

# Fulfilling His Purposes

As most of you will know, this month I will be ordained priest by the Bishop in Deddington Parish Church with three others. I am very grateful that many of you will be able to join us for the service. It seems particularly fitting because, without an incumbent to oversee my year as a deacon, I feel that everyone in the whole parish has had a hand in my training. We have learned much about how to be 'deacons', or servants of the Christian family, together. I am sure that, as my training continues, we will also learn much about how to be 'priests', about how to bring the needs of the world before God, and to present God prophetically to the world. Because, like it or not, we are all in this together. When St Peter writes of "... a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God", he is not talking about a crowd all wearing dog-collars. When St John writes that Christ "has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father", he is not addressing a cohort of theological college students. Rather, these apostles are affirming that all the people of God are his saints and priests: each and every one of them. All have been bought at the price of his blood. All are called to live holy and challenging lives. All are called to pray for, and to help, a needy community. All are called to know Christ and to make him known. Long after we have left Cowley, I will remember how this member of

the congregation showed me much about how to pray; how that person demonstrated the loving-kindness of Christ; how another gave themselves in faithful service of his people. Long after we have left Cowley, I will have forgotten any service that I may have given here as deacon or priest, and remember the great lessons that we have learned from the royal priesthood of the household of God in this place.

So whether or not you have been able to make it to the ordination in Deddington Parish Church, I wonder if this might be a month in which we all ask in what ways we are called to the service of God in St James' Church, St Francis' Church, the community of Cowley or beyond. This seems even more appropriate because this is, of course, also the month in which our new Rector is instituted. He and his family have responded to a call to serve amongst us. I have no doubt that there is a place and a task to which God is calling each of us and to which we could be 'ordained' or 'instituted'. The challenge is whether we will respond to that call. My prayer is that, over the coming months, we will together discover these vocations and honour the place that God has made for each of us in fulfilling his purposes for the world.

Michael

# Chronicle

# Eric Uren

1923-2007

*Sermon preached at Eric's funeral*

Shortly after he died, Connie opened a letter addressed to Eric and read the words that we have just heard from Paul's letter to the Philippians. "Do not be anxious about anything". She tells me that it struck her as a message straight from scripture to her, a message that she found comforting and that she needed to hear, "Do not be anxious about anything."

Well you might be excused for finding it surprising that Connie found comfort in this verse. This injunction from Paul is pretty tough. How can a widow not be anxious about the future? How can any of us not be anxious when we have watched someone that we have loved suffer and eventually die? How can any of us avoid being anxious on our own account when we come face to face with the reality of death? Paul faced his own death in prison as he wrote the letter to the Philippians, so how could he have been so blasé?

These are natural questions. We are so used to being afraid, afraid of all sorts of things and, if we are honest, particularly of death, that an injunction not to be anxious seems at best wishful thinking. But the testimony of Paul—and of Eric and Connie too and thousands like them—is that there is a place beyond fear in which we can find what Paul calls in his letter 'the peace that passes all understanding'. It is a peace, an 'acceptance' she called it, that Eric's nurse noticed had settled on the Uren house in the last few weeks of his life, a peace that

she said she had rarely seen.

So what is the source of that peace, and how can we comply with Paul's command not to be anxious, a command that we so long to hear but that seems so impractical? There are two things that we can do.

The first is to remember that, as Paul says, 'the Lord is near' and to draw near to him in prayer. That has been a theme of Eric's life. Eric was someone for whom the Lord was very near and for whom prayer came naturally. Even when he could barely speak he would follow the words of the morning and evening service. It was a tonic, reminding him that the God he had served these long years was not about to abandon him at death, but was nearer than the breath that he struggled to find. We need not be anxious because the God who has the world in his hands is the God who draws near to us when we draw near to him. That doesn't mean that we won't have trouble. Christians all over the world can testify to that. But it does mean that we have someone who can carry us through, someone who loves us more deeply than we love ourselves. That is something that Eric knew and something in which he found comfort.

Second, we do not need to be anxious, even about death, because Jesus has defeated its terror. Christians believe that there is something offensive about death, that God finds it as appalling as we do. When Jesus encountered death at the tomb of Lazarus, his great heart burst and he wept for his friend and for his fallen world. But

Christians also believe, and Eric believed it and is now finding it true, that death does not have the last word over a Christian life. Christians believe that, in his resurrection, Jesus somehow defeated death and can take his children on to life: we believe that in Eric has not passed from life to death, but from life to life, and to a new kind of life in the loving presence and glory of God. This is mind-blowing stuff. It is hard to express in a way that doesn't just sound like wishful thinking. When he preached, Eric never waffled, but he never avoided things that were hard to express either. I think at this point he would have simply pointed to the fact of Jesus' resurrection and said that the same God who raised Jesus from the dead can raise Eric and you and me to. And he would powerfully have left it at that.

So there is no need to be anxious. The Lord is near and death is not the final word. To affirm those things is not to deny our sorrow. We cannot serve a Lord who wept at the tomb of his friend and entertain that type of denial. But it is to say that we have hope, as Eric had hope, and that hope is the first fruits of that peace that passes understanding, a peace that Eric had glimpsed in life and that now he enjoys in full in the company of his Lord. If we can grasp those two things, then the command not be anxious comes, not as oppressive, but as a glimpse what life, and life beyond life, are really all about. Let us praise God for Eric and for the comfort with which He can comfort us.

**Michael Spence**

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## A Family Tribute

*Read by Christopher Uren at Eric's funeral*

We are here to remember Eric, Dad, Grandpa or maybe Mr Uren if there are any of the numerous pupils he taught during his long career in teaching.

Eric Ronald Percy Gordon Darch Uren was born in late November 1923 in Penzance Cornwall where his father worked as a train driver for The Great Western Railway. His parents were very proud of him winning a scholarship to the local Grammar School at the age of 11. Throughout his life he had a strong affinity with his Cornish roots and joked that the North started at Truro.

Three strands seem to run through his life. Firstly: children. Whether himself growing up, his own family or the children he encountered throughout his career and his service to the community.

Secondly: the RAF and aircraft through his membership of the Air Defence Cadet Corps (ADCC) before the second world war, his service in the RAF during the war and, after the war his long association with the Air Training Corps (ATC). Thirdly: his faith.

Eric joined the ADCC in Penzance when it was formed before the outbreak of war and could be found patrolling the sea-front around Penzance keeping watch for the expected invasion. The ADCC became the ATC in 1941. Eric joined the RAF in 1943 and started aircrew training before he was transferred to serve as a ground wireless operator listening to German radio transmissions. He did not expect to survive the war and had a very narrow escape whilst camped on a cliff-top in the south of England waiting for the invasion of France. He woke to the sound of a V1 flying bomb, and looking out of his tent saw it headed straight to-

ward him, when its engine stopped. It carried on gliding down towards him, but luckily passed a few feet over the top of his tent and blew up on the hill behind.

He went to France shortly after the D-Day invasion and served in Belgium, the Netherlands - where he was living in a tent during the bitter winter of 1944-1945 - and finally Germany.

After being demobbed in 1947 he decided to train as a teacher and went to Culham College between 1947 and 1949

During this period he was not involved with the RAF but renewed his association in 1950 when he was commissioned into the RAF Volunteer Reserve (as an Air Training Corps Officer) first with 2210 (Cowley) Squadron at Cowley Barracks and later with 150 (Oxford) Squadron who are still based in Marston Road. He held various uniformed jobs in the ATC until 1969 when he "retired" and joined the civilian committee that helps to run the local ATC. He continued to do this until 2004. In total he served with the ATC and its predecessor for 63 years which led him to jokingly claim that he had been in the ATC for longer than it had existed. His long service to the ATC was recognised in 2005 by the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire who presented him with a certificate recognising his outstanding service to the community.

The ATC was not his only association with aviation as anyone who has visited their house in Clive Road will be aware; he was also an avid collector of books on aircraft. He had a huge collection that has spread throughout the house including the loft and the conservatory, so that the only place you could escape from his books was in the bathroom.

Eric's first job as a teacher was at East Oxford Secondary Modern. During the next 34 years he continued to teach in

Oxford gradually taking on more responsibility and teaching younger and younger children as he moved from East Oxford, to Northfield, to Lawn Upton and eventually to Rose Hill First School. We can still remember the sight of him in a thick coat, gloves and a fur hat cycling to work in Littlemore on freezing cold winter days in the late 1960's. He must have been an intimidating sight to many pupils who were more used to small women teachers rather than a large man. Once again "retirement" from teaching did not mean an end to his connection with education. Eric became a governor of St Christopher's Primary school in 1987 where he continued to serve until earlier this year.

### **An appreciation**

By Tony Williamson

Eric and Connie Uren moved into 13 Clive Road in Cowley four weeks after they were married in 1952. I got to know them when I joined St Luke's Church six years later. This developed further after Barbara and I were married in 1959 and our children grew up together. Jeremy, their third son, was roughly the same age as our eldest, and I became his godfather.

Looking back we can see the very significant and vital role that Eric and Connie played through the Cowley Church regimes of Alec Whye, John Betton, Patrick Parry-Okeden, Ross Thompson, Keith Haydon, and Stephen Hartley. Their loyalty to the church and concern for all its members were very important. Eric became a lay-reader in 1959 and his carefully prepared addresses were always of value to the congregations.

Throughout our time in Cowley Eric was teaching, first at East Oxford Secondary, then Northfield Secondary, Lawn Upton Middle School and finally Rose Hill First School. He was often one of few men

teachers and hence a role model for many pupils.

I was always aware of Eric's great interest in everything to do with flying and the RAF and his delight when Jeremy joined the RAF and had such a good career in it.

Throughout Connie was a great support to all of us involved in the church. One of

her greatest contributions to the church has been her role in the Mothers Union, in which she always had Eric's quiet support.

Eric was a wholly reliable and faithful member of the church in Cowley and he will be sorely missed.

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## From the archives



### Ask the Urens

DID YOU SEE THIS PICTURE ON YOUR TELEVISION ON OCTOBER 5? MR AND MRS UREN OF 13 CLIVE ROAD, COWLEY WERE TAKING PART IN B.B.C. TELEVISION'S "ASK THE FAMILY" PROGRAMME TOGETHER WITH THEIR SON'S CHRISTOPHER (LEFT) AND JONATHAN.

In this article from the Cowley Chronicle of November 1970, Jonathan Uren explained how he had applied on behalf of his family to take part in the popular panel game Ask The Family. He was surprised to be accepted and after heats in Stratford the family found themselves being transported by special car to Lime Grove Studios. The filming was only slightly held up by their being taken to the wrong studio by mistake.

Following a full rehearsal the real contest between the Uren family and the Maddell family saw the Cowley branch go down to a 140-100 defeat; third son Jeremy watched from the wings.

With the BBC opening up their archives who knows whether, this battle of the families will once again see the light of day...

# The Lessons of life

## **I've learned ...**

That the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person

That when you're in love it shows

That just one person saying to me, 'You've made my day!' makes my day

That having a child fall asleep in your arms is one of the most peaceful in the worlds

That being kind is more important than being right

That you should never say 'No!' to a gift from a child

That we can always pray for each other if we don't have the strength to help in some other way

That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart that understands

That life is like a roll of toilet paper, the closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes

That we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for, and if He has, watch out!

That money doesn't buy class

That it's those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular

That under everyone's hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved

That to ignore the facts does not change the facts

That when you plan to get even with someone, you are letting that person continue to hurt you

That love, not time, heals all wounds

That everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile

That life is tough, but I am tougher

That opportunities are never lost; someone will take the ones you miss

That when you harbour bitterness, happiness will dock elsewhere

That I wish I could have told my Dad that I love him one more time before he passed away

That one should keep his words soft and tender, because tomorrow he may have to eat them

That a smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks

That I can't choose how I feel, but I can choose what I do about it

That when your newly born child holds your little finger in his little fist, that you're hooked for life

That everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but happiness occurs climbing it

That it's best to give advice in only two circumstances: when requested and when life-threatening

That the less time I have to work with, the more things I get done

# *From the Registers*



## **Weddings**

16th June Carol Brown and Steve Hutton

23 June Michelle Turner and Mark Parsons

## **Baptisms**

17 June Joshua James Harris

24 June Michael Morgan

Lily Tappin

## **Funerals**

8th June Violet Smith

11th June Eric Uren

21 June Bessie Williams

25 June Richard Clifford

29 June Catherine 'May' Webber

## **Cowley rectors/clergy I have known**

Sometimes the Holy Spirit guides the clergy to perform other than their traditional pastoral care.

In the mid-seventies, Father Ian Randal (Priest in charge of St Francis) and the then curate, Rev John Gawne-Cain (with picnics provided by their wives) hired a van to move my donated house furniture etc. from my brother's house in Coventry, stored it in the upper room at St Francis until I could move into my first acquired home in Frederick Road.

After blessing the home, before I moved in, they then insulated the loft – before global warming was the buzz word. Approximately 10 years later, for my ecumenical wedding, Father Ross Tompson (Parish Rector) and Rev Keith Hayden skilfully manned the bar at the reception, held in the Parish Hall.

These are just a few of the quiet workings of the Holy Spirit for which I am most thankful and continues to strengthen my faith. Thanks be to God, may He use us all to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters.

**Clivia M Andrews-Philbin**

# Rosanne Interviews

## Jeremy Herklots

Having interviewed our new churchwarden this month I am considering myself lucky that Fr Stephen is no longer editor of The Chronicle. You see he always confined me to the two centre pages whereas Phil, our new editor, is much more lenient. Just as well as Jeremy has such a story to tell that really it could be a serial or even a book!

He and his wife Rosemary (Rosie to her friends) have lived in Oxford for nearly 14 years, having moved here from Newcastle. At that point in his life Jeremy was working as a consultant, helping small companies to computerise their accounts. Being self-employed has meant that relocation was no problem. They found a lovely old house half-way up Rose Hill and even though it needed a considerable amount of refurbishment they settled in to tackle both house and garden with en-

thusiasm. The move brought them closer to Rosie's mother and Jeremy's sister. On arrival their son Philip introduced them to St Aldate's Church but Sunday worship there proved a little too noisy. A move to St Matthew's in South Oxford was more satisfactory but required a car journey so after a couple of exploratory visits to St James they decided that they could happily join the congregation. And very happy we were to welcome them.

In order to define Jeremy's life we need to circle the globe from east to west several times. His father was the Reader in biology at Hong Kong University. Having gained a PhD at Cambridge he was offered this prestigious post (a Chair we might call it in Oxford). So having met the daughter of a naval officer in the British colony and having married her in London he took his bride

back to university life in Hong Kong. There their first son was born, and 3½ years later in 1936, Jeremy came along. In 1938 a little girl completed the family but by that time war was on the horizon. By now Jeremy's father was moving upwards in the world of science, writing articles and books and becoming quite an expert.

Of course the war in Europe when it did begin in 1939 did not immediately affect Hong Kong. However, the situation between China and Japan was becoming precarious so at very short notice Mrs Herklots and her three young children were packed off along with many other Europeans by ship to Australia. Among some of his first memories Jeremy remembers the ship docking in Manila in the Philippines and his mother making the decision to go ashore. She felt that Australia would be too far away from her husband. She



had contacts in Manila through the University fraternity so managed to find a small cottage on campus. But after becoming seriously ill due to a septic mosquito bite, the family moved to the more benign climate of the mountains. There they were taken under the wing of an American language school for missionaries and their father was able to visit them.

The attack on Pearl Harbour turned the world in the East upside down and on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1941 a Japanese soldier, fully armed, arrived at their house, gave them half an hour to pack and they were taken to the first of three internment camps. Women and children were kept in cramped conditions with little food and no comfort. After about 4.5 months they were moved to a better camp in the mountains with more room. The prisoners were allowed to organise a school, church, even a Sunday school but life was still fairly harsh. Food and keeping healthy were the main priorities. Their mother was forced to work in the fields to grow food for the camp kitchen. After two men es-

caped, one of their friends was tortured in public and everyone, including the children, had to watch. Meanwhile Hong Kong had fallen to the Japanese and their father was also imprisoned.

In 1944 the prisoners were moved down to Manila on the coast to the most appalling camp – part of an old Spanish prison. There was barely space to sleep on the floor, primitive sanitation, and mattresses infected with bed bugs. However, it was a miracle that Mrs Herklots recognised that one of the weeds growing round the camp, which thanks to her husband's expertise she had learnt to recognise as a Chinese vegetable. While in the camp, as a direct result of malnutrition and deprivation, Jeremy contracted dysentery from which he almost died.

At last came the battle for Manila when the Americans bombed and fought for the liberation of the Philippines. Jeremy recalls being taken by jeep through the burning city to an old shoe factory. None of the liberated people could cope with proper meals after all those years. Next a ship

transported them to Los Angeles, but he told me the Brits were at the bottom of the pecking order for repatriation. On the long sea voyage the only pair of shoes he possessed were some plimsolls and unfortunately he lost one over the side. He arrived in Los Angeles in a pair of clogs made for him by the ship's carpenter. They were next put on a train for Halifax in Canada and from there sent in an old Cunard liner to England. They arrived back in Liverpool (poor blitzed Liverpool) just after VE day and so on by train to London, also a devastated city. After the luxury Jeremy had seen in America and Canada, the 8 year old was shocked. His father came to London for a visit and was offered a very important position to go back and help rebuild post-war Hong Kong. He was made the Secretary for Development. Jeremy spent a short while in prep school in England and then joined his parents. He had a burning ambition to follow a long family tradition in the Navy. After school in Hong Kong he studied first at Pangbourne Naval School and then took up a place at Dart-

mouth Naval College when he was just 16. Eleven years of service followed, seven of them in submarines. He enjoyed his years in subs where he was happy working in a small team. He is, he says, a perfectionist and was also 'a bit of a rebel' so he decided to quit the service. He felt he didn't live up to his own personal ideals. His first job on leaving the Navy was in avionics which involved developing the navigation systems on Polaris submarines, though he now believes he would not have done this work if he'd realised the implications of arms proliferation. It was while he was still a naval officer that he navigated a submarine to Singapore and there, at a Foreign Office party met Rosie. It took another 2 years for the two of them to meet again in London, fall in love and marry.

He moved on to become a management consultant and was offered a post in West Africa. By this time he and Rosie had two sons so off they went to live in Guinea. He worked on a large bauxite mining project for the World Bank. However, on

his return to the UK he felt that the work he was doing was not helping ordinary people. He resigned. A friend lent him a book entitled 'Small is Beautiful', written by Dr E F Schumacher. Jeremy read it and says he found his calling at last. Through the preacher at his church and after several personal attempts he got in touch with the Intermediate Technology Group, the organisation founded by Schumacher. They interviewed Jeremy and he became regional advisor for their South East Asian area. The work involved contacting various organisations in order to publicise help which could be given to small-scale businesses to introduce improved technology. He explained to me about an innovative boat-building project he introduced in southern India to help local fishermen. That was how he eventually gravitated to Traidcraft. One of his early initiatives was with the Tabora beekeepers of Tanzania. Some of the projects with which he was involved no longer function, much to his disappointment. Convinced that computers

were the way forward, he became a self-taught consultant. He then realised that he could be helpful to small businesses and also, within the organisation of the Church, and that, readers, is where we come in! I don't think I need to say that a person with so much know-how, motivation and expertise, will make an excellent Churchwarden, do I? Well, maybe I will anyway!

### **How would you describe yourself as a child?**

Curious about how things worked and about materials – after the war, always taking things apart.

### **Have you a significant memory you'd like to share?**

I got a sailor on the old Cunard liner to take me up through the hollow mast to the crow's nest. That confirmed my ambition to join the Navy.

### **Has God been part of your life since childhood?**

Oh yes. I had missionary grandparents. There was plenty of RE in the camp from the missionaries. I was

very aware, through my mother, and her prayer group that God would help us win the war. In retrospect I often feel that things have happened in my life that were God's will.

**In modern society what disappoints or angers you?**

Oh a great deal – waste, the arms industry and failure to grapple with third-world poverty.

**Is there anything in the modern world which you find positive or encouraging?**

**ing?**

Increasing awareness of international issues such as environment and trade.

**Do you have a treasured possession?**

Nothing now, we're trying to downsize!

**Do you have a hero or heroine, past or present?**

The person I have most admired was my commanding officer in submarines on two occasions.

**How do you like to spend your leisure time?**

I find gardening very therapeutic and I fix things. Since being in Oxford I've refurbished a large number of old computers for overseas students and asylum seekers.

**What makes you laugh?**

Small children saying funny things.

**Do you have plans or ambitions for the future?**

To have time to work on the whistle clock.

(And if you want to know more about that last answer, hunt Jeremy down and he'll tell you more.)

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## Notes from the June PCC meeting

The PCC members reflected on the long and faithful Lay Ministry of Eric Uren who died on 30<sup>th</sup> May and decided to write to Connie to express their gratitude for them both.

A group had been formed to assist the Treasurer on matters of finance.

They discussed the churchyard and the rules governing its use for burials. A new area for the interment of ashes is needed.

The Cowley Deanery Plan was discussed and they considered what an extra stipendiary priest might do in the Parish if appointed.

They agreed to have the electrical equipment tested in both churches.

There was disappointment at the lack of support for two excellent performances arranged at St Francis Church recently.

They decided to grant a further year's lease to the Fellowship of Reconciliation at the Church Centre. The rent was increased.

The Revd Lorne Denny was warmly thanked for all he had done at St Francis Church and in the Parish.

## Sunday Services

### ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist ( <i>exc 2nd Sunday</i> )
	All Age Eucharist ( <i>2nd Sunday</i> )

### ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am	Parish Eucharist
	[ <i>Family Eucharist – 2nd Sunday of the month</i> ]

## Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Group – <i>St Francis</i>
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union – <i>St James (3<sup>rd</sup> Mon)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Seashells Toddler Group – <i>Church Centre</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Service – <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of <i>St Francis</i> – <i>St Francis (2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup>)</i>
5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>	
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Tea Break – <i>St Francis (1st Wed)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast – <i>St Francis</i>

### Day Off

Lorne and Michael can be contacted in the evenings and at weekends. Beth can be contacted during the day as well.

## Parish Directory

### Team Rector

(from July 2007):  
Revd Howard Thornton

### Team Curates:

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### Non-Stipendiary Minister

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### Churchwarden:

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### Deputy Wardens:

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**Chronicle**

The next issue of the *Chronicle* will be available from Sunday 2nd September. Please send in your articles, stories, comments and news by 30th August. Contact Philip Hind on 01865 427523 or leave at St James Church.