

ELSTOW PARISH MAGAZINE



From Jeremy Crocker

I am always moved by those who show tremendous courage, when suffering physically. Roy Castle, Marty Caine, and Christopher Reeves are to me very inspirational adults, in the way they lived their lives while physically very unwell. Three weeks ago I attended the General Synod, and during this time a friend of mine organised for me to have a tour round parts of Great Ormond Street Hospital and I spoke with 18 six- to ten-year-olds. One young man caught my eye and touched my heart by the way he coped with his physical difficulties and by his courage, keenness to try, but particularly his love and care for others.

I would like to share with you a detailed true story of a girl who I have called Bell.

Courage of Butterfly girl who can never have a cuddle

They call it the Butterfly Condition with a cold future looming before this brave little girl. For six-year-old Bell faces life without ever feeling the warmth of a cuddle from Mum. A life swathed in bandages touched by constant agony.

Bell's incurable rare genetic condition means that her skin is as fragile as a butterfly's wing. A hug can raise massive blisters. Turning over in bed can cause terrible wounds. *Last Christmas opening her presents with her vulnerable little hands brought tears of pain to her eyes.* "We barely wrapped them for her so she could get to her toys easily", sighed her devoted mum Lilly. "But even pulling off the bit of paper that was on them hurt her, "It is as if she has 100 percent burns all over her. She spent this Christmas covered in bandages from neck to toes. "But she is so strong. The pain she endures every minute would destroy most people."

The Butterfly Condition-medical name epidermolysis bullosa affects the production of proteins that glue connective body tissues together. The skin is under constant attack. *Not only does Bell hurt outside, the condition affects her inside too.* Even swallowing food causes her throat to blister, so she has to be fed through a tube.

The youngster has already been through a gruelling operation at London's Great Ormond Street Hospital to widen her throat because she has such difficulty swallowing. She also needed ops to regain the use of her fingers which have been badly damaged by blistering. Her 35-year-old dad Stephen - a transport worker - gazed at his tragic daughter as she played in the garden of their Sheffield home, bandaged limbs protruding from beneath her favourite red dress. "She just gets on and copes with life - but it is a heart-rending illness which affects only a handful of people in Britain," he said.

"When Bell was a baby, she fell off the settee and my natural reaction was to grab her hand, but it literally stripped the skin from her fingers. That's how fragile it is. There is no known cure and youngsters with the condition can die prematurely from complications. *"Against all the odds this remarkable child battles on. She is a bright girl who does well at school. But games lessons are little fun"* She can throw a bean bag but she can't catch one because of the damage it would cause," said 29-

year-old Lilly. "If she falls over she cries and needs a cuddle like any other child. I have to be very careful not to make matters worse. It's heartbreaking."

There is, however, a glimmer of hope on the horizon for Bell. For doctors are working on a possible treatment for the condition. But, a breakthrough may still be ten years away - and money is badly needed for vital research. Prime Minister Tony Blair and his wife Cherie have helped raise cash for DEBRA - the Butterfly Condition Charity. They even invited one 11-year-old sufferer, Adam to Downing Street last year to help highlight the illness. And friends and neighbours of the family have rallied round to help. Bell's plight touched the hearts of local pub managers Mark and Mandy, who run the Star in Sheffield. Lilly who also has two sons, Billy, three, and Fran, 19 months, mercifully not affected by the condition. "We can only pray that there is a breakthrough."

Dermatologist and Butterfly Condition expert Professor Robin Eady is cautiously hopeful. "I think we'll eventually have something like a gene cream which will restore normal function to the skin," he said. It can not come quickly enough for Leanne who dreams of the day when she can unwind her bandages and throw them in the bin. *"I just want to be well soon so the pain goes," she said with yet another brave little smile.*

As we approach another Lent on Ash Wednesday the 1st March let us thank God for all that we have, and for all that we are able to do. And let us spare some thought and prayer for the many who suffer mentally or physically in our town and village. As our young people begin their new half term we are reminded of how much they learn from us, but equally how much we can learn from them... their love, their spirit, and their courage. May we learn and teach others during this Lent as we develop our love, our spirit and our courage to be a more dedicated Christian person and to lead more Christ-like lives in helping others less fortunate.

With Best Wishes,

Jeremy

A COURSE FOR LENT

'The Return of the Prodigal Son' by Henri Nouwen

- Monday 6th March at St Mary's Cardington
- Tuesday 14th March at St Michael's Church, Barford Ave.
- Wednesday 22nd March at Elstow Church Hall
- Wednesday 29th March at St Mary's Cardington
- Thursday 6th April at St Michael's Church, Barford Ave

All meetings start at 7.30pm and last for c. 1½ hours
Refreshments are provided
There is no charge for the course



'The Prodigal Son' – pen & ink etching
by Jean-Louis Forain (1852-1931)

TUNES OF GLORY

This month we shall sing No. 392 “*Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom*”, by John Henry Newman, 1801-1890. According to The Times of October 2005, the case of the late Cardinal Newman is of particularly relevance at the present time because he is currently the subject of possible canonisation by the Roman Catholic Church. He was an Anglican who converted to Catholicism, and shocked Victorian England in doing so. Although the dossier on Cardinal Newman’s beatification was first opened in 1958, no miracles had been attributed to him until recently, but now that situation may have been resolved. Cardinal Newman worked among the poor of Birmingham and later moved to Dublin, where he founded University College and became its Rector. He is highly regarded as the author of the poem “The Dream of Gerontius”, subject of the superb musical setting by Sir Edward Elgar.

People of different creeds regard Newman highly. He preached sermon entitled ‘God's Will The End of Life’ in 1849, saying "we are not sent into this world for nothing, we are not born at random: we are not here that we may go to bed at night and get up in the morning, toil for our bread, eat and drink, laugh and joke, rear a family and die. God sees every one of us, He creates every soul for a purpose".

John Newman wrote the hymn in the summer of 1833 while a passenger on an Italian cargo boat heading for Corsica. He was returning to England after a holiday in Sicily, but the homeward journey was irritatingly slow. “We were becalmed for a whole week in the Straits of Bonifacio”, he wrote, and it was there that he wrote the lines "Lead, kindly Light" which have since become so well known. He was then aged thirty-two, vicar of St Mary's, Oxford, and was in an unsettled state of mind. He was already grappling with deep religious questions, which some twelve years later led him to enter the Church of Rome. The lines he wrote were a prayer for divine guidance. When in due course he published the poem, it was entitled “The Pillar of Cloud”, likening himself to the Israelites on their journey through the wilderness, led step by step by the light of God's presence.

The phrase “*Lead thou me on*” is repeated five times, and is the essence of the prayer. The three stanzas are concerned respectively with the present, the past and the future. In the first he acknowledges “*The night is dark, and I am far from home*”, and in simple trust he asks to be shown the next step. In the second he looks back to his youth and recalls with shame how proud and self-willed he had been, choosing his own way, not God's. Then in the final stanza he faces the future with serene confidence. There may be difficulties and dangers to be overcome, but he knows that the pillar of cloud will continue to illuminate his way until the darkness gives way to morning light.

Several tunes are used with this hymn, and in our book the tune is *Lux Benigna* by John Baccus Dykes, whose diary shows that he began writing out the tune in 1865. A friend once remarked to Newman what a pleasure it must be to have written a hymn that was sung wherever Christians are to be found. “Ah”, said Newman, “It is not the hymn itself, but Dykes's tune that has gained it the popularity”. Nevertheless times change, and ‘*Lux Benigna*’ has been overtaken to some extent, especially among Nonconformists, by C H Purday's well-known tune ‘*Sandon*’. So on this occasion we shall sing it to *Sandon*. Purday was a music publisher, and in his early life a vocalist of some repute. He set the hymn to this tune in a book which he edited in 1860. So we will sing it to *Sandon*, and return to *Lux Benigna* at a future date.

John Crookall

BOOK REVIEW

“Fat Girl” by Judith Moore (Profile Books £12.99)

This short (it is only 196 pages) but intense autobiographical book of Judith Moore’s first dozen or so years of life (in the USA) is not to be undertaken lightly. You must not expect a slimmer’s story with a happy ending, or anything else so banal. It is an intelligent adult’s cruel and at times sordid exposé of a nightmare world in which compulsion and abuse jostle with each other for our attention. Set among this hellish landscape, there are descriptions of food (not recipes) which will make your mouth water, but they serve only as background rather than cravings: Moore would plunder food almost wherever she found it, but would do so with a ghastly self-awareness.

Moore had a horrible childhood. Her father, as grossly overweight as she was, was thrown out of the matrimonial home by a slim mother whose vicious unpleasantness (I choose my words with care) came barely second to *her* own mother’s calculated nastiness. There was no love or affection there. Moore was an only child of effectively a single parent. Because of her mother’s pursuit of a singer’s Master’s degree, she was left in the “care” of a thoroughly reluctant farming and widowed grandmother. Grandmother and mother hated each other. In fact, it seems as though virtually everybody hated everybody else as much as Moore seems to have hated herself.

Even when Moore eventually met up with her (vastly overweight and twice-remarried) father, there was no lightening of the atmosphere: her mother merely thrashed her the harder for disloyalty (the thrashings only ceased when Moore revealed them to one of her mother’s many male friends about it). Only her homosexual uncle, Carl, showed her kindness when she went to live with him for a time. He gave her money for candy bars and sodas. At school, it was just as bad: she was the butt of every bully, both male and female. There were no friendships. Moore is stark in her assessment of herself: she serially betrayed almost every adult who did trust her.

The problem, never fully displayed for us, was that Moore ate compulsively out of misery.

I am, for once, going to conclude this review with some quotations from the book instead of giving my own evaluation of it. This is in part because I feel so alien to the story: I am unable to identify with what I recognise to be the story of one of the world’s many obese young outsiders. It is also to encourage you to read this off-beat and thoroughly disturbing self-analysis (Moore was, I believe, in her sixties and twice married when she wrote it). Moore, you see, is a multiple-prize-winning author who knows how to captivate her readership.

“There are different ways fat folks get fat and lose fat and stay fat. I am a simple overeater, what nutritionists call a ‘yo-yo dieter’” / “I hated them (her mother and grandmother – “they were poisonous snakes, those two”) and I needed them and I prayed to God and Jesus to help me love them. I was nobody’s fool. I had no place to go.” / (Writing of her stay with Carl) “I was enchanted with the idea that to all the world I appeared to be a girl with a father that loved her.” / “I was a dirty girl and I knew it.” / “I stole (money) ... I stole food ... I took the Lord’s name in vain.” / “I was afraid of myself. I was afraid of the evil in me.....” / “Other girls were fatter than I was ... I didn’t care that they were fatter than me: what broke my heart was that I was fat, fat, fat.” / “I was overweight, unshapely, awkward, homely and half nuts. Nobody nice was going to ask me out.”

Despite what I said, I have a *caveat*. This book is a retrospective about an obese person who had a loveless childhood, written decades after the events. It is carefully composed by an experienced writer and, for all the truth at its heart, is designed to engage its horrified reader. It won superlative reviews in America when it first came out in 2004 and has been almost sycophantically reviewed over here. I’m afraid that I found it too artificially self-aware.

Bookworm

ENGLISH HISTORICAL MYTHS

BOADICEA

Well, actually, she was called Boudicca, but of course our royal writer *Spurius Historicus*, author of “**FAMOUS LITTLE-KNOWN PERSONAGES**”, wouldn’t have known that. “Boadicea” derives from an error in a mediæval manuscript, but then, as we know, **Historicus** didn’t “do” research. He “did” Dickens’ derivative “A Child’s History of England” (1852).

Since Day One of my investigations, I had been looking for a chapter on Queen Boudicca, given her splendid defence against the nasty conquering Romans, as **Historicus** would have seen it. After all, **Spurius Historicus**, a.k.a. HRH Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, was determined to write about people who would measure up to his other half’s demanding prim standards.

I should have looked in a more obvious place in that chilly library on the Island of Iona: it was not enclosed within the dusty covers of the main book, but was proudly obvious in a separate slim gilt-tooled leather-bound edition all on its own and standing alongside the main work.

Fortunately for **Historicus**, the main facts are well established by Tacitus and Cassius Dio and he could safely describe her career, which he did. “*She a campaign led against the Roman mighty legions to right the heimtückisch [I think he means “dastardly”] wrongs so brutally against the Iceni tribe committed.*” She went on to take Colchester, London and St Albans before suffering a disastrous defeat somewhere in the Midlands at the hands of Suetonius Paulinus, the Roman Governor of Britain. (“*This brave English Queen [actually she was a Celt] failed to overcome the tierisch [“licentious”?] Roman soldiers.*” In fact, though, the Romans had been vastly outnumbered at the decisive battle.....) She escaped and returned to Norfolk and her tribe, the Iceni; there, realising that the game was well and truly up, she took poison along with her two daughters.

Unfortunately for **Historicus**, he only knew half the story. As I have repeatedly said, he didn’t “do” research.

To him, Boudicca was one of the very great figures of early English history, as indeed a cursory glance at any standard history book will confirm. But our wannabe Englishman purported to be a serious historian. I have already revealed to you his chapters on Lady Godiva (not too far off the mark, in fact) and Horsa (a whopping aberration): here at last was a real copper-bottomed heroine (well, at least her hair was copper-coloured, “tawny”, rather than the “blond” he states) who was incontrovertibly OK. “*She a bewundernswürdig [wonderful – he did enjoy long words] example for a Queen was*”, he gushes.

In reality, Boudicca was a vindictively vicious avenging angel; and with good reason. To cut a long story short, Catus Decianus, the Imperial Procurator, had descended upon the Iceni after their king, and Roman vassal, Prasutagus had died, and, in his determination to extract even more funds from the tribe had had Boudicca, Prasutagus’ widow, publicly whipped and her two teenage daughters raped. This was in reprisal for non-payment of monies deemed due and to ensure the end of the royal line by rendering the girls unmarriageable. Nasty, as I said. This turned Boudicca into a raging fury and she took the Iceni and other tribes along with her. She didn’t just “take” Colchester, London and St Albans, she totally destroyed them (having first looted them) and massacred every living soul therein, amounting to some 70,000 people it is thought. Many were most horribly tortured into the bargain, with Roman-style crucifixion being a favoured instrument of her wrath. The inevitable Roman retribution duly caught up with her.

Oh, and as a safety factor for her own troops, she did not have scythes attached to the wheels of her chariot. Not quite what Queen Victoria would have admired, somehow. Or ... would she?

Elstow Timewatch

ELSTOW PARISH COUNCIL

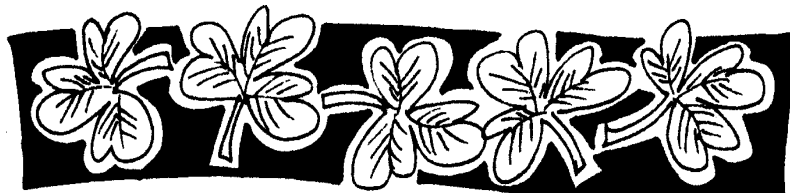
Planning applications by Elstow Retail Centre fifty-six dwellings on the land to the west of the surgery at the junction of the Spine Road and Romsey Way and for three retail units with flats above on land to the east of the surgery have yet to be decided. RMC have also yet to provide further information concerning their plan for a gravel pit on Medbury Farm and this is now unlikely to be considered by the County Council before the summer. Westbury/Persimmon has finally submitted plans for the sales office on the Allotment Site and the Parish Council has asked the Borough to ensure that the hard standing as well as the office is removed once the site is vacated.

The County Council is currently consulting on the Minerals and Waste Development Framework and documents are available to view at www.bedfordshire.gov.uk

Speeding along the High Street is continuing to cause problems and we have asked the County Council to consider a traffic-calming scheme in the next financial year. Graffiti has also increased and residents can now use the new 'freefone' number **0800 121 8888** to report graffiti as well as litter, fly tipping and abandoned cars.

Four new seats have been ordered three for the Playing Field and one for The Green and should be installed in the summer. The Playing Field Association has also been awarded a Rural Grant of £5000 to help pay for the disabled toilet required under the new disability legislation.

Ann Paice, Clerk, Elstow Parish Council (01234 824852).



PARISH PUMP

St David's Day

March 1st is St David's Day, and it's time for the Welsh to wear daffodils or leeks. Shakespeare called this custom 'an honourable tradition begun upon an honourable request' - but nobody knows the reason. Why should anyone have ever 'requested' that the Welsh wear leeks or daffodils to honour their patron saint? It's a mystery! We do know that David - or Dafydd - of Pembrokeshire was a monk and bishop of the 6th century. In the 12th century he was made patron of Wales, and he has the honour of being the only Welsh saint to be canonised and culted in the Western Church.

Tradition has it that he was austere with himself, and generous with others - living on water and vegetables (leeks, perhaps?!) and devoting himself to works of mercy. He was much loved.

In art, St David is usually depicted in Episcopal vestments, standing on a mound with a dove at his shoulder, in memory of his share at an important Synod for the Welsh Church, the Synod of Brevi.

St Patrick's Day

Friday, March 17th is St Patrick's Day. St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. If you've ever been in New York on St Patrick's Day, you might think he was the patron saint of New York as well... the flamboyant parade is full of American-Irish razzmatazz.

All this is a far cry from the hard life of this 5th century humble Christian who became in time both bishop and apostle of Ireland. Patrick was born the son of a town councillor in the west of England, between the Severn and the Clyde. But as a young man he was captured by Irish pirates, kidnapped to Ireland, and reduced to slavery. He was made to tend his master's herds. Desolate and despairing, Patrick turned to prayer. He found God was there for him and his faith grew and deepened, in contrast to his earlier years, when he "knew not the true God". Then, after six gruelling, lonely years he escaped, made his way to a port 200 miles away and persuaded some sailors to take him with them away from Ireland. After various adventures in other lands, including near-starvation, Patrick landed on English soil at last, and returned to his family. But, he was much changed. He had enjoyed his life of plenty before; now he wanted to devote the rest of his life to Christ. Patrick received some form of training for the priesthood, but not the higher education he really wanted. But by 435, well educated or not, Patrick was badly needed and the Pope sent Patrick back to the land of his slavery. He set up his see at Armagh, and worked principally in the north. He urged the Irish to greater spirituality, set up a school, and made several missionary journeys.

Patrick's writings are the first literature certainly identified from the British Church. They reveal sincere simplicity and a deep pastoral care. He wanted to abolish paganism, idolatry, and was ready for imprisonment or death. He remains the most popular of the Irish saints and the principal cathedral of New York is dedicated to St. Patrick - as is, of course, the Anglican cathedral of Dublin.

Launch of Christian Muslim Forum

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, hosted the inaugural meeting and formal launch of the Christian Muslim Forum at the end of January. The Forum brings a wide range of Christians and Muslims involved in community life together with specialist members. The Christian Muslim Forum has come into being as the result of a Listening Initiative first proposed in 1997 whose report, published in 2004, recommended that a formal structure for dialogue and encounter would bring stability and promote understanding between the two faith communities as they encounter issues of difference and of common concern and seek to enhance their contribution to public life.

The Forum has been constituted as a charitable company. It has eight presidents - four Muslim and four Christian; twelve specialist members covering Community and Public Affairs, Education, Family Issues, International Affairs, Media and Youth. Its structure also provides for two full-time directors, one of whom has already been appointed from the Christian Community. Funding for the project has come from a mix of sources including grants from Christian and Muslim bodies, other trusts and a start-up grant from the Home Office.

Dr Williams hoped that the Forum would provide an opportunity for the members and consultants from both communities "to explore together their common and different perspectives on issues affecting us all. I look forward to seeing their work develop"

Lee Young Pyo

Tottenham Hotspur's new left back has impressed many observers this season. Lee Young Pyo was a member of the Korean World Cup team in 2002. Lee said: "Playing in a World Cup in your own country is a wonderful experience for any player. For Korea, who had never won a game in their four

previous World Cup finals, to play at home and to get to the Semi-final was wonderful, especially as we defeated Italy and Spain on the way. Everybody shed tears of joy and of emotion after the game”.

Lee Young Pyo is a Christian but he has not always been. “I became a Christian four years ago. Before that, to be honest, for me, the idea of God was a fairy story for me. I considered believing God was just for some odd people. Growing up in Korea, I was influenced by Buddhism and I would think that if I had had a religion I would have been a Buddhist.

“Since then everything in my life has been changed. My way of thinking before I believed has changed. Questions, such as where I came from and where I am going. How the problem of my sins, about which I sought answers with mental anguish without finding any when I was a student, were answered. One of the biggest human problems is fear of death. As I know where I come from and where I will go, I know about death and am free from death itself. Therefore all my thoughts and my very life has been dramatically changed after I believed in God.”

Anyone who watches Lee for Tottenham or Korea, could not doubt the depth of his commitment to win. His relationship with God and Jesus Christ gives him a purpose in life and certainty for the future but it does not diminish his desire to win one little bit.

Stuart Weir, Christians in Sport www.christiansinsport.org.uk

Dag Hammarskjold

Dag Hammarskjold (1905 – 1961) gave the impression of being an agnostic humanist while he was serving as Secretary-General of the United Nations. So it came as a surprise when, after his death in a plane crash, his private papers were found to contain notes entitled “negotiations with myself – and with God”. His prayers have a naked honesty which is deeply moving. Here are some extracts:

1957

In thy wind – in thy light –

How insignificant is everything else, how small are we – and how happy in that which alone is great.

1958

So shall the world be created each morning anew, forgiven – in thee, by Thee.

Didst thou give me this inescapable loneliness so that it would be easier for me to give thee all?

1961

Have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon our efforts,

That we before Thee, in love and in faith, righteousness and humility,

May follow thee, with self-denial, steadfastness and courage, and meet thee in the silence.

Give us a pure heart, that we may see thee,

A humble heart that we may hear thee,

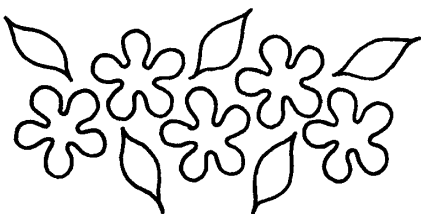
A heart of love that we may serve thee,

A heart of faith that we may love thee,

Thou whom I do not know but whose I am.

Thou whom I do not comprehend

But who hast dedicated me to my fate. Thou – ...



Source of Parish Pump articles: © www.parishpump.co.uk

Christian Aid News

Once again, we look forward to Christian Aid Week 2006 (May 14th – 20th). As always, we welcome new volunteers for the house-to-house collections – so, if you are likely to have any spare time during that week, please contact Sheila Batiuk at the address below – or see the notices that will be on display at Elstow Abbey.

Dr. Daleep Mukaryi, the Director of Christian Aid, writes: “Thanks to all of you who worked so hard to make Christian Aid Week 2005 a success. More than £15million was raised and nearly 100,000 votes for trade justice were fantastic achievements which had a significant impact on the movement for poverty eradication”. There were more than 410,000 Gift Aid declarations that raised a further £1million at no additional cost to our donors. . Locally, in Bedford, we raised £26,242 – only very slightly less than in the previous year. This is encouraging and we look forward to a successful collection this year. Please help if you can.

There will be a Christian Aid exhibition in Bedford Central Library from May 8th to May 20th 2006
For all the latest information about the on-going work of Christian Aid, please see their web site at: www.christianaid.org.uk

Sheila Batiuk (19, Greycote, Shortstown, Bedford MK42 0ND)

EASTER CARDS

Easter cards are now available from the stand at the back of the church near the Vestry Door. All profit from the sale of these and the other cards on sale, goes towards the day-to-day running expenses of the Abbey.

Colin Albon

'TO THOSE I LOVE, AND THOSE WHO LOVE ME'

By Jeremy Crocker

When I'm gone, release me, let me go
I have so many things to see and do
You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears
Be thankful for our many beautiful years
I gave to you my Love, you can only guess
How much you gave to me in Happiness
I thank you for the Love you each have shown,
But now it's time I travelled on alone.
So, grieve a while for me if grieve you must,
Then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It's only for a time that we must part,
So bless the memories within your heart.
I won't be far away, for Life goes on,
So, if you need me call, and I will come,
Though you can't see or touch me, I'll be near,
And if you listen with your Heart, you'll hear
All my Love around you, soft and clear.
And then, when you must come this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile, and say
WELCOME HOME!

THE CHURCH CALENDAR

MARCH

Wednesday 1 st	Ash Wednesday	
	11.30am	Coffee Morning followed by a light lunch in the Church Hall
	7.30pm	Holy Communion with the Imposition of Ashes (The Revd J R Crocker – “JRC”)
Thursday 2 nd	11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
	7.30pm	Wedding Rehearsal (JRC)
Saturday 4 th	3.00pm	Wedding Blessing – Darren Ring & Michelle Edwards (JRC)
Sunday 5th	Lent 1	
	9.30am	Family Communion with Children’s Groups (JRC)
	11.00am	Morning Prayer (JRC)
	6.30pm	Evening Prayer (Robert Heley)
Monday 6 th	7.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
	7.30pm	Lent Course at St. Mary’s Cardington
Wednesday 8 th	11.30am	Coffee Morning followed by a light lunch in the Church Hall
Thursday 9 th	11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
	8.00pm	Meeting of the Finance & Standing Committee at 43 Armstrong Close, Wilstead
Saturday 11 th	10.30am	Working party in Elstow Churchyard
Sunday 12th	Lent 2	
	11.00am	Parish Communion. (JRC) Preacher The Venerable Trevor Jones, Archdeacon of Hertford
	6.30pm	Evening Prayer (JRC)
Monday 13 th	7.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
		<u>DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR THE APRIL MAGAZINE</u>
Tuesday 14 th	7.30pm	Lent Course at St. Michael’s
Wednesday 15 th	11.30am	Coffee Morning followed by a light lunch in the Church Hall
Thursday 16 th	11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
Saturday 18 th	7.00pm	St. Patrick’s Day (17 March) Quiz with a Bring and Share supper in the Church Hall
Sunday 19th	Lent 3	
	9.30am	Family Communion with Children’s Groups (The Revd Peter Littleford)
	11.00am	Morning Prayer (Mattins Group – Ann Knight)
	6.30pm	Songs of Praise Evening Service (JRC)
Monday 20 th	7.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
	7.45pm	Bereavement Group Supervision in the Church Hall
Wednesday 22 nd	11.30am	Coffee Morning followed by a light lunch in the Church Hall
	7.30pm	Lent Course at Elstow Church Hall

Thursday 23 rd	11.00am 6.00pm	Holy Communion (JRC) Wedding Rehearsal at Elstow Abbey
Saturday 25 th	2.00pm 3.00pm	Workshop in the Church Hall Wedding Blessing – Colin Parish & Mandy-Ann Parish (JRC)
Sunday 26th	Lent 4	
	9.30am 11.00am 6.30pm	Young People’s Service Morning Prayer (JRC) Evening Prayer followed by Holy Communion and the Laying on of Hands for Healing (JRC)
Monday 27 th	7.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
Wednesday 29 th	11.30am 7.30pm	Coffee Morning followed by a light lunch in the Church Hall Lent Course at St. Mary’s Cardington
Thursday 30 th	11.00am 7.30pm	Holy Communion (JRC) Easter Vestry and the Annual Meeting of the Parochial Church Council in the Church Hall

APRIL

Sunday 2nd	Lent 5	Passion Sunday
	9.30am 11.00am 3.00pm 6.30pm	Family Communion with Children’s Groups (JRC) Morning Prayer (Mattins Group – John Crookall) Baptism of Niamh Catherine Foster Evening Prayer (Canon Philip McDonough)
Monday 3 rd	10.00am 7.00pm	Group Visit (Dr John Crookall) Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
Wednesday 5 th	11.30am	Coffee Morning followed by a light lunch in the Church Hall
Thursday 6 th	11.00am 7.30pm	Holy Communion (JRC) Lent Course at St. Michael’s

CINDERELLA

A delightful, though rather unusual marriage took place on the evening of the 4th February between Cinderella (*Megan*) and the so-called 'Prince' Charming (*Margaret*). Accompanied by an amazing collection of Mice (*Sophie, Findlay, and the Two Simmonds Boys*), Buttons (*Emily*), unnumbered fairies (*Sarah, Olivia, Becca, and Bethany*), and a menagerie of others, they were brought together in unholy deadlock by a flying, mad archbishop (*John*).

This wonderful ceremony came about after a bizarre series of events which may have prevented its happening at all. Baron Hardup (*Bethany*) was some help in bringing the two together, though goodness knows how. But the real flies in the ointment were Cinderella's step-sisters (*Barbara, Glynis, Hannah, Teresa, Amber, and Lily*) who were not just ugly but downright horrendous, and their wickedly wicked mother (*Fred*) who was as useful as a chocolate teapot. These vile creatures did their utmost to prevent the lovely girl being allowed to go to the ball, but thanks to the intervention of her wonderful fairy godmother (*Jessica*), she managed to get an early-return pumpkin to the palace.

With the level of incompetence only managed by the backstage ineptness of *Tracy* and *Vicki*, her shoes were not as perfect a fit as had been wished for, and she managed to lose one of them as she dashed for the 2359 hours 4-mouse-powered Barbie-carriage to take her back home.

The next day, Prince Charming, now in the role of a door-to-door shoe salesman, managed to find the foot that laid the golden slipper. "A fit, a fit, a perfect fit," he cried, and most of the audience obliged by having one. (Oh no they didn't – Oh yes they did – etc.) But, as the two Narrators (*John and Rosemary*) pointed out, love conquers all, and all was forgiven of those who had acted badly (*the entire adult section of the cast*). Finally to the romantic tune of 'How much is that doggie in the window', it all ended happily ever after.

Mention must firstly be made of the Pianist (*Graham*) who was banging away in the background, entirely to his own satisfaction; secondly there were the writers of the script (*Beth and Jeremy*), whose words were generally ignored by the cast. Next the cast have to thank the make-up team (*Lynn and Tracy*) for the way they looked, and also thank their mothers for the unfashionable clothes they were made to wear.

The audience was a tolerant group who attended the performance in order to get at the food afterwards, and are to be thanked for not heckling or throwing rotten fruit. There is a movement afoot by some of the cast to get their own back and do it again next year, forcing other unsuspecting characters to join in the melée.

Fred Steele (Wicked Stepmother)

The Cast

Narrator 1 - *John*
Narrator 2 - *Rosemary*
Cinderella - *Megan*
The Ugly Sisters - Ecclesiastica - *Glynis*
Knickerelastica - *Barbara and Sarah*
Formica - *Hannah*
Arnica - *Teresa*
Flirtatia - *Amber*
Vivatia - *Lily*
Stepmother - *Fred*
Prince Charming - *Margaret*

Fairy Godmother - *Jessica*
Little Fairies - *Sarah, Olivia, Becca, Bethany*
Baron Hardup - *Bethany (Sarah understudy)*
Buttons - *Emily*
Mice - *Sophie, Findlay and the two Simmonds boys*
Mad Greek Archbishop – *John*

Backstage – *Tracy and Vicki*
Make-up – *Lynn and Tracy*
Music – *Graham*
Written by – *Beth and Jeremy*

And, some of the songs were ...

“I enjoy being a girl”

When I have a brand new hair-do,
And my eyelashes all in curl,
I float as the clouds on air do -
I enjoy being a girl.

When men say I’m cute and funny
And my teeth are as white as pearl
I’m simply a happy bunny -
I enjoy being a girl!

I flip when a fellow sends me flowers!
I drool over dresses made of lace!
I talk on the telephone for hours,
With a pound and a half of cream upon my face!

I’m simply a female female,
And my future I hope will be,
In the arms of a brave and free male,
Who enjoys being a guy,
Having a girl like me!

“I feel pretty”

I feel pretty, oh so pretty
I fell pretty and witty and bright,
And I pity any girl who isn’t me tonight.
I feel charming, oh so charming
It’s alarming how charming I feel!
And so pretty, that I hardly can believe I’m real.

See that pretty girl in the mirror there.
Who can that attractive girl be?
Such a pretty face, such a pretty dress, such a pretty smile

Such a pretty me!
I feel stunning, and entrancing
Feel like running and dancing for joy,
For I'm loved by a pretty wonderful boy!

“A Windmill in Old Amsterdam”

A Mouse lived in a windmill in old Amsterdam
A windmill with a mouse in and he wasn't grousin'
He sang every morning, "How lucky I am,
Living in a windmill in old Amsterdam!"

I saw a mouse!
Where?
There on the stair!
Where on the stair?
Right there!
A little mouse with clogs on
Well I declare!
Going clip-clipperty-clop on the stair
Oh yeah?

This mouse he got lonesome, he took him a wife
A windmill with mice in, it's hardly surprisin'
She sang every morning, "How lucky I am,
Living in a windmill in old Amsterdam!"

A Mouse lived in a windmill, so snug and so nice
There's nobody there now but a whole lot of mice.

“Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow”

Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow (bow-wow)
Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow (bow-wow)
I've got a little cat
And I'm very fond of that
But I'd rather have a bow-wow-wow.

“Ten minutes ago”

Ten minutes ago I saw you
I looked up when you came through the door
My head started reeling
You gave me the feeling
The room had no ceiling or floor.

Ten minutes ago I met you
And we murmured our how-do-you do's
I wanted to ring out the bells
And fling out my arms
And to sing out the news!