



# The Grapevine

Issue 113

June 2015

## Editorial

Having enjoyed a lovely Spring resplendent with wonderful spring flowers and bulbs in our gardens and woods, we look forward to all the colourful gardens and meadows in June and July.

Hankerton has entered the Best Kept Village Competition again this year so let's get busy and ensure the village looks its best for the judging in June. The annual village clean-up in March saw a dedicated band clean out litter from ditches and kerbsides - what a shame so much seems to be thrown out of car and van windows, something every community suffers from.

So now that task is done let us all do our bit to help the village look tidy, cared for and colourful; after all we all moved to Hankerton to live in a village community and should look after it.

Thinking of community - look out for village activities in these pages and come along and join in!

**Eds**

### Nature Diary - June.

Spring has come and gone, and we're heading into the warmer weather of summer. Warm enough hopefully to sit outside in the evening and into the dusk, which is when you might just be lucky enough to get to see the Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). I say lucky because, despite this being one of our favourite mammals, its numbers are in serious decline. The hedgehog will have emerged from hibernation sometime in April, and as well as feeding enthusiastically to replace the bodyweight lost during hibernation, (as much as 25%), there is also the business of finding a mate and breeding. The male will circle the female and if she is not receptive she will rebuff him with explosive sneezes. This can go on for hours, and is loud enough that on occasions people have phoned the police to report noisy disturbances in the garden!

Following successful mating, the baby hedgehogs are born in June or July. They are born with spines - fortunately the skin of the baby swells with water before birth and the spines are shielded. This water is then resorbed after birth and the spines are exposed. Unlike those of the adult they are white in colour, and a bit softer.

The young suckle for around 4 weeks before spending the next two or three following mum around and feeding.



If you're very, very lucky, you may see the mother leading her young around in convoy on their nightly feeding rambles.

Hedgehogs do wander long distances at night to find food, and one of the proposed major reasons for their decline in abundance is the fragmentation of their environment, due to things such as solid fences that are flush with the ground, concrete walls or culverts, and building developments (those without gardens), that divide areas of natural vegetation, especially hedges and woods, from each other. The spines are present for defensive reasons, and will protect them from most predators, but the badger has very long claws, long enough to open up a hedgehog rolled in its protective ball and devour it. All that will remain is the prickly skin of the deceased hedgehog. Badgers also compete for much of the food that hedgehogs eat, so the rising badger population has a dual impact on hedgehogs.

Their diet includes beetles, worms and caterpillars; grasshoppers are said to be a favourite. They will also eat birds' eggs, young fledglings and even small mammals.

Hedgehogs cannot digest cows' milk, so this shouldn't be put out for them. If you want to attract them to your garden, a small amount of tinned dog food is the most suitable.

**Steve Davies**

The next Newsletter will be published in August 2015.

Please send copy by

16th July 2015 to

Craig McCallum,

19 Follyfield Hankerton,

SN16 9LA or email to

[Craigmccallum@Btinternet.com](mailto:Craigmccallum@Btinternet.com)

All opinions expressed will be solely those of the correspondent.

Don't forget to visit the Hankerton Village Website at [www.hankertonvillage.com](http://www.hankertonvillage.com)

for Parish, County Council, back issues of Grapevine and other useful local information

### Do you have things for sale or goods/services that are wanted?

Please feel free to use Grapevine to place your small ads. They are free for Hankerton residents or good causes and should be sent to Craig using his email address shown above.

### Do you need a babysitter?

Do you live in Hankerton and need a babysitter?

Flo, a responsible 15-year-old who lives in Church Lane, can babysit at weekend evenings and daytime and weekday evenings.

Please phone (01666) 575498.



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## **Babysitter Required!**

Elf sitters are recruiting sitters to join our team. We are looking for experienced individuals with their own transport for evening childcare. Applicants should be over 18 years of age, have a current CRB/DBS disclosure (or willing to have one processed), checkable references and weekend availability (we do also have week night bookings).

To apply please contact Emma Fursman-Ward.  
01666 860171 | [emma@elfsitters.co.uk](mailto:emma@elfsitters.co.uk) | [www.elfsitters.co.uk](http://www.elfsitters.co.uk)

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## **Do you need funding for your group?**

Our challenge is to make a positive change in Wiltshire and Swindon by helping local groups make life better for their communities. We want to help you to support those who need it most.

You can apply grants for project or core costs and overheads for:

### **Foundation Grants**

Apply for up to £5,000 for one year's funding, or up to £3,000 a year for two or three years. Funding will go to projects where the majority of people who will benefit experience disadvantage either economically, socially, geographically or physically.

### **The Office of Police & Crime Commissioner Grants**

Apply for up to £3,000 for one year's funding. Applications are welcomed from groups who seek to bring communities together to tackle local issues around anti-social behaviour, crime, drug and alcohol related crime, reducing re-offending, violence against women and girls or youth crime.

### **Comic Relief Small Grants**

Grants available up to around £1,000-2,000 to support work where there is clear evidence of a sustained beneficial impact on people's lives who are excluded or disadvantaged through low income, rural or social isolation, age, disabilities, race, sexuality or gender. Priority is to be given to small, locally based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs.

### **Public Health & Wellbeing Grants**

Apply for up to £4,000 for one year for groups who can demonstrate a clear link to improved mental or physical health outcomes that will result from their project, for example, reducing childhood obesity or helping adults to adopt healthier lifestyles, helping to combat loneliness, isolation and other factors which contribute to poor mental health, supporting older people to have more active and fulfilling lives, promoting the use of community green spaces, assets and infrastructure for exercise and wellbeing or reducing drug and alcohol abuse.

Visit our website at [www.wiltshirecf.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirecf.org.uk) for more information and click on the 'Apply' menu. The first step is to fill in an 'Expression of Interest' survey and the link for this can be found underneath the listing of our criteria. If you meet our criteria we will send you a link for an online application form.

Call us on 01380 729284 or email [info@wiltshirecf.org.uk](mailto:info@wiltshirecf.org.uk) to find out more about how we can help. This information is valid until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

## **COFFEE MORNINGS**

Coffee is available in the North Aisle of the church every Saturday morning between 10:30 am and 12 noon. There is a regular group of attendees but new visitors would be very welcome.

If you would like to volunteer to organise one Saturday it is very straightforward. Please contact Anne Brown or have a chat to whoever is "on duty" when you visit on a Saturday.

### **The North Aisle Committee**

## *Hankerton Art Group*

I am delighted to announce that the Hankerton Art Group (HAG) is now up and running after an inaugural meeting on 22nd April attended by Craig, Chris Jarvis, Steve Davies, Linda Davies, Anne Goodyer, Catherine Grierson and Carrol Geake with apologies from Sarah Jackson and Sue Beard. We will meet fortnightly, at each other's houses in the summer months and Charlton Village hall in autumn and winter. Hopefully we will also have "away days" when the weather is really nice for painting outdoors. If anybody else wishes join us, all levels of expertise are very welcome, please contact Craig by email.

*Craig*



## **Hankerton History Group held their AGM on May 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 In the North Aisle, Holy Cross Church, Hankerton.**

An informal group was started in March 2004 and formally adopted a committee a year later – which means we have been in existence as a group for 10 years. A small celebration was enjoyed by all who attended. Since then we have held exhibitions about a variety of topics from: our village, the Olympics, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and World War I.

A great deal of research into the village as a physical entity and delving into the lives of the people who lived here has been undertaken by many members with interesting results. A small metal detecting group has been set up discovering a gold and diamond ring on their first outing and many farming articles and milk bottle tops since!

The last year has seen trips, talks and exhibitions –

April 16<sup>th</sup> 2014 – our last AGM when Sue and Dave Wood gave a moving presentation about Jack Tugwell.

May 2014 – a visit to Down Hatherley, Gloucestershire, to complete the circle and link the Earle family up by visiting the birthplace of Mary Earle, commemorated on the plaque in the church.

June 2014 : a group of members went to the Commemorative service at Tidworth for the Soldiers in World War I.

September 2014 : Dr. Theo Stening – gave an informative and lively talk about the Cotswold Canals and the restorations completed and planned.

October 2014: Craig hoped to show some DVDs of battles in WWI but met with certain reluctance on behalf of the computer to co-operate. Nevertheless, with some extra help some of them were shown.

November 2014 : WWI exhibition to commemorate men from the village who served and died along with members of our own families involved with all the Services. The exhibition was drawn to a close on the Sunday with a short service of commemoration which was very well attended.

February 2015: There was a showing of the DVD made by The Flying Monk Community Productions of the Wiltshire regiments First Battalion's retreat from Mons to Le Cateau. A donation from the group has been sent to UNICEF and The British Legion via Daniel McAleavy, the director.

March 2015: Visit by Malmesbury U3A to look at our material and hear a short talk about the village. Thanks to all the members who turned up to help and talk about our village history. The profit from this meeting has been donated to the Hankerton History group.

We continue to link up with people all around the world with connections to Hankerton.

And finally, thank you to everyone who helps organise the meetings and those who come and help to keep the group alive and thriving.

**Susan Mockler**

## **HANKERTON STREET FAYRE**

**Save the date!**

**MONDAY AUGUST 31<sup>st</sup>. 2015**

Come along and enjoy an afternoon trying your hand at games, buying produce and enjoying the usual home-cooked teas.

Look out for stalls - old and new.

We welcome ideas and offers of help to raise money to maintain the North Aisle as our community resource in Holy Cross Church.

## CHARLTON VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

The committee has agreed a package of changes to the Village Hall website and an estimate obtained from the website administrator. The full committee has not yet met to discuss these, but we have agreed that the cost must be considered alongside our other financial commitments. As mentioned in the last issue, the committee are undertaking two maintenance projects: a programme of repairs to the playground equipment and installing hot water and hand driers in the toilets.

The committee would welcome new faces from Charlton, Hankerton or Garsdon who would like to help us maintain and develop the Village Hall in the coming years. We meet no more than once a month for 1-2 hours usually in the early evening. If you are interested please contact either Steve Roberts (822112) or Anne Hodgkins (825248).

## General Election - Hankerton Results

After the 10pm voting closure, out of 245 entitled to vote here, 143 voted in person at the church, 7 delivered their postal votes and a further 18 had already sent their postal votes. Turn out was 168 out of 245 = 69%. Very high.

**Philip Carter**

It is reasonable to clear up after one's dog has fouled a footpath or someone else's garden, and all responsible dog owners do so. But what about cats? Apparently it is acceptable for them to wander at will through other gardens, killing small rodents and birds, even those using nest boxes, defecating in freshly tilled or planted soil, and making a cursory attempt to bury their faeces. Such behaviour by a dog would rightly be criticised, but not if a cat were the culprit. Why not? Cat faeces are just as unpleasant (and dangerous, possibly resulting in toxocariasis) as those of a dog for us who 'find' them while gardening, and nest boxes are generally out of reach of most dogs.

The RSPB estimates that at least 275 million prey creatures, including 55 million birds, are killed annually by domestic cats. So, cat owners, how about taking some responsibility for your pets? Don't just stroke, feed and forget them. How about providing them with a litter tray and training them to use it, or having a section of finely raked soil in your own garden, and also fitting their collar with a bell to warn small creatures of their predatory approach?

**David Pynn**



Catherine and Ted Grierson are kindly opening their beautiful garden to raise money for Prospect Hospice Wroughton on the 4th and 5th of July 2-6 pm. Entry will be by donations to Prospect.

Teas and car parking are available.

## Follyfield Sewer Problems

The sewers in Follyfield have been blocked several times recently. Water treatment companies have experienced blockages involving a greater increase in the use of 'wet wipes' for every conceivable purpose. 'Wet wipes' include plastics in their fabric and do not break down in the sewer like normal paper tissues. It is possible that the Follyfield blockages may be caused by 'wet wipes' so please do not dispose of them down the lavatory.

**David Pynn**



## Hankerton Golf Club

As expected the Hankerton Golf Club tour of Cornwall was meticulous planned by the organiser Mike Geake. Nothing at all was left to chance, perfection is what Mike sought and delivered. His after competition speech was also eloquent and delivered with extraordinary aplomb and his passing of the baton to the other Mike for next year's trip was an example of elegant courtesy and goodwill. There is no doubt at all that Mike will organize the event with the utmost attention to detail which to date has been the norm.

Frances organized the sweepstakes for the Grand National and the University Boat Race, the winners very generously donated their prizes to the Bar bill, which was not a small sum. The occupants of 121 were charged £326,433 on extras but fortunately this was an error and credit was passed - phew!

We had several achievement awards for Mike Geake. His prize was an expensive and much coveted golf memorability plaque which is now affixed to the rear of his cloakroom door for all to see, or perhaps not. Frances, as the best lady golfer received an expensive bottle of Pino; Mike Goodwin a putting aid which he is putting to good use; Brian, whom Carol thought well endowed, a box of golf balls and Phillip an award for most balls lost in the ravine. Not forgetting David for his super drive on the Jack Nicklaus course for a drive of 200 yards with yards to spare.

It was good fun with lots of laughter with all the non golf playing girls having a variety of beauty treatments, not that any needed them of course. There is, at the moment much talk about the ending of the World War in 1945. Of interest, Richmond Golf Club in Surrey made the following rules.

*In competition during gun fire or if bombs are falling players may take cover without penalty for ceasing play.*

*Shrapnel and bomb splinters on the fairway or in bunkers within a club's length of a ball may be moved without penalty*

*Finally a player whose stroke is affected by a simultaneous explosion of a bomb may play another ball from the same place with a one shot penalty.*

My, are we not proud to be British!

**Peter Jeffris**

## Hankerton Bridge Re-Opens

DOZENS of residents in Hankerton turned out to celebrate the re-opening of the bridge into the village four weeks ahead of schedule. The bridge was closed on March 2 and the work was initially expected to take eight weeks to complete, with residents having to take a lengthy detour to approach the main road between Cirencester and Malmesbury. But Wiltshire Council's engineers managed to finish the job, which saw the bridge being reinforced, in a single month and it was officially re-opened on 2nd April. After a brief speech from parish council chairman Jill Kearsley, the curate of the parish Reverend Sarah Wyman blessed the newly strengthened bridge, praying for good fortune and protection to all who crossed it. A pair of the village's oldest residents, Lawrence and Nancy Nurden, then cut the ribbon across the bridge and everyone present was given food and drink by volunteers. Around 50 villagers lined the approach and celebrated with a glass of bubbly as a vintage car driven by Bunny Lees-Smith was given the honour of being the first vehicle to use the new crossing. Cllr Kearsley, 61, said that she was delighted with the finished bridge and gave special thanks to the engineers from the council for their work and for attending the village's celebration to mark the re-opening. She added: "Without the bridge, getting around was a bit difficult. But it needed repairing, they kept to schedule and they've done a fantastic job."

Assistant bridge engineer Emma Biggs, 36, said she had never seen a community give such a huge response to a bridge being re-opened.

"It's a bit overwhelming, really," she said, "This is a first for me. It's really nice to see the community spirit here."

Resident Bunny Lees-Smith, 83, who moved to the village in 1968 and attended the re-opening ceremony, said: "It was very nice to have such friendly people working on the bridge."

"This is a very community minded village and we have a very active wives group, history group and even a golf club."



# Hankerton Church News



## Hankerton Church Services June - August 2015

Please note the Church is open every Saturday, unless specified, for tea, coffee and chat; all are welcome.

### June

7 <sup>th</sup>	9:30am	Holy Communion
14 <sup>th</sup>	10am	Group Holy Communion Crudwell
21 <sup>st</sup>	11am	Informal Service
28 <sup>th</sup>	3-5pm	Strawberry tea

### July

5 <sup>th</sup>	9:30am	Holy Communion
12 <sup>th</sup>	10am	Group Holy Communion Hankerton
19 <sup>th</sup>	11am	Informal Service
29 <sup>th</sup>	7:30pm	Licensing Service for Rev Phil Daniels at Crudwell

### August

2 <sup>nd</sup>	9:30am	Holy Communion
16 <sup>th</sup>	11am	Informal Service
30 <sup>th</sup>	10am	Group Holy Communion Oaksey

## Celebration Tea Party

The North aisle Committee were delighted to welcome over 30 people to the celebration tea party on Sunday May 17th, raising funds to keep the community area running for use by the village and church.

The conversation flowed along with gallons of tea, which everyone thought tasted better from china cups, and went down well with the delicious sandwiches, scones and cakes. Thank you to all who provided the food and helped organise another successful village event and to all who came along to enjoy it.

*North aisle committee.*



## AMEN

Amen, Praise God, We will wait on You. - So be it, our Faith is  
as You taught it to

Us and thus Your promise, Your covenant is made - A pledge  
by You that is for ever, that will never fade

It is Your timing that is different from our days and hours -  
Our lifetime is just a moment that You gave us by Your Power.  
Jesus said, **"I will return"** which we look forward to - But as  
we don't know where or when, we leave that up to You.

You made us this promise and it You will not break - And we,  
in turn, will try to learn all we can for Your Son's sake

We must take our hours of waiting quietly and in faith - Until  
Your time is come and we can look upon His Face

For He will come - Your Will be done

We look towards this day - As lovingly we pray  
To thank You with elation - And joyful anticipation

A new Heaven, a new Earth - The whole rebirthed  
To reach this home of righteousness, we must try to live a  
blameless life - Aim to keep clear from sin and  
stay away from trouble and strife

We cannot imagine what it will be like later on - All that will  
be revealed to us when He comes

For we've been told, we will be like Him when we look upon  
His Face - This means of waiting  
is so that we can grow in grace

As we believe that Jesus is the answer that we need - Our stat-  
ure blossoms into flower if His teaching, we heed

We keep our eyes on Him who does not change - Has been, is,  
and forever will be, just the same

As our world continually falters - Jesus Christ, He does not al-  
ter

We wait on You, Lord, whilst You wait on us - Time passes  
while we seek Your trust

You are waiting on us to come to You free - From sin so we  
can spend with You Eternity.

You show Kindness and Mercy whilst we wait -  
To start our journey we won't hesitate

So we ask You, Lord, to hear us in our struggle as we call  
For we know it matters not whom we are at all

What matters most is that You ARE and that we believe You'll  
pull us through - So it's by Your Grace and Mercy that we say:  
*"Amen" to You.*

1.11.96.

(2 Peter: 3: 9)

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## Charlton Village Hall

The Quiz Night took place on 28 February and, after expenses, raised £300 for the Village Hall. Thanks are extended to Val Coombes for her challenging questions, Jenny Walker for running the Raffle (which boasted some 16 prizes) and Leanne Woodford and Terri Chivers for the refreshments, all of which contributed to a very enjoyable evening.

The committee are currently undertaking two maintenance projects on the hall and grounds. We have agreed a programme of repairs to the playground equipment with the company who installed the items and are currently waiting for them to provide a date for carrying out the work. We are also exploring options for providing hot water and hand driers in the toilets, which will be partly funded by the recent generous donation from St. James Place.

The committee is also planning to undertake a revamp of the Hall's website and on 10 March a group of us met with our website administrator to discuss a package of changes. These will be presented to the full committee for agreement at our next meeting.

Finally, in the last quarter, two members of the committee had stood down due to other commitments. The committee would welcome new faces from Charlton, Hankerton or Garsdon who would like to help us maintain and develop the Village Hall in the coming years. We meet no more than once a month for 1-2 hours in the early evening. If you are interested please contact either Steve Roberts (822112) or Anne Hodgkins (825248).

You can find us at: <http://www.charltonvillagehall.co.uk/>

**Anne Hodgkins**

### WIVES GROUP

The Charlton and Hankerton Wives Group is an informal group that meets once a month, in the evenings, to enjoy each other's company. Activities, talks, dining out and craft evenings are examples of past activities. We welcome new members. Contact Susan 577526 or Claudine 577627 for further information.

John and Edna Edwards want to say a big thank you to all who offered help and for the many enquiries made whilst John was in hospital both in Oxford and Swindon. Glad to say he is now the mend and a lot better. Nice to know that so many of you care!!!!  
Very many thanks.

The Village Singers Community Choir from Sutton Benger will be performing VIVA VIVALDI, a concert of choral classical music and light opera favourites including Vivaldi's Gloria with choir, soloists and chamber orchestra on the evening of Saturday 27th June 2015 in Malmesbury Abbey. The audience is invited to bring a picnic tea and drinks to enjoy in the Abbey before and during the two intervals of the Concert. Doors will open at 6pm with an opportunity to make a start on your pre concert refreshments. The Concert music will begin at 7.15pm. We want to welcome you to what will be a very special evening of music with an opportunity to picnic with friends and family. Chairs and tables will be provided.

Tickets for the Concert are £12.50 from Malmesbury Abbey Book Shop, Sutton Benger Post Office or [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk) For further information see [www.villagesingers.co.uk](http://www.villagesingers.co.uk)

### STOP PRESS – Silver Services Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Miranda has asked me to let you know about an important meeting which will affect future services for older people and their carers.....

**If you or someone you care for is aged over 60, the area board would love to see you for a cup of tea and a chat about your views, experiences and expectations of activities and services for older people in the Malmesbury Community Area.**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2pm  
in Wesleyan Room,  
Malmesbury Town Hall**

For more information please contact:  
Miranda Gilmour – email: [miranda.gilmour@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:miranda.gilmour@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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**Transport can be arranged for this meeting.  
Have your say - make your views known now!**

### STRAWBERRY TEA

The Strawberry Tea will be held on Sunday 28th June at 3.00pm in the Churchyard or in the Church if wet.

For tickets phone Anne Brown (577160) or Philip Carter (575465) and will be available in the Church on Saturday mornings.



## **HOLY CROSS CHURCH HANKERTON CHURCHWARDENS REPORT 2014**

Holy Cross Church is the most treasured place in this village. It continues to draw people together in mutual fellowship, worshippers, non worshippers and visitors alike.

We continue to hold two regular services each month, Holy Communion at 9.30 on the 1st Sunday and Informal Worship at 11am on the 3rd Sunday. We have our regular faithful worshippers for both services but it is always wonderful to welcome visitors from other parishes. Our Easter, Christmas and Carol services were all well attended and we are now having a Group Service on the 2nd and 5th Sundays within Braydon Brook.

The last year has of course been dominated by the Vacancy. Barry retired in October 2013 and since then we have been without a full-time Minister. However we have been ably supported by Sarah, Richenda and many visiting, often retired, clergy. We were also very fortunate to have Rev Lee Barnes as our Interim Minister for just over 6 months. He was warmly received by all who were fortunate enough to meet him and his sermons brought a breath of fresh air to his services. We wish him well in his new appointment as Parish Priest in Bristol.

Sarah has borne the brunt of the extra work during the Vacancy, especially since Lee moved on. She has been dedicated and conscientious throughout this difficult time and we give her our grateful thanks.

Everyone will now know that a new incumbent has recently been appointed. After two separate advertisements which brought a disappointing response on each occasion, we were about to advertise for the third time, when the Bishop said that someone within the North Wilts Deanery was interested in the position. Rev Phil Daniels, who is currently Assistant Curate in Gauzebrook, was subsequently interviewed and unanimously appointed. We will welcome him and his wife Rhoda when he takes up his position at the end of July.

We have held many successful social events during the year - a lovely Supper Party in the Spring, Strawberry Tea in the Churchyard, Harvest Supper in the North Aisle and of course our Lent Lunch and Advent Sale. All these events help our general finances and are essential to help pay our Quota and every day running expenses.

The fabric of the Church is in excellent condition with no repairs carried out in the last year. However, the Church architect will be carrying out a Quinquennial Inspection later this year which will bring to light any concerns. The organ has undergone some major repairs.

The Churchyard is looking lovely at the moment- the snowdrops and primroses have been wonderful this year. Steve Davies has continued to co-ordinate the "Living Churchyard" project in the area to the North of the Church and we thank him and all his volunteers for their hard work.

The North Aisle has been as well used as ever this year. We would like to thank all members of the North Aisle Committee for their continuing fund raising efforts. The North Aisle Committee and PCC are currently working together towards the provision of a Sound System/Hearing Loop facility throughout the Church. This will help enormously when we have large services, especially weddings and funerals and, of course, meetings in the North Aisle.

Finally, we would like to thank all of you who have helped us this year - all our PCC members, especially Anne, our Secretary and also Philip Selwood and John Edwards who have retired from the PCC this year. Thank you to all those on the flower and cleaning rotas who work so hard to keep the Church looking lovely, especially during the bat season! We must not forget our organists. Sadly, Rick Hewitt who played regularly on the 1st Sunday of the month can no longer continue because of family commitments. However, there is a silver lining because Heather Goodwin has kindly offered to play at this service from May. Thank you so much Heather. Thanks also to Penny Hall who plays for us at Easter and Christmas and Christopher who plays on the 3rd Sunday. It makes such a difference to the service to have an organist.

2015 promises to be a "new beginning" for all of us involved in Hankerton Holy Cross. With the appointment of Rev Phil Daniels we can look forward to a new inspirational chapter in the history of our Church and the Braydon Brook Benefice.

**Valerie Durnford and Philip Carter   Churchwardens  
April 2015**

## **From Bishop Mike**

### **Protecting our children: the dark arts of negative influence**

My heart skipped a beat when I heard on the radio earlier today that 10% of 12-13 year old children fear that they may have an addiction to pornography and a similar proportion have actually taken part in a sexually explicit video clip. This is the kind of statistic that should send a jolt to the adult conscience of the nation.

What worries me is that any discussion of pornography in the media seems to unquestionably accept that pornography for adults is perfectly acceptable. The problem, given its wide spread accessibility via the Internet, seems uncontrollable. The idea that pornography is fine for adults but we must try and keep it away from our children is doomed to failure, both morally and practically.

Pornography is wrong. Graphic images of adults in all kinds of sexually compromised situations involving allegedly group sex and violent sex is wrong. People performing these sexual acts are presumably mostly not in any kind of relationship and have to 'perform' in ways that are camera friendly. This is a great way to train our minds to objectify objects of our sexual desire in a way that can lead to both casual and abusive encounters.

This stuff can get into adult minds, never mind those 12-13 year old children mentioned in the research. Whilst political parties seek to seduce us with campaigns promising prosperity, the western world teeters on the brink of moral bankruptcy. Is this really what we want for our children?

I feel real sympathy for today's generation of parents. Being brought up in the 1960's the only threat to parental influence over the outcomes in their children was the pressure of the peer group. Parents fought hard to stop their children hanging out with the wrong crowd (though in my case, my parents reluctantly had to come to the realisation that, in fact, I was a leading member of the wrong crowd!). It also means that much of what goes on, goes on beyond the supervision and often the comprehension of parents.

Today our children are the targets of ruthless mass marketing and, of course social media, all of which have a massive influence on them. The consequence is that the influence of parents is now receding. Seduced into buying smart phones for children as young as six, (who are well practiced in the art of using them) a whole new and often unhealthy and influencing world is opened up to our children, which truthfully they are too young to cope with.

Supervising what our children are looking at also becomes more of a problem. Most people know how to delete their browsing history and children find their way around filters on their phones and computers designed to protect them.

Of course, the problem with all this is that it's very easy to diagnose. It's not rocket science to see a very negative prognosis. What is really difficult is to come up with a cure. Seduction is seductive. Watching this stuff at any age is bad for you; watching it during the vulnerable years of adolescence is very mind distorting.

Is there any way that any of this can be turned back? The worrying answer to such a question is 'not easily'. Education will play a part; the protection of the law will play a part; help for parents will be important but most important would be a robust recognition and conviction that pornography for all ages is essentially corrupting. It is naive to think that we can suggest it's fine for adults and then imagine we can keep it away from our children. It's not going to happen...

The problem we have is that the developed world seems to believe in ethical autonomy and the right of the individual to make up their own minds as to the way they behave. This is risky thinking. Not much use telling people to make up their own mind when that mind has been poisoned already by mass marketing and pornography!

But still there is huge resistance should anyone step into the minefield of seeking to reign in the rights of the individual. Yet without some discussion of these things we shall make little or no progress in safeguarding our children from these very harmful influences.

Our children need protecting, not just from the evils of sexual assault from predatory adults, from also the pollution of these virtual assaults on their minds.

Paul wrote "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind". I think we need a bit less conformed and a bit more transformed in our worrying culture.

**Mike**