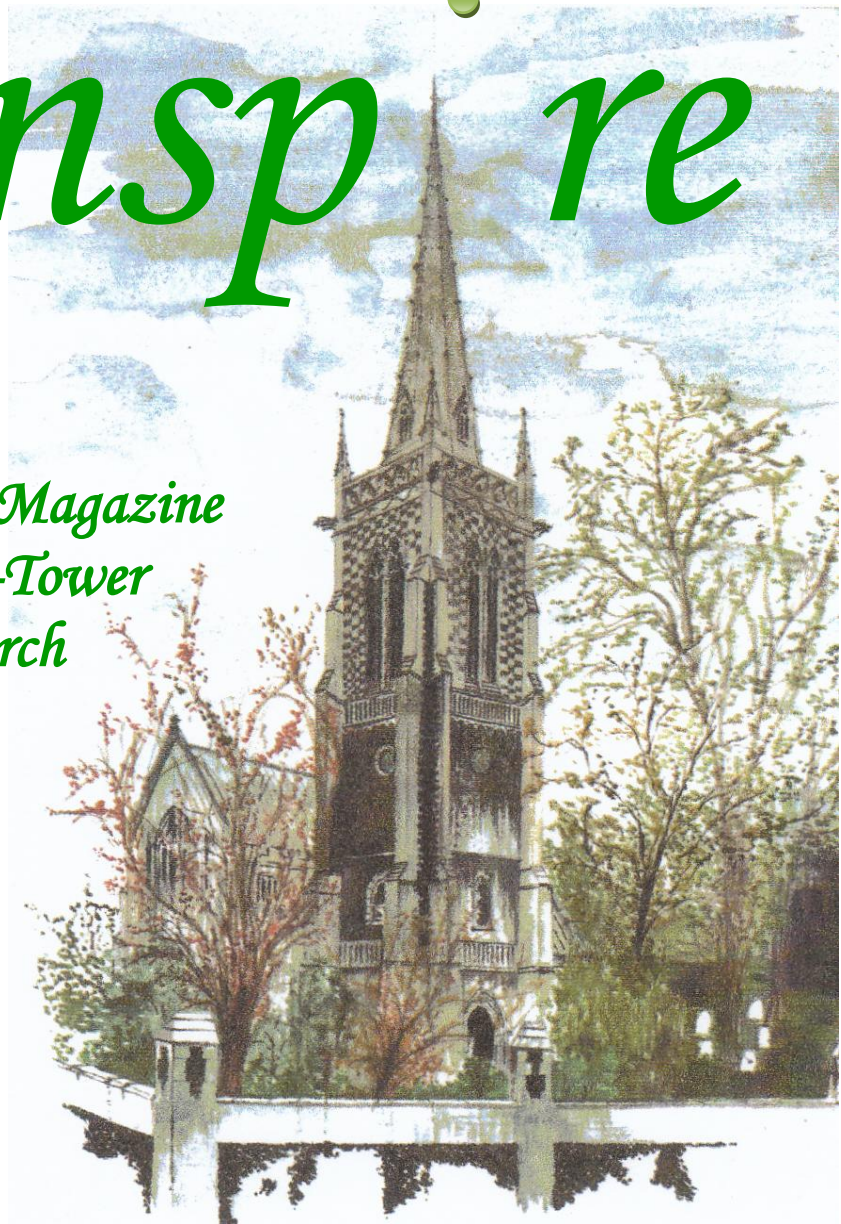


Easter 2013



Inspire

*The quarterly Magazine
of St Mary-le-Tower
The Civic Church
of Ipswich*



www.stmaryletower.org.uk

MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR

New Hope

We celebrate Holy Week and Easter this year with not one but two new global spiritual leaders. Archbishop Justin and Pope Francis 1 are to be enthroned within days of each other, and each is bringing new gifts and new hope to Churches that face many challenges and many opportunities in today's world.

Pope Francis is the first Latin-American, the first Jesuit and the first person from the global South to hold the highest office in the Roman Catholic Church. His evident humility and commitment to the world's poor are already a shining Christian example. It remains to be seen whether he will have the capacity to reform the Vatican and restore the Church's reputation for high ethical standards amongst the clergy, but it has been a refreshing start.

Archbishop Justin comes to office with an unusually broad experience of the modern world of commerce, but also with a deep knowledge of the practice of mediation and reconciliation. Again, it remains to be seen whether he can chart a way through Anglican divisions, but he shows an incisiveness that bodes well.

The Church today faces many challenges, but the fundamental challenge to both the Church and the World comes from the Cross of Christ.

In the first place this is a challenge to human religion. Religion is often and rightly criticised when it becomes a source of division and conflict and way for people to exercise power over each other and their communities. These failings have their roots in human nature (and its will to power) and a consequent vision of god who is basically about power and domination.

The Cross of Christ challenges all this by saying, "You are wrong about God! God has not created a universe where he wishes to take power, however much people would sometimes like him to do so." Rather, God reveals himself as a servant, giving himself away for the love of humanity. The Cross challenges us to gaze at the real God of all time and space, and not the god of mere human desire.

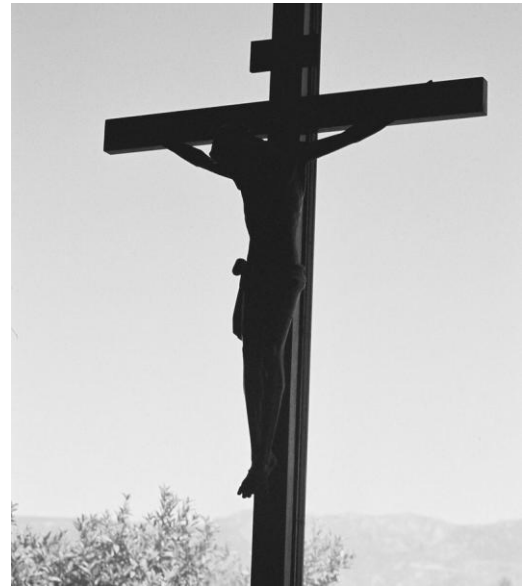
And secondly the Cross challenges the ways of the world, whose ways are not in fact so very different from the kind of religion that is so often criticised. Again the challenge is to service rather than power, and it is as humankind learns the ways of the true God, that the Kingdom grows.

All this is about the challenge to humanity of divine love, to learn to allow ourselves to be grasped by the sheer breadth and depth of the love of God, to grasp it for ourselves, and to learn to live it with all our heart and mind and strength.

Canon Charles

KEEPING HOLY WEEK

Our celebrations of Holy Week are designed to lead us more deeply into the great revelation of divine love in Jesus. As we face the challenges before us as a church and in our personal lives, we can do no better than to immerse ourselves in this amazing story, that we may know more deeply in ourselves the new hope of Easter.



If you haven't before kept Holy Week fully, or if it is many years since you last did so, I strongly urge you to do so this year. It's best to attend something every day if you can, for each day has its theme and takes the story forward. But at the very least you should try to keep the big four days: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day.

In particular, the Maundy Thursday Liturgy is a joyful celebration of the fellowship of the Church. Its focus is the new command to the disciples to love one another as Jesus has loved us. This is a vital and distinctive part of Holy Week, and links very closely with Good Friday. It is an evening of contrasts, firstly celebrating our loving fellowship together in Christ, with the liturgy of foot washing symbolising our service one to another; and then going with Jesus into the garden of Gethsemene to watch and wait and pray.

So do make a point of keeping Maundy Thursday as well. Everyone is invited to have a foot washed by the clergy if they would like to take part in this ceremony. (Remember to come suitably clothed for this if you mean to participate.) Do then also stay for at least part of the Watch of Prayer if you can. Jesus asked his disciples to watch and prayer with him for an hour. Could you manage 15 minutes?

Keeping Holy Week has three main elements. Firstly it is about following Jesus through the story. Secondly it is about seeing the amazing love of God unfolded. And thirdly, it is about discovering more deeply the new life of the Kingdom. As we witness God himself paying the price for human sin, we know more surely the transformation he is working in our own lives.

Canon Charles

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you
for all the benefits you have won for us,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for us.
Most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may we know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

DIARY OF EVENTS: APRIL TO JULY 2013

APRIL

- Fri 5th Choir sings Choral Evensong in Westminster Abbey
Sun 7th Choir holiday. No Choral Matins or Choral Evensong.
Thurs 11th 6.30pm Prayer Supper at the Vicarage
Mon 14th 12 noon Prayers for Wholeness and Healing
Sat 27th 3pm Concert by Young People of St Mary-le-Tower

MAY

- Mon 6th 12 noon Prayers for Wholeness and Healing
Tues 7th Archdeacon's Visitation Service in Felixstowe
Thurs 9th 7.45pm Ascension Day Eucharist
12th-18th Christian Aid Week
Sat 18th 6.30pm Deanery Link Quiz
Sun 19th 6.30pm Deanery Link Service at St Francis
Mon 20th 12 noon Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

JUNE

- Mon 3rd 12 noon Prayers for Wholeness and Healing
Thurs 13th 6.30pm Prayer Supper at the Vicarage
Mon 17th 12 noon Prayers for Wholeness and Healing
Tues 18th 7.30pm Deanery Synod
Thurs 20th 7.30pm PCC Meeting
Sat 22nd 2.30pm Blooming Great Tea Party

JULY

- Sun 7th 10.30am iPart Festival Orchestral Mass
Sun 21st 6.30pm Farewell Concert and Choral Foundation Launch

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

11.45pm Sunday 14th April 2012 in Church
Followed by a Bring and Share lunch in Church House

Elections, Accounts, Reports, Questions and Discussion
An occasion to give thanks for the past and look to the future

All church members and regulars welcome

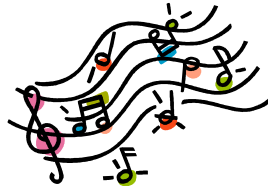
but generally to speak and have a vote you need to be on the Church Electoral Roll.
The Minutes Book, Church Reports, Financial Accounts and the Electoral Roll
will be available in church for inspection from Sunday 31st March

ELECTION OF PCC MEMBERS

6 members to serve three years; plus other vacancies

Nomination forms are available from the PCC Secretary, Annie Shead (233121)

Music Notes



Since the start of the year we have had six new members join the choir. They are: Jake Eells, who has joined the tenor section, Matthew Heyburn who has joined the basses as a choral scholar, and four probationary trebles - Adam Lockyer, Noah Gillings, Jasper Platt and Euan Chalmers. A warm welcome to them all and we hope that they enjoy and benefit from their time with us.

During the first half of the term, the main task beyond the Sunday services was preparing for the joint service at Ipswich School on February 3 and for the tour to France. The former of these occasions was based on a special liturgy for Candlemas and included several new anthems as far as we were concerned. It was, as always, a very pleasant occasion, which the School hosted very well. In addition to the School and St Mary-le-Tower choirs, there were singers from a number of different RSCM-affiliated parishes within the diocese, some as distant as Mildenhall. The singing was very fine, ably directed by Andrew Leach, Director of Music at the School.

The tour was the eighth foreign tour by the choir of boys and men since 2001 (there have also since then been five tours within England). Though the weather was as cold as anyone could remember, it was a very successful tour. We began in Ipswich's twin town of Arras, where the concert had been arranged by Betty Contart, an officer in the town council's department responsible for twinning arrangements. It was given in the splendid church of St Nicolas, where the acoustics at once enlivened the sound of the choir and where, too, the organ was of very good quality. Giles Brightwell, our organist, made full use of the instrument in his skilful accompaniments and his two organ solos.

We then continued our journey to Paris, where we had commitments in four different churches. We were somewhat taken aback to be contacted en route by the authorities at Notre Dame Cathedral who wanted to re-schedule our concert there for a day later. Fortunately we were able to accommodate this and we probably benefited from the extra day of rehearsal, for which the Anglican church of St Michael kindly gave us space. So on Friday February 22, we sang in the mighty expanse of Notre Dame at 10.30am and then hot-footed it to the famous church of St Sulpice (where Widor, composer of the famous Toccata, was once the organist) for a concert at 1pm. In spite of the somewhat impersonal receptions we encountered at both places, it was undoubtedly a memorable experience for the choir to sing in these magnificent buildings.

For more about the tour, please see the excellent article on page 14, written by Edward Faull, Head Chorister.

Bach St Mathew Passion

Already now preparations are underway for important events to come. The choristers will be taking part in the performance of the St Matthew Passion on Saturday March 23. They have a crucial role to play in Bach's scoring of the first chorus, where the ripieno choir sings out loud and clear the chorale 'O Lamm Gottes' against the complex polyphony of the two choirs and orchestras.

The Chamber Choir is in rehearsal, too, for this great occasion, which again brings to St Mary-le-Tower soloists of international standing. The orchestral ensemble, playing period instruments, will include leading professional players from London and Cambridge. This very great work is less often performed than Bach's St John Passion or many other pieces simply because it is so complex and demanding in its forces. Do not miss this rare occasion at St Mary-le-Tower.

Looking a little further ahead, the choir of boys and men is also preparing for its Evensong in Westminster Abbey on Friday April 5. It may be that some members of the congregation would like to join the choir on this visit to London. Details will be announced shortly in the Sunday church paper.

Lunchtime Concerts

Finally, a word about this year's Lunchtime Concerts, which begin on Tuesday May 7 with a recital by the Organist of St Paul's Cathedral, Simon Johnson. The main themes running through the series are readily suggested by the centennial or bi-centennial anniversaries of three very great composers, Britten (born in 1913), Verdi and Wagner (both born in 1813). They were all primarily associated with the opera house but there will be a surprising amount of music by them in our programmes, particularly Suffolk-born Britten who wrote so well in so many different genres and for so many different performers.

It is this programme of concerts, together with the educational work done with the church choir, which make St Mary-le-Tower the leading promoter of classical music in Ipswich. The leaflet with full details of all the concerts will be available shortly. Do please take one and pass other copies on to friends and neighbours who may also be interested.

MBN

TOUR DE FRANCE 2013

by Edward Faull, Head Chorister

We left Ipswich at 9 o'clock on Monday, and after a lengthy drive to Dover, interrupted by a stop at a motorway service station with an excess of litter bins, we got on the ferry. On the way from Calais to Arras John the coach driver told us all about the war graves on Vimy Ridge, where the Canadians lost a whole generation,

and about the square heads, a reference to the shape of the wooden headstones on the German graves because the French refused to allow stone tombs.

In the late afternoon we arrived at the B&B Hotel (Arras) and it was difficult to settle after the journey. We had a long walk from the hotel to the restaurant where we ate that night. Although it was a long way back, and the buses stopped at 9 o'clock, we all got a good night's sleep.

At the concert on the second night there was a wonderful reception and they said it was unusual for them to hear an all-male choir that includes boys. As the audience were leaving we received some very generous donations (our stock of CDs went). After the concert we had a supper of great French food all arranged by the city council.

The next day we went to Versailles, the biggest palace I've ever seen (the French kings really knew how to live!). All of the boys were very impressed by the amount of gold leaf in an amazingly ornate room named the hall of mirrors.

After a two and a half hour journey, where everyone became travel sick, we came to our second hotel on the Peripherique, the ring road on the edge of Paris, and for each room there was one key amongst three of us which posed some problems involving who had the key at different times. A certain boy managed to lock the key in his room three times!

On the Thursday of the tour we practised in one of the two English churches in Paris which was on the ground floor of an office block, near the city centre. After the rehearsal some of us went to the science museum and some to the Musée d'Orsay where there was a brilliant display of impressionist paintings.

On Friday we went to Notre Dame where it was the 850th anniversary of the church and there were new bells all down the centre aisle and hundreds of tourists were milling around the place. We had a short practice followed by the concert which was well received by those who took the time to stop and listen.

Also on the Friday we were in Saint Sulpice, the second biggest church in Paris, where weren't allowed to practise before the concert and we had to leave immediately afterwards because there was a mass and there was a slightly hostile air when compared with Arras.

After the singing in Notre Dame and Saint Sulpice we went to the Louvre where we saw the famous Mona Lisa. The museum was a big place, with so many pictures and statues it was difficult to take it all in and a bit boring for some of the boys. Beware of pickpockets!

In Saint Merri on the second to last day of the tour we did a rehearsal, and because the church was undergoing renovations a pigeon had managed to get into

the rafters. Then we did a short concert and a mass which was well received; the congregation really seemed to like our music.

The church was in the very centre of Paris and it was only round the corner from the George Pompidou building where all the water and air pipes and service corridors were outside the building so that there were wide uncluttered spaces inside and it was a real sight. Outside the Pompidou centre there were lots of stalls and about 6 of us bought berets and we had a lot of fun trying to get them to look right.

On the last day of the tour we sang a mass in a beautiful church cum military hospital named Saint Louis des Invalides. Lots of military veterans, some disabled, listened to the mass. We sang well and got a good reception and after the mass we all walked around to see the tomb of Napoleon and we were asked to give a short performance at a moment's notice of Rossini's O salutaris hostia.

We left Paris via the Champs Élysées and we passed the famous Arc de Triomphe and then it was a drive to the ferry and another drive home. When we arrived in Ipswich it was around eleven and we were very tired. All in all it was a great tour. It was Dr Nicholas's last and he said he was very proud of the boys and they sang marvellously. High praise indeed!

BELFRY BANTER

The period after the Christmas and New Year holidays is traditionally a quiet one for the ringers as everyone readjusts back to the real world following the festive period. After a two week gap over the Christmas period, our regular Monday evening practices restarted in January but because of the extreme cold and snowy weather that followed, the numbers attending practices were lower than normal. Happily, numbers have started picking up again now the snow seems to have departed, with our final practice of February being particularly well attended. With warmer (?) weather hopefully now on the horizon, we should see a steady attendance over the coming months.



As we enter March, Holy Week beckons at the end of the month and in lieu of the regular practice during that week, the ringers will be breaking out the dusters and vacuum cleaners to undertake the annual belfry spring clean – cobwebs beware!