

Newsletter for AUGUST 2013

July

Michael Flanders and Donald Swann's *Song of the Weather*, from an era when it always seemed to be raining, included the memorable lines 'In July the sun is hot. Is it shining? No, it's not.' Well, that has not been the case this year: our weather gets more and more surprising - and the long-term impact of climate change more and more alarming. The sun has certainly shone on recent parish events.

Our summer trip to **Bradwell-on-Sea**, to join in the ecumenical pilgrimage to the little chapel founded by St Cedd in 654AD, was a big success. The event was very well-organised - both from our end and theirs - and the mix of worship, walking, eating (including our private strawberry tea) and gathering cockle shells on the seashore was enjoyed by all - as the Rector was able to tell the incumbent of Bradwell, next to whom he sat at breakfast at the conference described below.



The following day we made the most of the **Matchgirls 125th anniversary**, telling their story at our all-age service (linked to the prophet Amos' call for social justice). Events in the Gardens that afternoon, organised by UNITE the Union, did not draw huge crowds - probably because of Wimbledon finals and the heat - but there were some good conversations and contacts being made. The Rector was enraptured by the playing of the world-class UNITE brass band, from his home town of Sheffield; he was also invited to take a turn on a drum (Sentamu-style) with a high-octane team of Brazilian drummers/tumblers, and there were some charming Ecuadorian dancers.

The sun continued to shine for our **284th Anniversary** and barbecue, which was expertly organised, as ever, by Michael Page and Richard Powell, with help from many others. The catering was of the highest quality (not only the cooked foods, but the range of salads, an amazing tofu creation, and fruit to follow), and so was the conversation. Various 'old friends' joined us - including Austin Tiffany, from Texas (it has been a delight to see him again this summer), and Edith's daughter Jenefer, who enlightened us on various historical details. Our thanks to all who helped make this such an enjoyable and significant event.



The same weekend the German Lutheran community in East London celebrated the 250th anniversary of **St George's Kirche** in Great Alie Street. There was an exhibition of its life, and organ music (it has a fine and distinctive instrument of 1886 by Walcker), and it was good to join friends for this event, both from the German community and from the Historic Chapels Trust (which is based in the church). Sigrid Werner writes:

St George's German Lutheran Church opened in 1763 and remained in use as a church until 1996. It has rare, largely intact 18th century interior. It also has a fascinating history of the congregation helping refugees, particularly in the 1930's when the congregation supported the Pastor helping people fleeing persecution in Nazi Germany. East London was once the home to a large German community, and was able to support four German churches into the 20th century. They made a significant contribution to the life of the district, in particular for their contribution to local industry - where they ran the sugar refining trade for many years. The exhibition is designed to tell the story of this church and how it has been rescued and has taken on a new role and yet it still can tell the story of the little known history of the German community in East London.

There are pages on our parish website about the [local German churches](#) and about [sugar refining](#). If you have never seen the inside of this wonderful church, do make an opportunity to visit. We

offer them our prayers and good wishes. Anglicans and Lutherans have much in common, and work together through the Meissen Declaration (with German churches) and Porvoo Agreement (with Baltic and Nordic Churches).

August

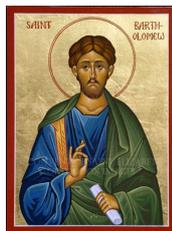
is a quiet month church-wise - our prayer is that all our members will find rest and re-creation here or elsewhere - but Sunday worship continues, and there is a clutch of other commemorations during the month:



¶ the **Transfiguration of our Lord**, on 6 August, which ironically coincides with the disfiguration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on that same day

¶ the **Blessed Virgin Mary**, on 15 August, which the Catholic world celebrates

big-style as the Feast of the Assumption. We Anglicans are more reticent, regarding this particular dogma as just that - an assumption, without explicit biblical warrant, though we are glad to join them in honouring Mary on this day, and at other times of the year, 'without prejudice' (as the lawyers say).



¶ **St Bartholomew**, on 24 August - a special day at the Rectory, since our younger son bears this name, honouring his Polish ancestry, rather than Bart Simpson, as everyone else assumes! The following day he will be ringing the bells for his sister Judith's wedding, in our former parish of Worsley, followed by a reception in the woods....

St Paul's School

Although most of the Year 6 children are of Muslim origin, it felt right to celebrate the eucharist in church with them, as part of their learning about this sacrament and as a rite of farewell for them as they move to high school next term. They joined in singing, praying, lighting candles and other aspects of the service with a reverence that, in the Rector's experience, cannot necessarily be guaranteed in schools where pupils are mainly of Christian heritage. We gave each of them a bible - a gift from our church - at the end of term service, and wish them well in their transition to secondary schools. We also offer good wishes to John Boutflower, who has worked with enthusiasm and distinction as a teacher St Paul's since he qualified, and is now seconded to St John on Bethnal Green; Terry Bennett is the executive headteacher of both these schools, and John's move marks a real vote of confidence. We'll miss his infectious enthusiasm around school, and his guitar playing in church.

Worship Transforming Communities

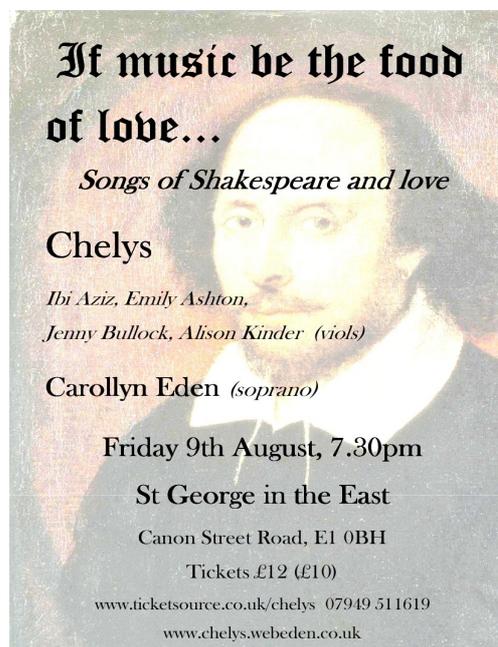
Bishop Adrian asked Kevin Scully and the Rector to represent the Stepney Area at the national Liturgical Committee conference at Aston University (16-18 July), and our joint report is at the end of this newsletter. Sadly, there were no delegates from other parts of London diocese, and the BME representation was minimal, which felt odd to us; but it was a good and useful conference, on how we are formed and transformed by worship, and how we need to allow the world around us to shape our worshipping agenda. The word 'liturgy' in the Greek world originally referred to public acts of service - providing people, and equipment, for community projects - and we need to recover this dimension, and be alert to the needs of 'outsiders' - how does our worship feel to them? In church we invite people to join in activities that they rarely if ever do anywhere else, such as speaking and singing together.

Tuesday Eucharist

For various reasons, the Tuesday lunchtime eucharist has become more fortnightly than weekly, and we are wondering whether to make this a deliberate pattern, to ensure that we have a good quorum on each occasion. Your thoughts are invited!

Calendar for August

- Sun 4 **Trinity 10** - Said Eucharist 10.15am
[Highway closed for Prudential Ride London]
- Tue 6 **Transfiguration of our Lord** [*no Eucharist 12.30pm*]
- Fri 9 Concert by Chelys, 7.30pm [*right*]
- Sat 10 Orthodox London Mission 9.30am
- Sun 11 **Trinity 11** - Parish Eucharist 10.15am
- Tue 13 Eucharist 12.30pm
- Thu 15 **The Blessed Virgin Mary**
Orthodox London Mission 7.30pm
- Sun 18 **Trinity 12** - Parish Eucharist 10.15am
- Tue 20 Eucharist 12.30pm
- Sat 24 **Bartholomew the Apostle**
- Sun 25 **Trinity 13** - Parish Eucharist 10.15am
- Tue 27 *no Eucharist 12.30pm*
- September**
- Sun 1 **Trinity 14** - Parish Eucharist 10.15am
- Tue 3 Eucharist 12.30pm
- Wed 4 *St Paul's school opens*
- Sat 7 Orthodox London Mission 9.30am
- Sun 8 **Trinity 15** - Parish Eucharist 10.15am - HOT POTATO SUNDAY



**If music be the food
of love...**

Songs of Shakespeare and love

Chelys

*Ibi Aziz, Emily Ashton,
Jenny Bullock, Alison Kinder (viols)*

Carollyn Eden (*soprano*)

Friday 9th August, 7.30pm

St George in the East

Canon Street Road, E1 0BH

Tickets £12 (£10)

www.ticketsource.co.uk/chelys 07949 511619

www.chelys.webeden.co.uk

Sunday Readings

4 August	Hosea 11.1-11; Colossians 3.1-11; Luke 12.13-21
11 August	Isaiah 1.1, 10-20; Hebrews 11.1-3, 8-16; Luke 12.32-40
18 August	Isaiah 5.1-7; Hebrews 11.29-12.2; Luke 12.49-56
25 August	Jeremiah 1.4-10; Hebrews 12.18-end; Luke 13.10-17
1 September	Jeremiah 2.4-13; Hebrews 13.1-8, 15-16; Luke 14.1, 7-14

Worship Transforming Communities:

Liturgical Commission Conference, Aston 16-18 July 2013

It is eight years since the last such event, which in the past was held more regularly. Since 2000, most of the Commission's work on *Common Worship* texts has been completed (though some continues, including alternative eucharistic prayers and a rethink of baptism - Michael, for his sins, was on the revision committee for the current rite, as well as on the publishing group which established the award-winning 'house style' for all CW publications, which our weekly service sheet follows). The focus of its work has therefore shifted to formation, with training being delivered in various ways, including the Praxis network. The conference saw the highest turnout ever: every diocese was asked to send several representatives, which was done by bishops either nominating members of their diocesan liturgical committees (or equivalents), or in some other way; a number of attenders paid for themselves. In the event, and sadly, London had only two representatives (both of us from the Stepney Area) plus a couple of 'independents' and LC members.

We met in a multicultural city - and the two major acts of worship were in its multicultural

cathedral - but with only two BME participants (one a LC member), which was regrettable and felt odd to us. The deal with Aston University ensured an affordable event: the student rooms, though perfectly adequate (if sweltering in the heat), were hardly the 4* promised; catering was good, though initially they seemed to have little grasp of the standard conference requirement of serving large numbers within tight time constraints, which caused some 'slippage'; we were also in conflict with graduation ceremonies throughout the day. But overall it was well-organised, and the major contributions were of high quality (full texts will appear on the website - see below). We were glad to be asked to attend.

The conference addressed the deliberate ambiguities of the title *Worship Transforming Communities*, particularly with the opening keynote address by Professor Ed Foley, an American RC Franciscan, whose thesis was that the mantra we were all taught 'liturgy = the work of the people' risks Pelagianism: the primary 'work' is that of God in Christ, to which we respond. He reminded us that the secular use of 'liturgy' was for an act of public service (for example, a duty to provide a ship for the navy, or people to fulfil community obligations); in like manner, the church's liturgy should be shaped primarily by the needs of those outside, for which the paradigm is Jesus' counter-cultural practice of table-fellowship, rather than the church's own ritual requirements. He was the only speaker to highlight the celebrant's performative functions, and pressed for explicit methodological tools to analyse and improve leadership skills in worship. In short, he reinforced Kevin's hobby horses, but with more insight and longer words!



Nick Holtam (Bishop of Salisbury) followed this up with descriptions of various public liturgies and events at/outside St Martin-in-the-Fields and Salisbury Cathedral (though with no reference to his earlier ministry on the Isle of Dogs - a pity). SMITF had been an 'ethical' church - birthplace of many local, national and international causes which didn't believe in spending money on itself - but by embracing the 'aesthetical' its recent refurbishment has



enhanced what it is able to offer in all these contexts. He gave telling examples and made many thoughtful points, though some pointed out that most churches cannot command similar levels of resource.

We learned a good deal about Will Todd (composer of the diamond jubilee anthem at St Paul's) and his activities, with lots of sound clips - interrupted by a fire alarm! - and he showed us possibilities (again, where resources permit), including crossover styles, but was not particularly reflective about the contribution of music to liturgy.

By contrast, the (now RC) poet Michael Symmons Roberts gave a profound presentation which will repay close study. He distinguished the specific nature of liturgical language, which has to bear repeated, and corporate, performance, from poetic presentation, and challenged received notions on accessibility of language, both for young people and adults. His comment that 'accessibility' is the language of public toilets drew laughs, but also outraged one delegate. From his experience of working in inner-city Manchester (including schools) he warned against patronising and low expectations. He has a real core of insight on the tension between usable, approachable and heightened liturgical language. The tension between 'accessible' and 'culturally specific' language was discussed in questions.



We disagreed on the final keynote address by Jessica Martin, a Cambridge don turned village parish priest. Her description of what the strangeness of liturgy (not least, inviting people to say, sing and

do things together, as participants rather than observers) feels like for outsiders, and how we might respond creatively to this, resonated exactly with Michael's experience, who welcomed her practical wisdom, particularly for congregations with limited resources (and shares her enthusiasm for singing rounds). She drew cheers for her sharp comments on the baptism rite. Kevin, however, felt what she said was dispiriting, confused and confusing. But we agree that this was a rich presentation (with a fine economy of language) which will repay study.

There were also small groups, plenary question and answer sessions, and twelve **workshops** on offer.

Kevin attended

(a) *Inculturation (sic) in worship: not just an issue for the global Church* with Jonny Baker, whose view was that culture being what it is in England, we need to be creative in what we do. He drew heavily on his experience with Grace (in Ealing). He spoke of creative attempts to change the way we do things to communicate. Kevin felt that this was less to do with culture and more about boredom thresholds of middle class people wanting to be different, and found his most resonant comment was advice given to his son, an aspiring DJ: 'know your archive'.

(b) *Using 'ancient-future' liturgy*, with Sue Wallace, was also about enhancing worship through creative ideas: light, music sampling, technology, but drawing on ancient materials. It was enlivening, showing ways of highlighting theatrically engagement with liturgy. Very resource heavy, but interesting.

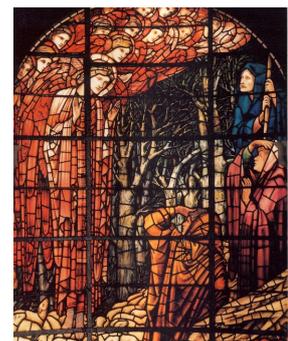
Michael attended

(a) *Bringing hymnody to life in our worship* with Anna Machem (Succentor at Southwark), which stressed the importance of giving time and attention to the selection of hymns and songs, including achieving balance, mixing genres in a single service, introducing new material, and how to deal with the reality that no one hymnal can meet all of a congregation's needs. Good ideas were shared, though no great revelations.

(b) *Worship Workshop: helping schools build better worship* with Paul Thomas (LC member, and St James Sussex Gardens). This introduced the [website](#) which the LC, National Society and others have created (with funding from Bridget Cass and the Jerusalem Trust), primarily as a resource for primary and secondary church schools but capable of use in other schools and in some church contexts. His attendance was an act of uxorial piety, at the behest of the General Secretary of the NS: he already knows and uses the site, including its core choice of 100 hymns and songs and a 'knapsack' of familiar prayers - and rates it highly. So far it has been well-received (particularly in Wales and Ireland, where less guidance on school worship is available), and will have a section on school eucharists by the autumn. It claims to be sensitive to interfaith contexts, though there are some ongoing issues here. It would be good to promote this site around our church school networks.

Worship was varied but solid: all out of authorised services with a range of manifestations.

- 'Informal' evensong (Cathedral), led by a worship group. The presence of a large screen across the chancel - blocking the Burne Jones windows which are its central glory [detail right] - had a diverting webcam loop of people passing through the grounds, onto which texts were superimposed (not always following best practice in terms of layout: liturgists can be so picky!) Kevin challenged Tim Lomax about the use of the word 'informal'; he conceded this was perhaps not the most useful term. Michael agrees that this increasingly-used term is inappropriate: all worship - including Quaker meetings - has 'form'. Kevin found it strangely



controlling: the screen and the nature of the service prevented any engagement beyond what the leaders wanted.

- Offices (Great Hall of the university) were mainly text based, from *Common Worship*, which worked well; they do the job in line with the tradition. We managed to say the psalms quietly and reflectively. Andrew Maries' oboe accompaniments were, as ever, a subtle delight.
- Eucharist (Cathedral): hearty, with a good mixture of choral and newer forms of cantor/response songs, enlivened by the wonderfully vulgar Trompeta Real of the Nicholson organ lining out melodies. Seating was arranged collegiate style, with the Liturgy of the Word facing west, in 'Syrian' mode: splendid, but useful to check that congregants have space to turn to face gospel and altar!

So - how might our attendance help our area/diocese to move forward?

1. Encourage others (via mailings, and a link from our diocesan site) to visit the recently relaunched [website](#) and read the main presentations, and contact us if they would like to know more about the conference.
2. Although (unlike most dioceses) we do not have an active DLC, urge our bishops and trainers to reconsider the creation of a group or network to help resource parishes and alert them to ongoing national developments. (Though he'll have his hands full, the move of Christopher Woods, currently (half-time) National Worship Development Officer and Secretary of the Liturgical Commission - and animator of this conference - to St Anne Hoxton, could help this process, for instance through the 'refreshing' of [Praxis](#) in London and the SE. There are other keen and able liturgists around who'd be willing to help.)
3. Ask area deans to put liturgical (trans)formation as an item on chapter or synod agendas; each will no doubt handle it in different ways, but we are available to advise and make suggestions.

Kevin Scully

Michael Ainsworth