

NEWSLETTER FOR JULY 2014

June and July

On 9 June Alex and Allan, our wardens, made a pilgrimage to the northern tip of the Stepney area (St Olave Woodberry Down), with Wendy and the Rector to support them, for their **admission to office** by Archdeacon Rachel. A barn of a church, and we were at the back so couldn't hear much of the service, but the refreshments were lavish and we were taken by the huge banners, and posters around the walls challenging church members to give by tithing (a tenth of disposable income) – something that the mainly black congregation there takes seriously, and which puts our giving to shame.

On 21 June a couple of dozen of us, including children, set off by coach on our parish outing to **Chalkwell**, spending the first part of our time there on the beach in fine, though occasionally cloudy, weather. A few of us made an 'optional' visit to Prittlewell Priory museum. For various



reasons (traffic and local mis-directions) it took some time to get there, but was well worth it: the remains of the 12th century Cistercian priory, sold on as a private house at the Reformation and with various Victorian additions, has recently been turned into a very

accessible museum – with lots of interactive things for children – charting its life as a priory, as a family home and as a civic base (it houses Southend's war memorial) set in a well-used park. The café, with a living roof, won an award as the greenest museum building in England. Later we walked along to **Leigh-on-Sea** [above] for fish and chips (or for some a mix of cockles, winkles and other seafood). Half of East London was there, and several of the group met neighbours and friends during the course of the day! It's also the former stamping-ground of Darren Rubin, Head of School at St Paul's (his parents ran a tea shop there), and the home of Elspeth's mother Sandra. A most enjoyable outing – thanks to Alex for organising it.



For **Founder's Day** (27 June) at St Paul's School, instead of mining further the rich archive of material on Dan Greatorex – including a recent 'find', the daybook of the Wilford Cottage Hospital, in what is now Church House, and has many intriguing entries on the medical conditions treated there – we focused on the First World War poet and artist [Isaac Rosenberg](#), born in 1890 of Lithuanian parents, a pupil at the school from 1897-1900, and killed in action in 1918, because among the many ongoing 1914-18 events there is a focus on the war poets, and *via* the [Concordia Foundation](#) Year 6 took part in activities at the Whitechapel and National Portrait Galleries, and a concert at the Gresham Centre. Other years did work on self-portraits, songs from the trenches, the Christmas Day truce and other aspects of his life.

Rosenberg was unusual among the war poets in being (a) Jewish – as were many local servicemen; (b) not an 'Oxbridge' man – he studied at the Slade; and (c) a private rather than an officer. It has been good to use some of his poems, including *The Jew*, and *Break of Day in the Trenches* – with its *queer sardonic rat ... of cosmopolitan tendencies* – at assemblies, not least

because they unite Christians, Jews and Muslims in common cause and mutual respect at a time of massive inter-faith violence in our world – something well-understood by our children. July in school sees a range of leavers' events: the **deanery leavers' service** on 9 July, at St Luke's on the Isle of Dogs (it didn't happen last year), their '**graduation**' event on 15th, **leavers' assembly** on 17th, and the **end of term service** on 18th at 9.30am. Plus, because as last year they are doing work on holy communion, the Rector has some sessions with them to plan a **celebration of the Eucharist** in church on 11 July at 9.30am (all welcome to these last two events).

On 12 July the **Orthodox London Mission** has a major celebration of the 20th anniversary of their union with the Coptic Patriarchate, with a number of national and international visitors: *Raising of Incense at 9.30am, Liturgy of St James at 10am, and lunch at 12 noon*, followed by further events. The worship is in English, and will include hymns accompanied by the organ, and bellringing – neither of which are particularly Orthodox but reflect their intentions of making their style of worship accessible! Do come for all or part of the morning, not least to show solidarity with persecuted Christians in the middle East.



20 July sees our **285th Anniversary of Consecration**: a joyful Eucharist at 10.15am, and a barbecue in the Rectory garden (when we'll have to take a little care to avoid the deprivations wrought by the urban foxes on the lawn – as if coping with falcons is not enough!) All are welcome to this, and food and drink are provided, but if you wish you can bring special veggie or other options – the papers are full of recipes for barbecued vegetables – and extra drinks. This event is a good time to bring back some 'old' friends of the parish, so please invite any with whom you are in touch.

Around and beyond the parish

Our condolences to Sylvie and her family on the death of **Henry Modupe ('Pa') James**, who had a distinguished legal career in government in Sierra Leone; his funeral eucharist was in Freetown on 30 May, and Sylvie and some of the children were able to be present.

We are now in the month of **Ramadan**, and hold our Muslim neighbours in our prayers during what is both a joyful and stressful time for them. Alex Nelson and colleagues are again running their late evening project (funded by Near Neighbours) which this year extends into Stepney too. Volunteers for this are always welcome!

Huguenot Threads is an imaginative programme of over 35 events (walks, talks, visiting former weavers' houses) from 9-20 August in the Spitalfields area – some of them at Christ Church – which anyone interested in the past and present life of the French Protestants who fled persecution and settled locally would enjoy.

On 3 August at 6pm at **St Paul's Cathedral** there is a special service, with Bishop Richard, bringing back into temporary use an [altar frontal](#) made by 137 wounded ex-servicemen (as therapy) after World War I, which will form a focus for various events there over the next four years; to view it on other occasions you can use our parish passes which give free entry to St Paul's. Tickets for the service are not needed, but they would like an idea of numbers, so let the Rector know if you'd like to attend.

The Rector writes....

On 29 June I announced in church that Jan and I will be leaving the parish this autumn and returning to the north-west. I will be taking slightly early retirement (about 9 months before my 65th birthday) partly on health grounds – since my energy levels have dropped because of my heart condition, and my mobility is reduced by a wonky knee following a fall 18 months ago, though otherwise I am OK! - but also because Jan, who leaves her national job as Chief Education Officer of the Church of England and General Secretary of the National Society at the end of August, wants to spend a few years with parochial responsibility in her own right. She has been appointed House for Duty Team Vicar in the Turton Moorlands Team north of Bolton (Manchester diocese), based at St Maxentius Bradshaw – in other words, two days a week plus Sunday, without stipend but with a house provided. (Just as there is only one St George-in-the-East church in the land, so there is only one church dedicated to St Maxentius – more in him in due course.) This also enables us to be nearer our children and grandchildren (apart from the ones who have just relocated to Barcelona!) Leaving will be a big wrench, for us and for the parish, but there will certainly be plenty of support when the time comes from the area dean, archdeacon and area bishop in maintaining and developing the life of St George-in-the-East (not forgetting St Paul, and our school) in positive and creative ways.