

The Parish of St George-in-the-East with St Paul

Newsletter for NOVEMBER 2013

Rev - little man against the world

The third and final series of *Rev*, starring Tom Hollander as Adam Smallbone, devout but innocent country parson appointed to a chaotic inner city London parish (the one aspect of the plot that doesn't quite ring true, but which dramatic licence requires), is in preparation and will be broadcast later in the year. East End clergy and congregations have, in the main, applauded the series so far as an affectionate portrayal of ministry hereabouts that gets most of the ecclesiastical details right, even if they are exaggerated for effect. (Even my predecessor Gillean Craig, the *Church Times*' doughty tv reviewer, and founder of 'Cross and Candles' which watches out for solecisms, would agree.)

I recently heard Simon McBurney, who plays the sinister Archdeacon Robert (riding around in taxis in black leather gloves, and always turning up at the most awkward moments) give a fascinating and thoughtful talk about the series. He was delighted to find himself filming at St Leonard Shoreditch (and paid tribute to its incumbent, Paul Turp, and those who have provided local hospitality for the film crew, which includes Fiona our administrator), since that parish - like our own - was a birthplace of theatre when it was banned in the the West End and City, and in particular was the burial place of the famous clown Richard Tarlton, in the time of Queen Elizabeth I.



Adam Smallbone, said Simon, stands in the line of comic clowns - little men confronting a chaotic world: a feeling familiar to all of us! He instanced Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Monsieur Hulot, demonstrating their physical gait to show how each coped in their different ways. He then suggested that the true nature of comedy (as opposed to the genre of tragedy) is to confront individuals' preconceptions about how things are and what is going to happen, and to draw them together into a shared experience of something quite different - very much like liturgy, he said, and in particular the drama of the eucharist. Son of an American archaeologist who worked in Cambridge, Simon is also a playwright (one of his works is based on the life of academics) and producer, and thirty years ago founded *Complicite*, an influential theatre education project. Though not himself a regular worshipper, he has clearly enjoyed doing *Rev*, and it was good to hear him making these connections between the worlds of church and theatre. He hinted that his character in the final series may turn out to be more sympathetic than hitherto - though perhaps not in the league of Rachel, our own real-life archdeacon!

Harvest Festival



Thanks to the children of St Paul's School who provided more harvest gifts than we can remember from past years, and which were augmented by the gifts of our own congregation, for the work of **Whitchapel Mission** which cares for homeless and vulnerable people in our area. They have maintained this work, in various forms, for over a century, beginning as a Primitive Methodist congregation in Sutton Street and then, under the great Thomas Jackson, on Whitechapel Road (next to the tube station - taking over the premises of the 'Working Lads Institute' in 1896) and later in their current premises (rebuilt in the early 1970s). Their website includes many of their [annual reports](#) down the years, and there is also a summary on [our website](#).

At our Harvest Festival service it was good to use materials from **US** (formerly the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel), and to send them our cash collection on the day, since this had traditionally been the mission agency which we have supported - and with whom Alex was a volunteer. We thought about Pandy and her small mountain town of Besao, and the pioneering work enabled by US via the Episcopal Church of the Philippines with their sweet potato crop (previously little-valued, until they discovered it could be used to make crisps and ice cream!), pigs, and muscovado sugar. Although the sugar crop is economically valuable, the community decided that they would not simply sell it, but use it to enable

villagers, who previously had nothing to offer, to make gifts to friends and neighbours on special occasions - a fine Christian principle, and humbling for us to contemplate.

All Saints & All Souls, and Confirmation



The first weekend of November is the time when we remember before God our own loved ones, now departed this life, and also the famous heroes and heroines of faith - for all true believers are saints, as the New Testament makes clear. All Souls' Day (Saturday 2 November) will see morning bellringing, the wedding of **Michael Page** and **Linda Moule** at 12.30pm (they have been true saints in our midst: theologically astute, and great and hospitable cooks, who will be much missed - so do come and join in this celebration!) and an evening eucharist, at 7.30pm, where we will light candles and name our loved ones. The following day we will celebrate All Saints at our all age eucharist, and present and pray for two confirmation candidates - **Marta Powell** and **Craig Jackson**, to be confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral on Saturday 16 November at 5pm, when we hope that many of our congregation will be present to support them.

Remembrance Sunday

The second weekend of November, within the month when we focus, as the leaves fall and the nights draw in, on God's eternal and unseen purposes, sees our traditional commemoration of 'the fallen' - those who gave their lives in two world wars in hope of achieving peace. Councillors and others will join us to lay wreaths, and keep the two minutes' silence, at our war memorial.

Next year, and the following four years, will see many special events marking key moments in the First World War. Some of us think it would be more proper to wait until 2018 to commemorate all of this, but our anniversary-hungry media will not allow it, so we must join in. Andrew Hargreaves, a Tower Hamlets officer with English Heritage funding, is currently surveying all the war memorials in the borough, including ours, which is of particular interest since it names a number of Jewish servicemen, and liberal rabbis as well as clergy of other Christian denominations were involved in the fundraising and opening, so it is both ecumenical and inter-faith. For various reasons detailed on [our website](#) it was not unveiled until 1924, and since this was just before a general election the candidates of all parties were also present.



The Players of St Peter

will be presenting parts of the Chester cycle of mystery plays in church from Monday 2 to Friday 6 December, at 6.30pm and 8.30pm each night. Further details about tickets are available [here](#).