

Taste...

July 2013

It was the Tonbridge Taster Day last Sunday (23rd). What were you expecting to taste? I know I always hope for chocolate and Matt always thinks of cake. What I saw was cheese and various pickles and chutney, but then neither Matt nor I had time on the day to wander far or taste much of the fare on offer – but I hope you did! It was a great day with good, dry, warm weather from early morning to just after 4pm when there was a short shower.

Taste and see...

Did you know that the person organising Tonbridge Taster Day knew that we were all praying for the right weather for the day – and when it was dry right through to 4.05pm, and then only a light shower, she remembered and sent her thanks. The council and the whole organising team knew and apparently kept reminding each other during the day. They had planned for a turnout of 7,000 as being a good number, but reckon that 20,000 came during the day, most of them staying for several hours. Taste and see; try God and see an answer to prayer – not only the dry weather, not so hot as to be exhausting, but perfect weather to be out in for the day with family, friends and neighbours all enjoying the same event. It was a day that was prayed over and blessed by God in a way that was seen by all comers.

Taste and see that the Lord is good Psalm 34:8

Tonbridge Area Churches Together put on an open air service in the park and several congregations joined together to be there – again, far more than were expected by the town organisers who had no idea so many people in Tonbridge worshipped God on a Sunday morning. There were also many more who happened to be around or who were attracted by the music or taken by their friends. TACT also had four stands on River Walk that gave a glimpse of what the churches have to offer the general public. A place for young people to gather and try table

football, crafts for the children, a prayer labyrinth and healing prayer for anyone who would stop to be prayed for. We hope and pray that the results of the contacts made and the prayers prayed will be seen in the lives of individuals and in the life of the town for many days, weeks, months and years to come. We have no idea whether those who asked for healing prayer were instantly healed or healed as they went on their way or have been healed since – but we do know that God hears all prayer and it doesn't return empty. God never wastes the time we give him, especially the times we step out in faith having to trust him as we couldn't do it on our own.

But God is good. The first person to stop and talk to me was a man we'd prayed for about two years ago. He stopped to say he wouldn't be here if it hadn't been for those prayers. He went on towards the open air service and is planning to come to St Stephen's. We met others we'd prayed for over the years, we met people who had just been diagnosed with cancer, the recently bereaved, those struggling with long term problems, those who were frightened of the future and many others.

About 15 people joined the team for the first time and their comments included; 'What a privilege!', 'It's amazing!', 'It's not so scary once you start...', 'Can I come again?' And to round off the day there was a service with the Bishop of Rochester and a youth service in the evening. Taste and see that the Lord is good! So many people were given the opportunity to taste and see that the Lord is good, very little of it was using words, mostly action and music with a few words of prayer.

Let's now pray that as they remember the taste they will know that the Lord is good and come to find out more about him and his kingdom. Who else could we help to 'Taste and see that the Lord is good'?

Sheila Perkins

Confirmation Testimonies

Eve Taylor-Bricha

I chose to follow Christ about two years ago. I was living in Morocco, a Muslim country, and although I was baptised as a baby I was not always actively practising as a Christian. On a holiday back to England I found the New Testament Bible that I was given as a christening present back in 1980. I just knew that it was the right time for me so I wrapped the Bible in paper and took it back to Morocco with me. From then I have had an amazing journey back to faith. I moved back to England in January 2012 and I have attended church each Sunday. I have learnt to pray and speak directly in my faith and pray with my daughter. My life had changed so much in this time. I feel I am learning each day in my faith and that being confirmed is the perfect next step.

More inside..

July 2013 – forthcoming events						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.30pm Contemplative prayer 4.45pm Kic cell	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 5pm YE 7pm OE	10am B&B 11am HC	9.45am Toddlers 10am LTF 10am MITM 3.30pm Blend	9am Re:Fresh 4.30 Kic cell sleepout	9am HGL 10am HotS 6.30pm Youth band	7.45am HC 10.30am SOW 6.30pm TES
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
4.45pm Kic cell	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 5pm YE 7pm OE	10am B&B 11am HC	9.45am Toddlers 10am MITM 3.30pm Blend	9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS 7pm Mix summer bash	7.45am HC 10.30 Baptism 3pm Mad hatters tea party 6.30pm HC
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
4.45pm KIC Cell	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 7pm Elements Summer bash	10am B&B 11am HC	9.45am Toddlers 10am MITM 3.30pm Blend	9am Re:Fresh 8pm Friday @ 8	10am HotS 10am DT 6,30pm Youth band	7.45am HC 10.30am HC 6.30pm TES
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
4.45pm KIC Cell 8pm PCC	9am Re:Fresh 3pm Blend 5pm YE 7pm OE	11am HC	10am MITM	9am Re:Fresh	10am HotS	7.45am HC 10.30am AAS 6.30pm TES
29	30	31				
	9am Re:Fresh	11am HC	Key to abbreviations : HC = Holy Communion DT=Dads & Toddlers SOW = Service of the word TES = The Evening Service BB = Bumps & Babes AAS = All Age Service		LTF= Ladies Thursday F'ship MITM = Men in the morning YE = Younger Elements OE = Older Elements HGL = Home Group Leaders CC = Community Centre HotS = Healing on the Street	

Quinquennials, marriages and vicar's expenses

Now that I have grabbed your attention, here is your starter for 10: What links these things? The answer is, of course, the 14th June! None the wiser? Well that was the date when Mark Brown (vicar of St Peter and St Paul), our rural dean, did his inspection of St Stephen's. Once every four years he has to inspect all the churches in the deanery. This includes looking at the registers (services, baptisms, marriages etc) and checking that the recommendations from the last quinquennial are being carried out. The quinquennial is the surveyor's inspection and report of our

buildings which happens every five years. He also looks at the logbook and terrier and inventory and checks that we are looking after the valuables and have suitable security and insurances. As well as making sure we (the church-wardens) are looking after the property, the rural dean is also concerned that we are looking after the vicar and that he is taking his holidays and claiming his expenses! You will be pleased to know that he was very impressed and described the condition of the church as 'amazing!' His final comment was 'Very efficient and thorough and encouraging scope and depth of mission and ministry'.
Glynis Hubble

The story continues Part 2 of a history of St Stephens

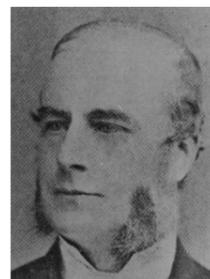
For the sake of accuracy this article must begin with a correction to part 1 which appeared in the April edition of Encompass. Charles Dallas Marston, the first vicar was firstly married to Emily Randall in 1852. She, alas, died in 1860 having given birth to six children, beginning with Herbert in December 1853. Katherine was Marston's second wife, married in 1863. They had three children together. When he died in 1876 Marston's effects are recorded as being under £3000, a not insubstantial sum for the time.

The second vicar of St Stephens was William Owen. He was ordained in 1854 and he became a curate at Southborough where he remained for two years before joining St Stephens in 1856. He was vicar here for six years, a relatively short period of time compared to later vicars. In 1862 he moved to become vicar at Damerham, a rural village near Salisbury, and the vicar at Damerham, Richard Allnutt, came to St Stephens to replace him: a vicar swap! According to Crockford's, (the directory of clergy) he was still vicar at Damerham in 1910, 48 years later. So it could be suggested that William Owen preferred a quieter life.

We do not, as yet, have an exact date for the opening of St Stephen's school but know it celebrated its 150 years about ten years ago. Presumably, teaching began during the time of Owen. A list has been found of the rules for the government of week-day schools in connection with St Stephen's church. Here is a slightly edited version:

- The business of each day in school shall be opened and closed with prayer.
- The school hours are 9 to 12 in the morning and 2 to 4.30pm in the afternoon.
- Children will be received above six years old. Each child is to pay twopence weekly. Payments must be made in advance on Monday morning, or the child cannot be received.
- The children are required to be perfectly clean in person and clothes, to have their hair well combed and to be provided with pocket-handkerchiefs.
- Children are not allowed to be absent with leave, unless there is sickness or another unavoidable circumstance.
- All children attending the week-day school are required to attend regularly at the Sunday school.
- Attendance at the Races or any other public amusement, is absolutely prohibited, under pain of expulsion.
- When a child applies for admission a parent or guardian must attend.
- The children are expected to attend doth *regularly* and *punctually*, which is absolutely necessary, in order to their obtaining that benefit from the school, which it is intended to confer.
- If any parents or guardians shall think they have cause for complaint they are requested to apply to the Rev. W. Owen; but *on no account to disturb the Master or Mistresses* with their complaints, either in the school or out of the school. They are also requested not to remove their children without notice.

Many thanks to Row Wills for his research on the clergy.
Joanne Ramsden



Rev Charles Marston



Rev William Owen

Confirmation testimonies

James Headington

I want to be confirmed because I want to follow Jesus and get to know Him better. I also want to bring God to those around me who do not know Him. After Confirmation I prayed for the gift of evangelism to show my friends about Jesus.

Will Parkes

I have come to the idea of confirmation because I feel called to youth work and feel that confirmation will further my connection to God and help me with attaining gifts of the spirit.

The Graduates

Sylvia quacks it as she completes degree



In January 2010 I began to study for a foundation degree in Early Years at Canterbury Christ Church University. I attended CCCU one day a week throughout the course at their Chatham campus, which boasts the longest lending library in the world. Each term a different module associated with the early years was studied and each ended with an assignment. These assignments consisted of both written and practical activities, such as 'Giving a presentation' (anyone that knows me will know how difficult that was for me) 'Making a display' for the promotion of early language skills and 'Creating a maths resource' to support the recognition and use of numbers. As part of this assignment I wrote a story about a lonely duck and this formed the basis of the maths resource and I am pleased to say that the resource is still being used by the children at STEPS today. Out of

all the assignments that I have completed over the past three years this was the one I enjoyed the most. I graduated in December 2011 and received my foundation degree in Early Years. I decided to continue my studies at CCCU and immediately embarked on a top-up year to complete a BA Honours degree in Childhood Studies which I completed in January 2013. Very soon I will be attending my graduation ceremony for this.

Studying for a degree, working full time at STEPS and fulfilling my role as a wife and mother was not easy. I had many sleepless nights before assignment due dates and moaned at many people about how tired I was feeling, and at these points when I was beyond despair there were always words of encouragement and support from my colleagues at STEPS, the staff of St Stephen's Church and my family. THANK YOU – I did it!

Sylvia Shoebridge BA Hons
Manager STEPS pre-school

Computer Amnesty

Since my Computer Amnesty project took off a few months ago, I have already received over 40 computers which will find new homes in Africa. And still they come ... most I pass on to *Computers4Africa* in Aylesford who wipe the disks, re-furbish, and then ship them out to their own agents in sub-Saharan Africa for education projects principally in schools, colleges or used in health education.

Some laptops however, with the donor's permission, I wipe and re-build in order that they can be taken out in hand luggage and given to church leaders to be used as they see best. Sylvie and I have friends in Kenya whose ministry would benefit from a laptop, and I have already been asked by teams travelling out to our two link dioceses in Tanzania for laptops.

If you have an old XP, Vista, Windows-7 computer you no longer need, or *no longer works*, do consider donating it to my amnesty scheme. It could change someone's life! When we give to God what is broken or rejected, He can bring new life and do amazing things with and through it. For a rural pastor to have access to a laptop and the internet is a great aid for their ministry and the furthering of their education.

If you want more information don't hesitate to ask. If you know an individual, business or school who has computers to dispose of do let them know of this scheme. Please contact me in church, on 01732 357985 or email sm.barbor@gmail.com. A big thank you too - The quiz evening back in March will allow 15 water filters to be commissioned this autumn, each capable of cleaning 295 gallons of water a day from all bacterial contagions – including faeces, typhoid and cholera which cause so much sickness in rural Africa.

Stephen Barbor

Computer4Africa - <http://www.computers4africa.org.uk>



Matt Rogers' graduation day Christ for all – all for Christ.

It's hard to think that it was four years ago that I started studying at Cliff College on the HE Dip Youth Mission and Ministry Course. At the time I was balancing two different jobs plus the course and then signed myself up for a further two years for the BA (hons) Mission and Ministry qualification whilst serving as Youth & Children's Pastor at St. Stephen's.

It has been quite a remarkable journey and I've learnt vast amounts through the process. The lectures have been incredibly inspiring and influential, the essays have challenged and stretched my thinking (and time management) and the people on the course have offered invaluable insight and experience from their own settings. I specialised in children's and youth mission and ministry throughout the BA, which has equipped me to work effectively in our challenging culture and help in the process of growing children and young people in faith and understanding. This venture is also testament to God's perfect planning. He has made every detail possible, including finding the time to study and write and paying the fees. It has been the perfect course for this time in my life.

I was able to celebrate with others on the course in June for our graduation day, along with many others of different ages and from around the world. It was a time of thankfulness to God and to family and friends for their support throughout the course. We gathered in the beautiful grounds of Cliff College, and received our degrees from the University of Manchester.

I don't know what God has in store next, but I do know that whatever it is, he will make it possible. Cliff College's motto 'Christ for all – all for Christ' sums up how I hope to carry my experience forward, being and helping others to be better followers of Jesus, authentic and effective evangelists and better disciples. Cliff College offers a great range of flexible courses for those at different levels of study or those who would simply love a refresher to equip them in mission and ministry in a whole range of settings. Check out their website for inspiration: <http://www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/>
Matt Rogers

