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Spring 2009

# Cross Keys

Theme: Transforming the World



*Above: Sleeping out at St Giles, Northampton. Full story, page 3.*

## Changing our vision

With so much information about so many problems in the world around us, how can we take it all in, let alone change things for the better? It's easy to accept that the quick-fire images and sound-bites of the media are the full story. But if we are truly to engage with issues so that they can be transformed, we need to go beyond the headlines and see the real people that lie behind them.

The articles in these pages give a glimpse of how we can do just that. For example, rough-sleepers are often reported as lazy drop-outs who have hit the bottle. Yet around one in three of the rough-sleepers in Peterborough and Northampton are ex-service personnel, some of whom have served in theatres of conflict in the Middle East. The sleep-outs and shelters for the homeless described in this issue go beyond the

stereotype to find and help real individuals.

Autism and Asperger's Syndrome is commonly associated with youngsters and anti-social behaviour, yet Mercedes Finning shows how her son and others' participation in the Special Olympics helps to dispel this myth.

So, look beneath the surface to find the real story. Ask about childhood poverty, learn about our Muslim neighbours, seek the truth behind euthanasia, or whatever it is that God, in his passion for the world, is calling you to do.

There is much that we can do to transform the world but sometimes the first transformation needs to be in our vision of the world.

*Robert Hill  
Diocesan Social Responsibility Adviser*

# News from the diocese

## St Peter's Day farewell for Bishop Ian

The St Peter's Day service at Peterborough Cathedral, on Monday 29 June, will be an opportunity for the diocese as a whole to say farewell to Bishop Ian, prior to his retirement in July. All are welcome at the service which begins at 5.30pm.

## Finding our new bishop

The process of finding our new bishop is underway and consultations with the Archbishops' and Prime Ministers' Appointments Secretaries are taking place in the diocese during March. The Crown Nominations Commission meets in June and July and, following their submission of names to the Prime Minister then the Queen, it is hoped that an announcement may be made towards the end of 2009.

## Archdeacon David to retire

The Archdeacon of Oakham, The Venerable David Painter, is to retire on 30 November after nearly ten years in the diocese. There will be a farewell service at Peterborough Cathedral on 31 October, at 11.30am.

## Schools celebrate Candlemas

The joint Candlemas service for Church schools in the diocese, held in Peterborough, just managed to take place before the snow set in at the beginning of February. A second service planned for Northampton had to be cancelled due to the bad weather.

However, over six hundred children from seventeen schools enjoyed the service at Peterborough Community Church (above), which was led by Philip



Williams and children from William Law, Eye and Newborough schools.

Mr Williams, headteacher at William Law School in Werrington, received a surprise presentation at the end of the service to mark his thirty years as head of the school. John Richardson, Director of Education at Peterborough City Council, made the presentation and congratulated Mr Williams on his achievement.



Left: Philip Williams with Archdeacon Christine, Bishop Frank and pupils from William Law School

## Wider church news

**On your knees:** Bishop Stephen Cottrell, formerly Canon Pastor at Peterborough Cathedral, has written a new book *Hit the ground kneeling* which takes common statements about management and turns them on their head in the light of Christian perspectives on leadership. It is published by Church House Publishing which has also produced *Reflections for Daily Prayer* which gives Bible comments for daily use and encourages church members to recapture the habit of daily prayer and reflection.

**Fresh vision needed:** The Archbishop of York has said that the current credit crisis is a unique opportunity to rediscover "a big vision for Britain" based on "freedom, social

fellowship and service". He said "any analysis of society which treats people either as just individuals with no collective responsibility or as mere objects of economic and social forces, is bound to fail."

**Don't raise the stakes:** The Church's Mission and Public Affairs Council has opposed government proposals to double the stakes and prizes for fruit machines. It says the proposals "will probably have adverse consequences in terms of problem gambling and detrimental effects on minors".

**Archbishop laments Gaza:** "The incomprehensible suffering of the innocent leaves one in a place of profound sorrow and silence," the

Archbishop of Canterbury has said concerning the conflict in Gaza. "When people ask where is God in all this, all I can say is that wherever people experience violence at the hands of others, God is there with them, being violated and blasphemed." He said it was time for everyone to recognise the right of Israel to exist and the need for the creation of a viable Palestinian state.

**Get the facts, not the views:** Media reports of Anglican affairs are never comprehensive. The Church of England web site provides a comprehensive and regularly updated source of accurate information. Look especially for reports on General Synod (which was taking place as we went to press), and for the brand new link to Bishops' many and varied contributions to national debates in the House of Lords, which are rarely covered in the media. Go to [www.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.cofe.anglican.org) and follow the links.

### The Church of England Diocese of Peterborough – Cross Keys – Spring 2009

A quarterly publication distributed free of charge to the 350 parish churches in The Diocese of Peterborough. Tel: 01733 887000 [www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

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# Lots to learn from Special Olympians

I have the privilege to be the mother of a 25 year old autistic son. Over the years I have realised that it is a privilege – that God gave me a special child because I was a special person. A person who would nurture, encourage and help to bring out his potential. In my own small way, in a Christian way, I can help.

It was last June, while I was attending the Special Olympics in Germany, that I fully realised this. My son Julian Guillen was competing for Great Britain in the cycle team (pictured). We are both committed Christians. Julian has an inborn faith and is helping to change people's attitudes towards others with disabilities.

Julian and his squad train for the Special Olympics with the help of a coaching team headed by Vivian Smith. All the members of the team have one goal - to prove that people with severe learning disabilities (or "alternative normalities") can teach the rest of us the meaning of love, forgiveness, perseverance, enthusiasm, hard work and the joy of delighting in God's creation.

The Special Olympics certainly bring out all these qualities. The athletes train hard and achieve high standards of performance to be accepted as a



competitor. People may think that those with learning disabilities have less understanding than the rest of the population. But when one of these Special Olympians wins a gold, silver or bronze medal and comes forward to receive it at the award ceremony, any such preconceived idea is dispelled. Their satisfaction in their team and their personal achievement is evident for all to see.

But to get to that stage these athletes have had to change their own mind sets and believe in themselves. That's no

mean feat when there is still so much prejudice around. Not only that, they have had to change the mind sets of those around them and prove that they are able to achieve what very few others can – to compete in an Olympic event.

I believe, as Christians, that we should do all we can to promote this change in attitude. It is a big privilege to see God's work in action with someone who others would disregard.

*Mercedes Finning  
Holy Trinity, Rothwell*

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## Snowy sleep-out makes the point

To promote Poverty and Homelessness Action Week and raise awareness of homelessness, churches in the diocese joined up with Northamptonshire YMCA in a sponsored sleep-out at three different venues.

On 30 January over 100 young people and adults spent a cold night



sleeping rough in the grounds of St Giles, Northampton and St Peter and St Paul's and four other churches in Brackley.

Their cold and uncomfortable night was nothing compared to the discomfort over 30 people felt when they spent 6th February sleeping rough in the grounds of Moulton Church (left), surrounded by deep snow. All who took part received hot drinks and some respite from the cold, as each opened the doors of church centres – a luxury not available to those who are homeless and have to sleep out every night.

Peter Storey, CEO of Northamptonshire YMCA and member of Moulton Parish Church said: "Although a great deal of fun was had by all, it also created a lot of awareness about the needs of

homeless people and I know that many who took part reflected on this as they made their way home to warm, comfortable beds".

This sponsored event has raised much needed funds to support the homeless outreach services of Northamptonshire YMCA and the Hope Centre Northampton. The money raised will enable the two organisations to provide the extra care needed to build the confidence and skills of homeless people. They can support them in the transition to independent living and encourage them to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Further information on how you can support homeless people is available from Peter Storey, CEO Northants YMCA, 01604 642104 or peter.storey@northampton.ymca.org.uk.

# Not powerless in the face of climate change

When Bishop Winston Halapua from Polynesia addressed the Lambeth Conference last July he spoke about a recent meeting of churches from Pacific islands. The subject wasn't religion, but the bare facts of rising sea levels. Within a few years, several islands will become uninhabitable.

Elsewhere, desertification, water shortages, prolonged droughts, failing farmland and floods are all making people leave their traditional lands. Globally, there are already more people displaced by environmental disasters and climate change than there are refugees from all the world's wars. Although the poorest parts of the world are currently worst affected, rising sea levels, severe weather events, migrating human populations and changes in the synchrony of nature will affect us all.

Are we powerless in the face of such challenges? No! In stark contrast to many global challenges, such as wars or economic crises, the very nature of climate

change means what we each do really does make a difference – for good or ill. It matters how much energy we use in our churches and in our homes, how we travel and what we buy. We can visibly transform our environment by making our churchyards and gardens havens for wildlife and places of beauty (see *Newton Bromswold churchyard*, page 7).



*Polynesian islands under threat. Photo: Nicole Kotschale*

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Lent is a time of personal transformation. A slow, reflective time in which we withdraw from some of our excesses, restraining our desires to give time and space for God's transforming power to work within us.

There is no better time for us to reflect upon our role as stewards of Creation and to act to help save it.

*Dr Peter Brotherton, Diocesan Environment Officer*  
[www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org)

**The Diocesan Environment Group is looking for new members. To find out more email: [peter.brotherton@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:peter.brotherton@naturalengland.org.uk)**

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## Serving the community together

Whether it's the lack of grit on some icy country lanes, big increases in parking fees, or health and safety rules seeming to have gone mad ... it's very easy for us to blame it on the council. But, as many Cross Keys readers already know, councils and other public bodies can sometimes be quite good things – and can potentially become even better if local churches are working with them.

But why should churches work with local councils and organisations such as the police, schools, housing associations and

other voluntary sector groups? There are many different answers to this, and many ways in which churches across the diocese are working with such bodies. But one answer is that churches and local councils are both there to serve their local community, albeit in different ways, and sometimes with widely differing priorities. Here are three local examples of co-operation:

By setting up the Rushden Homeless Shelter (left) and working pro-actively with the local homelessness forum, Rushden Full Gospel Church and other member churches of the East Northants Faith Group have led the way in helping homeless people in East Northamptonshire.

Churches are now one of the biggest providers of youth services in Northamptonshire, financed from county council grants, and working closely with council officers.

Recently launched Street Pastor schemes in Peterborough, North-

ampton and East Northamptonshire (and coming soon elsewhere) involve churches, the police and councils working together to get Christians and other volunteers on the streets, where and when they are needed to provide a listening ear.

Nationally, there are many individual examples of close working between the national church and government bodies. Churches are already recognized as one of the main providers of community buildings, and of education for example, but arguably more could be done to recognise the vital work already being carried out by churches in their local area on other issues, such as meeting the large and growing need for debt advice.

*Andrew Presland*  
*Whitefriars Church, Rushden*

*Andrew is a member of General Synod and a statistician in the Civil Service, currently working on Government targets for increased community cohesion.*



# Transformation Bungoma-style

Andrew Knowles and Clive Evans recently visited our link Diocese of Bungoma in Kenya. Here Clive (far right at the back) reflects on how the churches there go about "transforming the world."

Bungoma has a lot to share with us. Many visitors have been struck by their simple "joined-up" approach to mission and evangelism, Kingdom and conversion. There is no divide between the spiritual and the practical, sacred and secular. If you build a church, people expect you also to build them up materially and socially. If you build a school, it's assumed that its pupils – and their parents! – will attend the sponsoring church. And so on. But we discovered that it's no easy task or quick fix. Here are just three examples.

One parish, St Luke's, Nzoia, embraces a very large, ugly sugar refinery. This employs many people, mostly men. There's a wage but no provision of married quarters. Consequently in this area, the incidence of HIV/AIDS is running at 75%. There are many widows and orphans. In a country without any social security, there is much poverty and suffering. So St Luke's is doing something practical about it. It's their way of expressing their Christian love and service.

They said, "We are not employed so we can't fully support them. We pray for strength and support. We grind maize to make high-nutrition foods and then hand out bags of the



flour to widows." A project which is both very Biblical (the care of widows and orphans) and consonant with what many are seeking to do in this country, through Hope08 and other initiatives.

Last year's post-election disturbances in Kenya still cast a long shadow. Although Bungoma didn't see the worst, we were surprised to hear lots of stories and that people seemed to need to talk

about their experiences. One man bore the marks of being badly slashed and is permanently disabled as a result. Houses and shops remain burnt-out. Minorities wonder if it will be ever be safe for them to continue living away from their own tribal areas.

We stayed and chatted with Paul Mainah, a Kikuyu businessman living in Bungoma Town (which is predominantly Bukusu) his home for decades. Would "transforming the world" for him mean sticking it out, risking all, hoping and working for a time when such tribal hatreds would be a thing of the past? It could cost him his life.

Finally, on a lighter note, at Mbakalo Church we handed out Christmas cards made by the children of Whissendine Primary School (pictured). They were covered with glitter! Glitter in the equatorial sun is quite something. It brought a sparkle to their day to receive these simple greetings from children whom they will probably never meet. But it matters. Someone cared enough to make them and to send them.

Our diocesan link is as much about Bungoma helping us as our helping them. What can you do? Could you make a link?

Clive Evans, Link Officer

Tel: 01327 842909.

Email: [cliver.evans@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:cliver.evans@tiscali.co.uk)



*Above: The approach to Bungoma town with grain silos, cell phone masts and Mount Elgon in the far distance.*



*Left: The Cow Project at Namwesi, supported by St Peter's, Irthlingborough. Members pay 20KSh (about 20p) monthly to be part of the scheme, which started in 1995. There are now 17 cows and six goats. The milk produced helps the whole community and has eradicated many diseases ... and manure is a good fertiliser.*

## Youth Pilgrimage to Taizé

1-10 August 2009

A week at the unique Christian community near Cluny, France.

Peterborough Diocese plans to join Durham Diocese for this youth pilgrimage for ages 16-29 years.

Bishop Ian and Jo hope to join the group and Archbishop Rowan is also expected at Taizé that week.

Details from Liz Cundy:

[taize.peterborough@googlemail.com](mailto:taize.peterborough@googlemail.com)

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## APRIL 2009

**Sun 5, Organ recital** with Tony Edwards. 3pm at St Peter and Paul, Abington, Northampton. Donations invited. Refreshments available.

**Good Fri 10, Riding Lights Theatre Company** in Redemption Song, a communal experience of theatre and worship. 7pm in Minster Precincts, Peterborough Cathedral. Tel: 01733 452336. No charge.

**Easter Sat 11, Diocesan Guild of Bellingers**, sponsored ride or walk around Rutland Water. Email: gcsspullin@yahoo.com

**Easter Mon 13, Organ recital** with Francesca Massey, Assistant Director of Music at Peterborough Cathedral. 11.15am at All Saints, Oakham. Retiring collection.

**Sat 18, Cowslip and Fritillary Day** at St Peter's, Newton Bromswold 2pm - 4pm. Newton Bromswold won the 2008 Northants Conservation Churchyard Award (see photo right).

**Sat 25, Diocesan Guild of Bellingers Spring Festival** and six-bell striking competition hosted by Peterborough

## WHAT'S ON

branch. For details email: gcsspullin@yahoo.com

**Sat 25, Diocesan Affirming Catholicism group**, visit to Lyddington and Stoke Dry, 3.20pm. Tel: 01604 660679.

**Wed 29, Theological and Pastoral Responses to Climate Change**, a talk for Peterborough Theological Society by The Rt Revd David Atkinson, Bishop of Thetford. 7.30pm at The Friends Meeting House, Thorpe Road, Peterborough. Tel: 01733 355310.



**Thurs 30, Women in Christianity and Islam**, a talk for Rutland Theological Society by Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani. 7.30pm at Oakham Methodist Church. £3 each or £15 annually. Tel: 01572 722282. www.rutlandtheologicalsociety.co.uk

## MAY 2009

**Mon 4, Organ recital** with Robin Walker, Director of Music at St Mary's Hampstead. 11.15am at All Saints Oakham. Retiring collection. Ploughman's lunches.

**Wed 6, Great Fen Concert** – A world premiere concert by Britten Sinfonia, celebrating the natural world. 7.30pm at Peterborough Cathedral. Tickets £22.50; £18; £12. Box Office 01480 388248. www.greatfen.org.uk

**Sat 9, Starburst**, a major diocesan conference for all who work with children in our churches. Speaker, Lucy Moore of Messy Church fame. 10am - 4pm at All Saints Primary School, Northampton. £10 per person. Tel: 01604 887048

**Sat 16, Licensing of new ministers. Lay Pastoral Ministers, Licensed Evangelists and Readers** who have just completed their training will be licensed by the bishop. 11.30am, Peterborough Cathedral.

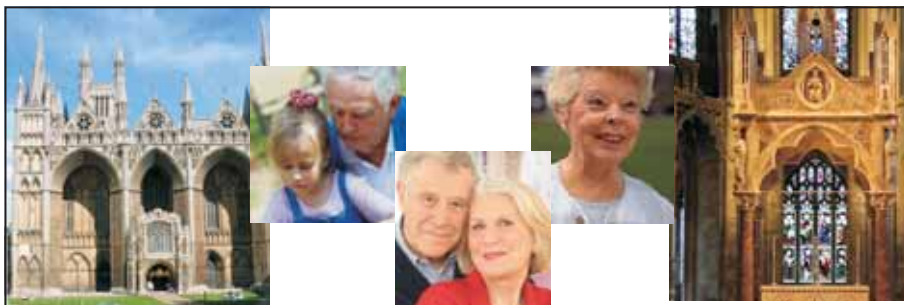
**Mon 18, Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship.** "Leadership in the church". Speaker John Donnett, General Director of CPAS. 7.45pm at St Nicholas Great Doddington.

**Sat 23-Mon 25, Launde Abbey Flower Festival.** Spring Fair on Mon. Car boot throughout the weekend. Tel: 01572 717254. www.launde.org.uk

**Mon 25, Organ recital** with Alexander Ffinch of Cheltenham College. 11.15am at All Saints Oakham. Retiring collection for church funds. Ploughman's lunches.

**Wed 27, Christian and Muslim Approaches to Scripture.** A talk for Peterborough Theological Society by The Venerable Dr Michael Igrave, Archdeacon of Southwark. 7.30pm at The Friends Meeting House, Thorpe Road, Peterborough. Tel: 01733 355310.

**Thurs 28, Why Bother with the Old Testament?** A talk for Rutland Theological Society by Dr Janet Tollington. 7.30pm at Oakham Methodist Church. £3 each or £15 annually. Tel: 01572 722282. www.rutlandtheologicalsociety.co.uk



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## Geddington on the move

A lack of convenient, affordable transport was one of the problems identified when the United Reformed and Anglican churches in Geddington, near Kettering, went visiting in the village last year. The response, twelve months later, is the launch of the Good Neighbour Transport scheme which is run by volunteers from the church and community.

The door to door visits were inspired by the Hope 08 initiative, which encouraged churches to seek ways to improve life for people in their community. One of those they called on, Annette Hall, volunteered to co-ordinate the scheme and a local business, Rockingham Cars, provided a phone.

"One of the first calls we had was to request an urgent lift to Huntingdon for a hospital appointment," said Giles Godber, parish priest in Geddington. "I am happy to say we were able to fulfill that request. Now we are busy encouraging more and more people make use of the scheme."



## Apprentices celebrated at Rushden



There was a special ceremony at Rushden Community College in January to celebrate the achievements of the *Access All Areas* project, which is a collaboration between the College, Whitefriars Church and the County Council.

The programme is in its third year and includes a mentoring project to build up young people's confidence; community clear-up projects for improving gardens for elderly and disabled residents, and *The Apprentice* which is an opportunity for young people to develop as leaders.

The apprentices pictured are showing their award, presented by Cllr Joan Kirkbridge, for helping at the weekly KidzKlub at Whitefriars Church. The club, for 5-11 year olds, regularly attracts 60 to 70 children.

"I believe that through this partnership we are transforming the community as a whole by helping young people," said Philip Evans, vicar at Whitefriars.

## Bible study group seeks understanding of Islam

Desborough parish Bible study group took a step towards transforming their understanding of the Muslim faith during its January meetings by taking a look at Islam.

Robert Hill, Social Responsibility Adviser, led the sessions which introduced the foundations of Islam, the Koran, Shariah Law, and some of the issues that can lead to distrust between neighbours.

As part of the series, two Muslim women were invited to come and talk about their life and faith, and to answer the questions posed by the group. Those taking part said that they had gained new insights and, in at least one case, had set their fears to rest.

## The Noise is ready to get the job done

Requests for practical help in Northampton are awaited, as preparations are made for *The Noise*, a day of social action on 2 May. Church youth groups of all denominations in the town will be joined by people of various ages for gardening, painting and many other tasks, suggested by people within the community.



"Last year we painted the outside of a school building and some railings at the racecourse park, did some gardening and ran a tea dance and a football session," said one of the organisers, Pete White (Youth Worker at St Giles Church).

"We start with a time of prayer and worship on the Friday evening, then end the day on Saturday with worship. It's a great opportunity to show that the church cares about these things, and for people from the different churches to get to know one another better."