



No rain on this Noah

Is this really Noah? Well he was very convincing and, as the photo shows, very friendly, when he hosted the recent Mothers' Union Family Fun Day.

The Fun Day, on 13th June, at Ty Clwyd, Llanfair Talhaiarn, certainly lived up to its name! *writes Elizabeth Gauge.* We thank God for answering our prayers during the months of preparation and for providing – most importantly – glorious weather. Add to that co-operative, generous exhibitors; a good, harmonious atmosphere amongst the hard-working helpers; lovely people who came to participate in the huge variety of interesting activities; the perfect site for a summer's day out; a charismatic Mr. Noah; concluding worship which ideally would have lasted twice as long – and you see that He truly blessed everyone involved. *More on the back page.*

(My sources tell me that Noah was played by Chris Williams from Wrexham. Well, I didn't *think* Noah had a Welsh accent!)

"Llefara, Arglwydd, canys y mae dy was yn gwranddo"

"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3.10)



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"Llefara, Arglwydd, canys y mae dy was yn gwrando"

"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3.10)



It's a familiar story. Samuel hears someone calling him and assumes that it's his employer, Eli. No, it turns out it is God himself, and Eli advises Samuel to be attentive to the divine word.

Being attentive to the divine word is one of those themes that runs like a thread through the entire Bible – the story of Jesus in the New Testament begins with the response of a young girl who says "Be it unto me according to your word" (Luke 1.38).

Samuel's response is my choice as a motto for my first year of ministry as bishop. I've been telling anyone and everyone who will listen – including the Diocesan Conference at the end of June – that since God has brought me here as your bishop, I need him to guide me in the work I must do. I need to listen for his directions in my prayers and through the plethora of advice that comes in my direction.

And not just for me, but for the diocese. A diocese doesn't exist to look after itself. It exists first as a response to God. God has called us through Christ into a right relationship with him, and Christians believe that it is through centring our life

on God that we get the whole of life into proportion. We can be a community that lives into a full-filled life (just that!) because we start from a right relationship with God. However, there are consequences – a diocese exists also to call the whole of society to acknowledge God's Reign (what used to be called "the Kingdom of Heaven", but people started thinking that was only about life after death). The Reign of God is about individuals finding wholeness in Jesus, and societies learning to model the sort of justice and compassion that we see set out in Jesus' life.

So my little motto is actually a motto for us all. We all need to listen to what it is that God calls us as a diocese to be doing: to become his agents for change. Sometimes you hear people – mainly non-religious people – saying that religion and politics shouldn't mix. I have to say that a Gospel that doesn't have an impact on every area of life isn't a Gospel worth preaching. So just how is God calling us to change our lives for the better - my life, your life, the diocese's life, the life of everyone in North East Wales? To answer that question is actually to answer the question "Why does the Diocese of St Asaph exist in the first place?"

+gregoryfleming:

O Amgylch yr Esgobaeth Around the Diocese



St Asaph Cathedral

Organ Recital Series 2009

John Hosking, Assistant Organist,
St Asaph Cathedral

- **Wednesday 5 August** at 7.30 p.m.

Damian Howard, Titulaire-Organist and
Director of Music, Lancaster Cathedral

- **Wednesday 2 September** at 7.30 p.m.

Admission £4 including programme
Contact 01745 583429 / 584039

www.stasaphcathedral.org.uk

A Pleasant Sunday Afternoon

Prestatyn Parish Church, in the company
of the Royal Buckley Town Band.

- **Sunday 16 August** at 3 p.m.

Admission £5, includes refreshments.

Diocesan Quiet Day at St Melangell
Centre, led by the Revd Linda Mary
Edwards

- **Thursday 20 August**

from 10.30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

*£10; concessions available; bring your
own lunch; drinks provided. To book,
contact St Melangell Centre 01691
860408*

Induction of the Revd Philip Clarke as

House for Duty, priest in charge of
Caerwys & Bodfari.

- **Thursday 3 September**

Induction of the Revd Adrian Copping

as Rector of Nannerch, Cilcain,
Gwernaffield, Llanferris and Rhydymwyn

- **Monday 7 September** at 7 p.m.

All One in Christ gathering at St Peter's,
Holywell – for disabled people and
those alongside them in the church -
worship, vision and fellowship

- **Saturday 12 September** 2 – 4 p.m.

Come and Sing Handel's Messiah in

St Asaph Cathedral with conductor Brian
Kay. Rehearsals 10.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

& 2 – 3.30 p.m. Performance at 7.30 p.m.

- **Saturday 12 September**

£10 for singers and audience

Diocesan Offering Sunday

In your parish...

- **Sunday 13 September**

St Asaph Theological Society

at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden,
with the Revd Paul Roberts, Director of
non-ministerial training, St Michael's
College, Llandaff: "The relationship
between liturgy and mission - from a
Western perspective"

- **Monday 14 September** 7.15 p.m.

Open Churches Day:

Bishop Gregory says, "Churches have
been described as 'signposts to the
Gospels'. I believe it is vitally important
that we ensure these signposts give a
visible sign of God's love and the
Church's ministry to all." Get involved!

- **Saturday 19 September**

www.visitwaleschurches.com

www.ymweldegylwysycymru.com

North Wales International Music

Festival in St Asaph Cathedral

- **Saturday 19 to Saturday 26 September**

*Rebecca Evans, Catrin Finch, Allegri
String Quartet, The King's Singers,
John Lill, The BBC Singers and others.*
Contact 01745 584508

www.northwalesmusicfestival.co.uk

Clergy Training Day

with Bishop Gregory - 'The Anglican
Communion'.

- **Tuesday 22 September**

Archiepiscopal See

discussion in St Joseph's High School,
Wrexham

- **Monday 28 September** at 7.30 p.m.

Diocesan Offering Service

in the Cathedral

- **Monday 12 October** 7 p.m.

HYSBYSFWRDD NOTICEBOARD

Berse Dreincourt Charity

The Trustees of the Berse Charity invite applications for this year's award of grants. The purpose of the charity is to assist with education expenses of no more than twenty girls, or women under the age of 25, who are resident in the Diocese of St Asaph. The assistance given is modest, but may be used in a range of ways; for example, to subsidise extra curricular lessons, to assist in the purchase of books, or to go towards university expenses. Second or subsequent degree courses are not eligible for a grant; only first degrees can be considered. For your guidance, successful applicants usually receive a grant of between £50 and £100.

Application forms can be downloaded from

www.churchinwales.org.uk/asaph/life/resources and are also available from the Diocesan Office, 01745 582245. Completed forms, countersigned by the sponsoring cleric, must be received at the Diocesan Office before Friday 6th November 2009.

Menter is a ten-session course to help explain the basics of the Christian faith to those who are new to the Church. It would also be suitable as a refresher course. Its name is a Welsh word which means Venture in English.

Menter was produced by the Diocese of St David's and so it reflects Welsh values more than existing courses from

elsewhere. Having said that, its imaginative approach is of sufficiently wide appeal for the Anglican Province of Hong Kong to have recently ordered one hundred copies!

Each session includes about fifteen minutes of material on DVD, but this shows far more than just a 'talking head'. Many of the presentations and interviews were shot in homes, churches and other locations in Wales, the Holy Land and elsewhere. Those who appear most frequently as speakers are the two producers - Andy John, now Bishop of Bangor, who wrote the course, and John Holdsworth.

Apart from the DVDs, most of the course material is set out in the Leader's Manual, which is fully bilingual. Each of the sessions is intended to last about ninety minutes and includes opportunities to reflect on key Bible passages to help focus and inform belief. There are helpful appendices which address questions which may be raised by the participants. The one on the Da Vinci Code is a particularly good example.

Materials for the course may be obtained by writing or telephoning Mrs Nia Evans, St David's Diocesan Office, Abergwili, Carmarthen SA31 2JG Tel: 01267 236145. A set of DVDs, a participant's workbook and a leader's manual cost less than £25 including postage.

If anyone would like to discuss the course and its potential locally feel free to contact the Revd Martin Snellgrove on 01978 762127 or

martinsnellgrove@hotmail.com

From the Dust

by Kefa Sempangi with
Jennifer Melvin:
Lutterworth Press

Book review by Ann V. Lamb

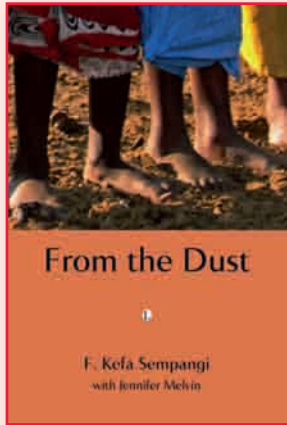
Written by a Ugandan Presbyterian Minister who is also a member of the Ugandan Government, Kefa tells the story of his survival from being number one on Idi Amin's hit list and then of the 6000 street children and families living on the garbage tips whom he rescued from squalor and starvation, providing them with education and fitting them for future jobs - several individual stories are told and they all make compelling reading. From the first page it is heart churning as we read of the family's escape (not once, but twice) from Amin's clutches, saved by one of the assassins who had originally come to kill him at his church on Easter Sunday 1973, but who with the other four gunmen became Christians.

The book costs £15 and is only 111 pages, but each one is full of faith and shows one man showing Christ's love; first caring for the poor, the neglected, the orphan, the widow and the beggar, enthusing others across the world to support the projects and through his example and faith pointing them to God. This is truly an inspiring book.

Singing the Psalms

Canon Bill Rowell writes...

Several of the churches I've ministered in over the years have had a tradition of singing the set psalm at Holy Communion, using Anglican chant. But not everyone finds this easy, and often



they find themselves concentrating so hard on getting the chant right that they hardly notice the words. One way to deal with this is to say the psalm, another perhaps to use a responsorial psalm in which only the cantor (or choir) sings the psalm, while everyone joins in the antiphon or refrain. As a lover of hymns, I've approached this issue at our modern eucharist

services (two Sunday mornings per month at Welshpool) by writing a hymn based on the psalm appointed for the day, set to a simple and well-known tune (see example below). I print the psalm itself on our readings sheet, with the hymn alongside it. Of course, if the set psalm is 23 or 100, I don't try to compete with the metrical versions already on offer, but I am gradually building up a stock of others - about twenty so far - and I'm happy to offer them to anyone else who might be interested. *Contact the Revd Canon Bill Rowell on 01938 553164.*

Psalm 1

(recommended tune: St Michael)

How beautiful a thing
when friends walk hand in hand,
and, unity our common tongue,
as sisters, brothers, stand.

It is the precious balm
anointing Aaron's head,
the dews of Hermon fresh and sweet
upon Mount Zion shed.

Fulfil your promise, Lord:
your dews of blessing pour,
that we may serve you now as one,
and praise you evermore.

EVANGELISM



Rocky Bateman, Lay Evangelist in the Deanery of Hawarden, writes about the recent Christian Spirituality Day at All Saints', Bistre.

Sometimes in a busy world, just the opportunity to take an hour or so out to be with God is all he needs to touch our hearts. The recent day on Christian Spirituality held at Bistre was such an opportunity. With sections on meditation, healing, spiritual direction and numerous prayer stations, this was a lovely day with lots of laughter, some tears of healing, warmth and love and lots of fellowship, just what you would expect when God is at home.



About thirty people attended the day from a variety of backgrounds, some with Christian links, some who would describe themselves as spiritual but not religious.

Those attending thoroughly enjoyed the time spent with each other. Some found having the time to spend at the prayer stations helpful. The sections on meditation and healing were where God met others' needs. There was the opportunity to talk with experienced people from within our church community, and to be prayed for. Many took the chance to spend time in fellowship over some soup, a cuppa, and some very nice cake and biscuits.



We would like to thank the Board of Renewal and Parish Development for the 'Investing in Mission' grant that helped make this day possible. This was a wonderful example of how effective ordinary people within the Church can be when they work together at getting the Good News to people who are outside of Church.

The next Christian Spirituality Fairs are at St Francis, Sandycroft on 26 September and at All Saints', Lane End, Buckley on 31 October, both from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; come when you can, stay for as long as you like.

At Bishop Gregory's first confirmation service, at the Cathedral at Pentecost, Rocky Bateman was licensed as the first Lay Evangelist in the Diocese of St Asaph.

Deanery Focus

Canolbwyntio ar Ddeoniaeth



The Deanery of Gresford

The Deanery of Gresford includes the parishes of Gresford, Holt, Gwersyllt, Rossett, Iscoed and Llay. Here we can get a taste of the Deanery priorities and some of its people. But we begin in Sri Lanka...

Boxing Day 2004 spelt terror for all countries bordering the Indian Ocean when the Asian Tsunami struck, devastating coastal communities throughout the region. The parishes in Gresford Deanery, among many others, wanted to respond but, at the same time, to ensure that their response was long-term. Worshipping in one of our parishes was Dr Ruwan De Soysa from Sri Lanka whose family are acquainted with Bishop Duleep Chikeera of Colombo, who had set up a Tsunami Relief Fund to help people left desolate and homeless.

The Deanery Parishes committed themselves to supporting the Bishop's Fund for a minimum of three years and, to date, they have raised over £2,200. Dr De Soysa, a paediatrician working in Liverpool, spoke about Sri Lanka both to the Deanery Conference and to some of the individual parishes. He referred to his country being described as "The Pearl of the Indian Ocean" - indeed, Georges Bizet's opera "The Pearl Fishers" is set in Sri Lanka. Pearls continue to be cultivated, even though the industry is one of many to have been affected by the Tsunami. The island's coastline provides the livelihood to many fishermen and their families and its beaches have become very popular with tourists in recent years.

Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) has a multi-ethnic and multi-faith population, and has been a much-valued trading post, frequented successively by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British mercantile empires. From the media, we are aware of the twenty-five year conflict between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamils over the sovereignty of the north of the Island. The Diocese of Colombo has stated that it will provide assistance at point of need, regardless of the ethnicity and religion of the recipients, and has continued with its relief in the north of the island in spite of the conflict.

The Bishop of Colombo's Relief Fund has provided for immediate needs such as trauma counselling and medical aid, but has contributed to rebuilding for the longer term through house building projects, providing school education in refugee camps, boat-building and repair services for fishermen, and the provision of bicycles to families in need of basic transport. Funds given by the Deanery have been much appreciated, and their acquisition through quiz evenings and other events have been enjoyable occasions.



Llay was built as an urban model village in the 1920s, to service the coal mine that was developed after the First World War, and people migrated from other mining areas in the country to populate the village. In 1966 the mine closed with its subsequent recession and since then light industries have come and gone, turning Llay more into a growing dormitory village that benefits from its good road links with both Chester and Wrexham. There are two large clubs in the village, the Royal British Legion and the Llay Miners Welfare, both of which enjoy close links with the Church.

The Parish Church is dedicated to St Martin of Tours, and was built at the same time as the shops and schools within the centre of the village and surrounded by the houses. Over the last ten years the church has been upgraded with new heating, lighting and chairs, so that it now presents a spacious, warm and welcoming place of worship that is at the heart of the village. With a refurbished Organ and sound system, we think St Martin's offers the best in traditional and contemporary music. It holds a 'big' service very well and is much appreciated by the community. Although we have close links with the School and nursery, the Junior Church has, sadly, recently closed due to falling numbers of children coming regularly to church. However, we do see growth in the attendance of the 'active retired' age group and St Martin's is felt to be a place where one can make new friends. With the recently refurbished Church Hall we are now able to offer an excellent venue with facilities and refreshments for up to sixty people.

At Christ Church, **Rossett**, we have set out to meet the worshipping needs of people who are becoming elderly, more infirm, and housebound. We refer to the "Differently-Abled" rather than the "Disabled" because people, often registered as disabled, have many skills which they are happy to use; the term was coined a few years ago by the Church in India. Many worshippers have been part of the church, whether in Rossett or elsewhere, for many years and are saddened that they can't come to worship at 9.30 a.m. on a Sunday morning. So, we lay on a Eucharist at 11 a.m. on a Tuesday, once a month.



Nothing particularly radical in that; nor in the fact that we provide refreshments afterwards. But, there is a bit of joined up thinking, insofar as

- it helps the elderly, differently-abled, and housebound to feel more strongly that they are still part of the church
- it reduces the number of house communions carried out by the parish priest - very useful if the priest has a medical condition

- it has an ecumenical aspect in that the worship and aftermath finish in time for some worshippers to go straight to a luncheon club at the Presbyterian Church over the road

Attendance has been good - usually 25+. If any worshippers cannot get to the church under their own steam, we have drivers who will bring them; loading up wheelchairs presents no problem. It's a very simple idea, really, though it took 15 years of watching people get older, a bit of heart-trouble for the Vicar, along with active enthusiasm from lay members, to make it happen.

St Chad's Church, **Holt**, is only one of five churches in the lower Dee Valley to celebrate Rush Bearing in late summer. This celebration dates back to medieval times when the floor of the church was made of soil. Rushes were used as a covering in order to keep the dust down and to give a little warmth. Rushes were plentiful along the banks of the River Dee and in numerous local ponds. In the case of St Chad's the old rushes were taken out of church on the first weekend of August and burnt. New rushes were cut and laid. This process took on certain meanings for the congregation; a new start and a time to give thanks for those who had gone before them. As a result, the gravestones were cleaned and dressed with fresh flowers. In a major period of restoration between 1871 and 1873 the floor was lowered in height, with cartfuls of human remains being removed and a tiled and wooden floor was laid. However, the celebration of rush bearing has continued with a few rushes tied to the pew ends and elsewhere as decorations. The gravestones are still bedecked with flowers. In the church service, prayers are said for the Communion of Saints.

St Chad's branch of the Mother's Union appears to be bucking the national trend by a steady increase in membership. It has 24 active, with 2 more soon to be enrolled and 2 others giving it serious consideration. An active approach to recruitment by all its members appears to be a key factor.

Recently, the Revd Canon Tudor Hughes was inducted in the parish of Holt, his second induction to the parish, 18 years on. This is part of a redistribution of responsibilities within the Deanery and he remains Vicar of Gresford. Pictured here with Bishop Gregory are the Revds Sue Huyton, Alan Suter, Tudor Hughes and Pauline Walker.



After many years of waiting, work started in January to refurbish Church House, **Gresford**, a Grade II listed building opposite the church. The project has received funding of £142,856 through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 which is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The project is supported by Wrexham County Borough and Northern Marches Cymru, with additional funding being provided by WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd, £13,000); St Matthews Church, Buckley (£2,500), and £25,000 from Church funds and a 'Gift Day'. Additional funding, almost £10,000, has been received

from 'Awards for All' to provide new furniture, and IT equipment for the building.

On Friday 12 June, a crowd of about 100 attended the opening, which was performed jointly by the oldest member of the congregation (90) and the youngest member of the Sunday School (9). A short service was held and then everyone enjoyed refreshments and a celebration cake was cut by Mrs Sue Kelly, 'fund raiser extraordinaire'.

The refurbished building incorporates a small 'committee room' and main hall; a new kitchen; a staircase and a lift to the upper room; comprehensive central heating system; upstairs storage area, and new indoor ladies and gents toilets. Existing windows have been repaired and made to fit again; new flooring provided, and the building redecorated inside and out. Church House now provides additional community meeting space for local organizations, in addition to existing users. The upper room will be a project centre for the Open Church Network.



In **Gwersyllt** we only have our Church building itself, so having a Sunday School has always been a problem. For some years we used the Old Clinic building on a Sunday morning and the children would walk down the hill and join us. But it was felt that this wasn't working very well and so a few years ago we started afresh with a group called "Pebbles". Presently it meets on a Tuesday afternoon in a local school



hall at the end of the school day, thanks to the kindness of the head teacher. Sessions include games and a Bible story and craftwork, led by a small but dedicated group of Church members. They believe that they are being most truly the Church when they are out in the community, telling the stories of Jesus. We do not know what the effect will be in the long term, but we trust that God will use the seeds being sown here.

We took part in the Diocesan stewardship initiative last year. The most exciting result of that is the birth of a regular Bible Study Group. People enjoyed meeting together in a non-threatening environment, and when it was over asked if they could continue. An Advent study course and a Lent course both followed.

With thanks to the Revd Canon Sue Huyton, Area Dean, and all the Deanery Clergy.

SPIRITUALITY YSBRYDOLRWYDD

During the last two weeks of April a group including parishioners from Dyffryn Clwyd Deanery and Rhyl - as well as the Wirral, Manchester, Ireland, Portugal and even New Zealand - travelled to the Holy Land. The pilgrimage was planned by the Revd Alastair & Mrs Rosina Shufflebotham of Llanbedr D.C. and began in Jordan, visiting Petra, Jerusalem, Galilee and Bethlehem, where a gift of £1025 was presented to the Bethlehem Lutheran Church to support welfare and health projects within the community. The Revd Huw Butler, Rector of the Llanbedr D.C. Group of Parishes, reflects on his experience of pilgrimage,

Since returning from the Holy Land, people have asked me all sorts of questions - "What is it like?" "Was it dangerous?" "Was it what you expected?" "Did it affect your faith?" "Would you go again?" Such questions are not always easy to answer. Overall, visiting the Holy Land was a wonderful and very positive experience for me. But, a number of people have said that they are unsure if they would like to visit the Holy Land because it may destroy the precious and personal images they hold of the Bible stories. I can understand this apprehension, in part. In the many months of preparation leading up to our pilgrimage there were occasions when I wondered if I really wanted to go. There were so many arrangements to be made, the financial cost was quite high and always at the back of the mind (fuelled by the media, especially during the Gaza crisis) was a fear for personal safety. But, if I am being honest, at a deeper level, could it be that I also feared a sense of disappointment, unwelcome challenges to my faith and possible changes to my outlook. Put simply, would I find the Holy Land to be holy for me?



Palestinian guide, Sam, in Jerusalem, carrying the Welsh flag.

All I can say from my experience is that visiting the Holy Land will most certainly change you - it will change your perceptions and your preconceptions about the places, cultures and religions which exist alongside one another in that region. It will also change your ability to imagine and make real the places, people and situations within the Bible. But, to face the fear of disappointment, to be challenged and to be changed is not only good for us, it is the only way to grow and mature in our faith. Consider Abraham. He was willing to embrace change, to leave the certainty of his home and surroundings and to go on a journey to he knew not where (Hebrews 11.8-12); all because he believed that God was leading him in faith. We, too, are called to live adventurously and not to fear change; provided it is God who is bringing about that change within us, to conform us to his image and likeness.

So, then, if you get the opportunity to visit the Holy Land, GO! This encouragement, however, does come with a warning; it may not be what you anticipate; be prepared to be challenged and expect to be changed!



John & Sheila Harris report on a recent event supported by the Board:

A group of people from the All One in Christ group met together at St Peter's Holywell on Saturday June 20th for a time of refreshment and nourishment for body, mind and spirit. Our theme was "Growing", as we explored, through worship, quiet prayer, shared creative activities and talking with each other, how the Church might grow like the mustard seed so that all of us, people of inability and disability, could be sheltered beneath its branches.



Perhaps the rosemary plants we planted might grow too!

Our next gathering will be on Saturday 12 September, starting at 2 p.m., also at St Peter's, and everyone is welcome – people with disabilities and those alongside them in the church – to continue the exploration with us.

The Revd David Lewis, Church & Society Officer, reminds us about two important opportunities

Remember! The Church and Society Board has grants available for churches to use on community projects.

By now, parishes will have had their **Diocesan Offering** Packs, containing prayers, profiles and stories about our nominated charities, Hafal and Rhyll Samaritans.

With the Bishop's Office, the Board of Church and Society has nominated Sunday 13 September as Diocesan Offering Sunday. Please use the material on that Sunday in prayers or sermons as together as a Diocese we pray for our nominated Charities and the people they serve. And remember to return your envelopes at our Diocesan Offering Service at 7 p.m. in the Cathedral on Monday 12 October

I found the story of actress Alex Hamilton, 26, on the Samaritans' website, www.samaritans.org It shows how vital their work of listening and support is. She called Samaritans for support herself as a 16 year old teenager when she was bullied at school. After a long period of suffering, she was persuaded to phone Samaritans, despite thinking it was just for adults. "I spoke to a woman who was clearly older than me, as I was just 16 – I found this quite comforting. All that I did though was to say that I needed someone to talk to and then I cried almost non-stop for about an hour. It was an emotional release after years of keeping everything locked inside me."

You can read more of her story on-line. She says to young people, "24 hours a day there is someone who cares about you, someone who wants you to achieve your dreams and have the bright and fulfilling future you deserve."

ECOLOGY

Following the feature last year on the Eco-congregation churchyard project at St Cystennin's, Llangystennin (with a photo of the overgrown area of bramble and butterbur weed), here's an update from Lynne Davies:

We have been working on this project to care for our churchyard in an eco-friendly way encouraging wildlife - birds and flowers. What a contrast to last year! We have had visits from British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the Council Biodiversity officer to advice on management of the huge rhubarb type leaved butterbur and overgrown areas have been cleared by community services (probation). They have done a grand job and we welcomed the chance to engage with the workers after our Sunday service.

The spring flowers are abundant - we are now seeing the results of managing the land as a spring meadow (leaving the first strim until after flowers have set seed), encouraging primroses, violets, celandines. A local bird group set up bird feeding and the congregation are donating bird food and enjoying seeing the variety of birds - blue and great tits, nuthatch, woodpecker; we can often hear him and the privileged

few have had a sighting! We have recently had a visit from Woodland Trust and we have registered the three old Yew trees (about 500 years old) on the Ancient Tree Hunt website. We are on footpath and cycle routes and hope to make more of this.

There is much still to do and we are linking churchyard issues with worship.

On Good Friday we had a bare cross made out of a piece of fallen yew branch and the stripped Christmas tree donated by a nursery - the tree was on display at the Christmas Tree festival at St. Michael's (which is featured in the April/May *Teulu Asaph*) with a theme 'Feed the Birds'. Hannah Redpath (10) decorated the cross



with daffodils from the churchyard for Easter Sunday. Additionally, I made Easter cards with photos of the churchyard spring flowers on, and raised nearly £40 for church funds.

Send any thoughts, on this or any other related subject, to Revd Adrian Copping, on behalf of the Diocesan Ecology Group - adriancopping@hotmail.com

*New address from September:
The Rectory, 9, Pen y Coed,
Nannerch, Mold CH7 5RS*

☎ 01352 741376



Every Good Friday morning for the past few years children in and around the village of **Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant** have been invited to a morning of activities at St Dogfan's Parish Church - and this year was no exception!

The event was led by Christian Entertainer Jason Fell and was full of fun and fantastic goings on - all aimed at promoting understanding of the meaning of Good Friday and the overall joy of the Easter season. There were craft activities, stories, singing, an Easter egg hunt in the churchyard, and of course the "parachute game" (pictured). Everyone, the children, Jason and all of the voluntary helpers had a wonderful time ... and we very much hope to be able to replicate this year's success in 2010.

There is some evidence that a branch of the Mothers Union existed in **Pontblyddyn** in 1915. There is a plaque which was dedicated to the memory of Emily Gertrude Owen Davies, wife of the

Revd Owen Davies, Vicar of the parish at that time.

At some subsequent date the Branch ceased to exist and remained in limbo until it was brought back into existence in September 1979 by Mrs Margaret Bennett, wife of the Revd C.O. Bennett. It began its second life with about 30 members.

Gradually over the years that number has declined, but this year two new members, Mrs Cynthia Smith and Mrs Edith Lyons (pictured in front of the Mothers' Union banner), have been welcomed



into our Branch, bring our membership up to 15. "It is our hope that more ladies will join us in striving to uphold the five objectives of the Mothers Union." writes Hilda B. Williams, Secretary.

Mae Eglwys Crist, **Y Bala**, wedi sefydlu grŵp cerdded a ffirwydd ers Mis Medi 2006 - fel rhan o ymdrech yr Eglwys i gynnig gweithgaredu cymdeithasol a hamdden. Hefyd, wrth gwrs mae'r grŵp hwn yn sicrhau bod pobl yn cael cyfle i roi sylw i'w hiechyd corfforol tra bod yr Eglwys yn gyffredinol yn gofalu am eu

hiechyd ysbrydol! Dyma ragor am gefndir y grwp gan yr arweinydd Sharon Jones.

Christ Church, Bala, established a fitness/walking group in September 2006 as a result of a successful grant application to the Sports Council for Wales Community Chest scheme. The group are now well into their third year of walking. The walking group operate under the Let's Walk Cymru scheme, which is the national programme for supporting walking projects in Wales.



The members of the group meet most Thursday afternoons at the church. The type of walks are health walks – with the pace and length of each walk planned in advance to suit the pace of the walkers in the group. The group is led on a voluntary basis by Sharon Jones and supported by a small but very committed group of church members – Nicola Harland, Mary Pritchard, Elaine Williams, Cynthia Jones, Wyn Morris, Jane Charters, Sarah Parry, Rhiannon Evans, Bill Rowlands, Alan Townley, Rita Townley, Mair Richards, and Edith Roberts. The group always welcome any new members.

The main purpose of the walking group is to improve the physical and social well being of the participants. As well as

walking, the group have time to chat to friends, both on the walk and afterwards in the church – over a cup of tea and a biscuit! The group also have an opportunity to visit and explore the local countryside both within Bala and the surrounding areas. Recently the group enjoyed an afternoon in the company of Bill Taylor, Snowdonia National Park, exploring the wild life of the lakeside. Certain individuals have ventured out to Coed y Brenin, near Dolgellau to receive a taster session of Nordic walking – walking with poles for an all-over cardiovascular workout!

“It is a well known fact that lack of physical activity is said to be one of the largest causes of illness and death in Wales,” writes Sharon Jones. “Increasing the nation’s activity levels is now a major target for many organisations. Active people are more likely to live longer, enjoy healthy years of life and retain their independence. So with this in mind I would encourage you all to join a walking/fitness group in your own locality.”

The Virgin Art exhibition recently held in **Mold's** parish church of St Mary the Virgin was hailed a great success by artists, visitors and teams of helpers alike. There was a steady flow of visitors from a wide area every day, to view almost 300 fine quality pictures displayed for purchase in the Church, with many paintings being sold, much to the delight of the artists who had welcomed this exhibition because hanging space in the area is very scarce.

The event also brought together people from other groups in the town such as



Cutting the cake at the Preview Evening: Sheila Wilson; Councillor Andrea Mearns, Mayor of Mold; Councillor Quentin Dodd, Chairman of Flintshire County Council; Sandy Mewies AM; Revd Ian Day, Vicar of Mold

members of the WI, Rotary Club, Probuss Club and local businesses, who either acted as sponsors or joined with members of the congregation and their friends in hanging the pictures, helping with refreshments, the raffle and stewarding. It was a wonderful community event with the opportunity to sit and chat to old friends over a cup of tea after enjoying the paintings. Many people commented that the Church was an excellent venue for the event, and appreciated being able to spend time in the lovely building. The idea was not totally new, as St Bartholomew's Church, Sealand, have a similar exhibition in June and gave us lots of initial help in how to set about it, for which we thank them very much.

Another bonus is that over £3,000 was raised for Church funds and a date has already been penciled in for next year. Chairperson Sheila Wilson said that the artists, members of the committee and all the various teams of helpers are to be congratulated on a wonderful joint effort.

History was made on May 9 in the parish of **Bistre**. For the first time in its long history in the shadow of the parish church, Emmanuel, the small church of All Saints was the venue for a wedding. Thanks to an Archbishop of Canterbury's licence, Paul and Sarah Fellows were married there by the Vicar, the Revd Martin Batchelor. With flowers and food organised by members of church and family members and the groom's father conducting Gwernaffield Brass Band, it was a memorable family occasion as well as a significant 'first'.

Six months after moving out of St Mary's Church, **Broughton** for a re-ordering, we moved back *writes the Revd Mike Douglas*. It was the same building, but had been transformed.

A kitchen, toilets and 'narthex' area had been provided downstairs with a lift and stairs leading to a meeting and prayer room upstairs. Chairs had replaced pews in the nave. The church had been redecorated, the heating system replaced and new lighting installed. But it wasn't all about replacing old with new, the Norman font had been restored and the Georgian woodwork displayed so new and old blended together. When we





moved back the work was almost, but not totally, complete.

The re-ordering was celebrated over the weekend of the 23 & 24 May. On the Saturday members of the local community were invited to inspect the new facilities and given refreshments. On the Sunday morning a celebration of Holy Communion took place with Bishop Gregory. Invited guests, as well as the normal members of the congregation, attended the service. In the evening there was a Songs of Praise service attended by team clergy and members from each of the 6 churches in Hawarden Benefice, at which the Rector spoke. Where previously there was no coffee shop in Broughton, from the end of May the 'St. Mary's coffee shop' opened in the narthex, on a Thursday morning.

The building has been transformed, but the church is the people not the building.

The challenge is for the church community to be transformed – encouraging the local community to use it more, extending the opening hours of the coffee shop, providing worship that is family friendly in welcoming surroundings. The changes aren't complete, but are transforming St. Mary's to be at the heart of the community, where it belongs!

A parish picnic with a mystery destination on May 23 formed part of the celebration for the Revd Canon J.P.Philip Williams' 60th birthday. The coach, bedecked with banners and balloons, took 50 parishioners from **Henllan, Llanefydd and Bylchau** to Rhoscolyn near Holyhead for a birthday banquet in the village hall. Then the



party split into several groups, depending on their degree of mobility, and explored the surrounding countryside and coast. On their return, accompanied by strains of 'Happy Birthday', they enjoyed the traditional birthday cake and a champagne toast. The day ended with a short evening service in St Gwenfaen's church, when we were able to express our thanks for such a happy time and a memorable day.



On Sunday 31 May, Pentecost, **Bishop Gregory** conducted his first Confirmation Service as Bishop. As the picture taken outside the Cathedral shows, there was a real variety of ages amongst the candidates, who came from the parishes of St Asaph, Colwyn, Hawarden, Minera, Petryal, Rhuddlan and Rhyl.

One candidate, Paul Copper, tells his story; "I started my life attending a Church of England primary school; I grew up hearing the stories of a Canon Lowe. I then drifted away from this world. In the ensuing years, I thought I knew it all! I didn't need any help from anyone or anything. The phrase on a t-shirt I saw recently described me, "Quick! Hire a teenager whilst they still know it all". At 52, I now know better.

"Last September, I was introduced to St Francis church and they made us feel so welcome. I didn't want to miss a Sunday service. I was also reawakened to the Church, God and Jesus; and what I now understand to be the Holy Spirit. The congregation showed me what it was

like to be a Christian and has made me want to take the commitment further. I would like to thank Revd Paulette Gower for her support and guidance.

"I am proud to be a Christian now and am proud to be one of Bishop Gregory's first confirmation candidates. I will never forget that wonderful day."

On Sunday 7 June the congregation at St Cynfrach and St Mary's in **Llanfair D.C.** had the pleasure of seeing their beautiful new altar cloth displayed and blessed, *writes Ann Bridges*. To create it, the Sunday School, members of the



congregation and members of the local community had decorated felt fish, using beads, buttons, sequins etc. The felt fish shapes had pre-cut holes around the edges so they were really easy to sew up after they had been decorated; a little bit of wadding gave them a 3D effect.

Two ladies from the congregation made the quilted backgrounds for the altar cloth and pulpit fall and the fish were carefully stitched into place. The altar cloth is for the 'green' weeks in the church calendar.

The fish symbol was used when the early church was being persecuted. It was a secret sign scratched on the walls of buildings or drawn on the floor in the sand, to tell people where a Christian meeting was being held. Even though we can meet freely in this culture, it remains a significant symbol for Christian believers.

The fish are all different, just as we in God's family are all different. Some of us are more individual than others....you might just 'spot the difference' somewhere in the 'shoal of fish' if you look really carefully.

Singers from all over the St Asaph Diocese gathered at the **Cathedral** for the Royal School of Church Music Annual Choral Festival. Alan McGuinness (Organist and Master Of The Choristers and chair of the RSCM N.E. Wales committee) said, "For many choristers this event is a highlight to join together with others and explore new repertoire in a special setting. This year we were delighted to welcome representatives from 24 different choirs – around 140 voices, in addition to the Cathedral Choirs."

The Festival was directed by Mervyn Cousins (Executive Director, Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod). Bishop Gregory presented RSCM Voice for Life Silver Awards to Natalie Davis (Colwyn Bay), Peter Huyton (Gwersyllt) and Rupert Williams received the Archbishop of Wales Award for music.



For further information about RSCM events please contact Alan McGuinness on 01745 584039 or email organist@stasaphcathedral.org.uk

The next presentation of The **Archbishop of Wales' Award and Certificate for Church Music** will take place on Saturday 7 November at St Woolos' Cathedral, Newport, at 2 p.m. The Archbishop will present the awards and the preacher will be the Dean of St David's, the Very Revd D. Jonathan Lean. Nominations for this year's presentation are now closed, but the committee will be pleased to receive nominations of suitable candidates for the presentation in 2010/11. Contact Committee Secretary, Mrs Margaret Blott, 8 Parc Dron Deg, Dyserth, Rhyl LL18 6BQ



The Rt Revd Dr Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales, visited the parish of **Abergele** on June 7. He is pictured here with the Revd Shirley Griffiths, Vicar, and Nan Jones, who has raised well over £1,000 through making marmalade in aid of the Canolfan Dewi Sant Centre – a project organised by Abergele P.C.C. to build a new community centre with worship area in the Pensarn area of the parish - one of the most deprived wards in Wales. As a result of successful local fund raising and grant applications it is hoped that the building work on this £1 million project will start before the end of the year. The Archbishop was given two jars of Nan's marmalade and enjoyed some for his breakfast the following day!

Continued from front cover

Stella Whitham's vision for the Fun Day came to fruition in a very special way and we thank her and the Mothers' Union planning team at Wrexham for pursuing it. We are also grateful to the Guide Association for use of the site and to the clergy, Mothers' Union members, Guide helpers and others who willingly played their part. It was great to meet our new Bishop and his family there. To those clergy who neglected to inform their congregations – well, we know who you are and we hope they'll forgive you! Profound thanks are due to Susan Varah



and the St. Asaph Diocesan Mothers' Union Trustee Body whose step of faith underpinned the funding. Many people want to repeat the experience of the church family gathering together in this way. Therefore, we would be glad to have feedback on the positives and negatives to assist future planning (for whoever may take it on board!). **Email:** stgilesshop@yahoo.co.uk

Teulu Asaph Sharing Good News with the Family of the Diocese

Editor: Revd Peter Mackriell, Diocesan Communications Officer.
Diocesan Office, High Street, St. Asaph LL17 ORD 01745 532588
petermackriell@churchinwales.org.uk

What is your good news? Let us know what is happening in your parish or deanery. Interesting photographs and short articles particularly welcome. Croesewir unrhyw erthyglau ynglyn a digwyddiadau eglwysig yn Gymraeg. Gellir cynnwys crynodeb byr o'r erthygl, na ddylai fod yn fwy na 250 o eiriau, yn Saesneg. Diolch yn fawr.

Deadlines: October/November edition: **24th August**
December 2009/January 2010 edition: **26th October**

Review of 2008 - 09

Highlights of the reports of the Diocesan Officers to the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Conference, May 2009

Full copies of the report can be obtained from the Diocesan Office, High Street, St. Asaph LL17 ORD 01745 582245 or downloaded from www.dioceseofstasaph.org.uk

Board of Education and Lifelong Learning

Carole Burgess,

Director of Lifelong Learning

Tim Feak, *Under 25s Officer*

Anne Suter, *Schools Officer*

Roz Williams, *Schools Officer*

Revd Christine Owen,

Child Protection Officer

Revd Alan Tiltman,

Continuing Ministerial Education

- New Director started in September 2008
- New Board structures and team established
- Development in hand of the 'Learn' section of the Diocesan website
- Chair, Lord Barry Jones, appointed the first Chancellor of Glyndŵr University
- Particular support for schools implementing the Foundation phase
- Outstanding inspection report for St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School, Wrexham
- Working with Welsh Assembly to maintain fabric of Church Schools; Governing Bodies encouraged to develop a capital investment plan
- Admissions Appeals held for first time; policies are robust, but fair
- Heads of Aided and Controlled Schools met
- New training programme for Heads, Governors and Staff
- 3 strands to the Diocesan Youth Work strategy – Establishing Team, Increasing Capacity of Volunteers and Developing Partnerships
- Discussions across the Diocese about

employing youth workers or 'gap year' students; links now established with 2 universities and many Christian youth work organisations

- Work of the team showcased at Governing Body
- Cluster groups support voluntary work throughout the Diocese
- Core Group of practitioners support Under 25s Officer
- Youth Work Grant Scheme has proved effective
- Creative work with children in parishes to be publicised and ideas shared
- Child Protection Officer offers advice and guidance, and responds to confidential matters
- Provincial Child Protection Officers planning for review of historic cases; work instigated on a bullying policy
- Work being undertaken to support Worship Leaders and Pastoral Assistants, and to review the take up and impact of the training courses
- Revd Janice Jones, ecumenical chaplain at Glyndŵr and Yale College, continues support for students and staff
- Diocesan Theological Society flourishes and attracts new members

Board of Ministry

Canon Mary Stallard, *Chair & Diocesan Director of Ordinands*

Revd John Harvey, *Vocations Advisor*

Canon Tudor Hughes, *Initial Continuing Ministerial Education*

- The Board is grateful to the Revd James Harris for all his hard work

- Vocations Vision Day led to new strategy; a team, led by the new Vocations Advisor and the Director of Ordinands, to build up capacity to nurture vocation in all the baptised; possible gap-year project for young people exploring a vocation to ministry; developing support for self-supporting (or 'non-stipendiary') ministries, the vocational diaconate and Reader ministry
- Students are training for ordained ministry at St Michael's College, Llandaff and on the 'St Michael's in St Asaph' Diocesan scheme
- A group has met to take forward the leadership training ideas explored at the residential Clergy school in Lancaster in September 2007
- Looking at support mechanisms for ministry, a Vision Day is planned
- Canon Dr Raymond Bayley has relinquished the role of Warden of Readers
- New system for Reader selection; a forthcoming scheme for Readers Emeriti; Reader Licence re-drafted to take account of recent changes
- St Michael's College is developing an integrated approach to ministerial formation, allowing for continuous education throughout ministry
- Assistance and resources are available for parishes to discern their vision for what God is calling them to
- Investing in Mission Grants available for mission/outreach projects; to date, 7 small (up to £500) grants and 1 large (up to £5000) grant have been awarded
- Evangelism Officer has contact with over 30 non-church groups and approx 2,500 children; work with Back to Church Sunday, Cymdeithas y Beibl / Bible Society, Saint y Cymuned / Urban Saints, and others
- Diocesan evangelists' scheme has 1 candidate in training and several potential candidates
- 3 Quiet Days held in 2008
- Annual Plygain; despite the snow, the Cathedral was packed
- Welsh Spirituality Seminar led by Revd Dr Elwyn Richards of Bangor
- Two year course for spiritual directors, run with Chester Diocese, to be completed this summer
- Ecumenism Officer supports the unique ministry in Rhostyllen, where the Revd Gary Windon is Anglican and Presbyterian minister and Chaplain at Nightingale House
- Provincial Ecumenism Officers meet quarterly and are currently looking at shared ministry in Wales
- Ecumenism projects in Urban Priority Areas are being studied
- Ecumenism Officer represented the Bench of Bishops at the Faith and Order Conference in Edinburgh
- Liturgy Working Group being formed
- Supplementary Liturgical Material and Service of the Word being developed
- Pre-Lambeth visit of overseas Bishops received a real flavour of life and mission within our Diocese
- Bishop John Simalenga, from South-west Tanganyika was among our visitors; the companionship link was signed in both

Board of Renewal and Parish Development

Archdeacon Bernard Thomas, Chair

Revd Vittoria Hancock, Evangelism

Revd Huw Butler, Spirituality & Healing

Revd Pam Powell, Ecumenism

Canon Bill Rowell, World Mission

Mrs Sue Kelly, Tourism

Revd Kate Johnson,

Liturgical Development Officer

- Thanks to the Revd Dr Peter Wykes, who has retired from leadership of the Spirituality and Healing section

dioceses in the Autumn; a visit is being planned

- World mission appeal raised £2,500; to support training needs in South-west Tanganyika and a project working with young victims of war in Sierra Leone
- Development of Open Church Network project centre in Gresford commenced with £142,856 funding from the Rural Development Plan for Wales
- Groups of churches are developing tourism / visitor trails
- Open Church Day organised by Churches Tourism Network Wales
- New project, 'Sacred Space', established in rural Wrexham

Church and Society

Very Revd Chris Potter, Chair

Revd David Lewis, Lead Officer

Revd John Barden Davies,
Rural Life Adviser

Revd Peter Mackriell,
Chaplain with Deaf People

Revd Aidan Coleman, TCC Organiser

Revd James Aylward,
Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Canon Philip Williams
World Development Officer

Revd Adrian Copping, Ecology Group

- Diocesan Offering in aid of Cruse; £6212 raised from parishes, topped up by the Board to £8,000. At the Diocesan Offering service a presentation was made to Mrs Joan Davies for her service as President
- The Chair and Lead officer are members of Faith into Action, which seeks to stimulate theological reflection on social issues
- Provincial Church and Society Officer addressed the Board on the policy document 'One Wales'
- Disability Conference, 'All One in Christ', underwritten by Board

- Ty Nos, permanent Night Shelter opened in December, a major achievement for TCC and the Board
- Quiet Day on social inclusion led by Revd James Alyward
- Support for the Deaneries of Llanrwst and Rhos's 'Food for Thought Day' held in Llandudno
- Helped Cytun in Conwy County Borough to provide a tent at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Penrhyn Bay
- Asylum seekers sent to Wrexham rising to about 150, in addition to section 4 applicants awaiting deportation who are often destitute; need to combat prejudice and racial abuse; £5000 grant given by Board has met a variety of needs
- Diocesan Ecology Group encourages good 'green' practices, the exchange of ideas and theological reflection
- Some parishes already committed to working with 'Eco-Congregation' materials
- North Wales Deaf Church continues to meet weekly; the Chaplain and interpreter support two signed services a month
- Good relations with hearing support units in three schools
- TCC continues to support Wrexham Muslim Association's efforts to find a worship space in Wrexham
- TCC Organiser attended reception at the Welsh assembly to promote a living wage for Wales
- Three new member groups have joined TCC in the last year; Get Fair, Shotton; Unison, Wrexham; and St Thomas' PCC, Pen-y-Cae
- TCC celebrated Wales gaining Fairtrade country status in June
- TCC continues to pioneer Participatory Budgeting in community councils
- Christian Aid Committee meets regularly and is represented on Denbighshire,

Flintshire and Wrexham Fairtrade Coalitions

- Fairtrade stalls/information points manned at the International Eisteddfod and during Denbighshire Food Festival
- The use of Fairtrade products is monitored in order to maintain the Diocese's Fairtrade status

Board of Communications

Revd Peter Mackriell,

Communications Officer

- 'Deanery Focus' is a new feature of Teulu Asaph
- Parish website scheme launched, with training for parishes. St Asaph has the most parishes on-line in the province
- Media coverage of Bishop John's retirement and election of Bishop Gregory
- Communications Training, looking at principles and practicalities
- Archdeacons' Visitation News 2009, sponsored by Ecclesiastical Insurance
- Diocesan Officers' residential led by the Dean in March 2009
- Diocesan Directory to be published in Autumn 2009

Funding & Parish Support

Tracey White,

Funding & Parish Support Officer

- In the Year of Stewardship, parishes undertook to preach and teach on the theology of giving
- Funding and Parish Support Officer has focussed on other areas of parish support and is developing further stewardship materials
- 'Re-shaping The Future' conference encouraged more flexible use of church buildings
- Support for parishes undertaking major development projects
- Funding support for numerous small building and people projects

- Development of Funding section of the website, including free online funding search facility, GrantNet
- Training for treasurers in preparation of accounts and annual report
- Support in the use of Giftaid
- Guidance on reclaiming VAT.
- Feedback being gathered on the 'Investing In Mission' programme
- Co-ordination of the Provincial Stewardship Executive, working with colleagues on Giving With A Direct Debit (GWADD) and the Charities Bill, and in developing and contributing to a Stewardship DVD

Board of Finance / Diocesan Administration Team

Revd Brian Harvey,

Diocesan Secretary

- In addition to raising some £2,790,000 by the new parish share arrangements in 2008, the DBF received a grant of some £1,030,000 from the Representative Body. Approximately 83% of the Diocese's annual budget is used to cover all Clergy costs
- The number of stipendiary Clergy continues to reduce in line with the plans agreed with Deaneries; target of 75 full time stipendiary Clergy by 2013. In 2009, budgeted for a net reduction of four
- 96.8% of parish share for 2008 has been paid. In almost all cases, arrears were lower at the end of 2008 than at the end of 2007
- 4.8% increase in parish share agreed for 2008 and a 4.5% increase for 2009
- Administration Team shortly moves into the new Diocesan offices, funded by the Board of Finance from the reserves held by the Diocese
- The Diocesan Administration Team consists of five full-time and nine part-time officers or assistants, with some posts part-funded by the Cathedral or Trust funds