

Sports ministry day at Bishopthorpe



The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, and the Bishops' Sports Ambassador, the Rt Revd Tony Porter recently welcomed 36 delegates from the Northern Province of the Church of England to Bishopthorpe Palace for a Sports Ministry Day. The day was designed to encourage the Church to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in the sports arena. Chester Diocese was represented by Diocesan Missioner, Lyn Weston and Archdeacon Ian.

Bishop Tony Porter said; "Given the context of sport which impacts every parish in the country with millions of men, women and young people participating in sport each week, it's important that we help grow, train and deliver parish based

ministry that supports this."

Archbishop Sentamu said; "Whatever sport you follow or play, it gives a great opportunity to work towards a common goal and to strive for excellence in the gifts that God has given us. In his letters, the Apostle Paul often uses the discipline and dedication needed to excel at sport to help us picture what a life of discipleship looks like. As Churches we should celebrate all that sport has to offer and its importance in local communities, as well as worshipping the God who has made our enjoyment of sport possible."

See page 8 of this edition of Chester Diocesan News.

Who is my neighbour?

Amongst the many good things that come with springtime, the Six Nations Rugby tournament is what I anticipate most! Recently talking about the tournament I found



myself trying to explain the identity crisis that goes with national sporting support.

In Rugby Union, Ireland play as a united island, even though Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and this summer I'll be cheering for the Lions, a team gathered from the whole of the UK and Ireland. In soccer all the home nations play separately against each other whereas at the Olympics we compete together.

In golf we cheer for Europe at the Ryder Cup and in cricket everyone plays for England regardless of their place of birth and the current England one day captain, Eoin Morgan, hasn't even got a British passport! The old enemy in one sport becomes our hero in the next. It is by any measure somewhat confusing but sport has again and again been a wonderful means to build bridges across human divides and, as such, has resonance with a biblical view of national allegiance.

The Old Testament has a strong association between the national identity of Israel and the revelation of God, but as scripture moves on into the New it becomes clear that the Kingdom of God requires a bigger vision and a greater ambivalence to national identity. Jesus

gives a telling answer to the question asked by the expert in the law in Luke 10:29, 'and who is my neighbour?' As the parable of the Good Samaritan unravels it turns out that the neighbour is not the person expected but the foreigner, a surprise to match the discovery that the captain of England isn't English! And so who was the neighbour? 'The one who had mercy'.

In a time of almost unprecedented human migration across national boundaries we do well to remember that citizens of the Kingdom of God are to be people of mercy first, building bridges across human divides and to remind ourselves that whoever we cheer for on the sporting field, those national allegiances must never get in the way of the call to be merciful.

The Venerable Ian Bishop
Archdeacon of Macclesfield

Chester Diocesan News

EDITOR: Stephen Regan, tel 01928 718834 ext 233. Email stories and pictures for the **May** issue by **18 March**, to:
stephen.regan@chester.anglican.org

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Church awarded grant of £250,000



St Paul's Compstall Chancel Restoration and Community Development project has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £250,000. The project aims to carry out essential conservation work and to promote a wider use and awareness of its rich heritage both within the

buildings as well as the church grounds. A community and educational programme is also planned that will make use of a renovated and purpose built facility made available to local, school and special interest groups to use. However, even with such generous funding, over £64,000 still needs to be raised to meet the full costs.

Mick Boyle from St Paul's Parish Council and Project Manager said, "We're delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. This striking church building has played a prominent role in the development of this village over the last 175 years. It's great to know that with the renovation and restoration work, coupled with a community initiative, we are a step closer to preserving it for another 175 years."

Clergy New Year honour



The Reverend Robert Nelson has been recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours list. Revd Nelson, who is the Incumbent of St Thomas Liscard, has been awarded an MBE for services to homeless people and the community in Wirral. Revd Nelson said; "I am thrilled by this award. It is largely my work with

the Ark project which is the main focus of this."

Wirral Churches Ark Project was founded by Revd Nelson in early 1992 as a winter shelter for the homeless and was planned to run for six weeks in a disused Wallasey church. Under the chairmanship of Revd Nelson, the project evolved and gradually spread to cover the whole Wirral borough. Throughout it has been an ecumenical endeavour with all Christian denominations supporting it – as well as many other individuals and organisations of good will.

The Bishop of Chester said; "It is fitting that Robert's work is recognised in this way. Awards like this not only honour those who receive them, they also acknowledge all who work on this shining example of practical and compassionate Christian action."

The Big Church Day Out comes to the Diocese



2nd-3rd June 2017 at Capesthorpe Hall, Cheshire.

We hope you can join us at this exciting event which is coming to our Diocese for the first time!

The Big Church Day Out is a festival style event which draws together tens of thousands of Christians to worship and celebrate all that is good.

The Big Church Day Out is like one huge playground, bursting with activities and fun for all ages. From the Big Church Kids' tent and fun-filled fête to the relaxing Tea Tent nestled in the beautiful gardens, you're sure to find your favourite spot and make memories that will last a lifetime.

Whatever your age, denomination or musical taste, you are welcome to join us for two days of discovery and enjoyment you'll never forget. The Diocese will also have an allocated area. Here's what to expect...

5 Music Stages

The Main Stage brings together the most popular line up of worship and artists from world-renowned choirs and urban acts to worship leaders and bands from all over the globe. The Illuminate Stage is a more

intimate venue. It's a great place for youth groups and those who crave the dance-til-you-drop festival experience. The Airstream Stage is a chance to perch on a hay bale and listen to breath-taking live music performed from inside a converted Airstream Caravelle. This chilled-out venue is brimming with character and talent -the perfect place to relax.

The Kingdom Come Stage has a beautiful, hazy atmosphere of non-stop worship. Soak it all in or dance wildly and sing your heart out as bands of all shapes and sizes fill this tent with sweet praises.

The Tea Stage boasts its own fantastic line up, with artists from all over the world playing more acoustic and chilled-out sets, this is the kind of place you can relax in all day!

Late Night Events

At the Campfire area you can worship under the stars in the cool night air, warmed by a roaring campfire. The Comedy Tent is a late-night-only comedy venue, mixed with acoustic sets from incredible bands who have got just a few more songs for you before they head off to bed.

The Big Church Bazaar

This buzzing venue brings together an incredible selection of Christian ministries and traders, so whether you're looking for ideas for your church, clothing with a Christian message, new campaigns to support, books, artwork, jewellery or a summer holiday location, you're sure to find it in the Big Church Bazaar!

Kids

There's a farm for little animal lovers, rock climbing for little dare-devils, face-painting for big imaginations and much more dotted all around the site. The Big Church Kids' Tent will be exploding with worship, dancing, fun and games.

Cafés and Bars

In the Tea Tent Café you can sip a steaming latte or a cool glass of Pimms as you enjoy the incredible entertainment in this family-favourite area.

How to Book

The Diocese is making a group booking which means the price of your ticket drops as more people book. To join the diocesan group you need to register by going to the Diocese of Chester web page under events. It would be helpful if you could register by 24th April.



Thy Kingdom Come

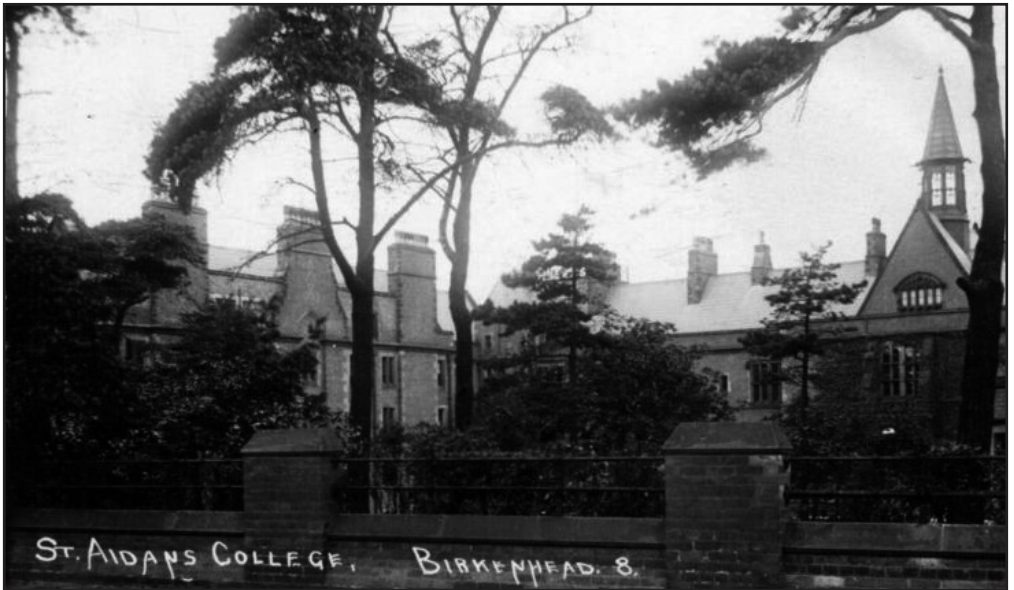


After The Big Church Day Out we have planned a huge beacon event in Chester Cathedral on Sunday 4th June at 5.30pm which celebrates our diversity and brings us together in unity as we pray for God's Kingdom to come.

To book your place at the Cathedral, visit the Diocese of Chester web page under events and look for Thy Kingdom Come.

For more information contact Anne Cody, Mission Coordinator, on 01928 718834 ext. 263 or e-mail anne.cody@chester.anglican.org

Tale of two Colleges



St Aidan's Theological College was based in Birkenhead. It was founded in 1846 in the days when almost everyone studied in Oxford or Cambridge to be ordained. St Aidan's was ahead of its time with a bolder vision of training men from all walks of life for ordination in the Church of England: amongst their company were dockers, labourers and miners.

It was a sad day when St Aidan's College closed in 1969. This college, where men had studied for ordination for over 130 years, was completely demolished, leaving the North West of England, an area overflowing with cities & large towns, without a full-time ordination route.

Over forty years later, with increasing numbers of clergy retiring, the North West bishops decided to revive the embers of St Aidan's by entering into a partnership to re-establish a full-time ordination college in the North West.

Their decision led to the partnership

with St Mellitus College in London, forming "St Mellitus North West: the St Aidan's Centre" based at Liverpool Cathedral. Just as his predecessors founded a number of theological colleges like St Aidan's & St Bee's in Cumbria, the Bishop of Chester was a key player in the decision to bring back full-time ordination to the North West.

Three years on, this college is thriving with 70 students drawn from across the North West and beyond – Cumbria to Shrewsbury, Bangor to York. Nearly half the staff team are drawn from the Diocese of Chester.

Those training for ordination spend half their time in parishes across the region and half studying for degrees (BA or MA) in theology or Christian Leadership. Not all students studying are training for ordination or come from the C of E – the vision is to form Christ-like leaders for the transformation of the North West, united

by the one Spirit who empowers the whole church of God.

The North West students join together on Mondays for worship and teaching, and, on some weekends, with students from across the country.

Director Rev Dr Jill Duff, says, "The training St Mellitus offers is bringing hope, courage and new life to the North West. Trainee vicars are still involved in their home parishes which brings their studies

to life; at the same time, studying the Bible & theology gives a more hopeful vision for what ministry can be. It also makes ordination training more accessible to people from all walks of life."

St Aidan is usually depicted with a flaming torch in his hand. As students find hope in their studies, our prayer is that many beacons will be lit across the North West and beyond.

Foxhill Retreats



'Breathing Space'

This individually guided retreat, on May 9th -12th 2017, is an exciting new venture run by Foxhill House, the Diocesan Spirituality Advisory Group. Numbers are limited so please book early.

There will be plenty of space for rest and relaxation, including walking in the grounds and using the dedicated art space. You will be allocated to a prayer guide with whom you will be invited to meet once each day for about 30 minutes, and who will suggest ways to relax and pray (perhaps with a passage of scripture). Most of the retreat will be in silence.

You can download a leaflet with more details from foxhillconferences.co.uk.

Cost: £195 (bursary available)

Explore the 'I am' sayings of Jesus

Mon 10th (4.30pm) to Fri 14th (10am) of July. Dave Hopwood will take a fresh and refreshing look at the 'I Am' sayings of Jesus including 'I am the way', 'I am the bread of life', and 'I am the gate.' These are rooted in history and culture. Dave Hopwood is a writer and speaker. He loves communicating the Bible using contemporary media, references and stories. Dave has written a number of books and believes that the Bible is aimed at ordinary people and that it is relevant, honest, powerful and incisive in the way it tells of God's interaction with the world.

Cost £275 per person.

Race course Chaplain



CDN asked the Revd Hennie Johnston, the new Chaplain at Chester Racecourse, about this unique role.

How did the chaplaincy come into existence?

Chester racecourse has never had a chaplaincy team before. The planning began in 2015 and involved the Chairman of the Racecourse, the Chief Executive and the rest of the chaplaincy team, the Revds. Jonathan Phillips and Gary Kennaugh.

What does the role involve?

The role of a sports chaplain is one of a pastoral presence. This season we have been able to attend the majority of the race-meetings and have enjoyed getting to know the Racecourse staff, gate-keepers, security guards, police, St. John's Ambulance, Red Cross, and other key stakeholders.

We cover a huge amount of ground as we walk around the course and mingle with the race-goers – chatting, attending incidents whether it be a drunken brawl or a sun-stroked visitor - but primarily quietly praying as we go. We have the privilege of having access to every part of the course including the stables and weighing room!

What are the challenges?

Inevitably it is going to take time to build relationships, especially with the jockeys, trainers and owners who may only be there a couple of meetings a year, and to see where God is already at work. Also to discern where the role needs to be developed and where we will be best used in God's mission field – and it is a big mission field!

What are the joys?

We have been so welcomed by the racecourse and made to feel very much appreciated as we base ourselves in the control room – the powerhouse of the racecourse. I have had the opportunity to pray with a gate keeper, and a security guard, who asked to be prayed for, as well as having some fantastic conversations as we walk around and quietly witness the love of God.

What are the opportunities?

I believe the opportunities are as exciting as God wants them to be! However, the racecourse is very keen to build bridges with the City of Chester, and as priests of St. Mark's whose parish lies on the edge of the racecourse, and of St. Peter's in the city centre, we are well positioned to help them do this. We are excited as to what God might have planned for the chaplaincy ministry at the Racecourse and remain open, willing and obedient to Jesus' calling.

Hennie was ordained in 2003 and served a curacy at Holy Trinity in Coventry, moving on to be Associate Vicar in the parish of Dorridge & Bentley Heath, Birmingham Diocese, and moving to be Incumbent to St. Mark's Lache-cum-Saltney in April 2011. She worked for 14 years in the House of Commons, and prior to ordination was Pastoral Director of St. James the Less in Victoria, London.