

WHAT'S ON AT ST PETER'S

CONCERTS

Wednesday 12th March
8pm

North Bedfordshire Youth
Chamber Orchestra
Conducted by David Knight
and Jan Kaznowski

Vaughan Williams
English Folk Song Suite

Mozart

Piano Concerto no 24 in C Minor
(SOLOIST Tim Short)

Mendelssohn
'Italian' Symphony

Saturday April 5th
5pm

Easter Youth Concert Band

Saturday 26th April
7.30pm

Eagle Choir & Chamber Orchestra
Handel's *MESSIAH*

FIRST FRIDAY IN THE MONTH

Friday 7th March

*A tidy house is a sign of a
wasted life!*

Margaret Walden, a member of
the Embroiderers' Guild, will
show samples and talk about
her embroidery and quilting and
the history of embroidery from
the time of the Renaissance.

*In recognition of the 40th
anniversary of the Bedfordshire
Music Service, and in
appreciation of the inestimable
contribution it has made to the
lives of so many children and
adults in the county, we
have an extra evening in our
2007/08 season which will take
place on*

Friday 28th March

Verdi and the Requiem

Michael Rose

Both talks will take place in
St. Peter's Chapter House
De Parys Avenue Bedford at
7.30pm

All welcome

No admission charge, but
donations towards expenses are
never refused!

Editorial - Living faithfully?

The Rowan Williams affair has been
all over the media in the last few
weeks.

It depends on who we've heard or
what paper we read, but there has
been a general gasp of dismay about
what he said concerning the
inevitability of Sharia law playing
some part in the governance of this
country in the future.

Reflecting on the furore his words
have caused – which does seem to
have been quite disproportionate – I
wonder if there are two different, but
quite important things going on.

First, there is a deep distrust about
religion and politics sharing space
together. It has almost always been
so, and for obvious reasons. Religion
is very powerful, and used
inappropriately it can do great
damage. Or it can be a sharp tool for
anyone wishing to resist evil and
uphold justice. The Christian Church
isn't alone in having had to hold this
difficult tension – often well and
honourably, though not always. But
there is a long and distinguished line
of Archbishops of Canterbury who
have done just as the primate has,
and for which very many have been
thankful. You can make your own
list!

Religion isn't just a private affair. It's
all about how our hidden hearts and
souls live embodied lives in the real
world where we all spend our days.
No wonder those with a vested
interest have always wanted it to be
less public and more pious. But that
isn't where it belongs.

And secondly, there seems to be a
fragility currently about the matter
of our national identity – what it
means to be British, and what are
the things that go with it. All the
issues around our immigration
policies; how we work towards
social cohesion whilst honouring
those with different cultural and
religious traditions; what our
membership of the European Union
actually means and how far it
should go. Of course, this is
nothing new. The people of Bedford
must have grappled with similar
issues ever since the Vikings first
arrived. But it is a terribly
important issue, and needs to be
thought about and debated by us
all. (And how good it is that
Bedford Council of Faiths
encourages us to do just that!)

Because these issues are so
important and complex, the
general prickliness about them
both is entirely understandable. In
a world of such change and
apparent chaos and uncertainty,
we do indeed need to know who
we are and where we stand.

But it is precisely because of that
that we need to talk to one another
about it. And we need others to
challenge our assumptions from
time to time, otherwise it is so
easy to become complacent and for
prejudice to rear its ugly head.

So I believe that Dr. Williams was
and is right to speak out about
matters of such importance to us
all. Not to do so colludes with
those who want to hide their head
in the sand and pretend that
change can never happen and that

Teachers

There is a fridge magnet which states 'to teach is to touch a life for ever'. We asked the question "What makes a good teacher?" and here are some of the responses.

'The good points of a teacher are that they are there to help you, even if they are sometimes really scary! If you need help with any of your work, they will explain the question carefully, (unless you are in a test!) I like a teacher who comes to talk to you if you're stuck.'

"They are sometimes bad though, like when your working from a textbook it can just get so dreary. They are also bad when just because two people are talking, they make the whole class stay in at break (that happened to me today.) Sometimes I just want to go to sleep when my teacher is doing R.E!"

"A good teacher is a teacher that doesn't start shouting at the slightest thing but isn't too calm. They need to set work that everybody can get on with that isn't too easy but isn't too hard. They should teach in a way that all different learners can understand and work from."

"I like teachers because they can be fun in other ways. My teacher can be very strict but also very nice sometimes."

"A good teacher needs a nice classroom so children can learn."
'My teacher is very kind which is nice. I don't like it when she makes me eat sprouts.'

'A good teacher needs to listen.'

"A good teacher has a good sense of humour and can have a laugh with the class but then is serious when he/she needs to be. A good teacher can listen and relate to the children, is patient with the class but can also be strict. A good teacher should prevent bullying and try to make sure everyone is happy at school. A good teacher should make lessons fun and try to make sure that the pupils understand what he/she is talking about. A teacher should help children when they are stuck. Finally I think that a good teacher should let children talk to them when they are worried or have a problem"

"We like teachers who are strict but not too strict and who are also fun. We like teachers who turn lessons into a game. We love maths teachers".

"I like teachers because they help you if you are stuck and they tell you things you don't know. What I don't like about teachers is that they tell you off."

'Teachers can only be successful if they can relate to the pupils, understand that the pupils cannot remember everything, don't always want to work in silence and would appreciate it if the lessons were made a little more interesting! My

favourite teacher has earned the class's respect by letting us talk and have a laugh during the lesson as we are learning. They don't patronise us and treat us like adults rather than little children.'

So, to any teachers reading this, you need to

- brush up your fun tactics
- have big ears and
- stop asking them to eat sprouts

EASY !

Thank you to our contributors ; Helena Davis (aged 15), Poppy and Nathaniel McHale (9 and 4), Lily and Jack O'Donovan (9 and 6), Molly, James and Lottie Shaw (10, 7 and 4) and Jack Yates (13).



BOOK REVIEW

TIME BENDS – a life
Arthur Miller
Methuen paperback

This is an autobiography with a difference. It not only covers his life, but weaves in with such vividness the social and political history and technical changes in America from the 1920's until the end of the century. The time spell more or less covers my life and it was fascinating

to compare the ups and downs of life in the New World to those in England – the 20's Depression, the Wars, the New Deal, McCarthyism and the dramatic effect of the cinema and theatre industry.

Page after page with wit and fun he creates memorable pen pictures of his family and friends. The descriptions are so sharp you can actually feel yourself transported among them.

His work is acknowledged world-wide in the theatre and cinema with so many award-winning plays and films. His best-known 'The Death of a Salesman' and 'The Crucible' are sought after even among the repertory companies.

Added to his wealth of written work there is the fascination of his marrying Marilyn Monroe (a marriage of opposites). He reveals a human side to her which was lost and missed by the publicity seeking press enthralled by her mystic glamour.

The book includes 36 black and white photographs. It is 600 pages long and absorbing to read.

On a lighter note, if sleep evades you, try a Dick Francis who-dun-it for a comfortable easy read, the sort you start and won't want to go to sleep until you have finished it. One like 'Straight' and you will get to know all about the gem trade and how you might medicate or nobble a horse with a kitchen baster.

Do Vesey

it is never good. But to dare to raise your head above the parapet as he has done is a risky business – as he has discovered! There are plenty of individuals and institutions that There are plenty of individuals and institutions that are more than ready to shoot you down if you do.

I believe passionately that one of the roles of the Church must always be to enable conversation and debate to happen, and not within a holy huddle of its own members, but always involving those with whom it shares its life and space. That's part of the reason for trying this little experiment with 'Network'. It can and does have its use as a carrier of information within our church, but I would love it to become a means of wider debate about all kinds of things that matter to us, locally and globally.

Easter will soon be upon us – and the story that goes with it of the Jesus who never allowed faith to be privatised, and who was painfully aware of the importance of identity for all of us. He lived it and he died it, and the God of resurrection, whatever else he was saying the first Easter morning, was standing by those convictions that so drove Jesus.

We can but try to do the same...

Mike Fudger

[What do you think....? Please send your comments to the website)

The **NETWORK** Interview *The elected Mayor of Bedford,* **Frank Branston**

The interview panel met Frank Branston in the Mayor's Parlour early in January and enjoyed a lively exchange.

NETWORK Can you tell us something about your background and career?

FB I attended a grammar school in London – incidentally the same school as the current Health Secretary Alan Johnson. I left school with 2 O Levels and joined the Sunday Express as an office boy, later moving to the Daily Express. After that, I spent some time with the Richmond and Twickenham Times and a news agency in London. After two years' National Service I joined a Romford newspaper and then became briefly a PR officer with a construction company. By a strange combination of circumstances I then joined The People which in those days was a good paper at the popular end of the market with a circulation of 5,600,00. Nowadays it is a pathetic 700,000 .

My wife Marlies and I spent some time abroad and came to Bedford in 1968 – one week after getting married – when I joined the Bedfordshire Times as chief reporter. Eventually there was a change of editor, and the new man and I did not get on. Having failed to get the job of deputy editor, I freelanced for a time while I tried to get the money together to launch my own free newspaper.

LETTERS COLUMN

WHAT IF ?



Dear Network,

I watched an item on a news programme a while ago where somebody suggested getting rid of traffic lights in towns. They argued that, rather than there being chaos and a lot of accidents, traffic would actually flow better because people would be more cautious generally and particularly at junctions. Given that Bedford can be a bit of a nightmare traffic-wise at certain times of the day, does anybody think this is a idea worth considering?

I'm not convinced - what would happen to pedestrian crossings? If you know the town well, would that make you more or less cautious?

L. M.

If you feel strongly enough to respond, please send comments to the website,

www.stpeter.org.uk

or to

St Peter's Rectory, 36 De Parys Avenue, Bedford MK40 2TP

No Smoking Day – Wednesday 12 March

It is generally agreed that smoking hurts your health, your appearance and your bank balance, but stopping can be a real challenge - three in every four smokers want to stop... but still they smoke.

So if you smoke, but would like to stop, why not use 12th March to begin? The No Smoking Day charity can offer would-be quitters support and information to help them. Whether you're ready to quit for good, or you just want to rise to the challenge for a smoke-free week and raise money for a good cause, visit www.nosmokingday.org.uk.

PICTURE PUZZLE

Do you recognise this?



Answer on page 11

NETWORK What is the role of the elected Mayor?

FB The elected Mayor's job description is set by the Mayor! Within the restrictions of the budget and the council's policy framework, and excluding licensing and planning, the elected Mayor has a free rein. I consult a 'cabinet' or executive committee made up of elected Council members. The Liberal Democrats have rejected offers to serve on the executive. **(Editors: Currently the 'cabinet' comprises four Independents, three Tories and two Labour)**

The elected Mayor is not obliged to accept the recommendations of the 'cabinet'. Within the council policy framework, the elected Mayor can overrule his 'cabinet'. I have on occasion wanted to do so, since the whole *raison d'être* of the elected Mayor is to overcome the problem of the councils where very little is achieved – as used to be the case in Bedford. There are at present 12 cities with elected mayors in England. Some don't involve their 'cabinet' in decision making and take all decisions themselves. I am more democratic in my approach.

I meet my fellow elected Mayors about twice each year. They are spread all over the country from Torquay to North Tyneside, and they each have issues specific to their area.

NETWORK What do you consider to be the major achievement of your Mayoralty?

FB Without doubt the Nirah Project. This mammoth £500 million project at last has planning permission. Although there have been many rumblings about public money being used for its development, the cash has been made available on a loan basis at commercial interest rates, and I am sure that it will bring great benefits to Bedfordshire. Together with Marston Vale Forest and the proposed Olympic rowing lake, Nirah will re-invigorate the whole county and rescue the brickfields from unsightly dereliction. The Eden Project produces £100 million a year for Cornwall. Nirah is much more ambitious, and Bedfordshire is more easily accessible by a large section of the country's population. I would like to see Nirah completed by 2013. It will establish Bedfordshire as a major leisure centre.

The western bypass is now underway after many stops and starts over the past 70 years. Within the borough there are redevelopment schemes either underway or at the planning stage – Castle Quays (adjacent to the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery), Riverside Square, and the Town Centre West (the bus station area). For all of these I have insisted on high quality construction to attract quality tenants. The Cecil Higgins and Bedford Museum are also to be updated and renovated.

Many of them require government money as well as local money but there is no doubt that my engagement has speeded things up.

Subsequently, Offa's wife Cynethryth became abbess of the Bedford Priory, it being customary in those days for widows to remain at the place of their husband's burial.

From the seventh to the ninth century timber-built halls were raised for the Saxon kings as they moved round from district to district for the purpose of control, consuming rent in kind as they went! King Offa would have been acquainted with eighth century Bedford, at that time a small settlement north of the Ouse in "Outer Mercia". Being near the eastern border and necessarily defended against raids by Danes sick of their inhospitable homeland, Bedford may have become organised and planned as a town by the 790's, as well as being an important place for both King and Christian church.

Some historians surmise that the town's northern limits were marked by St Paul's parish boundary which ran along Lime and Lurke Streets, their contention being that St Peter's Church did not exist until at least a century later, when it would have served a small settlement growing up around the Green north of the east-west route past Bedford (now St Peter's Street and Dame Alice Street); St Cuthbert's is also deemed to be a later foundation serving a small settlement outside the original eastern defences.

However, one historian at least has suggested that it was London's road builder, King Edward the Elder, who planned the grid of streets north of the Ouse, treating Bedford – complete with ealdormen – in the same way as his father, Alfred the Great, had re-established London within its walls and Wessex towns further south. According to this theory, the eastern boundary ran down St Cuthbert's Street with the church as part of the defences; at the northern limit St Peter's would have been included in the fortifications. It was Edward, certainly, who ordered (c 915) a burh to be built here on the south side of the river.

Bedford, an important religious centre in Saxon times and already a trading place by the tenth century, might have been a focus point for Early English pilgrims (many blest with wanderlust!) wending their way for a cure or favour, perhaps both to the holy well beside "St Peter" and to the resting place of the relics of a St Aethelbert (one of many with that name). Relics were the physical remains of the saints said to be a repository of their virtues by the grace of God. Precise dating of their sepulture at Bydanford by the river Usan is impossible though they were no doubt enshrined in the monastery existing in 970 AD when Ostykel Bishop of Dorchester (on - Thames) was buried there.

Saints (people believed to have entered heaven through God-given exercise of spiritual power in their lives) often had their miracles recorded in a written "Life" of praise. The clergy encouraged veneration, as certain acclaimed saints (mostly of royal or noble lineage) seem "to have been able to exercise a powerful patronage", an example being Saint Etheldreda the undying defender of Ely Abbey's lands. The most popular appear to have been those regarded as "confessors" amongst their fellow monks and clergy; three hundred saints were culted in Anglo-Saxon England, each church having its own saints and relics. Usually encased in reliquaries - although sometimes in icons and statues - relics themselves were sealed within altars or, occasionally, the walls of churches.

Overland travel had not been easy at first in Anglo-Saxon England, but archaeological finds prove that it became easier during the mid-Saxon period. Though more money came to be minted in London than elsewhere, by the end of the tenth century it was not yet the capital of England. Rather, it was the centre of resistance against renewed Scandinavian raids where Edward the Elder (c. 870- 925) was able to reside - in the royal palace at Westminster.

It is interesting that a grave-cover of late tenth or eleventh century date from the medieval church of St Benet Fink by the Cornhill bears an interlaced pattern almost identical to that on one face of the runic stone in the tower of St Peter's Bedford.

R. R. Evans

Bibliography

1. "The Beginnings of Bedford', by David and Evelyn Baker 48pp. Beds. County Planning Dept (1985).
2. Anglo-Saxon England, vol 7. pp. 61-93 (1978) D.W. Rollason. "Lists of saints' resting places in Anglo-Saxon England"
3. "The English Saints-East Anglia, by Trefor Jones. 252pp. The Canterbury Press Norwich (1999)



In the interim I had a couple of thrillers published by Andre Deutsch.

I started Bedfordshire on Sunday (BoS) in 1977. I have always felt drawn to local politics - my mother was a legal executive first with Chelsea then Kensington and Chelsea council, and my step-father was chief public health officer for the same councils. BoS had a very different style from Bedfordshire Times, and over the years we pricked a lot of bubbles in that we voiced an alternative to the 'perceived' public opinion. I retired from active involvement in BoS in 2002 as soon as I was elected Mayor, and sold the company in August 2005. I no longer have any connection with BoS.

NETWORK What about the transition from journalist to Mayor?

FB When the Government approved the institution of elected mayors in the 1990s, the Borough Council of the time decided not to take this route. BoS ran a phone-in poll to see if people wanted the choice, and a large majority of respondents did.

A small group of people, including Phil Lotan, now my PA, decided to petition for a referendum which required support from five per cent of the borough's voters. We got the numbers just within the deadline. The Council briefly considered challenging the authenticity of some signatures, but gave way to public pressure.

There were eight candidates in the first vote for Mayor - one each from the three main political parties, one Green Party and four Independents, including me standing under the banner of Better Bedford, the party that I had started for the purpose. In the second election in May 2007 there was only one Independent - me. While I had generous financial support from some local people, most of the cost of the campaign came out of my own pocket.

(Editors: Frank Branston was re-elected in 2007 with a majority of more than 5000)



NETWORK Why have you now disbanded Better Bedford?

FB Better Bedford isn't disbanded. It remains a pressure group but will not put up candidates. In retrospect I believe that Better Bedford was a mistake. For a time it increased animosity from the political parties which made it more difficult to work with them, and after the first rush of enthusiasm it became evident that we were not going to break any mould so there didn't seem to be any point in knocking our heads against a brick wall. Since I became mayor allegations of corruption and dubious dealings have virtually died out so I think voters felt it safe to return to their tribal allegiances. There's an irony here if you think about it.

Yes, I am happy in my job – there is plenty to do. I had a good living in Bedford, our children were born and educated here, and I did well when I sold my business. Now I am glad that I can give something back to the town that has served me well. I hope I shall not leave any disasters behind me when I go, whether voluntarily or by the electorate's *force majeure*. I would like to be remembered as having done an OK job.

NETWORK Any thoughts about your successor?

FB I have some concerns about all elected Mayors. Initially they were elected in order to deal with specific problems. Only two out of the eleven mayors that have faced re-election have lost their seats but those two successors have tended to be in the bureaucratic party mould. Experience in Bedford shows that for an independent to get elected he or she has to be well-known. I don't really mind whether my successor is an Independent or a Party politician..... as long as the Party politician can be independent and not a party hack. The label does not matter: it's results that count.

NETWORK Do you anticipate there will be a shortage of candidates to succeed you?

FB Not from the ranks of the traditional Parties, but Independents have to bear the cost of campaigning themselves. Tory, Labour and Lib Dems are supported from their party funds. My campaign started one year before election day. Even

though there is a limit on how much one can spend once the election has been called it is expensive, and not many potential Independents will have the private resources to see them through..

NETWORK What will life be like after 2011?

FB Not an easy question. I'm a good walker and enjoy reading history. And I've travelled a good bit. But I don't have any hobbies as such. I can't stand bridge or playing cards. I'm not averse to gambling, but I don't like losing! I expect I'll find something to do. Apart from anything else, my wife, Marlies has supported me in whatever I have done and whatever risks I have run so it is her needs and desires that will have first call after 2011.

NETWORK Many thanks for allowing us to interview you, Mr. Mayor.

(Additional information can be found on the following websites:
www.frankbranstons.co.uk/wordpress
www.bedsafe.org
www.nirah.org)

NETWORK interview panel: Jim Davis, Mike Fudger, Liz McHale, Michael Potter

The Network Editorial Team (Mike Fudger, Liz McHale, Tricia Oakley and Michael Potter) would be very happy to receive your comments on this publication. www.stpeter.org.uk

Lansdowne Road, where a group of people (also known as Quakers) meet on Sundays and Thursdays to share in silent worship. And by silent I mean no planned words are spoken though some people may feel moved to share an insight; nobody leads the meeting; somebody just closes the door and after the allotted time – an hour or half an hour – that person shakes hands with the person next to them and the handshake goes round the room. This takes place in a simple, plain room with flowers on a central table. People sit in a circle and are silent. It is a companionable silence; it is a special silence; in the silence each focuses on the life of the spirit within him/her and seeks to respond to 'that of God' in each human being and in the world. In that silence extraordinary things can happen.

Why, as somebody who is a member of St Peter's church, was I attracted to this quite alien approach to worship? Why does it feel comfortable? Simply, there are no words. Words have meanings; words make statements; words articulate beliefs – this rather than that; words in creeds have a way of excluding other ideas. For some, the words of the liturgy in the church take them deeper into and towards the mystery of what we mean by God. The liturgical words, which have been used and refined over the centuries, can for some people carry with them profound truths. For me, the words can get in the way. Words make me want to question. I want to say: 'Yes, this I believe; this is credible'; 'No, that isn't helpful'. In short, my brain becomes more active than my heart and the 'noise' of

thinking about other people's insistent words interferes.

I am an occasional visitor to the Friends' Meeting House and do not presume to speak for them. So, I shall use some words which the Quakers have written about themselves. Their "sense of community does not depend on the profession of identical beliefs or a creed but from worshipping, sharing and working together. Quakerism is a way of life rather than a set of beliefs. Quakers seek to experience God directly, within themselves and in their relationships with others and the world around them." Some Christian churches and some adherents of other faiths would agree with the spirit of this. It is an approach I find helpful to counter the busyness and noisiness of daily life and it is one which provides space to make sense of and explore the spiritual journey we are each invited to take through life.

Sylvia MacDowell

**PICTURE PUZZLE
answer**

The photo is taken from the base of the statue of John Bunyan on St. Peter's Green – the editorial team has been referring to it as 'Bunyan's bum'.

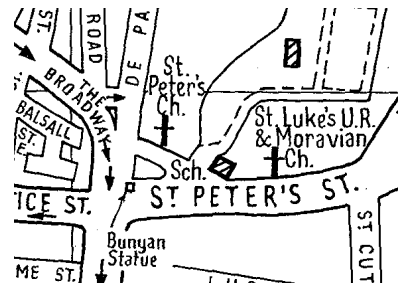
THE STREET

Ten things you might not know about St Peter's Green and thereabouts...

1. The Green was once part of St. Peter's Cemetery. (Remains were discovered when Bunyan's Statue was erected!)
2. What is now AGS Cars was once Banks' – where people flocked to buy their Meccano, Dinkys and Hornby trains.
3. St. Peter's Rectory was bought by the Harpur Trust in 1887 for use as workshops for the grammar school.
4. Broadway House was built on the site of a tea-shop!
5. Viscount de Vismes used to live at Bury House (facing the west-end of St Peter's Church. It was demolished in the early 1880's.
6. There used to be an Annual Wool Fair on St. Peter's Green.
7. Before the Granada cinema was built, there used to be a large mansion, built for Dr. Jabez Carter.
8. St. Peter's Church used to own what is now the Attica Club.
9. The Green used to be the site of 'the Hustings', for the

nomination of candidates for Parliament for the Borough of Bedford.

10. St. Peter's south porch used to be part of another church – St. Peter Dunstan – which was on the south side of the river.



The Importance of Silence

It can be hard today to find silence. Wherever you go, even in some local country parks, there is the distant hum of cars. Music accompanies us in shops or out of someone else's iPod in a train or bus. Then there is the 'noise' from our own minds constantly thinking what needs doing, planning ahead, coping with work, family and personal worries and it can be even harder to find silence from that internal sound!

Perhaps you are like me and need time for silence both externally and internally: time to pause, to stop doing and start being. Have you heard the expression that modern life can force us to become a "human doing rather than a human being"?

Over a number of years, I have been visiting the Friends Meeting House in

ST PETER'S PANTRY



This month we have a couple of seasonal recipes, one with the younger readers particularly in mind.

Chocolate Rice Krispie Easter Egg Nests by Annabel Karmel
Preparation time less than 30 mins
Cooking time less than 10 mins

Ingredients
 75g/3oz butter
 100g/4oz golden syrup
 60g/2½oz plain chocolate, broken in pieces
 50g/2oz Rice Krispies
 50g/2oz rolled oats
 30 sugar-coated mini chocolate Easter eggs

Method

1. Put the butter, golden syrup and chocolate into a small saucepan and melt together over a low heat.
2. Mix together the Rice Krispies and rolled oats and stir in the golden syrup mixture.
3. Line a bun tray with paper cases.
4. Fill the paper cases with the chocolate rice krispie mixture and make a hollow in the centre of each and fill each one of the nests with three Easter eggs.
5. Place in the fridge to set



A very dirty little boy came in from playing in the garden and asked his mother: 'Who am I?' Ready to play the game, she said, 'I don't know. Who are you?' 'WOW!' cried the child. 'Mrs Smith next door was right. She said I was so dirty that my own mother wouldn't recognise me.'

Hot Cross Bun Pudding
Preparation time less than 30 mins
Cooking time 30 mins to 1 hour

Ingredients

4 hot cross buns, each cut across twice horizontally to make three slices
 low fat spread or butter
 ½ lemon, grated rind
 2.5ml/½ tsp ground cinnamon
 2 eggs
 450ml/¾ pint milk (or half cream/half milk)
 Demerara sugar

Method

1. Reserve the top slices of bun, spread the other slices with low fat spread and then cut them in half. Arrange the slices spread side up in a round, deep 1.2l / 2 pint ovenproof dish.
2. Sprinkle with the lemon rind and cinnamon and finish with the four bun tops.
3. Beat the eggs with the milk and strain the mixture over the buns.
4. Sprinkle some demerara sugar on top. Bake at 180C/350F/Gas 4 for about 40 minutes or until the top is crisp and golden and the pudding is risen and set. Serve hot.

Serves 4

The Flour Advisory Bureau

London - Bedford Links c 450 –1068

When Angles, Saxons and Jutes from north-west Europe intruded into England in the fifth and sixth centuries AD, passage by river was a favoured way of penetrating inland. Newcomers who survived skirmishes with the resident British settled down in small, often rural groups, bringing with them their own language, customs, general way of life and Pagan religion & Pagan temples began to lose support in the fourth century; much later; with the arrival of Christianity, wooden churches began to appear in the landscape.

In the late seventh century Lichfield was the capital of the large area in central England called Mercia, and it seems likely that it was at that time that a minster church was built in Bedford, possibly by a small band of missionary monks sent out from that diocese. The building itself which may have been the first St Paul's, could not have lasted long in face of Viking raids but, nonetheless, conversion of the heathen Saxons had begun.

Religious zeal was such that minsters from a parent monastery generally developed into monasteries. Offa, powerful king of Mercia for an amazing thirty nine years and an early convert to Christianity, is said to have erected a

Benedictine monastery at Westminster in London (Lundenwic), the inhabitant of the island ("eyot") of Thornea, close to the north bank of the Thames, being mentioned in a charter of 785 AD. According to legend, St Peter himself had founded a monastery here, promising local inhabitants a good catch of fish if they rowed across the river! It was on this site that Westminster Abbey arose.

The record of Roger of Wendover, thirteenth century Benedictine monk and first great chronicler of St Alban's Abbey, indicates that King Offa was also the founder of a monastery at Verulamium dedicated to the martyr Alban. Of the King's burial he says that Offa having died in 796 at Offley (Herts), when he had nearly completed "his noble monastery", his body was taken to the town of Bedford, "where he was buried in royal manner in a certain chapel outside the city, situated on the bank of the river Usk". 'Usk' may well be a mistake for 'Use', an early form of the name 'Ouse' another being 'Usan'. It is believed that the north bank of the river was somewhat further north in Offa's time, thus making it likely that the chapel in which he was buried may either have been attached to an early church on the site of St Paul's or possibly in a similar position to the later Chapel of St Mary Herne, which existed c.1200 AD. Whatever the case, the final part of the tradition has it that Offa's tomb was swept away in a violent flood, chapel and all.

NETWORK Are you concerned about the atmosphere on the High Street on weekend evenings?

FB I don't fear it personally, although I understand why many people do. I have already said that I have no power over planning permission or the granting of licences. If Bedford eventually achieves unitary status, I will look to make provision for young people more effective. This is now part of the County Council's remit, not the Borough's. However, the North Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnership launched its BedSafe scheme to minimise the hazards in the town centre at night and that has been very successful.

NETWORK Do you think that the interfaith communities have any role to play in community action?

FB I have no religion and I am not a great fan of faith schools of any description because I believe them to be divisive particularly in a multi-cultural area like Bedford where it could be feasible to have schools of half a dozen different faiths. But where faiths have something positive to give to the community I am happy to work with them.

NETWORK How valuable do you consider the twinning arrangements for Bedford?


FB In principle, twinning is valuable but only if it is actively

supported by the community. The Bamberg twinning has had a very positive history. I cancelled the twinning with Arezzo because it was clear that Arezzo had no interest in Bedford. We are now twinned with Rovigo in northern Italy that seems more enthusiastic, but there needs to be enthusiasm from this side as well. I reduced our association with Wlocawek to a partnership rather than a twinning because there was limited interest from this end. Wloclawek itself is very keen. There has been interest shown by a city in China in twinning with Bedford, but I feel that would not be very positively received here. I am acutely aware that many people feel that twinning is really an opportunity for borough councillors and officers to go junketing abroad at public expense.

NETWORK What is your motivation, and are you still happy in your job?

FB I used to write a lot about what was wrong with Bedford which was a town in decline, and I had a powerful desire to change that. Bedford needs to maximise its merits and advantages in the face of regional competition from Milton Keynes, Northampton and Cambridge. I see the future of Bedford as a place of some historical interest where visitors can come to relax and enjoy themselves in congenial surroundings. Nirah and the redevelopment in the town are part of the plan to achieve this.

DIRECTORY

Clergy	Mike Fudger (Rector) 354543 Cyril Harris (Hon. Asst)344927	
Churchwardens	Alison Davis 267480 Maureen Tompkins 360495	
Assistant Churchwardens	Dave Hoskins 304424 Bruce Reid 267137	
PCC Secretary	Tricia Oakley 211499	
Treasurers	Hannah Potter 352675 Anthony Chestney 351719	
Planned Giving Officer	Gloria Clarke 357676	
Electoral Roll Officer	Jean Brown 270052	
Bookings:		
Chapter House	Ann Lawrence 358950	
St. Cuthbert's Hall	Hannah Potter 352675	
		
Church Flowers:	Hazel Bentley 353424 Gwen Farmer	

MARCH DIARY

- 4th Lent Group at the Hoskins' 7.30pm. BCoF Film and discussion 'The Imam and the Pastor' 7.30pm in the Chapter House
- 6th Spring Clean 11.15am onwards. Lent Group at Heather's 2.15pm. Education & Mission Group meets at Do's 4pm.
- 7th Spring Clean all day. First Friday 7.30pm
- 8th Spring Clean 10am-4pm
- 9th Music Workshop 2.30pm
- 11th Lent Group at the Hoskins' 7.30pm. PCC meeting 7.30pm
- 12th Concert 8pm.
- 13th Lent Group at Heather's 2.15pm
- 25th Stewardship Group meets at the Rectory 3.30pm
- 28th First Friday 7.30pm
- 29th OU Choir sings Evensong 4pm

On the **Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings** during Holy Week we shall again be joining the people of St Paul's for services of Holy Communion at 8pm.

Further details in the weekly notice sheets.