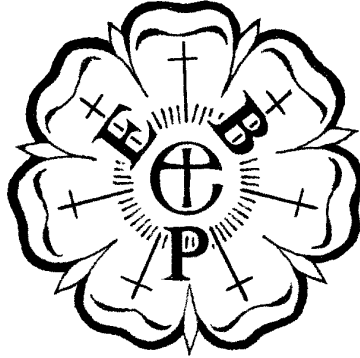


East Bristol Partnership Summer Newsletter 2009



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Start! 2009 and St Mary's Saturday Lunches

Mandy Young - EBP 'Start!' Coordinator

As many of you will be aware, St Mary's and the East Bristol Partnership have been hosting a lunch on a Saturday morning twice a month for any in need. There are between 20 and thirty people attending these lunches now, including young families. Chris Evans has pointed out that some of these families have been expressing a need for spiritual support and growth and has asked that we run the 'Start' course or something similar. I propose that we do this in September. This is a call to all those who feel this would be for them to be involved with:

- Prayer support
- As Start session facilitators (only one or two out of 6 would be fine)
- As hospitality providers (tea coffee and biscuit at the beginning of the evening)
- As venue providers (St Mary's Parish rooms have been used twice before; are they available on a Tuesday or Thursday evening? What about any of the other parish rooms?)
- As creche providers for a daytime course

Please contact Mandy Young if you feel able to support with this and let me know if you could manage a daytime (possibly a Monday) or evening course on a Tuesday or Thursday evening.

Tel 965 7302, micro_ltd@blueyonder.co.uk

Also Chris has said that they would really appreciate more support with the lunches themselves perhaps extending to one or two more per month, with play support for the young children attending, and listening support for the adults. If you feel called to any of these areas, perhaps on a once a month basis please contact Chris or any of the

lunch group team. The lunches take place on a Saturday between 12 and 2pm and usually involve soup and a sandwich.

40 years on and breaking new ground: Ugandan Diary from the East Bristol Partnership

by Revd. Susan Allman

4th May 2009: Arrival of Revd. Romans Serunjogi, Mission Co-ordinator for Central Buganda Diocese to stay in the East Bristol Partnership for two weeks. How blessed we are! Today Romans is accompanied by Revd. Tabitha Ddembe, his friend and counterpart in West Buganda Diocese, who is in the UK for the first time and sensibly wearing a fleece jacket to keep warm.

My hope was to grow the link in East Bristol. Having been to Uganda twice, I am only too aware of the wonderful way in which we can be enriched by our Ugandan friends. I hoped and prayed that the next two weeks would demonstrate that for all of us.

Also, I wanted Romans to experience something very different from the bigger churches he normally visits. He is mission co-ordinator in Central Buganda Diocese; I felt sure he had insights to share with us.

Over the next two weeks Romans led assemblies in St. Matthias and Dr. Bell's School, Two Mile Hill Infant and Junior Schools and Air Balloon Hill Infants School. He was a real hit with the children, speaking about Uganda and the schools he runs as part of his mission. His magic tricks were a particular favourite, as he talked about diversity, but reminded the children, "We are all one." We ate school dinners with the children. I watched with embarrassment as some of the children pushed their meals aside. I thought of the children in Romans' schools, who would be glad of anything to eat in the middle of the school day.

Most of the schools we visited are not church schools. Romans was scandalised that we had to be careful about how we spoke of our faith in a multi-cultural setting. When I explained the history of one of our older schools, he replied, "Do you mean to say the church started the school, the Board of Education took it over and now we can't talk about

Jesus?” Accompanying Romans in East Bristol was certainly an opportunity to view our own culture through a very different lens.

Down on the Farm

One morning we visited a local dairy farm. Romans was wide-eyed with amazement when he heard of the staggering yield of milk the cows there gave every day. The farmer explained that their diet was supplemented with maize to keep them healthy and productive. I blushed as I thought of the two maize mills Romans has set up in Central Buganda Diocese to improve the nutrition of the local children. I blushed again when the farmer showed us his state-of-the-art electric bore hole, which provides clean drinking water for the cows. I could not help thinking of the lakeside village of Lubajja some of us had visited in 2005, where there was no sanitation and no clean drinking water at all; the City Deanery churches have worked so hard to enable them to construct pit latrines, and a basic bore hole and pump so that the children can grow up in a healthy environment.

The Parable of the Great Feast

Romans was a great encouragement to us in our local mission. We visited the Saturday drop-in lunch at St. Mary’s, Fishponds; a fairly new venture. Volunteers were waiting inside, but as yet there were no diners. Romans and I went into the local park and told people on park benches and in the children’s play area about the offer of a free lunch. Soon the tables inside were full. “This place is in a great location for mission,” Romans said encouragingly. “You are next to a park where you can do things outside and so close to the shops (on Fishponds Road).”

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

The highlight of the two weeks was the day the Uganda Roadshow came to East Bristol, featuring the Anglican Youth Fellowship Band. The atmosphere as they led assemblies in Air Balloon Hill Junior School was electric. The children responded enthusiastically to the dancing

and singing; volunteers were able to joining in with both dancing and drumming at the front.

We moved on to Bristol Brunel Academy, the former Speedwell Secondary School, where the band would perform in the reception area during the students' three, overlapping, half-hour lunch breaks.

The Vice-Principal watched anxiously as they unloaded electronic instruments and amplifiers. She reminded us that it was exam time and that we would need to keep the volume at an appropriate level, as some students would be in class at all times.

The first group of students began to appear. The band began to sing. The lyrics were very openly Christian: "Hold on to Jesus; he is your best friend, he will not let you fall." There was a bit of jeering and my heart sank for the band. I could see that members of the band had noticed the jeers, but they were undaunted. Those of us who were with them prayed silently for a miracle, the band took their music to a new level and the miracle happened.

Suddenly there were students all around us and gathering on the walkways above, at levels two and three.

They danced and cheered, joined in with the actions, took pictures with their mobile phones and mobbed the band for autographs afterwards. This happened three times, as each successive group of students took their lunch break.

In the final break, Revd.Tabitha Ddembe, who was with us for the day, started dancing for joy in the middle of the arena. One of the older boys approached her, tapped her on the shoulder and danced energetically with her during the last song.

The Vice-Principal's fears were laid aside; not a single member of staff complained. In fact many admitted to having a tear in their eye, the Principal told me afterwards. The Academy was pleased to be able to showcase the occasion to a visiting group of head-teachers who arrived part-way through. "They think we are wonderful now!" said the V-P.

Perhaps it was that we had given the young people, "The chance to show a different side of themselves," in the words of my youngest son.

Perhaps, but I have no doubt that the Spirit moved among us on that unforgettable afternoon; and BBA rocked!

Coming down from the Mountain-Top

Now Romans, Tabitha and the band have gone back to Uganda. They have to get on with their work and we have to get on with ours. We have shared some memorable times and made new friends.

I still have the niggling doubt that our Ugandan visitors realise quite how much they have given us from their side of the link, but those of us who met and shared with them are in no doubt. We have been blessed, enriched and encouraged, as well as perhaps being made a little more conscious of just how difficult it is for those of us who are materially wealthy to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Prayer used at Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches,
Vancouver 1983

“We have squandered the gift of life.
The good life of some is built on the pain of many;
The pleasure of the few on the agony of millions.
To you we lift our outspread hands.
We thirst for you in a thirsty land.
We worship death in our quest to possess ever more things;
We worship death in our hankering over our own security,
As if our own survival, our own peace,
As if life were divisible,
As if love were divisible,
As if Christ had not died for all of us.
To you we lift our outspread hands. Amen.”

**Letter from Revd. Romans Serunjogi from Uganda, thanking
the East Bristol churches for their hospitality during his visit
in May 2009**

Dearest friends and mentors,

Firstly I regret the 'blackout' since I returned from your beautiful country. I request you to forgive me for that as things have been really pulling me in all directions thus rendering me being all over the place. [please excuse my english too] I had never spoken English until I was thirty, yet now I am ministering and writing in this strange language. If SEAN is pronounced SHON why is BEAN not pronounced BHON?

I need also to apologise for this very introduction below but have to speak my mind. This month while flying to the UK, all the dark feelings of psychological burnout crept over me. I was having a full -fledged pity party, feeling sorry for myself and the hard life I was leading. With a start, I began to tremble with fear about things I was going to tell my friends in the UK. What are they going to ask me? What message am I going to preach whilst there? How am I going to ask them for some more money to start project x or consolidate project y, purchase that piece of land at z or complete the building at b. I thought I was becoming too much to my friends and seems like taking them for granted. It is hard on the flesh to be travelling and asking for money day after day and night after night. It was almost becoming a sales operation for me, and I stopped feeling good. I remember when I was still constructing the corn flour mill, some people asked me about its progress. I told them that I had two types of news about the factory – the bad and good- so which one do you want me to start with? They said the good one first. I told them that I had secured all the money I needed to extend the power line to factory and purchase of the three phase transformer. They were so thrilled with the news and then asked me the bad news. I told them that the bad news was that this money was still in their pockets!! God loves a cheerful giver and He says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive". Therefore I should never miss an opportunity to provide people with the chance to experience this

blessing. Just like a salesman and making my audience feel guilty!! Because of this, I was becoming angry and judgmental. As I felt uglier and uglier inside, depression settled in. In the middle of the sea of all those thoughts, suddenly I felt the presence of someone else. I realized the Spirit of the Lord was speaking to me. "I am not in any trouble", He chided, "that I need someone to beg for Me or help Me out. I made no promises that I will not keep. It is not the largeness of the work that matters, but only doing what I command. All I ask of you is that you be a servant. For all who join with you in the work, it will be a privilege- a light burden for them." The words echoed in my mind. This is His work, I told myself. Why am I making it mine? The burden is light, Why am I making it heavy? The work is a privilege. Why am I making it a chore? I instantly repented of my sinful attitudes, God was sharing His work with me, and He was speaking of others who are ready and willing to join me in my ministries. I rejoiced and prayed that my friends and supporters too would find the burden to be light.

I am very very grateful for the meetings I had with Alan and Margret Reader, Rev. Sue and Eric Allman and of course the wonderful time I spent with Clare, Yvonne and Ian Hopton. I learnt and benefitted a lot from these wonderful people of God. They energised, re-equipped, refilled, refueled and re-tyred me for the ministry so much so that even my preaching, approach and attitude now have changed. My posture is different. Today the pressure is off.

Since the work of my ministries in Uganda was initiated by God, it doesn't need the worries and guidance of man. Whether our goal is to help hundreds of orphans and needy children in our schools, or it is starting hospitals, God cares and I still can approach this work without stress. For this is His work, and our burden is easy.

Now friends I ask you to picture this very possible scene. You finish your life on this earth. You arrive in heaven. There, enthroned in all His glory, is our Lord Jesus Christ. The other saints and martyrs you've often read about are there: Abraham. Moses, Peter and Paul, plus great loved ones like Mary Poor and others who obeyed the gospel also are there. They are all welcoming you into heaven. You walk around in

bliss, filled with joy and praises. All the promises of the Bible are true. The streets really are gold, and the glory of God shine brightly, replacing the sun, moon and stars beyond the power of any man to describe. Then, scores of strangers whom you don't recognize start to gather around you with happy smiles and outstretched hands. They embrace you with affection and gratitude. "Thank you, Thank you" they repeat in a chorus. With great surprise you ask "what did I do? I have never seen you before. But what exactly did I do?" You ask. Then, like a replay of a videotape, your mind goes back to a day when a widow came to your office with a chap in rags. She told you about her lost husband and the middle of her suffering and how you offered not only prayers but also free education and other financial and moral support to the boy. She narrates how your help relieved them so much- making it possible for their children to study. Others assert, "We never had a chance to see you face to face in the world. Now we can see you here and spend all eternity rejoicing with you over the victories of the Lord. Now Jesus Himself appears. You bow as He quotes the familiar Scripture verses to you. "I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed Me... Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt 25:35-40) Is this just a fanciful story, or will it be reality for many Christians in Bristol? I believe it could happen as Christians arrive in heaven and see how they have laid up treasure where moth and rust cannot corrupt. The truth of the matter is this: You have done as a whole family of God to share with one another, as the New Testament church did. The body of Christ in the Third World is looking to the body of Christ in the West to link hands with them in this time of harvest and to support the work with the material blessings that God has showered upon them.

Jesus is no longer walking on earth. We are His body; he is our head. That means our lips are the lips of Jesus. Our hands are His hands; our eyes, His eyes; our hope, His hope. My wife and children belong to Jesus. My money, my talent, and friends – all belong to Jesus.

I could list many things you did for me to make me feel at home during my visit but I know that the British people have suffered enough therefore I do not want to abuse you with an endless letter. You of course know how much you mean in my life, family and ministries. Your hospitality was beyond my comprehension. It is my prayers that the Almighty God rewards you a thousand times for the time, love, hospitality, prayers, gifts, and support you "invested" in me. In our regular prayer meetings, we constantly remember to thank God for your generosity.

May the good Lord reward you all abundantly,

Yours in His service,

Romans

**Feel out of the loop in a world of email communication? –
Help might be at hand!**

Mark Gartside – East Bristol Partnership Coordinator

In a Partnership of seven churches, spread across quite a wide area, communication is key if we want to grow together as a community. Given the fact that we so infrequently meet together as a Partnership, receiving regular email communication and looking at the Partnership website, can make you feel like you're more a part of what's going on in the wider community, and can help to spark ideas about things you might be able to do in your own church.

I realise that there might be several things putting some people off 'getting online'. One aspect is the cost of actually buying a computer and the monthly bill for your internet connection.

The other hurdle is actually getting to grips with the technology itself – Well help might be at hand in the form of our local libraries.

There are three libraries within the East Bristol Partnership Area

- Fishponds Library on Fishponds Road – tel. 9038560 – Open 9.30am -5pm daily – closed Wednesday & Sunday - open until 7pm on a Thursday.

- Hillfields Library, Summerleaze, Hillfields – tel. 9038576 – Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 10am-1pm & 2-5pm, Saturdays 10am-1pm & 2-4pm
- And St George Library, Church Road, St George – tel. 9038523 – Open daily 9.30am-1pm & 2-5pm – closed Thursday & Sunday – open until 7pm on a Monday

The libraries all offer free ‘Taster Sessions’ on computers tailored to the needs of the individual. These cover the basics like turning on a computer, using a mouse, knowing where to click to get the internet up, and how to set up an email account and search for information online. An experienced tutor will sit with you and guide you through each step, and library staff will be available to give ongoing support at future library visits.

These taster sessions happen at

- Fishponds on a Friday afternoon from 2-3pm
- Hillfields on Wednesday 9th September, then subsequent dates to be confirmed
- And St George on the third Wednesday of every month.

You need to ring in advance on the above numbers to book a place.

Once they’ve helped you set up an email address I’ll be able to send you emails about what’s going on in the Partnership, and if you need to get in touch with me, you’ll be able to email me at

- info@eastbristol.org.uk

You’ll also be able to look at the East Bristol Partnership website, which has an up-to-date calendar of upcoming events in the East Bristol Partnership. The web address is

- www.eastbristol.org.uk

But they’ll be able to help you with all this at the libraries.

Once you feel comfortable using the computers and the internet at the libraries, you’ll be able to ring up and book a session – up to one hour –

to use a computer during opening hours. It is free to use the library's computers!

Like it or loathe it, I'm sure everyone can appreciate that communication via computers is becoming more and more a necessary evil in our society – especially in communities like the East Bristol Partnership which has seven different meeting centres within it. Hopefully by helping more people in the Partnership to get online and learn the basics of computers, we'll be able to grow together more as a community!

Otters – The East Bristol Partnership's Youth Group for Pre-Teens

by Mark Gartside

In July and August I had the privilege of being asked to help out with the Otters Youth Group – which takes place on Tuesday evenings during term time from 7-8.30pm, based at All Saints.

The first session I helped out with was a Rounders evening, and the second was a Drama evening, which I led. Both evenings were tremendous fun, and I was bowled over by the intelligence, enthusiasm and commitment of the members of the group.

In the drama workshop the Otters managed to put on an improvised Pantomime from scratch, and perform it for their parents when they came to pick them up –all within an hour and a half. I was so impressed, and I look forward to maybe doing another drama workshop with them next term.

Caroline Vennard, the group's coordinator, works tirelessly to create a fun and varied programme for the group. The planning meeting for next term is on 4th August at 7pm in All Saints church hall. The group needs at least one male and one female adult to run each session – CRB checks go through the church. So as well as trying to attract new members, the group cannot survive without enough grown-up volunteers to run it.

The group is open to pre-teen children – roughly school years 5-7, from across the Partnership area. Please ring Caroline on 9395791 for further information. Once the programme for the Autumn term has been finalised, it will be available on the Partnership Website on the Young People's page.

You could be looking for.... Equipping God's People

- Starting Autumn 2009
- A course one evening a fortnight for 2 years, with written and practical assignments
- Explore the Bible and Christian faith and serve by leading worship and preaching
- This could lead to becoming a Lay Minister
- RUN BY THE DIOCESE OF BRISTOL & THE METHODIST CHURCH, BRISTOL DISTRICT
- Contact Mrs Stella O'Brien, Church House, 23 Great George Street, BRISTOL, BS1 5QT
- Tel 0117 90 60 100
Email stella.obrien@bristoldioocese.org

A Pilgrim Adventure

By Anthea Merrick of St Aidan's

Many of you will have heard of the non-profit organisation called Pilgrim Adventures that started up in Downend many years ago sending 'Pilgrims' to remote 'Celtic' centres for short breaks.

The firm is about to change its name to JOURNEYING but Bernard and I have just returned from an ADVENTURE to the remotest inhabited island in Great Britain, Fair Isle, halfway between Orkney and Shetland. It took two days to get there and the last bit by the Mail boat 'The Good Shepherd' couldn't happen because the seas were too rough. A combination of scheduled and a chartered six-seater plane eventually got all thirteen of us there.

Fair Isle is a gentle emerald jewel of an isle whose 60 inhabitants never lock doors, welcome visitors and encourage you to walk everywhere. They have been recycling for centuries, use wind power and everyone seems to have three or four jobs (the post office lady was also the fire crew at the airstrip).

Our group must have taken up most of the B & B accommodation on the island and we were in the lighthouse keepers' cottages, a fish store and a tiny cottage sleeping four. Once on the isle, after a few days, it didn't seem to matter if we never got off.

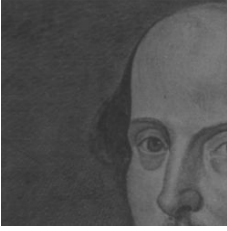
The 'Fair Isle knitting' is still going strong and when cruise ships call they open up their hall and everyone mans it with tea and scones and displays of arts and crafts.

Once on the island we soon settled into the rhythm of daily worship, companionship, and teams for self-catering, interspersed by lots of fresh air, Puffin watching and doing nothing in a beautiful place. We were each invited to lead the evening worship on something that had inspired us that day.

We would recommend this type of holiday/retreat/pilgrimage to refresh and renew mind and body with people of all faiths who enjoy the simple Celtic rhythms of prayer, thanks and praise in beautiful places.

Certainly an ADVENTURE this year, a JOURNEY next year? Try it! w.w.w.pilgrim-adventure.org.uk. Next years' brochure out Nov '09. For more informal information contact us through Mark.

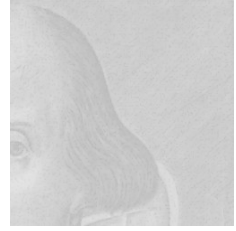
Bernard & Anthea Merrick.



To be or not to be, that
is the question...

Arts at St Aidan's

invites you to an
evening of...



Shall I compare thee to
a Summer's day?

Sharing Shakespeare...

Bring along your favourite soliloquy, duologue, speech or sonnet from
Shakespeare, and be prepared to give it your most theatrical reading!

Hopefully discussion, laughter and tears will ensue...

Tuesday 11th August – 7.30pm

St Aidan's Church, Fir Tree Lane, St George, Bristol, BS5 8TZ

Ffi. Call 07941 543 099, email artsatstaidans@gmail.com,

or see www.myspace.com/artsatstaidans



All the world's a stage...

Event FREE!



Romeo, Romeo wherefore
art thou Romeo?

Contact Details

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