On 9th September 2015, HM The Queen will become the longest serving monarch in British history, having reigned for over 62 years. At about 5:30 pm she will exceed the 23,226 day and just under 17 hour reign of Queen Victoria who acceded to the throne on 20 June 1837 and reigned until 22 January 1901.

There is no formal Royal event marking this moment: it is business as usual for the Queen, who will be in Scotland, opening a railway in the Borders. She is not, currently, the longest serving monarch in the world. King Bhumibol of Thailand has reigned for 68 years. Prayers have been written specially for churches to mark the occasion:

**Collect for use after the Collect of the Day at BCP services**

Almighty God, who hast set our gracious sovereign Queen Elizabeth upon the throne of this realm, and given her to surpass all others in the years of her reign: Receive our heartfelt thanks for her service to her people, confirm and encourage her in the continuance of the same, and keep her in thy heavenly wisdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who took the form of a servant for our sake, and reigneth now in glory with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

**A modern-language prayer drawing on Philippians 2**

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ exchanged the glory of a heavenly throne for the form of a servant, we thank you that you have given Elizabeth our Queen a heart to serve her people, and have kept her devoted in this service beyond all who were before her: encourage us by her example to serve one another, and to seek the common good, until you call us all to reign with Christ in your eternal kingdom. Amen.
Bishop’s Letter

The Bishop of Bedford writes about......

Taking risks

The crashed plane was a set of oil drums filled with diesel; the casualties two dummies; but all the same the crew of the Airfield Volunteer Fire Service, who support the Shuttleworth air shows, went about their tasks with energy and commitment. Soon the fire was out, the casualties receiving treatment, and the situation contained. Yet all the time there had been in the background the knowledge that a few days earlier in Shoreham it had been a real plane and lives had been lost. We hold the victims of that tragedy in our prayers including the pilot, Andy Hill, who lives in Hertfordshire and is known to clergy and laity in the diocese.

It is a great privilege to be a Patron of the Airfield Volunteer Fire Service and I am delighted that this year they have been the richly deserved recipients of the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service.

However, as I say, on that training evening there was a deep sadness after the tragedy at the Shoreham Air Show - the Hawker Hunter jet had often been at the Shuttleworth shows - and much conversation about the events, not least the nature of risk. At the surface level it was talk about the limitations on aerobatics by historic jets imposed by the Civil Aviation Authority; about how you couldn’t exclude all risks (even if the planes never took off); and about the joy that such flying days brought to so many. Underneath this was deeper issues of how to balance the skill of pilots and the delight at what they can do, with proper concerns about safety and the assessment of risk. Whilst no one endorsed recklessness, all were concerned that excessive risk aversion might go too far. There is delight in those ‘magnificent men (sic) and their flying machines’.

As Christians God calls us to live for him with confidence. It is to take the risk of engaging with others and the world around us; to take the risk of going deeper into God’s love. It is those risks that are the rural church that I was with last night who are trying again to reach out to children; the possibility of establishing an Eden Community that invites people to commit to an urban area of need; those who come for confirmation and make their confession of faith; and so much, much more. That stepping out in faith - taking the risk – that is the heart of flourishing and growing discipleship.

Yet all too often there is tendency to play it safe. We don’t want to take the risk of being rebuffed. Our endeavours might fail. Even worse we might lose money! Which is all possible, but then we never know those joys of people responding to our talk of Jesus; we never know the tentative initiative that blossoms and flourishes; we never know how our limited resources might have multiplied. We never become the church that Christ calls us to be.

Of course there is due diligence. It is right for instance following Shoreham that aerobatics over main roads should be reviewed. Similarly taking risks for Christ is not recklessness. But it is always to be a disciple of the one who calls us to take up our cross, and that is risky!

+Richard Bedford

bishopbedford@stalbans.anglican.org
Waterways Chaplaincy is on the move...

The word ‘chaplain’ leads us immediately to think of schools, tertiary education, hospitals, prisons and the armed forces. Probably not ‘waterways’.
Yet Britain is crisscrossed by an amazing network of canals and rivers on and around which live and work thousands of people. We may think of them as recreational resources, but the colourful narrow boats and Dutch barges lining our towpaths, as well as purpose-built houseboats, provide comfortable homes and business bases to a large mobile population embracing all ages. Here in the Diocese of St Albans, the Grand Union Canal is a major feature for many who live in towns and villages nearby eg. Watford, Kings Langley, Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted.

Inland waterways people may be involved with maintenance of its marinas and other service providers, or they may be recreational day boaters, canoeists, anglers or towpath walkers. One thing is certain: they all share a powerful connection with the rivers and canals which, beautiful though they are, can conceal human need as effectively as any suburban street, hospital ward, college or even regimental mess.

For some years there have been chaplains to waterways people, but 2015 has seen a move forward in the appointment, albeit part time, of a Senior Chaplain, the Revd Mark Chester. Workplace Matters, based at the Diocese of St Albans Office, is developing the fast growing Waterways Chaplaincy with Mark.

‘I’m new to the waterways but not to chaplaincy itself,’ says Mark, formerly Vicar of St Paul’s in Camberley. ‘I have been an armed forces chaplain for many years alongside more traditional ministry and the half-time waterways chaplaincy role is itself alongside continuing engagement with the army, so I’m excited by the vision for what needs to be done but, of course, can’t do it all on my own.

‘Chaplaincy to the waterways is expanding and being appreciated by the major national managing bodies. There are chaplains working in many regions already, including alongside the Grand Union Canal, providing pastoral support to waterways people but I am very keen to recruit recently retired but active clergy as waterways chaplains to work with me as well as lay people – especially in the St Albans Diocese and further north in the midlands where many canals and rivers converge.

‘These chaplains are attractive pastoral figures who, just as they might in a parish setting, keep their ears to the ground to provide support for those whose waterway related lifestyles isolate them from mainstream resources and cut them off from other pastoral support.

‘Chaplains might work for between half a day to two days a week, on ‘their own’ stretch of waterway. They can work when they like but they are part of a very supportive nationwide network whose ministry I am there to encourage and facilitate.

‘Pay? None! Expenses? Same again!’ says Mark, ‘but no previous experience is required, just a sense that God might be seeking to use existing pastoral skills and enthusiasm in a way which could prove very satisfying.

I know that some clergy have found their waterways involvement a really excellent ‘bridge’ between full-time parish work and full retirement. We are especially keen to appoint more chaplains in the Diocese before the colder weather sets in and life on the canals becomes bleaker for some.

Revd Mike Shaw who set up the chaplaincy in 2010 explains “My thinking about Waterways Chaplaincy was prompted by the Salvation Army Seeds of Exclusion Report which in turn triggered my thinking around the 3 D’s - the disillusioned, disadvantaged and disappeared-on our waterways. It’s a privilege to be alongside such unique individuals providing a confidential listening ear often some very practical support.”

If this is something you want to know more about, please contact Revd Mark Chester, Senior Chaplain Waterways, Workplace Matters, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans, AL1 1HE or visit www.workplacematters.org.uk or email waterways@workplacematters.org.uk.
This November, St Albans Diocese will be helping churches to meet a very particular need. A conference is being arranged to raise awareness and improve the welcome in church for children and young people on the autistic spectrum. The free conference is believed to be the first of its kind in the Church of England. Its aim is to help produce more welcoming and inclusive churches. The conference is being organised by the Diocesan Youth Officer and Children’s Adviser. It is a response to the perception that this need that was going unmet in many circumstances, with the risk that children’s behaviour might be wrongly categorised as disruptive or naughty. The conclusion of many parents is that others in church simply don’t understand their child’s behaviour. That makes this an issue that affects more than just children. Children come with parents and a study in the United states of families with a child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) showed that one-third of such families moved away from a church because they felt a lack of welcome for their child. By contrast, families with children with physical disabilities are more likely to report that they are welcome in church. So this conference is really for everyone in church who doesn’t identify as having an ASD.

Speakers at the conference have been carefully chosen for what they can pass on to others. Anne Memmott, herself on the autistic spectrum, is one of two keynote speakers, who has much to share about the authentic experience of those in church, who live on the spectrum. The other speaker is Dr Irene Broadley-Westerduin, an educational psychologist who can pass on a wealth of relevant insight and experience.

The idea came to Dean Pusey, Diocesan Youth Officer because of his own experiences with people with ASD. Also, he and the Revd Ruth Pyke, Diocesan Children’s Adviser, were increasingly approached for advice about how to care for children and young people with ASD in church, and they realised that something had to be done.
Living God’s Love: seeing the future clearly

The year-long Living God’s Love listening exercise has drawn to a close.

SeeRound has been given a glimpse of some of the positive and a few not so positive comments to come out of it, ahead of a paper going to Diocesan Synod in October which will make recommendations about the way forward. On the whole the feedback from the listening exercise is fairly positive.

There were 70 face-to-face listening exercises with clergy and laity from all 20 Deaneries. In addition, there were 520 responses to the online survey and 8 groups (PCCs and others) conducted their own self-guided exercises. In total, that represents a lot of listening. Here are some of the things that were said, and have been heard.

General Comments:

We need as clergy to look upwards, inwards and outwards – most churches have a leaning to one of three: LGL creates more of a balance.

We should do (even?) more to meet people “where they are at” and not be fixated with growth at the main Sunday services.

LGL is a useful framework.

There’s a danger that MAP & LGL will become just a box ticking exercise. If you want to add value, you need to offer a toolkit that will support the parishes.

Communication is always a problem. Getting things known by people in the pews. There is a nucleus of informed and interested people but a wide circle of those who either don’t understand or who don’t want to know.

Going deeper into God:

We’ve had to double the provision of our youth ministry as there are just so many young people coming to our new service.

We’ve placed a real focus on trying to grow people in their faith.

I have a deeper sense of God’s call and much needed presence in my life.

Transforming Communities:

‘We’ve really turned around our attitude to secular groups – there used to be an attitude of ‘this is our hall, do what we say’. Now we’re much more about ‘this is our hall, what can we do to help you?’

People have really started stepping up and understanding that they have a part to play.

Making new disciples:

We need to build stepping stones from community to church that help bring people to God.

Our social enterprise is a way that the church can come alive in the community. It is based on the belief that if we can facilitate activity with the church at its heart, we may draw people to church by example.
Buy local, buy British, ask questions, says CofE

“If other national industries like coal manufacturing have disappeared because production is cheaper elsewhere or businesses become unsustainable, why is food production different? Why shouldn’t the market dictate the price and the future? The answer is: we need to eat each day. This is at the heart of the milk price issue: every litre of milk costs about 30-31p to produce, but currently, the farmer is receiving on average 7p less, in some cases considerably less. It is not possible to sustain a business and livelihood by consistently selling a product at less than the cost of production. This low milk price results from international factors and the removal of quotas as well as competition between UK supermarkets.

Assuming that what we are not able to produce ourselves we can import denies our responsibility to promote access to food for everyone in the world as a matter of justice. Every tonne of food imported that could be grown in the UK is a tonne of food that is not available to feed the poorest in the world. Developed countries will always have enough money to buy the food they need on international markets, pushing up prices if food is scarce, leaving millions of people living below the poverty line in developing countries without.

Each year we produce only enough food to feed ourselves for 226 days. The international supply chain ensures that we have enough food every day of the year, huge diversity and that we can eat certain things whatever the season. The price of staple foodstuffs such as wheat, coffee, soya, rice and cocoa amongst many others, is set by the international trading markets with all the complexity and volatility that goes with them. Not every country can afford it when prices are higher. Food riots in 2007, 2008 and 2010 arose because large proportions of the populations of developing countries could not buy staples such as rice and flour. Some argue that the uprisings of the Arab Spring were partly triggered by rising food prices.

Part of the problem for the UK dairy industry is a low international milk price, which in turn has been influenced by Russian sanctions on the EU, preventing the import of dairy products, particularly cheese and powdered milk. Politics has just as big an influence on food prices as does the weather and the international market price. Dairy farmers also tend to be price takers rather than price makers, because milk is produced in bulk and can only be stored for a very limited time, and has to be sold on to someone who can do something with it quickly. Unless a farmer is bottling and distributing it or making cheese or yoghurt themselves, another company has to do it. Changing who you supply is not seamless or quick.

So what can we do? Prayer is essential. Christians have a responsibility to pray regularly about the impact of low prices on the farmer and farmworkers and their families and their reduced household incomes. They are likely to be suffering from increased levels of stress, with depression and the risk of suicide real problems for some. So great are the problems now, that good sustainable farm businesses will be at risk of going bust. The Arthur Rank Centre has produced a prayer but you can use personally or as part of regular worship. Christians are also consumers and can support the UK dairy industry through our buying choices and by asking questions as part of our thankfulness to God for his provision for us. The prophetic voice can come through by politely asking supermarkets, coffee shops, restaurants and other retailers about the origin of products and if a fair price was paid to the supplier. If enough of us do this, it will produce greater transparency and we will be more able to make better informed decisions about what we are purchasing.

Roughly half the milk produced in the UK is used to make dairy products. You can identify UK sourced products by the Red Tractor Logo on many packets, if not look out for the Union Jack, and if you have time read the small print on the packaging. It takes roughly 10 litres of milk to make 1 kilogramme of hard cheese such as cheddar, so buying cheese, yoghurt and butter produced in the UK from British milk can really help. When buying liquid milk Tesco, Sainsbury’s, Waitrose, Marks & Spencer’s and The Co-operative all source from British milk can really help.

When buying liquid milk Tesco, Sainsbury’s, Waitrose, Marks & Spencer’s and The Co-operative all source directly from dairy farmers and have a cost plus pricing model, which means the farmer receives more for the milk than it cost to produce. In recent days, Morrisons has introduced a new product where the consumer pays 10p extra for the milk, which will then be paid directly back to the farmer. This development seems to absolve the supermarket from its responsibility to pay a fair price and puts the onus on the public to shop responsibly and pay more. Asda, Aldi and Lidl have also recently raised the price they pay for milk, but still a few pence short of the cost of production. It’s best to buy milk directly from a local farm or via a farm shop or local shop if you can. If we want to be able to eat British produced food tomorrow we need to buy and eat British food today and ensure that the growers and producers receive a fair price.”

Edited from a blog by Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson, National Rural Officer for the Church of England
Clergy

Paul Arbuthnot, Minor Canon (Precentor) at the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban, has become Minor Canon and Sacrist at Westminster Abbey, in the diocese of London.

Milesius (Milo) Brandon, presently Associate Vicar at St John the Baptist, Croydon in the diocese of Southwark is to become School Chaplain at Haberdashers’ Aske’s Boys’ School.

Martin Burrell, presently Vicar in the benefice of Bushmead has retired but remains as Chaplain to the Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in a house-for-duty post with a Public Preacher Licence.

Bonnie Evans-Hills presently Priest-in-Charge in the benefice of Kimpston with Ayot St Lawrence is to become Vicar of the same.

Canon Jonathan (Jon) Reynolds, previously Diocesan Director of Education and Honorary Lay Canon, has become Honorary Canon Emeritus.

Caroline Wilson presently Assistant Priest (SSM) at St Saviour’s Church St Albans is to take up a house-for-duty in the benefice of Pampisford and Whittlesey in Ely Diocese.

Steve Wood, previously Priest-in-Charge in the benefice of Streatly, became Incumbent of the same in January 2015.

Consecration

The Consecration of the Revd Anne Hollinghurst as Bishop of Aston, at St Paul’s Cathedral, London, 29th September, 11am.

A number of people have already expressed their wish to receive details of the Revd Anne Hollinghurst’s consecration service at St Paul’s in September. Anyone who would like to attend the service is most welcome. To reserve a ticket in the cathedral for a seat with a reasonable view, please email or phone St Peter’s parish office by 7th September with your name and address, email: mail@stpeterschurch.uk.com or tel. 01727 855485.

There will also be un-ticketed space further back in the cathedral. Readers and clergy may robe, or not as they wish. Those who would like to robe, will not need a ticket but do need to let St Peter’s office know so that this can be passed on to St Paul’s.

Speaking about the forthcoming service, Anne said: “Most of all, whether you are able to attend or not, I will value your prayers. I have enjoyed enormously being part of the Diocese of St Albans and want to thank you for all the kind messages of support.”

Vacancy

Chaplaincy Assistant

(PA to Chaplain, University of Bedfordshire Luton campus) P/T 20 hours pw mostly term time, paid.

Do you have good admin and communication skills? Would you enjoy the challenge of supporting the Chaplain and relating to university students and staff? For more information and to apply send your CV and a Letter of Application by 7th September to: andrew.goodman@beds.ac.uk Tel: 01582 743360 visit: www.beds.ac.uk/treehouse

Christian Aid

HARPENDEN (Underwear-out optional!)

SPONSORED ABSEIL

Saturday 17th October

ST NICHOLAS’ CHURCH, CHURCH GREEN, AL5 2TP

Register NOW to secure your place

christianaid.org.uk/abseil

AWhalley@christian-aid.org

Tel: 07807 180071
EVENT LISTINGS for September 2015
The Diocese of St Albans in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Luton & Barnet

Concerts & Drama

St Mary’s Church, Carlton concert by Shambrook Gospel Choir on Saturday 5th September at 7.30pm. Tickets £8 (inc wine & nibbles) available from PCC members or on door.

St Peter’s Church, Berkhamsted Bridgwater Sinfonia Concert at 7.30pm on October 3rd. Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Mendelssohn and Vaughan Williams: The Lark Ascending with Soloist: Francesca Barritt. Tickets from 01442 873205 or from AITCHISON’S, Berkhamsted £16, £15 in advance. Under 18s FREE. Reserve Online www.bridgewater-sinfonia.org.uk

St Andrew’s Church Bedford Tenth Anniversary Celebratory Weekend concerts: Urban Folk Quartet on Friday 9th October at 7.30pm. Bring and Sing Handel’s Messiah on Saturday 10th at 7.30pm. Recital by Carolyn Sampson (soprano) and Joseph Middleton (piano) at 2.30pm Sunday 11th October followed by Afternoon Tea at 4.30pm and then Thanksgiving Service at 6pm. Visit www.standrewsbedford.org

St Mary’s Church Westoning, MK45 5DH ‘Love so amazing - An evening with Pam Rhodes’ on Friday 4th September at 7.30pm. Entry by ticket £5, available form 01525 714064 or 01525 712651. Refreshments available.

St Mary’s Church, Sutton The Annual Flower Festival and exhibition of local artwork will take place on Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th September, when the church will be open from 10.30am to 5pm. This year’s theme is “A Celebration of the Benefice of Sutton, Potton and Cockayne Hatley”. A variety of stalls will be in the garden opposite the church and refreshments will be available during afternoons. The famous Sutton Duck Race will take place at 3pm on Sunday 27th from Sutton Ford. Tickets to sponsor ducks are now available from Gabi, on 01767 260059 and from Derek on 01767 261742, with the prizes £150 for the first duck home and £50 and £25 respectively for the second and third winners.

St Mary’s Church, Ashwell 16th Annual Book Weekend on Saturday, 3rd October from 10am – 5pm and Sunday, 4th October from 2pm – 5pm. Hundreds of books of all types for sale at very reasonable prices. Come and browse and pick up some bargains. Entry £1. Children free. Refreshments available. All proceeds to Church Restoration Fund.

St Mary’s Church, Marshalswick, St Albans Christmas Fair on Saturday 21st November 10.30am-2pm. Lots of stalls including cakes, gifts, face painting and much more. Refreshments, lunches and a visit by Santal Entrance 50p, accompanied children free. Details from Lucy 07949 933167 or Kathryn 07742 594668.

Open Days & Festivals

St Mary’s Church Westoning - Coffee Morning And Tower Open Day Saturday 12 September (Same Day as Bike & Hike) 10.00am to 3.30pm. Great Stalls, Music, Raffle, Refreshments and delicious light lunches. Plus visits our famous Tower with ten magnificent bells and fantastic views of Hertford town and countryside. Ideal opportunity for photographers! Adults: £2.00, Children Under 16: £1.00. Free Parking at the Church.

St Andrew’s Church, Biggleswade Country Fayre and Exhibition on “Our Biggleswade, Our Community” on Saturday, 19th September from 10.30am to 3.30pm Free Admission. All the contributions raised from the Fayre will go to two local Bedfordshire Charities. www.biggleswadeparishchurch.co.uk

St Mary’s Church, Harlington, Beds. Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday September 20th at 3pm. There will be a small exhibition of pictures and photos and a ‘Brew for the few’ tea afterwards. Further details from chris.brown1234@virginmedia.com

Special Services

St Mary’s Church, Harlington, Beds Harvest Festival Service - Sunday October 4th at 10.00 am at Annables Farm School, Annables Lane, Harpenden AL5 3PR. Pet Service at St Mary’s Church - 4.30 pm on Sunday 18th October - all pets welcome! All welcome. Please bring donations of non-perishable food items (to be distributed to the charity NOAH) and financial gifts which will be given to the Bishop’s Harvest Appeal.

Courses/Conferences

Equipping God’s People Courses

www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/find-a-course
Home group/Bible Study group Leaders’ training course Saturdays 26th September and 31st October, 9.30am – 1.00pm Venue: St Luke’s, Watford ‘Leading small groups’ is a course run over two Saturday mornings for anyone who leads or would like to lead Bible studies/Home groups/Alpha groups etc and wants to learn more about how adults learn and the skills of facilitating groups.
Facilitator: Rev’d Jeanette Gosney Booking: Essential. Please book online http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/find-a-course/ or Contact: Gabby 01727 818141 pdadmin@stalbans.anglican.org

St Mary’s Church, Kinsbourne Green, Harpenden, AL5 3QE Puzzling Questions Course - explore the big questions of life in a 6 week course. Each session starts with a meal, followed by a DVD presentation and then discussion. Booking is essential. Thursday evenings 7.30 - 9.30 pm from 1, 8, 15, 22nd October, 5, 12th November. To book please contact: Becky Leach - associate. vicar@stmarys.parishofharpenden.org

Go For Growth Conference

Saturday 3rd October 10am - 4pm An exciting major ecumenical event on church growth in all its dimensions. Come and be inspired! The Focolare Centre, 69 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6JG
See last months bundle notices for leaflet or visit www.go4growth.org.uk

SeeRound Online Events September 2015/10 p8 www.stalbans.anglican.org/news/seeround