



*Newsletter
April 2017*



*He is not here;
he has
Risen!*
Luke 24:6

Welcome to the April Newsletter
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A Message from our Minister

This time in the Christian year is the most special. It's best not to rush to the end of a story. We must pace ourselves.

It took me a long time to realise that different Christian traditions approach this central time in our calendar in different ways. I was privileged to be allowed to train for Methodist Ministry on an ecumenical course, run by the Church of England. On this course I was sent to train in Canterbury during Holy Week. There were several services every day, some particularly intense. It gave me a whole new perspective.

When I became a minister, Lent and Holy Week took on another new shape: instead of attending services, I was preparing and leading them. Preparing for my first Ash Wednesday service helped me consider Christ's long journey to the cross. I began to see Lent as time available, set aside, to help us get ready for the horrors of Holy Week. A devout Christian told me that every year they get to the Good Friday story they want the crowd to not call for crucifixion, for Jesus to be set free, to escape suffering. But of course that never happens. We *must* go through it, with Jesus. So now I feel that I need to tell the Holy Week story up until Good Friday and simply declare that the story doesn't end there. After all, the first disciples didn't know about Easter when they witnessed the suffering and death of Jesus. Perhaps they represent all who face loss.

Lent continues to bring new insights, new applications, new revelations of the Grace of God in human lives. I pray this may be true for you too.

Graham

Church Family News

Congratulations and best wishes to Margaret Olney on the occasion of her 80th birthday on 22nd April.

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Congratulations to Corrine Brookes, who will be starting a teaching post in Leighton Buzzard in September.

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We think of Barbara Fenney during her time in hospital and pray that God will be with her and give her peace and healing.

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We continue to remember all those of our Church Family who have ongoing health problems. May God be with you all and be the help you need day by day.

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Church Flowers in April

We thank those who have agreed to donate the flowers to enhance our worship this month.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| 2nd April | Barbara and John Washington |
| 9th April | Sabina Ofori-Quaah |
| 16th April | Anne Foley |
| 23rd April | Margaret Olney |
| 30th April | Jane Claydon-Knights |

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*Holiday Club*

The Holiday Club will take place from 10th to 13th April. Please continue to pray for the preparations taking place. On the days when the club is running please remember in prayer the children who will be attending as well as the leaders and the young and adult helpers.

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Sheila Howe

You may recall that last Spring I wrote a piece on the life and witness of Sheila Howe. Sheila and her husband Malcolm were very loyal members of this church during the 1970/80s before they moved away to live in Harpenden. Over the years they have never forgotten the folk at Flitwick Methodist Church and have come back and supported coffee mornings and other events and special church services, and Sheila was a regular member of our knitting group right up until she was taken ill with cancer and could no longer attend.

Sheila died last year and under the terms of her will she has left Flitwick Methodist Church the very generous sum of £2000. Sheila has not stipulated how this money is to be spent and our Treasurer Janet May has suggested we ask the members and friends of Flitwick Methodist Church for suggestions as to how this money should be used. If you have any ideas or thoughts please contact our Treasurer Janet May before the General Church Meeting.

Sheila Smith and myself are keeping in contact with Malcolm and we went to visit him just a short time ago, and Sheila is keeping him updated with any special events taking place at church.

Margaret Fletcher

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General Church Meeting

The General Church Meeting, to which everyone is invited, is on Monday 24th April at 7.45 pm.

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Christian Aid News

**“We’ve been there for refugees since 1945.
We won’t turn our backs now.”**

British churches founded Christian Aid in 1945 to support refugees who had lost their homes and possessions during the Second World War. In 1957, Christian Aid Week was launched to help fund that ongoing work. Sixty years later, the need to support refugees is again enormous. Tens of millions of people worldwide are fleeing conflict and disaster, making dangerous journeys in search of safety.

This year’s Christian Aid Week, beginning on May 14th, will focus on raising money to help to transform the lives of our neighbours who are in such a desperate situation.

Together with other local churches, we will again be taking part in the house-to-house collection. However, I know that several loyal collectors will be unable to take part because of illness or age. Also, our wonderful team of Girls’ Brigaders is no more. We have to accept that we will not be able to raise as much money from the collection as in previous years. We do have some younger people in our congregation and if any of them feel able to take part for the first time, please speak to me. Teaming up with another collector, existing or new, makes the job easier and more fun.

We do have a date for a bucket collection at Tesco on Friday May 5th. If anyone feels unable to take part in the house to house collection but is able to give an hour of their time on that day, please let me know. We always work in pairs and it is an easy job. You always meet someone to speak to who you haven’t seen for ages!

On Sunday May 14th at 6.30 pm, the Christian Aid Week service will be held at the Sacred Heart Church. This is planned by the local

Christian Aid group and always contains some moving material. A collection for Christian Aid will be made at that service. There will be no evening service at Flitwick that evening.

Christian Aid is also encouraging us to organise other events, such as “Big Brekkies” or coffee mornings so again if you feel you would like to be involved with something like that, please let me know. I am hoping to organise an event but more news of that in the weekly notices.

Please speak to me, email me (annmblair@hotmail.com) or phone (714847) if you have any ideas for supporting Christian Aid’s work.

Ann B

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### *Churches Together Lent Prayer Spaces*

As you will know by now each Saturday morning during Lent one of the churches in the Churches Together group is open for prayer.

The overall theme is: *People Jesus met ‘on the way’ to the Cross.*

The dates, churches, and themes for the remaining Saturdays will be:

April 1st      Ampthill Methodist Church  
*Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)*

April 8th      St. Andrews Church, Ampthill  
*The triumphal entry and the crowds (Luke 19:28-44)*



You will be welcome to ‘drop in’ at any time between 10 am and 12 noon. Refreshments will be available at each of the venues.

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Easter Offering

On Palm Sunday you will receive an envelope in which to place your Easter Offering gift for the work of the World Mission Fund. Please place your envelope in the collection bag on Easter Sunday or as soon as possible afterwards. Please fill in the Gift Aid declaration if you are eligible to do so.

The tradition of the Easter Offering dates back to 1883 when women in Manchester collected £32 from 'Christmas pennies' at family gatherings on Christmas Day at lunch for Missionary work overseas. In March 1884, the London Districts distributed Easter envelopes and collecting bags asking for a penny a head and just over £100 was collected.

From this success, the idea grew and by 1900 the amount totalled £1,655. In 1903 Easter offerings were extended to all country chapels. 'Let us bear in mind,' they wrote, 'the importance of the "Littles"'.

Nowadays throughout the country, the annual Easter envelope collection is held, which is an opportunity to give to the World Mission Fund, supporting sixty-five Partner Churches overseas.

This year’s Circuit Easter Offering Dedication Service will be held on Thursday 25th May at Ampthill Methodist Church at 2.30 pm. Everyone is welcome to come to this service which has been produced on behalf of the World Mission Fund by Methodist Women in Britain and has the theme ‘Shine Like Stars’.

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## 1<sup>st</sup> Flitwick Boys' Brigade



March started with 10-pin Bowling for the Anchor and Junior Section Boys. We had 2 teams in each age group - a total of 14 Boys taking part from Flitwick. Anchor Boys finished 4<sup>th</sup> and Juniors =3<sup>rd</sup> with Junior lad Thomas Sutton getting the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest Junior Section Score with 109.

We then had 2 Company Section lads take part in Battalion Table Tennis where they finished =5<sup>th</sup>.

Given that Kempston are the BB National Table Tennis champions no guessing who won!

Still to come at the time of writing are the Junior Section Bible Competition and Company Section Unihoc.

Anchor Boy numbers continue to grow with a 10<sup>th</sup> lad to be enrolled at the next presentations at the start of May.

Junior Section have been learning about knots and preparing for the Bible Competition and also the Junior Section Centenary Team Games.

Company Section have been preparing an Easter Rap, and learning some First Aid, as well as practicing for the Table Tennis and Unihoc. We have recently had some staffing issues with the older lads but I am grateful for a leader from Harlington, a Parent and also our Chaplain Graham stepping in to fill the gap! I am also grateful to Steve Fossey who as a helper has kept the Company Section running in recent weeks.

Thank you for your continued prayers for Flitwick BB.

*Angela Brydon*  
*Company Captain*

## A word in your ear (this means everyone!)

We have been setting deficit budgets recently because our income has gone down, and because we had money in the bank from previous years and we all wanted to keep the church up to the standards we like to see, and want all our guests and users to see. However, if we run close to budget this year, (and we could fall a bit short even on that), we shall have depleted our reserves by over £4,000! So I'm afraid I'm asking for everyone to see if they can manage a little more. How important is it to you, personally, to keep this church going, and up to a good standard? Please consider this seriously, but of course the Church Council would not want anyone to be cutting down on essential household spending to do this!

### A note on Monthly Standing Orders

Do you use a monthly Standing Order to make your regular church offerings? Thank you if you do.

But did you realise that there are 13 months in the year, not 12? Many people think of a month as having four weeks, but in fact in this church year there are four months which have **five** Sundays. It is as if someone has smuggled an extra month in to the year but spread it out so we don't realise it.

So if, for instance, your Standing Order is for £40 per month that is like giving £10 a week in the four-Sunday months, but only £8 a week in the five-Sunday months. If you can put one extra month's offerings in the bag at some point this year, and do this just once a year, that will take care of the five-Sunday months and be a great help in meeting our target.

*Janet May*

# Prayer Leaflet

## April 2017



*Christ is alive and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love and praise.*

*Brian Wren*

*Singing the Faith 297 verse 5*

## Prayer Suggestions for April

*Saturday 1st April* - Thank God for springtime.

*Week beginning 2nd April - The World Mission Fund*

- Sunday Our Easter Offering gifts are for the work of the World Mission Fund. Let us pray for this work.
- Monday The Methodist Church in Haiti celebrated 200 years of Methodism in Haiti this year. Thank God and pray for the work as it continues.
- Tuesday Pray for the people of Fiji as they continue to recover from the effects of Cyclone Winston over a year ago.
- Wednesday Pray for Kenya Methodist University as it celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year.
- Thursday Thank God for the reunification of the Protestant Methodist Church in Benin. Pray that the peace it is now experiencing may continue.
- Friday Pray for the Methodist Church in Bolivia, in particular the work to overcome the problems of flooding.
- Saturday Pray for the Play4All project in Kamatipa, Zambia, as it aims to give children the opportunity to improve their social skills through structured play.

*Week beginning 9th April - Holy Week*

- Sunday As we remember Jesus entry into Jerusalem on a donkey we remember that he came in peace.
- Monday Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and the Holy Land today.
- Tuesday Remembering how Jesus turned over the tables of the money changers let us honour God and thank God for our church where we can worship him.
- Wednesday Ask God to help us to follow Jesus example as he washed his disciples' feet and be willing to do even menial tasks for him.

Thursday As Jesus ate and drank with his disciples at the Last Supper thank God that we follow in this tradition when we receive Holy Communion.

Friday Thank God that Jesus was willing to give up his life to save us.

Saturday As we remember the grief and sadness of Jesus' disciples may we pause to reflect on the events of the last week of Jesus' earthly life.

Week beginning 16th April - Easter

Sunday REJOICE! Celebrate Jesus risen from the dead.

Monday Thank God that Jesus' appearances to his disciples convinced them that Jesus is alive.

Tuesday Just as Jesus said 'Peace be with you' to his disciples let us remember that he offers his peace to us.

Wednesday The disciples did not always recognise Jesus straight away. Pray we may recognise Jesus when he comes to us.

Thursday Thank God for the hope the risen Jesus gives to us.

Friday Thank God that we can have the reassurance of Jesus presence with us each day.

Saturday Pray that the joy of Easter will remain with us always.

Week beginning 23rd April - Our Circuit

Sunday Thank God for the Circuit Ministers and pray for God's help in their work.

Monday Pray for Local Preachers.

Tuesday Pray for the Circuit Stewards.

Wednesday Pray for all who hold positions of leadership in the Circuit.

Thursday Pray for the Circuit churches, particularly those in our section of the Circuit.

Friday Pray for the team of people who produce the Circuit Magazine, keeping us informed.

Saturday Thank God that we are all part of the North Bedfordshire Methodist Circuit.

Sunday Pray that God will help us all to work together to further his work in this area.

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Services in April

Please remember in your prayers those leading our worship this month, especially during the week prior to the service.

2nd April	10.30 am	Rev. Graham Claydon-Knights (Holy Communion)
	6.00 pm	Rev. Graham Claydon-Knights
9th April	10.30 am	Peter Fletcher
	6.00 pm	Rev. Gill Baalham
16th April	10.30 am	Angela Brydon (All Age) (Holiday Club Service)
	6.00 pm	Bob Heley
23rd April	10.30 am	Meredith Major
	6.00 pm	Rev. Charlie Connor
30th April	10.30 am	Janet Watts (Café Church)
	6.00 pm	Circuit Healing Service at Haynes

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Monday 24th April
3.30 pm to 5.30 pm

All families welcome.
Children must be accompanied by an adult.
Donations welcome to cover costs.

Contact Rev. Graham Claydon-Knights for further details.

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All Saints Parish Church, Houghton Conquest

Good Friday Service

14 April 2017

As most of you will know, Carole and Lance are both involved in voluntary work with Headway Bedford, a local branch of Headway UK, which deals with the after-effects and rehabilitation of any brain injury, caused by strokes, road traffic accidents, heart attacks, assaults etc. Living in Houghton Conquest, they have also become involved in the monthly ‘tea and cake’ afternoons which are held in Houghton Conquest Parish church in aid of a local charity. Carole and Lance were very pleased when they were asked whether the church could support Headway at one of these afternoons. A cheque was gratefully received and as there was a lot of interest in what Headway does, the church has now asked if Headway could do a talk at their Good Friday service held in Houghton Conquest village hall, again an event that always supports local charities.

The short service starts at 11.00am, followed by a talk about Headway including any questions, and then at approx. 12.30pm, a frugal lunch is served, finishing at approx. 1.30pm. They have extended a warm welcome to anyone to attend this service and although the lunch is described as ‘frugal’ – there are usually several home-made soups, cheese and French bread, coffee or tea. It sounds like a very worthwhile event, supporting a great charity.

If anyone would like to know more, please speak to Carole or Lance.

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Clophill News

Tea and Chat

Every Wednesday 10.30 am to 12 noon

Coffee and Croissant Morning

Saturday 1st April
10.00 am – 12 noon

Messy Church

Saturday 15th April 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm
All Age Craft Activities, Worship and a Meal
Children must be accompanied.
Contact 07920 568861

Good Friday Service

14th April at 10.30 am

Led by Rev.Graham Claydon-Knights

Spring Concert with the Flitwick Singers

Saturday 22nd April at 7.30 pm

Light Refreshments

Tickets £6.00 Contact 01525 860695

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The Upper Room

**at Amptill Methodist Church on alternate Thursdays**

**Dates in April – 13th and 27th**

Coffee or tea and cakes from 10.00 am.  
Light lunches from 11.30 am to 1.00 pm.  
Proceeds after expenses for local charities.

All are welcome.

**Circuit Taizé Service**  
**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017**  
**7.30pm**

**Trinity Methodist Church Biggleswade**  
**Bedfordshire SG18 0AP**

**All Welcome**

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Circuit Prayer Meetings

You will be welcome at the Circuit Prayer Meetings on
Monday 10th April at 4.15 pm at Putnoe Heights
and
Monday 24th April at 10.30 am at Willington.

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*MWiB District Day*

Tuesday 9th May  
at The Square Methodist Church, Dunstable  
10.30 am – 3.00 pm  
Come and hear a firsthand account of present day life  
in Bethlehem from Rev. Nichola Jones,  
who has recently been working there.  
Tea and Coffee will be served. Bring a packed lunch.  
Bring and Buy Stall

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Bedford Passion Play Film Screening

Saturday 15th April 2017.

The Place, Bradgate Road, Bedford. MK40 3DE
2 pm, 4 pm and 6 pm

Choose a time slot and reserve a free ticket.

It is almost a year since The Passion Play was staged in Bedford. As the anniversary approaches you are invited to a screening of the film covering the event, made by Bedford College students.

The film runs for forty mins plus there is also a behind the scenes documentary, bringing the whole programme to just under an hour.

The film is being screened three times to make sure everyone gets a seat. Refreshments will be on sale.

Book your tickets at **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**>

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*Churches Together in Ampthill and Flitwick*

*Good Friday Walk of Witness*

*14th April*

Starting at 10.00 am inside St Andrew's Church, Ampthill  
and finishing at Ampthill Baptist Church at 11.00 am

The walk will be followed by hot cross buns and tea or  
coffee.

*Easter Sunday Sunrise Service*

*16th April*

Near Katherine's Cross in Ampthill Park at 5.45 am

Friends for Life's Spring Party

Supporters of Friends for Life are invited to attend the Spring Party on Tuesday 2nd May at 7 pm at The Place Theatre.

Arrival drinks – Light Buffet – Live Acoustic Music

RSVP by 18th April to pauline@friendsforlifebedford.org.uk or call Pauline Carter on 07460 575410

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You are invited to attend a Free Church Service in the Lady Chapel on following Wednesdays at 11 am:



THE CATHEDRAL AND ABBEY CHURCH OF SAINT ALBAN

Wednesday 5th April 2017

Preacher: The Reverend Meryl Court

Minister of the United Reformed Church, Thames North Synod.

Wednesday 3rd May 2017

Preacher: Major Heather Poxon,

The Salvation Army, International Projects Officer.

All services are followed by a fellowship lunch in the Abbots Kitchen

All are Welcome

Free Church Ecumenical Chaplain: Reverend Simon Carver

Email:simoncarver@btinternet.com

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News from Paraguay

14th February 2017

Well I thought I would get this driving licence sorted out today...but how wrong was I! All that was needed was a police report from the police station in Piribebuy. However I found that they had made everything more complicated. Now rather than just filling in a form they wanted an Interpol report. An Interpol report to renew my driving licence - how daft is that! The council also thought it was daft but despite speaking to the police they would not budge from what was on their form. And, of course, the report can only be done in Asuncion and has to be applied for one day and collected the next. So by the time things are finally sorted out renewing a five pound licence is going to cost much, much more and has already wasted three days!!

18th February 2017

I am still lacking a driving licence, although the council did adjust the expiry date on my old one so it is fine for the moment. I have spoken to a few people who have policemen friends and if no one offers to do the little form that just says I live in Piribebuy I will have to go to Asuncion for a couple of days to sort it out. I can see there being a panic in the last week of March when everyone suddenly realises that they have only one week to get a new licence and then no doubt at the beginning of April the police will be out in force doing their roadside checks and making a nice little profit.

Ramona will have to get her papers sorted out also, apparently she is given three months after buying the bike to do so and that will involve at least two trips over to Caacupe for registering the bike. I don't think she has thought yet about how she is supposed to find time to do that. Also she has never been as far as the tarmac as she is so scared of falling off and that is exactly what she has done a few times and so she is still relying on people giving her lifts so that she can get to college.

I don't have any new neighbours yet. The owner when I spoke to him said he was getting some but none have turned up yet. There are just workers coming in a couple of times a day to have a quick look over things and to feed the pigs that are there.

This afternoon I am going into Piribebuy for an afternoon out. It is warm and sunny and Saturday is always a good time for getting things done there.

Did I tell you that my latest App on the phone is the BBC radio IPlayer? It works very well and so I have been listening to many things on the radio.

#### 20th February 2017

The radio which is have on my phone works excellently as I guess it needs less internet power than TV so I have been able listen to lots of programmes. Just by chance I had Radio 5 on when they said they were about to do the FA Cup Draw.

This is the last week of the school summer holidays so it should be starting to get towards autumn weather soon. I think our clocks change about the same time as your clocks and then there will be five hours difference in time for six months.

#### 27th February 2017

Indeed the school holidays go on far too long. I wonder how they remember where school is let alone anything they have learnt. Also there is rain forecast for this week so that will be another excuse not to go to school!

This driving licence nonsense is still ongoing! I found the Asuncion Interpol site on the internet and it seems that they need two days to produce their bit of paper, so I will have to make it a few days in Asuncion to get that sorted. I am planning to go and do that next week. As for all the locals who, although they won't need to mess around with Interpol, will need to do everything else and I can't see people getting papers in order by the end of March - it will be chaos at the end of March.....

#### 1st March 2017

With a bit of luck I will finally collect enough bits of paper to satisfy everyone and get this driving licence renewed soon!! As always the problem is that a sensible idea - being to ensure that people driving on the road could drive and have a driving licence - is all rushed without any thought as to how practical the sudden new requirements are. They all seem to know things are coming but other than talking about it no one will do anything until the very last minute.

I went over to Piribebuy yesterday to get two passport photos and an authenticated copy of my passport which Interpol say they need. From there I went and had a haircut before heading over to Caacupe for some lunch and shopping.

It is still hot and humid every day. The forecast keeps threatening days and days of rain so sometime the rain will finally arrive - just hope it does not hang around too long.

#### 11th March 2017

Back home now after my little holiday in Asuncion. I expect you have seen the few photos I put on Facebook to show my sunny time away! It stayed hot and sunny all the time I was away although I came through some heavy rain on the way home but that had just about stopped by the time I got home and it is warm and sunny again today.

I visited Interpol and collected my certificate from them.....and surprise, surprise I did not turn out to be a Chinese gangster after all!! So maybe now they will let me renew my driving licence.

There is a very new and smart shopping centre in Asuncion I visited with my friend Gustavo. A chance for him to talk about music and practice his English!

I had a relaxing few days away wandering round the city and visiting the shopping centres, including the smart new one. When I was not doing that I was swimming in the hotel pool which I pretty much had to myself.

Now back home I have got all the washing caught up with and with this warm sunshine it should be dry by now and then this afternoon I am going into Piribeby to fill the fridge up again.

15th March 2017

I have finally got this driving licence nonsense sorted out..... I have had to do quite a bit of sitting around waiting though. Yesterday I went with my letter from Interpol down to the local police station for them to give me their bit of paper that said that I really do live here.

That was all fairly straight forward but then, along with a couple of locals who wanted the same form, I had to sit around for most of the morning in the police station before the local chief decided to turn up for work and put his signature on things. I then took everything over to the council and yes they said I had everything there - but the driving licence would not be ready until tomorrow - today.

So this morning I headed back there and had to spend most of the morning sitting whilst they processed everything and finally made up the little plastic card that is my new driving licence! Luckily I did not have anything better to do.

So that has been pretty much my week and now it is done I look forward to filing the papers away and being able to get on with doing something else!

Poor Ramona has only been back at college for a couple of weeks but when she came over on Monday she had to go back home before seven as if she had stayed any longer she would have been asleep on my sofa!

I see from your email that you have got rid of the worst of the cold winter weather and for the moment the flowers and ducks are putting in an appearance in your garden. I hope that means that spring has arrived. It is still hot here.....

Best wishes to everyone.....Simon

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Somebody's Tomorrow

Is anyone the happier for meeting you today?
Has anyone been prayed for just because he came your way?

Has anyone been helped because you stopped to lend a hand –
Spared a little time to listen, tried to understand?

Has anyone been made to feel that God was somewhere near?
Has someone somewhere been relieved of worry and of fear?
Has someone rediscovered faith in what is good and true –
Seen another side to life, another point of view?

If the answer's yes, then you have earned your night's repose.
If no, your day was wasted, spent in vain – and at its close –
There can be no satisfaction; not unless you say –
That somebody's tomorrow will be better than today.

Author Unknown

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## The Newsletter

Thank you for reading this newsletter and thank you to all who have contributed to this issue.

Please consider how you can contribute to a future newsletter. It would be lovely to receive your item or article.

Please let me have your items for the May issue by **Sunday 23rd April**. Thank you very much.

Janet Watts telephone: 717492 email: [janetwatts14@btinternet.com](mailto:janetwatts14@btinternet.com)

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