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* from *Parish Pump*

Now summer is in flower and natures hum
Is never silent round her sultry bloom
Insects as small as dust are never done
Wi' glittering dance and reeling in the sun
And green wood fly and blossom haunting bee
Are never weary of their melody
Round field hedge now flowers in full glory twine
Large bindweed bells wild hop and streakd woodbine
That lift athirst their slender throated flowers
Agape for dew falls and for honey showers
These round each bush in sweet disorder run
And spread their wild hues to the sultry sun.

John Clare

DIARY FOR JUNE

Monday 1st The Visit of the BVM to Elizabeth [transferred from 31st]

Tuesday 2nd

8pm

*Hampstead Christian Study Centre in St Peter's Hall:
Palladio and Wren*

Sunday 7th

11.15am

Trinity Sunday

Parish Eucharist. Celebrant and Preacher Canon Jane Hedges, Westminster Abbey

6.30pm

PrayerSpace

Tuesday 9th

8pm

*Hampstead Christian Study Centre at St Andrew's,
Frognaal : Calvin – a talk by Dr David Cornick, General
Secretary of Churches Together in England and former
Principal of Westminster College, Oxford.*

Thursday 11th

10.30am

Corpus Christi

Holy Communion

Friday 12th

Barnabas, the Apostle - if you kept Corpus Christi on
11th

Sunday 14th – Trinity 1

11.15am

Parish Eucharist

6.30pm

Celebration of Healing and Wholeness

Refugee Week 15th -21st - see page 9

Saturday 20th

7.30pm

A Friends' Reunion: *Elizabeth Wallfisch, Richard
Tunicliffe & Paul Nicholson play Baroque music for
violin, 'cello and harpsichord, on period instruments*

Sunday 21st

11.15am

Trinity 2

Parish Eucharist

6.30pm

Holy Communion [BCP]

Wednesday 24th Birth of John the Baptist

Friday/Saturday 26th/27th

7.30pm

**Shakespeare's Richard III – 2nd year students at
Central School of Speech & Drama**

Sunday 28th Trinity 3
11.15am Parish Eucharist. Celebrant and Preacher Revd Linda Dean
6.30pm Service of Readings and Music led by the Choir

Monday 29th Peter and Paul, Apostles

DIARY FOR JULY

Friday 3rd Thomas the Apostle

Sunday 5th Trinity 4
11.15am Parish Eucharist
6.30pm PrayerSpace

Saturday 11th 2.00-4.30pm
Summer Fair
something for all the family, inside and out!

Sunday 12th Trinity 5 ALMA Sunday - see page 11
11.15am Parish Eucharist
6.30pm Celebration of Healing and Wholeness

National Justice and Peace Conference 17th - 19th July - see page 8

Sunday 19th Trinity 6
11.15am Parish Eucharist
6.30pm Holy Communion [BCP]

Wednesday 22nd Mary Magdalene

Saturday 25th James the Apostle

Sunday 26th Trinity 7
11.15am Parish Eucharist. Celebrant and Preacher Revd Marjorie Brown
6.30pm Evening Prayer

Father Paul writes

Our Celebrations for St Peter's 150th Anniversary started last month with a visit to the church by Lord Harries, who gave, as part of the Hampstead Christian Studies Centre's 'Anniversaries' series, a heartfelt and most illuminating talk on Samuel Johnson, the great 18th century writer, poet and wit. His account of Dr Johnson as a sincere man of faith revealed just how selective our perceptions of historic figures can be, as we easily characterise them by their more 'colourful' acts and sayings, rather than looking at them as rounded human beings. More recently in the series, Richard Truss's talk in St Peter's Studios on Charles Darwin, from the standpoint of Christianity, similarly cautioned us against projecting onto this figure either the 'rosy' image of a devout Christian, or on the other hand, of a strident atheist, but encouraged us as Christians to celebrate the insights that his quest for truth continue to offer all of us in our understanding of the world.

2009 is proving an exciting year at St Peter's. Apart from the Study Centre's Talks currently based at St Peter's Studios next door to the church, and our expanding list of Anniversary Events (see p.), this is the first full year in which we have benefited from the newly refurbished Studios. As a result there is so much more life to be seen around Belsize Square during term-time, from students of the Central School of Speech & Drama, and St Peter's is learning to make fuller use of its own allocation for the use of the Studios. We now have a Columbian church making use of the Hall for worship on Sunday, and meetings twice a week, adding to our existing ecumenical links with St Gabriel's Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

As you will see, not only Talks and Music, but also Drama feature in our Anniversary celebrations - reflecting our collaboration with the Central School. Allow me also to draw your attention to the unavoidable change of date for St Peter's **Summer Fair** – **Saturday 11th July** – *please don't miss it!*

This range of activity, artistic performance and creativity, information and discussion seem absolutely in keeping with the Church's own mandate. Our close neighbours at Belsize Park Synagogue have recently celebrated *their* 70th Anniversary, and it's fascinating to realise that in its early years a series of talks for 'The Institute of Jewish Learning' were based at *Jacob*

Ehrlich House, whose postal address was still publicised in 1943 as 'St Peter's Vicarage, Belsize Square, NW3'!

As I write, we have just celebrated the Feast of Pentecost, in which the Church gives thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised this as 'The Spirit of Truth' who would lead us into all truth. Elsewhere, the New Testament talks of the love of God casting out fear. May God strengthen us all to maintain the search for truth in love, without fear.

Father Paul

Pole Cat

Elizabeth Gilbert's "Eat, Pray, Love" is a cheery but not insubstantial biographical tale of a girl who is looking for God. She goes to Italy, India and Indonesia in her quest and her writing about these places is quirky and unexpected. She has some funny turns of phrase and some glorious anecdotes. Here are two.

Praying earnestly after a long gap, when she had not needed God, she finds herself saying,

"Of course, I do not believe in you. "

A small quiet voice replies,

"So, who are you talking to then?"

Much later, in the second section of the book, she tells us of an Indian saint who had many followers who came to his Ashram and meditated and prayed with him for long hours every day. The sessions were interrupted by his cat, who strolled into the silence, purring and nudging and disturbing the faithful who were trying to concentrate. Finally he gave orders for the cat to be tied to a pole outside in the courtyard for that length of time in the day when silence was needed.

Every day the cat was solemnly and reverently tied to the pole. Indeed this became part of the ritual. Having lived to a ripe old age the cat finally died. "Aaargh, what are we to do? We have no cat to tie to the pole." I loved this book and recommend it.

Helen Braithwaite

St Peter's Church – 150th Anniversary Events 2009

A Friends' Reunion

*Elizabeth Wallfisch, Richard Tunnicliffe & Paul Nicholson play
Baroque music for violin, 'cello and harpsichord, on period instruments*
St Peter's Church, Saturday 20th June 7.30pm – Entry £5

Shakespeare's Richard III

2nd year students at Central School of Speech & Drama
St Peter's Church, Friday/Saturday, 26th/27th June 7.30pm – Free Entry

Summer Fair

with something for all the family, inside and out!
St Peter's Garden, Church and Studios **Saturday 11th July** 2.30pm –
4.30pm

A Talk by Mark Tully

Radio 4 presenter, and former BBC India Correspondent
St Peter's Studios (large hall) Saturday 12th September 7.30pm. Entry £5

Jeremy Brock on Screenwriting

*a talk by the creator of screenplays including
'Mrs Brown' and 'Charlotte Gray'*
The Embassy Theatre (Central School of Speech & Drama)
Friday 30th October 7.30pm

Anniversary Eucharist

with The Very Revd. John Halls, Dean of Westminster
St Peter's Church, Wednesday 11th November 7.30pm

Handel's Oratorio, 'Saul'

Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club
St Peter's Church, Saturday 14th November **6pm** – Free Entry

Three Squared present music by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, for soprano voice, original string instruments and square piano
St Peter's Church, Friday 4th December 7.30pm – Entry, £5

ALSO PLANNED – A SERIES OF INTER-FAITH TALKS
Wednesdays in October

Sermon for Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21; Romans 8:22-27; John 15:26,27; 16:4b-15

'I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you' John 16:7

This is a year of Anniversaries, and appropriately Hampstead Christian Studies Centre, meeting at St Peter's Studios, has made this the theme of its current series. In last Tuesday's talk the 'Anniversary' marked was that of Charles Darwin, and the Revd. Richard Truss – a former vicar of St Peter's – looked at this biologist from the perspective of our Christian Faith. Although he was clear that Darwin's own theistic belief by the end of his life didn't amount to a Christian Faith, he was convinced that as Christians we have much to celebrate in the work of Darwin. Although a few 'Creationists' may still reject his thesis of Evolution, the fact that Darwin's 'Origin of the Species' has opened out our understanding of how human life probably developed, and is still taken as the basis of modern scientific assumption and research into our origins, leaves us with much to be thankful for. In last week's Gospel from John we heard Jesus pray that his disciples may be 'sanctified in the truth', and whatever the full intention of that prayer, at the very least it must mean that his disciples in every generation must never fear, but always rejoice in, truth and fuller understanding.

Critics of Christianity – some of whom in our day have achieved the status of 'celebrity atheists' – often seek to polarise post-Darwinian Science and Biology from Religious Faith, on the basis of an assumed incompatibility, Evolution being assumed as a threat to Faith's very basis, as if the only kind of faith position was primitive fundamentalism. Richard Truss, however, was arguing in his talk that Darwin's work offers us something of

an answer to the problem posed to all people of faith by the existence in the world of suffering, pain, and tragedy, though it may not be an answer that all are comfortable with.

The picture of creation that Darwin's thesis gives us is one of a world that has been set in motion to create and recreate itself, with all the chance elements of clash, incident and collision that this implies. Within that picture human suffering and tragedy, therefore, is far from being the punishment or judgement of a vengeful God. Rather, the world, somewhat like humanity itself, which exists with freedom of moral choice ('free will', as we often call it), runs its own course – albeit sometimes with catastrophe that is directly brought about by selfish human choice.

This brings little comfort to those who want to believe that God's nature – perhaps his only useful function – should be to 'look after us'. But is 'looking after us' really what Jesus came to do? We can certainly imagine the dismay of those faithful disciples on hearing Jesus say 'It is for your good that I am going away' – he acknowledges himself that it has 'filled them with grief'. But he says that this must be, as unless he leaves the scene, the 'Counsellor', 'Advocate' – the Holy Spirit will not come. This signals something very significant about Jesus' departure. Of course it heralds what we often describe as 'the Birthday of the Church' – celebrating that empowerment of the disciples in Jerusalem through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we heard of in Acts to start with today. But perhaps, even beyond this great launching, it opens up to humanity a new way of encountering God; a new way of engaging with the nature and reality of God – even a more contemporary and mature approach. Instead of a relationship of helpless dependency, in which perhaps we placate him with certain observances and obedience to particular rules, we can now draw into his mind and will humbly and serve not our self-preserving agendas, but the building of his kingdom, and his work in the world.

The Church often likes to stress the charismatic, joyful aspects of the Pentecost experience, but even those witnesses to the outpouring of the Spirit in Jerusalem were profoundly unsettled by it, saying 'what does this mean?' This more challenging facet of the presence of the Holy Spirit is brought out by Paul in the letter to the Romans. He describes the whole creation 'groaning in labour pains' – even believers who have the Holy Spirit – having to wait in patient hope. This is not so much about dynamic empowerment, but about dialogue with God in the depths of our soul –

even when we feel at our weakest and most inarticulate; the kind of relationship which led Paul to the insight that through the Spirit of Christ, ‘when he was weak, then he was strong’. It’s more about a kind of ‘wrestling’ with the God who, rather than coming to our rescue from the heavens, is with us from the start even when we don’t sense it or choose to acknowledge it. This is the God who beckons us into relationship with him, who, knowing us better than we do ourselves, can help us to know and to understand ourselves.

This, of course, is what **true prayer** is about – not some ‘shopping list’ of things we want for ourselves, but aligning our wills to God’s will, and allowing him to pray through us and reveal to us our deepest desire, which is to know him. This should be what the church is really about – that’s why this church opens every week day for prayer; after all it was as the disciples ‘joined together constantly in prayer’, as the 1st chapter of Acts tells us – even while they were feeling that sense of abandonment after Jesus’ ascension – that they received the Holy Spirit with such power.

Paul Nicholson

National Justice and Peace Network Conference
ON THE ROAD TOGETHER: A-MAZED BY MIGRATION
17th-19th July 2009

A conference for all denominations on migration, asylum and refugees. A unique opportunity to strengthen the fabric of our society, have your say on these issues and find out how Catholics are working for social justice across the UK.

Speakers include

Don Flynn (Migrants’ Rights Network)
Professor Mary C Grey (Theologian), Neil Jameson (Director of the Citizen Organising Foundation)
Patrick Lynch (SSCC) Bishop for the South East area of Southwark diocese and Chair of Office for Refugee Policy at the Catholics Bishops’ Conference ; he has published ‘Mission of the Church to Migrants in England and Wales’
Open Space Expert: Annette Zera.

Part subsidised places are available for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees from your parish.

Please contact Westminster Justice and Peace for details on justiceandpeace@rcdow.org.uk or 020 8888 5518

BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW by downloading the form from www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or phone 020 7901 4864 or email admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

Refugee Week 15-21 June

Different pasts, shared future

Refugee Week is a UK wide programme of events which celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK.

During Refugee Week hundreds of events exploring refugee experiences take place across the UK. These range from small community and school activities to art exhibitions, political debates, film screenings, conferences, big music festivals, sports events etc.

Anyone can get involved in Refugee Week either by organising or visiting an event or by just spreading the word! The main focus of our activities this year is the Simple Acts Campaign, which is about inspiring people to use small, everyday actions to change perceptions of refugees. For more information go to <http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/>

Who's saying what about Refugee Week?

Check out these statements of support:

“Refugee Week is important because it reminds us that refugees are not just statistics to be used and abused, they are living, breathing people. I am British, I was born here and I have no intention of leaving here, so I want to create a society here where compassion is built into our culture, in this society we will be so aware of the world around us that we will not need a Refugee Week. Until then this is how we do it.”

Benjamin Zephaniah, Poet

“Refugee Week is a unique time when we can all celebrate the contribution that refugees have made over the years to the UK - both culturally and economically. Please do something to support Refugee Week- go to an event, find out more about the issue or just speak out for refugees when you can.”

Colin Firth, Actor

“Compassion has long been a part of British culture, and Britons are proud of our history of providing refuge to people seeking sanctuary and of the vibrant communities that refugees have helped to build. Refugee Week is a celebration of the diverse contribution of refugees to our society, and a week with an important role to play in fostering greater understanding between all of our communities. It is also a time when all those who continue to live in fear of persecution are at the forefront of our minds, and I know that Britain will continue to offer a safe haven to people fleeing desperate situations in the years to come.”

Prime Minister Gordon Brown

Refugees of all background are made to feel a burden on this state. For centuries we have made the country creative, flowing, rich and exceptionally dynamic. Although they will still despise who we are, I am proud to be an exile who helped make this country what it is. I am even prouder to be one among millions of others who had to come here but who have never let their hopes and aspirations weaken in the face of prejudice.”

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Journalist

“As a former refugee myself, I am very aware of the difficulties people face when they arrive in this country, such as language problems, isolation and prejudice. All of these are helped through volunteering, because when you volunteer alongside someone, you get to know them a little bit, which helps to break down barriers. And together we'll aim to provide newcomers to this country with a bright and welcoming environment!”

Cyril Nri, Actor

“Our country has benefited hugely throughout its history from the contributions of those who have fled here to escape persecution. There is nothing new about this. We celebrate this year, for example, the 350th anniversary of the return of the first Jews to England after their expulsion in the Middle Ages.

Like those from all continents to whom Britain has been a safe haven before and since, they have repaid our hospitality by enriching our culture, our society and country. Refugee Week celebrates this contribution. It also reminds us of the courage and resilience of those who must continue to leave family, friends and home to escape prosecution. Britain and its people have a proud heritage of welcoming refugees. We must continue to do so. We must also provide them with the support they need to fulfil their potential and make their own full contribution to our society. I am delighted that we are again sponsoring Refugee Week and give it my full support.”

Tony Blair, former Prime Minister

“Britain’s worsening record on the treatment of refugees doesn’t exactly make you proud. Perhaps living in such a prosperous democracy has dulled our ability to empathise. Perhaps we fear that people fleeing chaos and brutality will bring it here with them. There must be some reason why as a society we do so little and do it so grudgingly. We help only a tiny quota of people. Refugee Week helps to humanise the media myths, replacing distorted statistics with men, women and children who all have stories that can teach us how to live; a small voice, speaking our shared humanity.”

Moira Buffini, Playwright

“I am very pleased to support Celebrating Sanctuary, which is a great opportunity for Londoners and visitors to enjoy the talents and creativity of refugee artists and performers, and is a positive platform to help dispel the ignorance, fear and negative stereotypes that continue to surround refugee communities throughout the UK.”

Ken Livingstone, former Mayor of London

“There is a gratifying sense of the recognition paid to us during Refugee Week. Refugees are not simply here to work and claim benefits from the State. Whilst we are here, we very much want to be part of the Society and contribute in different sectors, for example, in Government policy like I have done. “

Harris Nyatsanza, Leader of the United Network of Detained Zimbabweans

“Every refugee deserves protection and support, especially families with children. Please support Refugee Week in any way you can.”

The Angola, London and Mozambique Association (ALMA)

On 12 July 1998 a Covenant was signed between the Dioceses of London, Mozambique and Angola to form the Angola, London and Mozambique Association. Since then the Sunday nearest 12 July has been kept in the Diocese as ALMA Sunday.

- * The formation of a link was the result of relationships formed over many years.
- * The intention is that our relationship with our partners should be in depth allowing each to learn from one another.

ALMA provides:

- * ALMA Reports, discussion papers and talks
- * Prayer Requests
- * Background information on Mozambique and Angola

The work of the ALMA link in London is supervised by the ALMA Steering Group. Members of the Group come from across the Diocese.

For further information, visit the <http://www.london.anglican.org/ALMA>

To contact the ALMA Link Officer, Peter Southwood, telephone 020 7932 1231 or email alma@london.anglican.org

Hampstead Christian Study Centre Outings

June 10th trip to Cambridge. Meet at King's Cross to catch the 9.45 direct train to Cambridge. We shall get a bus to the Centre and view the exhibition at the Fitzwilliam before lunch. After lunch there will be some free time before Evensong at St John's at 6.30.

June 25th trip to Down House (Darwin's home) - Meet at Charing Cross at 9.45 to get a train to Bromley South. From there we get the 146 bus to Down House which is open 11-5. It is maintained by English Heritage and unless you are a member entry is £8.50 for adults and £7.50 for concessions.

All welcome on the trips.
Mary Shakeshaft

Floral dreams?

Here's a new way to ensure sweet dreams: sleep with flowers in your bedroom. A recent study in Germany has discovered that the scent of flowers may encourage good dreams.

Sleeping women who were given 10 seconds of the scent of roses while asleep reported pleasant emotions in their dreams. When the roses were substituted with the smell of rotten eggs, the dreams turned unpleasant, too.

So – here's a question: would flowers help relieve recurring nightmares? Anyone care to try?

We can learn to recognise God's voice in our lives

As God speaks directly to our hearts and minds, it takes time and training to sift through all the messages we receive to discern his voice.

The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" (1 Samuel 3:8-9).

Like Samuel, we will need to learn to be attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives. A personal relationship with God lies at the heart of this. In any relationship we need to be hearing each other if communication is to take place. Otherwise we simply end up with a monologue!

God can speak to anyone

God does not restrict his voice to spiritual giants like Billy Graham or Mother Theresa. God can speak to anyone, but he will do so according to his way and timing, as we cannot demand it. Even Mother Theresa admitted that there were long periods of her life when God was not obviously speaking to her!

God's voice can be recognised

People often ask, 'how can I know if it is God speaking and not my imagination?' God will always speak in a way that is consistent with the following characteristics:

His character: is what he says in agreement with God's character? (eg. he will not promote fear or anxiety)

Scripture: is it in line with what the Bible says? (eg God would not encourage adultery)

Who God made me to be: is it consistent with my gifts and personality?

Love: does it encourage loving not selfish action?

The need to pray

The good thing about prayer is that there's only one way to go wrong, and that's not to do it. The best way is to just get on and do it. If prayer at its simplest level is listening to God and talking to him, you don't need long books to tell you how to do it, you just need a conviction that prayer is a

good thing to do, that you're someone God wants to hear from and that he's worth talking to.

Is prayer a good thing to do? Never mind for the moment about whether prayer 'works' or not: Jesus prayed and he encouraged his disciples to pray too, so if we're following him, we need to be praying. Full stop.

Am I someone God wants to hear from? The message of the Bible is that however unworthy, sinful and useless we may feel as human beings, God can't wait to hear from us and is sitting on the edge of his seat, hand poised ready to pick up the phone the second it rings.

Is he worth talking to? He's the one person who knows us inside out, the one person with infinite power at his fingertips, the one who has the true perspective on an entire world's story. Not a slot machine to pay into in the hope of one day getting 'an answer to prayer', but a person. Who likes us.

How might you begin to pray?

What sort of a person are you? Do you like a good gossip? Then gossip to God. Are you the strong silent type? Then be silent in his presence. Say hello... say the Lord's Prayer ... say 'Oh God' and mean it... deliberately be silent and still for one minute ... read a story from a Gospel and imagine what you would say to Jesus if you were there... tell him about what is worrying you or thrilling you ... copy the great pray-ers of the Bible and of the Church... write a letter to him ... listen and look for a few moments in a place you consider holy... You can't go wrong. Prayer is good. God longs to hear from you. He's worth it.

Worried that your life is changing beyond recall?

A wise farmer rotates his crops: no one thing should always be grown in the same place. Change and diversity are the key to long-term health. It is the same for us: for us to be at our most productive, we must not be surprised if God suddenly rests us from 'growing corn', and gives us something else to do. Often it is something we would never imagined!

Life is lived in seasons: in each of our lives, there is a time to do this, a time to do that. Too many of us lose our sense of self-worth and direction because we don't understand when we're leaving one season and entering another in life. We struggle and want to hang on to what we had.

But sometimes God wants to give us something new, to make us productive at every stage of our life. God will never put you in a place too small to grow. You may be asked to grow in ways that seem uncomfortable at first, but he is out to develop you fully, in every aspect of your being – not just the ones at which you are already good!



Columba of Iona (c. 521 -97) 9th

Columba was born in Donegal of the royal Ui Neill clan, and trained as a monk. He founded the monasteries of Derry (546), Durrow (c.556) and probably Kells. But in 565 Columba left Ireland with twelve companions for Iona, an island off southwest Scotland. Iona had been given to him for a monastery by the ruler of the Irish Dalriada.

Why would a monk in his mid 40s go into such voluntary exile? Various explanations include: voluntary exile for Christ, an attempt to help overseas compatriots in their struggle for survival, or even as some sort of punishment for his part in a row over a psalter in Ireland. Whatever the reason, Columba went to Iona and spent the rest of his life in Scotland, returning to Ireland only for occasional visits.

Columba's biographer, Adomnan, portrays him as a tall, striking figure of powerful build and impressive presence, who combined the skills of scholar, poet and ruler with a fearless commitment to God's cause. Able, ardent, and sometimes harsh, Columba seems to have mellowed with age.

As well as building his monastery on Iona, Columba also converted Brude, king of the Picts. Columba had great skill as a scribe, and an example of this can be seen in the Cathach of Columba, a late 6th century psalter in the Irish Academy, which is the oldest surviving example of Irish majuscule writing. In his later years Columba spent much time transcribing books.

Columba's death was apparently foreseen by his community, and even, it seems, sensed by his favourite horse. He died in the church just before Matins, and it is a tribute to this man that his traditions were upheld by his followers for about a century, not least in the Synod of Whitby and in Irish monasteries on the continent of Europe.

Here is a prayer of St Columba:

Christ With Us

My dearest Lord,
Be Thou a bright flame before me,
Be Thou a guiding star above me,
Be Thou a smooth path beneath me,
Be Thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
Today and evermore.

If you always suspected Father's Day was a ruse invented by the Greetings Cards Companies read on.....

The third Sunday in June is Father's Day.

It all started way back in 1909 because of a woman in Spokane, Washington, named Sonora Louise Smart Dodd. That year she heard a church sermon about the merits of setting aside a day to honour one's mother. Mother's Day was just beginning to gather widespread attention in the United States at this time. But Sonora Louise Smart Dodd knew that it was her father who had selflessly raised herself and her five siblings by himself after their mother had died in childbirth. So the sermon on mothers gave Sonora Louise the idea to petition for a day to honour fathers, and in particular, her own father, William Jackson Smart.

Sonora Louise soon set about planning the first Father's Day celebration in Spokane in 1910. With support from the Spokane Ministerial Association and the YMCA, her efforts paid off, and a 'Father's Day' was appointed. Sonora Louise had wanted Father's Day to be on the first Sunday in June (since that was her father's birthday), but the city council didn't have time to approve it until later in the month. And so on June 19, 1910, the first Father's Day was celebrated in Spokane.

Gradually, other people in other cities caught on and started celebrating their fathers, too. The rose was selected as the official Father's Day flower. Some people began to wear a white rose to honour a father who was dead, and a red one to honour a father who was living. Finally, in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day - a permanent, national holiday.

Today, Father's Day is a great time to celebrate any sort of male role models, like uncles or grandfathers, as well as dads. Certainly Father's Day has become a day for greeting card companies to rejoice, and sales of the most popular gifts for Dad (shirts, ties, and electric razors) increase considerably. Perhaps most telling of all, though, is how children continue to see their fathers: more 'collect calls' to home are recorded on Father's Day in America than on any other day of the year!

Diet drinks that – aren't!

You can't win.... it seems that diet drinks may actually make you put ON weight rather than lose it, a study has claimed. It seems that artificial sweeteners can make it harder for us to regulate our intake of food, and so therefore may lead to over-eating. In a recent research, rats at Purdue University in Indiana were given low-calorie yoghurt, and gained more weight than rats given a sugary version.

It seems that sweet food provides a 'orosensory stimulus' which tells our body that a lot of calories are about to be consumed. When this does not happen, the body gets confused, and people feel an urge to eat more, to compensate for the food's low calorie content. (Which would explain why obesity levels and the use of artificial sweeteners have risen simultaneously.)

Doctors instead advise that anyone wanting to lose some weight "should try and retrain their palate so that they enjoy foods without a lot of sugar."

Best for breakfast

Want your breakfast to make you feel full for longer? Eat porridge. Now scientists at King's College London have found that foods with a low glycaemic index (GI), such as oats, trigger the release of greater amounts of a hormone in the gut, which delays hunger pangs by creating the 'full' sensation.

As well as porridge, try also brown bread and most fruit and vegetables, which stimulate the release of 20 per cent more of the GLP-1 hormone than food with a high GI ratio.

