

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear friends,

By the time you read this you will no doubt have already seen the Circuit Plan for June-August 2009 and have realized that there has been a change to the pattern of our evening worship. Put simply, whilst the monthly communion services remain, the Bible Study services that have clearly not appealed to everyone have been removed - for the time being at least. Instead, and at the request of a number of people, a Service for Healing and Wholeness has been added. This is to take place on 14th June.



For a number of well intentioned reasons – a lack of space on the Circuit Plan and ease of use to name but two – there is a tendency for us to shorten the title of these acts of worship and to refer to them simply as “Healing Services”. Understandable and necessary as this might be, it can also be problematic as it runs the risk of placing an emphasis on one word, taken out of its original context, leaving the possibility of its meaning being skewed. As a result, we can be left with the impression that these services are “dodgy” or “freaky” and, to quote Kate McIlhagga, ‘something for the cranky way-out few’. The reality of the situation couldn’t be any further from the truth.

The Methodist Worship Book, in its introduction to its Service for Healing and Wholeness, underlines the thinking behind such services.

Healing was central to the ministry of Jesus. It was a sign of God’s kingdom, bringing renewal and wholeness of life to those who turned to God in their need. Jesus sent out his disciples with the commission to ‘proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal’ (Luke 9:2)

In every act of worship, the Church celebrates the grace of God who desires wholeness of body, mind and spirit for all people. At a service of healing, we focus on that aspect of God’s character. We bring to God our own frailty and brokenness – felt not just in physical illness, but in guilt, anxiety and all the burdens which weigh us down.

We also bring our concerns for others and for the world. Above all we

come to the God who knows our needs before we ask, and whose love revealed in Jesus Christ is stronger than suffering or death.

Often at the heart of these services lies the ministry of the laying-on of hands. Again, first impressions can leave us feeling uneasy. We might be disturbed by at the very prospect of someone touching us – threatened as we can be by touch. But touch is a basic need that we all share. And ‘laying hands on someone in worship or cuddling a child or putting an arm round someone in distress are all ways of expressing our concern for others, and of letting God use our hands to bring comfort and strength and healing.’ The world and its people are in constant need of the loving and healing touch of God.

We only have to switch on our televisions to see that we live in a broken world. We only have to pick up our newspapers to comprehend that fact that, whoever we are and wherever we are in the world, we will be living in a fractured society. And we only have to open our hearts and minds to know that our own lives are, in some way, incomplete. We are in desperate need of healing and wholeness. And only God can offer this.

These services for healing and wholeness provide us all with an opportunity to pray for the healing of our world and its people. These services offer us a quiet place in which to express our own longing for wholeness.

Let us embrace God’s offer of healing and wholeness – revealed to us in Christ – and let us respond to it wholeheartedly.

With every blessing

Paul

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The story of The Rock (reproduced opposite) was recently sent to us from our friends, Kate and Arthur, who reside in Gibraltar. The story appeared in a Church Magazine during a visit to the Rock of Gibraltar by the Princess Royal. Because of its Britishness such a visit always upsets the Spanish Press and Politicians, hence the story about God making the Rock and all it has, but politically the last line says it all!

Derek and Mary Heaton

THE ROCK

God and Archangel Gabriel were sitting in Heaven, looking down at the Earth.

God said, “Let’s create a rock and call it Gibraltar.”

Gabriel started taking notes.

“We shall site it where it is warm in the summer, but not too cold in the winter.”

Gabriel wrote quickly.

“We’ll make the people good natured, kind and tolerant of all races and religions,” God boomed.

Gabriel replied, “Even the Jews and the Muslims?”

“Yes. Even them” retorted God.

“We will place the Rock close to the ocean and sea, so that seafarers can stop and rest and mix with these lovely people. This Rock shall be beautiful with wild animals and flowers, and in this Rock I want caves with stalagmites and stalactites that generations can see and enjoy.”

Gabriel scribbled frantically.

“On their shores we shall create reefs and provide plentiful fish for food and enjoyment ... And give them beaches with fine white sand and make sure they have clean seas.”

At this point Gabriel stopped taking notes and he looked up at his master. “Lord, why are you being so generous with these people?”

The Lord smiled. “Well my son, I haven’t told you yet who their neighbours are going to be!”



Do you wonder what to do after church on a Sunday?

Do you hate cooking Sunday lunch but

can't afford to go out to a restaurant?

Do the children get bored on Sunday afternoon?

Do you get lonely on Sundays after church?

Well, we have a solution to your problem.

Come along to the

General Church Meeting on Sunday, 10th May

There you will get a free lunch in good company with activities for children and an opportunity to express your views about the church in a non-threatening environment.

After the morning service, over tea and coffee, we will be making appointments and checking that our finances are in good order.

This will be followed by a free lunch of jacket potato with a variety of fillings.

Then, over even more tea and coffee, and while the children enjoy themselves with a variety of supervised activities, Paul Timmis with his usual brand of good-natured humour and fresh thinking will invite you to discuss in groups how we might develop the church.

intimidating

HEAVY

Boring?

Not a bit of it !!!

The General Church Meeting is meant to be lively with relevant discussions where everyone's views are welcomed and nobody need be embarrassed about expressing them. We don't just want the Leadership Team there - we know what they think! We want *everyone* there so that *everyone* can share their views and discuss each other's ideas. You don't have to be a church member or even a regular attendee - you just need to be hungry!

So come on - break the habit of a lifetime. Join us for what is more a social event than a meeting and work with us to develop the work of the church.

See you there !



CHRISTIAN AID 2009

The church will not be doing House to house collections this year but what we are having are 2 events to support Christian Aid - if you want to have more information about this charity please have a look at their website at www.christianaid.org.uk

SATURDAY 16th May 2009

Quizaid [a quiz for all ages] staring at 7pm

The Tickets are £5 for adults and £3 for under 12's. Included with the price of the ticket will be refreshments & a ploughman's.

Teams of up to 8, so either bring along friends and family or join a table on the night.

and on

SUNDAY 17th May 2009

Circle the City sponsored walk

Tony and Maralyn Loft will be doing the walking and they invite others to join them (and to get sponsors for themselves)

Make a note in your diaries. By supporting either or both these events we can help Christian Aid with the important work they do all over the world.

For any additional information for either of these events please speak to Tony Loft (8543 0696)

Tickets for the Quizaid are available from Abby Herring or Tony Loft Please let them know if you are interested in attending by 14th May so food can be ordered.



The Mary Jones Walk

Challenge yourself and help fight Bible poverty

Who was Mary Jones?

In 1800 Mary Jones, aged 15, set out on a 26-mile walk through her homeland of North Wales. She had a single aim – to buy one of the Welsh Bibles that had been delivered to the town of Bala. The 17 shillings she took with her had taken six

years to save. Her patience and determination were rewarded when Mary at last received the Scriptures.

Mary's story was part of the inspiration for the foundation of Bible Society and the birth of the worldwide Bible movement. And, today, many people complete that same 26-mile walk to raise funds so that others can read or hear the Bible's lifechanging message in their own language.

Where does the walk go?

Llanfihangel-y-Pennant, where Mary's walk began, is also the starting point for today's walkers.

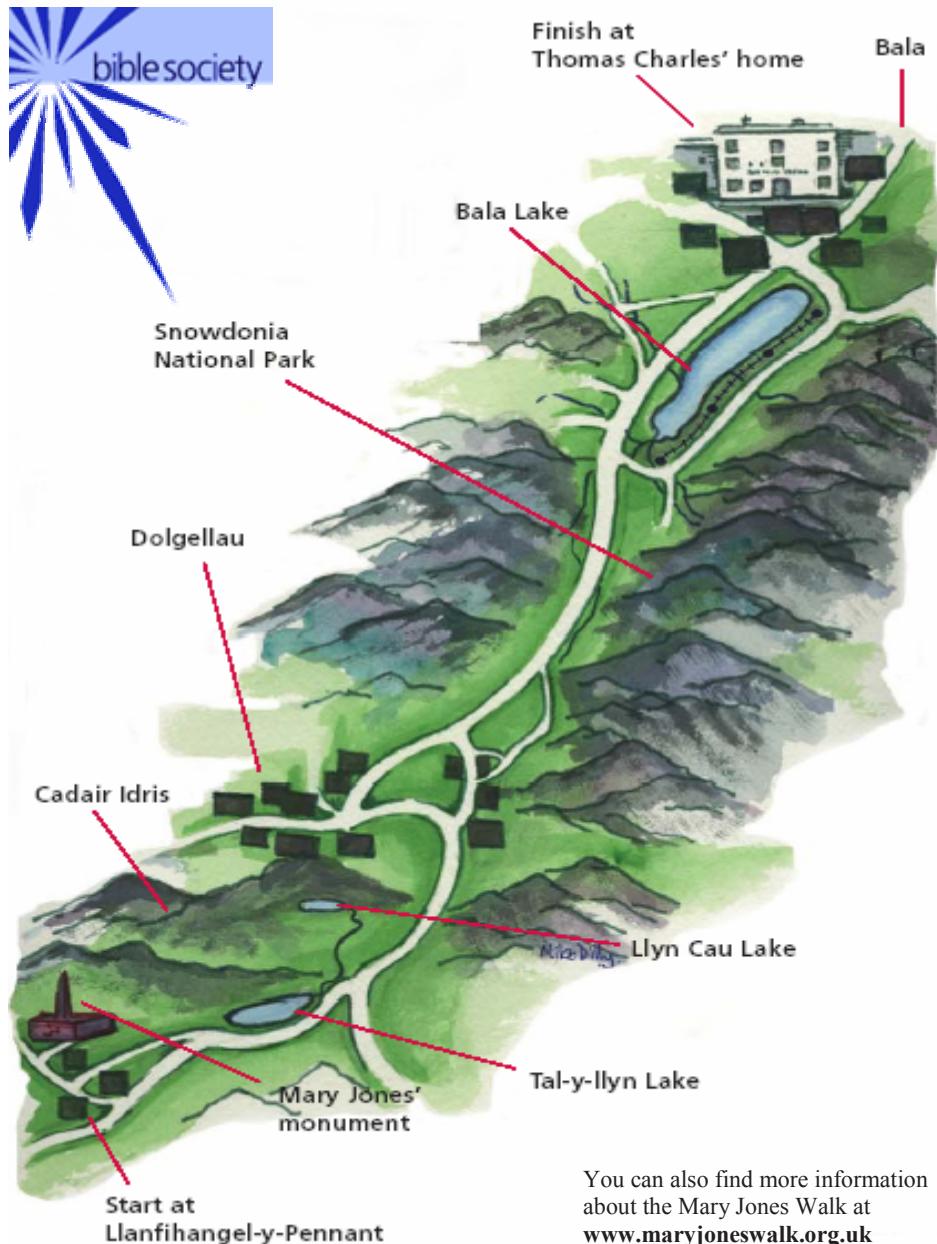
It is here there is the Mary Jones monument and the village church she attended with her family. Following in her footsteps, the walk passes through breathtaking countryside, past Tal-y-Llyn and Llyn Cau lakes, in the shadow of the majestic Cadair Idris.

The 26-mile route travels through the Snowdonia National Park for several miles, crossing narrow stiles and fast-flowing streams before reaching the awe-inspiring expanse of Bala Lake. The walk finishes in the town of Bala where plaques on the wall of Barclays bank depict the spot where Mary, at last, received her Welsh Bible.

My friends and I are going to do the 26 mile Mary Jones walk at the

end of May to raise money for the Bible study groups in Kenya and for the orphaned children.

Gwen Wildman



You can also find more information about the Mary Jones Walk at
www.maryjoneswalk.org.uk



SPONSORED WALK

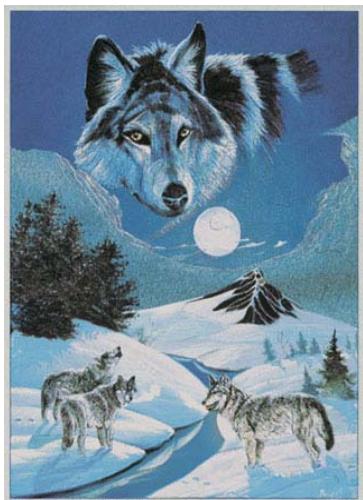


In its fourth year, the Walk for Skin 2009, is a series of eleven sponsored walks taking place throughout the country, chosen for their scenic appeal and accessibility to all, to help raise vital funds for research into skin disease.

On Sunday 10th May, Karen, Jenny and Rebecca Smith will be doing the sponsored Walk For Skin (about 3 miles) in Kensington Gardens. This walk raises money for the British Skin Foundation and the Childhood Eczema Fund. Anybody who would like to sponsor them, please see Karen or Jenny or ring them on (020) 8542 0176.

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A CHEROKEE LESSON



One evening, an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, 'My son, the battle is between two 'wolves' inside us all.'

One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, arrogance, self-pity, greed, guilt, resentment, lies, inferiority, false pride, superiority and ego.

The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.

The grandson thought about it for a moment and then asked,
'Which wolf wins?'

The old Cherokee simply replied, 'The one you feed'

Author unknown



PREPARING FOR SPRING HARVEST 2010

A Group of 20 of us have just come back from Spring Harvest in Minehead – and a good time was had by all! There will be more about our experiences in the June Newsletter.

The Reason for this note is we intend to go again next year and would love more people to join us. There will be a small display in the Corridor at Church about ‘what Spring Harvest is’. Otherwise please speak to Tony Loft, Brenda Cannon, Tim & Caroline Johnson, Celia & Natalie Johnson, Abby Herring, Penny Osborne, Alex Pallister, Simon Ward, Katie & Ellie Budd, Jenny Smith – to find out what they thought of Spring Harvest 2009.



The dates for next years Spring Harvest will be Tuesday 6th until Sunday 11th April at Skegness Butlins. (Next year Easter weekend is 2nd to 5th April). We need to book our places in the middle of June so please consider joining us. There will be Fund Raising to assist people with the cost so please don’t let costs put you off.

Tony Loft will be organising the booking so please let him know if you would like to go.

Tony Loft and Abby Herring



Spirituality

The Rabbi's Gift

A monastery had fallen on hard times. Once it had been a great order. Now, as a result of waves of anti-monastic persecution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the rise of secularism in the nineteenth, all its branch houses were lost and it had become decimated; to the extent that in the decaying mother house there were only five monks left, the abbot and four others, all over seventy in age. Clearly it was a dying order.

In the deep woods surrounding the monastery there was a little hut that a rabbi from a nearby town occasionally used for a hermitage. Through their many years of prayer and contemplation the monks could always sense when the rabbi was in his hermitage. "The rabbi is in the woods, the rabbi is in the woods again," they would whisper to each other.

At one such time, as the abbot agonised over the immanent death of his order, it occurred to him to visit the hermitage and ask the rabbi if, by some possible chance, he could offer any advice that might save the monastery.

The rabbi welcomed him at his hut. But when the abbot explained the purpose of his visit, the rabbi could only commiserate with him. "I know how it is," he exclaimed. "the spirit has gone out of the people. It is the same in my town. Almost no one comes to the synagogue any more." So the old abbot and the old rabbi wept together. Then they read parts of the Torah and quietly spoke of deep things.

The time came when the abbot had to leave. They embraced each other. "It has been a wonderful thing that we should meet after all these years," the abbot said, "but I have failed in my purpose of coming here. Is there nothing you can tell me, no advice you can give me that would help me save my dying order?"

"No. I'm sorry." the rabbi responded, "I have no advice to give. The only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you."

When the abbot returned to his monastery his fellow monks gathered around him to ask. "Well, what did the rabbi say?"

"He could not help;" the abbot answered. "We just wept and read the Torah together. The only thing he did say just as I was leaving - it was something cryptic - was that the Messiah is one of us. I don't know what he meant."

In the days and weeks and months that followed, the monks pondered this and wondered whether there was any possible significance in the rabbi's words. The Messiah is one of us? Could he possibly have meant one of us monks here in the monastery? If that's the case which one? Do you suppose he meant the abbot? Yes, if he meant anyone, he probably meant Father Abbot. He has been our leader for more than a generation. On the other hand he might have meant Brother Thomas. Certainly Brother Thomas is a holy man. Everyone knows that Thomas is a man of light. Certainly he couldn't have meant Brother Eldred. Eldred gets crotchety at times. But, come to think of it, even though he is a thorn in peoples' sides, when you come to look back on it, Eldred is virtually always right. Often very right. Maybe the rabbi did mean Brother Eldred. But surely not Brother Phillip. Phillip is so passive, a real nobody. But then, almost mysteriously, he has the gift for somehow always being there when you need him. He just magically appears by your side. Maybe Phillip is the Messiah. Of course the rabbi didn't mean me. He couldn't possibly mean me. I'm just an ordinary person. Yet supposing he did? Supposing I'm the Messiah?

As they contemplated in this manner, the old monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that one among them might be the Messiah. And, on the off chance that each monk himself might be the Messiah, they began to treat themselves with extraordinary respect.

Because the forest in which it was situated was beautiful, it so happened that people still came occasionally to visit the monastery to picnic on its tiny lawn, to wander along some of its paths, even now and then to go into the dilapidated chapel to meditate. As they did so, without being conscious of it, they sensed this aura of extraordinary respect that now began to surround these five old monks and seemed to radiate out from them and permeate the atmosphere of the place. There was something strangely attractive, even compelling, about it. Hardly knowing why, they began to come back to the monastery more frequently to picnic, to play, and to pray. They began to bring their friends to show them this special place. And their friends brought their friends.

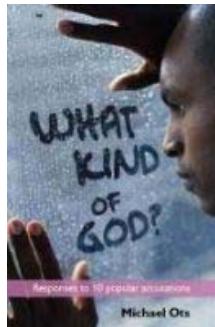
Then it happened that that some of the younger men who came to visit the monastery started to talk more and more with the old monks. After a while one asked if he could join them. Then another. And another. So within a few years the monastery had once again become a thriving order and, thanks to the rabbi's gift, a vibrant centre of light and spirituality in the realm.

BOOK REVIEWS from RE:FRESH BOOKS

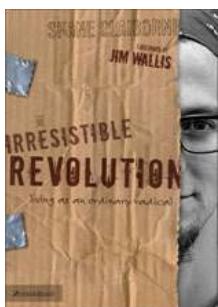
What kind of God by Michael Ots

160 pages, paperback, £6.99

Responses to 10 common accusations against God. Michael Ots is a young man passionate about sharing his faith through university missions and this book has grown out of some of his lunchtime discussions with non-Christians. “How can God be good when he authorises war, allows suffering, represses our sexuality, punishes his own Son, lets a hypocritical church represent him and excludes people on the basis of their beliefs, condemning them to hell?



His final chapter turns the question round to the reader or seeker “Awesome, loving and amazingly gracious, what kind of person would reject a God so good? This book can be dipped into and includes helpful suggestions for further reading on each topic.



The Irresistible Revolution - Living as an ordinary

radical by Shane Claiborne.

368 pages paperback, £7.99

Ever wondered what your life would be like if you really did sell all your possessions and give to the poor ... or opened your house to anyone and everyone ... or were not only willing but happy to be taken advantage of?

Now you're starting to understand Shane Claiborne. He is the founder of The Simple Way, a community in inner city Philadelphia. It's been running now for 10 years, constantly learning new ways to love the poor around them. They've given out food, clothes, newsletters, planted flowers and been arrested.

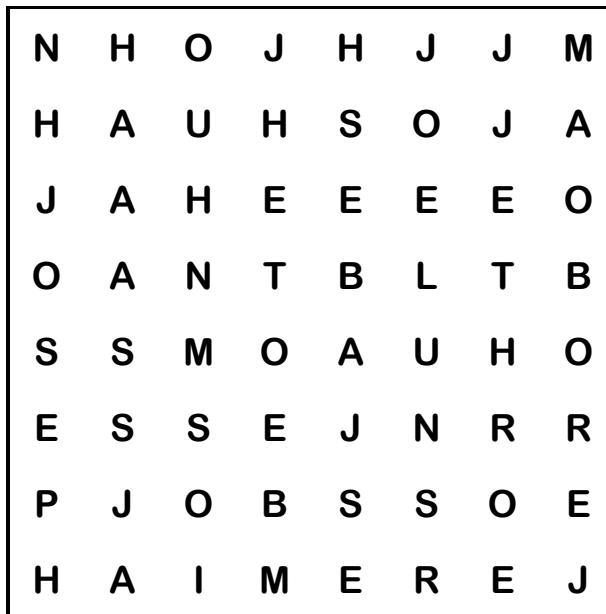
The Book addresses questions about the church and the world through some incredible stories of The Simple Way. It is both inspiring and challenging. It's well worth reading for anyone who is finding contemporary Christianity unexciting, or who just wants to be inspired to love people.

Both of these books are available from re:fresh books & christian resources, 23 The Broadway, Tolworth, Surbiton KT6 7DJ

PUZZLE CORNER

Bible Word Search: J Names

All the words listed below are in the puzzle - left, right, up, down or diagonally. After you have found all the words, the leftover letters in the correct order will form the *mystery name*



Jabesh
James
Jeremiah
Jeroboam
Jesse

Jethro
Job
Joel
John
Jonah

Jonathan
Joseph
Joshua
???????

CHURCH DIARY



Fri	1	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	3	10.30 am	All Age Worship led by Mark Williamson
Tue	5	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
			<i>Start of Christian Aid Week</i>
Sun	10	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
		12 noon	General Church Meeting followed by Lunch
Tue	12	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	13	7.45 pm	Midways Group - <i>Dr Peter Branham - Flowers of the Med</i>
Fri	15	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sat	16	10.30am-noon	Midway's Jumble Sale - <i>proceeds to Church Funds</i>
		7.00 pm	Christian Aid Quiz
Sun	17	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Valerie Ashcroft and Joanna Puslecka
			<i>Christian Aid Walk</i>
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
		6.30 pm	Ecumenical Songs of Praise in the church field next to St Mary's Church Hall, Church Path
Tue	19	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Member's Evening</i>
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	24	10.30 am	Morning Worship led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	26	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	27	7.45 pm	Midways Group - <i>Annual General Meeting</i>

Fri 29 12.30 pm Luncheon Club
Sun 31 10.30 am Morning Worship led by Brenda Cannon and
Tony Loft
6.30 pm Bible study led by Rev Margaret Adams

*Please refer to the Website (www.martinway.org.uk)
or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information*

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We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday
in May a very

Happy Birthday
and especially to:

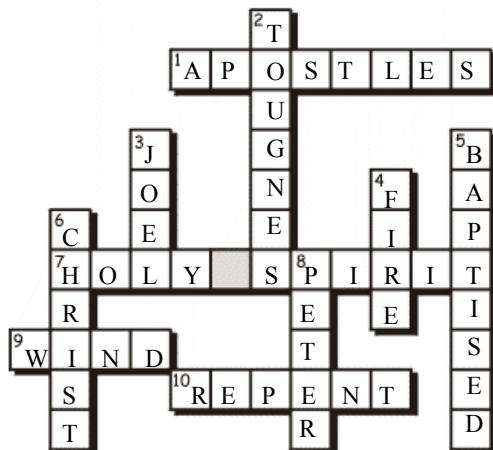


Seleso Sepanya on **3rd May**
Lesedi Sepanya on **17th May**
James Smith on **18th May**
Alex Pallister on **19th May**
Sherie Nyota on **24th May**

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PUZZLE CORNER ANSWERS

Solution to the
Crossword from last
month's Newsletter



HELP WANTED



In the summer the 1st Merton Park Rainbows will be losing one of their leaders. As Girlguiding UK requires there to be a leader for every five girls there is the risk that the unit will have to reduce its numbers. There is already a waiting list and a constant demand for places.

Would you be prepared to help?

The unit of 20 girls meets from 5.30pm to 6.40pm every Wednesday during term time. If you can spare time to help from September, or know somebody who could, please speak to me. I will be happy to tell you more about what we do and what would be asked of you – or come along and see for yourself.

Geraldine Ellis

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Items for the **June Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 24th May** at the latest.