

ELSTOW PARISH MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2008

On Saturday, September 6th, some of the members of the Elstow Benefice Youth Group were involved in a Car Wash to raise funds for Ketch Cottage and Cancer research. These two charities were chosen by the young people earlier on in the year to be the charities they wanted to support this year. Despite the fact it had been raining earlier on in the morning, the weather remained dry throughout the time of the event. This did not stop the youngsters getting wet however! Despite some larking about, they worked hard and raised £72.48 for the charities. Thank you to all who supported this event.



Young people often get a bad press these days. However, throughout the country, every day, young people are involved in activities that are productive, healthy and in some cases, like the car wash, working for the benefit of others. These often go unreported and unsupported. In Elstow, the youth club runs every Wednesday. We have around fifteen to twenty youngsters each week, aged between nine and fifteen years. We have a varied programme, from playing football, to treasure hunts. We even slept one night in the graveyard, although not much sleep happened. The important aspect of the group is variety and fun.

I overheard a conversation at a church event that challenged me. These two church members had grown up children, who used to be church members, but had stopped coming when they were teenagers. What disturbed me was the assumption that it was inevitable that the young people we have presently in Sunday school will also leave church before they are grown up. Statistics may seem to prove that these members are right. For decades, the Church has failed to appeal to young people and young people have got bored and left. We now have the situation where we have three or four generations of non-church goers. That is, not only have the majority of children's parents never been regular church goers, but also their grand parents and in some cases, great grandparents.

It is a challenge that the church has before it, to not only keep the children we've got, but to reach out to other children. It is a challenge, but it is not inevitable that young people will not want to come to church. I have been in Churches, which not only attract young people, but also keep them, until they grow up to be church members themselves. The key, I believe, is people. The reason that that young people leave the church is that no one is bothered with them. Or it is just left to the handful of faithful youth and children's workers. We need people to get involved in helping and leading children's groups. We need people to be welcoming to young people. We need people to pray for young people. And prayer is something everyone can do.

David Wells



TUNES OF GLORY

We sing "*Songs of praise the angels sang*" by James Montgomery (1771-1854) to the tune 'Northampton', composed for the hymn by C J King (1859-1934) when he was organist of St Matthew's, Northampton. This hymn first appeared in Cotterill's *Selection of Psalms and Hymns*, 1819. Montgomery gave it the title 'Glory to God in the highest'. Its theme is epitomised by the phrase 'songs of praise', which runs all through the hymn. It occurs at least once in every stanza, ten times in all, and its repetition gives strength and unity to the hymn. The six stanzas follow a clear and orderly pattern. The first three link the songs of praise to the great crises of biblical history: creation, redemption, and judgment. The last three apply the principle of praise to the life and worship of the Church, both on earth and in heaven.

James Montgomery was born at Irvine in Ayrshire, where his father was a Moravian minister. When he was five he went with his parents to Grace Hill, a settlement of Moravians near Ballymena, Northern Ireland. Two years later, he was sent to the Moravian seminary at Fulneck in Yorkshire, which was the chief Moravian settlement in England. In 1783 when James was 12, and still at Fulneck, his parents were sent as missionaries to the West Indies, where they both died. Elsie Houghton gives a full account, which is important to us. At Fulneck, young James received a good education and was under true Christian influence. He acknowledges that his first poetic attempts were sacred poems after the manner of the Moravians. He was a mere ten years old when he began to write such poems, filling a small volume before he was 13. He was designed to be a preacher but his early devotion to poetry diverted his attention from serious study. It was a happy thing that he early recognized his own bent and saw that he could serve the cause of Christ better as a poet than as a preacher. His poetical bent, however, met with sharp reproof at Fulneck.

In 1792, Montgomery went from Wath to Sheffield as assistant to a Mr. Gales, auctioneer, bookseller and the printer of a newspaper entitled the *Sheffield Register*. In 1794, when Mr. Gales left England to avoid persecution for his political principles, Montgomery took over the paper, changed its name to the *Iris* and edited it for 31 years. He wrote many poems, some of considerable length, but apart from the hymns of his boyhood he does not seem to have written many more hymns till much later in life. Montgomery lived for many years at the *Iris* office, an old house in the middle of Sheffield. He had achieved literary fame by then and many eminent literary people visited him. Like Cowper, Montgomery never married. Also like Cowper, he often An unpublished letter of 1839 indicates that his times of depression continued throughout life.

It was not until Montgomery was 43 that he became a member of the Moravian church, having been influenced by the printed sermons of Cennick, under whose ministry his father had been converted. As the Moravians had no chapel in Sheffield, he worshipped with the Methodists. He was always in sympathy with philanthropic and spiritual movements and occupied himself greatly with their promotion in his later years. He died at the venerable age of 82, amid universal tokens of esteem from his fellow townsmen among whom he had lived and worked and sung, and who recognized "that his life and his hymns had one music". Montgomery has laid the Christian Church under great obligation by his hymns. In 1825 he published his *Christian Psalmist, or Hymns Selected and Original*, of whose 562 hymns 103 are by Montgomery. It is from this work that most of his hymns are taken. In his 'Introductory Essay' - which was actually the first English work on hymnology - he has given his account of what a hymn should be. He calls for unity in hymns, gradation and mutual dependence in the thoughts, a conscious progress, and at the end a sense of completeness, and he insists that hymns ought to be easy to understand.

Montgomery's hymns are the productions of a skilled hand and bear traces of the writer's maturity as a poet and a Christian. The most precious truths of Scripture and the richest experiences of the Christian find in them simple but poetic expression. Another important thing about his hymns is that they are very suitable for congregational singing. As a poet, Montgomery stands well to the front. His poetic genius was of a high order. His ear for rhythm was exceedingly accurate and refined. His knowledge of the Scriptures was extensive. With the faith of a strong man he united the simplicity of a child. He is richly poetic without exuberance, dogmatic without uncharitableness, tender without sentimentality. He has bequeathed to the Church of Christ wealth which could only have come from a true genius and a sanctified heart. speaks of unbelief and despondency, and he has in fact been described as 'the Cowper of the 19th century'.

John Crookall

Music of the Spirit

Polymnia is a chamber choir of sixteen voices, based in Olney and directed by the talented local musician, John Byron. Their next concert, '*Music of the Spirit*', which takes place in Elstow Abbey Church on October 11th, has a decidedly spiritual dimension; whether it pertains to the inner life of the spirit, the various spirits encountered in Shakespeare's plays, or the out-and-out fervour of Negro Spirituals (as represented in Sir Michael Tippett's famous arrangements) and Gospel Music.

The concert is also a tribute to the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), whose music is distinguished by its reflective and expressive depths, and the 50th anniversary of whose death is celebrated this year. RVW's *Valiant-for-truth*, which sets a text from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is a particularly apt choice for this venue.

Polymnia will sing two of RVW's *Five Mystical Songs*, to poems by George Herbert: for these they are joined by the baritone Nick Epton, a renowned Lieder singer and vicar choral at Peterborough Cathedral. Nick will also perform some songs by RVW and others, with John Byron at the piano. A further set of RVW choral pieces, the *Three Shakespeare Songs*, written in 1951 for a national competition, masterfully illustrate the fantastical side of Shakespeare's imagination.

The programme also includes two choral works by the American composer Eric Whitacre, whose music has recently achieved great popularity: *This Marriage* celebrates the spiritual union of marriage, while *Sleep* invokes the dream-filled and almost cosmic experience of the spirit while in sleep. An evocative and atmospheric hymn arranged for ladies' voices (sung in Norwegian, no less!), some spirit-lifting Gospel Music and Tippett's soul-searching *Five Negro Spirituals* complete what promises to be an unforgettable musical experience.

Tickets for the concert are £7.50, concessions £5. All proceeds from the concert will be donated to St John's Hospice at Moggerhanger. Polymnia's last concert was sold out, so please don't rely on buying tickets at the door; contact their box office on 01234 713381.

FRIENDS OF ELSTOW ABBEY

After a long, distinguished period of service as Chairman of the Friends of Elstow Abbey, Colin Albon decided to stand down at the last AGM. Colin has been involved with the Friends since its inauguration in 1995 and £40,000 has been raised towards repairing and refurbishment of Elstow Abbey. Most recently the Friends have given £2,000 to the PCC to repair the organ, which has not been serviced for some years.

My name is Lynne Faulkner and I have been elected as the new Chairman. I grew up in Portsmouth, but also lived overseas. My father was in the Royal Navy so we lived in South Africa, Sri Lanka and Scotland before he retired. While at school I attended Portsmouth Cathedral and I married there in 1967 after graduating from university.

I studied Spanish at Queen Mary College, London University, attending services at St. Benet's Chapel and also a church in Lancaster Gate. In 1972 I moved to Pirton, near Hitchin, Herts and sang in St. Mary's Church choir, while serving the community as a District Councillor and WI Chairman. My 2 daughters Sarah and Helen grew up in Pirton and they now have 2 small children each - Emma, Jessica, Oliver and Thomas.

In 1987 I moved to Cople, Bedfordshire with Paul my 2nd husband and attended All Saints Church, while my daughter Helen went to John Bunyan School. Sadly after 12 years together Paul left and I then moved to Bedford, where I attended St. Andrew's Church and sang in the choir for 8 years. In 2004 I retired after a 35 year career in international HR management. Now I have 3

part time jobs as County and Borough Councillor for Elstow and Wilstead and as an employment tribunal member.

Last February I moved to Elstow and now sing in Elstow Abbey choir. We are very privileged to have such a beautiful and historic church. Elstow Abbey was built in the 11th Century as a Benedictine Nunnery and only became a church in 1539 after the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII. John Bunyan, author of *The Pilgrims Progress*, was born in Elstow and baptised and married in Elstow Abbey and his baptismal font is still used by the Revd Jeremy Crocker for baptisms today.

Sadly old churches are expensive to repair so the Friends of Elstow Abbey needs to keep raising money. The Bedford area has a strong musical tradition, so this year we have decided to launch the 1st ever Elstow Abbey Music Festival with 4 concerts.

Please note these dates in your diary and just come along and join in the fun.

For further information please contact Lynne Faulkner, Chairman on Tel 354914 or Derek Norman, Secretary on Tel: 262325. Lynne Faulkner Chairman of The Friends of Elstow Abbey

THE FRIENDS OF ELSTOW ABBEY - MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Trustees and Committee of The Friends of Elstow Abbey have arranged an exciting programme of music to see us all through the long dark days of winter.

Saturday 1st November at 7.30pm

The Flitwick Singers

Monday 1st December at 6.30pm

Hitchin Town Brass Band with The Kingshott School Chamber Choir

Saturday 31st January 2009 at 12 noon

Organ Recital by Bedford Organists Association

Saturday 28th February 2009 at 7.30pm

Luton Male Voice Choir

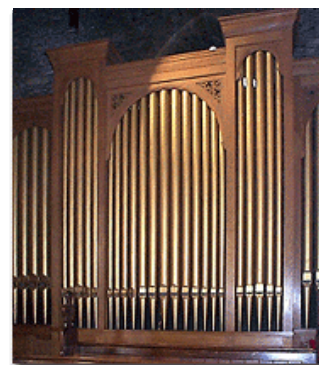
Tickets for each concert £7.50 concessions £5.00

Ticket for the whole festival £20.00 or £15 concession Children free

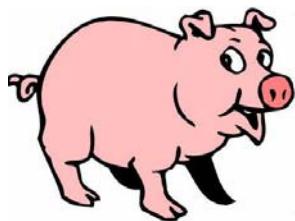
Tickets available from Friends Trustees and on the Door.

Please give your support to all or as many as you can of these concerts. The Friends of Elstow Abbey have recently agreed to pay for urgent work on the organ which should keep it working for a few more years and the proceeds of these concerts, after expenses will help toward paying for the work.

The organ, which will be 70 years old next year, is showing signs of its age and will over the coming years need money spending on it. The organ is the one most valuable piece of equipment that the Parochial Church Council own and any replacement with a similar instrument would cost tens of thousand of pounds to purchase.



ANNUAL HOG ROAST



If you missed the annual Elstow Joint Benefice hog roast in the vicarage garden, on Sunday, September 7th, then you missed a treat! After a week of rainy days the sunshine was an unexpected surprise, but even a light shower mid-way through the afternoon couldn't dampen spirits. The hog was roasted perfectly and was accompanied by a delicious range of salads and mouth-watering cakes - did you see that delectable Pavlova? The chorus of excited screams and shouts from the far end of the garden seemed to indicate that the younger members of the family were very much enjoying the bouncy castle too! Congratulations to everyone involved in making the event a "roaring" success!

ELSTOW ABBEY CHOIR



New Members Always Welcome

We have a few vacancies for both the Junior (7 and over) and Adult Choirs (Both Ladies and Men Allowed!!!)

If you would be interested please come to one of the following practices in the Church

3rd October

17th October

7th November

Junior Choir 6.45am -8pm

Adult Choir 7.15pm - 8pm

If you would like more information please contact Director of Music Stephen McDonald (see front page of magazine for contact details.

MISSIONARY GIVING

It has been decided by the Parochial Church Council that donations should be given to a nominated charity and that it would be approximately 10% of our income of that month.

Displayed on a board at the back of the church can be found information of the nominated charity for the month. Nominations for September are The Tear Fund and Multiple Sclerosis.

Members of the Missionary Giving Committee would welcome charities of your choice supported by paperwork that can be displayed on the board. We hope to be able to give to both local and third world missions.

Rosemary Albon

THE CHURCH CALENDAR OCTOBER 2008**OCTOBER**

1 ST	Wednesday	11.30am	Coffee morning and soup in the Church Hall
		6.30pm	Youth Group meet in the Church Hall
2 nd	Thursday	11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
		7.45pm	Churches Together at London Road Methodist Church
3 rd	Friday	6.45pm	Choir practice, new members welcome
4 th	Saturday	8.30am	Brownies and Youth Club trip to London Zoo
5 th	Sunday Pentecost 21		
		10.00am	Family Communion with Sunday School (JRC) Preacher Captain David Wells
		11.15am	Morning Prayer (Group)
		6.30pm	Evening Prayer (JRC)
6 th	Monday	10.00am	Mums and Toddlers meet in the Church Hall
		2.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
		7.30pm	Caretakers annual meeting in the Vicarage
7 th	Tuesday	10.00am	Sing and Sign in the Church Hall
		4.30pm	Dance Club in the Church Hall
8 th	Wednesday	11.30am	Coffee morning and soup in the Church Hall
		6.30pm	Youth Group meet in the Church Hall
9 th	Thursday	11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
10 th	Friday	7.30pm	Polymnia Concert rehearsal in the Church
11 th	Saturday	7.30pm	Music of the Spirit Concert by Polymnia with John Byron (Conductor and Piano) and Nick Epton (Baritone) in aid of St. John's Hospice, Moggerhanger. Tickets £7.50 ; concessions £5.00 Phone 01234 713381 for tickets or speak to Colin or Rosemary Albon 01234 407084
12 th	Sunday Pentecost 22		
		10.00am	Family Communion with Sunday School (Rev Mervyn Terrett) <i>JRC at St Michael's, Cardington</i>
		1.30pm	Baptism of Charlie Bilton (JRC)
		6.30pm	Evening Prayer (Mr. Robert Heley)
13 th	Monday	10.00am	Mums and Toddlers meet in the Church Hall
		2.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR NOVEMBER MAGAZINE			
14 th	Tuesday	10.00am	Sing and Sign in the Church Hall
		4.30pm	Dance Club in the Church Hall

15 th	Wednesday	11.30am	Coffee morning and soup in the Church Hall
		6.30pm	Youth Group meet in the Church Hall
16 th	Thursday	11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
		8.00pm	Liturgy Committee at 43. Armstrong Close, Wilstead
		8.00pm	United Prayer Fellowship @ London Road Methodists
17 th	Friday	6.45pm	Choir practice, new members welcome
19 th	Sunday Pentecost 23		
		10.00am	Family Communion with Sunday School (JRC)
		11.15am	Morning Prayer (JRC)
		6.30pm	Evening Prayer (JRC)
20 th	Monday	10.00am	Mums and Toddlers meet in the Church Hall
		2.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
		7.30pm	Benefice Wardens meeting at 1. Bindon Abbey
21 st	Tuesday	10.00am	Sing and Sign in the Church Hall
		4.30pm	Dance Club in the Church Hall
22 nd	Wednesday	11.30am	Coffee morning and soup in the Church Hall
		6.30pm	Youth Group meet in the Church Hall
23 rd	Thursday	11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
		7.30pm	A meeting of the Parochial Church Council in the Church Hall
25 th	Saturday	11.00am	Work party to prepare Bonfire site
		2.00pm	Children's workshop in the Church Hall

SUMMER TIME ENDS CLOCKS GO BACK 1 HOUR

26 th	Sunday	Bible Sunday	Last after Trinity
		10.00am	Young People's Service (JEH)
		11.15am	Parish Communion (JRC)
		6.30pm	Evening Prayer followed by Holy Communion with the Laying on of Hands for Healing (JRC)
27 th	Monday	10.00am	Mums and Toddlers
		2.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
28 th	Tuesday	10.00am	Sing and Sign in the Church hall
			Half Term - No Dance Club
29 th	Wednesday	11.30am	Coffee morning and soup in the Church Hall
			No Youth Group
30 th	Thursday	11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
		7.00pm	Wedding rehearsal @ Elstow Abbey
		8.00pm	Elstow Team Council meet at St. Michael's Church

NOVEMBER

1 ST	Saturday	All Saints Day	
		12.00noon	Wedding of Christopher Coe and Rebecca Swanton
		7.30pm	Concert by The Flitwick Singers in aid of The Friends
2 nd	Sunday 4 th	Before Advent	
		10.00am	Family Communion with Sunday School (JRC)
		11.15am	Morning Prayer (Group)
		2.00pm	Baptism of Joseph William Whiteman
		6.30pm	Annual Commemoration Service (JRC)
3 rd	Monday	10.00am	Mums and Toddlers meet in the Church Hall
		2.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
4 th	Tuesday	10.00am	Sing and Sign in the Church Hall
		4.30pm	Dance Club in the Church Hall
5 th	Wednesday	11.30am	Coffee morning and soup in the Church Hall
		6.30pm	Youth Group meet in the Church Hall
6 th	Thursday	11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
7 th	Friday	6.45pm	Choir practice, new members welcome
8 th	Saturday	6.00pm	Firework evening around the Church Hall. Please bring a large firework. Free soup and hot dogs. All welcome.
9 th	Sunday	Remembrance Sunday 3 rd	Before Advent
		10.00am	NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
		10.55am	Remembrance Service followed by laying of wreaths at War Memorial with John Bunyan Christian Fellowship(JRC)
		6.30pm	Evening Prayer (JRC) Preacher Mr Owen Parker, Chair of Bedford and District Royal British Legion

LESSON READERS OCTOBER 2008

October	10.00am	Philippians Ch.3 v. 4 - 14	Matthew Ch.21 v. 33 - end	Ken Webb
5th	11.15am	Isaiah Ch.49 v. 13 - 23	Luke Ch.12 v. 1 -12	Ann Knight
Green	6.30pm	Proverbs Ch.2 v. 1 - 11	1 John Ch.2 v. 1 - 17	Dorothy Steele
October	10.00am	Philippians Ch.4 v. 1 - 9	Matthew Ch.22 v. 1 - 14	Delphine Fordham
12th	6.30pm	Proverbs Ch.3 v. 1 - 18	1 John Ch.3 v. 1 - 15	Barbara Routledge
Green				
October	10.00am	1 Thessalonians Ch.1 v. 1 - 10	Matthew Ch.22 v. 15 - 22	Lynne Faulkner
19th	11.15am	Isaiah Ch.54 v. 1 - 14	Luke Ch.13 v. 31 - end	Peter Batiuk
Green	6.30pm	Proverbs Ch.4 v. 1 - 18	1 John Ch.3 v. 16 -Ch.4 v.6	Glynis Annan
October	10.00am	Young People's Service		
26th	11.15am	1 Thessalonians Ch.2 v. 1 - 8	Matthew Ch.22 v. 34 - end	Ann Knight
Green	6.30pm	Ecclesiastes Ch.'s 11 & 12	2 Timothy Ch.2 v. 1 - 7	Margaret Eastwell
November	10.00am	1 John Ch.3 v. 1 - 3	Matthew Ch.5 v. 1 - 12	Colin Albon
2nd	11.15am	Isaiah Ch.35	Luke Ch.9 v. 18 - 27	Organist
Green/Red	6.30pm	Isaiah Ch.1 v. 1 - 20	Matthew Ch.1 v. 18 - end	Catherine Parrish
Purple				

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

OCTOBER 2008

October 5th	10.00am	Mrs. S. Brown.	Mrs. B. Routledge.
	11.15am	Mr. F. W. Crossen.	
	6.30pm	Miss. M. Eastwell.	
October 12th	10.00am	Mrs. S. Batiuk.	Mr. P. Batiuk
	6.30pm	Mr. P. Moss	
October 19th	10.00am	Mrs. R. Albon.	Mrs. J. Barnicott
	11.15am	Mrs. M. Crossen.	
	6.30pm	Mrs. G. Annan.	
October 26th	10.00am	The Young People	
	11.15am	Mrs. A. Knight.	
	6.30pm	Mrs. V. Whyatt-Routh.	
November 2nd	10.00am	Mrs. A. Morris.	Mrs. S. Brown.
	11.15am	Mr. F. W. Crossen.	
	6.30pm	Mr. C. Albon.	Mrs. B. Routledge.
		Mrs. R. Albon.	Mrs. C. Parrish.

If any of these dates are inconvenient, please would you arrange a swap and let Colin Albon know that you have done so.

DETAILS FROM THE REGISTERS**JUNE 2008**

Date	Communicants	Attendance	Collections
1st	38	65	337.36
5th	11	11	3.00
8th	30	48	212.65
12th	4	4	3.20
15th	28	57	290.99
19th	6	6	3.00
22nd	20	77	11.00
29th	9	33	129.90
	<u>150</u>	<u>305</u>	<u>1308.85</u>

JULY 2008

Date	Communicants	Attendance	Collections
3rd	19	19	14.20
6th	34	75	193.14
10th	10	10	8.00
13th	40	60	206.39
17th	10	10	17.00
20 th	35	70	225.72
27 th	29	93	365.14
31st	7	7	12.00
	<u>184</u>	<u>344</u>	<u>1041.59</u>

AUGUST 2008

Date	Communicants	Attendance	Collections
3rd	37	68	457.32
7th	4	4	2.00
10th	13	121	184.52
14th	7	7	7.00
17 th	49	131	325.72
21 st	7	7	22.00
24 th		76	279.60
28 th	9	9	36.00
31 st		18	243.30
	<u>126</u>	<u>441</u>	<u>1557.46</u>

BAPTISMS

July 7th Jamie Stephen Cooper

August 3rd Jamie Rebecca Leslie

August 10th Olivia Merly Caimino
 Isabella Deborah Caimino
 Charlie Hayden Robinson
 Harmony May Sarfas
 Kurtis John Dandy

August 31st Isabel Lily Kemp
 Charlie James Kemp
 Thomas Lee Williams
 Kathryn Underhill

BURIALS

August 1 3th Jonathan Charles Dye

August 14th Olive May Robinson

August 15th Penelope Anne Rigden

Sept 3rd Marian Chilvers (Ashes)



JOKES, JOKES, JOKES

There's this cathedral that's still being worked on, and the workers have rigged a "cage elevator" inside so they can get material up and down to the upper floors. A characteristic of these "cage elevators" is that the doors (gate) must be closed manually for them to be "called" to another floor. One day one of the workers, Peter by name, takes the elevator to the top floor, and it is subsequently needed on the first floor by the sexton. Unfortunately, Peter forgot and left the door open. After the sexton rings for the elevator a couple times, to no avail, he yells up for the worker to send the lift back down. Visitors to the cathedral were treated to this sight: The sexton of the

cathedral, head tipped up, yelling up to the heavens: "Peter! CLOSE THE GATES!!!"

Q. Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A. Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Q. Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible?

A. Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet.

Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he got married?

A. Ruth-less.

Q. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

A. Samson. He brought the house down.

Q. Where is the first baseball game in the Bible?

A. In the big inning, Eve stole first, Adam stole second. Cain struck out Abel, and the Prodigal Son came home. The Giants and the Angels were rained out.

DID YOU KNOW?



Half the world's population has never made a phone call on a landline

The chance of being born on Leap Day is about 684 out of a million, or 1 in 1,461.

Less than 5 million people have their birthday on Leap Day.

Gaius Maecenas of Rome built the first heated swimming pool in the first century BC.

In 1946 war rationing of material inspired the invention of the two-piece bathing suit, called a 'bikini' after the US nuclear testing site in the South Pacific.

In Indonesia alone, 365 different languages are spoken.

The earliest known report of a UFO sighting was by Julius Obsequens in 100 BC, when he claimed to have seen 'things like ships' in the sky over Italy.

The biggest ice cream sundae ever made was 12 feet high and made with 4,667 gallons of ice cream.

A Swedish bride puts a silver coin from her father and a gold coin from her mother in each shoe to ensure that she'll never do without.

The word 'steak' is derived from an old Saxon word, steik, meaning meat on a stick.

The smallest country in the world is the Vatican. It also is the only country where Latin is the official language.