

Rodborough Tabernacle News



Sharing God's Love
Serving the Community

FOREWORD

Going further

I thought of giving up sherry for Lent but hesitated, as that seemed taking things a bit far. Recently there was a row because in a special Service in Glasgow Cathedral a reading from the (Muslim) Koran was allowed, and some people thought that was going too far. Sheffield Cathedral has beautiful moveable pews so that the main body of the church can be cleared. People from the city (whether they attend church or not) are welcomed to use it as a space for a meeting, a dinner, a concert – I suppose, even a dance. No doubt there are people who think that is going a step too far.

The season of Lent, Ash Wednesday to Good Friday (1 March - 13 April), is about going a step further. In the first celebrations of Lent people learnt the story of Jesus in the days leading up to and including his crucifixion. The next day, Easter Saturday night, was when new Christians took the decisive step of committing themselves to be Christ's followers and serious members of the church – at whatever cost. For some that included persecution, as it does for some now in many parts of the world.

So shall I give up sherry for Lent? My first aim this Lent is to go deeper in looking outward: to try harder to understand people who are committed to another faith or to no particular faith, look for the things we have in common and the ways in which we could collaborate. The reasons why Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Christians and the general public all believe in giving to charity to support people in need might be a good starting point in trying to universalise faith and experience.

As our political leaders tackle the work of negotiating leaving the European Union (EU) I want to think more about the common ground there is among us Europeans – the longing for peace that was the initial inspiration of the EU, our shared music and art, our religious history, our love of each other's cooking and appreciation of beautiful scenery.

I want to think about how our church can be more outward-looking by learning from and being involved in what Christians are doing in other parts of the world, and by becoming more involved and vocal in the issues disturbing our own society. In this country we cannot

ignore looming issues such as shortage of care for the elderly, huge gaps in pay between some shop-floor workers and senior managers, the abusive life-wrecking power of social media

I want to think about how the church can go further in being more loving and open at the centre of community life. Perhaps following the example of Sheffield Cathedral we should explore how the church can be more available for the community to use. How can a church become both a refuge and a radical stimulation? How can it be made easier for people on the geographical fringe to join in?

However we do it, Lent is about taking courageous steps because it commemorates Jesus showing us the true nature of Love, suffering arrest and brutal murder - for the world's sake.

John Sutcliffe

Lenten Poem

Lent is a time to take time to let the power
of our faith story take hold of us,
a time to let the events get up
and walk around in us,
a time to intensify our living unto Christ,
a time to hover over the thoughts of our hearts,
a time to place our feet in the streets of
Jerusalem or to walk along the sea and
listen to his Word,
a time to touch his robe
and feel the healing surge through us,
a time to ponder and a time to wonder....
Lent is a time to allow
a fresh new taste of God!
Perhaps we're afraid to have time to think,
for thoughts come unbidden.
Perhaps we're afraid to face our future
knowing our past.
Give us courage, O God,
to hear your Word
and to read our living into it.
Give us the trust to know we're forgiven
and give us the faith
to take up our lives and walk.

Ann Weems

Wednesday Fellowship

On Wednesday 15th February, Peter, in his new role which he carried out so well, welcomed John, Rose and Eric who were going to be our entertainers for the afternoon.

He had put pictures up on the screen of the children from Belarus who had received the Christmas boxes that had been sent from the "Tab" and it was lovely to see the children's smiling faces holding their toys and wearing the hats and gloves.

We then went on to think of those who could not be with us, Peggy Short, Marion Driscoll, June Weekes, Dorothy Gillings and Aggie, but so glad that Avril was able to come. Commiseration went out to Jill, still trying to get over her insect sting, and to many members who were struggling with a range of different problems. Special thoughts were also given to Shirley.

Then the notices were given and birthdays celebrated and we sang a hymn accompanied by John and Eric. Peter then talked about the snowdrops that are everywhere at the moment and told us about a walk he had taken with his neighbour who is the Vicar of St. Matthews and how they went into a Church where the Christmas decorations were still up, this was due to the fact that, in some churches, they are not taken down until Candlemass. This is celebrated on February 2nd which is halfway between the shortest day and the Spring Equinox, a Christian holiday commemorating the time when Jesus was presented in the Temple. He also read out the meanings of the word "Fellowship", all of which were so relevant to our gathering, like companionship for instance.

John then began his programme by saying how much Cephalonia in Greece has, for many years, become such an important holiday destination for him and Rose. He told us about a lady called Marina who has become very special and always says something that stays in John's mind. He finds that, on returning home, he has to write a song using her words such as: "A little bit of you stays in my heart," "People I love, people I know" and "It must be Summer now you are here". He sang several songs using these words and then he and Eric sang a beautiful new song which they had recorded when John had been inspired to write it after Peggy White had made the comment "Walk in the shoes" in a debate at Café Church. He also sang

a very moving song about mourning which goes on for 40 days in Cephalonia in order to really focus on the person who has sadly died.

As well as the lovely songs, John read some poems that he had written himself with Rose and Eric reading more. These poems covered many subjects, some funny especially about when he was mischievously growing up in Tabernacle Walk, then others in a more thoughtful mode. Anne read a very moving poem about John's grandfather, Percy Wilmot, who in WW1 was involved in playing football with the German's. Thankfully he survived but thought was given to how it must have been for Percy and his wife, Kitty, during this awful time.

It really was a very enjoyable afternoon as John is such a talented, deeply caring person and this just shone through like a beacon.

On behalf of the Fellowship

Dorothy

Cephalonia's Golden Sun

To Argostoli on the bus
We travelled with so little fuss,
The sun shone brightly all the way,
And we enjoyed the views that day.

We walked along the promenade,
Where fruit was sold some good, some bad,
We said "hello" in Greek and then,
Proceeded on our way again.

Got on the ferry, crossed the bay,
To Lixouri where the music plays.
The bands march up and down the square,
And people sit to drink the air.

Tavernas offering scrumptious fare,
A mezze plate for both to share.
A walk around the fishing boats,
And passing yachts at which to gloat.

Then all too soon return on board,
The ferry back with one accord.
To where the journey had begun,
In Cephalonia's golden sun
.John Cook

"I was a stranger...and you took me in"

Do you believe in 'God-incidences' as opposed to merely 'co-incidences'? A striking example occurred the day after my father's death in April (following a broken hip replacement and further fall. This was Lawrence Squires, former Minister here at Rodborough for those who never knew him.) This encounter turned out to provide an update on work begun by people here at the Tab and in this area of the Cotswolds with Hungarian refugees in 1956!

I was on my way to a crucial training weekend in conflict transformation - the culmination of nearly a year of training - to miss which would have caused me to drop out of the entire process. I knew Dad would have wanted me to attend and I had said my repeated goodbyes to him for months and most recently three days earlier. On my way to Coatbridge a woman struck up a conversation with me as we crossed to our platform. Later she tracked me down in my train compartment and continued the conversation. Eva is Hungarian and works as a translator for the Scottish Courts. She was on her way to a hearing that day. Her PhD was on the fate of the Hungarian Diaspora –the scattered refugees -following the disastrous ending of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956 when Russian tanks brutally moved in to crush the demonstrations. The aftermath was vicious and a flood of refugees began. Amongst those she interviewed were people who spoke of experiences in Gloucestershire, an initiative including Rodborough. I remember as a little girl sitting by the telephone ready to write down the name and address of the caller and article of furniture that was being donated to help furnish Rodborough Fort that stood empty at the top of our lane. Later my sisters and I accompanied my mother, it was Christmas time, as she welcomed dazed Hungarian families move into the newly furnished Fort, demonstrating by acting how to cook the turkey and food provided! There was much laughter.

Now fifty years later here was Eva telling me the stories of some of those people and how that kindness and provision is still remembered and spoken of. Indeed one of the early residents from the Fort now lives in Glasgow. It was a timely encounter celebrating the work this committed faith community had helped take forward - 'fruit that would last.' Surely this encounter was more than mere chance and I found it a warm comfort.

Fast forward to 2016. Having offered accommodation for refugees earlier this year through Room for Refugees, Ian and I felt conflicted in March when the co-ordinator, Robina asked if we would take some people, but with my father so ill at that time we regretted having to turn her down. In September we were asked again. **This time the refugee had a name.** 'Mani'* had been in a refuge but now had to move on. He was at risk of being made destitute. Alan Kurdi also had a name. He looked exactly like our youngest grandson Alex-the same age, the bright red shorts and little chunky legs. Our UK wide outpouring of shocked compassion at the sight of this child washed ashore lasted a full month then faded, according to the toddler's father. Here now was an opportunity for us to actually provide a home and this time we did not hesitate. Knowing 'Mani's' name and the possibility that **we could allow him to become destitute** was crucial. How could we refuse? Being so very rural however, three miles to the village and far from employment or training opportunities we were relieved and pleased to hear someone in Edinburgh had also offered a home, that one being much more suitable.

In Hungary by November 4th 1956 it seemed that a peaceful movement for democracy and freedom had gained momentum but Russian troops were on their way. 'Help Hungary...help, help, help!' were the last words said before the radio station was seized. Brutal order was restored and 200,000 refugees fled into Austria and the West until the border was sealed. Thousands were executed or imprisoned. (Source: Rupert Colley.) Not one Western power helped. Now it is Syria. However we are placed, whether a spare room, spare warm clothes, time to write, donate, time to pray, we can be part of the wider welcome-'when I was a stranger-you took me in.' Each refugee has a name and a story. At my church in East Lothian our weekly Bible passages from Luke's Gospel continue to challenge us with the words of Christ - to share what we have....



Rosamond Robertson
3.1.2017

*Not his real name.

Holocaust Commemoration



Clive Lewis, Norman Kaye, Bishop Rachel Treweek and her husband who attended the very successful multifaith Holocaust Remembrance Commemoration, held at the 'Tab' at the end of January.

The event was organised by Brian Oosthuysen and was attended by some 200 people. There were representatives and contributions from many faiths such as Judaism, Bahai, Islam and Buddhist as well as different Christian denominations. Bishop Rachel gave an address about how people need to be able to tell their stories of what happened in the past, so that we can learn lessons for the future. The service, although called Holocaust Remembrance, reminded us about other shameful episodes of man's inhumanity to man, such as the genocide that occurred in Rwanda. The service was very moving, but the singing of the children in Rosary School Choir lightened the atmosphere and reminded us that they are the next generation and are our hope for the future. After the service everyone joined together for tea and cake in the community room. It was lovely to see people of different faiths coming together in fellowship and reminded us of how much we have in common with each other. It is hoped that the event will be repeated next year.

Liz Shankland

A Woman's Reflection

Peace is a state of respect, co-operation and well-being.

Peace is the presence of social justice.

Peace is the absence of war, poverty and hunger.

Peace is the freedom from sickness and disease.

It is employment and health.

Peace is hope for our future of all God's children and all God's world.

Peace is when we have no fear to assemble, to worship, to work, to publish and to say the truth, even to the powerful.

Peace is Salaam, well being for all, equality and respect for human rights.

Peace is when everybody feels at home and accepted, without barriers based on age, class, sex, race, religion or nationality.

Peace is a sense of unity and relationship that compels one to work for justice and equality.

Peace is action that is dynamic and positive.

Peace is that fragile harmony that carries with it the experience of struggle, the endurance of suffering and the strength of love.

+Jean Zaru

From Ramallah Friends' Meeting House



Jean Zaru is a Palestinian Christian who is unable to travel out of Ramallah due Israeli restrictions

Ethical Manufacturing



Páramo's partnership with the Miquelina Foundation in Bogotá, Colombia began in 1992. This partnership gives valuable opportunities for vulnerable people – women at risk of prostitution and drugs are offered training and employment, homes and childcare. Over 80% of Páramo's annual production occurs at Miquelina, including all our Analogy waterproof garments.

The Miquelina Foundation

In 1977, a Colombian nun, Esther Castaño Mejía set up a sewing workshop with a few second hand sewing machines to offer practical help to women rescued from the streets of Bogotá. The workshop provided training and experience enabling women to apply for jobs in other factories, but at this stage was not a commercially viable manufacturer.

Páramo's founder, Nick Brown, made contact with Miquelina in 1992, and since then Páramo and Miquelina have grown together – allowing Miquelina to help significant numbers of women and their families, and enabling Páramo to make high quality outdoor clothing. With encouragement from Páramo, Miquelina incorporated as an independent charitable foundation in 1997 and in 2002 obtained ISO 9001 accreditation, a highly prestigious international standard recognising dedication to quality.

Miquelina's achievements

The profits of the factory are reinvested in equipment and significant donations are made to the other associated projects, including a housing cooperative, canteen, nursery school and training facilities. Miquelina has developed from a small section of a charity that survived on donations to an important source of employment and funding for community projects.

The Foundation provides employment and training for 400+ vulnerable women each year, who want to improve their lives. 130+ houses have been built, 200 under 5s attend the kindergarten and 300 children eat daily in the canteen.

Street Pastors

"Street Pastors is an inter-denominational church response to urban problems, engaging with people in their own communities, to care, listen and dialogue."

"The Street Pastors initiative is designed to give Christians the tools to be effective expressions of God's love, and through the dedication of time and love, become bridge - builders in today's society ."

(Quote from Street Pastors handbook for trainees.)

The Street Pastors initiative began some 20 years ago in East London; now there are teams of Street Pastors in most towns and cities in the U.K. including Gloucester, Cheltenham and Cirencester, commissioned and trained by the Ascension Trust.

The first team of Street Pastors in Stroud was commissioned in October 2015 in St. Laurence's church and has been on duty every Saturday night since then. A team of 4 patrols the streets of Stroud from 10pm. to 4am. with the aim of keeping people safe and being available to help if needed. We offer water, foil blankets, flip - flops and lollipops and help to anyone who is in difficulty as a result of drinking too much.

On 4th. February, the team on duty found themselves consoling traumatised young people after the tragic death of a young man in the Warehouse nightclub.

If you would like more information about Street Pastors , please email stroud@streetpastors.org.uk or telephone 07926497345.

Tony Morris.

Prayer Point

There is now a prayer point in the Community room with post its in a box on the side of the board. If anyone would like to write on a post it the name or situation about which they feel concerned and add the date and stick on the board. These names, etc will be prayed for on a Sunday during the following month. The board is situated between the Live Wires cupboard and the book cupboard.

Diana Davis



**POSITIVE JUSTICE
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**PUBLIC MEETING
Cheltenham**

Thursday March 23 7pm

Francis Close Hall campus (room TC001)
the University of Gloucestershire, Swindon
Road, Cheltenham, GL50 4AZ.

Preventing Prison Suicides

Speaker:

- ❖ **Lorraine Atkinson** senior policy officer for the Howard League for Prison Reform
- ❖ Chair: **Dave Turner** senior lecturer in criminology, University of Gloucestershire.

Opportunity for questions from the audience

All welcome. Admission free. Free parking

Further details: www.pjglos.org.uk or phone 01453 759438

March

March is an in between month
When wintry winds are high
But milder days remind us all
Spring's coming by and by...
(Author unknown)

Preserving the Plot

"Spring is sooner recognised by plants than by men for as the days lengthen they start to move and make new growth..." Suddenly neglected primrose plants in odd corners... even some which have self-seeded right in the middle of clumps of Helenium are covered in flowers. They need splitting up so now is a good time to get the spade inwho did I make promises to back in the summer? Red and pink sedum and Rudbeckia also need sorting out....

Blackcurrants, gooseberry bushes and raspberries have been pruned and are being treated to some extra nourishment of fish, bone and blood, plus some rich compost from one of the bins which are conveniently nearby. Blackcurrants, I've learned, are particularly greedy feeders and fruit on the new wood so I hope they will be more productive this year, providing that I remember to cover them in netting to keep the pigeons away. I like to make some into a coulis to drizzle over melon or ice-cream. Perhaps you remember the tins of blackcurrant puree available for children during the war as an alternative to orange juice...? Just 12 blackcurrants contain more vitamin C than 2 lemons!

American Land Cress has self-seeded around this garden for many years and is usually the first thing we pick in spring, but this year none to be seen so I've purchased some new seed and will have to make do with boughten watercress for the time being. Some little onions which lost their green to slugs last year have survived and appeared again so we have spring onions. Garlic shoots have at last appeared... I still have one bulb to use from last year's crop.

The fine, well-drained, soil in this garden needs feeding after the winter rains have washed away precious nutrients so chicken pellets will be scattered and all the compost available will be dug in. It's too cold for planting seeds outside yet - remember that carrots should not be grown on freshly manured ground.

March weather is often inclement - as I write I can hear the wind howling but everywhere nature is on the move and we have to get moving too and make the most of each good day.....

"Spring, slayer of Winter, thou art here again!" (William Morris 1868)

Maureen Arthur

Holy Humour - Meatless Fridays

John Smith was the only Protestant to move into a large Catholic neighborhood. On the first Friday of Lent, John was outside grilling a big juicy steak on his grill. Meanwhile, all of his neighbours were eating cold tuna fish for supper. This went on each Friday of Lent.

On the last Friday of Lent, the neighbourhood men got together and decided that something had to be done about John. He was tempting them to eat meat each Friday of Lent, and they couldn't take it anymore. They decided to try and convert John to Catholicism. They went over and talked to him. John decided to join all of his neighbours and become a Catholic, which made them all very happy.

They took him to church, and the priest sprinkled some water over him, and said :

"You were born a Baptist, you were raised a Baptist, and now you are a Catholic"

The men were so relieved, now their biggest Lenten temptation was resolved.

The next year's Lenten season rolled around. The first Friday of Lent came, and, just at supper time, when the neighbourhood was settling down to their cold tuna fish dinner, the smell of steak cooking on a grill came wafting into their homes. The neighbourhood men could not believe their noses! WHAT WAS GOING ON? They called each other up and decided to meet over in John's yard to see if he had forgotten it was the first Friday of Lent.

The group arrived just in time to see John standing over his grill with a small pitcher of water. He was sprinkling some water over his steak on the grill, saying:

"You were born a cow, you were raised a cow, and now you are a fish"

Unknown



URC Update

Alison flies the flag for UK youth at United Nations



Alison Greaves is in demand. The 18-year-old, a member of United Reformed Church Youth, has just returned from New York where she was the UK's sole delegate to the United Nations 2017 Winter Youth Assembly. The conference, at UN headquarters from 1 to 3 February, involved 13,000 young people and adults from over 100 countries.

The teenager, who attends Bamford Chapel and Norden United Reformed Church in Rochdale, flew out after speaking about the trip at her church and the United Reformed Church Youth Assembly in Staffordshire. Alison said: 'My role now is to educate people, in particular young people, about the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which aim to improve 17 aspects of life in both the developing and developed world. Personally I feel this is how I am going to let Jesus shine in my life.'



Glenis Massey commissioned as a Lay Preacher in an afternoon service led by Rev Steve Faber, Moderator of the West Midland's Synod



Hi Aggie,

It is so lovely to hear from you... thank you for all the kind wishes for the Staff and learners from our school. I will certainly relay your words to them.

I realised that it would be impossible for any of the Rodborough Knitters to attend, but in essence, as loyal and cherished supporters of our school, I just could not leave you out of the mailing!

The children are practicing really hard and are getting so very excited. Their singing is coming along beautifully and I am so truly blessed to be able to be a part of this little school.

If they come and film our Nativity, I will send a copy of the DVD to you.

A box arrived with a precious little knitted mouse inside... I did send you an e-mail to say 'thank you' and also to tell you that it had arrived..... another with the most beautifully knitted little dolly came a few days ago.... we are just waiting for the 3rd box.

How can we ever thank you sufficiently well for all the love, care and patience that goes into making all these beautiful woollen garments and toys? You are very special ladies who stand for love, stability and provision in the mixed up lives of these little ones in our care.

Heartiest congratulations to your friend of 101! I am only 55 having being born in 1960, but certainly do not have all the energy you ladies seem to have. May God bless you for your diligence and perseverance!

Please send all the ladies my kindest regards. Here is hoping that this e-mail will find you in good health and good cheer.

Have a very blessed Christmas,

All my love, Sue.

**Spaniel in the Works Theatre Company
present**

AREA 8'

**Friday March 31st at 8pm
In the Little Chapel**

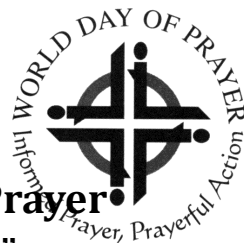


Based on the book written by Captain P R Symonds, Area 8 is a lively, funny, poignant performance looking at the experiences of the Civil Defence Services and A.R. P. in Stroud and Nailsworth

The performance takes in all aspects of life during wartime from rationing and nursing to what to do in an emergency and what the cry "Rallyho!" means.

Tickets £10.00, £ 7.00

Available from Stroud Tourist Information or Tel 01453 760900



Women's World Day of Prayer

"Am I being unfair to you"

Fri Mar 3rd - 2.30pm

Church of the Holy Spirit, Stratford Rd, Stroud

The service has been prepared
by the Christian women of the Philippines.

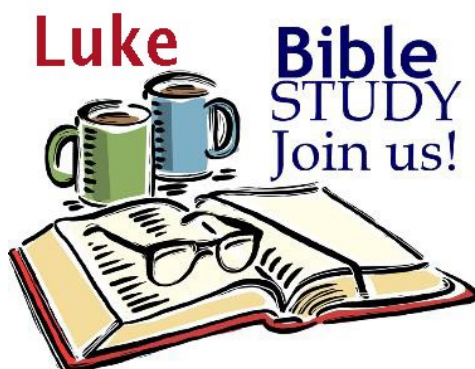
Refreshments. All welcome

Lent Bible Study

'Through the eyes of Luke' will be held at the home of Marion Sadler on Wednesday evenings 7:30 -9 pm - 15th March, 22nd March, 29th March, April 5th April 12th. Numbers are limited, and the full programme will be circulated.

Take a closer look at who Jesus is through the lens of the writer of the gospel of Luke. Walk the way of the cross, from Galilee to the triumphal entry to tragedy and injustice . Make the connections to today and inspire each other.

Eric Massey



Flower Rota March

- 5 Hilary & David Smith in memory of all loved ones.
- 12 Agnes Arkell in memory of Eddie
- 19 Barbara Cook, sisters and brother in memory of their Mum
- 26 Marilyn Brown in memory of her Mum & Dad

Services In March

- 5 Rev Eric Massey (HC)
- 12 Alan Jackson
- 19 Cafe Church - Mary and Joshua Evans
- 26 Glenis Massey - Mothering Sunday

'What's On' in March

Sat 4th - 10 –3pm - 'A Quiet day for Lent' led by Sister Anna O'Connor SP at Christ the King Roman Catholic Church Hall, Castle St, Thornbury. Cost £10.00 contact Revd. Canon Michael Cozens mgcozens86@btinternet.com/01453 546459

Sat 11th - Playgroup Quiz Night - RT Community Hall

Sat 18 – 7.30 for 8 pm Quiz Night at Avening Memorial Hall, to raise funds for the World Challenge trip to Costa Rica and Nicaragua. To book a team – call Sarah on 07815 169239

Sat 25th at 7.00 pm at St George's Church, Nailsworth

'Music Springs to Mind' a programme of light music in aid of 'Mind' Mental Health Charity. Tickets: £10 in advance from me at the 'Tab' or contacting me on 07941874004 email kay.sandells@gmail.com

Sat 25th 6-9.30pm - St Laurence Church, Stroud. A dance concert in aid of Stroud & District Foodbank featuring The Raga Babas, plus Gospel Choir and support band.

Cost: Generous donations of around £5 - £10 encouraged

Christian Aid Week Organiser and Treasurer Needed

Christian Aid in Stroud needs two key volunteer roles to continue its tremendous work. We need one person to order and distribute resources to the churches and another to be the local treasurer to oversee the efficient banking and recording of income. We have committed individuals and groups organising events, services, house to house collections, quizzes, church collections, street collections, Big Brekkies, coffee mornings and the like totalling about £10,000 each year. If you would consider taking on either of these roles, please get in touch with Noel Sharp 01453 298389 or nsharp@christian-aid.org

Contacts:

Minister: **Rev Eric Massey** **01453 766389**

Email: minister@rodboroughtab.org.uk

Secretary: **Mary Evans** **01453 756330**

E mail: secretary@rodboroughtab.org.uk

Treasurer: **Clive Malcolm** **01453 873373**

Email: treasurer@rodboroughtab.org.uk

Hall Bookings: **John Rohrbeck** **01452 812934**

Email: hallhire@rodboroughtab.org.uk

Website: www.rodboroughtab.org

Church Mobile: **07925996455**

All Sunday services held @ 10.30 am unless notified

Bible Study and Holy Communion

Every Tuesday in the Manse 10am – 12.00

R.T.N **Gill Gyde** **01452 812587**

Email: news@rodboroughtab.org.uk

Prayer Chain contact for March:

Mary Evans: 01453 756330 or secretary@rodboroughtab.org.uk

Copy date for next issue : Mar 19th