

# The Pilsdon at Malling Community

Easter 2014

## A time of transformation and renewal

**W**e have had some beautiful weather just lately, so welcome after the months of rain and grey skies.

Warm, sunny days usually encourage me to do a bit of gardening – tidying up, a bit of chopping down here and there of dead stuff. It was at this time of year that I would decide finally to get to grips with the jasmine that we had at our old house, before we moved to Pilsdon. It was usually quite a mess: lots of long trailing stems and even more dead wood. In summer they are magnificent, covered with the **most fragrant white flowers**. My parents' house seemed always to smell of jasmine as my mum had a large shrub and kept masses of the flowers in vases all over the house over the long South African summer.

Snipping away at the stems and dead wood is a sort of analogy for this time of Lent, Holy Week and Easter. The word that comes to mind is **'transformation'**. The **dead wood of winter** is always followed by the new growth of spring. By summer all is transformed – it's still the same garden, but looks very different.

The gardens here at Pilsdon have been emerging from winter for some time now. The first signs of spring, as always, are the beautiful, delicate snowdrops, the aconites and the crocuses, followed closely by wave upon wave of daffodils and narcissi of all sorts of size and shade of yellow. The wildflower meadow was really lovely again this year as are the gardens, if you can ignore the weeds! It certainly is a

huge transformation from the dull, grey days and dead looking gardens of winter.

Change or transformation is something that seemed to be integral to **Jesus' ministry**. He **challenged, invited, or** sometimes forced change in everyone. He tended to condemn those who heard his teaching yet wanted to remain unchanged by it. Change, growth and healing are at the core of our faith. Not only those who were healed were forever changed by their encounter with Jesus but just about all who heard him or came close to him. Jesus constantly challenges his followers not to think they have arrived, but to have more growing and changing to do.

We, as individuals and as a community, are being challenged by our time in history to see Jesus in a different light - not because we didn't know him before, but because the ever-changing needs of our world and our communities demand that we be willing to see Christ with new eyes.

Challenge is very much a part of our lives here at Pilsdon, not least in our dependency on the land and the weather for our food and wellbeing. The constant rain over the winter months was a huge trial – we seemed even to sleep in our wellies! The poor pigs were in the worst quagmire that threatened to engulf anyone who ventured there. But everywhere was sodden and our days were defined by the amount of mud that seemed to get into everything. Happily the sunny days of the past month have cheered everything up immensely and given us all a new lease of life.



The other big challenge that we have been grappling with has been our endeavour to build more accommodation. English Heritage proved to be a huge hurdle but we eventually agreed on a new site and we have now secured planning permission for two timber cabins on part of the large greenhouse. We plan to demolish one bay of the greenhouse and the motley collection of buildings just outside the kitchen so that the cabins can be placed there. The design has been altered slightly to include a new purpose-built freezer and store room to replace the current freezer room. All we need now are the funds to achieve it. If there is anyone out there who has fundraising experience and would like to help us find and apply **for grants, we'd love to hear from you.**

**This year is Pilsdon at Malling's 10<sup>th</sup>** anniversary. We will be celebrating this on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September with a Service of Thanksgiving, food and fellowship. We would love as many of you as possible to be here for that occasion. Please let us know by email or letter if you can join us so that we have some idea of numbers.

Challenge and transformation. The movement from Lent to Easter echoes the transformation of the dark days and seemingly lifeless landscape of winter into the light and life of spring. May the challenges of our journey through Lent give us new light and life as we greet the Risen Lord on Easter morning.

Happy Easter!

With every blessing,

PAM RINK

## A beautiful view, in a Jackson Pollack way

**M**ost of you out there in the Pilsdon-loving world have never heard of me or seen me. I think maybe my stay here has been relatively inconsequential outside of my mind. I was only here for three months. The average person is going on three or four years. I feel like a single drop of water in the channel...always existing, always changing, and always moving. I think that shouldn't be confused with idea that I might feel useless or like I may have wasted my energies here.

**I couldn't really tell you why I came** here. I was in a place in my life when I needed to just go with it. And this was me going with it. I arrived here entirely sleep deprived and rootless. What was I doing? Why was I doing it? Even now, I could not tell you for sure why I did it, but I can tell you what I see and what I experienced.

This place makes sense. That doesn't make it easy or always happy, but it **does mean it's purposeful. Often it's a quiet purpose that can go undetected.** If you don't look, if you aren't willing to see it, you won't.

**From what I've gleaned in my short** life I would say that in our everyday lives, we take for granted or wilfully ignore the good things. Without careful intentionality, life usually becomes stale, like you're walking through a cloud of complacency (**I'm fairly certain this is a developed country problem**). Often it's like nothing fully stimulates or fazes you. You go through the days looking for the next day which is usually mixed with the day before it. We are not outside the bounds of reality, so

we too struggle with this.

Though we get distracted here, it is mostly from within. The exterior world of bills, traffic, deadlines, and queues for coffee are set back from our lives. There are fewer external factors to blame for our impatience and lack of kindness toward one another. **Don't get me wrong. You can get really distracted,** but I feel like the slings and arrows and joys in life are profoundly obvious inside our walls.

Everyone living in Pilsdon at Malling is human. We get tired of one another. It's 15 different people's preferences, opinions, personal allegiances, and perceptions living under one roof. Like in any household, there is an endless cycle of one person doing, another undoing, and then the first doing again. And then, again, there are the 15 sets of opinions and preferences on that process.

I'm still a relative outsider. I'm not quite as immersed in the life. And I can say the view in is beautiful...usually in a Jackson Pollack kind of way.

The masks we learn to fashion are far more difficult to maintain here. Anyone that has participated in Halloween or cleaned up hazardous waste could tell you that it inevitably leads to a sweaty face and unbearable humidity lingering around your mouth and eye balls. It generally leads to desperately whipping your mask



Pilsdon at Malling volunteers Mike, left, with Andy (yes, she's a girl!)

off with a dramatic gasp for free-flowing air.

There are 14 persons to hide your face from here. They are always around and you're never at home alone. You can hide...but for how long? What you are will be. What you are will eventually be in the light... breathing freely or gasping in a cacophonous yet timorous manner. That's your choice. Is it not better to accept oneself for where and what we are? Is this not how we find where we can go? I feel like here we are forced either to fold in on **one's self and wilfully ignore the signs** or open yourself up to be changed.

I'm not saying we need to expose

everything about ourselves at all times to everyone. That is a mistake. No one wants to hear you talk that much. I'm just saying we've been given a place to learn how to be human with other humans who are learning to be human. It's a great opportunity to search for true peace with and acceptance of self and others. It's a difficult gift to accept. It most likely means you can't do what you want a vast portion of the time. But I think it can lead to being **made better if we let it. And that's what this place is about.**

What we've got here is a good thing.

MEGAN WINTERS, aka ANDY



I came in September 2010, following a breakdown after a garden maintenance business failure in London, to recover.

During my stay at Pilsdon, I looked after the chickens, did a little garden and farm work, did the bonfire (burning excess combustible rubbish) and enjoyed that, and helped in the kitchen and with the washing up.

I found the prayers in the chapel, at

the abbey and the local RC church to be a great comfort.

Despite some ups and downs, I feel that my stay at Pilsdon has enabled me to make sufficient recovery to move on. I am moving to Maidstone, to semi-independent accommodation with other Aspergers/high functioning autistics (I have the condition). Living out of London is less stressful too.

TIM LODER aka TIMBO

### easyfundraising .org.uk

Would you like to raise money simply by shopping? You can help Pilsdon at Malling every time you shop online by logging in to your favourite shopping website through the Easyfundraising link. It doesn't cost you a penny - the retailer donates a percentage of the price to your chosen cause (which, we hope, will be Pilsdon at Malling). Many big brands and major online retailers, from Amazon to Zizzi, support this way of fundraising. All you need to do is register yourself at [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and select Pilsdon at Malling as your chosen charity. Then just get shopping.

## With bikes, what goes around comes around

In our Christmas newsletter we announced the birth of Born-Again Bikes, our social enterprise to refurbish old bicycles for our own use and to sell to the wider community. The project was, just then, in an embryonic stage, and we were expecting no more than a slow birth and gradual growth.

But that was not to be. Instead The Downs Mail, a local free paper, copied our article and published it around the county. So, when we had been expecting a dribble of bicycles to find their way to us, suddenly we were flooded with bikes of every shape and size and condition.

Instead of slowly finding its feet, Born-Again Bikes was launched into the world, kicking and screaming and extremely well supported. And all of this came on top of start-up grants of £300 from Community Futures Training and Small Grant Programme at Trafford Hall and £200 from a local church, which has helped to equip our workshop with appropriate tools, parts and cleaning equipment.

Now comes the hard work, which



A barrow-load of bikes: 14 bikes, all given to Pilsdon by a 90-year-old donor

involves stripping down the bikes, sorting and cleaning the parts that can be reused, and rebuilding the bikes into roadworthy machines. We have already sold or swapped a number of bikes and we will soon have more ready for sale (watch our website for details). Our repair service too is already proving popular with local cyclists, giving the mechanics enough work to keep them out of trouble.

Of course, this is a long-term project and it will need all the ongoing support you can give, so please, next time you have to oil your chains or mend a puncture, think about Born-Again Bikes.

DENNIS RINK



In the pink: a bespoke bicycle painted pink at the customer's request

## APRIL

- Monday 14 8pm Holy Week Play: *Meanwhile, back in the upper room ...*  
St James the Great, East Malling
- Tuesday 15 8pm Holy Week Play: *Meanwhile, back in the upper room ...*  
St John the Baptist Church, Wateringbury
- Wednesday 16 8pm Holy Week Play: *Meanwhile, back in the upper room ...*  
St Peter and St Paul, Teston
- Thursday 17 8pm Maundy Thursday: Eucharist with footwashing  
Vigil until midnight
- Friday 18 11am Good Friday Walk of Witness. Begins at St Thomas More Church,  
West Malling.  
Finishes at Pilsdon at Malling. Coffee and hot cross buns will  
be served.
- Saturday 19 8pm Service of Light and Easter Vigil.
- Sunday 20 6pm Easter Day: Eucharist.

## MAY

- Friday 30 Bazaar opens in the Barn Chapel. Daily (except Monday June 2)  
until Sunday June 8.

## JUNE

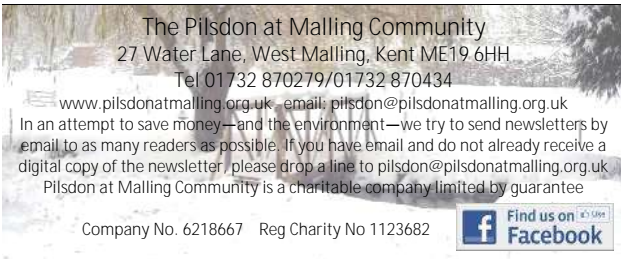
- Thursday 26 8pm Duo Isario perform in the Barn Chapel.  
Rebekka Hartmann (violin) and Caroline Bergius (harpsichord).

## JULY

- Sunday 20 **Afternoon concert: Julian Minone's violin quartet.**  
Details to be confirmed.

## SEPTEMBER

- Sunday 21 Pilsdon at Malling tenth anniversary celebrations. Details to be  
Confirmed. Please mark this date in your diary.
- Sunday 28 10am Malling Art Club exhibition in the Barn Chapel, until 4pm (to be  
Confirmed). Refreshments will be served.




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