



St James  
**25 YEARS**  
*faith & action*

Jubilee Issue  
25 April 2004

# St James Journal

Newsletter of the Church of St James, Voorschoten

## Celebrating 25 years of St James!



### The Voorschoten 'experiment'

by Revd Francis Pole -  
Chaplain 1979-1983

It is extraordinary to think that 25 years have elapsed since the beginning of the Voorschoten 'experiment'. I recall very clearly my first meeting with the Revd John Lewis in Croydon, prior to my interview for the appointment to The Hague. John said that, because of an increase in expatriates in the northern part of the chaplaincy area, a new church would be meeting at the British School and that he and I would share the chaplain's role. Truth to tell, it did not work out that way. Because a number of people felt that *the* chaplain should be in The Hague since it was, after all, the Embassy Church, I landed up as the first regular minister at Voorschoten. **Something I have never regretted for one moment.**

We started off, very traditionally, in the Music Room with chairs, books, and all the impedimenta for Holy Communion being carried into the room – and being put away afterwards – by churchwardens and willing helpers. The chairs were initially put out pew-like, in rows from the front to the back of the room. But we soon tired of the formality and moved the room around – with the altar-table just in front of the large window facing inwards, and the congregation in a semi-circle. This gave everyone more breathing space, and felt better – the only distraction being the clear view of the railway-line. I soon got to know that, at the

point when there was some loud coughing, the 'D' Train (Amsterdam – Paris) had passed. If I was still preaching, then I was 'going on a bit'! A salutary, if unplanned lesson!

From a very small group of people who initially, rather tentatively, came to the BSN on a Sunday morning, we developed a core group. The church grew slowly but steadily, with several people telling their friends about their new spiritual home. It soon became clear that the days of 'experiment' were over and the foundations of a new church had been laid.

It undoubtedly helped in these early stages that I was (part-time) School Counsellor at the BSN, and led a course in Community Development – thus providing a bridge between the school and the new church. But it was the development of a Sunday school and crèche that gave us real stability, and made us into the family church that we are today. Furthermore, the growth and attraction of local house-groups, and other meetings outside the normal Sunday worship (including parties and barbecues!) only served to make us realise that God was calling us to look at where he had led us so far, and to look at the enormous potential for the future – and that, sooner rather than later, a chaplain should live in the midst of the people.

It is therefore obvious, and comes as no surprise, that today we can marvel at the working out of the plans of the God who is always faithful, 25 years on. And doubtless the Lord has many more plans for us all! ■



# Going for growth

by the Venerable Geoffrey Allen - Chaplain 1983-1993

We arrived in Voorschoten, about midday on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> July 1983. So it reads in my diary, and I knew things were going to happen, for our first visitor was John Overton who had sung in the choir of my first parish, St Mary's, Langley Marish, Buckinghamshire. (I believe the goalposts have been moved and it is now in the county of Berkshire!) John had completed his course at Corpus Christi and was now working in the Netherlands, and it was so good to see him again.

Just up to that date in my diary I read "visited the South African ship SA Waterburg and the Irish ship Kilkenny" – so I kept my ship visiting right up to date.

On the next day, I had an appointment with Monseigneur Bishop Baere of Rotterdam. I asked him for his blessing, and as I knelt and he gave it to me, I suddenly remembered that the Old Testament says blessings should be handed on – and so I went to visit Olive and Dan Spruiyt. Dan had been suffering from cancer, so I passed on the Bishop's blessing to him – and the fact that Dan lived for so many more years after that will always remain a mystery to me.

That evening I learned that Jennifer West's husband had died and the funeral was Friday at 11am, while later on that afternoon at 4pm there was a wedding at which I was expected to officiate in The Hague. That was the beginning of my ministry in Voorschoten, as Assistant Chaplain to The Hague.

On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>, we had a pleasant visit from René and

Helen Schoo, who came loaded with the most beautiful side of beef and a meal, caring for our physical needs. Yet over the years they cared also for spiritual needs, and came to be good friends and family.



On my first Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, I celebrated at the 8.30 am Holy Communion service at St John and St Philip, and came back to Voorschoten for the 10.30! It was Peter Potter's last service, and I understand he is now in Largs as the

Revd Peter Potter, St Columba's Rectory. At 5.00pm I was officiating at the healing service, which finished at 7.15pm after ministering to those who had been slain in the Spirit, and those suffering from spine, knee and cancer problems.

On Monday morning 25<sup>th</sup> my first incoming telephone call was to tell me a physiotherapist friend from Rotterdam had died, and would I please take the funeral. On the 28<sup>th</sup> a former churchwarden's wife was dying and again I was 'on call'. So it all began, and has been the story of my life.

But Voorschoten has also had a very bright side. For example, there was my licensing, by Bishop Ambrose Weekes, when we had used an odd table for an altar, which produced a letter from our Suffragan Bishop the following week, stating that the table had not been altar regulation height and would I do something about it, please?

Then there was the sponsored swim, where I dived into the pool with robes and Bible and angelic band on my head, wondering if I would ever surface again; the Christian

men's breakfast meetings in *The Golden Lion*; the small music room in which, when the train passed, we all had an imposed silence until the sound had disappeared into the far distance; and ice hockey on the Rembrandtplein, Amsterdam – at least I hope it was ice hockey, and even more I hope it was the Rembrandtplein!

In sum, it has been a life involved with people, and people I love (René told me to get that one in!), and that is the secret of the growth of St James as it now is – LOVE. And I am so happy to have succeeded Francis, and to be succeeded by Philip.

The relations with the British School were enhanced by the Principal Brian Davidson and his wife Ilsa; while the King, Elvis Presley, was there in the form of Barry Birch, and we all tucked into Nancy's delicacies. For me, the children made the services; and Cherry's graphic displays were only transcended by Mike Cannon's announcement of the church notices preceded by "I'll only say this once!"

My last but not least compliment must be to my wife Trudy, the boys and now the young ladies. Without you all, and the love of God, it would have meant nothing. St James! May the Lord bless you and keep you. Amen. ■



*Happy faces at St J's club – the children and the Sunday School keep on growing, March 2004*



# A new church is Bourne! (pardon the pun)

by Revd Dr Philip Bourne - Chaplain since 1994

Early in December 1993, I celebrated Christmas at Exeter University where I was working as chaplain. Then we packed our house contents into a removal lorry and headed for Gloucestershire, where we had a mini-Christmas with our families before travelling to the Netherlands in time to celebrate Christmas for the third time that month! (Echoes of *The Vicar of Dibley* here!)



Before arriving here, I imagined that I would be able to enjoy the best of both worlds, being part of the chaplaincy team of The Hague and Voorschoten, yet having my own 'daughter church' in Voorschoten where I would live and minister. However, I soon discovered that there was a 'cunning plan' and that I was going to be the person who would implement it!

For 15 years, the congregation in Voorschoten had been steadily growing, to a point where it made practical, financial and spiritual sense to 'let the adolescent leave home' in order to allow it to find its own path as it continued its growth. In some ways, I was sad to be letting go of the connections with St John and St Philip in The Hague; yet in other ways, I knew this was the right development and that both congregations would be released to pursue their separate goals.

So a number of committees were set up to consider a constitution for the new chaplaincy, to consider financial matters, to think about buildings and resources, and to learn the tasks of self-management. Towards the end

of 1995, the Synod of the Church of England Diocese in Europe agreed to establish the church in Voorschoten as an independent chaplaincy of the Diocese and in January 1996 the Bishop inaugurated the 'Church of St James'. (The name was chosen in relation to the biblical book of James, whose principal theme is that of faith and action working together.)

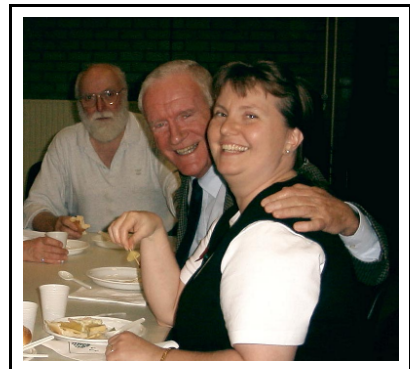
For the last decade, the Church of St James has continued to build on the very good foundations laid in the first fifteen years by former chaplains Francis Pole and Geoffrey Allen. As the years have gone by, there has been a strong emphasis on belonging, involving anybody and everybody, such that there has been real numerical and spiritual growth. Today, the main Sunday morning service is regularly attended by almost two hundred people, of whom one third are children and young people. There are thirty different ministry teams operating within the church; two thirds of the church members take part in at least one of them.

Yet, numbers aren't everything. What is particularly attractive about St James is its uniqueness as a multi-denominational community, yet with a clear Anglican identity and structure. People from many different Christian traditions, as well as people who just want to explore their spirituality, are drawn together in one church family, to muddle alongside one another to worship and to learn. There are opportunities for making a Christian commitment and for serving in various ways but people are equally free simply to 'brush up' against the

community, to challenge it and to be challenged by it. For this reason, we value everyone who comes through the doors of St James - and we appreciate our links with schools and the wider community.

I believe that the existence and growth of the St James church family can be attributed to the reality of a God who is at work in the world today. He has called together a community of people to worship him and to proclaim his love for others, locally in the case of those who are hanging around for more than a couple of years, and across the globe for those who pass through and move on, taking something new with them.

So may God's work continue for the next twenty-five years (and beyond), that we may experience the words of the Lord recorded in the prophet Ezekiel: "You will be my people, and I will be your God" (36:28). ■



*Potluck, yum-yum!*

*Donald Trigg, René Schoo, Linda Gottschalk, Nov 2001*



*Joan Kelland and Jill MacRae enjoy a garden party at the Dallard's, May 2002*

# St James started evolving

by Donald Baldwin - reader 1979-2000

In the September 2003 Journal, Rene Schoo wrote a very good article about the beginning of the Voorschoten church. From the start, our church kept on changing and evolving. Worship in the British School new Senior School building was started as an experiment from Easter to the summer in 1979. David Harrison, Sunday school superintendent in The Hague was asked to provide teachers for three months.

The experiment was obviously a success and the June 1979 church magazine reported, "we no longer talk about the Voorschoten project, but the Voorschoten church." The Voorschoten church first met in the music room, later turned into a second domestic science lab. We sat in a semi circle facing the window, and looked across fields to the railway - this was before the gym was built. Once when I was bearing the chalice, my then infant daughter called in a stage whisper, "Train, Daddy, train." Also David Price wrote a "Voorschoten Psalm" which Keith Galpin set to a series of Anglican chants. This was sung by the Voorschoten choir at several social events, usually in The Hague church hall. The psalm included the words, "The passing of the Paris Express marks the end of the sermon".

Numbers grew until the room was filled with rows of chairs facing one end, and after receiving communion we had to use the corridor to return to our places. Brian Davidson, then headmaster, invited us to move to the main hall, named after Sir Richard Sykes, the British Ambassador assassinated in 1979.

To help the Revd John Lewis, the Revd Francis Pole arrived as second chaplain with wife and two small boys in June 1979. At first the idea that Francis should be the



Voorschoten chaplain was met with 'no polarisation', but after a few weeks, they agreed that for pastoral reasons, each chaplain should be in his home congregation, three Sundays a month. Francis Pole

and family were housed in De Poorterstraat in The Hague. Before Francis left in 1983, we were looking for a house in Voorschoten. When Revd Geoffrey Allen arrived, his family first lived for three years in a rented house in Bartoklaan in Voorschoten, until the house in Chopinlaan was purchased.

Although the same team from The Hague church led worship in Voorschoten, the atmosphere

was different. Voorschoten meeting in a room in a school, with loose chairs and a piano was much more relaxed, whereas the Hague church was more formal, with its church building, fixed pews, pipe organ and very good robed choir, which had an annual weekend with the Royal School of Church Music. This difference enabled more people to feel at home. Some preferred the more relaxed Voorschoten, and others the more formal Hague, with its high quality music.

In the mid-1980s the worship team had grown unwieldy, so the Voorschoten members were separated to form the Voorschoten worship team. As they also handled practical internal Voorschoten issues, they divided to produce a Voorschoten committee, from which evolved our present chaplaincy church council.

The congregation keeps on changing, as the Revd Geoffrey Allen found to his horror, when, one Sunday soon after he arrived, he said farewell to five families from a congregation of fifty-six. ■

## Margaret's Mite

by M. Sleeboom-Derbyshire

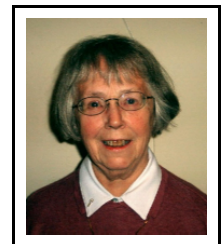
### Fireworks – Dud or alive

Did you enjoy the New Year fireworks? I did, as there were far less bangs and far more very beautiful ones. Thinking about them I also thought of people. What I mean is this.

When one sort shoots high into the night sky you expect either a bang or lovely coloured patterns of light. However some just do nothing. They are duds. Some bang and then disappear but others we enjoy even though it is only for a short while.

People are like that. Many who could help and do, others just do nothing and are content with that, and still others fly high but go out with a lot of noise and don't help others. There are, thank God, people whose lives are full of light and colour as they lovingly help their fellow human beings as our Lord Jesus asked us to do.

It is now St James' Jubilee and I am sure many will agree that this very much 'alive' church is so because there are, and have been through the years, many really lovely and good 'fireworks'. Thanks be to God. ■





# The middle years

by Colin and Jill MacRae - August 1993 till July 2003

We arrived in Holland two weeks before the start of term for Rachel (14) and Kate (12) - time

enough to acquaint ourselves with our surroundings and essential amenities in Voorschoten and to get a flavour of Dutch life. Once the girls were settling into school life, it was time for me to venture out, and discover, amongst other things, the delights of badminton. What a joy to meet some other English people who asked me if I'd like to come to the church service held at the school the following Sunday.

"Yes," I said rather hesitatingly, as our previous church had been very uninspiring and unwelcoming. We had made a conscious decision to support the village church, rather than continue to return to our very special city church, Trinity, where we had grown in faith and met so many caring people, so we wondered what **this** church had in store for us! Well, I can only say that it was like 'coming home' again, with an immediate feeling that we wanted to be part of the church life. So we kept going (coming?) back, and we were privileged to get to know some lovely people and experienced some very memorable occasions. These included: seeing Philip 'walking on water', at the 'it's a knockout' swimming gala! (We've got a photo to prove it!); hearing some very moving testimonies at the annual testimony service; celebrating the birth of Sarah and John Marshall's first-born daughter, after many prayers and almost as many tears; and seeing the church filled to bursting at the inauguration of the Church of St James.

Also memorable was the team effort of so many to make Colin's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party a total

surprise to him. Jan Grzonka conveniently found lots of 'usefuls' for Colin to be busying



himself with after the service, and supplied him with croissants at the back of the church while we prepared the party, with Dave Allin erecting the tent to ward off the rain, Lynne

Woodward helping with the invitations, Pam White hiding all the food supplies and helping me prepare things, and not forgetting Ian Brown's bugle contribution.

I can honestly say that St James really was a living example of a 'church family', which we so appreciated, with our own family cared for in so many ways. Margaret Eggleton and Helen Schoo, and Angela Grzonka, your faithful prayers were so appreciated at times when we weren't able to pray ourselves.

It has been very exciting to see the church grow, and the youth groups really flourishing. God bless all at St James - we miss you. ■



*Ian Brown (Churchwarden 1995-1999) adds heavenly trumpet sounds to the music group.*



## Some newcomer's views

by Nelleke Yakubu

Dieter and Aurianne Reule with their three boys Philip, Lukas and Markus, found their way into St James through the BSN. They really felt welcomed and very much at home. So much so that they had Markus baptised recently. One of the positive things they mentioned was the youth work: they really feel that the St J's Club is doing a good job, teaching children about God!

Nick and Debra Lambert said: "We love it!" They agreed that St James is extremely welcoming and friendly. Their children Grace, St. John and Christian also really enjoy St J's Club and in general they all find the style of the services exactly right. They've been around since before Christmas and really feel at home.

Very recently arrived from Chad, Africa, are Eric and Christina Anonby with their daughter Parisa and another little one on the way (at the time of writing). One thing they really enjoy is the evangelical feel of the services and the relevance of the sermons, put in real language. Christina likes the liturgy and Eric enjoys the fact that St James meets in a school.

We welcome all our newcomers. ■



*Anthony Cummings heightens excitement at the Palm Sunday Service, April 2001*

## St James Jubilee Prayer

Praise be to God,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Father, we thank you for your Church of St James  
here in Voorschoten  
and for the faith you have planted in us.  
We rejoice in our growth and look forward to the future.

In our hearts and in loving celebration with many,  
we wish to celebrate our Silver Jubilee.  
May it be a blessed and honouring testimony  
to your glory.

To mark the occasion  
and as a sign of our ever deepening commitment,  
we wish to find a church house –  
a place for gathering, a place for working,  
and a place for living.  
We seek your blessing on this plan  
and on all who lead us.  
May your blessing and guidance move us  
to do our very best for you.

In the name of Jesus we pray.  
Amen.



*Ben Mizen, our first youth minister (1997–1999), with a very young looking Philip! September 1997*



*Rev. Mandy Beck, (Assistant Minister 1999–2002) with her family, at her Licensing.*



*Liz Smith (current Churchwarden) says farewell to Assistant Minister David Martineau (Oct 2002–July 2003) and his wife Sara.*



*Lynne Woodward takes time out from her duties for a small (?) bite of cake. (Churchwarden 1996–2003)*



*Youth Minister Marc Prescott accompanies BSN and St James youth on school ski trip, February 2003*

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