

# CONNEXIONS

The magazine of  
**Lavington**  
United Reformed Church  
Bideford  
[www.lavingtonurc.org](http://www.lavingtonurc.org)



**JUNE 2024**

**50p**

## JUNE DIARY

Sun.	2 <sup>nd</sup>	11.00am	Family Worship & HC – Sabrina Gröschel
Sun.	9 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Family Worship – The Minister
Sun.	16 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Family Worship – The Elders
Sun.	23 <sup>rd</sup>	11.00am	Family Worship - Mrs Paula Littlewood
Wed.	26 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Elders Meeting
Sun.	30 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Joint Service – Mrs Alison Biggs with Bideford Methodists

## WEEKLY ACTIVITY

Tuesdays      10am – 1pm      Coffee and lunches mornings

### Mission Statement

Lavington's mission is to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness encompassing the love of Christ and to share this through worship and service.



We are a Fairtrade Church



Dear Friends

During the month of June, I will be out on Roadford Lake, teaching some of the Lifton Scouts about sailing using our collection of dinghies. I've always enjoyed messing around on boats, having been introduced to sailing by my uncle when I lived in Plymouth. There is something quite special about zooming across the water, harnessing the power of the wind.

Bideford's long connection with boat building and sailing has made me stop and reflect on the parallels of the voyage of a sailor and our journey of faith. I'm not the only one to have considered the lessons learned on the water and how they enrich our spiritual lives - just think of all the hymns that refer to sailing adventures.

Much like sailors setting out on the open sea, we often embark on our spiritual journey with a sense of adventure and purpose. Sailors prepare diligently, studying charts and weather forecasts, ensuring their vessel is seaworthy. Similarly, our faith journey requires preparation and commitment. We immerse ourselves in scripture, prayer and fellowship, equipping ourselves to navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead. No matter how experienced we become, there is always more to learn.

Sailing isn't always smooth; storms and rough waters are inevitable. In those times, sailors rely on their skills, faith in their vessel and trust in their crewmates. Likewise, our lives are marked by trials and tribulations. During these periods, we lean on our faith, trust in God's plan and draw strength from our church community. The support and prayers of our fellow believers are similar to the solidarity of a ship's crew facing choppy waters together.

Moreover, the challenge of maintaining a steady course amidst changing winds mirrors our need to stay grounded in our faith, even when life's circumstances shift. Just as sailors adjust their sails to harness the wind's power, we too must adapt, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us through times of uncertainty.

Let us be reminded of Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4:39. His words, "Peace! Be still!" echo through our hearts, offering assurance that no matter the storm, our faith anchors us. Let us continue to sail forward, navigating life's seas with hope, faith and the unwavering love of God as our compass.

May our journey be blessed, and may we always find safe harbour in challenging times.

Every blessing,  
Rob Weston

### **ECO CHURCH PRAYER**

*Lord, how wonderful your creation is, the place we call home. May we be reminded each day to open ourselves to experience the beauty that is creation.*

*We thank you for the trees – as they are vital to all life. Trees are in the first page of Genesis and in the last page of Revelation. They are in the first Psalm and first page of the New Testament and they mark the spot of many major events in the Bible.*

*Lord, help us protect your trees and all creation, not just because they are part of your world, but because they hold together your land which protects our neighbours from floods and landslides. Because they are a sign that life is near and water, shelter and sustenance is possible.*

*Lord, may we see a tree and be reminded of your goodness, faithfulness and provision and may we remember our responsibility to care for creation. Amen.*

Laura Young  
an environmentalist and Tearfund Ambassador  
*Plymouth Churches Green Action newsletter*

## PENTECOST LUNCH

On Pentecost Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup> it had been decided we would hold another church lunch. These lunches are becoming very popular with us! In addition to our own church family, we invited our friends from Muddiford URC and some attended. Rob had conducted worship earlier that morning and that was a bonus as he was then able to stay for lunch. About 24 of us sat down. Also, importantly, it was another opportunity for all of us to share fellowship together.

Our Pentecost menus usually have an international theme celebrating the birth and outreach of the early church. This year we had a French inspired main course, Chicken Provençal, roasted chicken, Pommes Dauphinoise and ratatouille. There was a choice of sweets – one healthy option or one unhealthy one made by Alison Biggs. I believe the unhealthy one was the clear winner!

Our waiters were Messieurs Colin, Ricky and Rob who served folk with Gallic charm! All this and with a hot drink for only £5!

Coming at the end of Christian Aid Week we had already decided that any profit from the meal would be donated to Christian Aid and our profit was £100 for them. This amount was possible by use of Jill's Morrison's vouchers and the donation of vegetables etc so thank you to everyone who made this possible.

The monies from the Christian Aid envelopes has not yet been counted so I will tell you in the Summer *Connexions*.

Our thanks must be given to Jill Davis who as usual did all the preparation and cooking.

When we have our next church family meal, please give it a try but it may not be until Advent Sunday!

*Editor*

Pot Luck supper on Sunday at 5.00pm –  
Prayer and medication to follow!

## JUNE PRAYER DIARY

w/c 2<sup>nd</sup>

As we enter the summer season we look forward to days of warmth and sunshine. Time to marvel at God's creation. We thank God for this season of long days lit by the sun, the wonderful colours in gardens and hedges, the warm breezes from an open window or door. Help us to appreciate with joy the world around us.

w/c 9<sup>th</sup>

Loving God we pray for our local community here in Bideford. For those who are struggling to feed their families, those caught up in addiction to drugs, alcohol or self-harm, those who beg or sleep on our streets. We pray for the organisations seeking to help these local needs remembering the food bank, Harbour, the Street Pastors, Wings and all groups working alongside those in need. Give them hope, strength and commitment as they work in our community.

w/c 16<sup>th</sup>

Father God with tenderness you surround us with your love. We thank you that you are a patient father whatever we try to do in your name and however far short we fall. We know that we are forgiven, assure us of your forgiveness. God, in so many ways you reveal your love for us, strengthen our faith so that we may show our love for you in our care for others.

w/c 23<sup>rd</sup>

Living God, seen in the face of Christ and known in the power and presence of your Spirit, we rejoice that your Word is vibrant; still surprising, still upsetting, still sweet to taste, still transforming lives. Your Word turns tables; heals broken hearts; confronts injustice; breathes life; brings hope; shares pain; speaks love; became flesh in Christ and becomes known by your Spirit. By our words and deeds may we bear your Word in our lives. (By Revd Stephen Brown).

w/c 30<sup>th</sup>

Lord God as we meet together with our fellow Christians we remember your Church throughout the world. We are thankful for its diversity, enthusiasm, commitment and faithfulness to work for your coming kingdom in a broken world. Help us all, as Christians, to answer your call to be daily witnesses to your message of hope and love and to be living communities of faith. Bless your Church loving God now and always. Amen

A



The Christian Aid Committee had a meeting in April to plan some events for the year. All committee members were present.

Unfortunately, we are working without a secretary at the present time since Lindsay Brading retired from the post, 12 months ago. Lavington is the only church that has its full quota of committee members, it should be 2 from each church, but we live in hope that the situation will improve. We are very reluctant to abandon the committee because we all care passionately about Christian Aid but in the longer term, it can't rule it out unless we can gain a secretary or a couple of additional committee members.

Christian Aid Week has just ended when Burundi is the focus of the money raised nationally. To enhance the envelopes throughout the churches locally, other donations will come from various ways. The profit of £100 from our Pentecost Lunch and also from a concert by Barnstaple Ladies Choir at High St Methodist church at the end of May. Other smaller events in various churches or groups take place throughout the year and monies donated.

Other future events in 2024 will be a Quiz in September at Lavington and the annual Christmas Carol Concert on December 3<sup>rd</sup> – venue to be decided.

We meet again in mid-July when hopefully the above 2 dates will have been confirmed.

*L C & J P committee members*

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The wonderful thing about saints is that they were human. They lost their tempers, scolded God, were egotistical, or testy or impatient in their turns, made mistakes and regretted them. Still, they went on doggedly blundering towards heaven.

*Phyllis Ginley – American writer*

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

I wonder, are you aware of the boards listing our past and present Ministers? The Elders were aware that they were in need of updating and I was tasked with arranging for this to be done.

However, finding a local wood engraver turned out to be more of a challenge than was anticipated! I tried local wood carvers, wood turning clubs and even attended various craft fairs to seek out an expert, all to no avail.

I then ventured further afield into South Devon, but nobody wanted/couldn't do the work. After several months trying to find someone to help us, a visiting Minister (Sabrina) knew someone in Exeter who gave us a couple of people to try, albeit that they were a fair way away.

So, I duly emailed a guy called Marc at Wild-Work who - to my joy - said he thought he could help us, Alleluia !! We would have to take the board to his workshop as the job was done by a computerised engraving machine and although he was based on Dartmoor, I explained this wasn't a problem and R and I duly set off with the Board on 13<sup>th</sup> May.

We left Northam that day in light drizzle but unfortunately, the nearer to Dartmoor we got, the rain got heavier and heavier and it lashed down as we got near to Widecombe in the Moor. To make matters worse, the fog descended making conditions very difficult.

We were relying on our car Sat Nav which turned out to be a mistake as it took us down a few narrow roads with grass growing down the middle but we persevered until we came to a dead end with rain still lashing down. Fortunately, a gentleman dressed in a sou'wester and oil skins was in his garden cutting down a tree (they make 'em tough on Dartmoor) so I volunteered R to get out and ask directions !!

As it turned out, we were only about a mile from Marc's barn. We were instructed to back up the dead end and take a left, at the same time avoiding a 'ditch' at the top. Of course, with the rain still lashing and visibility reduced, the only way to be sure of avoiding the ditch was to drive with the window open thus ending up with getting a good soaking !! (The 'ditch' also turned out to be a 3foot drop with a stream !!).

Then at last we made it to our destination. Marc was such a super chap and was eager to be doing the board – something he hadn't attempted before.



His speciality are signs for the National Trust that you see on Coastal footpaths etc.

By the end of the week, not only had the Board been updated but it had been delivered back to Marc's friend in Bideford all ready for us to pick up. Such a professional job done and Marc had gone above and beyond.

One good thing though – although drenched, we both enjoyed a lovely Pub lunch in the village after our traumatic journey!!

Here is the up-to date board.



J

Dear Vicar,

“I liked it when you said that good health is more important than money, but I still want a rise in my pocket money”.

Sincerely, Annette aged 10

## JUNE ROTAS

### MINISTRY of FLOWERS

We thank those who are providing flowers for our sanctuary this month and those who arrange them if asked to do so.

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mrs J D
9 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs H P
16 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs M T
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Mr R Q
30 <sup>th</sup>	_____

### SIDESMAN DUTIES

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mrs A B / Revd C B
9 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs L C
16 <sup>th</sup>	Mr P J
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Mrs L C / Mrs J C
30 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs L C / Mrs L B

### VESTRY

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mrs A B
9 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs J D
16 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs J P
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Mrs L C
30 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs J P

### COMMUNION

Prep	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mrs H M / Mrs L B
Servers		Mrs J D / Mrs A B

### READERS

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Revd C B
9 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs H M
16 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs J C
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Mrs J P
30 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs J D

**OFFERTORY STEWARDS:** Mr & Mrs R C

## TUESDAY CAFÉ ROTA

	KITCHEN	REFRESHMENTS	COFFEE /TEAS
4 <sup>th</sup>	JD JS	AB LC	HM WR
11 <sup>th</sup>	JD LB	JS LC	RS BG
18 <sup>th</sup>	JD JS	JP LC	HM MT
25 <sup>th</sup>	JD AB	JS CB	LC HN



After no birthdays or wedding anniversaries that we knew of in May I'm pleased to say there are 4 birthdays in June.

One more than other years and one of them is a special one too! A is celebrating her 70<sup>th</sup>. A, we send you special greetings on this milestone birthday and trust you don't feel a day older than you did yesterday! Your Lavington friends send all of you love and best wishes for happy birthdays.

Here they are –

J H	1 <sup>st</sup>
A B	13 <sup>th</sup>
H McD	17 <sup>th</sup>
R W	25 <sup>th</sup>



Only one wedding anniversary this month, that of S and C M on 9<sup>th</sup>. Not a special one, I'm told. Never mind, they come around fast enough! We send you both our love and best wishes for a happy day.

*Editor*

## NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY

Very sadly, as we go to print, we have received the sad news that **V P** has passed away. She had recently been in hospital briefly but wanted to go home, and she did, where she died with her family around her. We pray that she is now at peace and that God's arms of everlasting love are surrounding her. We pray also for her family at this difficult time. Obviously, it is too soon to know of any funeral arrangements but the service will be at Lavington and we will make sure you are aware of the details as soon as we know them.

**C W** has had time in hospital and we hope he will soon be well enough to return home and continue his treatment. Recently **H M** spent time in hospital and whilst there suffered a fall which has left her with a bruised lower back. We are sorry to hear you are still in pain H and hope you will soon be much better. Our prayers go to **Rev T C** and his wife A as T is also in hospital receiving care.

Unfortunately, **J C's** hip operation was postponed until the beginning of June. We hope and pray that all will go ahead on your new date J and our love and prayers for a smooth recovery period. **L C** is receiving treatment for sciatica; we hope she will soon be pain free and much improved. It was good to welcome **G M** and **M T** back to Sunday worship recently. **C T's** mobility has improved and he has been able to get out on his mobility vehicle and enjoy the recent sunshine for the first time in months. He hopes to be well enough to have a scan and talk to the consultant in June. We wish him well. Our love and best wishes to **M M** as she continues to recover from bronchitis.

The Lavington fellowship send their love and prayers to all those who are anxious, stressed or worried; those awaiting or undergoing treatment, the housebound or those unable to join us for worship. Our prayer is that you will all be surrounded by God's peace, hope and love.

A

Dear Vicar,

*"My mother is very religious. She goes to play bingo at the church every week even if she has a cold"* Annette aged 9.

## FAVOURITE HYMN

### Lord of good life, the hosts of the undying

Geoffrey Hoyland (1889-1965), the author of this hymn, was a Quaker who married into the Cadbury family. In 1920, he became the Headmaster of the Downs Preparatory School in Malvern, where he employed W H Auden as one of the teachers. (Auden dedicated his poem “A Summer Night” to Hoyland.)

Hoyland is by no means noted as a hymn writer – 5 hymns attributed to him are to be found in a publication of 1933 called “*The Fellowship Hymnal*” but only one of those appears to have been felt to be deserving of any further publication, and that only in *Congregational Praise* and subsequently *Rejoice and Sing!*

The hymn was originally set to a tune called *Oakham* by a friend of the author, J B Johnson, but Rev Eric Shave evidently knew the hymn and wrote a much stronger tune to use with these words in his youth work at his first pastorate in Eastwood, Nottingham in the 1920s. As part of the editorial committee for *Congregational Praise* (and significantly on the music advisory committee) he easily prevailed on his colleagues to use his tune, rather than *Oakham*.

With such a strong - even robust - tune, it is easy to perceive the hymn as militaristic and perhaps even triumphalist:

*The hosts of the undying hail thee as conqueror ...*

*Take thou our strength . . . our courage ...*

Hoyland however compares what positive traits we might exhibit with the far greater expression of those traits seen in God. The *hosts of the undying* are those who have passed positively through the trials of this world and who call on us to share the task of *earthly service*. God is asked to take not only our courage but also our fears and use all that we are, all that we have, to his glory. The hymn is a call to service above all else. It may be expressed in the somewhat militaristic terms of his age (*best of his gifts the call to share his strife and fight for heaven*) but the heart of the message remains the call to selfless service to God’s glory.

C

## ST BONIFACE

Did you know that St. Boniface is the patron saint of Devon? and that his life is commemorated on 5<sup>th</sup> June. He was born in Crediton in 675AD, the son of a prosperous family. His birth name was Winfrid. His father did not want him to take up the monastic life, but the first we hear of him is attending a monastic school in Exeter. At a later date, he went to a similar school in Nursling, near Winchester where he taught grammar. At the age of 30, however, he decided to become a missionary in Europe.

Legend has it that one day, he found a group of pagans celebrating the winter solstice around an old oak tree, which he thought to be blasphemous, so he grabbed the nearest axe, felled and uprooted the tree and planted a fir tree in its place. When he came back a year later, the fir tree had grown, the locals had converted to Christianity and were celebrating Christmas around a decorated tree. Thus, was created the first Christmas tree. The idea caught on and soon the whole area was celebrating Christmas in this way.

Of course, a thousand years had to pass before Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, brought the custom over from Germany to England where it has become an important part of the English Christmas celebrations ever since.

He went to Rome early in his career, where the Pope gave him the name Boniface and gave him church jurisdiction over large parts of Germany, eventually becoming Archbishop of Mainz.

In old age he was particularly keen to convert the Frisians of north Germany, but one day whilst visiting the area, he was attacked and killed by bandits expecting to find silver plates and other valuables in his luggage, but found only manuscripts of sacred texts.

He was said to have held up a Gospel to protect himself, which still exists, and shows the cut mark where a sword hit it.

So, he died a martyr, aged 79.

The place of his death immediately became a place of pilgrimage and a major shrine was set up in Fulda Cathedral. He is venerated all over the world. There are statues to him in Crediton and in the grounds of Mainz Cathedral. In 2019, he was made the patron saint of Devon.

*C T.*

## **PREMISES NEWS**

We agreed at our Church Meeting on 20th April to go ahead with the fitting of secondary glazing. Knowing that secondary glazing should qualify for a 50% eco grant from the South Western synod, we agreed to proceed with the application for this grant. We are still awaiting a response from the Synod's Property Committee.

Work to patch up the lead flashing (above the upstairs toilet) has been completed by Hiax Building Services and so far, it seems to be working.

We are also awaiting a quote from Luke Smith for some work to clear and repair the guttering round the halls above the kitchen.

To assist in keeping the halls and church clean, the Elders have agreed to purchase a steam cleaner which our cleaner Emily will be able to use to keep the floors even cleaner.

Finally, a lightweight aluminium ramp has been donated to the church, to enable access to the main church entrance for those with mobility issues, using wheelchairs and electric mobility scooters.

*Rob*

## **DEVON ECO NEWS**

Many of you will be aware of the proposed rail link between Barnstaple and Bideford which has been supported by our local MPs. Making public transport more easily available has to be a good step forward environmentally. The scheme to reopen the line from Exeter to Okehampton has proved that there is great demand for better rail links, which has exceeded all expectations.

The Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance, was established on March 1 and has put forward plans to establish a new railway connection between the two towns while also upgrading the existing Tarka Line, which links Exeter and Barnstaple.

Those of you who have lived in Bideford for a while, may recall that Bideford railway station ceased public operations in 1965 and closed completely in 1982. The Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance hopes that the proposed plans might help revitalise the area, recognising the economic challenges Bideford has faced since the closure of its railway station.

*Rob*

## IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

I remember the corned beef of my childhood  
and the bread that we cut with a knife,  
when the children helped with the housework  
and the men went to work, not the wife.

The cheese never needed a fridge  
and the bread was crusty and hot,  
the children were seldom unhappy  
and the wife was content with her lot.

I remember the milk from the bottle  
with the yummy cream on the top.  
the dinner came hot from the oven  
and not a freezer, or shop.  
The kids were a lot more contented  
they didn't need money for kicks,  
just a game with their friends in the street  
and sometimes the Saturday flicks.

I remember the slap on my backside  
and the taste of soap if I swore,  
anorexia and diets weren't heard of  
and we hadn't much choice what we wore.

Do you think that bruised our ego?  
Or our initiative was destroyed?  
We ate what was put on the table  
and I think life was better enjoyed.

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The *Rootnotes* Musical group led by Becky Driscoll that held a concert in our church a couple of weeks ago raised £788 to support a refugee family to settle in Bideford.

As yet, it is not known from which country the family will be from. This will be decided by the Government.

*Editor*



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### IT COMES TO US ALL

Dear Lord, I have a problem. My memory is failing.  
I do such stupid things these days it really is degrading.  
I wake up in the morning, is it Tuesday? Is it Monday?  
To make things worse I often find the fact is – it is Sunday!  
My hearing's not so good now and it's hard to be inspired  
especially now my eyesight leaves a lot to be desired.  
But much of this I can accept it's all to do with age,  
it's just this darned confusion which gets me in a rage.  
I lose things and mislay things - it isn't very nice,  
some things I forget to do and others I do twice.  
And now I sit here on the stairs, brow furrowed in a frown.  
Dear Lord – please help me,  
Was I going up or was I coming down!

## PICNIC AT WESTWARD HO!

*This poem was written by a friend of Margaret Turner's who visited her on a beautiful day when they decided to go for a walk at Westward Ho! First published in Connexions in September 2014 but well worth airing again now, ten years later.*

It was such a lovely day  
as we ate our lunch down by the bay  
the sun was shining the sky was blue  
next thing to decide was, what to do.

We walked to the sea to sit on a wall  
and alas, poor Margaret had a fall,  
she slipped and slid across the stones  
but fortunately, didn't break any bones.

Brian to the rescue came  
but alas his attempts were all in vain,  
in no time at all he too did fall  
it was proving impossible to sit on this wall.

Along came some others to help with the rescue  
as they both lay there with limbs all askew,  
one a new knee, the other a hip  
this all turned out to be quite a trip.

We ended up all sitting in a row  
with my two companions feeling, 'so so',  
but the tide then came in on the sand  
and the decision was then, how to stand?

I really enjoyed visiting Westward Ho!  
but in future will know this wall as 'no go',  
next time we will just admit defeat  
and find ourselves a nice comfy seat!

*Vivian Miller 2014*

# Fun Page

## AROUND THE COAST OF THE UK

All the answers are names of seaside places.

1. A rodent's home (9)
2. Start a card game (4)
3. What one does on a bicycle (4)
4. Food for a picnic (8)
5. A dark lake (9)
6. A sovereign with a girl's name (5 & 3)
7. Start of life and an orifice in the face (11)
8. Female bovines (5)
9. An early holiday and a horse's home (10)
10. A brightly coloured vehicle (6)
11. Mr Wise's pal (9)
12. You can fish in here (5)
13. Part of an oil lamp (4)
14. A place of convenience (4)
15. A water bird in the ocean (7)
16. We inhale this (3)
17. Prevents the cat eating the salmon (9)
18. A quiet time and a question of values (9)
19. Found in a lighter (5)
20. Prohibit use of the 15<sup>th</sup> letter (4)

Answers to May Quiz

1. Viola
2. Marigold
3. Snowdrop
4. Iris
5. Honeysuckle
6. Phlox
7. Hollyhock
8. London Pride
9. Larkspur
10. Red Hot Poker
11. Heather
12. Geranium
13. Lilac
14. Aster
15. daffodils
16. Bluebell
17. Gentian
18. Cat Mint
19. Prim Rose
20. Wallflower

## Who's who at Lavington URC

Bridgeland Street, Bideford, EX39 2QE

### Minister

**Revd Rob Weston**

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### Church Secretary

**Mrs Alison Biggs**

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### Church Treasurer

**Revd Colin Biggs**

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### Church & Hall Bookings

**Revd Colin Biggs**

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Enquiries for weddings and baptisms are welcomed.  
Please contact Church & Hall Bookings Secretary above.

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The Summer issue of *Connexions* is due out  
on Sunday June 30<sup>th</sup>

Please give items for inclusion to Janet Palmer or send by email to  
[palmer.jan@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:palmer.jan@tiscali.co.uk)

**Before or at the latest – Sunday June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

*Connexions* is edited by Janet Palmer  
Printed and assembled by Jenny and Ricky Cawsey