

## Diary dates for July and August 2010

9 <sup>th</sup> July	14.00 Flower Festival
10 <sup>th</sup> July	10.00 Flower Festival
11 <sup>th</sup> July	12.00 Flower Festival
15 <sup>th</sup> July	10.30 Council Meeting
18 <sup>th</sup> July	12.00 Friends AGM
21 <sup>st</sup> July	11.00 Julian Meeting George Dobinson
7 <sup>th</sup> August	14.00 Garden Party
18 <sup>th</sup> August	11.00 Julian Meeting George Dobinson
29 <sup>th</sup> August	11.00 Patronal Festival

### Prayer of the month

Almighty God,  
in Christ you make all things new:  
transform the poverty of our nature  
by the riches of your grace,  
and in the renewal of our lives  
make known your heavenly glory:

*Collect for the Second Sunday in Epiphany*

### Prayer focus

We remember the Flower Festival in July and the Garden Party in August and all those committed to make the events a success. May both prove ways of raising our profile people living in Departments of Ille et Vilaine and Côtes-D'Armor and raise much needed funds to help finance our development as a church



## Newsletter - July 2010 St Bartholomew's Church, Dinard



### Services

Sunday 11.00 Holy Communion (with hymns)  
Thursday 10.00 Holy Communion (said)

A warm welcome to all who worship with us.  
During the service there is a Sunday School.  
After the service coffee is served.

**Priest-in-charge: The Revd Gareth Randall**

For further information concerning baptisms,  
marriages or funerals:

 02 99 46 77 00

e-mail : [gareth.randall@nordnet.fr](mailto:gareth.randall@nordnet.fr)

Website : [www.stbarts-dinard.org.uk](http://www.stbarts-dinard.org.uk)



July, 2010

Dear Friends,

*A question of envy ?*

In our June Newsletter, Lynette Jarvis made this sharp observation on the tenth commandment: 'Envy is a vice of the inadequate.' I know what she means. One of the things I envied in my former pupils was the perfection of their teeth: mine are anything but.

I guess my post-war-baby generation suffered from the unforeseen effect on a nation's teeth of the removal of rationing thereby making readily available sugar and sweets and above all American fizzy drinks. My mouth is a tribute to the skill and ingenuity of English dental engineering and I am grateful to the hours I have spent in a dentist's chair to have repaired the inevitable damage of a misspent youth. And now, here in France, I am still grateful to all the work which puts off the evil day of dentures.

The early decay of our teeth is one reminder of our mortality, pointing to the inevitable end of this life. And in my case, it reminds me of a careless youth when I should have known better. But with age and experience, we can know better, we can try to be better and brush our teeth twice a day which according to the most recent medical research is judged to have real benefits for our general health and well being.

Regret for past wrong-doing and a desire to try harder to be better are not just about dental hygiene but also at the heart of our spiritual well being. Good can come out of what is bad and though we can't change the past, we can at least change our attitude to the past. And every day can be a potential new start.

*Father Gareth*



➤ **Notices**

- **Planned Giving:** Anyone wanting to join the scheme may obtain forms from Doreen Collier, the Assistant Treasurer
- **Banque Alimentaire** Helen Morgan wants to thank you all for your generous support of the work of this local charity and trusts that you will continue to do so in the months ahead.
- **Flower festival 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> July** You might like to sponsor the cost of the flowers. Any amount would be gratefully received by David Morgan or Corrie Stein but as a guide 20€ would cover a small display; 35 € a large one. If you could help to staff the refreshments or contribute fresh scones and/or strawberry jam then please contact Corrie Stein.
- **Garden Party** Tickets are now on sale from Doreen Collier 02 99 58 48 13 5€ (includes tea) children under 12 free Boxes for your contributions to the stalls are now in the coffee area.
- **Diocesan Haiti Appeal** raised £22,271.04
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the August Newsletter is *midday on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> July*
- **Church Finances for May**  
Income: 3,383€ Expenditure 2,420€

**Association of the Friends of St Bartholomew**

The AGM will take place after the service on Sunday July 18.

Subscriptions for 2010 are now due, minimum 16€ or £12

Please make Sterling cheques payable to

"The Diocese in Europe, Friends of St Bartholomew's Dinard.

Euro cheques should be payable to

'Les Amis de l'Eglise Anglicane de Dinard'.

Please send your subscriptions to:- The Treasurer,  
Friends of St Bartholomew, 6 rue Clemenceau, 35800 Dinard.

## Readings in church

### *July 4<sup>th</sup> Fifth Sunday after Trinity*

Isaiah 66 v10 - 14                  Psalm 66 v1 – 8 p1173  
Galatians 6 v7 – 16                  Luke 10 v1 - 11, v16 - 20

### *July 11<sup>th</sup> Sixth Sunday after Trinity*

Deuteronomy 30 v9 – 14              Psalm 25 v1 – 11 p1121  
Colossians 1 v1 - 14                  Luke 10 v25 - 37

### *July 18<sup>th</sup> Seventh Sunday after Trinity*

Genesis 18 v1 - 10a                  Psalm 15 p1108  
Colossians 1 v15 – 28                  Luke 10 v38 - end

### *July 25<sup>th</sup> James the Apostle*

Acts 11 v27 – 12 v2                  Psalm 126 p1267  
2 Corinthians 4 v7 – 15              Matthew 20 v20 – 28

### *Sybil Fagg*



## Grace of the month

The eighth of a baker's dozen from a former chaplain:

We bless the Lord for food and drink  
When summer sun is shining.  
And blessings more than we can think  
To complement our dining.  
Amen

### *The Revd Donald Pankhurst*



## Air Crash

In April 1977, my husband, Jack, and I were living in Jersey. My favourite uncle had died in Reading and I was able to fly to England by BA for his funeral. This was to be on Maundy Thursday but I was unable to get a scheduled flight home as all seats were fully booked for the Easter period.

We were members of the Jersey Aero Club and had two friends there who used to fly a private plane every Thursday afternoon for enjoyment and to keep their hours up.

It was agreed they would fly to Blackbush private airport to pick me up. After the funeral my cousin drove me to there and the three of us took off for Bournemouth to clear customs and to buy duty free and fuel. By the time we took off for Jersey, the weather had deteriorated but it was still okay.

Jack and I had guests arriving that evening off the boat from England so when we were about three quarters of the way across the Channel, looking down, I saw the boat tossing about below and thought how much better off I was in the air rather than at sea!

We were soon approaching Jersey from the west flying over St Ouen's 5 mile beach with the start of the airport runway about half a mile off. As we came over land the plane coughed twice; I looked forward and thought we were very low!

There had been no conversation between the two pilots in front and me in the back. It was very noisy and best to let the boys get on with flying. Now my mouth was very dry; my palms were damp; my heart, now very large, felt in my throat. I said nothing. Mr B said "Beach". The plane banked steeply to the left, then right and we were over the beach with the tide just out but the sea comes in very quickly in the Channel Islands. It was dark and sleeting.

I didn't panic. I said nothing. I felt sick. I feel sick now as I write this. The beach came close, closer and closer and so did the sea. I thought I was going to die. I prayed to God it would be quick and not too painful and that I would be forgiven.

A jolt; a shudder; nothing. It was quiet. Then I saw we were within a few feet off Pulente Slipway. Mr A, the pilot, started pushing and pulling knobs. The only time I spoke on the whole trip was to ask, "What's happening now?" and Mr A replied "We're trying a reapproach." Inside I cried 'Oh no!' but simply said "Oh." Suddenly the engine started; we moved, turned round and started along the beach but now in the sea. A couple of times, Mr B said, "Mind that rock, then there was a crunch and the plane went up on its nose and stayed there for ages before falling back on its belly. Finally, the men said "You stay there and hand us out anything important." . . . "Like what?" . . . "The duty free!"

I did as I was told. They were standing waist high in the sea while I went along the wing handing them what I could. Finally Mr B, a big, burly farmer said, "It's no good you'll have to jump down. I'll carry you piggyback." Not easy in a tight black skirt, high heels and a fur coat! With the duty frees, he carried me off, my skirt hitched up to waist.

By now the police, fire and ambulance people had arrived. Fine but we still had a steep slippery sea-weed covered sea wall to climb in the dark. Now supported between two policemen all three of us slipped as we tried to climb ashore.

Finally we were taken to the Airport Fire Station where we treated less than sympathetically! They wanted to take me home but I insisted on going to the Aero Club where I was due to meet Jack and our guests. He asked if I'd got back all right. Lifting my skirts, I displayed my cuts, bruises and torn tights! "What do you think?" I asked.

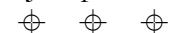
## Personal Page

*From time to time, we will publish details of births, baptisms, weddings and funerals. If you wish to include the names of someone close to you, please let Father Gareth know.*

### Births

Congratulations to Claude and Agnes François whose daughter, Claire, has given birth to a baby boy, Jules, and to the wife of their son, James, who has given birth to a baby girl, Jasmine.

Congratulations to Doreen Collier whose granddaughter, Rosa, gave birth to Joseph Peter on 1<sup>st</sup> May



### Baptisms

Congratulations to Dr Michael Robb, Helen Morgan's son, who was baptised at St Barts in May.

Congratulations to Isobel Sofia, a daughter of a Cousin of Sheila Frost, who was baptised in England on 6<sup>th</sup> June.



### Weddings

Congratulations to Daniel and Anna Jackson married in St Barts on 5<sup>th</sup> June

Congratulations on Eric and Tanya Lambert celebrating 18 years of marriage on 20<sup>th</sup> June



### Funerals

Alan Wallis - died 22 5 10

RIP



### ***Vic's Meat Loaf***

I started making this recipe many years ago now and first learnt it from my mum.

- ✓ 1/2 oz butter
- ✓ 2oz breadcrumbs
- ✓ 2lbs minced beef
- ✓ 1 medium onion
- ✓ Salt and pepper to taste
- ✓ 1/2 beef stock cube dissolved in 1tbs of boiling water
- ✓ Pinch of dried minced herbs
- ✓ 2 tbs tomato puree
- ✓ 1 egg beaten



- Grease a 2lb loaf tin with butter.
- Coat with bread crumbs
- Put remaining ingredients into a bowl
- Mix well
- Pack mixture into loaf tin
- Place in a preheated oven (190 Gas mark 5) Bake in a moderate oven for 45 minutes
- Bake for 1 1/2 hours

Can be served hot or cold.

If serving hot, allow to stand before slicing

***Victor Pumfrett***

### **Date and Walnut Loaf**

Last month's recipe (1<sup>st</sup> spotted by Fr Eric Illing) omitted:  
***250 gm self raising flour.***

Mr A never flew again but at my request Mr B took me up for a 'joy' ride two days later. After three near fatal occurrences in my life, I am now a convinced fatalist. In the light of the crash, a 'Thought for the Day' might be 'Obtain fuel for the vehicle before fuel for yourself.'

***Sheila Frost***



### **French Grace**

The following grace by the French poet, ***Clement Marot***, 1496 – 1544, together with his own translation was sent to us by a former chaplain:

Père éternel, qui nous ordonnes  
N'avoir souci du lendemain,  
Des biens que pour ce jour nous donnes  
Te mercions de cœur humain.  
Or puisqu'il t'a plu, de ta main,  
Donner au corps manger et boire,  
Plaise-toi du céleste pain  
Paître nos âmes, à ta gloire.  
Amen

Eternal father, who commands us  
Not to take thought for the morrow,  
We give thee thanks from human hearts  
For the things which thou hast given us this day.  
Now, since it hath pleased thee,  
With thy hand, to give food and drink for body,  
May it please thee to feed our souls  
With the Heavenly Bread, for thy glory.  
Amen

***The Revd Eric Illing***

## **The Power of a Simple Gift Operation Christmas Child**

It may seem strange to be thinking about Christmas in the middle of Summer. But for the charity Samaritan's Purse, this is when all the planning begins for the Operation Christmas Child appeal. As a Christian charity that follows biblical principles it seeks to share the example of the Good Samaritan all across the globe. Samaritan's Purse UK was launched by the legendary Dr. Billy Graham in 1990 following his visit to Scotland. Operation Christmas Child is the world's largest children's Christmas appeal.

### ***So how does the Appeal work?***

Operation Christmas Child works by taking your gift-filled shoebox - packed, wrapped and taken to a local drop off point - and hand delivering it to a child in need, asking nothing from them in return. All shoeboxes are given to children in need, with no regard to their background or beliefs. For many children this is the only gift that they receive at Christmas. Where culturally appropriate, overseas partners will make available a booklet of Bible stories, which gives a message of hope and an explanation of the true meaning of Christmas - God's gift of His Son, Jesus.

### ***How can we help?***

It is simple. All you need to do is find an empty medium-size shoebox; wrap the lid and box separately in wrapping paper; decide if it is for a boy or girl and what age ( 2 -4 years, 5-9 or 10 -14); then fill the box with appropriate toys, pens, pencils, paper, toiletries, hat, scarf, gloves and sweets etc. The box can then be brought to church and handed to **Val Carter** who will bring it to the UK in September ready to be sent

won a design competition, and was one of the forty churches built in north London in between the wars. A brilliant design, ideal for worship and with a very lively congregation.

I am still in touch with, and attend reunions of the youth club, which used to run me (!) 55 years on, many of whom have been distinguished in their church affiliations. Frank Williams, the Vicar in Dad's Army, whom I knew when at JK, is still a regular worshipper there. A former bishop of this Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich (John Dennis) was once Vicar of the parish. Indeed, as I write, I have just heard that a new Vicar has been appointed there. The influence of John Keble lives on.

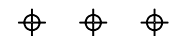
### ***The Revd Malcolm Cherry***



## **Church History Leaflets**

Alan Charters's leaflet, originally in English and translated into French is now available in German, Italian and Dutch. If you know of a native Spanish speaker who would be prepared to translate it into Spanish, please let me know.

### ***Father Gareth***



## **Lord Russell Club**

If you would like to lead conversation classes in English at an elementary level for French folk, please contact The Secretary on: 02 99 46 75 98 (afternoons only)

## **An Anglican Saint?**

JULY has its fair share of saints' days. Most of you will know about St. Swithun. However, I should like to introduce you to somebody whom the Church of England commemorates on the 14th July. Unlike the rest of those remembered in this month, his 'day' is not kept on the date of his death. He was truly a member of the Christian Church here whilst on earth, what the Bible describes as a 'Colony of Heaven'.

He won great praise for his collections of poems, *The Christian Year*, issued in 1827. A lot of us have sung his hymns, among them, *New every morning is the Love, and Blest are the Pure in Heart*. He was born in 1792, the son of a priest, he showed early brilliance, becoming a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, at the age of nineteen, a few years before his ordination. He was elected Professor of Poetry in Oxford in 1831. Nevertheless, he did not seek preferment and in 1836 became a parish priest near Winchester, a position he held until his death in 1866.

In his parish church, he introduced pews specifically designed for comfortable kneeling in prayer. He continued to write scholarly books and was praised for his character and spiritual counsel. Yet he is still best remembered for the sermon he preached in Oxford, known as the 'Assize Sermon', considered by many as the beginning of what was to become known as the Oxford Movement, delivered on 14th July 1833, now his commemoration day.

His name was JOHN KEBLE. From his sermon came the Tractarian Movement, so-called because it produced many tracts protesting at the threats to the Church from liberal developments in politics and theology. This resulted in a major shake up in the Church of England, not least in church worship, the effects of which are with us still today. Significantly, an Oxford College was built and named in his honour.

I began my ministry in the only church in England to be dedicated to God in memory of John Keble. This church was built in 1936, having

## **To get involved?**

Pick up a leaflet from Val from the middle of July and borrow a DVD. See more information on the website: [www.samaritanspurse.uk.com](http://www.samaritanspurse.uk.com).

Join the Operation Christmas Child Campaign this year and bring a smile to the face of a child through a shoebox.

***Andrea Banyard,***  
***Operation Christmas Child Volunteer,***  
***St. Jude's Church, Wolverhampton***



## **From the mouth of a child**

An argument overheard in a school playground:

- Boy 1: My father is a teacher and makes me clever for nothing.  
Boy 2: My father is a doctor and makes me healthy for nothing.  
Boy 3: My father is a vicar and makes me good for nothing.

***John Marshall***



### French Proverb of the Month

This month's proverb from 'Almanach du Marin Breton 2008' may well appeal to anyone suffering from sibling rivalry:

*On peut vivre sans frère mais non pas sans ami*

Last month's might be paraphrased as follows:

*Eat your fish while it's still fresh*



### Quotation of the Month

Father Peter, my former Vicar at St Mary's, Potters Bar, sent me some chocolate bars as part of my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday present on one of which was printed the following:

'The old don't have to worry about avoiding temptation. When you're old temptation avoids you.'



### Church Notice Board

There are some questions that can't be answered by Google

*Marjorie and Stafford Crane*



### A pearl of humour for the cultured

Shotgun wedding: a case of wife or death.

*Ronald Frankel, MBE*

### Poem of the month

The seventh in a series exploring the nature of the incarnation through the humanity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

*'To bathe his feet with her tears  
and to dry them with her hair'  
Luke 7 v38*

An intimate, outrageous act of love in public;  
A sincere, unrestrained act of public repentance.  
A woman, who made a living by selling her body,  
Gives of herself without thought for herself  
To demonstrate how much she respects Jesus  
By washing and drying his feet with her body.  
How was Jesus, a rabbi of repute, able to lie there  
And to allow a strange woman to touch him so?  
By the standards of the day, he risked impurity:  
If she were menstruating, it would be so;  
As a prostitute, it would be so. How could he?  
How could he permit such intimate contact?  
Jesus was holy, wholly pure, wholly clean.  
He could not be other than he was.  
His compassion guaranteed his purity.  
He could not be tainted by healing a leper,  
By touching the bier of a widow's dead son,  
By talking to a Samaritan woman at a well,  
By eating and drinking with tax collectors.  
He was not afraid of the touch of others.  
It is the love of others embodied in him  
Which makes God our God who He is.





*Thanks to...*

Well, whoever or whatever *was* being thanked, it wasn't me. Everyone was looking upwards, for some reason. For a cynical, disbelieving moment, I thought the ceiling might be falling in.

Then there were the celebrations. A lot of noisy shouting – congratulations, self-congratulations - with just a touch of name-calling - bounced around my bathroom. The architect said, as an expert, that while he understood everything that had happened - nonetheless he remained mystified. He intended to write it all down and submit it to his Institute – or even the Vatican. *It was evidence.*

At the same time the second plumber took further pictures, including himself facing the bathroom mirror, photographing his own camera. *More evidence*, he said.

In the meantime, the first plumber had managed to get his apprentice to get the hand pump to make a joyful noise. With a grin his apprentice crossed himself and then joined the whole bathroom in discussing the World Cup. Surely France would win now ?

*Moi ?* I felt indefinably relieved – or I soon would be. I flushed my toilet again, just for the hell of it.

**David Norris**



## Modern Miracles: *Go with the flow*

*"If I had my life over again, I'd be a plumber."* Albert Einstein

I first noticed something might be wrong when I tried to flush the toilet – and the bathroom lights went out.

And when I turned the lights back on, the toilet flushed – and gurgled. And when the toilet flushed, the washbasin filled up with water - and gurgled a different gurgle, and then kept on filling, but up from the plug.

I put the plug in to stop the basin overflowing, but then the water just arrived in the shower – again, from the drain. The only way I could stop the water coming over the shower tray was to turn the lights out...

My first reaction was to blame the new restaurant below - recently rebuilt. A week before, on the Saturday night they opened, my electricity was cut off - on the stroke of midnight. The *patron* kindly came and rescued me – by re-running everything, on the strength of a paperclip jammed into my fuse-box, from the lead on my electric kettle... *Let's see what happens*, he said.

On the Sunday morning my bedside alarm turned the bathroom lights on again, and when I watched the television I got steam not pictures, though I couldn't boil any water for some reason. When I tried, the television went off.

On Monday morning - still the week before *this* week - an electrician came, admired the paperclip, and said that as nothing seemed seriously wrong, if *I* was happy, *he* was happy. But if I wanted to use the television - or the telephone - again, he'd have to come back with his apprentice. He tapped his nose and gave me a tip - *Watch that kettle*. Instead of the television, I assumed.

So that's why I thought the restaurant must be responsible for my bathroom blockage *this* week. But when I went downstairs and asked the *patron* if he'd put anything big down the communal drain, he simply handed me the menu, and shrugged. Actually, first comments on their food *had* mentioned over-large portions.

Meanwhile I was queuing for the WC facilities in the Market Square – particularly busy on Saturday mornings, when they take the doors off *to facilitate through-put*. In the afternoons I used the Church, so to speak. Throughout the night I went down to the public toilets on the promenade. Dressing gown and umbrella.

Following another emergency call on Monday morning, the plumber did arrive. Or rather, he didn't. A teenager arrived mid-morning to ask if my lights were on. If not, he'd have to come back with his colleague who was certified.

I said the lights *were* on and had been for a week. I turned them on and off to show him. He looked puzzled and said I mustn't panic, he'd be back as fast as he could. Maybe today. They shouldn't be going on and off like that. He'd switch off the power, for safety's sake.

The plumber did arrive at 4.30pm - to tell me he'd be coming the following morning, with a pump. Till then I wasn't to use the toilet *for any reason at all*.

Thinking, despite what he'd said, that the toilet might be all right by now – after three days it might have *self-bealed* – I tried flushing it.

Nothing. No water anywhere in the bathroom now, except what was still dribbling up through the shower drain, which I thought I'd plugged with a sock.

When I removed the sock – why do we do that? – water surged up. Which I thought I could stop by turning the lights on (or off). It had worked before. But hadn't the boy turned off my power? So when I

*Marvellous!* I shouted.

*Merci!* replied the second plumber, stroking his camera. *De rien!*

The first plumber and his mate ran up the stairs.

*Voilà!* the first plumber yelled triumphantly, sinking onto the toilet seat, exhausted by success. *I knew my pump would do it! If I persisted.*

The second plumber glared at him and took his camera off. Then his jacket...

It was the builder who broke them up, rushing in to demand who'd sent a rush of water down the water column which he'd newly opened up? The café was flooded knee-deep and everybody standing watching had drowned - including himself. *Who did it?*

*I did!* I said. *Moi!* *I flushed the flush. It was my magic touch!*

The builder loomed over me.

But at that moment the architect came up to my flat, too, wearing a black plastic bin bag and no trousers. *I wet them*, he said. I knew what he meant. I'd been there.

But he was smiling! The architect was smiling *a real smile*. I hadn't seen one of them in days.

He explained everything - at length...

*... so, as a result of the unexpected torrent of water released by mysterious means from above –*

At this point he – and everyone else, looked at me –

*- A complete **un** - blockage has occurred...*

Modestly, I looked down.

*Now my mobile's gone dead, he said.*

*My mobile. I said.*

*Yes, my mobile, he said. I'll take some more pictures. How about the shower?*

Would I stand in the shower looking like somebody whose shower wasn't working and who'd been let down by a plumber?

*You needn't ask.*

Snap. Snap

Now would I stand over the wash basin looking like somebody who badly needed a shave?

*That's me.*

Snap. Snap.

Now would I...?

Snap. Snap.

And now...?

Snap. Snap.

Finally, he asked me to look like somebody who was totally fed up with trying to flush the loo.

*Do you mean me?* I said wearily.

But, once again, I tried the flush... *Heaven help me!*

And everything worked! Instantly.

The toilet filled, correctly. The shower responded, and drained. The taps flowed at a single turn – and the wash basin emptied like a dream.

tried to switch the lights off (or on), nothing happened, although my television started to hum a little and my kettle – bone dry by now – gave an irritated crackle.

Early on Tuesday morning the plumber phoned.

*There's a plumbing problem somewhere, he said. I've got to attend to it.*

I attempted to say –

But he'd asked *the Head of Re-canalization at the Town Hall* – his phrase - for *a total wash-out* – my phrase.

I attempted to say -

*- And is there anything wrong with your phone? he said. And rang off.*

The Re-canalizer arrived with his apprentice - both in heavy-duty marigolds stamped with the municipal coat-of-arms. They rolled up in a small tanker van with a smoking funnel, also municipalized.

The boy dug a hole in the floor of the dustbin room downstairs, while the Head of Re-canalization wore an oxygen tank to watch him. A trap door was eventually unearthed and the boy was sent down bearing a huge tube – boy first. I have no idea what happened to him afterwards.

I do know, however, that nothing happened to my bathroom. Other than that a minute or two later, a few drops of... something ... appeared in the wash basin. And I heard a faint voice coming up through the toilet.

On Wednesday morning the Agency called me. They look after the flats, ensuring everything runs smoothly 24/7. *We exist to be helpful.*

They were very helpful. They'd heard from the plumber that there'd been *a plumbing problem* which had been keeping him busy. Was it all right now?

I told them *No*.

Was I sure ? they said.

I told them *Yes*.

*Oh good*, they said, helpfully. By the way, was there a problem with my phone ?

Before I answered, they helpfully rang off.

That lunchtime a *second* plumber arrived. To take photos - nothing else. *No plumbing*, he said.

The Agency needed evidence of *the total toilet situation*, and he began taking pictures: the seat, me, the tank, me again, the pan, me sitting on the seat, the toilet roll, me and the toilet roll...

A few minutes later, with the second plumber still snapping, an architect arrived, with his builder. At the door, the architect said that in his expert opinion at least one inner wall of the restaurant would have to be knocked down to reach *the vital vertical water column* under my shower, toilet and washbasin - all of which seemed to be blocked, in his expert opinion. They would go downstairs and immediately set about tearing down the first storey of the building.

*Anyway, I see you have guests*, he called back, rather pointedly.

It was the young electrician, now with an older electrician, the one who'd called in the first place. They'd come urgently. *Are we too late ?*

They suggested turning the power on. It was entirely up to me, said the senior one, and flicked the switch. You could see he was a real electrician.

The bathroom lights came on - plus the kettle. So I filled it and turned it off. But when I looked again, the electrician and his apprentice had gone.

*And now your phone's gone dead*. The photographer gave me the news as he tried to contact the Agency with a progress report.

*We're getting there*, he told them, using my mobile, and carried on cheerfully explaining how.

Then the front door began to knock.

The first plumber had finally turned up – with a hand pump, and an apprentice to pump it. *I've been busy*, he said. *Ask the Agency*.

*Oh*, I said. But such subtleties were lost on him.

For the next twenty minutes, listening to the walls below being demolished with pneumatic drills and a sledgehammer, I talked to the first plumber's apprentice as he pumped away at the toilet, watched by his boss.

As he pumped the boy told me he was praying for France in the World Cup.

*What about my toilet ?* I blurted out. *Pray for my toilet !*

OK, he said, pleasantly. *Why not ?*

Eventually he was so tired (his boss announced) that we could all do with a *world cup* of coffee. *Ha ha !*

We laughed, but not for long, because the kettle - though full, was out of action again. The drills had overloaded the electricity.

The thirsty *firsty* plumber went downstairs to report this to the builder - who'd already returned to his yard to fetch a generator. So he called me downstairs to say he was staying in the café *for a well-earned brandy*, while his apprentice would sit outside *airing the pump*.

When I returned, the photographic plumber beckoned me into the bathroom.