

Churches mark 60 year anniversary

CHURCHES from our diocese will be commemorating the 60th anniversary of D-Day in a variety of ways.

Worshippers at St Thomas's Church in Elson, Gosport, will open their doors for five days from June 9-13 for an exhibition to give people an idea of life in the parish in 1944.

It will feature photos of bomb damage in the parish, the building of an embarkation ramp at Hardway and troops embarking. Home life, rations and recycling will also be remembered.

The church will be open from 10am-12noon, 2pm-4pm and 6pm-8pm from Wednesday to Friday.

On Saturday, the displays will be on show from 10am-4pm during the annual church fete, and on Sunday the exhibition can be seen during and after services.

The climax of the week will come with a Songs of Praise-style service at 4pm in the church followed by a procession to the embarkation ramp at Hardway led by a pipe major.

There will be a short

service on the green there, with a symbolic launching of a boat to lay a wreath of poppies in the harbour in memory of those who died.

At Christ Church, Portsdown, where armed forces took part in a service on 4 June 1944 before sailing to Normandy, a D-Day exhibition will also take place, between May 30 and June 13.

The church will also be open every Thursday from now until September from 10am-12noon.

D-Day will also be the theme of a flower festival at

St James's Church, Yarmouth, from June 4-6. Viewing is from 12noon-4pm on Friday and Sunday and 10am-4pm on the Saturday. The weekend culminates with a Songs of Praise in the church at 6.30pm on the Sunday.

And St Margaret's Church in Eastney, Portsmouth, will hold a social evening at 7.30pm on June 12 to celebrate the anniversary.

Tickets, priced at £3, are available on 023-9273 5170 or 023-9275 1254.



The icon of St Birinus given to the bishop
(photo: courtesy Michael Camps)

Icon recalls our past - and models future

THIS is St Birinus - the man who helped bring the Christian faith to our diocese.

He arrived on the shores of Fareham in the seventh century and decided to preach to the pagan West Saxons. He later became Bishop of Dorchester.

This icon of him was made for Bishop Kenneth by our diocesan iconographer, the Rev Derick Stevenson, from St Mary's Church, Brighthelm. He used Isle of Wight lime, French gold leaf and natural pigments mixed with egg tempera.

It was presented to our bishop during the Chrism Service on Maundy Thursday and now hangs in Bishops Grove.

"The icon was

designed on the 1225-1250 roundel window at Dorchester Abbey in Oxfordshire," said Derick.

"It's an unusual privilege to be asked to produce an icon for which there is no known icon pattern."

Bishop Kenneth said: "I am delighted with this. It reminds me of how much we owe to Christian saints and martyrs over the centuries and particularly to St Birinus."

"In his day the church was supremely mission-focused."

"It's that kind of single-mindedness we're seeking to replicate in our Kairos thinking today as we move our priority from maintenance to mission."

Prestige D-Day event for choir

OUR cathedral choir will headline an international concert to mark the 60th anniversary of D-Day this month.

Around 40 singers will travel to Caen to perform a brand new work for royalty, heads of state, D-Day veterans and 2,000 others gathered there for the anniversary.

They will join the London Mozart Players, a French children's choir and the newly-formed Portsmouth Youth Chamber Orchestra to perform *Valete in Pacem* on June 6.

The music was composed by Harvey Brough, the man behind the chart act Harvey and the Wallbangers, and the text was written by Lee Hall, who wrote the screenplay for the film *Billy Elliott*.

The event is part of a weekend of activities in Portsmouth and Caen to mark 60 years since the successful Normandy landings that helped bring an end to the Second World War.

Valete in Pacem follows the journey of an 18-year-old soldier experiencing the events of D-Day, from the hell of battle to the calm of the evening.

It uses extracts from pieces of monastic liturgy such as Vespers and Compline. Parts will be sung in English, French and Latin.

The concert, at the 12th century Abbaye aux Hommes, will be a nerve-wracking moment for 18-year-old cathedral chorister Oliver Jones, who will sing the solo part.

"I cannot believe that I am going to be singing at such an important occasion," said Oliver, who was also featured recently on the BBC *Songs of Praise* programme from our cathedral. "It will certainly be my biggest musical challenge so far."

And composer Harvey Brough said: "My desire for this piece is that it should show the horror of war but also be a prayer for remembrance to those who died and a powerful pleas that such an event should



Harvey Brough (right) takes soloist Oliver Jones through *Valete in Pacem*

never happen again."

The cathedral choir will also take part in two radio broadcasts during their weekend in Caen - one to be broadcast live at 8.30am on June 6 on BBC Radio 4, and a Choral Evensong, which will be recorded and broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on June 9.

Meanwhile in Portsmouth, the cath-

edral will host its annual D-Day and Normandy Fellowship service at 11.30am on June 6.

There will also be special events organised by the city council on Southsea Common that afternoon. *Valete in Pacem* will then be repeated at Portsmouth Cathedral on June 25.

Hear stories of caring God at summer school

CHURCHES in the Bishop's Waltham area will host their first ever summer Bible school this month.

Anyone who wants to get to grips with the stories in the Bible is invited to come to the event on June 26.

The theme is 'Stories of a caring God', reflecting the fact that the narrative style seems to be the most popular way for God to communicate with his

people in Scripture.

It will take place at the study centre, St John the Baptist Church, Shedfield, from 10am-3.45pm.

The study will be led from Brian Powell, a Reader from Fareham, who teaches about the Old Testament in the Reader training course and has just been appointed director of initial Reader training.

Organiser Tony Thorpe, a

Reader from St Peter's, Bishop's Waltham, said: "Much of the Bible is story, some would estimate about 50 per cent, both in the Old and New Testaments. That would make it God's favourite way of writing to us, which is not surprising."

"For at its heart, the Bible is the story of God's revelation and plan of salvation for a fallen and needy people. So what better way of engaging with the Bible

than to immerse oneself in its God-given stories?"

The day will focus particularly on how stories in the Old Testament relate to those in the New Testament. The role of women will also be highlighted.

Anyone who would like to come is encouraged to read the story of Ruth in advance.

For more details, or to book your place on the course, contact Tony Thorpe on 01489-891350.