

## A view from THE BRIDGE

### The 'Authorised Version - impact and issues

As a student in the early 1970s, the only book that I was required to take with me to college as I started an English degree, was the Authorised Version of the Bible.

Here was recognition that this version of this book has cast a deep and profound influence over the literary heritage of our society for 400 years – not to mention its impact on the social, theological, political, cultural and moral landscape too!

As we celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this extraordinary achievement of translation (completed in four years!), the following questions are worthy of discussion.

This is after all 'the King James Version' publicly imposed to secure uniformity of religious life and practice after the Elizabethan Settlement albeit threatened thirty years later by the English Civil War. What might seventeenth politics teach us about the relationship between church and state today?

This Bible was 'authorised to be read in churches' – not firstly to be taken home to be read in private. Few would have been able to afford a copy and less to read it for themselves. For most of its life this version has been 'heard'; its rich cadences and sentence structures lend themselves to public reading. How might church and society rediscover the power of reading the Bible aloud – and having it read well?

In its time the King James Version was at the cutting edge of Biblical and literary scholarship – but linguistic and textual studies have moved on. For instance, it repeatedly translates a Greek word as 'everlasting' whereas we now know that 'eternal' is more accurate: Jesus was talking about the quality of life not the quantity. How much does accuracy in translation matter today?

The greatest criticism levelled against this version is that it is 'inaccessible': after all its virtue at the time (some but only some would say) is that it was intended to be understood with ease. How should we balance clarity of meaning and understanding and the power of language to evoke the transcendent and 'other'?

This anniversary gives the church a wonderful opportunity to promote the place of the Bible in public and church life. Whilst we do so, let us also debate the issues that its presence provokes.

**The Venerable Chris Skilton**



# Earlsfield church opens Community Garden

On 4 December local MP, the Rt Hon. Sadiq Khan, cut the tape to formally open the new Community Garden at St Andrew's, Earlsfield.

**Denise Mumford  
(Project Chair)  
writes:**

The Garden was the brainchild of James Cable, a graduate of the diploma course at Kew, who persuaded John Sallis, a tutor at Kew to bring his design students to work on designs for a community garden in 2006.

Thirteen designs were displayed in the Church and members of the local community voted for their favourite.

The winning design by Emily Waters centred on a Labyrinth – and although some changes have had to be made, the essential elements remain.

The project included removing the old railings to open up the front of the church and make it more accessible and using them to make two new entrances to the garden.

The paved Labyrinth, surrounded by stone seating, is reached by a wide curved path.

Planting is intended to encourage biodiversity, attracting birds and insects and to be more like a hedgerow than a flower-bed providing protection from the Garratt Lane traffic pollution. There are also new trees and two herb gardens.

In the South Garden, there is an area of raised beds, where children and disabled people will be encouraged to grow plants.

Our Brownies are keen future gardeners, and the Rainbow School for autistic

children, only walking distance away, is already preparing by planting sun-flower seeds indoors. A work area with a shed and composting facilities is behind the church.

The North Garden has also been transformed with four vegetable plots for the Earlsfield Friary, whose members wish to continue working the patch they began to develop this year. There is attractive planting near the street, and a bench for weary gardeners.

### A few 'thank-yous'

We have many people to thank for the development: James Cable has been Project Manager, working alongside Sallis and Chandler, the landscape company which, after a proper tender process, was chosen to do the work. Members of the Garden Committee have worked tirelessly over several years to obtain the funding and the permissions necessary, and to develop community links.

Five Trusts gave a total of £105,000 towards the work, and we are greatly in their debt. They are: Community Spaces/Groundwork, (a Big Lottery fund); the SITA Trust; the City Bridge Trust; Virador Credits Environmental Company; and the Ninds Wandsworth Church Trust. We are very thankful to the Trustees of The City Bridge Trust for their generous grant, and the help given by the Grant Officers.

### Formal opening

The formal Opening of the Community Garden took place on 4 December.



After a snowy week, we were fortunate that the thaw allowed people to see the garden! A huge crowd turned out to hear the Beatrix Potter School choir open the ceremony with carols; and Guides and Brownies ringed the Labyrinth, holding up a ribbon.

The Labyrinth is an ancient Christian symbol for the path through life, and is associated with meditation, as one walks slowly towards its centre. It seems likely that it will also be an endless source of children's games, and a pleasing area for communal activities.

After speeches by the Revd Jonathan Brown, Vicar of St Andrew's, and Cllr Angela Graham, the Rt Hon. Sadiq

Khan cut the tape before everyone had the chance to explore the new garden and wander round the stalls of the Earlsfield Christmas Fair in the church.

We now look forward to developing the volunteer group of gardeners to maintain the garden, and running a variety of activities of interest to local people: 'mini-beast' days for school children, days to explore the use of the Labyrinth; courses on cooking vegetables, grown in the garden, for families and children who have never enjoyed 'greens'!

**We have an ambitious programme.**

## THE BRIDGE

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