

## APRIL NEWSLETTER 2011

### WELCOME TO OUR NEWS LETTER



As Christians Easter is a special time for us. It's a busy time as we move from event to event and sometimes it's easy to miss the point with our busyness (is that a word??).

The central truth about Easter is the cross. The eggs, the hot cross buns, the Easter bunnies, all bring their own bits of fun and traditions, especially for the children,

but it's the Cross that we should be focusing on.

Part of that focusing process is the period of Lent. It's the preparation time that prepares us for the celebration of the risen Lord. In fact most major festivals have a period of preparation. For Christmas it's Advent. For Eid it's Ramadam. Traditional Christians observances of Lent include fasting and penitence, both in preparation for Easter and as a way of spiritually "joining" Jesus with the fasting and meditation he did in the wilderness.

The name Lent is a Germanic word originally used to refer to the spring season generally. Over time, it replaced the Latin quadragesima, which means "forty days." Lent lasts forty days because, according to biblical accounts, Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days of fasting, meditation and reflection before beginning his ministry.

So it's a time of preparation and it makes me wonder just how prepared we are generally. With our busy lives, often, things that are important, get put off until the last minute, and then in the panic we end up going for the easy option rather than the best option. I'm not just referring to spiritual things here, but also practical, like making a will, making sure we are on the best utility tariffs, sorting out our finances.

So why not this Easter as you focus on the cross make a conscious decision to sort things out and spring clean that draw where you hide all the paper work that your trying to avoid !

We can help you with this and we are used to people turning up with big carrier bags so don't delay, book your appointment today!

We wish everyone many Easter blessings.

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#### 10 fun facts about Easter! :

1. THE TRADITION OF GIVING EGGS AT EASTER TIME HAS BEEN TRACED BACK TO PERSIANS, EGYPTIANS, GAULS, GREEKS AND ROMANS, TO WHOM THE EGG WAS A SYMBOL OF LIFE.

2. EASTER IS A "MOVEABLE FEAST" CELEBRATED ON THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE FULL MOON WHICH HAPPENS ON OR AFTER MARCH 21, THE SPRING EQUINOX.

3. THE FIRST CHOCOLATE EGGS WERE MADE IN EUROPE IN THE EARLY 1800S AND STILL ARE ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR TREATS ASSOCIATED WITH EASTER.

4. 76 PERCENT OF PEOPLE EAT THE EARS ON CHOCOLATE BUNNIES FIRST.

5. THE TRADITIONAL ACT OF PAINTING EGGS IS CALLED PYSANKA (ORIGINS FROM THE UKRANIAN WORD PYSATY, "TO WRITE")

6. ACCORDING TO THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS THE LARGEST EASTER EGG EVER MADE WAS JUST OVER 25 FEET HIGH AND WEIGHED 8,968 LBS.

7. EASTER ALWAYS FALLS BETWEEN MARCH 22 AND APRIL 25.

8. THE NAME EASTER ORIGINATES FROM EASTRE, THE ANGLO-SAXON GODDESS WHO SYMBOLIZES HARE AND EGG.

9. EACH YEAR NEARLY 90 MILLION CHOCOLATE BUNNIES ARE MADE.

10. BY TRADITION, IT'S OBLIGATORY FOR CHURCHGOERS TO WEAR SOME BRIGHT NEW PIECE OF CLOTHING OR AN EASTER BONNET, IF NOT A COMPLETE NEW OUTFIT.

### WINCRED



Wincred, which stands for Walsall In Credit, is a web site whose aim is to promote financial inclusion within Walsall. The wincred website has been created by a group of agencies committed to tackling the issues of financial inclusion faced by the residents of

Walsall. By bringing together in one place, links to many sources of advice and guidance on all types of money related topics, the site aims to help you to identify ways of maximising your household income, get information and tips on saving money. Willenhall Money Advice is a member of this group. You can visit the Wincred site by going to [www.wincred.org](http://www.wincred.org)

### DEBT AND MENTAL HEALTH

The current economic situation in the UK may be causing an increase in depression, it has been reported.

GP's and charities, such as ourselves, are seeing more and more people struggling with debt and job worries. It's understood that the financial concerns could act as the starting point to mental health issues. A clinical psychologist whom we have been working with recently, says that 'there is a demand for a specialist service supporting people with mental health issues with debt; this is often an issue that gets in the way of people being able to undertake therapeutic work. Some organizations don't have the resources or knowledge to offer the extra help that someone with mental health issues need.'

Thankfully we are able to give these clients the specialist help and time they need. So if you are supporting people with mental health issues in and around Willenhall we may be able to help.

### SHOP NEWS



We recently started working with A4e (Action for Employment) who partner with employers providing work placements for the long term unemployed. The objective being that the placement gains useful experience and helps them gain employment. A4e's Employer Solutions division works with more than 2,000 employers on a local and national level. They help businesses like ours to

recruit staff, and also to help drive employment growth in key sectors of the job market. As well as supporting national recruitment campaigns, they are on hand to help fill the gap when an employer has a specific recruitment need. It helps us and it helps the placement — win/win all round!

#### 5 Reasons to go on a work placement.

1. ADD TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS RELATED TO YOUR DISCIPLINE AND/OR ANTICIPATED CAREER FIELD.

2. "TRY ON" A CAREER WITHOUT MAKING A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT.

3. PRACTICE PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND LEARN HOW ORGANISATIONS FUNCTION.

4. GAIN THE WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE THAT EMPLOYERS VALUE.

5. PRACTICE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWING SKILLS AND GOING THROUGH THE HIRING PROCESS.

#### 5 Reasons to volunteer

1. YOU'LL FEEL GOOD ABOUT DOING SOMETHING WORTHWHILE.

2. THERE IS A WIDE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO SUIT YOUR INTERESTS.

3. YOU'LL MEET LOTS OF NEW PEOPLE.

4. YOU'LL BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF A TEAM.

5. ALL VOLUNTEERS SAY THEY GET MORE OUT OF IT THAN THEY PUT IN.

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ONE OF OUR VOLUNTEERS — MEL BROOKES

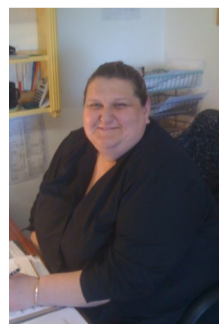
I'm Mel and I have volunteered for Bridging the Gap now for 4 years. I help here one morning a week when I am not looking after my family. My main role is helping people fill in forms, this could be for Disability Living Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit or any other form, long or short !

When I arrive at the shop I check the diary to see what appointments are booked in for that day. We like clients to feel comfortable and at ease so when I meet them my first task is getting to know them and making them a drink, if they are really lucky there might even be a biscuit! We work our way through the form, some easier than others. A DLA form will take about 2 hours.

Once all the from filling is done I check to see if we have had any successes or failures. If it's bad news we can generally help with the clients appeal if we think there may be merit.

I generally also help with a bit of cleaning and general tidying up.

The morning soon whizzes by and I soon find myself heading back for home. Its great having the opportunity to help people in this way and I benefit by meeting new friends and feeling like I've achieved something worthwhile.



### A Churches Together In Willenhall Initiative

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).

Questions or comments? E-mail us at [donbrown@bridgegap.org.uk](mailto:donbrown@bridgegap.org.uk)

or call 01902 606615

