

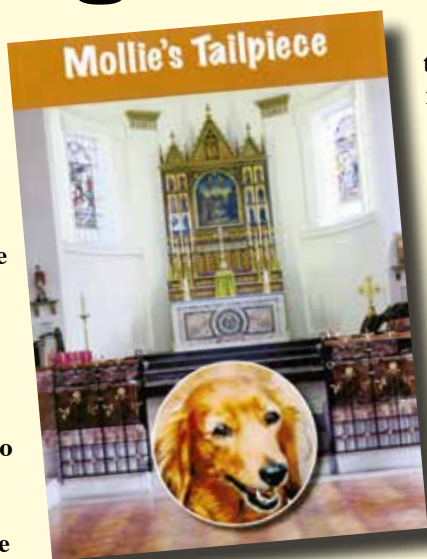
Clever dog writes book for church

IT'S not often that the most popular column in a parish magazine is written by animals rather than humans.

But that was the case at Holy Trinity, Gosport, where one of two miniature dachshunds, Sasha and Mollie, put pen to paper each month.

Their contributions to *Trinity Times* lasted for 10 years, and they were able to offer a wry take on church life.

The dogs were Christine Harris's pets, and started coming to church for the first time in 2005 – Sasha had just had an operation and Christine didn't want



Mollie's book

to leave her at home for the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass.

They behaved so well that they became a regular fixture at the church, lying at Christine's feet as worshippers gathered in a circle for Communion.

Sasha started writing the regular column in the magazine in May 2006. Mollie did the occasional column when Sasha became frail and took over completely when Sasha died in 2008.

The columns were full of comments about the 'Uprights', as humans were called, and the strange things they do in church.

Mollie became a fixture, not just at Mass, but at

PCC and deanery synod meetings, concerts and services elsewhere. She had her own kneeler in church and received a blessing from the priest each week.

After Mollie died in April 2016, just short of her 17th birthday, Christine decided to collate a selection of columns in one volume. So *Mollie's Tailpiece* has now been published with the help of fellow worshipper Amanda Field.

The book is available from the church, priced at £5.99. A contribution of £1 is made from the sale of each copy to the organ fabric fund at Holy Trinity Church.

Readers enjoy a Dr Who theme

OUR lay ministers travelled through time and space on their recent Doctor Who-themed conference.

And Readers from across our diocese came face-to-face with a real Dalek as they considered the past, present and future of the Church.

They considered whether the Church should be like Doctor Who – able to regenerate and to have the same essential character while looking quite different.

Our cathedral staff led the weekend conference, which took place in Sandown on the Isle of Wight at the end of January. Bishop Christopher led the conference Eucharist and the Rev James Grenfell, director of the Portsmouth Pathway, was the after-dinner

speaker.

Reader Mary Close said: "We learnt that the particular thing about the Time Lords is that they can regenerate.

"When the Doctor is mortally wounded or reaches the end of his physical life his whole body regenerates into a new one. He is the same person but different physical features, character and personality. Does this remind you of someone?"

"Can, indeed should, the church be like a Time Lord, able to regenerate and be completely different and yet remain fundamentally the same? Together we learnt from past regenerations of the church, examined where the church is now and considered what the future might be like and had fun and laughter in the process."

The Reader's annual



The bishop with the Dalek at the Readers' conference

conference is the chance for all of our licensed lay ministers to share good practice, learn more about the role, and to examine an area of theology.

Canon Peter Leonard from our cathedral, who is a Doctor Who fan, said: "Together we time travelled across the church from the past to the present and on into the future.

"We considered the ways in which the church has regenerated in the past and evaluated these before we examined where we were now and what the signs of regeneration were for the church today.

"This then enabled us to

jump forward to the future and imagine together what the church might look like in years to come. In addition to being interesting there was also challenge for us.

"This was particularly highlighted as we considered the ninth doctor's regeneration into the tenth, where he acknowledges that both he and his companion have been great and he has loved it but the time for change had come – a position that perhaps many could identify with."

One of the conference organisers borrowed a real Dalek from a work colleague who works for Wightlink.

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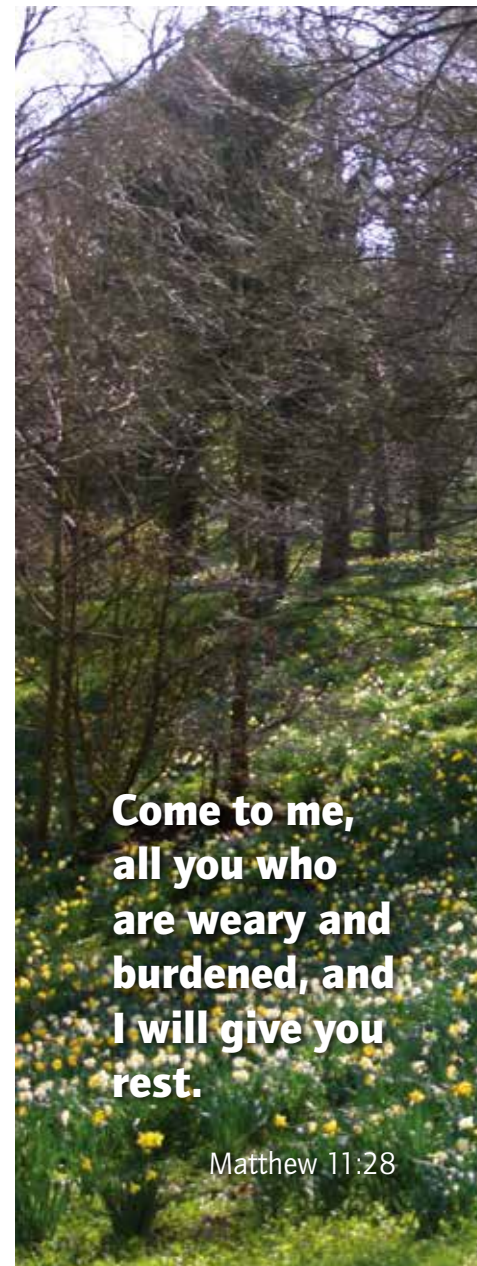
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Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28