

## *Rita's Ring*

*Two months ago (Bosham Life, May 2013, page 11), Chris Pexton told us about a wedding ring, one of many valuable objects which belong to the church—and are listed in the Terrier (see page 9). He wrote a short story, giving his suggestion as to how it got there, and inviting other readers to contribute their own ideas. Here is another.*

Jenny looked at the ring in her hand. It was a simple gold band, free from any engraving. Her mother, Rita, had worn it for over 50 years—26 as a wife and then 32 as a widow. The undertaker had asked if she had wanted the ring left on her mother's body when it was cremated. Jenny had not wanted to think of the ring being reduced to molten metal and oozing away from her mother, who had worn it so proudly every day since her wedding. So she had asked the undertaker for it. To Jenny it was more than a ring—it was a symbol of her mother's dedication and love for her husband and family but it was also the mark of a happy family life.

Rolling the ring around in her hand Jenny looked across to the stream to where a large clump of primroses was tumbling down the bank, causing a splash of yellow. The ring had been warmed by Rita's body heat and glowed darkly. Jenny looked hard at the ring and could see her reflection in it—distorted slightly because of the curve of the band of gold. She slipped it on to the ring finger of her right hand and held her hand out to admire it. The ring was a little loose in fit. Rita had always said that Jenny had the long thin fingers of an artist while she herself had short fat workmen's hands. Jenny could remember her mother hiding her dry, cracked hands, when she had worked in the factory, where they had been subjected to chemicals used in the processing. Jenny was reluctant to admit that she had felt a little ashamed of her mother doing manual work in a factory, instead of seeing her mother's strength in trying to earn a little extra money, to supplement the small pension, which was all they had to live on after her father had died. That had been a hard period in both of their lives, but it had forged a close bond between mother and daughter that had never been broken. That is, until now.

Jenny slipped the ring off her finger and put it in her coat pocket. She walked slowly across the grass to the church. Inside it was light and dust motes could be seen in the air. The altar cloth shone richly. Jenny sat quietly in a pew, thinking of the past, most of which made for happy memories. Her hand felt the ring in her pocket and it suddenly occurred to her that she would like to leave the ring in the church's safe keeping. There was no one around, but there was a secure box set in the wall for donations, and into this Jenny dropped the ring. With one more look around the church and a sigh of—what? Nostalgia? Relief? Jenny walked away from the church saying quietly to herself, "Thanks, Mum". When the wall safe was unlocked and the wedding ring discovered, it was decided to put it with the church treasure. What more fitting place for Rita's ring to be?

*Christine Fallows*

### **QUICK QUIZ**

How many houses are there in Bosham with 'Saltings' in their name?

*Answer on page 30*

### **COMPUTER EXPERTISE**

**Service engineer:** "What version of Windows do you have?"

**Customer:** "Double-glazed."