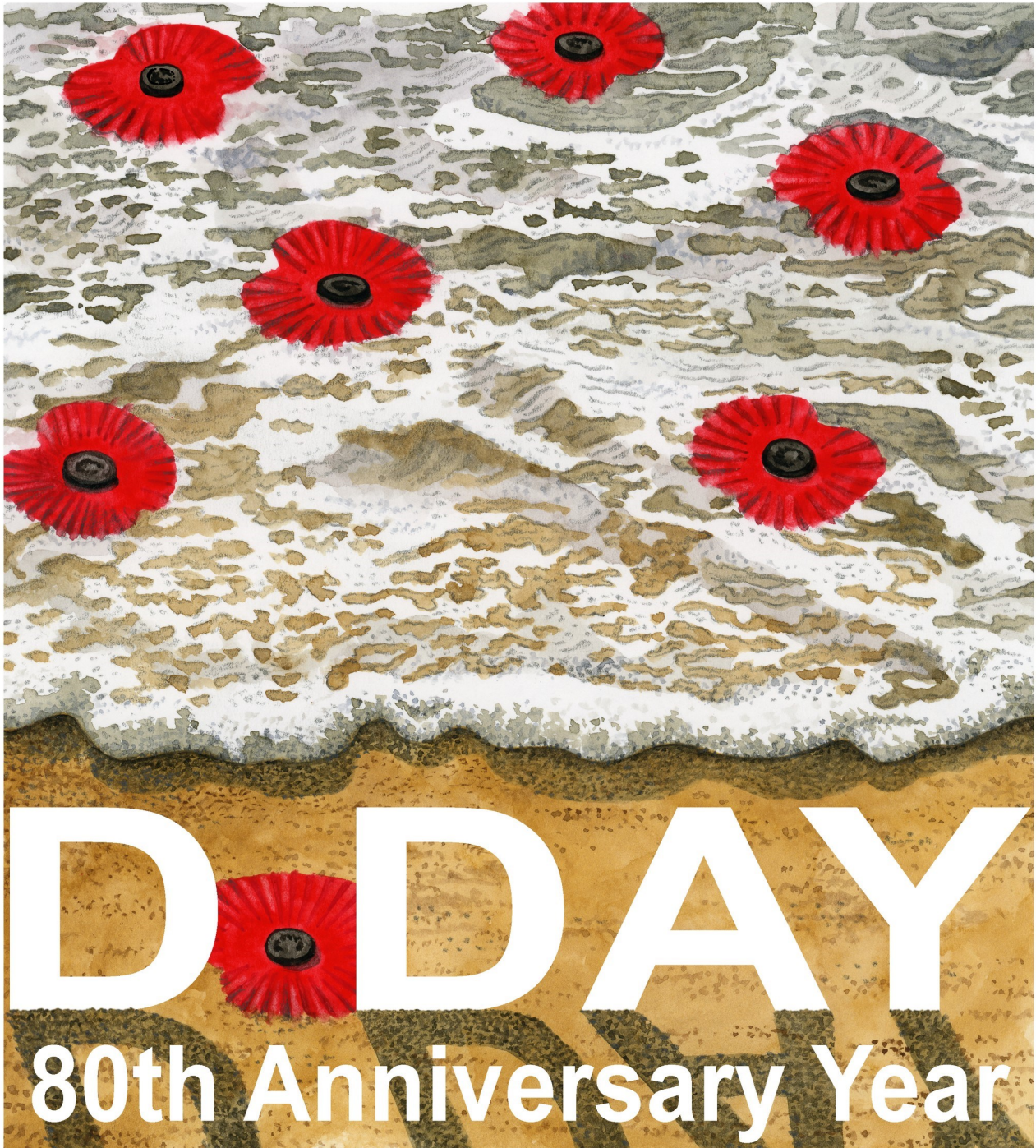


St Mary's Church, Bromley
Parish Magazine

NOVEMBER 2024

61 College Road Bromley BR1 3QG



www.stmarys-bromley.org.uk

Minimum donation 75p



To The Induction and Collation Service of
Reverend Eucharía Ifeoma Asiegbu
As Vicar of St Mary's Church, Plaistow , Bromley
by Bishop Simon Burton-Jones
WEDNESDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 2024
19:00

Welcome to the November 2024 edition of the Parish Magazine.

Welcome to our November magazine, which as you might expect includes memories of recent and less recent events. However, we are also looking forward to the arrival of our new vicar and the opportunities that will bring.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed this month, and please remember to come up with some more articles in good time for our bumper December/January issue.

Atlanta

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Memorial Book



St. Mary's Church has a memorial book in which may be inscribed names of people associated with the parish. If you would like to know more details please contact Alan or Jean Read on 020 8402 0886.

Disclaimer

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various participants in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editors.

All Change



We are moving towards November the month of remembering and of change. Chiefly, we formally remember those who have died in war, and all that it means to individuals and nations. We pray for peace, sometimes in despair but also in hope. We remember the dead more generally around All Saints and All Souls, both the great ones of the faith and all our own holy and much loved dead, continually missed and mourned.

This time of transition means that I am once again struck by the beauty of nature and by its fragility, the visual glory of God's creation as we move from the beginning of autumn towards winter and we are driving again along country roads, marvelling at the beauty of ploughed and freshly sown fields, at the colours of the trees that are on the turn to reds, russets and golds before they fall. The world is never still, always on the move changing from glory to glory and from one new thing to another new thing. The variety of creation is just continually amazing.

Variety is often described as 'the spice of life', but it is in fact the very stuff of life, we live our lives in a state of change, as we grow and mature and then age and decline. At the same time we are called to new and transformed living in Christ.

When we produced our Parish profile I was struck by the enthusiasm we all expressed to learn new things and to develop in our faith, so who knows how we will change, as we go forward and work together with Rev'd Eucharistia on building up the body of Christ at St Mary's.

Many of you know that I was for many years in a Church community in which the Vicar regularly ended the written notice sheet with the words "Expect good things". I realised only after I had left, and gone to

university, how that short injunction had formed my thinking and how I do indeed almost always expect good things.

A quick search offers us a whole raft scriptural material about change both from the Hebrew Bible and from the New Testament. The major theme of the scriptures is the excitement and yet the comfort of God's actions in bringing in change and new things, we can feel almost, safe but also excited.

Isaiah 43:19 is one of those memorable verses on change " See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Often we interpret that prophecy as referring to the coming of Jesus, and the glory and the fruitfulness that Jesus brings to all life and creation.

Then in Romans 8:28 St Paul tells us "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." We can be reassured by St Paul's belief that in all things that God really works for our good, God is always working for our good. He goes on to tell the Corinthians that anyone who is in Christ is made a new Creation, the old has gone.

It is obvious, though that some changes make us anxious and sorrowful, as when our loved ones become ill and die, or when we ourselves become ill, lose our job or our home, or are overcome by concern for climate change, or for peace in a dangerous and warlike world. So we are often fearful for the future as well as excited, because all life is made up of such a range of good and difficult experiences.

Many of my friends are like me, old and ailing, one in their late 80s has just had complex and difficult ,but successful surgery, and another is moving slowly through the final stages of Alzheimer's disease, both have faced the prospects of life and death with courage and mixed feelings at different times in their lives, and I am full of admiration, as well as great affection for them. they have lived their lives to the full, as they have been able.

Their examples inspire, but anxiety inevitably remains, as God's creatures, we know we are immeasurably beautiful but fragile and destined to change, through our earthly life and death, and through faith, hope and new life in Christ. We have faith and hope best summarised in the lovely words from Lamentations 3:

"Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning;....." God sees all of time from beginning to end, and God knows that living and changing is never easy. But God seeks always to share our sorrows and our concerns, and we are not alone as we face the difficult times and changes, we are following in the footsteps of Jesus, as sisters and brothers on the journey together. So we can indeed expect good things.

Alison Tyler

Making melody unto the Lord

Miriam plays her tambourine
In tribute to her Lord,
The harpists play their melodies
Their sound is heard abroad.

The trumpets and the cymbals too
Ring out throughout the earth,
Extolling God our Saviour
And telling of His worth.

So let there be a paeon of praise
To Him who set us free,
Forgiveness and His gift of life
He gives to you and me.

This gift was bought by Christ's own blood,
A cost none could afford,
So let us join with heaven and earth
To praise our Risen Lord.

By Megan Carter

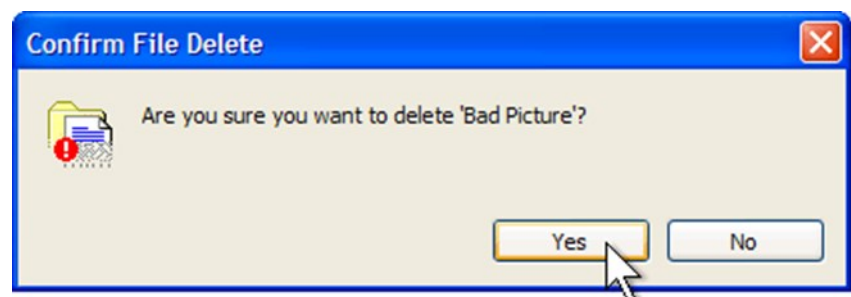
A view from the pew



I have just been trawling through my old emails. Most of them I don't remember, and so I have been deleting them, more-or-less without serious consideration. Was that a wise move? Might there have been a nugget of information, that was vital to my well-being, or my future, - or the future of the planet - hidden in the dross? Might there have been valuable advice/important data/never-to-be-repeated-again bargains lurking beneath the surface of boring emails?

We will never know. They have gone.

I expect that they still exist in some electronic version of purgatory – for



ever waiting to be summoned back into existence. But accessing that far-off (or far-deep) reality seems beyond the skills-set of the average computer user. Certainly it is beyond mine!

Which leaves me with a dilemma. Continue deleting – and take that risk. Or stop deleting - and keep everything – just in case!

In my rational moments (rare, and unplanned) I am scientific, focussed, definite and objective. But most of the time I have my usual “shall I, shan't I?” approach to life. Indecisive, but (in fairness) pretty good at weeding out of the black-holes this sometimes creates.

However, I must issue an urgent warning to anyone considering deleting old emails (or texts). “When they're gone, they're gone!” You may recognise this well-worn retail tag-line at the end of a sales push, but despite the corny nature of its familiarity, there is an element of truth lurking. Computer experts may claim to be able to resurrect deleted computing, but it is never the same once it has gone through the back of the program to that cloud up in the ether. And who wants their old emails closely examined and revived by a stranger, anyway?

So, take it from me. If you delete it, you've lost control of it. And if there really is someone out there collecting all the deletions and analysing them, all I can say is "Good luck!" What a dead-end job. What a mind-numbing thought. Other peoples' lost emails. I am bored with mine – I don't think that I could face anyone else's.

Hence you have nothing to fear from me accessing your old communications. I won't be doing it. Carry on deleting!

Whoops! There goes another one!

Peter Fall

Book Review

**A Beginner's Guide to Dying by Simon Boas Swift Press
(12th Sept. 2024)**



This is an amazing book by an amazing person. Simon Boas loved his life, enjoyed every moment and yet died of cancer aged 47, a happy and contented man full of joy and gratitude for the wonder of having been alive at all. Simon lived his life to the full, emotionally, socially and literally and was very definitely someone who received all that life offered to him as gift. He reminds each of us of our own extraordinary uniqueness and the wonder that we were ever here at all.

I cannot recommend his book too highly, which, as he tells us, was almost called Muscadet and Morphine, because they were the things that got him through the painful final months of his illness. It is full of insights about how to keep company with the dying in ways that are helpful both to the dying person and to their friends and relations. I do so hope that I can be as inspirational about my joy in life when my turn to die comes round.

Alison Tyler

Choir Notes

“Church choirs are funny things. In some churches they are not part of the congregation; they come solely for the singing, not the worship. A few Church choirs have been enticed from one church to another by offers of better leadership, a better organist, better music to sing, more appreciation by the leadership, more love from the congregation, even by promises of money! Church choirs are sometimes told to sing more softly, so as not to overwhelm the congregation. And some are told to “sing up” and lead the worship more strongly. They may face the congregation when singing, or face at right-angles to them, or even turn their backs on them occasionally – all at the whim of a choir director or member of the clergy.

Meanwhile, St Mary’s church choir continues to support the worship of the church, wherever, and however, they sit or stand; whenever, and whatever, they sing or chant; whichever, and whyever, they bow or process. Singing to the glory of God does not mean that choir members have better or more important voices than other churchgoers. It simply gives them the opportunity to use their limited gifts to encourage others in the faith through music.

St Mary’s choir members are a particular brand, however. They practice diligently and regularly. They contribute to the music chosen for services. They warm up before every service to keep their voices secure. They tackle new music pieces to reduce staleness, and they introduce different timbres to provide the appropriate soundscape in church. St Mary’s choir members have developed a sixth sense, thanks to their commitment of time and energy; a sense that enables them to blend their individual voice with all those around, and which can produce a choral sound to awaken the spirit and salve the soul.

We are not all great solo singers. But we work hard to produce that choral blend which enables listeners to relax and listen, or to join in and

soar to heaven. Singing religious hymns and anthems can open a way to engage with the depth of our faith. The words are enhanced by the music, and transmuted through our heads to our vocal cords. What comes out of our mouths is filtered by our brains to provide a musical commentary on our belief. We hope that this supports your worship, enhances your faith and bolsters your belief. We will continue to try and nudge open the door of heaven for us all, by the application of blended vocal music. We hope that it assists your worship, as it helps us.

Peter Fall

Choir anthems in November

3rd “How beautiful upon the mountains” by John Stainer

3rd p.m. “Santus” by Gabriel Faure from “Requiem”

6th “Clare Benediction” by John Rutter

17th “Incline thine ear” by Johann Himmel

24th “Blessed Word of God incarnate” by Robert Pearsall

1st Dec “Sleepers wake” by Felix Mendelssohn



Mothers' Union Matters



Despite Knitting and Knattering continuing apace, St Mary's Mothers' Union found time in October to enjoy a Quiz organised by the Sopers, and mainly presented by John. As well as the expected topical, historical and political questions, there was a picture quiz. This consisted mainly of photos of two people, with the simple question "Who are they?" In all, there were 16 pictures of "pairs". Some were couples, some were lead actors in a film, others were novel opening lines, children's book characters, sports duos. Even a multi-coloured umbrella (representing "Legal & General") appeared! This was a thoroughly engaging and infuriating morning in equal degrees for the dozen or so members taking part. Grateful thanks go to the Soper family for yet another successful Quiz morning. All those present had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

The next MU fun-filled morning will be a "Qwirkle" event on Thursday 14th November. "Qwirkle" returns by popular demand and is guaranteed to provide much simple fun and laughter. This will be an ideal opportunity for the busy, socially-involved MU members to kick off their shoes and relax into a rather silly competitive game. Please direct any queries, such as "What on earth is "Qwirkle"", or "What are the rules?", or "How can I win?", to the Committee member responsible for this meeting, Mary Fall.

Knitting remains a key focus for many members. Knit and Natter members are busy knitting articles for a stall at the Christmas Fair (30th November). These will be mainly decorative items for the Christmas Season, and items that are warm for Winter.

Peter Fall

Dates for November

Wednesday 6th Grace Café

Thursday 14th "Qwirkle"

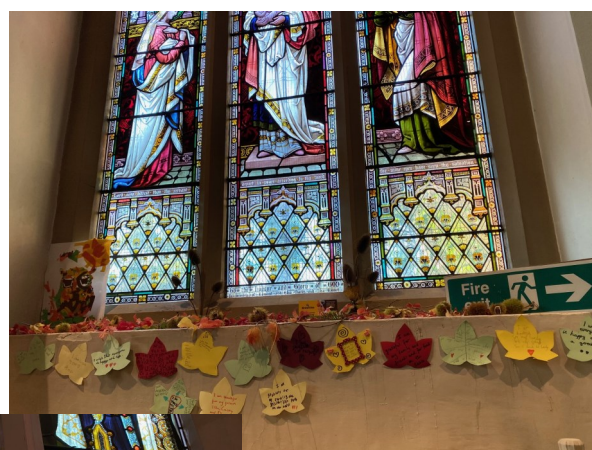
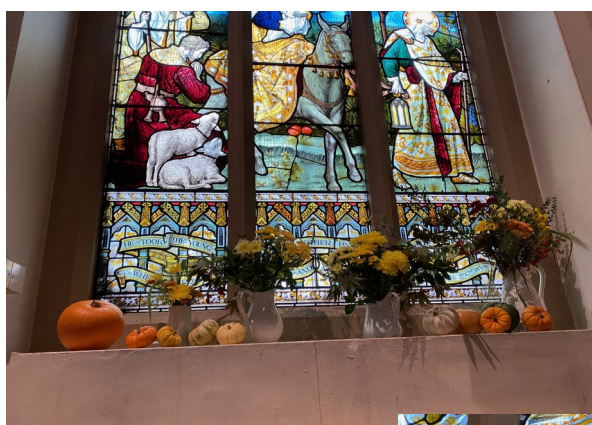
Thursday 21st Knit 'n' Knatter

Harvest Flowers



Did you see the attractive Harvest Festival window displays in church or on St Mary's Facebook? These were full of autumnal tints, tones and hues, together with colourful squash, berries, fruit and vegetables. The windows were decorated by Alison Tyler, Chris Soper, Jill Atkinson on behalf of the Brownies, Maria Staines, Veronica Loh & Sue C. It was so good to have all the additional support as the small team of regular flower arrangers were not available due to other commitments or illness. The morning sped by quickly, with lots of chatter and enjoying refreshments together. Grateful thanks to all those who helped and for the donations kindly given towards the cost of the Harvest Flowers. It will be good to encourage more individuals or groups to be involved with decorating the church windows on Christmas Eve – details to follow.

Anne Yolland



Southwark Flowers



At the end of September I was invited to arrange flowers at Southwark Cathedral with two other flower arrangers from Bromley Flower Club. This is always a special occasion and privilege to become a 'volunteer' at Southwark Cathedral for the day. The flowers need to be purchased from the flower wholesaler a few days in advance to give them time to be conditioned and in peak condition for the Friday's flower arranging. We chose flowers in autumn colours and these included sunflowers,

chrysanthemums, gladioli, hypericum berries, assorted grasses and Kangaroo paw. The containers to be filled are two very large urns in the nave, on a pedestal plinths and quite high up to reach, with some additional smaller displays at the entrance. Prayers are said every hour by the cathedral ministry team and all work stops for these. We also had some good conversations with visitors who came over to admire the flowers. Hodge the cathedral cat was very much in evidence and also came to say 'hello'! We spent a productive time in this wonderful place of worship and pleased that we were able to be involved in a small way.

Anne Yolland





ITEMS NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS FAIR

HELPERS - VOLUNTEER ON SIGN UP SHEET

CUSTOMERS - INVITE FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS

BOTTLES FOR TOMBOLA EG WINE, SHAMPOO, CORDIAL

MINCE PIES

CHRISTMAS CAKES / YULE LOGS

HOUSE PLANTS

HANDMADE JAMS/PRESERVES

UNWANTED GIFTS, GOOD CONDITION TOYS AND TRINKETS

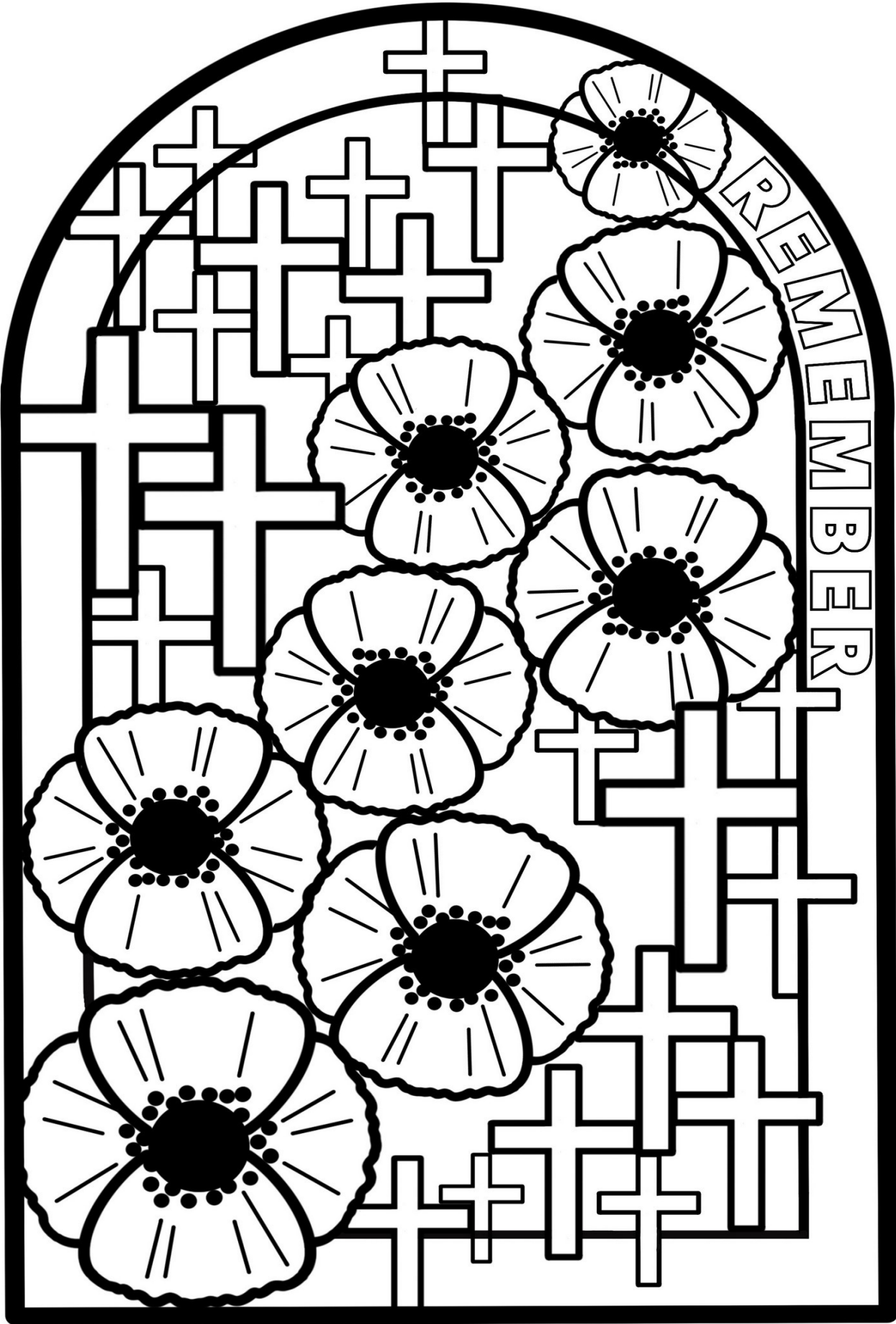
UNWANTED CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

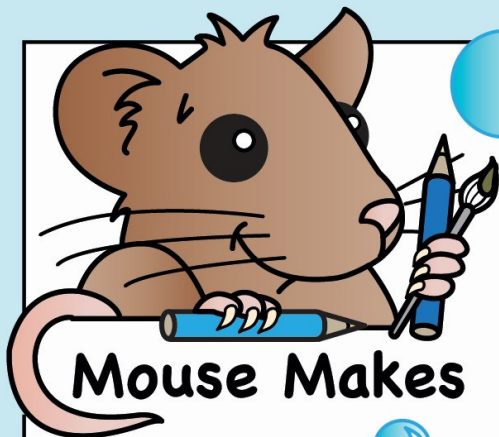
BOOKS AND PUZZLES

TOMBOLA PRIZES



Colour-in





Mouse Makes



READ

the story in
John 13:1-17

"DO AS I HAVE DONE FOR YOU."

The disciples had met with Jesus in an upper room to share a meal together, but there were no servants to wash their dusty feet. Jesus got up from the table, took off his outer clothing, wrapped a towel around his waist and began to wash the disciples' feet just like a servant would do.

Then Jesus said:

*"Do you understand what I have done for you?
Now that I, your Lord and Teacher have washed
your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.
I have set you an example, that you should
do as I have done for you."*



By washing his disciples' feet, Jesus showed that as God's people we are never too important to serve and care for others.

S C L O T H I N G S
N U N D E R S T A N D T
G S W I P E T E R E W R
W D A U A S E R V A N T A E H M
A O R P S C L E A N X O T X O A
I U M P H I J E S U S W E A T S
S F E E T P A S S O V E R M H T
T E N R B L E S S E D L L P E E
K E T X T E A C H E R O O L R R
B A S I N S C R I P T U R E S P
C D A N M E A L O V E D E W
C H O S E N F S
F E A S T

JESUS
DISCIPLES
PASSOVER
FEAST • SUPPER • MEAL

GARMENTS • CLOTHING • TOWEL • WAIST • WATER • BASIN • WASH • FEET • WIPE
CLEAN • UNDERSTAND • OTHERS • EXAMPLE • DO • LOVED • CHOSEN • BLESSED

PETER
SCRIPTURES
LORD • TEACHER
SERVANT • MASTER

Cleanliness is next to Godliness - Soaps.



Earliest evidence of manufactured soap in Mesopotamia, in cuneiform tablets from about 4500 years ago. At that time it was made by heating ashes and fat or oil together to give a solution of soap in water. Salt can then be added, which pushes the soap out of solution to give solid soap.

This process gives you the solid soap and also helps to purify it, It

is where the expression “salting out” comes from.

500 years before that (about 3000 BC) the Sumerians were already using a slurry of ashes and water for cleansing and purification. This would have formed a crude solution of soap when the ash solution combined with the grease and oil in the stuff that they were washing off. It probably worked better when there was more oil about, so that the dirtier you were, the more soap got produced and the cleaner you got.

Everyone seems to have forgotten about this by Roman times, because Roman baths only used oil and fine white sand for cleaning – a mixture of abrading the dirt off balanced by the soothing effect of the oil. No ashes.

So there is a gap of about two thousand years, until Pliny the Elder in the first century AD describes the Gauls as making soap and using it both to keep their hair fair and also medicinally against sores and other skin problems. All the same, the Romans knew a good thing when they saw it, claiming that soap was theirs, discovered when the mixed ashes and animal fats were washed into the River Tiber from Mount Sapo

There is then another long pause in the history of soap making, but by the 13th century it was being made and used in Britain – now mainly by the cloth industry, not personal hygiene. By now it was being made industrially from quality ingredients. In fact, it was being made in such quantities that whole woodlands were sacrificed to make the ashes needed, so heating in the winter became a problem. The soap industry also needed fats and oils, so they also became much more expensive, so that soap was either cheap and nasty, or out of reach.

Spain and France were also producing soap. Their soap was of higher quality as they not only had good wood ash, but also olive oil. By this time, quick lime was also being added to enhance the action of the wood ash.

Up to this point, the soap industry in Britain was still influenced by its use for cloths, but in the 1600s they began to experiment. Whale fat was introduced, perfumed olive oil soaps came from Italy and southern Europe and then the Industrial Revolution brought in mechanisation. A slightly unexpected lift was provided by the discovery of dynamite by Nobel, as it could use the hitherto unwanted soap byproduct, glycerine. It was at this point that regular baths became common, now that many more people could afford soap



We now take it for granted that manufactured soap is the only alternative. In fact, soap like compounds, the saponins, are quite common in plants. They tend to be bitter in taste, but their defining property is that they form foams with water

Some, like soapwort, are best known for their soapiness, but others have all sorts of unexpected uses. For example, liquorice produces such a stable foam that it is used in fire-extinguishers. It is also used to give beer a good head and to relieve the pain of stomach ulcers – possibly by the foam protecting the ulcer from stomach acids.

The foam produced by soaps is really interesting in itself. Part of the cleansing action of soap depends on the action of the foam, it also affects the perceived quality of a glass of beer – the more foamy, the better it tastes. Foam can support quite heavy objects and is also ideal to provide the luxury effect in the Hollywood starlet's bath.

To hear more about foams and bubbles, listen to “Curious Cases” from October 4th on Radio 4, where Dara O Brian and Hannah Fry will tell you all about them. It will be history by the time this is printed, but you can still get it on Catch-up if you search for it.

Trine Hevezi



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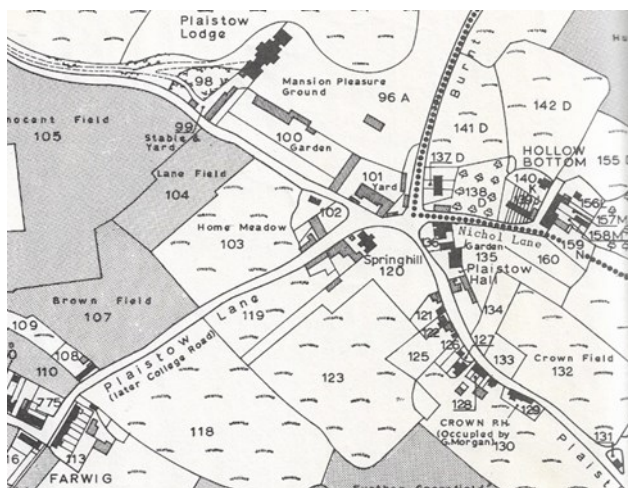
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Springhill and Environs (Part 1)



PLAISTOW GREEN 1895. ON THE RIGHT IS PLAISTOW LANE TOWARDS WIDMORE; STRAIGHT AHEAD IS NICHOL LANE TOWARDS HOLLOW BOTTOM; ON THE LEFT IS BURNT ASH LANE TOWARDS MILK STREET; IN THE FOREGROUND IS PLAISTOW LANE (COLLEGE ROAD) TOWARDS FARWIG WITH FORK TO LONDON.

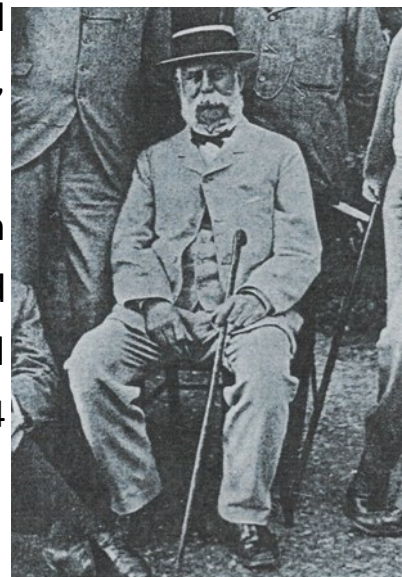


1841

Springhill house was originally set in rural surroundings of pasture and arable land in the hamlet of Plaistow. It was located adjacent to a small green, becoming known as Plaistow Green (1895 photo), from which lanes diverged to Widmore, Hollow Bottom, Milk Street, Farwig and London. Before the 20th century, Plaistow Lane twisted and turned from Widmore to Farwig and the green was located where there was a sharp bend in Plaistow Lane, from which the lanes diverged (shown on 1841 map).

From ancient times, there was a house and farm on the site of Springhill. An earlier house is known to have changed hands in the 17th and early 18th centuries, with a new larger house built c1705. With increase in the population in the 1860's, the Springhill estate was reduced, divided and set out for the building of Cambridge Road, Crescent Road and Alma Grove, later renamed Lansdowne Road, for new housing.

Major Clement Satterthwaite (photo) was born in Manchester in 1819, educated at the celebrated Quaker School in Tottenham, moved to London and became a member of the Stock Exchange in 1844 and from thereafter a member for nearly all his life.



MAJOR CLEMENT SATTERTHWAITE

He married and bought Springhill with its surrounding gardens in 1857 and resided there with his family for the next 31 years. During that time, he extended the house and provided extensive stabling, coach housing and built Springhill Cottage next to the house. He was one of the very influential gentlemen for the instigation and of overseeing the building of St Mary's Church. When the nave was completed in 1863, he took his seat in the Church regularly on Sundays and became the inceptive Churchwarden from 1864 to 1868, then again Churchwarden from 1875 to 1885 and finally from 1889 to 1904.

Major Clement Satterthwaite took an active part in the Volunteer movement and from its foundation, commanded the Bromley Detachment. He was Captain of the 18th Kent Rifle Volunteers and subsequently promoted to Major in the 1st (A) Battalion Kent Rifle Volunteers in December 1874. He took the initiative for building the Drill Hall (now O'Neill's) in East Street and was instrumental in raising the Volunteer Fire Brigade in Bromley. He moved from Springhill to Hope Park in 1888 and subsequently to Oaklands Road by 1896. He retired from business in 1905 then moved to Torquay where he resided until his death on the 4th October 1912, aged 93.

On the opposite side of Plaistow Lane from Springhill, stood Springhill Dairy Farm with its extensive pasture fields enclosed by London Lane, London Road, Farwig and what was still part of Plaistow Lane. The farm had also probably existed from ancient times. Strong's Bromley Directories of 1869, 1876 and 1887 show entries for a Mr. J. Hollyman, bailiff at the farm. However from 1889, the farm was worked by Major Clement Satterthwaite's eldest son, Clement Henry who became a farmer and dairyman as listed in the directories. He was not listed there after 1901 and the farm was no longer listed thereafter, with it being consumed with new roads and housing. However from 1901, Clement Henry Satterthwaite was listed as a farmer at Sundridge Park Dairy Farm, which was located in Plaistow Lane past St Joseph's Catholic Church and Orchard Road, which itself had been part of the farm before the road was built.

He remained there for a few years but not after around 1908. The farm was no longer listed in directories after 1924, having undoubtedly been swallowed by housing.

College Road had been cut through from College Slip to the Farwig Arms (now Co-op) on the corner of Farwig Lane in 1881. Here, College Road now joined Plaistow Lane, so the section of Plaistow Lane between Farwig Lane and Plaistow Green was renamed and became part of College Road in 1897.

By 1909, all houses, No's 67 to 103 from St Mary's Church to the site of Springhill Farm buildings in College Road had been built and were occupied. The remnants of the farm buildings were apparently still visible until shortly before WW1. On the Springhill house side of College Road, house building also continued along the road and Springhill Cottage became No. 140 and Springhill became No. 142.

There were three further private owners of Springhill, firstly Mr. John Gordon from 1889 to 1895, then Mr. William Bowley from 1895 to 1896 and finally Miss. Bowley from 1896 to 1899.

Springhill remained vacant for nearly two years and then it was taken over by Kent County Council and became the residential Domestic Economy School from the 8th October 1900. There was accommodation for 30 pupils, who were selected by an examination, including reading, writing and arithmetic. Candidates were girls who were aged between 13 and 16 on the 1st October 1900 and had been resident for 6 months prior to the date for application in one of several specified rural districts of Kent. The syllabus included cookery, needlework, dress making, laws of health (hygiene) and laundry work, which took place in the old coach house. General household work of the school was performed by the girls, each of whom took her turn. The Superintendent was Miss. Isabel Duncan, who was a most popular and esteemed principal. Her pupils generally attained very high standards in the examinations.

Prize giving was held in large marquees on the lawn annually in June or July. Local noble people, including the Satterthwaites and later their children and a granddaughter, plus visitors were among the guests who attended the prize giving days. Miss. Isabel Duncan stayed until 1915 into the start of WW1, after which the school had to move out.

Roger Benoy



This year Remembrance includes several significant dates from past wars.

2024 marks the 110th anniversary of the start of World War I.

2024 marks 80 years since D-Day. The Normandy Landings of 6th June were the largest seaborne invasion in history, and began the Allied invasion of Normandy, which led to the liberation of France and laid the foundations of the Allied victory on the Western Front.

2024 marks the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino in Italy, the bloodiest battle of the Italian Campaign, when Allied forces finally broke through the Germans' notorious 'Gustav Line' and freed Route Six and the way to Rome.

2024 marks the 80th anniversary of the battles for Kohima and Imphal, where in northeast India the Imperial Japanese Army was held off by much smaller numbers of British and Indian troops. In Kohima alone, the defenders held off a staggering 25 Japanese attacks over 14 days in appalling conditions. When Indian troops arrived to relieve the defenders, the Japanese encirclement was broken. Amongst the liberators was Havildar Major Rajindar Singh Dhatt of the Royal Indian Army Service Corps, from the Punjab.

2024 also marks the 80th anniversary of Operation Market Garden in the Netherlands, when the Allies managed to free Eindhoven and Nijmegen, but famously failed to capture the bridge at Arnhem. (The story is told in the film *A Bridge too Far*)

The Church in Suffolk.

Having recently returned from a holiday in Suffolk, you might not be surprised to hear that I visited seven different churches in seven days. You may well be familiar with the large stone churches with historical interest now sharing their priest and serving small populations. Obviously, I was interested in



all the features – ancient fonts, decorated rood screens, ancient memorials and so on, but I was also unable to stop myself researching the various church communities!

Our first visit was to the local church, conveniently open for “Ride & Stride” – although, to be fair, all the churches we tried were open to visitors. Of note was a large, double-sided embroidery showing most of the buildings in the village, a real work of art. Of course, I was also interested in the way the bell tower had been fitted out as a church kitchen.

Having done our research, on Sunday we went to the morning service in the next village – and were greeted with warmth by the small congregation who seemed to be amazed we had travelled the few miles for a service when there was none that week in our local church. We had studied the complicated rota on display to see what options were available. It was obviously a good choice as we were offered birthday cake with our coffee after the service – one man was going to be 80. The service was similar to St Mary’s, with no sung communion setting, but four hymns from the same hymn book – two of which were familiar to me & no one else!

Everywhere I went, I looked out for magazines & newspapers, which were usually readily available, & often shared between the different parishes in a benefice. They varied in shape & size, price & printing, but most seemed to have plenty of adverts, mention of the familiar (Mothers’ Union for example), & one even had “Mouse Makes”.

There were reports of past events, and adverts for those to come. I also picked up various other pieces of literature, including the order of service for the installation of a new vicar, “just for reference”. Gift aid envelopes and Q codes were in evidence, and most of the churches had clearly marked electronic card readers for purchases/donations.

In one church, I discovered a letter from the (fairly new) vicar who had hoped on arrival that his multiple parishes would come to a common mind about the re-introduction of the chalice – or continuation of the practice of the priest dipping the wafer in the wine before administering it to communicants. This document took two sides of A4 to explain, with pie-charts, how discussions at the various APCM plus an online survey had led to the conclusion that some parishes would reintroduce the chalice, whilst others wouldn't. Somewhere else I found a report about the church fabric, & the all too familiar discussions about replacing the church boiler. The upkeep of some of these churches must be huge, and the population so much smaller than in suburbia – I was told one congregation (of around 20) were struggling to pay nine thousand pounds as their Parish Share.

Most of the churches were empty apart from other tourists, but while we were visiting one, someone arrived to lock up, & then offered us extra time & went away again – real generosity. And in another, a hard-pressed lady was busily decorating the church for the forthcoming harvest festival, but kept pausing to point out specific features. In Suffolk, as everywhere else, the real wealth of the church lies in the time of the volunteers.

Jill Atkinson

Worship Diary

We offer a variety of services through the year. They are mostly on a Sunday at 10.30am and are mostly Family Communion. Most months we also have an All Age Communion. We hope you will find us a warm and friendly congregation. If you have questions about what we do, why we do it or how you might like to be more involved please do speak with a Church Warden, a sidesman... or anyone really!

Our Sunday Club is a valued provision for our youngest members. They do not meet during school holidays.

Services for November

Sunday 3rd November—All Saints

10.30 am Family Communion with Sunday Club and Baptism

Sunday 3rd November— 4th before Advent

3.30pm— All Souls Service

Wednesday 6th November

7.00 pm— The Induction and Collation Service of
Reverend Eucharika Ifeoma Asiegbu

Sunday 10th November—Remembrance Sunday

10.30 am Family Communion with Sunday Club

Sunday 17th November 2nd Sunday before Advent

10.30 am All Age Communion

Sunday 24th November Christ the King

10.30am—Family Communion with Sunday Club



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