



Open Door

May 2023

THE OCCASIONAL MAGAZINE OF ST MARY-AT-FINCHLEY

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF ST MARY-AT-FINCHLEY



An application for the Give Me Shelter! St Mary's Church and Churchyard Project has been submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Helen Bevan, the Project Manager, says we should hear the results on or around the 30th June.

As part of the application process, Felix Aresco arranged for photos of the church to be taken from a drone. We thought everyone might enjoy looking at St Mary's from a different perspective.

Many thanks to Felix for arranging the drone and for allowing us to use this photo and to Helen Bevan for managing the project.

FROM THE PASTORAL GROUP

In some churches, you might get the feeling that all that matters is for moving services to be conducted every Sunday and throughout the week. Then you can go home and get on with the rest of your life. In other churches, you might get the feeling that all that matters is the warmth of the welcome and the intensity of the chat about God and being saved. Actually, both these things are important. The one is answering God's call that we love him and worship him. The other is a response to God's call that we love our neighbour as ourselves.

At St Mary's we try to hold services which are moving and are responding to God's call to worship him. And we try to be a friendly church. We try to show that we care about each other and about all our visitors. We recognise that belonging to St Mary's involves a feeling of community, where we can belong and be cared for and we can care for others. We know that this is simply how our faith works. We cannot talk about being good and kind without practising it as well.

But, something more is needed. We must know who in particular needs particular care and we must make sure that the whole church responds to the needs of others with prayer. Jesus taught us to pray all the time, and so we must try to do this. One important thing is our prayer list which is published in our weekly newsletter. That enables every one of us to pray for individuals who we know are in some kind of need. Everyone on the list is mentioned in daily prayers in the church.

Then there is the Pastoral Group. We are a group of parishioners, chosen by Philip. We work together and individually in providing pastoral care for our community. Primarily, we invite you to tell us of particular needs, either your own or someone else's. We respond by seeing what we can practically do to help, if anything. Most importantly, we also pray for all those whose names have been put forward to us.

That's why you see a notice every week inviting you to tell us about anyone who might be helped by the Pastoral Group. All you have to do is mention the need or person to Philip or Francesco or one of the Readers. We treat any information shared around the Pastoral Group with complete confidence.

We look forward to hearing from you.

NIGEL WILDISH

NOTES FROM THE ARCHIVES – THE RECTOR IS AT THE END OF HIS TETHER!

The Rector of St Mary at Finchley church is at the end of his tether! He has had a terrible year. Normally the Registers for baptisms, marriages and burials in a parish include just standard factual information. But, this year the Rector, Samuel Carr, makes an exception. He adds the following commentary. The year is 1780.

“N.B (Note Well) The Queen's Regiment, the Royal Irish and the South Hants Militia were encamped this summer, on account of the dreadful riots in London in the month of June. A fatal Dysentery prevailed here, and in most parts of the Kingdom during the months of August, September, and October. Samuel Carr, Rector.”

Finchley Common used to cover much of what is now North and East Finchley. It is mostly associated with highwaymen – another story! But in the 17th and 18th centuries the Common was used as a military encampment in times of national emergency. The last major encampment was in 1780 during the Gordon Riots, the worst riots which London had ever experienced and which resulted in roughly 500 deaths. It was these riots to which Samuel Carr was presumably referring. They were prompted by a new law aiming to reduce discrimination against Catholics, for example by allowing them to join the Army.

The presence of large numbers of soldiers and their dependents on Finchley Common, and the terrible ravages of Dysentery which coincided with this, led to a large number of deaths in Finchley. During the month of October 1780 alone, Samuel Carr had the sad task of presiding over 26 burial services in our Church, including sixteen relating to children. The Registers tell us that nineteen of these burials were of Militia men and their families, including ten children.

Can we draw any conclusions from these events in relation to the problems which our society faces today? I hardly dare do so! But I know from my own family history researches that our ancestors often suffered greatly and worked selflessly to create a better world for future generations.

PETER NASH

CONGRATULATIONS TO.....

All who were confirmed by Bishop Rob in the 10.00 am service on Sunday 7th May 2023

Akosua Asantewa-Nkansah, Ana Isabel Mejia Estela ,Christopher Thomas Zambelli, James Cheepan Chin, Joe Lan, Juliano Morais, Richard Leung ,Simyee Kong , Susana Fay Hun Lee-Lerwill, Vilma Adriana Zamora Viteri, Yuliya Stancheva



Congratulations to Emmanuel Dowuona-Hammond, (AKA Manny from St Mary-at-Finchley!) who won an outstanding service award in recognition of his fundraising work.

The Awards were presented by the Mayor of Barnet, Alison Hammond, and recognised those who have gone “above and beyond” whether fundraising, volunteering or other forms of service to improve the quality of life for others.



MUSIC NEWS

OUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC, ALISON SMART FISHER WRITES.....

This was a busy spring for Music at St Mary-at-Finchley, with several extra services. These included the Young Voices Festival of RSCM London, with 23 children from 5 different parishes across North London coming together to sing choral evensong. Then we had a special Sunday evening Lenten service featuring the music of J.S. Bach and meditative choruses from the Taizé community.

There were three recitals to raise money for Give Me Shelter!: St Mary-at-Finchley Church and Churchyard project. We had a lovely violin/piano duo in January, a fabulous jazz night in February with Rob Hughes and friends, then a stunning organ recital by our very own Damon Ying FRCO with guest artist and current organ scholar Lamgie Yip. We are so grateful to all these performers for their support in helping us to raise money for the fabric of the church.

Our Holy Week and Easter services were varied and beautiful, with Youth Choir singing unaccompanied *At the Foot of the Cross* during the Good Friday service.

If you'd like to join the choir or try it out, or sing a psalm as cantor, please contact Alison Fisher: alisonsmartfisher@gmail.com



Here are our wonderful trebles at St Paul's Cathedral after singing evensong on Sat 10th Nov with the resident choir of St Paul's. Well done to you all: Luna, Kenyalyn, Mariam, Ali, Leon and Angelina



This is Joanna Forbes L'Estrange with Alison, our Director of Music here at St Mary's, on the occasion of French TV channel TF1 coming to film the St Mary-at-Finchley adult choir singing Joanna's coronation anthem - *The Mountains shall bring peace*.

Piano Recital by Angela Brownridge, Saturday 3rd June at 6pm.

Please come and support this wonderful concert with music by CPE Bach, Haydn, Debussy and Chopin. Entry is free, drinks afterwards - please spread the word and bring your friends! Retiring collection for Give Me Shelter: St Mary-at-Finchley Church and Churchyard appeal.

MEMORIALS

We are so fortunate to worship in a building which is a testimony to the care of our forefathers and mothers, who are commemorated in many memorials. Do you realise that you probably touch some 'modern' memorials each time you visit the church for they are at your very feet – the oblong shaped cushions which you can kneel on! Hassocks is their proper name but most of us refer to them as kneelers.

In the 1970's a project was embarked upon by Muriel Kendall to make kneelers for the pews in the main church, which Sally Prescott wrote about in an early edition of Open Door in 2010. In the 1990's Sally undertook a proposed project to replace the blue leatherette kneelers in the Lady Chapel with similar kneelers, to be in keeping with those in the rest of the church. The scheme for the kneelers was to have two designs (Saint Mary and the peace dove) with the same blue background. Adding names to the kneelers then came in. Sally tells me that it was originally expected to provide 24 kneelers. As more requests for names of loved ones to be recorded came in the kneelers extended into the pews in the North Aisle, but recently some have become scattered around the church.

It occurred to me that past parishioners who are named on the kneelers are all part of the community that has helped to build and preserve the church. Their contributions are as worthy as those who are commemorated on the grander and more visible wall monuments.

Before the passing of time obscures knowledge of these people, I thought it important to record information about them in future editions of the Open Door. I have already spoken to a few people about this idea.

GLADYS VENDY



I am delighted that Claire Disbrey has responded:

"You may have noticed the blue kneelers with people's names on them in the Lady Chapel and the North Aisle. You may have recognised some of the names there. Or you may have thought, 'Who made these? Who are these people? Why are their names here?'"

I am interested because two of them have my parents' names on them – Betty and Kenneth Campbell - and I sewed one of them. When my father died there was already a kneeler with my mother's name on it and I asked if there could be one for my father. I was handed some instructions, some canvas and some coloured wools. I had never done tapestry before but I enjoyed doing it and I love that they are remembered in this way, and we can look at and use these kneelers.

My father led a decorating firm that specialized in churches, palaces and cathedrals, and he worked on the old face of Big Ben and the gold coaches that we saw recently in the coronation procession, as well as Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral and Buckingham Palace. He was on the St Mary's building committee (now known as the Estates committee) for many years and as churchwarden was involved with the re-ordering of the church and the building of the halls. His expertise was highly valued although his advice on colours was sometimes controversial. The carpet in the chancel had always

been pale blue! And the organ pipes had never been such a strange green!

My mother was church warden, too, in the 1980s and much involved with the Women's Fellowship.

Do look at these kneelers. Did you sew any of them? Do you remember any of these people? We would like you to share your memories through the pages of future 'Open Doors' so that they are not forgotten? Just let Gladys have your thoughts."

CLAIRE DISBREY

Mick Nolan writes: Monty Malleson was a senior dentist at Guy's Hospital and one of his hobbies was making silver items, in fact he had his own silver mark.

He was always available to carry out various repairs on the Church Silverware and over the years saved us some substantial expense.

Named blue kneelers in the Lady Chapel and the North Aisle in St Mary at Finchley Church :

Chris Bradford
Betty Camkin
Nancy Cockman
Thea & George Cunnington
Barbara Frost
Leone & Myrna Hart
James Hiner
Margaret Lazarus
Jesse Nattress
Nora & Eric Pugh
Winifred Threadgold
Pam Walker

Nan & Ted Beasley
Betty Campbell
Doreen Cockrell
Guy Darke
Clare Harrop
Hilda Hewins
Evelyn & Jock Icke
Monty Malleson
Doris & Jim Palmer
Joan & Ivor Richards
Loreen Taylor
John Whittington

Norah Brooks
Kenneth Campbell
Phyl Copsey
Naomi Flowers
Roger Harrop
Olive Hiner
Muriel Kendall
Sally Martin
Bob Piper
Cecil Rixon
Mary Voysey
Sheila Whittington

MEMORIES OF 1953 CORONATION

I was six years old when the last Coronation took place in 1953 and have vivid recall of a truly wonderful day.

My five-year-old brother Dave and I were staying in London's East End with Mum and some of her friends. Everywhere was a riot of red, white and blue. All the streets were closed for races, dancing and carnival-style fun. Dave and I eagerly took part in the children's races. We didn't win, but everyone was "rewarded" with a red, white and blue ball.

Mum was always nifty on her feet and a good sport so Dave and I were yelling our heads off as she streamed ahead in the ladies race. And then something terrible happened – she tripped just before crossing the finishing line and fell.



We cried when we saw her bleeding, badly grazed knees. But mostly, I confess, because it meant that she too had to settle for the "consolation prize" – the same red, white and blue ball!

She was still laughing when she came back clutching her "reward", muttering what a silly fool she was. Mum was always a keen runner, following in the footsteps of her Dad and our Grandad who ran for Tipton Harriers.

When she was 21, she had her left kidney removed, but still loved to dance, sing and play the fool. In her 60s she took part in a sponsored walk, raising funds for the mentally handicapped with her friend, MP Betty Boothroyd.

I lost count of the times I would see someone wearing one of my dresses as I walked along the High Street. I knew the culprit: Mum would regularly raid my wardrobe and randomly give away some of my clothes to girls who were less fortunate. She never bothered to ask me.

Very soon they would be replaced with new ones – always in the latest fashion!

LYNN RADNEDGE

CELEBRATING FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2023



SUMMER REFRESHMENT EVENING July 16 th July at 6pm

CELEBRATING THE ROYAL GARDENS AND ROYAL GARDENER: KING CHARLES

Our newly-crowned monarch has been a passionate gardener since his mother gave him his first garden when he was a little boy. What better way then to mark our annual summer refreshment evening by honouring all things green and fair?

Join us for a royal parade of beauty and culture as we celebrate our green-fingered monarch in words, music and pictures.

From Kew to Kensington Palace and Hampton Court to Highgrove, the evening will honour some of royalty's best blooms and flower beds and the matchless glory of gardens in summertime.

Please let me know if you would like to take part in the readings or music.

We traditionally serve fairtrade "fizz" and homemade fairtrade cakes at the close. Contributions of homemade cakes will be welcome – please use at least one fairtrade ingredient if possible.

LYNN RADNEDGE 020 3015 2302 / 07977 222708



INTERVIEW WITH SMITA BORA

Smita was appointed to the position of Churchwarden at the Annual Parochial Church meeting in April this year. Alongside people who have worshipped at St Mary's since the 1940's and 1950's, Smita might be regarded as a relative newcomer. I have changed from my usual 'back page interview' approach and instead asked Smita if she would write a little about herself so that we can all get to know each other more quickly. I am appreciative that Smita undertook to do it this way, following the usual line of questioning.

Since 2015 I have talked to 18 people (and sometimes their partners) for this back page interview. If you feel you have been overlooked and would like to be interviewed for this page, I apologise and ask you to contact me so that this can be rectified!

Gladys Vendy



My father came to this country from India as a qualified doctor to help with the shortage of medical practitioners who were able to pass postgraduate medical examinations. After he passed these exams, he became a GP rather than a consultant. My mother was a teacher in India but, when she came to England, she prioritised spending time with her children and enabled my sister to follow in my father's footsteps as a GP. I was born in Manchester and educated in Bolton, before moving to London to study Chemistry at King's College, and later an MBA. I had wanted to teach from the age of six, having been inspired by an excellent primary school teacher called Sheila Mary Josephine Glock, and I have remained passionate about education throughout my whole career. I will always value the role of family in education, and I know I was fortunate to have parents with high moral and academic expectations for their children, which they were able to nurture successfully.

There are not many teachers I have come across that have both Mary and Joseph as part of their own name! Mrs Glock taught us about everything and, although my primary school was not a Church of England school, I was brought up in

a classroom environment where everybody knew God and prayed. I didn't actually start going to church on Sundays until I was in secondary school but all our assemblies in both primary and secondary school were fully Anglican in nature and so I felt totally comfortable the first time I attended church (and the vicar was my father's patient!). We participated in all the Christian seasons and festivals at school, as we do at St Mary's.

My career as a teacher got in the way of my church attendance for many years but, throughout my whole time working in schools, my faith remained strong. When I first started teaching in Tottenham, I realised that I had been sheltered from deprived communities in my early life and I was shocked to discover that the children in my school, who were just as intelligent as the girls who had attended the selective school I had been educated in, were receiving standard education in classrooms full of crime and disruption. At this moment, I realised that God had spoken to me and my next step in life was perfectly clear - I would dedicate myself to working in the most challenging schools to give as many children as possible the same education that I had benefited from. This has not been easy and, to be honest, I do not know how I would have coped without the comfort faith brings.

My happiest moment was when, as a Headteacher, I managed to turn around a secondary school in the sixth most deprived ward in the country from Special Measures to Outstanding. It took five difficult years. I spent many more enjoyable years in state education and, although I am now semi-retired, I still tutor children and run a few education businesses.

I suppose the thing that makes me angry/upset is when I hear from my tutees that Christianity, its values and its history are no longer promoted in their schools. Many are ashamed or embarrassed to speak out about this. The first thing I wanted to do when I had finished working in schools was to go back to church.

I chose St Mary's because of its ability to balance respect for tradition with a warm, welcoming environment. The congregation is exceptionally diverse and coffee morning conversations extremely interesting! We are fortunate to have Philip as our fantastic Rector and Francesco as our wonderful Curate.

One of the best things about St Mary's is when the congregation comes together to volunteer, for example, for the Winter Shelter. I really enjoyed working as an assistant to Latifa, with her other assistant Akosua, for the first time this year. I was overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of everybody who volunteered, including those who have been helping out for years. As well as the Winter Shelter, there were many other opportunities for me to get to know people in our church, for example, being part of the welcoming team and volunteering to be a charioteer. Our coffee mornings after the Sunday service are always well attended and we now have our Chapter House Set coffee morning and lunch before and after the Wednesday service.

We have many other social occasions, such as the parish BBQ, and groups such as the walking group. We also put on a wide range of musical concerts. It is lovely to see how we work with other denominations and faiths in our community not just as part of the Winter Shelter but also, for example, by participating in the Churches Together in Finchley, The Finchley Inter-Church Women's Luncheon Club and Holocaust Memorial Week. We have also got to know each other through groups such as Bible Study, Seeking God and Lent courses, which help strengthen our faith.

We have many new members of the congregation, so I think that one priority needs to be to utilise their fresh eyes and ears to find out how we can improve St Mary's, and how they would like to contribute. I pray that we can continue to keep the uniqueness of St Mary's alive.

I enjoy reading and listening to classics and I am a traditionalist. The most recent book I enjoyed was "Next to Nature" by Ronald Blythe. The most recent concert I attended was Bach's Mass in B Minor.

I would choose to be locked in the church with anybody who would be able to put up with me in such a scenario!

SMITA BORA