

# + ST ALP

AUTUMN 2019 MAGAZINE



THE PARISH OF ST MARY & ST PAUL  
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

50P



## Nurturing their faith

Sunday 6th October saw a vibrant and busy First Sunday service at St. Mary's. As well as welcoming lots of children to participate in Harvest- themed activities, having uniformed groups on parade and welcoming new families to our welcome desk – it was a very special day for our young people. As part of our commitment to nurturing the faith of our older children, this date marked a wonderful First Communion service for 6 of our young people.

The photograph shows Matthew Musiwa, Maja Catchpole, Louise Boardman, Isabella West, Sophia West, Ava Bralsford, (from left to right) as they collected their certificates, candles and celebratory gifts.

The young people had taken part in a clergy-led First communion course, learning all about what happens in a service of Holy Communion. If that was not enough, they came out of their usual activities in Acorns and participated and undertook observations in services for the whole month of September as well as observing a baptism too! They all showed great commitment and hard work and we are very proud of them!

Revd Caroline



### Historic Churches Trust Annual Sponsored 'Bike and Hike' Event.

On a warm sunny, September morning Emmeline, intrepid Church Warden at St Mary's, set off on Bella, her trusty trike arriving ... (see back cover)

# From the Editor's Desk

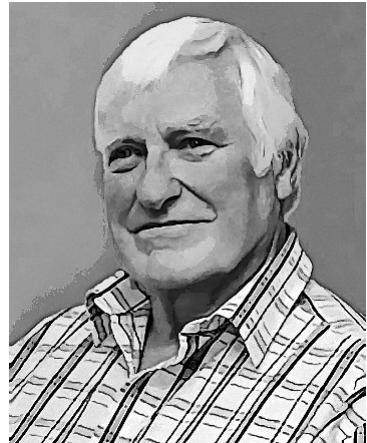
Words are units of language and are the principal carriers of meaning. We have a phrase such as 'looks can kill', but words once used, whether written or spoken, convey a lasting meaning and effect. It is not only what is said, or written, but how this is received and interpreted.

Archbishop Justin Welby recently in a Sunday Times article asked us to mind our language. In the context of all the prevailing social media of facebook, twitter and the rest, he stated that, 'it is extraordinarily dangerous to use careless comments'. I see this clearly as relating to the dangerous questions about what is truthful, untruthful and misrepresentational. Views so quickly put into words and spread so widely, without thought as to their effect, can be hugely damaging.

Our Archbishop sees careless comments which amplify things as creating a great danger in polarising opinion and confirming and increasing divisions in society at every level. He even expresses the thought that we are a broken society.

This leads to the question of whether a leading cleric should speak in this way. I go back to a service in St George's Cathedral in Cape Town several years ago when the Revd Frank English preached about the same issues: what is truthful, what is disseminated, the danger of the biased unverifiable opinion being sent out through the media all over the place.

I think that it is the duty of Church people to do exactly what Archbishop Welby has done and it is good that some of the national press have given him space to express his views.



## The Clergy

The Revd Canon John Williams 01442 265272:  
The Revd Luke Geoghegan  
The Revd Richard Leslie  
The Revd. Diana Spink 01442 262133  
The Revd Caroline Wainman 01442 212875

## Hall Bookings:

For St Mary's and St Paul's Halls:  
Norma Howie 01442 253977

## SToMP Magazine

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Reg. Charity no 1130644

## Cover Picture

Browsing recently through the archives of a photo agency to which I subscribe for an image for the parish weekly bulletin, my eye was caught by this photo montage – a compilation of a number of original images. A striking artwork, but not really what I was looking for just then but worth downloading I decided, so filed it away in a my ‘Might Come in Useful One Day’ folder, and continued my search.

What had originally attracted me to the image was an appreciation of the highly skilled digital editing processes the artist has employed to seamlessly weld the original images together, (at least five of them by my count, probably more), and create the reflections and the lighting effects.

The finished image is actually in landscape format and I’ve had to crop it to portrait shape to fit SToMP’s cover but to view it in its full form on a large computer monitor is an arresting and thought provoking experience, and I was drawn back to it time and again.

Apart from the technical skill of the artist I was also drawn by the allegories the image suggests.

Why is this child alone in such a sordid and threatening environment? Who is looking out for him? Who is watching his back?

But the child sees none of this - he sees only the need of the homeless man asleep on the bench and with simple unquestioning trust he generously responds and gives what he has to a fellow human being.

And both are watched by the wistful eyes of a guardian angel.

"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 18.3)

*The artist, Alan, works under the name of AD\_Images and lives in London*

*Jeff Wallis*

## ART IN THE NAVE 2020

5th-7th June, 11am-5pm

Exhibition and Sale of works by over 40 artists. We are delighted that our favourite artists continue to support this prestigious event and we are very happy to make new artists a welcome addition to the team.

Entrance will be £2 for adults but free for anyone under sixteen. Event-organizers will make a significant donation from the proceeds to nominated charity partners - The Hospice of St Francis and Dacorum Emergency Night Shelter (DENS)

[www.artinthenave.uk](http://www.artinthenave.uk)

# The Ends of West Hertfordshire

by John Henry Salter (Victorian Poet and Naturalist) quoted by  
William George Seymour Crookin his book  
"A Child's Hertfordshire Reader" published when he was  
Headmaster of Boxmoor School

Visitor:

"I have a friend  
Lives at some End  
In Hertfordshire, I know.  
Can you, my friend,  
Tell me the End,  
That I may quickly go?"

Resident:

"Of places, friend,  
That are called End,  
We have a score or so,  
To which to send  
My worthy friend,  
I really do not know".

"There's Holtsmere End, and Revel End,  
Bennetts End by the kiln,  
And Potten End, and Harper's End,  
And Bourne End by the mill.  
There's Piccotts End, and Water End,  
Stag's End by Gaddesden Row,  
Ward's End on high, Bodd's End close by,  
Bury Mill End down low.  
There's Gossoms End, and Warner's End,  
And Field's End in between,  
Redbourn Church End, and Wood Lane End,  
And Green End on the Green.  
There's Snatchup's End, and Frogmore End,  
And Moor End in a row.  
  
And now, my friend, choose your own End,  
And say farewell and go."

\*An 'End' was thought to be a village or settlement reached only by a dead-end track through an ancient forest, another explanation, that it just means an area.



# what3words

addressing the world

Jeff Wallis describes a new and potentially life-saving navigation app for smartphones and discovers an extraordinary coincidence.



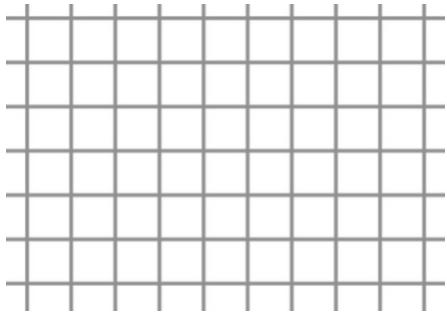
In a radio interview, 5 years ago, a young musician, tired of finding difficulty locating remote venues where he was performing, claimed he had devised a new global navigation system. He reckoned any 3m (10ft) square on a virtual grid covering the earth's entire surface, including oceans and polar regions, could be uniquely identified using just three everyday dictionary words. It sounded far-fetched: for a start there would be around 57 trillion such squares .

Today, his system, known as 'what3words', is being adopted by Herts & Beds Emergency Services and many other organisations world-wide. It's also become available as a free app for anyone with a smart phone. How does it work?

A scenario for illustration:

- A car has broken down on a remote country road with which the driver is unfamiliar.
- He starts up the what3words app on his smartphone and taps on the 'my location' button.
- A map comes up on the screen indicating his current grid square with its 3word address. The driver calls the AA or RAC and gives them the three words.
- They will know in seconds exactly where he is.

It can also be used by private individuals - a sprawling hospital can publish the 3word address of a particular department so visitors can easily find it; teenagers needing a lift home can tell parents exactly where they are; friends who have arranged to meet at a busy location can easily find each other.



The international grid system of longitude and latitude has provided an accurate means of identifying a location for many years but to communicate a location to an accuracy of a 3m square requires a 20 digit number. Try working that out and tapping it in on a dark night in thick fog when your car has broken down in the middle of nowhere!

The words identifying each square bear no relation to its adjacent squares, or to the nature of the location. The 3 words have already been allocated at random to each one of the 57 trillion squares and so it is highly unlikely that any of the 3 words will have a logical link to its square other than by sheer coincidence.

Immediately outside the West door of St Mary's, generations of newlyweds emerging from the church on their special day have posed for their wedding photos. The 3word address of the square in which they stand is – and I'm not making this up – love.diary.camera



Life is short,  
And we do not have  
much time  
to gladden the hearts  
of those who travel with us.  
So, be swift to love,  
And make haste  
to be kind.

Henri Frederic Amiel, 19c Swiss philosopher



"It's a devil to start on these damp Winter mornings – luckily we have a sidesman who works for the AA"

# On the tribulations that await a curate in his first parish...

The Rectory  
St James the Least



*My dear Nephew Darren*

So, your bishop is dropping hints that you should begin to consider a move to having your own parish - 'not forever in green pastures' comes to mind. Do not be too hasty to leave; remember that a curate can do no wrong, but a vicar can do no right. That means that as soon as you get your own parish, you will be held accountable not only for everything that goes on inside the church, but also for the goal average of the local football team and the state of the economy. And if it rains for your first Summer Fete, you will be told reproachfully that this never used to happen when 'the former vicar was here'.

As you begin to ponder this momentous decision, allow me to give you a few pieces of advice. It will be assumed in the parish that every new incumbent is bound to be worse than his predecessor. The greatest compliment I ever received when leaving a parish came from an elderly parishioner: "I've known six Rectors of this parish; you weren't the worst."

Naturally the church you go to will have asked for a married man between 30 and 35 with a wife who will not have her own job but who wants to devote her entire life working for the parish - and it will be a definite advantage if she is a brilliant organist, professional caterer and fully computer literate. They will expect you to have two children, one of whom should be of primary school age, so he can attend the local Church school, where you will naturally wish to be chairman of governors and coach of the football team.

They will want you to have exceptional talents for attracting young people - but for young people who enjoy the sorts of Services that the present congregation prefer - and you should have the ability to stop a baby crying during Mattins with the briefest of glances. They will want you to bring 'a breath of fresh air' into parish life without changing anything. They will hope you will shun holidays, preach short sermons and be able to run a tight jumble sale.

Your CV is a little thin. If you could acquire a wife and family within the next six months, become an expert flower arranger and qualify as a football referee, chartered accountant and trained electrician and plumber, it would prove very helpful. If in addition, you learned how to service photocopiers, had a mini-bus available for church outings, were an heir to a family firm producing a single malt whisky and could provide reliable horse racing tips, your choice of parishes would be endless.

On the other hand, my advice would be to stop attending all meetings where you know the bishop may be present; out of sight, out of mind. Have your phone disconnected, your letterbox sealed and only appear in public wearing dark glasses and a false beard. Keep your head down, lay low, hold on to the charmed life of being a curate for as long as possible. Life will never be better.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

# God in the Sciences

*This series is written by Dr Ruth Bancewicz, who is based at the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.*

## Wonder and Worship

“I was travelling, and out early in the morning: at first there was a vast fog; but, by the time that I was seven or eight miles from home towards the coast, the sun broke out into a delicate warm day. We were then on a large heath or common, and I could discern, as the mist began to break away, great numbers of swallows (*hirundines rusticae*) clustering on the stunted shrubs and bushes, as if they had roosted there all night. As soon as the air became clear and pleasant they all were on the wing at once; and, by a placid and easy flight, proceeded on southward towards the sea”.

How many church leaders today have time to enjoy their surroundings? Gilbert White was a vicar who became famous for his observations about the flora and fauna of his parish. His letters about the local wildlife through the seasons were so beautifully written that they are still in print today, more than 200 years after they were first published as *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne*.

White is a great example of someone who saw science and faith in harmony. He writes that he hopes his readers will be inspired to “pay a more ready attention to the wonders of the Creation”.



His stories are often so vivid that he gets away with packing in quite a bit of scientific detail, painting a more accurate picture of the wonderful events he observed as he travelled around the countryside. White’s book is one of the classics of nature writing.

It is well worth spending ten minutes every now and again staring into a bush, pond or tree - especially in winter when it’s easy to hurry indoors and put the kettle on. Experiencing wildlife first-hand is wonderful fuel for our worship of God and care for His creation. As Psalm 111 says, “Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them” (NIV).

(White’s book can be downloaded for free at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1408>

# Happenings at St Paul's

The NHS Hertfordshire Step 2 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team continue to meet groups of children and parents on Thursday during term time. The newly furnished Parish Room is being used flexibly by them and by 'Families need Fathers', Alcoholics Anonymous and recently by the Talking Elephants bereavement initiative.

Refurbishment continues, the Hall being equipped with a movable jigsaw-like floor covering and shortly with window blinds. The refurbished and modernised toilets continue to create wonder, reminding us of the user who, coming out of one of them, said 'they remind me of the toilets in the Ritz'. The dangerous approach to the church has been sorted enabling disabled access and dealing with slippery and cracked, dangerous paving. The 60 year-old fuse board has been replaced. Our recent big pressing worry is heavy rainfall and the performance of the gutters.

A new and good relationship with the administration at the Bellgate Community Centre is leading to references to use our Hall. The latest led to a 50th birthday party on a Sunday with nearly 100 people, a Pentecostal occasion starting with prayers.

Canon John now would like us to think about how our space for worship could be developed and improved and the challenge arises in his recommended reading 'Repitching the Tent'.

# Soon be Christmas

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount of our modern Christmas celebrations can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens.

When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in A Christmas Carol, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!).

And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.



Our STOMP cover and Jeff Wallis' interesting description brings to mind the story of the Dacorum Emergency Night Shelter, now widely known as DENS. Conceived by Bert Inward in 1997, the acorn of an idea to help the homeless, who then we called 'the roofless', became a sapling in 2003 when DENS was officially formed and now, nearly quarter of a century on from 1997, it is a healthy young oak tree.

The analogy of the development of DENS with the growth of an oak tree is relevant. Over the first four years during the winter months volunteers helped the roofless based on a weekly rota using seven church halls. The aim was to provide beds, warmth and food and a welcoming environment. It involved huge voluntary effort and essential encouragement and material help from the Dacorum Borough Council.

Over the period 1998 to 2003 the cost was £55,000, covered 38% by the churches, 36% by the Borough, 9% by each of business and charities and the rest by individuals. Vital was the work of

## Acorn, to Sapling

the volunteers, research showing that, at £4 an hour certainly under-priced, their contribution was six-fold of the worth of the cash spent. During this period 2303 bed spaces were occupied by 251 guests.

By 2002 the idea had to move on. It was unsatisfactory to provide shelter just in the winter months. It was unsatisfactory for people to be turned out onto the streets at 8.30 on those mornings. It was unsatisfactory that there seemed to be no co-ordinated process for bringing the roofless back into society. The decision was made to establish DENS as a limited liability company and a charitable trust, all completed by March 2003.

The story then developed. Over the period 1999-2007 throughout Dacorum the initiative was supported by hundreds of people, 50 businesses, 26 charitable trusts, 74 churches, 10 government and quasi-governmental bodies and 24 schools. By 2007 DENS had established a night shelter, a move on unit, a day centre and a resettlement service and was introducing the notion of a foodbank and clothes store. The 1997 acorn had become a sapling.

DENS today has become an oak tree.

# to Oak Tree

The statistics, the range of its activity and local reputation say it all. Whilst its first income in 2003/4 was around £110,000, in 2018/19 it was around £1.7 million. The full-time staff has increased from 3 to 38. Its property holding now include The Elms, a 44-bed hostel for the homeless replacing the early 10-bed hostel.

Services have been widened and now include the Day Centre, the Hostel, the Move On facility, the Food Bank, the Warehouse and crash pad facilities. In summary, last year DENS: provided 245 people with emergency accommodation; housed 355 people who were rough sleepers; moved 91 people into independent living; served 4,438 hot meals at its Day Centre; fed 4,719 individuals through the Foodbank., including 1,842 families and 1,782 children; distributed 52 Home Starter packs; organised 78 tenancy support sessions; fed 11 dogs belonging to service users; and helped 34 people into temporary accommodation, 11 of which then moved on to settled housing.

Its Day Centre had 343 visitors, served 4,339 meals and provided laundry and shower facilities.

It is difficult in a short article adequately to pay full respect to the far-ranging work of DENS and to the creative ideas continually being introduced and developed to help the roofless back into homes, to work and to self-belief. But a fulsome tribute can be paid to what is being done to support and bring back to us some of the people at the margins of our society.

*Gordon Gaddes*

*Chairman of DENS, 2002 to 2007*

References:

'DENS: From IDEA to FACT', 2007

DENS Annual Report 2018/19



The vicar was already regretting ordering the new stained-glass window from IKEA

# World Rugby Cup

In Yokohama on Saturday 2 November South Africa won the 2019 World Rugby Cup convincingly beating England 23-10. Captained by Siya Kolesi, the first black captain in the 127- year Springboks history, a mixed team of blacks, coloureds and whites followed up the great ‘rainbow nation’ triumph watched by President Mandela in Cape Town in 1995.



Nearly 80 years ago Prime Minister DF Malan, on the centenary of the Battle of Blood River, said:

‘The Trekkers received their task from God’s hand. They gave their answer. They made their sacrifices. There is still a white race ... Separate development under the leadership of God’s chosen instrument – the Afrikaner people – was the divine plan for South Africa’.

Some 30 years later in the 1960s Prime Minister Vorster stated:

‘Over my dead body will we allow a black man, a coloured man, an Indian man to become a Springbok, whether it be rugby, cricket, football, you name it’.

What has this story got to do with folk in an Anglican church in Hemel Hempstead?

A lot, as a sort of warning about how political movements can be empowered by scriptural interpretations. The three white Africaans churches (the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke – NGK churches) had provided the Apartheid Government with the intellectual and religious legitimacy for its policies, a legitimacy based on biblical texts, for example Genesis, Deuteronomy and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. This went to the extent of the main NK church having three branches, one each for blacks, coloureds and whites. Buildings were not shared nor was communion taken together.

Pressure from the world movement of churches, from Protestant and Roman Catholic churches and the non-white NK churches in South Africa began to influence opinion. More especially, within the NK church movement, interpretations were emerging of the Christian ethic based on Jesus Christ and the New Testament. In 1980 eight NGK theologians expressed discontent about racism and in 1982 123 NGK ministers published an open letter rejecting apartheid laws. The big moment came in April 1984 when NGK, the mother church in the Cape and the theological powerhouse of Stellenbosch University, urged its members ‘to confess their participation in apartheid with humility and sorrow’.

The Moderator, Johan Heyns, proclaimed:

‘There is no such thing as White superiority or Black inferiority ... all people are equal before God ... There may not be under any circumstances a political policy based on oppression, discrimination and exploitation ... the task of the church is to protest against unjust laws’.

In October 1996 Nelson Mandela in his address at Stellenbosch University stated:

‘Last week saw an event of the greatest significance that originated right here ... the Stellenbosch Presbytery of the Dutch Reformed church confessed before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission a collective share in the systemic injustice of our past. Neither the message this conveyed, nor the impact this will make on the process of reconciliation is to be underestimated’.

The changing make-up of the South African Springboks over 80 years reflects political and attitudinal changes and the influences of religions and churches, which ambiguously have been both regressive and progressive but finally ethics seem to have prevailed.

*Gordon Gaddes 2 November 2019*

We do not own our lives  
Not the lives of pet dogs nor cats  
Not the precious pulse of bee nor ant  
The thread of gossamer light is bestowed  
Transcendent beyond all else  
To define us, manifest our Being  
Miraculous more than anything conceivable  
Fragile, wondrous and invaluable  
The strand that links us one to another  
Universal spirit and connection

*Mervyn Podmore*

### A Last Beatitude



And blessed are the ones we overlook;  
The faithful servers on the coffee rota,  
The ones who hold no candle, bell or book  
But keep the books and tally up the quota,  
The gentle souls who come to 'do the flowers',  
The quiet ones who organise the fête,  
Church sitters who give up their weekday hours,  
Doorkeepers who may open heaven's gate.  
God knows the depths that often go unspoken  
Amongst the shy, the quiet, and the kind,  
Or the slow healing of a heart long broken  
Placing each flower so for a year's mind.  
Invisible on earth, without a voice,  
In heaven their angels glory and rejoice.

*by Malcolm Guite*

*This sonnet appeared in the weekly sheet of St David's Cathedral*

# The Parish Fair

Going back to Christmas 1960, and under different names for example ‘The Bazaar’, 30 November 2019 will see it all happen again.

Gone are the days of ‘bric a brac’ and good second-hand things. Life, the economy and local society have moved on! No more queuing up to get through the door at 10 to be the first at the stalls for the best buys.

So, we have cakes, pickles and marmalade as ever, several tombolas, children’s games, handbells, a Yewtree School choir and the Grand Draw. It makes a bit of money but is also a social occasion. If you have new items not being used or any other contributions, please let us know. We can do with all the help we can get on the day and will need to know who is staying for the traditional lunch for helpers.



Bill loved the birds and every night he would go into his garden and hoot like an owl. He was tickled pink when on one evening an owl hooted back. This went on for some time and he was immensely proud of his ability to talk with his new feathered friend.

His wife was so proud of his accomplishment that she told one of their neighbours that regularly her husband goes into the garden to communicate with an owl. “That’s really amazing” said the neighbour, “my husband does the same.”



# Report to the congregation on the PCC Meetings on July 15 and September 23

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), which is the governing body of the parish of St Mary and St Paul, comprising elected lay members together with the clergy, will now be making regular reports to the congregation about business conducted at meetings.

Reports are circulated to the members of the Electoral Roll (for whom we have an email address as GDPR updates allow), displayed on the notice board in both church buildings and printed in STOMP, our parish magazine.

Below, is a summary of business at the meetings on Monday 15 July and 23 September with the latest approved minutes of the previous meeting also being posted upon the notice board once the PCC has accepted them as an accurate record.

## **Meeting held on 15 July 19**

### **1. Capital Expenditure – St Paul’s**

The PCC approved Capital Expenditure at St Paul’s for a temporary hall floor, a new ‘Hymnal Plus’ music system and a ramp and renewed tiling in the entrance.

### **2. Capital Expenditure – St Mary’s**

The PCC approved Capital Expenditure at St Mary’s for the replacement of the Lexan polycarbonate window covers with metal grills for all vulnerable windows.

### **3. Art in the Nave**

Mr Brian Doran reported on another successful year for Art-in-the-Nave and his plans for the future which included involving local charities so that they might benefit from the event.

### **4. Toilet and Kitchen for St Mary’s**

The PCC arranged a visit to the church in Standon where our architect has recently installed a kitchen and accessible toilet facilities

## Meeting held on 23 September 19

### 1. Stained Glass Windows – St Paul's

The PCC approved Capital Expenditure to protect the important stained glass windows above the altar at St Paul's.

### 2. Noticeboards

The PCC approved Capital Expenditure to fit new noticeboards outside St Mary's Hall and to replace the main exterior noticeboard at St Paul's.

### 3. Music and the Organ at St Mary's

Mr Peter Lipman, Organist and Director of Music, updated the Council about his work since his appointment, changes made to storage of music and the recommendations of the recent independent report on The Organ at St Mary's.

### 4. Toilet and Kitchen for St Mary's

The PCC reflected upon a very successful visit to the church in Standon where they recently viewed a kitchen and toilet facility designed by our own architect.

*Canon John Williams  
Chairman*

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*We don't sing carols no more ...  
you 'ave to listen to 'em off me iPod!*



## News from Langa Township Pre-School Trust

### South African Barbeque ( BRAAI)

Held on 7 September this was attended by 35 people, including 22 from our two churches. Mervyn Podmore manned the two searingly hot barbeques and his wife Norma, and Sue Rowland and Rosina Gaddes gave maximum support from kitchen to serving tables. We all enjoyed the South African food and wine. We were fortunate with the weather and a very happy occasion contributed £724 to LTPT funds.



### LTPT Christmas Party at St Paul's 7 December 7pm

This popular event, for which we have 50 places, will feature a 3-course meal, the main course provided by Julia Maddox a professional caterer, the Nightcall Duo and a pay bar. 26 tickets have gone already so book soon to ensure a place: £30 person, £12 a child. Full details available from Rosina or Gordon Gaddes.



### Sponsored Bike 'N Hike

Historic Churches Trust in Beds & Herts

I visited 11 Churches in the town beginning at The Church of the Resurrection about 9.30am on Saturday 14th September working my way through the town, avoiding the steepest hills!, and finally arriving at St Mary's about 1pm.

The weather was dry and warm and I was made welcome at all the churches I visited. It was interesting to see who had been ahead of me when I signed in at each church. Beryl Vickery from Warners End walked and always arrived before me until I finally caught up with her at St John's in Boxmoor. It was a most enjoyable day and the furthest I have been so far on Bella (my trike!).

I wish to record my thanks to all those who sponsored me and helped to raise £291 in total. The odd £1 was from a donation of £1 per church I visited!. Half of this money will come back for the Parish Account and the Trust keeps the other half plus the Gift Aid which enables them to award grants to Historic Churches in Beds and Herts.

I do hope that more folk will be inspired to join in next year. It makes a great day out - especially if a family get involved - walking or cycling, and you meet lots of friends along the way.

*Emmeline Lambert*

# Editor's Interview

## Jean Corfield: An Anglican Stalwart

*Born in October 1930 in the Kensal Green area of North London Jean turns out to be 'a Yorkshire girl'. She shares my feeling when I go back to Cumberland, as she does in returning to Yorkshire, that these are our tribal homes. This is quite odd as each of us has lived the best part of our lives in the South.*

### *Early Childhood*

An interview with anybody is about where one is taken during it and with Jean this led very much to the disruption of the Second World War: of Jean going to five schools before she went to the Harrow County School for Girls; of her teacher father being sent away with his Kings Cross school children, evacuated in the Summer of 1939; of Jean as an evacuee herself in Yorkshire, but only for three months.

Her memory of that three months is of an austere uncle and aunt, both in their 40s, head teachers and childless. She was glad to get away after a short stay and she returned to Harrow with her parents and sister. More memories, of walking home to lunch in those days, one mile each way, and of being in the top ten in junior school so getting into secondary school without the dreaded 'eleven plus'



Jean was happy at the County School and had wanted to become a teacher, like many in her family, but after a term in the 6th Form she realised this was not to be her route into the future. Leaving school and Maths being one of her best subjects she was offered a job in the Bank of England, quite a coup for a girl of 17. Reminiscing, she found herself in an old building in Old Street, eating lunch in an asphalted area supposedly 'above a medieval plague pit', and facing long and tiring work journeys. Interestingly a recent documentary on Cross Rail work revealed this very plague pit. Better to get work nearer home, so she joined Kodak in Harrow and I remember particularly two of her memories. Cycling to work she heard the tragic Harrow train crash and remembers the horror of that dreadful three-train happening.

## *Moving to Hemel ...*

Second, at Kodak she met Roy, marrying in 1955 and their daughter Margaret was born in 1956. She then spent twelve years as a housewife. In those days, ‘if you married and had children you stayed at home’. In 1963 they followed Kodak to Hemel Hempstead, whilst later she started work again first at John Dickinson’s and then at Atlas Copco. There was no escape from Kodak, however. When her marriage to Roy broke up, she met George Corfield at a Kodak dance. They married in 1975. George had worked for Roy who later officially became George’s boss. The catalyst for this togetherness between the two men was the great work going on in establishing the successful Kodak social and sports club.

### *...and to St Paul’s*

Living with George in Highfield was to become an important and never-ending phase in Jean’s life. There was an interesting convergence. Catching a bus close to St Paul’s Jean decided to look in on a service in ‘that little church’. This was the start of a fascinating St Paul’s story, all ‘the fault of the Vicar, Mervyn Banting’, the first of several vicars she knew and worked for at St Paul’s. On her second visit Mervyn said: ‘you look if you can read’! What followed in a sequence was Treasurer of the St Paul’s District Council, of the Team Parish and the Deanery, all at the same time.

This was followed by a part time position for 12 years in the Diocesan Office. It was a time of dealing with auditors, and fronting up at annual meetings and dealing with occasional difficult circumstances.. Separately included were reading lessons and intercessions, which have continued to this day. All of this was an eye-opener to Jean, but she dealt with it resiliently.

### *Musical Talent*

We turned then to music and there was a glint and a touch of emotion. Jean was singing solo from an early age. Her very encouraging Dad had a lovely baritone voice. She could read music aged 4 and came to the piano at the age of 6, a new piano which she did not know how her Dad could afford. She had only a few lessons the War arriving. Many years later her transition to the organ came in attending the New School of Organ Studies initiative at St John’s Boxmoor. We benefitted from this greatly at St Paul’s, Jean being our treasured organist for over 21 years, and she was always able to come back to help, until 2004 when George her husband died.



*Jean & George  
on their wedding  
day in 1975 and  
(below)  
celebrating their  
Silver Wedding  
Anniversary in  
2000.*

### *A last thought*

Finally, I asked: ‘what about God’? Jean, as she considers in church and elsewhere all the devastating things that go on and as she prays, she asks the question, ‘where are you God’? She wants to believe and does believe but it remains a puzzle. I try to help, ‘do you feel that God is omnipresent but chooses not to be omnipotent, so that we can be free?’

Jean and I agree on the answer, ‘who knows’?

*Gordon Gaddes 2 November 19*





... at St Mary's, 3½ hours later, 11 churches visited and £291 earned for the Trust and the Parish, looking as fresh and energetic as when she set off! See more on page 20



Another wonderful afternoon and evening at the Town Halloween Event this year. At some points things seemed close to breaking point but we got through them and certainly set a new record for the sheer variety of witches in church! We had lots of positive conversations and many people were grateful for the opportunity to visit the church and be fully refreshed. Well done also to those who stayed and cleared up which was well worth the extra effort and left the church clear, clean and ready for action.



On 1st Sep Sir Mike Penning MP rang the church bell to signal the start of the new monthly Sunday Market season in the High St. During the Winter months some of the market traders will be setting up their stalls inside St Mary's attracting more visitors into the church.