

COULSDON  
PARISH  
CHURCH  
St. John



50p

*July/August 2023*

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welcome at all these  
services & events—  
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otherwise stated**

## **July**

### **1—Saturday**

12.00 noon Old Coulsdon Village Fair, Grange Park  
2.00 p.m. Cream Teas in the Church (to 4.00)

### **2—FOURTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion  
9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (*in Church and live-streamed*)  
11.30 a.m. Baptism Service  
3.00 p.m. CTC 'Farewell to Paul' Service, in Churchyard

### **4—Tuesday**

9.45 a.m. Holy Communion, MU

### **6—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

### **8—Saturday**

10.00 a.m. Baptism Preparation  
10.00 a.m. Gardening Group in the Garden of Remembrance

### **9—FIFTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (*in Church - and live-streamed*)  
11.15 a.m. Family Service

### **11—Tuesday**

4.15 p.m. Life Group meets (Old Church)

### **12—Wednesday**

10.30 a.m. House Group Leaders meet (Old Church)

### **13—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

### **15—Saturday**

7.30 p.m. Downland Chorale Concert, in the Church

### **16—SIXTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion  
9.30 a.m. Worship Together  
11.00 a.m. Baptism Service

**18—Tuesday**

9.45 for 10.00 a.m. Pram Service for Babies & Toddlers, in Church

**20—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

**21—Friday**

9.30 a.m. Coulsdon CofE School End –of-Term Service, in Church

**22—Saturday**

2.30 p.m. Wedding: Ian Prime & Sylvia Mayers

**23—SEVENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (*in Church and live-streamed*)

11.15 a.m. Family Service

**26—Wednesday**

2.00 p.m. Pray, Knit & Chat (Old Church)

**27—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

**29—Saturday**

1.00 p.m. Wedding: Ian McCracken & Catherine Cattani

**30—EIGHTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (*in Church and live-streamed*)

## August

**1—Tuesday**

~~9.45 a.m.~~ NO MU Holy Communion

**3—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

**5—Saturday**

10.00 a.m. Gardening Group, in the Garden of Remembrance

**6—NINTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (*in Church and live-streamed*)

**9—Wednesday**

7.30 p.m. Children's Group Leaders meet

**10—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

**13—TENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (*in Church - and live-streamed*)

11.15 a.m. Family Service

**17—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

**20—ELEVENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (*in Church and live-streamed*)

**23—Wednesday**

2.00 p.m. Pray, Knit & Chat, in the Old Church

**24—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

**27—TWELFTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (*in Church - and live-streamed*)

11.15 a.m. Family Service

**29—Tuesday**

7.30 p.m. PCC meets

**31—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

## september

**1—Friday**

11.00 a.m. MU 'Wave of Prayer', in the Old Church

**2—Saturday**

10.00 a.m. Gardening Group in the Garden of Remembrance

**3—THIRTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (*in Church and live-streamed*)

11.30 a.m. Baptism Service

### WHEREVER YOU ARE YOU CAN STILL JOIN US ONLINE FOR SOME SERVICES:

Follow the Parish Communion services, etc. online live as they're streamed from the Church on Facebook via our website at [www.stjohns.coulsdon.net](http://www.stjohns.coulsdon.net) (or watch later) . You don't need to be on Facebook to do this.

**Saturday 1 July**  
**Old Coulsdon Village Fair**  
Grange Park ~ 12-4.30

**Come & visit us**

... at our tent on the fair ground with displays  
about the spire restoration.

**Come & visit us**

... for Cream Teas in the Church from 2 - 4 pm,  
browse our 'Summer Bookstall' and an opportunity to  
see a repeat of the popular church history exhibition.





# FROM THE RECTOR ...



## Dear Friends

When I looked back at the first article I wrote for the Parish Magazine I was reminded about how much has changed over the last 20 years. Within the first three months of my time as Rector we were addressing the pattern of services, which led to the introduction of Worship Together on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month. We introduced the use of the NIV bible at the 8.00 a.m. service. We abandoned the rather archaic practice of lay communion ministers robing to give communion. We changed our pattern of support for mission beyond the parish. We launched the first 'Saints at Prayer' course, and I announced that we would be joined by Simon Stocks as our curate.

Quite early on during my time here we had a series of meetings to help us focus on our purpose and mission, and as a result we produced our motto: 'St John's: helping people to meet Jesus'. I have always believed that this is the purpose of any church, and for us at St John's it helped us to focus on what is really important. I was very soon aware of people's love of the history and heritage of this place – 'a church going back more than a thousand years' – but I pointed out that that is no guarantee of the church continuing for another thousand years. The church, like any living body, needs to change in order to stay the same and to carry out its mission.

The advert in the Church Times that hooked my attention mentioned a desire to develop our gathered worship, and so the values that have guided me have been worship that helps people to engage with God – worship that is liturgical, but relaxed – and preaching that is based on an understanding of the bible as the revealed word of God.

A local paper announces Paul & Nicy's arrival



Looking forward: The Rev Paul Roberts and wife Nicy  
Photo No: N2305B/1 John Nunn

## Rector relishes new appointment

WORSHIPPERS at St John's Parish Church in Coulsdon are welcoming their new rector.

The Rev Paul Roberts will officially take up the post at an induction service at St John's led by Dr Tom Butler, Bishop of Southwark, on October 2.

Mr Roberts arrives in Coulsdon after 12 years of service at his old parish in Reading.

He said: "There's lots of opportunities in Coulsdon. It's a diverse parish and there's a group of people here, in particular, who want to move on in their spirit of worship. People have been very welcoming."

Mr Roberts, his wife Nicy and children Tim, 11, and Amy, 10, moved into the Rectory on

Coulsdon Road to coincide with the beginning of the school year.

Tim has started at the Archbishop Tenison's school in Croydon and Amy attends Coulsdon Church of England primary school.

As a music graduate, Mr Roberts is looking forward to developing music in the church. He said: "I'm keen to explore both traditional and contemporary music."

The parish has been without a rector since the departure of Canon Stephen Maslen 18 months ago. Gail Souppouris, a reader at St John's, said: "We've been very fortunate that our honorary curate, pastoral auxiliary and readers have kept the services going."

Over the years the patterns of worship have changed. As the evening service shrank and was finally discontinued, so the Family Service grew from once a month, to twice, and then every week. Sadly as a result of the pandemic and changes in staffing we have not been able to maintain that weekly service, but rather a fortnightly pattern. For those with children recently baptised, the Family Service has been a good 'entry point' into the life of the church. I hope that service and congregation will continue to grow.



Two curates, Simon Stocks and Linda Fletcher, came and went on to fruitful ministries of their own. Sue Thomas joined us and has stayed as a faithful and valued colleague, bringing a passion for the work of the Holy Spirit, and a deep concern for the persecuted church. I was delighted to encourage Christine McCutcheon in her journey towards the ministry of Reader, and we all value her preaching and pastoral gifts. Jo Udell also completed her training as a SPA soon after I came, and gave several years, along with Valerie Price, in that valuable ministry.

On a personal level, these last 20 years have been ones in which Nicy and I have seen our family grow. When we arrived Amy started in Year 6 at Coulsdon C of E School, and Tim went into Year 7 at Archbishop Tenison. How fortunate to have two local schools with a strong Christian ethos. Amy has pursued her musical gifts and is now working with the orchestra of Welsh National Opera. (Recently she was glimpsed on TV as one of the two orchestras playing for the Cardiff Singer of the World competition). We were so proud to see her and Ollie married at St John's in 2017, and their baby, Clara, appearing as the infant Jesus in our Crib Service last Christmas. Tim also followed his musical interests at university, and then taught music for several years until a change of career into accountancy. Tim took on the role of Tower Captain, leading our ringing team through the pandemic with bells that can be a little unpredictable at times, according to the weather.



Nicy took on the role of Branch Leader of our Mothers' Union group. Where many local MU groups have dwindled away, Nicy was able to restore a sense of vision to our group, keeping alive the MU aims of promoting the values of marriage and family life. Over the years the MU here has run parenting courses, helped provide teas for Messy Church, provided refreshments for marriage preparation sessions, given gifts to baptism families and sent cards on the anniversaries of the children's baptism. Age has taken its toll of many loyal MU members, but the group is still in good heart. Nicy has also led our small group of singers that add so much to the joy of our worship.



When we were thinking of moving from our previous parish on the edge of Reading we had hoped for a slightly larger house and garden. So imagine our delight at the size of the rectory! In those early days the cost of heating was not a problem, but now.....! Twenty years ago I had the energy to transform the garden from a rather overgrown patch of ground into something attractive and productive. I spent four years, on and off, reducing the yew



hedge to a manageable size, and the wilderness at the bottom of the garden into a productive allotment. It's been a great joy to use the garden for church events – open-air services, cream teas, a jazz concert – as well as family parties, and Amy's wedding. But now I'm glad that I will not have to spend two hours cutting the grass, or weeks and weeks clearing leaves in the autumn. We are moving to a house with an attractive but much smaller garden.

What are the happy memories I will take with us? We have grown to love Old Coulsdon as a neighbourhood. It combines the convenience of a London suburb, with the charm of a village. I nearly always meet someone I know when I walk round here. My links with the schools – in particular Coulsdon C of E and Keston School – have been a great joy, and very often I hear children calling out, "Hello Paul", when I'm out and about. We are really spoilt here with easy access to London, but also such lovely areas as Farthing Down, a favourite



place of mine for a walk. Getting to know the local shopkeepers, being part of the community gathering for the annual Service of Remembrance, walking alongside people during times of sadness and joy, sharing with the ministers of the other local churches, worshipping together in church, enjoying one another's company – these are just a few of the happy memories we will take with us.

At the end of August we will be moving to Kington in Herefordshire, where we have already begun to make good friends with some of the people nearby. Kington is a small market town of about 3,500 people, but with two schools, several independent shops, and a regular bus service into Hereford, it has a lot going on. There are at least three choirs that we know of, and a light opera group. It's a centre for walking as Offa's Dyke Path runs through the town. They even have a wheelbarrow race in June that goes past our new house. Living next to a pub, and opposite another, we will not be short of places to eat or drink! And the church is five minutes' walk up the hill. I'm going to take a break from any ministry for at least six months, but maybe I'll get to play the organ again. Amy, Ollie and Clara will be moving to Cardiff soon, so won't be too far away.

I thank God for our time in Old Coulsdon. I thank God for the people we have

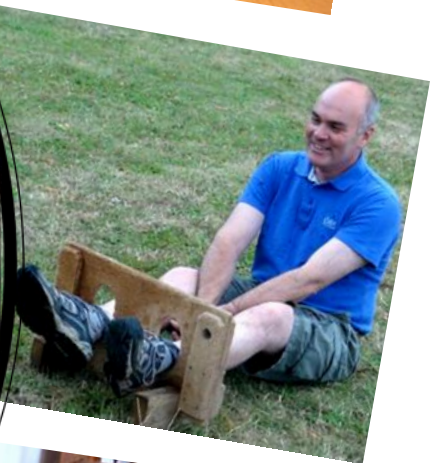


known here. I thank God that his church will continue in this place. I'm looking forward to laying down responsibilities, and to simply enjoy being a friend of Jesus again.

With great love

Paul

## Paul remembers:





Christingle



MU Anniversary Family Celebration



Online Communion Service  
from the Rectory—  
Church locked-down!



Christmas Fair in Church

CTC Easter Dawn  
on Farthing Down



**SUNDAY 23rd JULY  
PAUL'S LAST SUNDAY SERVICES**

**INVITATION TO AFTERNOON TEA  
on Sunday, 23 JULY 3-5pm**

Please join us in the church for Afternoon Tea to mark the occasion of Paul and Nicy's retirement after 20 years of service to St John's parish and their move to Kington. If you are able to attend, please let the Parish Office know - 01737 552461 or [stjohns@coulsdon.net](mailto:stjohns@coulsdon.net). Thank you.

**Gill and Ralph (Churchwardens)**

## CTC's 'Farewell to Paul' Service: Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July

Our Rector, Paul, has always been an active supporter of Churches Together in Coulsdon (CTC). Indeed, he took the chair for a number of years and assisted with the Floating Shelter, among other things. Coulsdon's churches have arranged a short farewell service for Paul, to be held in St. John's 'Garden of Remembrance' at **3 p.m. on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July**. (*In Church if wet*). Members of various Coulsdon and Old Coulsdon churches will be taking part, with Malcolm Newman from OCCC leading.



So do come and join us. **Dave Newland (Vice-Chairman CTC)**



... is quite a busy month with the Village Fair, Cream Teas and 'farewell' events for Paul (see invitations on other pages) but towards the end things start to quieten down and as we move

into our quietest month you → may feel that nothing is happening.

But it is! There will still be our regular Sunday services—Holy Communion (8.00 a.m. 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>), Parish Communion (*no Worship Together in August*) (9.30 every Sunday) and Family Service (11.15—13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>) and although some groups are taking a break, the monthly Gardening Group will meet as usual on the first Saturday - 5 Aug. and 'Pray, Knit & Chat' will have their regular get-together on Wed. 23 Aug. Both groups would be delighted to welcome you. And don't forget that the church is open most weekday mornings 10.00-12.00 if you're in need of some friendly company!



## PRAM SERVICE FOR BABIES, TODDLERS & PRESCHOOLERS



It was lovely to welcome so many of you to Pram Service in June! It has taken some time to build up again after all the pre-Covid lockdown regulars 'grew and flew' during those two unusual years. So last year it was almost like 'starting from scratch' and it has been wonderful to see the numbers slowly grow again.

**Pram Service** is on the third Tuesday morning of each month at 9.45 for 10.00 a.m. start in the church —**Tuesday**



**18 July** this month. All parents and grandparents with babies or toddlers will find a warm welcome at this very relaxed little service. Come for songs (chosen by the little ones), an interactive story, activity, prayers, musical instruments and birthday celebrations—and lots of fun—with refreshments afterwards while we play and chat. Lively toddlers, restless babies, new mums, tired mums and grannies all very welcome—as well as brave dads and grandpas! Why don't you come along and see what it's all about?



In June we heard about Bartimaeus and how Jesus restored his sight. We discovered fruit and vegetables hidden in socks just by touch and then the little ones took their blindfolded mums and grannies for a walk around the church being careful to miss (just!) some obstacles. If you're at home with a little one on a Tuesday morning, why not come and give us a try.—we'd love to see you.

**Pram Service will take a break in August but we'll be looking forward to seeing you in September—on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>.**

## TIME TO SPARE? ... THINK CHRISTMAS FAIR!



We really don't want to hurry you through the year but we know Christmas always seems to come along more quickly than we think it will. And even sooner than Christmas will be St. John's Christmas Fair on **Saturday 18 November**. So if things are a little quieter we'd be delighted if you had some time to spare to make preserves/chutney/marmalade, etc. [*empty jars available in the church*], make some handmade items, have a turn-out and put any unused gifts, good condition books, and toys, etc. to one side for the Fair—that would be wonderful! Thank you..



## Church spire project update

The spire restoration project is continuing to push forward. Our faculty application to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) has now been provisionally approved, pending a final report from wildlife experts. Fundraising efforts are also continuing, following our successful Open Day on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March the Church spire project has continued to receive donations from across the community. We're delighted to report we have now raised a total £111K – up from £92K in March, which is a little over 47% of the total estimated cost of £235K. Our aim is to get past 50% before contacting various grant-giving organisations to ask for support. Every penny counts, so please support us by giving what you can.



*(Stop Press: Delighted to hear that the fantastic Gala Concert raised nearly £2K for the spire restoration project).*





# MOTHERS' UNION - *Transformation - Now!*

## JULY focus: **Stable relationships**

Mothers' Union is a Christian organisation that has been supporting families worldwide for over 140 years. Started by our founder Mary Sumner in 1876 in her local parish, we have grown into an international charity with over 4 million members in 84 countries. We demonstrate our faith in action. This happens as we work towards stopping poverty, stopping inequality, and stopping injustice. Our members work at grassroots level around the world. They bring hope and practical support to millions of people every year through parenting, literacy and community development programmes.

Our prayer is that we can:

***Transform ourselves, personally and spiritually, to live out our faith***  
***Transform the churches and communities we work with, and of which we are a part, to reflect Christ's kingdom***  
***Transform Mothers' Union to be relevant for 21st Century life.***

"For with God nothing shall be impossible" - Luke 1:37

### BRANCH DATES:

- Tues. 4 July:** 9.45am Corporate Holy Communion, followed by refreshments **(NB: There is no service in August)**
- WED. 12 JULY:** 7.00pm BRANCH SUPPER & SOCIAL EVENING at The Rectory
- SAT. 15 JULY;** 11.30am MU FESTIVAL SERVICE - Southwark Cathedral - an annual event bringing together members from branches across the Diocese
- Wed. 26 July:** 2.00pm Pray, Knit & Chat in Church - do join us!  
All welcome whether you knit or not - delicious cakes and good company on offer!

### AUGUST:

(There is no monthly service in August)

**Wed. 23 Aug:** 2.00pm Pray, Knit & Chat in Church - do join us!

### Coming up in SEPTEMBER...

**Fri. 1 Sept:** 11.00am WAVE OF PRAYER in church - all welcome

**Tues. 5 Sept.** 9.45am Service of Prayer and Reflection, followed by refreshments

### JULY Reflection:

Christ's parable of the houses built on sand and rock highlight the importance of strong foundations in withstanding adverse conditions. In the context of relationships, for these to be stable enough to withstand adverse conditions in life, they too need strong foundations. As the meaning of the parable highlights, the ultimate foundation is faith in Christ. Like all properties, relationships sometimes **need repair work or shoring up. But whether in our own relationships, or as we seek to support others, let's check that the foundations are secure before attempting to fix or improve other features.**



### Monthly prayer:

Heavenly Father, give us grace in relationships. May hope be stronger than struggle, celebrations more frequent than trials, may kindness prevail over judgment, equality dissolve oppression, may love break walls of hate. **Amen**

### In August we remember our founder, Mary Sumner:

Mary Sumner was a woman of deep faith, with a heart for prayer and a determination to make a difference in the lives of others. She listened to God then acted upon his call (in 1876). In doing so, she set the pattern for the place of prayer in Mothers' Union down the years and across the world. In our own day, let us also be mindful to unite firstly in prayer and worship that we may sense God's prompting. We can then act upon God's specific call to reach out in love and service as his hands across the world.



*Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.  
Unite us in worship; build us in service, as together we seek to share  
your love and continue to reach out as your hands across the world. Amen*  
(Mary Sumner's personal prayer)

### OUR BRANCH 75TH ANNIVERSARY CREAM TEA!



As you will see from the selection of photos of the event we were blessed with lovely warm sunny weather and could enjoy the Rectory garden as well as delicious scones (with jam and cream!) as well as a wonderful array of homemade cakes. Everyone clearly enjoyed themselves and most people stayed for the whole afternoon. We reckon we welcomed over 80 people!

It was in April 1948 that the inaugural meeting of St John's MU



branch took place, and 75 years on we are still as committed as ever. The by-line of Mothers' Union - 'Christian Care for families worldwide' - encapsulates all the work that we support, and the very generous donations received at the Cream Tea (a total of £450) have benefited the church and also the MU Diocesan Holiday Fund (AFIA - Away from it all) in equal measure. Very many thanks to all who contributed in every way to make the afternoon such an enjoyable and joyful occasion.



## **THINK AGAIN!**

Summer at last! Time to put away all those thick woollies, and buy something new for summer. Think again. Every choice we make has an effect on our climate.

Surely cotton, a nice natural fibre is good? Well, no. The problem is the amount of water used in its manufacture. 2,700 litres of water is used to make an average T-shirt, which is the same as a person's drinking water for 900 days.

So let's not support fast fashion, but buy things which will last, and we'll not tire of. The blouse in the picture was bought 50 years ago on a holiday in Romania, and the owner couldn't bear to part with it.



There are several brands, Fairtrade for instance, which use sustainably produced cotton, but they all come at a quite high price. The alternative is to decrease the amount of manufacture by buying second hand 'pre-loved' clothing. If you are wary of such places, we can assume they've changed beyond recognition since their early days. There's one in Salisbury with the appearance of a high quality West End store. You'll also discover more interesting garments than on the High Street.

When you take your own no longer needed items to a charity shop, you support not only the well-being of the customer but also a worth-while cause, especially if you request they be Gift-aided.

*(Much of this information and more can be found on the website: [sustainablecampus.fsu.edu](http://sustainablecampus.fsu.edu) which you may find interesting.)*

In the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century laundry was such a chore that people only washed garments when really necessary, but that changed with the advent of washing machines. No trouble now to wash each garment after each wearing; no trouble for us, but big trouble for the environment. Over-washing means our clothes wear out faster, and we use so much of that precious resource, water. As for man-made fabrics, scientists believe that each time we do our laundry an average of 9 million microfibres are released into waste water plants which cannot filter them. However a full load of older fabrics, washed at a cooler temperature will release fewer microfibres to pollute our rivers and oceans.

Nicer to wander outdoors contemplating the beauties of nature than to do the washing! Happy summer!

**ECO GROUP**



## KEEPING UP WITH TONY!

As I sit here dripping after a couple of hours on Enid's allotment with humidity over 70% and the temperature around 30°, I wonder if the promised thunder storms will ever arrive in Old Coulsdon. The gardens could certainly do with the rain – but the good news is that the grass in the churchyard is not growing quite as fast as it might – although over on the 'far' side it is reminiscent of something out of the old movie 'The Day of the Triffids'!

That being said, the working party on 3<sup>rd</sup> June did a terrific job, helped in no small way by Kevin Selman who had made a really good start with the mowing on the previous Friday. The entire 'managed' area and Garden of Remembrance were all mowed, a lady named Julia who is an occasional visitor to the churchyard came to give us a hand, and the rest of us – John Alger, Sheila Bird, Jon and Jill Waters, and myself made full use of the morning – and even if I say it myself; it looked beautiful.



That's more than can be back of the church out of hand. Gill had hind the Old Church and going with the strimmer giving it another go with ting, after the cuttings



said of the area at the which had got completely earlier mown the part be-Wendy's office, so I got to reduce the rest before the mower on a high set-had dried.

During half-term week down to deepest Kent for a visit to the Hornby Museum; and what a great day out that was. Railway layouts – big, small and everything in between, including Thomas the Tank Engine, and a scene from Harry Potter. The boys loved it, but what impressed us was that Jack, the 10 year old, seemed to have an encyclo-



paedic knowledge of aircraft – there were made up examples of pretty well all the Airfix kits that I remember as a boy, right up to the modern day, and he was able to trot out the vital statistics of just about every one. So instead of going to the beach afterwards we nipped across to RAF Manston that I waxed lyrical about last month, so that he could look at some of the real things. He also ‘flew’ the Spitfire simulator – under the Dartford Bridge, and between the up-rights of Tower Bridge, before making an excellent landing. We’re now looking forward to the Lancaster simulator opening to the paying public – but not sure who or what we might bomb!!

Another pleasant surprise for me recently was bumping into Charlotte Best’s daughter Caroline. So good to see her up and about after seriously breaking her leg during the snow and ice, when walking her dog alone on Farthing Downs. Thank goodness for mobile phones! She was telling me how she, with friends and neighbours on the Byron Estate had been nominated as Litter Pick-up Champions for their work in the community. Well done to them all ..... so now how about a group in and around Chaldon Way taking up the chalice and doing something about Chaldon Way Gardens? They were always so beautifully maintained in days gone by, but it wasn’t until Enid and I had paid a visit to the Memorial Ground and waited at that bus stop that we realised just how sad looking it had become. Could something be done do you think before Croydon Council or a developer puts a block of flats on the site?

Since last writing we have had the pleasure of visiting another C12/13<sup>th</sup> church – this time in the parish of St Neots. Cambridgeshire (previously Huntingdonshire). Enid was born in the town, so it was a trip down memory lane for her – and easy to get to with a direct train from Coulsdon South! St Mary’s, St Neots is the parish church – a large and beautiful building with eighteen stunningly beautiful stained glass windows, wherein the life of Christ is depicted.



Located where it is I don’t think too many bombs rained down on the town during the War, and consequently every one of those Victorian windows is intact, with no clear glass anywhere.

Co-incidentally we visit a friend in Cornwall from time to time and on our last trip called in to another St Mary’s in another St Neot. At the time Enid remarked how similar the name was to her old church and it transpires that both are closely linked. Down in Cornwall they had a Celtic saint who (it is believed) died in 877, and his remains were said to have been placed in the north wall of the Chancel. From there they were stolen in 974 and re-interred at St Neots in Huntingdonshire. It may be a tall tale but it added to what was a really good day out, lunch in a nice pub, a trip down memory lane, and a walk along a tiny stretch of water off the Great Ouse known as Hen Brook (anything to do with you Sue?).



*Swans and cygnets beside Hen Brook*



*Our swan family on Hen Brook*

In closing off, just a couple of thoughts/observations. On Songs of Praise last Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June there was a feature on a 'planted' church in Birmingham known as Gas Street Church. It was born out of Holy Trinity Brompton and after three iterations in different buildings it now welcomes over 1000 worshippers per week – and they're all young. Looking closely at their website it all seemed slightly scary to me with an 'academy' in which students go through a very rigorous training programme – to me almost like a cult. Have a look on the iPlayer and let's have a talk about it.

Finally a word or two of positive affirmation for the work of our churchwardens, Rev. Sue, and Christine, as the pressure builds prior to Rev. Paul's forthcoming retirement. They are doing a great job and we should thank them, pray that the Holy Spirit will carry them through the interregnum, and that God will provide us with the ideal candidate to take St John's to the next level.

Have a wonderful summer everyone; and of course as grass and weeds continue to grow, if you fancy some gentle exercise in the fresh air, do let me or the wardens know, and we'll open up the shed.

All blessings **Tony**

## **AN EVENING of THANKSGIVING**

On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June Sylvia and I visited the Food Hub at Purley United Reformed Church and joined in the celebration to mark 10 years of service that the Food Hub has given to the local community.

The evening started with delicious refreshments and the chance to meet and talk to some of the organisers and volunteers who work for the Hub. Then followed a brief tour behind the scenes. The array of







shelves, all neatly stacked with tins and packets of dry goods, was most impressive. Everything was labelled neatly to help the packers as they prepare the deliveries for clients. Sainsbury's and Tesco couldn't do better!

At 6:30 we moved to the church for the Service of Thanksgiving led by Revd Russell Furley-Smith, the Minister of Purley U.R.C, and Revd Fiona Weaver, Vicar of St Mark's and St Swithun's Churches Purley.

The theme of the service was taken from St Paul's epistles where he writes about the various limbs that make a body and the gifts of the many people that make a church. This is very true of the Hub, which is supported by 23 churches of all denominations in Coulsdon, Purley, South Croydon and beyond, local businesses and other community organisations.

These bodies provide not only the food and other supplies, but the sorters who receive the donations, the packers who make up the orders, and the drivers and their escorts who deliver to the clients.

In 10 years of operation the Food Hub has provided more than 300,000 meals to recipients. In May this year 3340 meals were delivered, 1000 more than this time last year. This reflects the impact of the cost of living over the past 12 months. At present the Food Hub is supporting about 30 families and households each week. The clients are referred by various welfare agencies and are able to choose what they need for one month initially. These are emergency packages supplied free of charge to help the clients through an immediate situation. Usually the clients are then referred on to one of three Food Stops close to them if they still need help. Here, in return for a modest payment of about £4.00, they receive goods valued between £20-£25. These include a wider choice of items such as fresh fruit, vegetables etc. There is also the opportunity to seek advice about other problems, such as finance or other factors that may affect the clients.

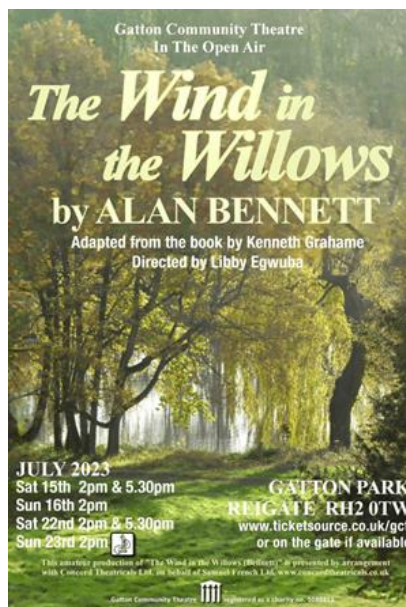


The benefits of the Food Hub do not travel in just one direction. Apart from the satisfaction of being part of a much needed and charitable enterprise, team members are also developing life skills that, especially for the younger ones, may be useful in the future.

One may think it is a sad reflection on our society that the need for the Food Hub became apparent 10 years ago, and that its work continues and, if anything, increases now. Nevertheless we all give thanks for the people who support it, either by donating supplies, or helping at the Food Hub.

Sylvia and I were asked to pass on a very big Thank You from everyone at the Hub for all the gifts we have provided. Well done St John's!

**Graham**



## 'The Wind in the Willows' at Gatton Park 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> July.

**Saturdays: 2.00 & 5.00pm, Sundays: 2.00pm**

Set among the willow trees by a river within Gatton's beautiful parkland, this delightful adaptation by Alan Bennett combines all the joy of Kenneth Grahame's much-loved classic story '**The Wind in the Willows**' about Riverbank folk, friendship, love, loyalty and forgiveness. The play is performed by a Gatton Community Theatre's community cast of more than 45 adults and children and is directed by Libby Egwuba.

Tickets are available from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/gct](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/gct)  
Adults £13.50, children £8, family £38 (2+2)

This is an open air production and no seating is provided. We suggest you please bring chairs and/or rugs to sit on. Golf buggies are available to take those who are mobility impaired to the performance site but please still bring your own chair to sit on. This is not a promenade performance. Enquiries to:

[info@gattontheatre.org.uk](mailto:info@gattontheatre.org.uk)



## Surrey Churches Preservation Trust Could you Ride, Stride or Sponsor?

This year the '**Ride and Stride**' is on **Saturday 9 September**. Cyclists and walkers get sponsorship for visiting as many churches as possible on the day. Half the money raised is for their own church and half for the trust, which gives grants for restoration and repair to churches in Surrey. I will be putting the sponsorship form on the Information Desk in August.

St John's has received 2 grants in the past and I hope we will get another one for the Spire Appeal. I will put this year's sponsorship money towards the Spire Appeal. Your support will be greatly appreciated and spur me on. If you would like to find out more about taking part—'riding' or 'striding' - please contact Angela Gillman (01737 552040)



## SUMMER CONCERT A TEDDY BEAR'S PICNIC

AN EVENING OF SUMMER DELIGHTS FOR TIRED LITTLE TEDDY BEARS FEATURING RUTTER'S *A SPRIG OF THYME* AND MUSIC BY ELGAR, GERSHWIN AND COLE PORTER

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**Saturday 15th July 2023  
7.30pm**





## Charity Garden Party 28<sup>th</sup> August

(Bank Holiday Monday).

**9 Placehouse Lane ~ 11am-5pm**

Do come and enjoy morning coffee and cake, or a cream tea in the afternoon. There will be crafts, cards, gifts, plants, a raffle and tombola. Entrance is free. All proceeds help to pay for the children in The Alpha Ministry School in the Acholi Quarters, Kasese, Uganda, to have a daily bowl of porridge. Do hope

you can join us and do bring family and friends . **Trevor & Sandra Meadowcroft**

## Sending Blessings on Paul...



It's amazing how the last dozen years have flown by since I first arrived here at St John's. I remember meeting Paul for the first time in the Rectory. We sat round the dining room table and I asked Paul something about, 'Where was the church spiritually?' because that was important to me. And he answered something along the lines of being open to the Holy Spirit. Being alive in the power of the Spirit is,

for me, what it means to feel fully alive to Christ as I join God in his mission.

Paul's favourite verse is Jesus' words in John 10:10, 'I came that they may have life and have it to the full', meaning abundant, an overflowing life, and that fullness of life is something Paul has brought to St John's. Paul has run many courses including numerous Alpha courses, Prayer Ministry training, and Explore the Bible series 'from beginning to end'.

Paul has graciously given his love and care to the spiritual needs of St John's, and we have loved the joy of knowing Jesus come close to us through him. In preparing to lead Sunday worship, many times Paul will have looked through this door to the altar. This is a photo of that 'pause moment' before walking out to lead a service, knowing God in this place.





Easter soon follows Christmas, and we give thanks for the many times Paul and Nicy have come to Spring Harvest, for it's been a time of blessing, for the Church family, connecting and relaxing with each other, enjoying fellowship together.

Paul established the essence of St John's when he first came with the words next to our logo:



*St John the Evangelist  
Helping people meet Jesus*



And this all comes together here in this photo of Paul touching the hand of Baby Jesus: a moving moment as this child is Clara, his granddaughter (mum Amy looks on). Everything you see here also expresses the loving touch that Paul has given this church.



The one thing also dear to Paul's heart is the Word of God. The Bible is his point of reference for his daily life and he has made it ours too. So perhaps you would like to read the following Scripture, with Paul in mind, and then follow it with prayer....to send Paul from here with our love and blessing

**Jeremiah 29:11-14** For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.





Saying goodbye to Paul and sending him on his way, knowing Jesus is right beside him, is a blessing both for Paul and for us, because although we know Jesus leads Paul on, Jesus stays on with us too, to guide us into his next season at St John's.

## **Sending Blessings on Nicy...**



Nicy has captivated the hearts of all of us, with her strong leadership behind the scenes supporting Paul in everything he has done. Nicy's leading of the singers, the Mothers' Union, and organisation and participation in many events, including singing in the Cafe Concert, Cream Teas, Rectory Garden events, social Civic gatherings, and so many more things, have given this church a sense of community. I especially remember the Cafe Concert and Nicy

& Paul's duet singing 'There's a Hole in my Bucket' It was very funny! And do you remember the Christmas viral sensation during lockdown when Carols were broadcast from the Rectory Porch, with Paul in his bright jumper on the accordion, and Nicy singing. Nicy's strength and joy comes from her prayerful presence with the Lord as she has given him such devoted and loyal service. So we give our heartfelt thanks to Nicy for all that she has given us in his name.

Please pray for both Paul and Nicy as they prepare to leave St John's after 20 years of fulfilled ministry. Pray also for Tim, as our Tower Captain, who has called us to worship every Sunday in leading the Bell Ringers. Many of us





watched him grow up here and have very fond memories of him. We will miss you Tim! Pray for Amy & Ollie, who will have so many joyful memories of St John's, especially on their wedding day, and of course pray for Baby Clara too.

We say goodbye, giving thanks to God for all that we have received from God through them all. You may like to use these words:

*Loving God, giver of life,  
Pour out your Spirit on Paul, on Nicy,  
on Tim, on Amy & Ollie, and on little Clara,  
Guide them with your wisdom.  
Encourage them with your grace  
and bless them so they may  
know your love.  
In Jesus name we pray.  
Amen*

*Sue*

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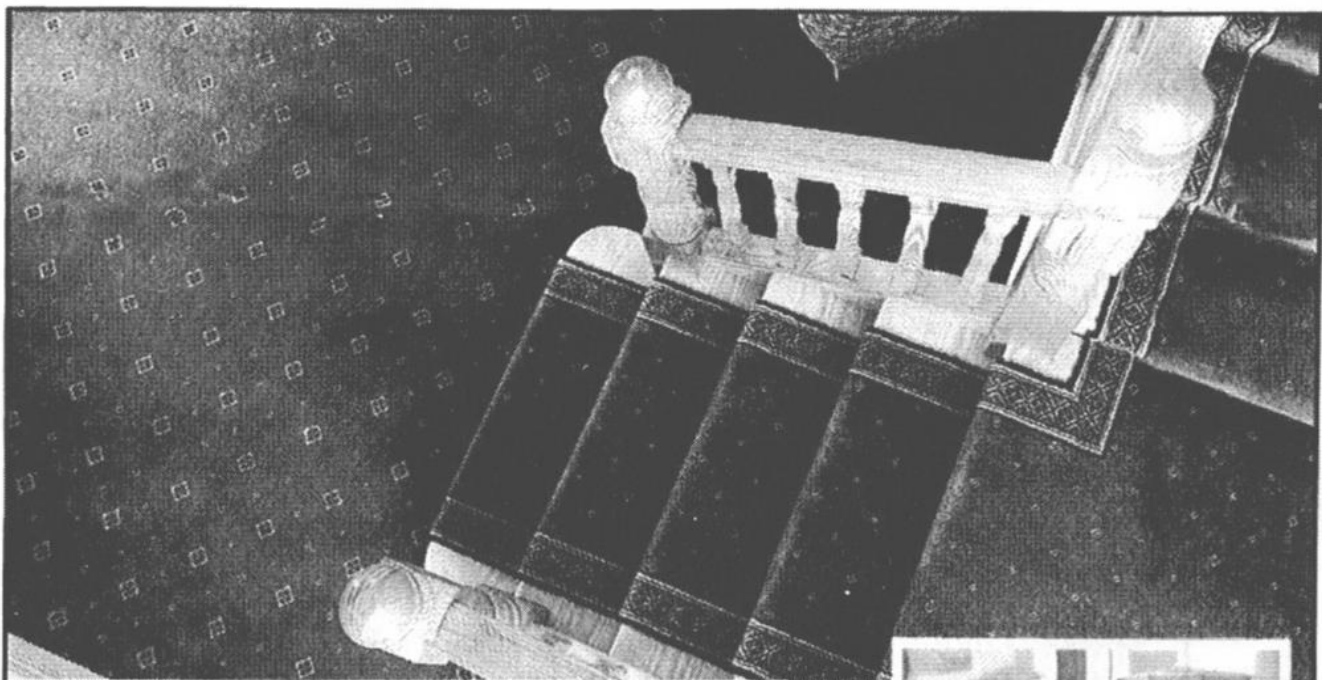
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