

COULSDON  
PARISH  
CHURCH  
St. John



50p

September 2023

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## september

### **1—Friday**

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

### **2—Saturday**

10.00 a.m.. Gardening Morning in Garden of Remembrance

### **3—THIRTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed on Facebook/through church website)*

11.30 a.m. Baptism Service, in Church

### **5—Tuesday**

9.45 a.m. MU Service, in the Old Church

7.30 p.m. Prayer Meeting, in the Old Church

### **7—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

### **10—FOURTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

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

11.15 a.m. Family Service, in Church

### **13—Wednesday**

10.30 a.m. House Group Leaders meet, in the Old Church

5.00 p.m. Life Group meets, in the Old Church

### **14—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

### **16—Saturday**

10.00 a.m. Baptism Preparation, in Church

## **17—FIFTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

9.30 a.m. Worship Together, in Church

## **19—Tuesday**

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

## **20—Wednesday**

5.00 p.m. Life Group meets, in the Old Church

## **21—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

## **23—Saturday**

3.00 p.m. 'Latin Fiesta' - in aid of Spire Fund *(details further on)*

## **24—SIXTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion with Archdeacon Greg Prior, in Church  
*(and live-streamed on Facebook/ through church website)*

11.15 a.m. Family Service 'Harvest Festival'

## **27—Wednesday**

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

5.00 p.m. Life Group meets, in the Old Church

## **28—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

# october

## **1—SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY**

### **Harvest Festival**

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed on Facebook/through church website)*

11.30 a.m. Baptism Service, in Church

## **3—Tuesday**

9.45 a.m. MU Service, in the Old Church

## **5—Thursday**

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

## **7—Saturday**

10.00 a.m.. Gardening Morning in Garden of Remembrance (to 12.00)

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

Can't get to Church? You can still 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) .



## ‘INTERREGNUM’

As September starts, here we are in an ‘interregnum’ because, as you know, Paul has retired and is moving to Kington, Herefordshire, . So, you may be thinking, “why isn’t there an immediate replacement for Paul due now?”. [*I’ve already been asked several times locally ‘Have you got a new vicar yet’ or ‘When’s the new vicar coming?’*] However, in the Church of England, there is always a planned gap – a time for reflection – before a new appointment. The term for this is interregnum - which, in effect, means that there is vacancy between leaders—so we are now ‘a parish in vacancy’. But we are in safe hands with Sue Thomas, our Assistant Priest, and Christine McCutcheon, our Licensed (Lay) Reader continuing to lead us in our regular pattern of services, as well as two very active Churchwardens and a strong PCC (parish church council). The churchwardens write:

"As Paul and Nicy have now retired to Kington, we are entering an interregnum. Sue, Christine, Ralph, Gill and Wendy together with those working behind the scenes will endeavour to make sure everything runs smoothly. However, if there are concerns or worries within our Church Family, please speak to the Churchwardens, Gill or Ralph."

Gill---01737 553596 [gillthaxter@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gillthaxter@hotmail.co.uk)

Ralph---0208 409 1662 [rigoodwin@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:rigoodwin@blueyonder.co.uk)

Basically it’s up to all of us to pull together and support each other as we wait and pray and the next steps are taken towards finding our next Rector. We will let you know how things progress. **Ed.**

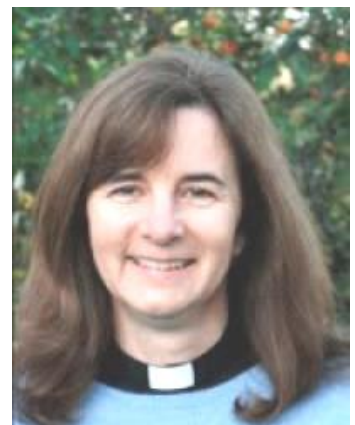


## SUE WRITES ...

### New beginnings...



*St John the Evangelist  
Helping people meet Jesus*



### St John’s begins to look forwards to new beginnings.

Saying goodbye to Paul on Sunday (23<sup>rd</sup> July) was moving, and everyone had happy tears knowing amazingly God-filled moments full of love and joy, and thanksgiving, for Paul’s ministry among us.

We prayed the Aaronic blessing over Paul: *‘The Lord Bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you his peace.’* (Numbers 6:24-27).

And for Nicy, we prayed from Ephesians: *'I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit, so that Christ may dwell in your heart.'* (Ephesians 3:18-19).

We sent them from the 9.30 service with our blessing. **Family Service** followed and a **Prayer Arch** meant everyone could pray 'Bless you, Paul' as he walked up and down, so getting a double blessing as we played and sang 'Amazing Grace'. This photo encapsulates that happy moment, knowing God's love with Paul and with us. Here is Paul bending down to get through the little arms stretching up high as they could.



Someone said that 'the air was full of love, something very special, and it is something we shall hold for a very long time.' As we move forward with the Vacancy, Archdeacon Greg Prior, is overseeing the process with St John's. You may like to join myself, and Christine, for an hour of worship songs and open prayer.

The **Prayer Meeting** will be in the church, to pray for Greg, for all those involved in the planning and decision-making, and most importantly of all, to **pray for the new Incumbent-to-be**. There will be worship songs and open prayer, every month.



**Prayer Meeting**  
5 September 7.30pm in church

*Helping people meet Jesus*

**St John's Prayers**

*Please pray for everyone in our church in the vacancy and for the new Incumbent-to-be. Pray for the process, for those involved in making decisions on our behalf, and for the advert and Parish Profile that are being put together.*



Life in St John's, and for me in the Diocese, is getting busier as September approaches. Exciting things are happening: a Latin Fiesta evening on 23<sup>rd</sup> September (do book with Roxy—details further on.).

You may remember [Mervyn Thomas CMG](#) who came to St John's in February. He returns to speak at an [OPEN MEETING](#) of Deanery Synod at St Mary's Church, Purley Oaks on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30pm refreshments for 8pm start. I will Chair the meeting - so hope to get through the business at the beginning asap! Mervyn is an international, inspirational, and humble person who speaks out for those with no voice; for those who are persecuted, and he has spoken at the UN, European Parliament, Capitol Hill, Washington DC, and to our own Parliament.



Mervyn saw a need for justice and his book *'Standing Up and Speaking Out - 40 years of fighting injustice'* is a good read, light-hearted yet serious as he personally takes a stand, putting himself at risk in dubious circumstances, particularly in Romania. He set up *Christian Solidarity Worldwide* and now chairs *UKFoRB Forum*, having taken over from *Bishop Philip Mountstephen*. The Forum is made up of

over 90 civil institutions and NGOs, groups of all faiths, and none. So do come to hear Mervyn speak, and to hear the positive work going on, things that don't get mention in the media!

And in the Diocese, you may like to come to the [Bishop's Spirituality Day at Southwark Cathedral](#) on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 10-1.30 pm, £5.00. I shall be leading the day, along with two keynote speakers: *Natalia-Nana Lester-Bush* who will speak on the theme of 'rest'. I met her on a retreat for 'weary activists', and with my work on persecution, this was very helpful. So we look forward to her helping us to experience some 'rest'. *Rev'd Canon Dr Andrew Bishop*, priest-in-charge of *Croydon Minster*, will talk about 'sleep'. With some *silence, musical nocturnes, and prayers for peace*, this will lead into a time of healing and wholeness. Three bishops, along with the *Spiritual Formation Group*, will anoint people with oil should they wish it. Here is the link to book: <https://rest-southwark-2023.eventbrite.co.uk>

All this takes place under this [moon](#) - an art exhibition going on at the same time - it will be very atmospheric! Perhaps get a group together and have lunch after...

I think that's enough for now - I shall let you know something of the hens next time.

[Looking forward to seeing you at these events, and of course in church too!](#)

*Sue*





After our August 'downtime' when Church and Old Coulsdon generally have been much quieter, everything gets going again in September as we head for the usual busy autumn. House Groups restart, the

children's group at the Sunday 9.30 Parish Communion services begins again, Pram Service returns and the Life Group will be starting some new study sessions. Be sure to come and join in with any or all of our services, groups and events—we look forward to welcoming you. If you'd like more information about anything, just contact the Parish Office—01737 552461 or stjohns@coulsdon.net

## THE MONTHLY GARDENING GROUP ...

... will be meeting in the churchyard on **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September** from 10.00-12.00. This very small group does a wonderful job in keeping the Garden of Remembrance area so neat and tidy. If you could spare some time to help them, they would be delighted to see you—even if only for a short while. If you can bring your own tools that would be helpful—but don't worry if not. They're a lovely friendly group and we're very grateful for what they do. If you'd like to know more call Gill on 01737 553956 or just come along



## PRAM SERVICE FOR BABIES, TODDLERS & PRESCHOOLERS



Pram Service returns after the August break to its usual third Tuesday in the month spot at 9.45 for 10.00 a.m. start in the church —**Tuesday 19 September** this month. All parents and grandparents with babies or toddlers will find a warm welcome at this very relaxed little service. Come for songs, 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, tired mums and grannies all very welcome. Why not come and give us a try.—we'd love to see you

## HARVEST FESTIVAL

There will be two opportunities to celebrate our Harvest Festival this year—on **Sunday 24 September** at the 11.15 a.m. **Family Service** and on **Sunday 1 October** at the 9.30 **Parish Communion**. So you can take your pick or why not come to both—they're sure to be very different! If you would like to bring something to church as a thank-offering, goods received will be distributed to 'Nightwatch' and 'Purley Food Hub'. :

**Nightwatch** volunteers are out every night in the centre of Croydon giving food and other help to homeless and other vulnerable peo-





ple. They help people at every level of homelessness, from the street homeless to those in hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation and vulnerable former homeless people who need continuing support if they are not to become homeless again. There are no paid staff, and no office premises. They need cans of soup (*not packets*) and also canned food, vegetables, meat and fish for people who have basic cooking facilities, and cans of tinned fruit for people who have no facilities at all. Canned milk is also popular.

**Purley Food Hub** is an emergency food bank, set up 10 years ago and run by volunteers, that helps local people in crisis. They provide clients and their families with tinned and other non-perishable food and since the start of the Covid pandemic they've been delivering supplies direct to clients' homes. At

the time of writing they need: long life whole milk for children, jars of peanut butter and fish/meat paste, small packets/boxes of 40 tea bags, 500g packets of long grain rice, tins of ham and chicken, jellies, Angel Delight, tinned rice pudding, unisex deodorant, shampoo and bottles of washing up liquid



~ ~ ~

**Saturday**  
**23rd September**  
**3.00 – 5.30pm**

**LATIN FIESTA**

Come and share in the fun at this vibrant fundraising event whilst helping raise funds for the restoration of

St John's Spire. Enjoy a buffet of delicious food, cocktails and entertainment from great dancers. For those who fancy a go, there is a chance to learn some basic Salsa moves. Get ready for the Hora Loca (crazy time!) at the end, when everyone lets their hair down, balloons come down, garlands are handed out and you can show your newly-acquired skills on the dance floor dancing to Latin American music – all for a good cause!

**Venue:** Roxy's garden in Coulsdon or in church if bad weather.

**Tickets £15pp.**

Numbers are limited so tickets are available on a first come first served basis.

**Contact Roxy Moore** at: [roxy.moore225@gmail.com](mailto:roxy.moore225@gmail.com) or message/phone

Mob. 07989 851406 to get your name on the guest list.

**Let's have fun together and help our fundraising to save St John's Spire!**



## Surrey Churches Preservation Trust

Most counties in England have an annual 'Ride & Stride', on the second Saturday in September, to raise money for church restoration and repair. The idea is that cyclists and walkers are given a list of participating churches in their area. They map out their own route to visit churches by bike or on foot, and then get friends to sponsor them for a fixed amount per church visited.

The money that is collected is divided into two. Half the monies go to the church of the cyclist/walkers' choice; the other half is retained by the Surrey Churches Preservation Trust for distribution to churches in need (that apply for a grant). In the twenty years that the Ride and Stride has been running in Surrey over £500,000 has been raised—St John's has had 2 grants from the Trust in the past.

This year the Ride and Stride is on **Saturday 10 September**. I will be taking part, trying to visit as many churches as possible on the day and I'm looking for sponsorship. Half the money raised will go towards the Spire Fund at St John's and the other half will go to the SCPT for distribution to other Surrey churches in need of restoration. John Alger has very kindly said he will accompany me. If you would like to sponsor us and help St John's, there is a sponsorship form on the Information Desk at the back of church. Thank you. *Angela Gillman*

## MOTHERS' UNION ~ Going Forward

We said farewell to Nicy at our MU Social evening at the Rectory together with our heartfelt thanks for all she had done for our branch whilst she had been our branch leader. Over the years she has been leading us, we have some wonderful memories of Cafe Concerts, fundraising events and always her enthusiasm, compassion and fun. She enabled us to enjoy all she did for us. It will be very difficult to replace her but together we will try to continue her ideas.



Our Holy Communion, during the Interregnum will be replaced by a **Service of Prayer and Reflection** led by Chris McCutcheon, **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September** at 9.45 am. On **Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September** is our **MU 'Wave of Prayer'** in the Old Church at 11 am, followed by refreshments. This is a special event in the MU calendar as the Mothers' Union around the whole world join together to pray. **Pray, Knit and Chat** will be on **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>** in the Old Church. Please do join us as all are welcome to all our events and services. . *Elaine*



## **MOTHERS' UNION - Transformation - Now!**

### **SEPTEMBER focus: Peace and Reconciliation**

Mothers' Union is a Christian organisation that has been supporting families world-wide 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.



#### **REFLECTION:**

*The olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane is over 2,000 years old. It was a silent witness to Jesus' anguish before his trial. It now bears the scars of many wounds from which have grown fruitful shoots of new life, reflecting the message of the resurrection.*

*A dove brought an olive branch to Noah, a sign of peace and reconciliation with God. The olive tree is a sign of the cost of God's enduring love for us and generosity in creation. We are called to reflect that love and peace with each other and with the earth.*

#### **FAITH IN ACTION - Comfort and welcome in Norfolk**

***"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."*** Hebrews 13:2

Over the past few years, Norwich MU has been assisting with the resettlement of Syrian and Afghan refugees. These refugee families have often been in temporary accommodation for some time, with a community of others in the same circumstances, before being offered a place to resettle. The idea of moving elsewhere naturally leads to trepidation. Ways needed to be found to make refugees feel as comfortable as possible.

People in diverse circumstances will have different needs. At the start of the resettlement project, Norwich MU joined together with other organisations to make a



difference - their contribution was to make up the beds for incoming refugees. They wanted refugee families to be well-cared for in a thoughtful way. Often when members went to make up the beds, the local mosque had already laid a prayer mat and members were instructed not to move that because it was already facing

the right direction. This attention to detail and respect makes all the difference. ***Pray for refugees coming into our country, that we would find ways of supporting and welcoming them.***

**MONTHLY PRAYER**

May I know peace: Peace in this world. In my country, my community, peace in my family. May I know peace in myself, and be a giver of peace... As a peacemaker in my family, in my community, my country, a peacemaker in this world. Amen

**MU Supper at The Rectory in July**

Nicy invited all branch members to an evening supper as a thank you for all their support during her time as Branch Leader. Elaine, on behalf of all members, presented Nicy with gifts and a card as a thank you to her too. The evening was also an opportunity to present Jean Loh with a well-deserved long service certificate and flowers in recognition of 30 years service to MU.



The follow-  
received

*Thank you  
ing. It was  
have so many MU members together to say a heartfelt farewell to Nicy, and to  
voice their appreciation of all that she has done for MU during her years at St  
John's. Lovely food and great organisation as always.*

*Your careful preparation for the weeks ahead, when the branch is without a leader,  
will mean that the group continues in the caring and purposeful role within the  
church family, with worship and prayer at its centre.*

*Thank you so much for a very special party and for so many other things as*

ing comments were  
from members:

*for a lovely even-  
very special to*

*well! It was good to all be together in such a relaxed setting - I felt it 'consolidated' us as a group, preparing us for the changes ahead.*

*We did enjoy the delicious spread and wine - it was a real treat!*



And to round off, a picture of Nicy with the MU branch banner (usually beside the altar in church) at the MU Diocesan Festival Service in Southwark Cathedral in July—her last official duty as Branch Leader.

St Andrew's Church Coulsdon  
invites you to a  
Noah's Ark Art Festival and Autumn Fair



Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> September

11 am - 2 pm

Wildlife Show in church at 2 pm

Games \* lunches \* cakes \* books \* preserves \* jewellery\* tombola \*  
raffle \* jigsaws\* white Elephant  
All are welcome. Admission free.

## CLIMATE CHANGE – TAKING ACTION OURSELVES

Read in a magazine recently –  
5 ideas for personal action to  
challenge and encourage us:-

- 1. Use your voice**  
Write to your MP or local council, talk to your employer, make green choices in all parts of your life, and be the change you want to see.
- 2. Reduce personal car use**  
This is the single biggest emission-cutting action you can take – it's 100 times more effective than recycling.
- 3. Change your diet**  
Go lower carbon by eating less red meat and dairy in particular – it's much better for you!
- 4. Turn down your thermostat**  
Insulate, draft-proof and wrap up to reduce your home's carbon footprint.
- 5. Waste less**  
Don't rely on recycling to do all the heavy lifting – buy better, less frequently.

***Eco Group***



## The Bishop's Certificate Course



'The Bishop's Certificate is a one-year course for anybody who wants to be more confident about what they believe, read the Bible with more understanding, and reflect on their journey as a Christian.'

I've just completed this one year course and I've really loved it!

I opted to attend in person at Trinity House, near Southwark Cathedral, on Saturday mornings (September-June). There are also options of attending evening Zoom sessions or 'in person' evening sessions.



I enjoyed listening to our five different course tutors and to the course director, Peter Graystone, and taking part in the class. I especially enjoyed the modules on the Old and New Testament. The highlight for me was the 24-hour residential event held at Wychcroft, the Southwark Diocese retreat centre amidst beautiful Surrey countryside. I explored a secret garden, and an old chapel and we had services in another. We got creative learning about the Trinity and our lives and with prayer.

I made many new friends and we're meeting up before our celebration at Southwark Cathedral where the Bishop will be presenting us with our certificates, whether or not we completed the five assignments.

It's made me think of my vocations. I recommend you give it a go!

**Charlotte Best**

P.S. Just wanted to tell you about my granddaughter, Holly Upton (17½) who was at Coulsdon CofE Primary School, and attended Tim Hill's Youth Alpha in 2017, who has recently returned from Tanzania. The trip was organised by St. Bede's School and directed by the charity 'Go MAD' (Go Make A Difference). She did amazing work tending to those with leprosy. Here she, and other members of the team, are moisturising affected limbs.



**Dear Friends**

**Nicy and I want to say a big thank you to you for the very generous gift of £1900, plus other smaller gifts, that were presented to us at our leaving tea on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. We are so grateful for your kind messages and good wishes as we set out on this new**

**chapter of our lives in Kington, Herefordshire. We've had two lovely weeks in Italy and are now gradually being surrounded by packing boxes ready for our move from the rectory on August 31<sup>st</sup>.**

**With our love PAUL & NICY**

**A SERVICE for REMEMBERING THOSE WHO HAVE DIED**  
**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 3pm at St John's Church**



A special service held annually, when we particularly remember those who have died in the last two years but anyone who has lost a loved one is welcome to come and have their loved one's name read out. If you would like someone remembered, please contact the Parish Office by email [stjohns@coulsdon.net](mailto:stjohns@coulsdon.net) or on 01737 552461. The names will be read out in a setting of praise and thanksgiving, and you will be given an opportunity to light a candle. For those unable to attend, the service will be live-streamed.

**KEEPING UP WITH TONY**

I hope I'm not wishing my life away by starting an article for the September Magazine in July, whilst Wimbledon is still on, and those amazing athletes in the Tour de France haven't yet reached the Alps; but things happen and if I don't catch them in writing they could be gone forever!

For many of us this Summer will be dominated by the realisation that Paul and Nicy have left us for pastures new in Kington; but what a wonderful day we were able to give them on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July.



*Our beloved Rector moments before the start of his final Parish Communion*

Parish Communion to a packed church was rounded off by Rev Sue speaking the Aaronic blessing over Paul and another blessing from Ecclesiastes over Nicy. We pray that they will go on their way with light hearts and carrying 20 years of very happy memories.



*Paul starts his last long walk down the aisle to spontaneous and rapturous applause*

..... but the day was not over, he still had to conduct his final Family Service, before returning for afternoon tea with the majority of his congregation – and we have to thank our Warden Ralph Goodwin and Andrew King for converting the church seating into



a large but informal café, where we were treated to cream tea, cake, hot drinks, and even Prosecco before hearing warm speeches from Rev Sue and Churchwarden Gill. Paul then stood up with his own farewells in front of his whole family – including baby Clara.

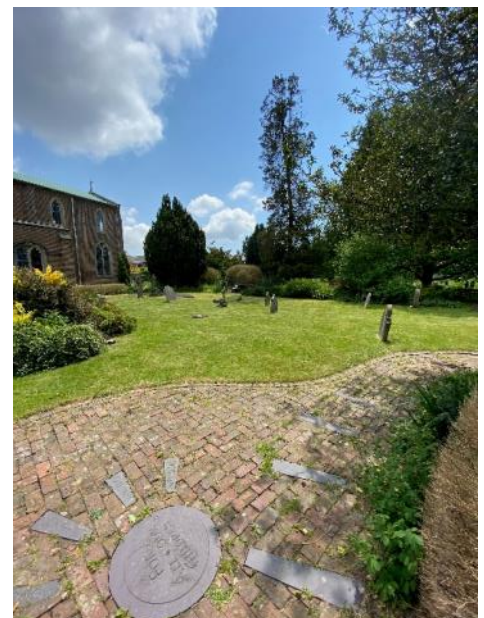


*What a lovely day – thank you Paul and Nicy It has been wonderful*

After all that it seems a bit mundane to talk about ‘Gardening Club’ but it has become a big part of the life of St John’s. The July working party met a week late this time as our usual first Saturday clashed with the Village Fair, and what a brilliant team we had in – thanks to Kevin who had made a good start with the mowing on the previous Friday evening. There was a forecast for serious rain so John started work early – 8:30ish – but was joined for the 10:00am start by Sheila, Anne, Jon & Jill, our new friend Julia from last month, our young neighbour George Coleshill, and his best pal, Ollie. Ollie already has his Duke of Edinburgh Silver award, and with George working towards his, between them they put in a huge effort with the two strimmers. At the end of the day the churchyard – in front of and behind the church (thanks for that bit Jon & Jill) looked absolutely splendid; a fact acknowledged by several passing people who had come in to find/visit loved ones. Without exception they all thanked us for the work we do to keep things looking nice.



*These pictures are from last month but are a reminder of just how lovely our churchyard is in the sunshine. This time Julia spent two hours on her knees digging the weeds out of the ‘Children’s’ circle of dreams – but still a lot of weeding to do.*





Not quite up to our standard, but very welcome nonetheless, was the visit by our contractors yesterday (11<sup>th</sup> July) who cut down the jungle in the old part of the churchyard. A very difficult task at the best of times, but at least visitors will not find themselves lost in the savannah now,

or come across the herd of wildebeest that were rumoured to live there!

Before leaving the gardening though I must offer a tick and gold stars to Kevin for his work in the approach to the lychgate, and the triangle of grass outside Rose Cottage which once again looks loved and cared for; and also to Jeff, John, and the Scouts who put in an evening's hard graft clearing yet more grass and weeds from the less well cared for areas of the churchyard. It is much appreciated guys and girls, so thank you very much on behalf of all of us.

There was no gardening possible last Saturday (5<sup>th</sup> August) due to the appalling weather but we had a good session this morning, when I was joined by John Alger, and our recent friend Julie (I've been calling her Julia – but it's Julie). She continued weeding the brick circle, whilst John and I did a lot of mowing, and cutting back low lying but overgrown shrubs on the far side of the Garden – in doing so a grey marble grave was partially uncovered – but we'll need the big croppers to cut away some of the hard woody stems that cover it. A job for another day but we're beginning to get on top of it.

Whilst still metaphorically in the churchyard; some time ago a longstanding member of our congregation was telling me something of what went on in the laying down of the Garden of Remembrance, and the brick path in particular. Apparently the plans unknowingly incorporated the energy fields (or ley lines) said to pass through ancient religious sites, and that they can still be found today with the right equipment and belief. I'm a bit of a sceptic but our daughter isn't, and living only ten minutes or so from Stonehenge you may understand why! Anyway, yesterday after work she accompanied us to the churchyard with her copper dowsing rods, and together we walked slowly up to the sun-dial plinth. As we approached, the tips of the rods came together - astounded I then had a go, and lo and behold they did it for me too. Then we walked round the brick path and as we arrived at the circle with the blessing for children, in the very centre of the slate circle, they came together again, although even more strongly. It seems unbelievable in this the C21st, but dowsing has been around for centuries, and from what I saw and experienced myself, is still alive and well.

Almost as an afterthought and not worked by 'magic', I should also mention that

the tower clock is no longer six minutes fast! It is spot on again. It necessitated a climb up the old wooden ladder in the ringing chamber to jiggle the buttons on the control box, whilst my assistant (Rev Paul on this occasion) checked from the path that the big golden hands on the clock outside, synchronised themselves with the digital clock inside. It would be fun to watch the change during the +/- hour in Spring and Autumn, but that takes place at 2:00am and would mean leaving a nice warm bed – so maybe not!

By the time this goes to print of course Rev Paul and Nicy will have gone, and we'll be coming to terms with another interregnum. Rev Sue, our Wardens, and Christine will be up to their ears, so we must all rally round and provide as much help and support as we can.

A final thought for this 'epistle' - I'd like to share something from the You Version bible app that starts off most of my days. It comes from Psalms 133:1 and reads **"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"**

I pray that during this busy time, we can all work together to provide support to those who need it, not just within the church community but to all those who cross our paths in life.

God bless. **Tony**

August has now dawned and some folks representing the Bereavement Group met in the churchyard on a (forecast to be) very wet morning to tackle the bind weed and brambles. Gill writes: 'We still held our "one-off" gardening morning despite the threat of rain and more rain!!! Thanks go to Tony, Jen, Sylvia, Sheila and Gill for clearing weeds and brambles galore.' Here they are hard at work.



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I hand-designed these cards and enjoyed doing it! I hope you like them.



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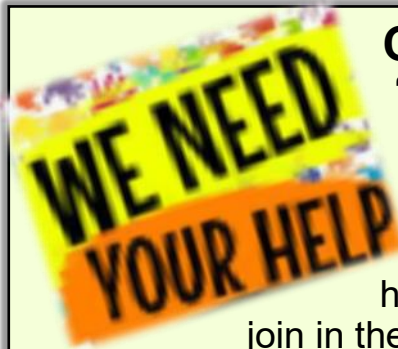
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## CHRISTMAS is COMING!

“Go away” you might say, “I don’t want to think about that yet!” But we just want you to know that St. John’s Christmas Fair will be on **Saturday 18 November**. So please could you start gathering together items to stock the stalls—unwanted gifts, homemade goods: pickles, handicrafts, etc. and keep the date free to give a hand and join in the fun! Thank you.

## CHURCH OF OLD COULSDON

<b>CLERGY</b>	The Rector, - Parish in Vacancy (All enquiries to the Churchwardens or Parish Office ~ see below) The Rev. Sue Thomas	020 8406 9300
	(available Thursdays & Sundays)	
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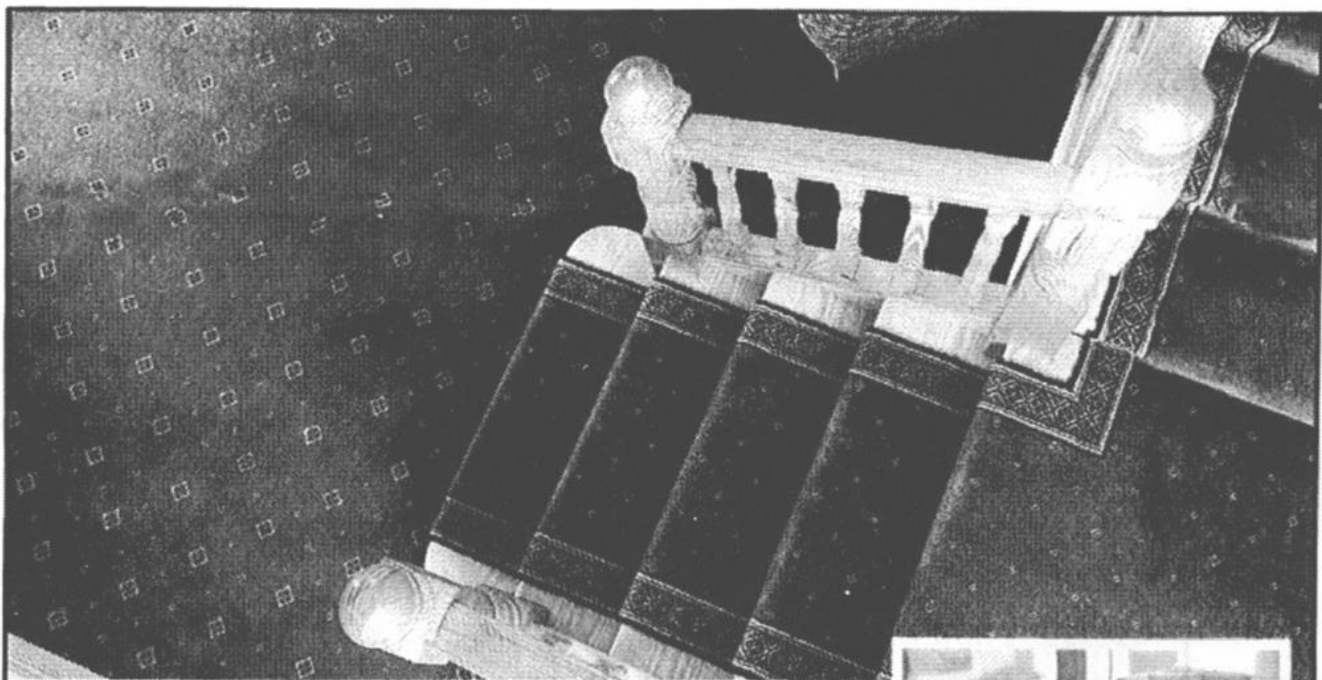
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