

Old Malden News



The Parish Magazine of St John the Baptist, Malden

September 2020

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**The Parish Magazine of
St John the Baptist Parish Church Malden**
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Hall Bookings	Mrs Pat Sutton	020 8942 8321
Parish Website:	www.stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk	
Parish Office:	administrator@stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk	

OMN Letter September

On the 16th of August St. John's re-opened for public worship. In our thousand year history the Church has been closed before for periods of time due to plague, political unrest, and even when the building was falling down around the ears of parishioners because Elizabeth I refused to pay for repairs during her tenure as Lord of the Manor. Poor Rev'd Chetwynd Stapylton even had to fetch a churchwarden out the Manor House to make a third member of his congregation. Thankfully churchwardens are of a higher caliber these days! So, while St. John's has lived through such times as these before, they have understandably been very hard for us who have not known such difficulties before. But the rhythm of prayer across the parish has continued at home as well as in our ancient church building. Long may that continue!

Covid-19 has made us discover new ways of living out of necessity. Technology has come to the fore and all of us have appreciated the kindness of friends and neighbours. As some have been able to return to Church, others are being cautious and remaining at home. That is a decision only you can make and there is no pressure on anyone to do anything they are not comfortable doing. Safety is paramount! Luckily, thanks to Sally Josolyne and Harvey Howlett, we have added live streaming to our repertoire. This has been an important milestone because it means St. John's can gather together again in praise and worship wherever we are. Looking ahead, it will be our priority to negotiate the uncharted waters of the autumn and winter ahead. We don't know what Covid may do once we're all stuck indoors again in the wet and cold, nor the impact of schools reopening fully again.

As the autumn approaches, we have several things in hand as we move to re-open more fully. Heritage Open Days at St. John begins Friday 11th and runs through Monday 14th. This year we will have Anne Beales with our Traidcraft stall and cold drinks available as we use this opportunity to engage directly with some of our many visitors to our churchyard during lockdown. The new service pattern will begin on Wednesday 16th at noon with Holy Communion including the previous Sunday's readings and sermon, as well as the additional service on Sundays at 4:00pm from the 20th. Harvest will be different this year as we will still be booking places and large services are not allowed. The Kingston Food Bank has asked for vouchers and pre-paid supermarket cards to distribute to people needing a helping hand. In October our Annual Parochial Church meeting will be held as we elect representatives to Deanery Synod and PCC. Further ahead we have Advent and Christmas to plan for. These will likely be smaller celebrations given the Covid epidemic. Our carol service this year will be live streamed as the Church will be given over to Barry, Marilyn, and the choir so that they can sing and maintain a safe distance from one another. This could be made available to the wider public and be a bit of a fundraising opportunity for those who would like to support St. John's financially. Our drop in numbers attending church and the lack of plate collections as well as missing out on our normal summer and Christmas fairs have hit us hard. A sizeable shortfall of at least £10,000 is on the cards for this year, and 2021 may see a deficit as well. So we must continue to be creative as we face an uncertain future because we will eventually come out the other side of this crisis and, hopefully, be all the better and stronger for it.

Michael

Booking the Service

Ordinarily we would have around a hundred people attending our 9:45am service on Sundays, but due to the social distancing restrictions this had been severely limited. St. John's has room for 18 "Bubbles" per service, which means we can accommodate 18 households (either individuals or families etc.) **When booking, please only use one name per household so we will have spaces available for others!** The system isn't sophisticated enough to recognise separate households unfortunately.

St. John's is working with the Government's Track and Trace initiative so we will keep a 28 day record of who is attending which service and ask that anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 report it at once to either me or one of the churchwardens. We want to avoid any further closure of lockdown, but our priority is your and the community's safety.

Last Sunday as we held our first service in Church together since March. We had 33 people in attendance. As you can see it will not be possible to accommodate our entire congregation unless there are additional services offered. I know everyone would prefer to be at the 9:45am service, but we will all need to be flexible if this is to work. From September we will add a later service on Sunday and also celebrate Holy Communion on Wednesdays at mid-day with the readings and a sermon from the preceding Sunday. Barry has kindly offered to play for both Sunday services. The alternative would be to work out a rota so that everyone could attend only one service a month so that everyone had a chance to make their Communion and worship in Church, but I don't think this is what you all really want to do and I would like to avoid that if at all possible. So please use the link below to book or catch us online to watch the service at home.

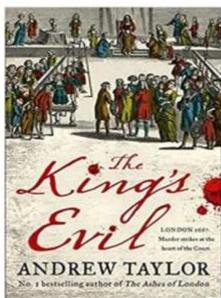
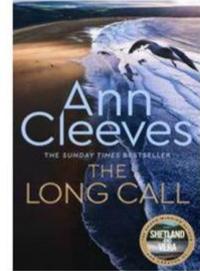
All the best, Michael

Book using the link below!
<https://prayin.io/lyu-syn-nqo>



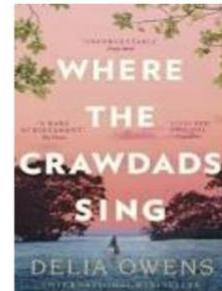
St John's Reading Group September 2020

During August we read **The Long Call by Anne Cleeves** – the first in a new series of murder/mystery novels set in North Devon by the author of favourites 'Vera' and 'Shetland'. This book has a map, lovely setting, interesting characters, powerful evangelical community, kidnap, deception and of course, murder. As the author writes in her introduction, bringing us a new detective is like bringing a new girlfriend or boyfriend home for the first time. Matthew Venn lacks self-confidence and is so unlike Vera or Jimmy but there is a lot of scope for him to develop as a character in this new series. The murder victim is Simon Weldon, someone with a chequered past who is trying to put his life back together. Several of the suspects are associated with a craft/disability centre run by Matthew's husband so a possible conflict of interest which concerns Matthew at times. However, there are other suspects connected to the evangelical group, Simon's two flatmates – and then there is the local curate. It is a good read and the group gave scores of 8,9 & 10/10. We look forward to more in the series.



For our September read we have **The King's Evil by Andrew Taylor** (James Marwood and Cat Lovett No.3 in the series). This is an historical suspense set during the reign of Charles II.

For October: **Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens**. A murder mystery, romance and a celebration of nature, set in North Carolina. A coming of age story of survival which has led to it becoming a very popular read.



Tracey Chevalier's A Single Thread which we had planned for November has a delayed publication date of 29th October for issue in paperback – so we shall delay that until December. We shall make a new choice for November.

At the moment I am catching up with some of the books I have been intending to read for some time – Tomblandy by C J Sansom is the current choice. It is the seventh novel in the Shardlake series and set during the reign of Edward VI and the Protectorate. A brilliant historical novel with lots of action, interesting characters and a glimpse of what it was like for an 'ordinary' person to live in the sixteenth century with all the dangers, privations and uncertainties.

As Autumn approaches with evenings drawing in – a good time to settle down with a good book. So put Covid aside for a while and immerse yourself in a book (or two).

Marilyn Burkett

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2020

11th - 14th September

It is planned that St. John's will once again participate in this event in one form or another. Due to Covid 19 rules arrangements may change at the last moment. Hand sanitisers will be available and masks must be worn in church with social distancing observed. There will be a one way system through the church with the history boards on display in the Coffee Lounge.

Whatever we do we will need members of the congregation to welcome visitors to the church. If you are able to help during any of the times listed below please contact Pat Lovegrove (8942 7699) or email: lovegrove276@btinternet.com.

The church will be OPEN from the 11th to the 14th September as follows:

Friday 11th	- 11.00 am to 4.00pm
Saturday 12th	- 10.00 am to 5.00 pm
Sunday 13th	- 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm
Monday 14th	- 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

The history boards will be on display telling the very interesting story of Old Malden and St. John's over many centuries from Early Iron Age to present time. The theme this year for HOD Open Days is Hidden Nature and there will be opportunity to look for hidden nature in church and the churchyard.

HOD's continue to celebrate all aspects of local heritage, with hundreds of events taking place nationally - all of them free. Again due to Covid 19 considerations a lot of events will be digital only. For details about other participating venues, locally or nationally, go to www.heritageopendays.org.uk

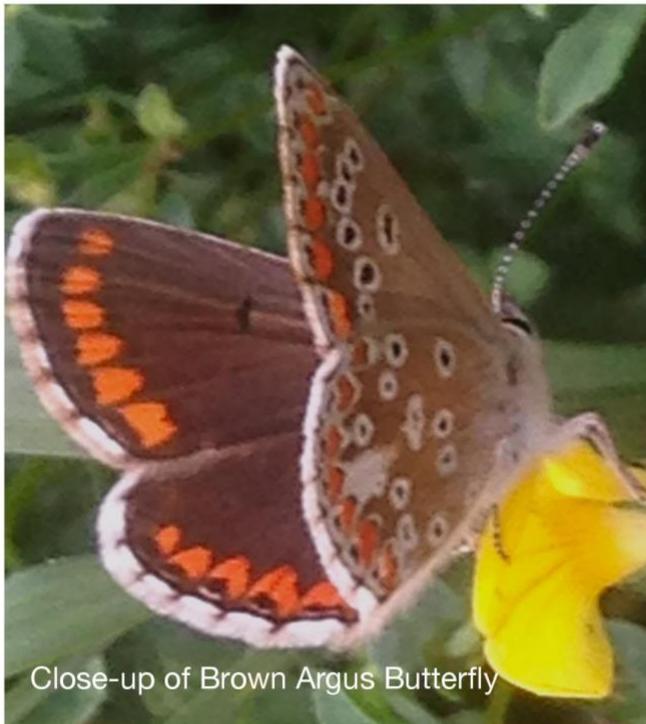
Heritage Open Days is supported by The National Trust and People's Postcode Lottery.



HIDDEN NATURE

75 different species of plants were listed in 2005 in a scientific survey of the ancient wildflower meadow that is now our north churchyard. Last autumn, children here identified 37 more species after a search of the whole churchyard, the car park and the copse next to it. They found trees and shrubs and climbing plants. They used an app on their phones, but they also examined the plants really closely, they touched them. They learned to recognise some of them by name.

This climbing plant was the hardest to identify. - It wasn't yet in our plant books. By chance, it appeared in the local garden centre with a label on it reading '*Lonicera henryi*' (in plain English, Henry's Honeysuckle). Once it had a name, Google knew it was from China



Close-up of Brown Argus Butterfly

Because Brown Argus butterflies appear here every year, we knew there must be wild Geraniums for their caterpillars to feed on. But they don't like our disagreeable-smelling No 1 Geranium called 'Herb Robert' which was the only Geranium listed in the scientific survey.

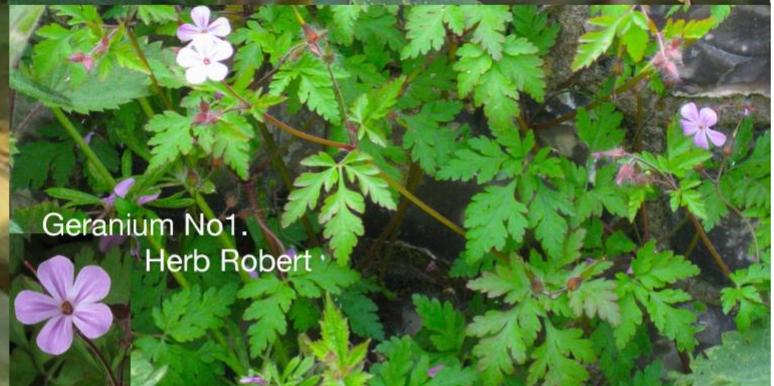
Our No 2 wild Geranium, is the rock-garden favourite called 'Bloody Cranesbill' (possibly because of its crimson autumn leaf-colour). It is long-established on two separate graves. The Survey ignored it. So do Argus butterflies.

*Outdoors, plants are under our feet and in our faces.
Other living things hide from us or fly away from us.
Plants stay still, each offers us the time to stare
deeply into the hidden wonder that is Nature.*

*Plants are the cradle in which our animal existence
became possible, the source of the oxygen we breathe
and the answer to the global threat from carbon dioxide.
Plants constantly put evidence in front of us of the
hidden ecosystems that weave all life together.*



Henry's Honeysuckle

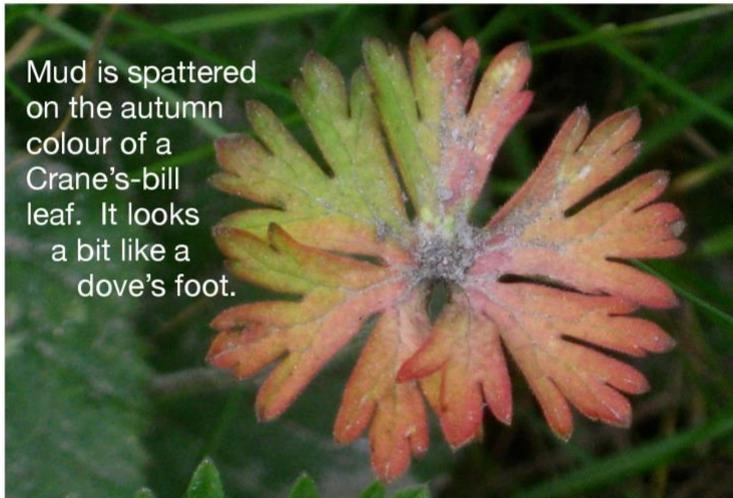


Geranium No1.
Herb Robert



No 2. Bloody Cranesbill - *Geranium sanguineum*

In many allotments, this invasive, pink-flowered American Geranium, '*maculatum*' takes over its own plots. It is taking over Church Path from the cottage garden end. Replacing it with Beth Chatto's lovely, less assertive cultivar, '*espresso*' could be wise.



Mud is spattered on the autumn colour of a Crane's-bill leaf. It looks a bit like a dove's foot.

In the grass along Church Path, rather too close to the wheel-splash of delivery lorries, wild Geranium No 4 (Dove's-foot Crane's-bill) is rather common. It is one of the recognised food-plants that the Brown Argus lays its eggs on - in clay areas. So along the Path it is being encouraged - where it can live less dangerously.

Seeds collected from Meadow Crane's-bill that floods Six-Acre Meadow every year with sky-blue flowers are just awaiting the right weather for sowing.



Meadow Crane's-bill may become Geranium No 7 - *Geranium pratense*

Common Stork's-bill should have been our No 8 Geranium. Last year it was overflowing a grass roadside verge nearby. Sadly, repeated courses of weed killer turned that attractive Council verge into bare earth. So in 2021 survivors will be accorded refugee status in Church Path.



Our No 3 Geranium is called 'Spotted' i.e. '*maculatum*'. Where are these spots?

Spots could just be leaf-blotches. The cultivar '*espresso*' may just join the spots.



Geranium No 5, Cut-leaved Crane's-bill

Meanwhile, this subtler, mauvish '*Hedgerow Crane's-bill*' spreads along the Church Path hedge. Geranium No 6 (from the Pyrenees) is a food-plant Argus butterflies sometimes choose here.

So many places must be shut in the Heritage days of 2020. But for our Outdoor Heritage this is a landmark moment.

Via the website link below you can see:-

all the 207 plant species recorded in and around our churchyard since 2005 (not just the wild Geraniums);

judge our progress in the area managed "with conservation in mind" in the north churchyard;

see which plants are genuinely wild; which have been planted, and which are cottage garden or cultivated species;

see which seeds are about to be sown, and which plants are about to be planted;

see a wish-list of plants it is hoped to obtain;

see which plants must be 'discouraged' if this level of biodiversity is to be maintained.

<https://www.stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk/heritage-open-days/hidden-nature/hidden-nature-found-around-st-johns-church-2005-2020.php>

Stay well - enjoying the wonder of them all.

Chris Beales

Mothers' UNION

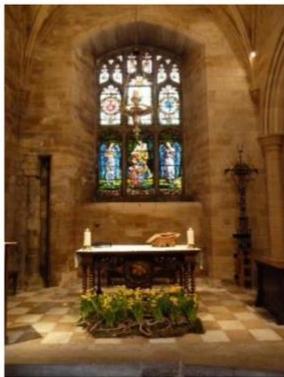
Christian care for families



St John's branch of Mothers' Union is not out on a limb on its own, nor is it inward-looking and parochial. The members of the branch are very much part of the Kingston Deanery and of the Diocese of Southwark. They support MU Southwark Diocese in its projects and decision-making and in turn are supported by the Diocesan President, the Trustees and other members in their faith through services, retreats and quiet days, in their membership and in practical ways such as courses and advice for projects. Southwark Cathedral is our spiritual home and Trinity House is our practical home.



The Mothers' Union is underpinned by prayer, so every meeting locally and in the Diocese begins and ends in prayer. One of the highlights of the calendar is the annual Festival Service which takes place in the Cathedral. Usually between 400 and 500 members attend this exhilarating service where banners are paraded, the Bishop preaches and uplifting words are heard and sung. Do you recognise anyone or anything in this photo?



On the last Wednesday of every month members join together in the Harvard Chapel in the Cathedral for a more contemplative service of thanksgiving and prayer for all members: those in Southwark, those in our Link Dioceses, those worldwide and those in the Year's Mind.

Members are also fortunate in being able to join in regular Quiet Days arranged throughout the Diocese and in the annual residential Retreat. This is held away from the bustle of traffic and everyday life in Wychcroft, the Southwark Retreat House near Bletchingley, where the only sounds heard are the birds singing, the insects buzzing, the sheep baaing and the occasional clip clop of hooves. It is the perfect place in and around which to wind down, relax, and be revigorated with spiritual reflection.



Mothers' Union is not only a prayerful organisation but one in which faith dictates how we work. Wherever



Mothers Union exists in the world, we will express our Christian faith in the transformation of families and communities. In order to carry out this work effectively it is necessary to discuss with others the type of projects which can be the most effective within the Diocese and select volunteers with the appropriate skills to carry them out. The Diocesan President and Board of Trustees are elected from Southwark members by Southwark members and together the process of practical outreach is carried forward. Most discussion and council meetings are at the Diocesan Offices at Trinity House off Borough High Street, either within smaller groups or with all branches represented, which can be quite a crowd. Once a year,

however, Diocesan Council takes place at a church out in the Areas. These meetings, though still important for discussions regarding the running of the MU Diocese are generally much more relaxed affairs, with more time for small group discussion. The last photo shows a Diocesan Council which took place at St

Saviour's, Raynes Park. Out of the eighty or so members present there are at least three members from St John's though as it is so small, it is hard to see where they are. On the other hand, it is still possible to see that members are all colours, from both sexes and are both lay and ordained. We are fortunate indeed to live within one of the most diverse (and in many cases, deprived) dioceses in the country so that the experience within the membership is vast. All Southwark MU members, including those at St John's, work with families who are going through times of stress and hardship, bringing spiritual and practical support to thousands each year.



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