



## From the Rector's Study

**Weather and Organs** July and August are those months when the weather is supposed to be on our side and we can slow down a little. Well, June, it turns out, was one of the hottest on record if you follow such things - averages were higher than the hot summers of 1940 and 1976. I confess to not liking hot weather one bit - sorry! So as I sit and write this, Helen has just gone off on the school run in her mac and the clouds are gathering!

Nothing summery about that, or so it would seem. But I wonder if we just have memories we rather embellish and then project expectations onto our present and future which then simply can't keep up with our hopes and dreams... The weather is unpredictable and truth be told the past, present and future are all in God's hands and whether we measure and compare them or not, we truly only have the moment. Worth remembering.



The organ is rather similar to the weather. For some, its golden rays are sadly somewhat clouded and the weather was better yesterday - this is reason enough for restoring it and looking forward to golden sunshine once more. For others, the weather was never really that great and it's best left to slowly pass into its next season. I could go on, but you get my drift! The organ in our church, like so many, was put in to enrich worship and to provide an 'orchestra' of sound with the choir. But whether you dream of a full restoration project as

many of you have indicated in your notes to me; or whether you think its a big white elephant and best avoided (not quite put like that, but some have suggested we best avoid it altogether!) or indeed, whether you like the idea of restoration but the numbers seem impossibly big and we already have to find our £22000 target to meet our parish share, perhaps we are best focussing on the balancing the books of our church. Again, I could go on. There are no simple solutions; there is no immediately clear way forward, but I wanted to thank those of you who took the time to write to me to give your view. I am very grateful.

So, where are we now and what are we to do?

I have asked for a report on the state of the Organ, and that is now complete, as you know; I have established a *Living Organ Project Working Group* to look into costs,



state and planning if we are to restore the organ - that is now done; next, we will seek the reality of costs to act upon the very fulsome and balanced report written by one of the nation's finest Organ consultants, Paul Hale, should we go ahead.

*What do I think?* Well, the truth is I am not wedded to any one solution and see the merits of all those who have expressed a view - some passionately. But I think at this point it is important to recognise a few things:

First, that the organ has cost a lot of money over the generations and good people have given significant sums over the years and so it is incumbent upon us to tread carefully as stewards of this instrument which has been used in the worship of Almighty God and whatever we do will reflect upon that investment. Catherine Ferguson's excellent and comprehensive article on the costs and investments over the years is testimony to this.

Secondly, in hindsight, some of the projects undertaken in the past were perhaps expensive mistakes. That is not to pass judgement - quite the opposite - but to acknowledge that what was done in good faith at the time has somewhat limited the performance of the current instrument and this is reflected in Rick's previous article last month, as he is the one who uses it today.

Thirdly, if PCC is still minded to enable a project of restoration that this **ORGAN RESTORATION WOULD NOT BE A CHURCH EXPENSE**. The costs, funding and responsibility of raising money for the Organ will be quite independent of church, not run by church, not paid for by church, but by those who are interested in the life of this instrument as much for its historic as much as its contemporary importance.

Fourthly, I am aware that the shelf life of the current instrument may not match the longer timetable required for the raising of the necessary funds for the restoration of the same! Simply put, the current organ may not last that much longer. With that being the case, we will need to look into the costing of what I suggested originally, namely an electronic organ with a good sound system which will be required for the immediate future. This is something of an immediate action, and for the PCC to consider in the Buildings PCC in September.

This need not interfere with an independent body (e.g. *The Living Organ Project* group) raising money for restoration of the original instrument, but we should be mindful that it may well appear as if we are raising money on two fronts - and about that I want to be completely clear - we are not. If the *Living Organ Project* is to complete its work, it is independent of the church's finances. Our focus must be to meet our parish share deficit of £22000.

So, stormy weather, or cloudy horizons or golden sunshine temporarily behind grey cloud? You decide, but there is work to be done and we may well have the weather we get rather than the one we ordered when it comes to the organ!

**Our New Curate** This month we have welcomed Fr Alistair as our new Curate. His main focus in this first year will be pastoral care - the heart of the work of a Deacon and so please do let me know if you would like a visit - he likes cake and tea!



*Rector and Curate, by Darrol Radley*



**Area Dean** Thank you, too, for your support at my Induction Evensong as Area Dean. What does this mean? Well, a rather fetching Roman purple cincture for starters! But in reality it means convening the local clergy and giving them the direction of the Bishop and Archdeacon. It means the care of those who are in vacancy - Westborough, Merrow, HT Guildford, Burpham and the Cathedral from September. And it means setting the strategic vision of the Deanery as we seek to do more together. My first calling however, roots me in this work, and that is as your parish priest. As Rector, I am delighted to say yes to teaching the Durham University training for clergy, to Deanery, to the DBE because it also enlivens me and that in turn serves the parish best. Thank you for your support in this regard and for helping me raise the profile of our Catholic parish!

**Thank yous** As ever, I end with my thanks for our wonderful team - to Darrol and Jo, Hilary, Cath and Phil as my Wardens and Administration hub, and to Rick for the glorious music not least at Fr Alistair's



welcome Mass, and to Nicky for the work on Holiday Club and to those of you who helped at the Fayre on the same weekend as our Welcome for Fr Alistair! It is to those good souls that we owe so much, but we really do now need to look at what can continue without some further help: Friday coffee really needs volunteers, after Mass coffee needs volunteers and our SOCIAL CIRCLE needs some volunteers - for monthly lunch, for Curry and Questions and so on - from Dedication to Harvest, to St Nicolas Day to Corpus Christi - these things are important to us, but we need more help if I am not going to have to rule some of them out. So, come on, what might you be able to help with...? **Fr Neil**

Sa 1		CHURCH FAIR
Su 2	<b>Trinity IV</b>	<b>TRINITY IV Making of Deacons</b> 830 Mass; Cathedral Ordination Service <b>630pm Choral Eucharist</b>
Tu 4		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
We 5		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 6		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fri 7		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel; 11 Mass, St George's Chapel
Sa 8		
Su 9	<b>Trinity V</b>	<i>Scout Group Family Camp</i> 10 Mass
Tu 11		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel <i>PCC II-Children &amp; School</i>
We 12		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 13		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel; 730pm Walsingham Cell Mass
Fri 14		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel; 11 Mass, St George's Chapel
Sa 15		
Su 16	<b>Trinity VI</b>	830 Mass 10 Mass
Tu 18		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
We 19		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 20		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fr 21		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel 11 School Service; <i>End of term School Party at Rectory</i>
Sa 22		
Su 23	<b>Trinity VII</b>	830 Mass 10 Mass; 530 pm Hymns and Pimms
Tu 25		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
We 26		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 27		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fr 28		10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel; 11 Mass, St George's Chapel
Sa 29		
Su 30	<b>Trinity VIII</b>	830 Mass 10 Mass





Tu 1	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
We 2	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel; 12 Angelus and Mass, St George's Chapel
Th 3	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fri 4	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel; 11 Angelus, 12 Mass, St George's Chapel
Sa 5	
Su 6	<b>TRANSFIGURATION</b> NO 830 MASS 10 Mass
Tu 8	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
We 9	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 10	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel;
Fri 11	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel; 11 Mass, St George's Chapel
Sa 12	
Su 13	<b>Trinity X</b> NO 830 MASS 10 Mass
Tu 15	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
We 16	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 17	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fr 18	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel; 11 Mass, St George's Chapel
Sa 19	Wedding (Fr Nick) <i>Paula-Maria Popescu &amp; Charles Griffiths</i>
Su 20	<b>Trinity XI</b> 830 Mass 10 MASS
Tu 22	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
We 23	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 24	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Fr 25	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel; 11 Mass, St George's Chapel
Su 27	<b>Trinity XII</b> 830 Mass 10 MASS
Tu 29	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
We 30	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel
Th 31	10 Morning Prayer, The Lady Chapel



*From the Summer Fayre, more on last page.*





**Eat In or Take away?** As an Ordinand (that is, someone currently in training for Church of England ordained ministry) a key element of my training is to make a short placement in a church with a significantly different tradition or context than I am used to. With this in mind, and thanks to Father Neil's welcome, I have recently spent a couple of months at St Nic's complementing my evangelical, gently charismatic background. My husband Rob has also joined us when he has been able. I'm pleased to say it's been a positive and absorbing process giving me welcome experience, not only during the recent months, but also giving me much to take forward as I embark on ministry. So with reference to the slightly quirky title of this item, St Nic's has become for me both Eat In and Take Away.

Let me give three examples of how I've been nourished at St Nic's, all of which reflect one treasured thing - experiencing the presence of God - but in distinctly different ways than I am used to in my familiar church tradition.

Firstly there is the presence of God in pilgrimage. During Holy Week, I was able to journey with the donkey and the people singing God's praises, through the daily services to the desolation of the stripping of the altar, the agony of Gethsemane, the Cross and ultimately on to the breaking out of the first light and hope of Easter. This pilgrimage of travelling with Christ during Holy Week required active effort, choosing to stick with Christ - and together with others, sharing in some way with Him His experience of this unique week in history.

Then there is the presence of God in the beauty of holiness. Together with you, I have been worshipping in a church building with decor and atmosphere that touched me with a sense of God's holiness and majesty, but at the same time, His presence, mixing the awesomeness of the Lord of Lords with the comfort and delight of Emmanuel, God with us. This beautiful combination doesn't just happen by hiring artists and skilled ecclesial designers, but is established through prayerfulness, worship, community and ministry. I am delighted to hear that there are plans to open the church up during the week for people to spend time there. It was said to me you are never alone in St Nic's even when you are. And whilst the church wardens may be pleased to know I did not attempt lone working, I certainly understood what was being said about sensing the presence of God in the beauty of holiness.

And thirdly, I met with the presence of God in His people. Now obviously there are people in my home church too, and I meet with God in them. But St Nic's people are all unique individuals, and in meeting many of you I've heard new stories and seen new perspectives on following Christ. Thank you for sharing your unique stories with me and making both Rob and me welcome.

So as I reflect on my time at St Nic's through pilgrimage, beauty and God's people, what is in my Take Away bag? New possibilities around bringing Christ into the present moment through the Eucharist and the journey of Holy Week. The richness of encountering God in new and different ways through beauty, symbolism and the senses. And a reminder of the universality of the church in the sense that though there are many different styles of worship, we are nonetheless and above all else, one in Christ.



I would like to think that all who are part of the St Nic's community find St Nic's a place to both Eat In and Take Away - a place where we are each well-nourished with Christ's presence in various ways as we 'Eat In' by meeting together in gathered worship (both Mass and companionship), but also as we leave we have something to 'Take Away' with us to share with our neighbours in the wider world where we spend the rest of our weeks. What is in your Take Away bag as you return from church on a Sunday, and who might you share your picnic with? **Karen Wheatley**  
(Ordinand on placement)

**Pilgrimage to Walsingham** Have you heard the one about the man who jumped off the top of the Empire State Building? As he passed the 90th floor he was heard to say "it is all right so far". Those words were in my mind as we drove on the anti-clockwise carriageway of the M25 on the way to Walsingham. Traffic was relatively clear and we were making a good 70mph. My fears of severe traffic congestion, it being the Friday of the Spring Bank Holiday weekend, having not materialised. Display panels warned of delays at junctions 2 and 3 but having first said 30 minutes then said 20 so hopefully it was clearing. Alas we joined a queue about 8 miles from the Dartford crossing and didn't reach the tunnel itself until more than 2 hours later. There were more delays further in the journey but I won't bore you with them save to say that a trip which normally takes barely four hours ran to six and a half.

Such stressful matters were forgotten when we proceeded to the initial event of the pilgrimage approximately called the First Visit. We entered the Shrine Church by the west door and said our initial prayers in front of the altar of the Annunciation. Behind us the wall was covered with hundreds and hundreds of plaques given by pilgrims in thanksgiving for having been cured from serious diseases by water from the Holy Well. We then moved to the Holy House, in effect a chapel within the main building just east of the altar of the Annunciation. It's size is in accordance with the directions given to Lady Richeldis, the wife of the local squire, by Our Lady of Walsingham in the vision back in the 11th century. Above the altar was the statue of Our Lady created by a local artist using a picture of her included in the seal of the monastery destroyed by Henry VIII. Beside us on the walls were numerous lights some in memory of former pilgrims but many simply from parishes all over the country and abroad.

Saturday morning saw us following the Stations of the Cross in which we mark fourteen stages of Our Lord's journey from being condemned to death by Pilate, to his body being laid in the tomb. At Walsingham these are marked by brick pillars throughout the Shrine site with an additional station for the resurrection. I have always found

these deeply moving but this time Father Neil's observations at each station made them even more so. After an excellent lunch in the refectory we were off to the slipper chapel so called because pilgrims used to leave their shoes there and walk barefoot for the final mile to the Shrine. The site was purchased by a Roman Catholic woman in the 1900s and given to that church and is now their pilgrimage centre.



*Walsingham garden, with the Chapel of All Souls in the background. Photo by Donald Thompson*



*Prayers at the Shrine Church. Photo by David Sharpin*



*The Holy House and Image of Our Lady prepared for Pentecost. Photo by Donald Thompson*



This includes a chapel of the Holy Spirit with a mosaic with the flame forming a golden dove as it descended onto the disciples. This had been covered up for some years but to my delight had now been restored. How marvellous to see it again on the eve of Whitsun.

So back to the Shrine church for the Pilgrims Mass. After another super meal, the evening concluded with a procession of the image of Our Lady of Walsingham round the shrine grounds followed by Benediction back in the church. The sacrament was then left on the altar with incense burning before it whilst the laying on of hands, anointing and confession were available elsewhere. A truly appropriate end to such a spiritual day.

Whit Sunday morning saw us off to High Mass at St Mary's, the village's parish church where Father Hope Patten was vicar when he was inspired to recreate the shrine.

The afternoon saw the final events of the pilgrimage. Firstly all the pilgrims were able to sample the water from the Holy Well before there was another procession, this time with the Holy Sacrament. Benediction then concluded the events before we all turned to face the Holy House for the prayers of the Final visit and our departure.

In all, as always a highly spiritually rewarding weekend.

One of our party, on her first pilgrimage, commented how she felt enveloped by the special atmosphere of

the shrine as a holy place as she walked through the archway entrance. This reminded me of Father Derek Sayer, whom many of you will remember saying how in that place the barrier between heaven was thinner.

**Philip Hooper**



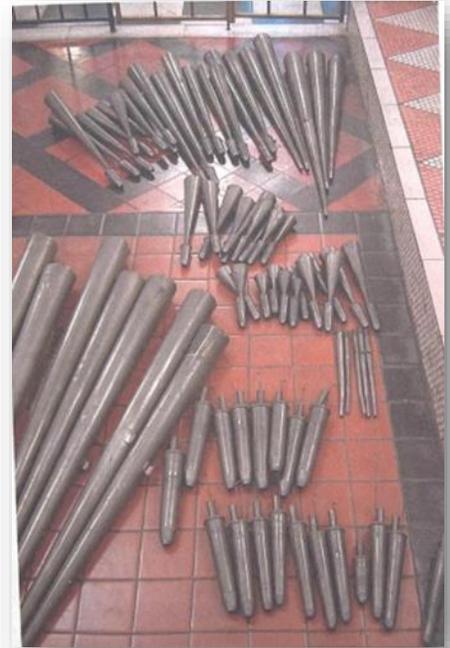
*Procession round the Shrine grounds.  
Photos by David Sharpin*



*The St Nicolas Pilgrims,  
without Donald Thompson  
who took the photo.*



**St Nicolas' Organ** There's plenty to think about as we contemplate the cost and upheaval of an organ rebuild. However, there has been some unclear information going round about St Nicolas' organ, both spoken and in writing, to the effect that it is currently in poor condition because it has been 'without regular maintenance' and that St Nicolas' congregation and PCC have failed to spend what they should to keep it in good order (Newsletter May & June 2023). This is not entirely accurate and in the light of a major organ fund-raising appeal on the near horizon, I feel it is critically important that we deal only with accurate facts in order to help us make the right decisions about that appeal.



*Organ pipes in the nave during major work, 2009*

All parish accounts and APCM reports since 1997 show punctilious, regular annual servicing and repairs. I've been through each report and listed the information in a table sent to the Living Organ Committee in March 2023, and can give anyone who wishes a copy of this record of servicing and repairs.

Many of us can remember the significant rebuild and repairs 14 years ago in 2009 by Griffiths and Cooper, with the organ pipes dramatically laid out down the aisles. Those repairs cost the parish c. £55,000, equivalent to £82,000 today (*Bank of England website*) which was paid by the Dorothy Grover Trust. We were warned at that point, by the then Director of Music, Gareth Bennet, that this considerable sum (to us) would only alleviate the problems to a certain extent and that much more would be needed in due course. Since then, and for the last 13 years, the PCC has continued to authorise and pay for all the repairs, servicing and maintenance which have been asked of it, at least c.£1000-2000 per year. I've been a PCC member for 20+ years.

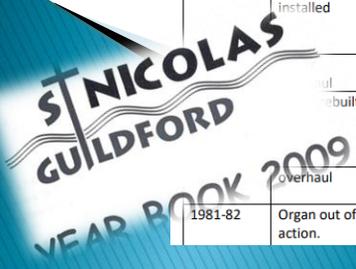
The latest report on the St Nicolas' organ in April 2023, compiled by organ consultant Paul Hale, acknowledges the amount the church has spent on its organ over the past 150 years: 'No fewer than twelve major pieces of work over 150 years (excluding replacing the blowers and humidifier) is quite extraordinary and will have cost the parish very considerable sums of money'. Our present Director of Music, Rick Erickson, acknowledges that the 'PCC has spent many thousands of pounds' although he goes on to say that in his view these were for 'minor, inadequate repairs and .... a 'sticking plaster' approach [to] postpone serious expenditures' (Newsletter March 2023).

The image of a stingy, penny-pinching, neglectful and imprudent PCC is unfair. The reality is a PCC which has always paid up for everything asked of it but struggling to face the prospect of enormous potential cost and disruption of a major organ rebuild only 13 years after significant (to us) outlay, set against the reality of a parish which is already not able to pay its way just to open its doors. This is a PCC simply trying to do the best thing in a delicate balancing act.

Be in no doubt that a major organ rebuild is now required and will be extremely expensive, to the extent that we shall need considerable funding from outside the parish as well as within. As a parish, the balancing act continues in which we have to weigh two issues: whether we could and whether we should undertake this. As we make these difficult decisions, accurate information is not only respectful to those whose support we might want – it is an essential factor in the outcome. **Catherine Ferguson**

Date	Work done [proposed]	Amount [estimate]	Work done by	Funded by	reference
1876-1887	Willis organ installed	<b>Paid:</b> £750 initial cost + £118 additional	Willis		B. Taylor book 'The of St Nicolas' 1992
	Organ rebuilt	<b>Paid:</b> £67	Littlejohn & Ruggles		ibid
	Organ rebuilt	<b>Paid:</b> £870	Lewis & Co (amalgamated with Willis 1919)		ibid
	Organ overhaul		Henry Willis III		Bennett Report to PCC (doc 1)
1981-82	Organ out of action.			DGT bought piano	B Taylor, 'Organs'

*Catherine has delved into Parish records and assembled a comprehensive schedule of the work undertaken and money expended on the organ between 1876 and 2020, together with supporting documentation. If you would like a copy, please do contact Catherine or the editors.*





**I wish to thank  
every member of  
St Nicolas Church.**

You are a wonderful family, for your love and prayers after I was hospitalized on the 16th March, 12 weeks ago.

Through the very kind help of Hilary, each of you who kindly asked after me were kept informed as to my recovery from Covid-19. It's been a more close walk with God, than I think I already had.

While still recovering I have had to undergo cataract operations on both my eyes. I am so grateful to the Surgeon for his skill and I look forward to seeing you much more clearly soon.

Thank you all for your love, prayers, support and many acts of kindness. **Julia Wake**

Walsingham garden  
and stations of the  
cross, photo by  
Donald Thompson



**To Walsingham**

We are on our journey along Walsingham way  
In the lovely heart of a summer's day.  
The blue of the sky and the birds flying high,  
We are in sight of the Shrine ever drawing nigh.  
The weekend is always packed full of joy and love,  
You are always so close to the Heavenly Dove.  
Walsingham is like Heaven on earth,  
Thanking God for our Dear Lord's birth.  
Our Lady's Shrine is a wonderful place  
When we die we shall see Jesus's glorious face.

**Elizabeth Hooper**

**Tuesday Group** Are you ever free at 10am on a Tuesday morning? If so do come along to one of our group meetings in the Parish Centre. You will be made most welcome and will be provided with coffee or tea, biscuits and cake if it is a member's birthday.

We resumed our meetings after the break [we follow the school holidays] with Shirley Aston giving one of her excellent quizzes from her special book. We formed into 2 teams and despite several bonus points when the others side couldn't answer, the result was neck and neck.



The following week I gave an illustrated talk on the cruise Liz and I made to Dubai in January. I included pictures of places we saw such as Lisbon, the Straits of Gibraltar and Crete. The high points of the trip were transiting the Suez canal and a shore excursion to Luxor and the Valley of the Kings. The latter had involved a 160 mile journey from the Red Sea coast but it had been wonderful to see the temple at Karnak and four of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings including that of Tutankhamun.

*Text and photos by  
**Philip Hooper***

## Saint Nic's "at sixes and sevens"

"In a state of total confusion or disarray" is what we mean when we use the phrase "at sixes and sevens" but where does the phrase come from, and what's the link to Saint Nicolas? One theory about the origin of the phrase links to the Livery Companies of the City of London. The Livery companies are very ancient, and the oldest amongst them are called the Great Twelve, based on the year they were granted their Royal Charter. The order of precedence is a matter of huge pride, and the companies formed in order of precedence in the Lord Mayor's procession (at that time on the River Thames). The Merchant Taylor's Company and the Skinners were both granted their Warrants in 1327 and fought over their position, treating the procession as a race.

The violence turned deadly in 1484 and so the Lord Mayor resolved that they would take it in turns on alternate years to be the 6th and 7th Companies in the order of precedence. A very English compromise!

So what's the link to St. Nicolas, Guildford? Just to the right of the glass doors as you enter the Church from the North porch, there is a brass plaque in memory of Caleb Lovejoy which records that he was "Free of the Worshipfull Company of Marchant Taylors".

The Livery Companies are thriving and still play a vital role in the City and for Industry. I was granted the Freedom of the City of London through my Livery Company in 2014 and in 2018 I was "clothed" as a full Liveryman of the Company.

As we processed in on Fathers' Day we sang Hymn 346 "City of God...true thy Chartered Freemen are." So if we appeared to be "at sixes and sevens" or in a "state of total confusion or disarray" remember that some of us were simply following the footsteps of previous worshipers at St. Nics! [Stuart Murdoch](#)

## Shirley's Ringers Strike again!



Having so much appreciated last year's Handbell Festival Service at Guildford Cathedral, I was pleased to be free to attend this year's celebration, held on Saturday 17th June. In company with a couple of friends from Tuesday Group, we found seats at the front, where there was a good view of the front row of ringers, plus (when standing up for the hymns) a glimpse of Shirley Aston who leads the **Pilgrim Ringers**, and who also attends Tuesday Group. (Several rows of ringers were between us - there were sixteen teams from the South East Region playing at the Festival.)

As happened last year, I was caught up in the beautiful bell music from the start, which included arrangements of Handel and of traditional tunes. My front seat gave the opportunity to admire the dexterity of the ringers, who had to manage their own page-turning as well as their bells. The visual effect of the co-ordinated ringing, as the musicians rang or were silent for that moment, pleased the eye and added to the interest. This year, I noticed belle-plates also being used, and handbells being treated as percussion instruments, which added to the variety of the tones.

The hour that the festival lasted was soon over, and I've brought home a delightful memory of uplifting music played in an impressive setting. My friends who were also there

agreed it had been a wonderful experience. Next year's service is due to take place on Saturday 15th June, and I for one can hardly wait. **The Pilgrim Ringers are looking for new members!**

[Cathy Goodwin](#)





**Summer holidays of 1968**

21 August will always be a significant date for me because that summer holiday, when I was still a schoolgirl, Russian forces invaded my homeland, then called Czechoslovakia. There was no war and thankfully little bloodshed.

On the day, the unsuspecting public were simply astonished. Generally well-schooled in Russian, people on their way to work waved down the passing tanks to ask the soldiers what they were doing, had they lost their way perhaps? Once it was clear that they were on a mission to liberate the country, people wanted to know who from?

On the first day the invading, mostly very young soldiers, engaged in dialogue and appeared as confused by the situation as we were. From day 2 they were forbidden to talk to anybody and told to just carry out their orders. There was unarmed resistance outside the Prague tv and radio headquarters where, sadly, people died and similar skirmishes elsewhere around the country. The Russian tanks lined up in Prague's Wenceslas Square and, to show they meant business, shelled the Natural History Museum which they mistook for the seat of government.

We knew that the Russians were bigger than us and there was no sense in resisting. Instead, the country settled into the inevitable (21) dark years of oppression that followed, laying down its lifestyle, economy, arts, culture and freedom along with the dreams and hopes of a generation, and quietly resorting to a black sense of humour to see the situation for the mixture of the tragic and ridiculous that it was. Even the puppet government, installed by "Big Brother," took years to repair the above-mentioned Museum, allowing all to quietly snigger at the bully's incompetence.

The current situation in Ukraine is different and I, clearly with many around the world, admire the courage of Volodymir Zelenskiy. He could have saved himself and his family somewhere nice and safe in exile, but instead chose to lead his people against a blatant injustice. They are all giving up not only their creature comforts, but their security, their homes, their families and all too often their lives. This is not a game and believe me, it is not only right, but in all our interests to give Ukraine all the help it needs, because its border is not that far away. **Jana Phillips**

The Natural History Museum

Typical Czech humour. The sign says: "Unauthorized entry is strictly forbidden"



Image from Aktualne.cz

**Christian Mindfulness and Meditation**

**19th July**  
Wednesday 19th July, Friday 4th August

Saint Columba's House

**01483 766498**  
[stcolumbashouse.org.uk](http://stcolumbashouse.org.uk)

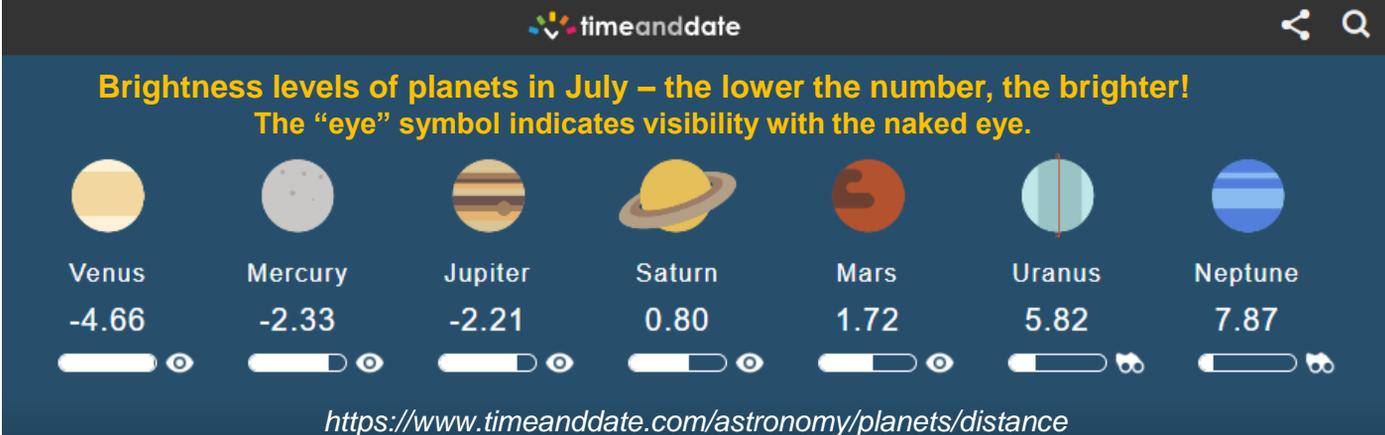
A monthly facilitated session of guided meditations, reflections, discussion and tips for practice. A meditation for everyday life, all are welcome, regardless of experience. About the leader: Suzette Jones Suzette is a registered nurse and a Health & Wellbeing adviser.

"A society may be secular in its procedures ... but it will still need the argumentative grit of the worshipping mentality to keep it asking moral questions and not reducing those questions to issues about majority opinion. This surely is one of the most important distinctions between a fully lawful democracy and a majoritarian tyranny, whether religious or secular."

**Rowan Williams, Reith Lecture 7.12.22** Offered by **Sally Lowe**

**The sky in July and August** **Rory Fenner**

**July** The **Sun** moves from Gemini into Cancer on the 23 July. **Mercury** becomes an evening object but is horizon-hugging and not easily seen. **Venus** is still a brilliant evening object but falling towards the horizon. Its last hurrah is a grouping in the Western twilight with Mars and Regulus in Leo. **Mars** joins Venus in bowing out in the post-sunset. At magnitude of +1.7 (=brightness, this is still visible with the naked eye), Mars lies very close to Regulus, the leading star in the constellation of Leo. **Jupiter** rises before midnight by the end of July, when it is visible at a decent altitude before sunrise. **Saturn** rises well before midnight and achieves a good altitude before dawn. **Uranus** makes steady progress in the pre-dawn sky and offers an hour's observing before sunrise. **Neptune** is a morning object in Pisces and is well up by 2am.



**August** The **Sun** moves from Cancer into Leo on the 23 August. **Mercury** reaches its Greatest Eastern Elongation but this is not a good apparition and won't be seen. **Venus** reaches Inferior Conjunction on the 13 August and then speeds West of the Sun to become a morning object. **Mars** has now run into daylight on the long road to a conjunction in November. **Jupiter** is a brilliant morning object in Aries, rising before midnight at the beginning of the month. **Saturn** reaches opposition on the 27 August in Aquarius and is visible all night. **Uranus** is a morning object in Aries close to the boundary with Taurus. **Neptune** is a morning star in Pisces. The **Perseid meteor shower** will be very good this year, at maximum on the 12 August.

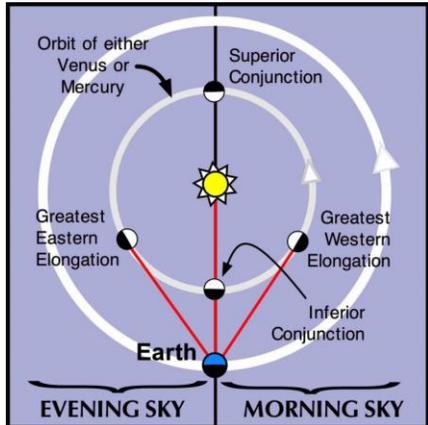


Photo of a Perseid shower from Natural Museum website

**MATT**



*It's a small studio flat, but your mortgage repayments will make it feel like a much grander property'*

**On a lighter note, from The Telegraph**

**Cancer Testing South**

Saving Lives Through Awareness

- **Prostate Awareness Testing Day**
- **16 July 2023 10:30am - 4pm**
- **Guildford Fire Station, By-Pass, Ladymead, Guildford, GU1 1DL**
- £20 fee. Donations also collected at event. Cash or card accepted.
- Cancer Testing South organise regular PSA testing events at venues across Sussex & Surrey.
- To book your slot please follow the booking link below which takes you to the PSA central website where you will need to register (one time only) and complete the booking process.
- Should you have any queries then we can be contacted at [info@cancertestingsouth.org](mailto:info@cancertestingsouth.org)
- **National helpline 0800 035 5302**

### Divine Nature Workshop

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> August 10am – 4pm**

“Open your eyes and there it is! By taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such can't see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of God's Divine being.” Romans 1v20 (The Message)

Discovering how to encounter and engage with God through the natural world. Taking examples and teachings from scripture and from Christians through the ages. **Led by: David Cole.** An award-winning author of books on Christian Meditation, David regularly leads retreats on Christian Mysticism and the contemplative tradition.



### Walking the Labyrinth

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August 10am – 3pm**

Walking the labyrinth can help us reflect on our journey of faith and the obstacles we may encounter.

Morning prayer will be followed by a short address reflecting on the Labyrinth; optional midday Anglican Eucharist, followed by lunch.

Second address, quiet time followed by a time of sharing, closing prayer. People free to do as much or as little as they wish. Art/craft materials available. Suitable for all. **Led by Linda Scrivener and Jane Baker**



<https://www.stcolumbashouse.org.uk/your-retreat/our-events/> 01483 766498

**Garden health** This picture says it all. When it is hot and dry, don't mow your lawn. The temperature in long grass is much lower. At the base of long grass it's shady, cool and moist, perfect hiding places from predators for little frogs, newts and insects. And if you plant plugs of wildflowers and bulbs in your grass in the autumn, you will be awarded with a spectacular meadow the following year, helping our precious pollinators.



**Eco news**

**Looking after beasties like frogs, newts, insects.** Rake the grass before strimming in September to drive out any beasties. Strim the grass in sections, lay down the cut grass to allow any remaining beasties to escape before composting the cut grass.

We've had long grass since 2015 and it looks so beautiful! Buzzing with insects; they lay their eggs on the grass in late spring, hatching over the course of the summer. So no-mow-May isn't enough, it should be no-mow-summer to give insects a chance to hatch. We need to help our pollinators as there has been an Armageddon in the insect world, with an 80% reduction in insect numbers! This means less food all round for all wildlife, plus not all our produce will get pollinated. It is important to make a change in gardening. Instead of stripey lawns, chemically treated and killing all life in that lawn, we need a drastic departure to 'what can I do to help all wildlife in my garden' approach.

My garden is part of the Merrow pollinator/wildlife reserves. We have 3 ponds and lots of insects in the long grass. Message me on NEXTDOOR if you want to visit (or contact Jana). I can help you create your very own piece of paradise. **Annelize Kidd**, Merrow, Guildford



#### On a hot summer's day

- ❖ Uncut grass keeps the soil at 19.5degC.
- ❖ Grass cut to 10 cm (4") maintains the soil temperature at 24.5deg C.
- ❖ Bare soil in the middle of summer rises to more than 40degC.



**Our legendary cook and baker Cath Anderson has agreed to share some of her special recipes!**

As a child I never won prizes at sports days and the first certificate I can remember getting was when I was 8 and won third prize for my jam tarts in the local WI show. It was such a sense of achievement. I grew up in a farming family in Wiltshire, a family where a meal wasn't a meal unless you had pudding and the cake tins were always full! We were fortunate to have a well tended vegetable garden and an orchard so Mum was used to producing a wide variety of fruit puddings.

This is a family favourite and I can still see it coming out of the oven in the gold-coloured tin that Mum used to bake it in. The recipe is in ounces and I'm putting here exactly what I have in my file, in Mum's handwriting, but feel free to adapt - I sometimes use butter instead of margarine!. This is delicious warm (with cream!) and also good eaten cold with a cup of tea.

**Dutch Rhubarb Tart**

- 8oz S R Flour
- 4oz Margarine
- 4oz Sugar
- 1 Egg
- A little Water
- Rhubarb

Rub fat into flour, add sugar. Bind together with beaten egg and a little water to make stiff dough. Press into greased tin (11" x 7") Arrange 1" pieces of rhubarb in lattice fashion, dot with butter and sprinkle with a little sugar. Bake for 30/40 mins at 180C

*Photograph courtesy of Cath's sister Trish*



**There will be a Friday Lunch on 28 July, but NOT in August due to holidays. Back in September!**



**TRAIDCRAFT**  
Fighting poverty through trade

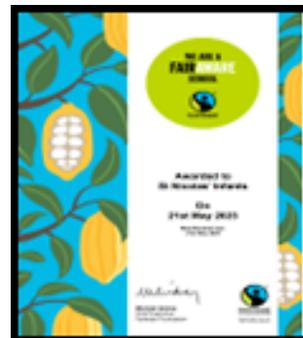


**Final Sale - Sundays 9 and 30 July**

As you know, Traidcraft have sadly stopped trading, so we will be selling the remaining stocks of the divine tasting Divine Chocolates, coffee, honey, biscuits and several other delights. Fair Trade goods remain on sale in general shops, so please look out for them as much as possible to promote justice in food production and farming. To quote Dr.Cornel West, "Justice is what love looks like in public."

**Wendy Gabriel & Jana Phillips**

**St Nicolas School** has been awarded the **FairAware Fairtrade award**. Becoming a Fairtrade School means joining a worldwide movement where young people learn that, whatever their age, they have the power to make a difference in the world. **FairAware** is the first Fairtrade Schools Award and is about finding out where a school is in terms of understanding Fairtrade and using Fairtrade products.





**St Nicolas' Infant School**

"Living life in all its fullness" John 10:10



Green Team have been working on a gardening project and have begun a small trial of growing some food in a patch in the school grounds and an upcycled container in the playground. Last term, Chestnut planted some pumpkin seeds indoors and just before half term, we dug over, weeded and prepared the patch of ground for the seedlings, which were then planted out. We have since added some strawberry, tomato, pea and radish plants and a chilli. Last week, Green Team planted up a container in the playground with strawberry plants, so that the whole school can watch them grow close up. Green Team water these every lunchtime and are very excited to see if we'll get some strawberries! By submitting some photos and a little information about this project, we have gained a Level 2 award in the RHS Campaign for School Gardening!

**Children & Families**

**St Nicolas' Junior church**

Term-time, during the 10am Service on Sundays



**St Nicolas' Café Play Wednesdays**  
**10-11:30am in the Parish Centre.** All welcome, no need to book. Nicky Geraghty  
[missionenabler@saintnics.com](mailto:missionenabler@saintnics.com)



Nicky putting adults and toddlers through their paces...

**SCHOOL GARDENING**

Your current **School Gardening Awards Level 2**



Value This Half-term Perseverance!

We can't wait to welcome children to our **Journey Through Time Holiday Club, 24th-28th July.** We will be travelling through time, visiting different eras from the bible from Creation to the Future! Midweek we will be having a Supersonic Science Show which we are all very excited to see and on the last day we invite parents to join us from 11am to see what we have been up to, followed by an inflatable fun run and hot dogs. Please speak to Nicky or email [missionenabler@saintnics.com](mailto:missionenabler@saintnics.com) for more information or to book your child's place.



*St Nics Summer Fayre*



Advertise with us in colour for a mere £5 per quarter page, £10 per half-page or £20 per full page.

St. Nicolas Parish Church, Bury St, Guildford,  
GU2 4AW [saintnics.com](http://saintnics.com)  
Rector Fr Neil Roberts [rector@saintnics.com](mailto:rector@saintnics.com)  
Curate Fr Alistair Milne  
Parish Administrator Cath Anderson  
tel 01483 564 526 [parishoffice@saintnics.com](mailto:parishoffice@saintnics.com)  
Editors Fr Neil Roberts & Jana Phillips

Please continue to send articles on matters that interest you and you would like to share. Email or telephone your material to: [janagp@btinternet.com](mailto:janagp@btinternet.com), mob.07970 934325 or give to Fr Neil or Jana at church. The next **copy deadline will be Sunday 19 August.**

