



## St Augustine of Canterbury, Belvedere

### 'GUS'S GOSSIP' Edition 5

Welcome to the fifth edition of Gus's Gossip, an occasional newsletter to keep us all in touch with what is happening within our church family during this unprecedented time.

#### *From Fr Clive...*

Some of you will know that I worked in insurance broking before ordination. EIG (Ecclesiastical Insurance) provide a good home insurance package and from personal experience are speedy with claims. They also give the parish a grant if you take out a policy!

<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/individuals/home-insurance/>

Benenden Healthcare is discretionary healthcare complimenting the NHS. They are a Mutual Friendly Society and the premium is 11.50 per month regardless of age or infirmity. At a time when NHS waiting lists are likely to get longer this may well be for you.

[www.benenden.co.uk](http://www.benenden.co.uk)

Window Cleaning - I recently engaged Scott Dillnutt who I met many years ago when chaplain of Trinity School. He did a great job on the vicarage windows 07780 439436 e: [scottdillnutt@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:scottdillnutt@yahoo.co.uk)

Gilbert Rd Service Station (opposite church) has re-opened for servicing and MOTs....they sponsor our mass sheet so do support them. They service my car and have always proved efficient and reliable.

#### *From Rev Captain Paul Fitzpatrick*

A South London lad, growing up in Kennington, my Irish parents worked hard at bringing up my brother, sister, and myself. I enjoy making time for my friends, sharing moments together in the theatre, cinema or having a pint down the pub.

Reading helps me to relax and helps in preparing sermons. God gave us the Earth and I have enjoyed travelling it to far places like Costa Rica, Israel, Egypt, and Ghana. Alongside this I have travelled extensively across Europe.

In terms of Christian ministry, I have been a Church Army Evangelist since 1998, working in deprived areas in Sheffield and Cleethorpes, as well as inner city areas within London. I have had a fulfilled prison ministry over the last 25 years. In 2005 I moved into management within Church Army. At time I moved into Belvedere. By the summer of that year I was visiting churches, with a view to finding a place to worship. I visited St Augustine's of Canterbury one Sunday morning. I fell in love with the building and I was spiritually refreshed by the ministry of Fr. Clive. He was so kind and thoughtful; he was aware what I was doing to invited me to be myself.

That got me hooked. From time to time, I would preach, talk with the kids, and do other things for the parish. I enjoyed, fundraising and been an involved member of the PCC.

In January 2011, I took a directorship with Prison Fellowship, suddenly my life changed, I had a major stroke. It was a massive shock to me, and those around me. Fr. Clive anointed me when I was paralysed in hospital. I started to walk and talk again over the following six months. The power of anointing oil is evident in my life. I will never forget the love, the care, and the ministry that folks at St Augustine's offered to me as I got on my feet.

Alas I had to move into central London, in order to be able to go back to work, as I struggled with the commute. I carried on with Prison Fellowship and from there I moved in 2015 to lead a charity named Change Up at Kennington Cross helping those at risk in stabilising themselves and developing a business. But it was no surprise, many, when I was accepted for training to be a priest.

Today, I am about to enter my second year of curacy, and I am looking forward, God willing, to be ordained priest in October 2020. I minister in a busy suburban parish during a time when a lot of change is taking place in the world and in our country. I am blessed to walk alongside parishioners. My Anglo-Catholicity gives me a firm foundation in building a living faith centred upon our Lord. This equips me and those whom I will serve to face up to the rigours of life in today's world. I come to this vista as a servant. My prayer is that I discover where I and our parishioners are fitting in to these changing scenes and hopefully make a substantial contribution for our spiritual well-being here in South Beddington & Roundshaw.

Every Blessing. Fr. Paul.

### *Fr Michael's Memoirs 3: Life at Saint Francis of Assisi*

I had started to attend the church of Saint Francis of Assisi in Ewell when I was about seven. Soon after that the parish priest was joined on the staff by a Parish Worker - Miss Gwynneth Littler. One of her areas of responsibility was children's work, and she certainly knew how to do it. One of her innovations was to arrange that the mass on Saturdays in Lent should be particularly for children. The parish priest celebrated, she gave a commentary and, some of the boys - soon including me - were trained to be servers by Mr Thomas Stanley Toms, the sacristan and senior server. It was from these two that I took my early lessons about the Church and its life.

Saint Francis church was next to the junior school. On Wednesday or Thursday morning, it was possible for children in the upper classes to start the day not in school, but in the Withdrawal Class in church. There Miss Littler taught us the basic elements of the Christian faith, the outline of the Church's year, the lives of the saints and the meaning of the things the priest used or wore at the Eucharist.

In those days there were no evening masses - the Maundy Thursday mass was at 6.30 am, and the Good Friday Liturgy at 9.30 am. Between these two services (including the whole of Thursday to Friday night) there was a continuous watch before the Blessed Sacrament. On Maundy Thursday there were ten-minute slots for children to join - two at a time - in the watch.

Another of Miss Littler's innovations was a Three Hours for Children on the afternoon of Good Friday. The time was divided between a simple form of the Stations of the Cross - done, I think, three or four Stations at a time - and hand work, organized in age groups round the church hall. There was a break for lunch - including a (cold) hot-cross bun, and we finished as the grown-ups were coming out of church.

One of the year's liturgical highlights for the junior servers was a sung eucharist for children (and the elderly) at 9 am on Ascension Day. (There had already been a Eucharist with full choir at 6.30). In those days it was the custom to extinguish the paschal candle after the Gospel on Ascension Day, and in my last year at junior school that task fell to me.

It was also about this time that I had my first experience of incense, and - although I didn't know it at the time - of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Mr Toms took me with a group of parishioners to the church where a former parish priest was now the Vicar - and, for the first time, I was a boat boy. Twenty-five or so years later, when I needed to move to a new ministry, I met the Bishop of Dorking in Holy Trinity Church, Hawley, and - to my surprise - discovered that this was the church where I had served at Benediction for the first (but not the last) time. So I had a surprise to spring on the parishioners when, a few months later, I was instituted as Vicar. But that's another story!

*From Father Dane Batley-Gladden  
Vicar of St Mary the Virgin, Swanley*

I was born and grew up in Belvedere. Upper Belvedere, as my mother used to correct me. Almost Bexleyheath, as my father would add, somewhat mischievously, probably just to get a reaction from my mother. These interactions may tell you something about me and my somewhat strange sense of humour. I went to Bedonwell School and then to Picardy School. From the age of 16, I worked at the WH Smith shop in Powis Street, Woolwich and at 18 wrote a letter to the Head of Public Relations of the WH Smith Group to ask about career opportunities in his department. He wrote back to say he didn't have a job, but if I'd like to arrange a meeting, then he'd be glad to talk to me about the different aspects of PR and how it was different in departments of large companies from PR agencies. I made an appointment and as a result of that chat, he created a role as, essentially, an apprentice. I would spend time in each of the department's areas, learning about corporate & financial PR, sponsorships, donations, product & placement and so on.

I started at the Group's Head Office, just off Sloane Square, in August 1986 and eventually became the finance & administration manager of what had by then been enlarged to become the Corporate Affairs Division. Managing a budget of £8m a year, my job was to ensure we didn't overspend and also to put together financial PR materials because I understood money - a skill which a number of my colleagues noticeably and comprehensively lacked. I left in 1992 as a restructuring of the head office meant around half the jobs in the HQ were lost. After nearly 10 months unemployment, I became the administrator of a housing co-operative in Southwark: this was local authority housing which was run by its tenants. During the time I worked there, just off the Blackfriars Road, I began to explore my vocation to the priesthood.

If we backtrack to the late 1980s: I had never been a church-goer although my parents and their families had been members of St Michael's Abbey Wood from the very beginning of that church. One of my great aunts was present at the church's consecration and she could remember worshipping in "Tin Mary" the mission hut at the bottom of New Road, where it joins Abbey Road. Auntie Dora and her younger sister, Auntie Edith, were sisters of my grandfather and were formative influences on me as I got older (I tend not to use the words 'grew up' as I feel that's something I've never quite accomplished.) My grandfather was churchwarden at St Michael's, his brother in the choir; my father and his brother and their cousin Michael sang in the same choir and my father was also a server. Auntie Edith was the Church Treasurer for a time. Auntie Dora died in 1996 at the age of 99: she had been a church worker up in the Diocese of Durham for many years and she and Auntie Edith were both delighted when I began attending St Michael's as a result of a chat at a family party with their vicar. I was Confirmed in October 1992 and was Churchwarden from 1993 until 1995. As a result of my vocational discernment, the Advisory Board of Ministry's Selection Conference suggested that I needed a year to broaden my understanding of the Church of England and so I served for a year as a parish assistant at St Peter's Plymouth with Father Sam Philpott. It was a wonderful year of learning about deprivation in an urban context but in a very rural county. Devon is beautiful and St Peter's was a fantastic experience.

After a year at St Peter's, I went to St Stephen's House in Oxford to train for the Priesthood where I studied for my theology degree. From there I went to Saint Alphage, Burnt Oak where I served for two years at the parish church before moving to the daughter church of Saint Augustine, Grahame Park. I served on the Grahame Park estate for 13 years before moving to St Mary the Virgin, Swanley for whom I have been the vicar since November 2014.

The time I spent in Burnt Oak and Grahame Park has been the foundation of my priestly ministry and I spent my whole time there learning. Mind you, the learning hasn't stopped at Swanley!

### *Profile of a Parishioner: Donna Ducker*

I was born in a bungalow in Heath Avenue Bexleyheath, 3 doors away from where Barbara lives now. Family legend decrees that, as I was born in the back bedroom, my father was playing Grieg's 'Wedding Day at Troldhaugen' on the piano in the front room - my favourite piece of piano music to this day. I was the eldest of 3 sisters by 5 and 11 years respectively and had a very happy childhood full of music and singing.

I attended Bedonwell School, Erith Grammar School and Philippa Fawcett & Furzedown College where I met Sharon, my best friend of 42 years. I don't think our lecturers would believe that Sharon went on to be ordained as a priest and I married a church organist! I qualified as a teacher in 1980 and taught in Peckham, Thamesmead, Lewisham and Swanscombe before finally ending up at Trinity School, Belvedere, in 2002 where I happily remained until I retired. I was at various stages in my career Head of English and Head of Year. I was always more interested in the pastoral side and was appointed Head of Key Stage 3 at Trinity in 2005 having been Head of Year 7 and primary liaison for 3 years. I started Trinity on the same day as their first ever chaplain, a certain Fr Clive Jones and the rest, as they say, is history...

My family church was St Andrew's Bostall Heath. I used to go with my mother, often under sufferance, until the organist asked if I would like to join the choir. The organist was a lovely man called Stanley Ducker; little did I know that I would end up marrying his son some 20 years later! I loved singing in the church choir and subsequently joined the choir at Erith Grammar and was introduced to the wonders of The Creation, The Messiah, Faure's Requiem, Carmina Burana etc - and my personal favourite at the time - The Daniel Jazz!

I did not have any form of Damascene conversion, my faith grew steadily often through the music that I was singing. I love hymns and psalms and often use them as prayers. I stayed at St Andrew's for 30 years, being churchwarden for the last 3 years I was there under the lovable eccentric Malcolm Gribble, who then went to Christ Church Bexleyheath. After marrying Jeremy I joined the choir, wherever he was playing, St Mary's Welling, St John's Erith, St Paulinus Crayford and finally Christ Church Bexleyheath where he was organist from 1998 to 2013. I loved the choir there and the music we performed. I also served as PCC secretary for 6 years.

Fr Clive invited us to St Augustine's Patronal Festival in 2003. St Augustine's was a church that I would never have considered going to because of its Forward in Faith status. I was absolutely bowled over by the beauty of the service. I then started attending on the Choir's 'morning off' from Christ Church, where a worship group played, and Jeremy used to go and play at St Martin's Barnehurst. It gradually crept up on me that I was very dissatisfied with Eucharistic worship elsewhere. It was missing mystery and reverence. I began to look forward more and more to my monthly visits to St Augustine's. It was inevitable when Jeremy left Christ Church that we would become regulars, although he still often plays at St Martin's. On the first Sunday we attended after leaving Christ Church, Manda put electoral roll forms in my hand and that was that.

I took early retirement in 2016. It coincided with a very sharp decline in Jeremy's health and my middle sister, Sandra, dying after years of dialysis. Not the start to retirement I'd planned. Our travel plans haven't materialised yet but I'm still hopeful.

However life is good. I am very close to both Jeremy's children and we have 4 amazing grandchildren. My sister, Julie and her husband are a wonderful support to us and her twins and their younger brother are a constant joy. Lockdown has meant taking stock a little and realising what is really important (although I am still longing for a pedicure & manicure!) Modern technology is wonderful for keeping in touch with people. The grandchildren FaceTiming me to read me their story books is a particular highlight and gives their parents a little break from home schooling. I have rediscovered Morning Prayer - a service I used to love 'back in the day'. We join the Dean of Canterbury, and often one of his cats, every day in the Deanery garden for this comforting and uplifting service. I have also joined Zoom services to hear Sharon preach from her church in Deal. As we start to begin to return to something like normal, Lockdown has taught me never to take everyday things, like coffee in a coffee shop, meeting a friend for lunch and singing in church, for granted again. Stay safe and well.

*From Rosemary Thomas:*

I and my late husband came to Belvedere in October 1987. When we arrive I was worried about travelling to work I was pregnant at that time, and lot of other things going through my mind. But, as a strong believer in God I decided to look up to the Almighty God, his son Jesus's Christ the mother of all mothers, Virgin Mary and all the Saints and Angels. First thing was to look for my local church which was St. Augustine. My husband & I, started attending and became a member of St. August in 1987. Then when my son arrived in 1988 we took him to the same church and gave God the glory for safe delivery, he was baptised at St. Augustine Church. Then the challenges set in, he was not well. We took him from one doctor to another, with no luck. Then we decided to take him to Africa to try natural remedies and this went on for three years. God is the giver of everything he healed him and today I give testimony about this miracle cure. I then have two more children who were baptised at St. Augustine and all three take part in the church. All three attended Christian schools. They're church members, if they can help they will. I and my family know that there is no way to the father only through his son Jesus Christ. If you believe in God, there is nothing too big for him to handle. He sees all he knows all he created the world.

*From Moses, Churchwarden of St Mary's Chitungwiza, our link parish.*

Greetings Dear Father Clive, from the parish of St Mary in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Following the updates regarding Covid 19 in Zimbabwe and the government pronouncement, we started congregating yesterday (28 June). However, we are having three services and have since grouped our congregations according to their sections - Home groups. The setup is still under trial to assess how feasible it is and hopefully adjusted as the lockdown eases. It is our prayer that the state of the world comes back to the normal where we can congregate and conduct our services freely. Meanwhile we are striving in ensuring safety and adherence to the prescribed regulations and preventive measures towards safety of congregants and the society.

You remain in our thoughts and prayers.

Yours in Christ Moses.

*If you would like to contribute to the next edition of Gus's Gossip, which will be published the first week in August please email Fr Clive at [frclive@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:frclive@tiscali.co.uk) or Donna at [staugustineofcanterburypa@gmail.com](mailto:staugustineofcanterburypa@gmail.com) .*



02/07/202