

## Finding and sharing faith

Richard and I spent a few days during April in Suffolk and one evening let Moffat, our Border Terrier, out into the garden. She had her first encounter with a hedgehog. Moffat discovered that when hedgehogs feel threatened they roll themselves up into a ball. Moffat loves playing with balls and this led to her second discovery; she picked it up and ran round the garden with it in her mouth yelping as she found her 'new ball' was a ball of prickles. Fortunately she let go when told to do so.

Sometimes we find things out by reading about them or hearing things from others, whilst other things we experience for ourselves. We can read stories of other people's faith and hear others tell what their faith means to them. This may help us in our understanding of faith but we need to take ownership and discover what it means for us.

On 5th May the church celebrates Ascension Day. It is the time when Jesus' physical presence on earth comes to an end; we hear his words of commission to his disciples; and the way is prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Trying to explain the Ascension means attempting to put into words what is beyond description. It is an experience that is real (the disciples saw it for

themselves). Yet, to those disciples - and to us in the 21st century - it is as much an act of faith, as it is a real experience.

*'While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.'* (Luke 24, 51-52)

The disciples reacted with joy: only a few weeks earlier, after Jesus' crucifixion, they had been fearful and without Jesus had felt lost.

After the resurrection, when they met with the risen Jesus, their faith and confidence was renewed and strengthened. They knew they must show others what it meant to live out the Gospel. So when Jesus was taken from them at the Ascension they set their sights on serving those on earth. The proclamation of the good news would no longer be through Jesus, but through those who lived out the faith he had brought to them.

**Rev Morag Finch**

### Special Events and Services

#### Sunday 1 May

##### 10.30am Family Eucharist

Join with us to welcome our friends from Douai

#### Thursday 5th May - Ascension Day

##### 8.00pm Holy Communion

#### Sunday 15th May - Pentecost

##### 10.30am Family Eucharist with the admission of children to Communion

##### 6.30pm Choral Evensong

Responses: Smith  
Canticles: Noble in B minor  
Anthem: O thou the central orb - Wood

#### Sunday 22nd May - Trinity Sunday

6.30pm The Music Group will lead an informal service  
All are welcome



**CONGRATULATIONS** to Rebecca Aldred, awarded Chorister of the Year by the Friends of St Mary's.  
(Pictured: Rebecca Aldred and Canon Claire Tillotson)



## From the Registers

### Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:

17 Apr Jasper Mills

### At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Doris Whybrow 14 Mar aged 82

John Whittaker 15 Mar aged 81



CONGRATULATIONS to Cecilia Willatt for her beautifully decorated Easter egg!

## Remembering

### Doris Whybrow

Doris (also known as Doris Parry) was born and grew up in and around Croydon. After the war she went to work at the local firm Muirhead where she met and married Ken.

She was blessed with three children - Peter, Ian and Stella - and although times were not always easy, she was fiercely protective of them and often went without to provide for them. She was very proud of them and her four grandchildren.

Doris enjoyed music - singing in St Mary's church choir for a number of years.

In her later years she enjoyed creating home-made cards which she would not only send to members of the family, but also sell at lunch club to raise money for charity - especially for Betel, a children's home in Brazil.

Over the past few years her health deteriorated and she had increasing stays in hospital: she and her family were grateful to church friends who kept in touch.

Doris had declared her trust in Jesus at a Luis Palau mission in 1984, and her family were pleased to have the opportunity to read the bible and pray with her in her last days.

### John Whittaker

John was born 81 years ago in Shortlands and had two brothers, both of whom predeceased him.

He grew up here and spent happy hours playing in the woods which now form Shortlands Golf Club - one can only imagine the fun three young boys had in their own adventure playground.

John had a very successful business life travelling extensively and taking his wife Gaby with him. Travel was a great joy for both of them as were their many friends.

They first came to St Mary's over twenty years ago when their niece joined the choir. They found it was the right place for them and stayed.

During the period of Gaby's illness, the obvious love and respect they had for each other was palpable and impressive: sadly she died twelve years ago.

For the past nine years John had found companionship with Jorge who also cared for him in his last illness.

John was described as great fun - very open to listening to others, very correct in many ways, very British! He was a man who respected old ideas like punctuality and hospitality and he hated injustice.

He was a valued member of our church family and of the 2WWs.

## Sharing good news

Christians often find it difficult to talk about their faith, whether for fear of ridicule or being accused of trying to impose their views on others. Earlier this year, six groups from St Mary's followed a five week course designed to help us communicate our faith. Some met in people's homes, others at the church and our Pathfinders (11-18 year olds) used it in their meetings during the Sunday morning services.

We started by looking at our responsibility for God's creation and to be faithful stewards of our world. In the second week we saw how Jesus and the early church engaged with issues of injustice and considered how we could help to challenge injustice in society. We were reminded how much time Jesus spent with those who were marginalised and how his harshest words were for the leaders who followed religious rules but ignored justice.

Next we looked at service, which is at the heart of Christianity. As Christians we seek to follow Jesus' example: he showed God's commitment and love for the world in the way he lived and sacrificed himself for us. We discussed how best to explain our faith to others, considering how Jesus and the disciples listened and understood where others were coming from, so that people were in turn prepared to listen, allowing God to meet them where they were.

The final session drew this all together on the basis that, if we steward faithfully, act justly, serve sacrificially and teach effectively, we will ourselves be good news, earning a hearing to tell people about our faith.

What was particularly helpful was being able to talk about these issues together in a small group, hearing each other's questions, experiences and thoughts as we explore and build our understanding together.

There are various groups that meet throughout the year at St Mary's. Anyone is welcome to join, whether or not you attend St Mary's on a Sunday. If you would like to learn more, please contact the Parish Office on 020 8460 5682 or office@stmaryshortlands.plus.com.

*Catherine Bingham*

**Parish Picnic  
& Barbecue**  
Sunday, 12 June  
in the church grounds following the  
10.30am Family and Parade Service  
Come and Celebrate the 90th Birthday of the Queen  
Bring your own picnic -  
barbecue food and refreshments available to buy  
Bouncy castle and games for all the family  
**Come and join the fun!**

### Say it with flowers

*May God grant that our eyes and our hands may receive His inspiration, enabling us to glorify His house with the beauty of leaves and blossoms which He has created. (Guild of Church Flower Arrangers' Prayer).*

To be involved in this most delightful of tasks is a great privilege, one which I have enjoyed for the past fifty years. It has given me some very precious moments of friendship which I shall cherish for the rest of my life.

After all this time, I and my dedicated team of flower arrangers are beginning to run out of steam and are in need of some younger, fresher help. We are a friendly group who will happily guide and advise anyone interested in joining the team.

Do come and meet us on Monday 6 June at 2pm at St Mary's when we shall be celebrating the Guild's fiftieth birthday, with a demonstration by Graham Harmer, followed by tea and cake.

*Marian Parr*

## Crafty work

The Craft and Chatter group is continuing to produce a wide range of items for use and sale by the church and wider community. Current knitted projects include hats for the Mission to Seafarers, squares which will end up in blankets in Romania, and items for the premature baby unit at the Princess Royal University Hospital.

Looking ahead, the group will be creating felt and wool decorations for a Scandinavian-themed stall at the Christmas Fair – plus a knitted Noah's Ark with animals for the raffle!

The group meets most Tuesday mornings between 10 and 12 in the choir vestry. Anyone is welcome – you don't have to be a knitter as the group does other activities. Feel free to come along and chat over coffee.

## Supporting the Choir on tour

Thank you to our amazing congregation & parishioners!

The fundraising activities of the Choir of St Mary's over the past three months have seen some delicious cakes, a memorable concert (pictured below) and some extraordinarily kind donations to the Tour Fund.

The choir is to spend four days in residence at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds from 25- 28 August, leading the worship through a range of services including four Choral Evensongs.

Fundraising events include car wash days and a quiz night. The money raised is to provide the accommodation costs for the trip.

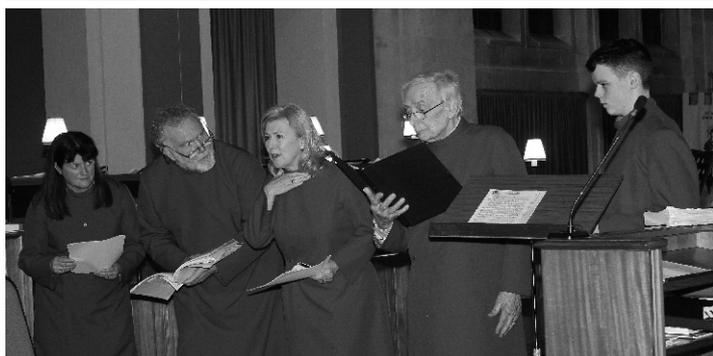
The cake sales and concert have been a tremendous success and what has been so humbling, for all in the Choir, is the support from parishioners. Comments received about the concert included: 'a beautiful and moving afternoon', and 'it was so lovely to see the children performing not only in the Choir but individually on their chosen instruments'.

The Choir has so far raised £4,030 towards their target of £6,000, with £1,200 coming from a generous donation from the Friends of St Mary's, £395 from the Parochial Church Council and over £250 from individual donations.

We have more events to come and details will appear in the pew paper and SPAN, but on behalf of the Choir, the Director of Music and fundraising team, I would like to say a very big 'Thank you' for the tremendous support from our wonderful congregation and parishioners.

*Tony Wright-Jones*

**CHOIR ON TOUR QUIZ NIGHT: Saturday 14 May, 7.30pm in the church hall. Tickets £10 per person from Tony Wright-Jones (07801 321964) or on sale after 10.30am services.**



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# Mission of the month

## Christian Aid Week – 15 to 21 May The week we love every neighbour

During Christian Aid Week volunteers in Shortlands, together with thousands of others across the country, will be taking part in house to house collections, raising money to help some of the world's poorest people.



People like Morsheda, a young mother of four who has few assets and no savings. She lives on a low-lying island in Bangladesh where floods are a terrifying part of her family's everyday life. Their single-room, corrugated-iron house has been flooded several times.

But together we can lift our neighbours like Morsheda to safety. Just £250 is enough to flood-proof Morsheda's home by raising it eight foot on an earth plinth, and to provide a safe place to keep livestock and grow crops. It could also buy a goat, seeds and a wormery to help produce compost that could give her a long-term income.

So please look out for the red Christian Aid envelope that will be posted through your letter-box and collected by an authorised collector during the week beginning 15th May. Your generosity could transform the lives of our global neighbours.

For more information about the work of Christian Aid see the display at the back of church or [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk).

## Saint of the Month St Augustine – 26 May

Augustine was prior of St Andrew's monastery in Rome when, in the year 595, Pope Gregory the Great sent him to lead a band of forty monks to preach the gospel to the heathen English.

They landed in Pegwell Bay just south of Ramsgate in 597 and were well received by the local king Ethelbert, whose French queen, Bertha, was already a Christian. He himself soon became a Christian along with many of his subjects, including thousands during a mass baptism on 15th August 597.

Augustine went to Arles to be consecrated archbishop of the English and established his area of domain (his 'see') at Canterbury. He founded the monastery of St Peter and St Paul in Canterbury, the remains of which can now be seen as St Augustine's Abbey.

Despite the presence of Christians in Cornwall and Wales, left over from the time of the later Roman Empire, no efforts had been made to try to convert the Saxon invaders in the east. Augustine's attempts to persuade the native Celtic bishops to submit to his authority failed. He was more successful with the pagans than with the Christians.

Before his death, Augustine consecrated Laurence of Canterbury as his successor to the archbishopric, probably to ensure an orderly transfer of office.

He also founded two other bishoprics – London with the original St Paul's Cathedral, and Rochester, where he consecrated Justus, who probably came from Rome with the second group of missionaries, as Bishop in 604.

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- 08.00 Holy Communion
- 10.30 Family Communion, except when notified. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 0-18.
- 18.30 Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday in the month)

**Every Monday**

- 17.00 Evening Prayers

**Every Wednesday**

- 10.00 Holy Communion

Further information about all services can be obtained from the Parish Office.

**PARISH DIRECTORY**

Vicar	Rev. M. Finch	8464 8065
(Sat - Thu)	revfinch@btinternet.com	
Associate Vicar	Rev. R. Finch	8464 8065
Associate Vicar	Rev. J. Peters	07531 617302/8460 5682
(Sun, Mon, Wed)		
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	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
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Stewardship	Mr. J. Westropp	8650 5178
Junior Church	Mrs. S. Aldred	8460 3978

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Open 9.30am - 12.30pm weekdays.  
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Mothers & Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	8650 4553
Mothers' Union Fellowship Group		
	Mrs. P. White	8460 9357
Friends of St. Mary's		
	Miss J. Rambridge	8650 0947

For admissions to Beavers, Cubs & Scouts please contact email: 7bromleyadmissions@gmail.com

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Cubs (Mon)	Mrs. P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
Cubs (Tues)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954 437658
Beavers	Mrs H. Ashford	07979 504079

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies & Guides please tel: 08001695901 or go to [www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested)

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Guides (Fri)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon.)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
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		8460 8122
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Pre-School	Mrs. P. Chase	or 07960 988552
		8460 9537
The 2WW's	Mrs. A. Heayberd	8249 7127
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Residents' Association	8460 4060
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Website [www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmaryshortlands.org.uk)  
Editorial Parish Office 8460 5682  
Distribution Mr. M. Harrison 8464 0284  
**Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those supported by the publishers, and no responsibility can be accepted for accuracy. The publishers cannot accept responsibility for work carried out by advertisers.**  
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