

# Hope springs eternal

The latest possible date for Easter under the calendar used by most Christian churches is 25th April, so 21st April, this year's Easter Day, is almost as late as it could be. Easter brings the Christian message of hope, at a time when spring is in the air and we are looking forward to summer. Writing this in early March, when Lent is just starting, and after a couple of weeks of cold wet weather, Easter Day and its message of hope feels a long way off.

Alexander Pope wrote the poem 'An Essay on Man' which contains the well-known line 'Hope springs eternal in the human breast'. This phrase quickly became proverbial, perhaps because it captures so clearly how it seems to be human nature to hope in the face of disaster and tragedy and at times against all the odds. False hope can be a bad thing, as when it feeds a gambling addiction, but true hope can be an overwhelming force for good.

True hope doesn't deny suffering and loss, it doesn't ignore pain and anguish – of which there is so much in the world – and indeed hope can come out of these situations. The apostle Paul understood this when he said 'suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope'. Paul goes on to explain that Christian hope is true and does not let us down because it is based on the love of God (Romans 5: 3-5).

I doubt that Mary, one of Jesus' followers, felt any hope when she went to his tomb after he had been crucified. She had gone to mourn, to be near him, as people will do when they lose someone they love. There is a huge gap and they know that the loved one will not return, but sometimes it can help to be nearby. But the Bible tells us that Mary met Jesus at the tomb. Jesus suddenly filled that gap: beyond all hope, he was alive. It was the beginning of a new and different life. The Bible tells how the news spread, how other people met the risen Jesus. How Jesus' followers, who had given up all hope when Jesus had been put to death on the cross, were transformed by the news of Jesus' resurrection and then inspired by the power of God's spirit.

Christ's resurrection is the true hope of the world. It comes from love that God shows for us and it is for the present as well as for eternity. As Pope Francis said in his Easter message in 2018: 'Death, solitude and fear are not the last word': the resurrection transcends these. There is hope in the offer of life and purpose in relationship with God: a relationship that is possible because God has reached out to us. This hope is at the heart of the Christian message, and if you want to find out more, as we move into a new phase in the life of St Mary's, with a new vicar, we would love to hear from you.

**Catherine Bingham**

## Special Events and Services

### Sunday 14 April - Palm Sunday

10.30am Procession of Palms and Eucharist for Palm Sunday

6.30pm Choral Evensong

### Monday 15 - Wednesday 17 April

8.00pm Compline with reflection

### Thursday 18 April - Maundy Thursday

8.00pm Washing of feet and Eucharist of the Last Supper

### Friday 19 April - Good Friday

10.30am Family Service

2.00pm An hour at the cross

3.00pm Half an hour for private prayer

### Sunday 21 April - Easter Day

8.00am Easter Communion

10.30am Eucharist of the Resurrection  
*Including the renewal of Baptismal Vows and the Easter Egg Treasure Hunt*

### Saturday 27 April

6.00pm The Instituting, Induction and Installation of Reverend Gary Best to be Vicar of St Mary, Shortlands

The Friends of St. Mary's invite you to:

## 'Here, there and everywhere'

Entertainments played, spoken and sung  
will be yours to discover  
all around the St. Mary's Church premises . . .

**Saturday, 11th May 7.00pm**

(ending approximately 9.45pm)

£10 to include a glass of wine and nibbles –  
refills available throughout the evening!

Tickets from the Parish Office,  
Friends' Committee members and after main Sunday services.



## From the Registers

### At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Christopher Parry 12 March  
Jenny Linstead 19 March

### Chris Parry

Chris was born in 1932 in Blackheath. His father (a Rear Admiral) had been in the Royal Navy for 40 years and the family moved around a good deal, eventually settling in Woking, Surrey.

During World War II Chris was sent as a boarder to a local prep school and thence to Charterhouse School. At the age of 17 he sat the Civil Service exam for the Royal Navy and in 1950 he entered the Naval College at Dartmouth as a cadet.

Chris's naval career took him all over the world and especially to the Far East. He spent 1969 circumnavigating the world.

He met Margaret in 1960 on a blind date in London and they married nine months after meeting. As Chris used to say, having been a boarder at two schools and then in the Royal Navy, he was thoroughly institutionalised and didn't have a proper home life until he married.

Chris and Margaret had three children and nothing gave him greater pleasure than his family and their achievements.

After leaving the Royal Navy Chris joined a firm of Chartered Surveyors in London and worked for them for 20 years. He then took up golf and was Treasurer of the local bowling club for a number of years. Later he joined Probus and was Chairman of the local branch.

Chris and Margaret made their home in Kingswood Road, and Chris was a loyal member of St Mary's for many years.

### Local places to visit: Kelsey Park

Kelsey Park is close to the centre of Beckenham and has good transport links. It is a very popular area for families, joggers and dog walkers. For older, less mobile visitors there is step-free access all around the park and plenty of seats to sit, rest and enjoy the views.

The stunning, well-maintained herbaceous border is particularly worth checking out from April through to October. There are large lawns with an interesting selection of trees and two areas of woodland. The Park is well known for its water birds and in particular a heronry, one of the largest in South London, on an island in the main lake ([www.rspb.org.uk/groups/bromley/places](http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/bromley/places)).

The popular café is by the well-equipped children's play area and there is a challenging mini-golf course behind. Toilets are next to the café. The Friends of Kelsey Park have an Information Centre (located on the opposite side of the park) which is open weekend afternoons. You can pick up leaflets on trees, birds and history as well as looking at the displays, purchase notelets and have your questions answered.

On Thursdays you can join a free walk, 'Walking for Health', starting from the café at 10am ([www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder/bromley-ramblers-walking-for-health](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder/bromley-ramblers-walking-for-health)).

The busiest times are usually at weekends and when the weather is good! A section on the west side of the park is dog-free. Please read any parking restrictions on local roads.

On Sunday 7 April from 11am to 4pm, anyone can come along to the park to learn about grey herons. There will be short guided bird walks at 12 and 2pm, from the FoKP stand in the central shelter between the two bigger lakes.

## THANK YOU

St Mary's church gives heartfelt thanks to all who have helped us during our 'interregnum', when we have been without a vicar. Thank you to the visiting clergy who have led our services, our ministry team, our churchwardens, staff in the office, and all who have helped things to run so smoothly, doing even more than they normally do and often unseen.

### Highfield Junior School Open Morning

Thursday 2 May, 9.30am  
Tel 020 8460 2597 or email  
[admin@highfield-jun.bromley.sch.uk](mailto:admin@highfield-jun.bromley.sch.uk)  
for more information

## Remembering

### Did you see...?

Tim Aldred, a member of St Mary's congregation, and Head of Policy at the Fairtrade Foundation, was interviewed on Songs of Praise on 3rd March, as part of Fairtrade Fortnight.

Tim said 'It was great to explain how important Fairtrade is for farmers in developing countries, providing a better deal and improving working and living conditions. Katherine Jenkins (the presenter) said that Fairtrade produce is sold in her church just like we do at St Mary's! It was also interesting to see all the work that goes on behind the scenes of the programme - it took nearly two hours to film my three-minute interview!'



PICTURED: Tim with Katherine Jenkins



### Meet Revd. Gary!

Hello, my name is Revd. Gary Best, and at the time of your reading this article I will probably still be the Vicar-designate of St Mary, Shortlands, but very much looking forward to being collated and installed as the new Vicar on 27th April.

With only a few words within this article, I will start with a brief introduction of myself and my family, and will look forward to getting to know Shortlands during the coming weeks and months.

I am married to Lynn, and I have six children, Holly (30), Jack (28), Olivia (16), Keira (8), Tommy (7), Kai (3), but with only four children living at home. Lynn and I are also proud Grandparents to Max (5), and Elsie (3). Olivia, Keira, Tommy, and Kai are very excited about moving to Shortlands, and they have already discovered Kelsey Park, as well as The Glades shopping centre!

My personal faith story is one that started in 2007 after walking into a church for the first time in my adult life, to someone who is now an ordained priest in the Church of England, a story that I look forward to sharing more with you in the future. Prior to being ordained, I worked within the printing industry for 37 years, where I have worked within production and management; experience from which I bring many transferable skills to my role in ministry.

My ministry will be focussed on community, and ensuring that St Mary's remains at the heart of Shortlands, and that it continues to be recognised as a relevant place for everyone, young and old.

I look forward to moving into Shortlands, and to establishing myself and my family within the community.

# Mission of the month

## Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

One hundred years ago on the 1st April the RAFBF was founded. The remit then was to provide direct welfare assistance to those of the Royal Air Force extended family in need or distress.



Today the Fund's remit, which now incorporates the Royal Observer Corps, proudly remains the same.

The Fund provides financial, practical, and emotional support to all members of the RAF family whether they are serving or former members (including National Service) as well as their partners and dependants. The Fund helps members of the RAF family to deal with a wide range of issues from childcare and relationship difficulties to injury and disability, from financial hardship and debt to illness and bereavement.

In 2017 the Fund spent over £17million supporting more than 55,000 current and former members of the RAF and their families.

The money raised is disbursed towards topping up care home fees of veterans, assisting in the purchase of mobility items, new clothing for the impoverished, Airplay youth facilities for children and young persons living at remote RAF stations, and those in need. The Fund provides respite and care breaks for members of the RAF family at Princess Marina House at Rustington, West Sussex.

Most importantly, the Fund supports the families of RAF personnel who have lost their lives or been injured/ wounded whilst in service including defence or humanitarian missions.

For more information please see the board at the rear of the church, or visit [www.rafbf.com](http://www.rafbf.com)

## News from South Hill Wood

Following on from recent conservation and holding works to the fountain at South Hill Wood the Friends have, with help from idverde and a £200 donation from Shortlands Residents' Association, had the moat filled in with top soil and planted a selection of ferns and wood anemones.



Bromley's Conservation Officer had advised that there was no possibility of full restoration so the conservation and holding works were the only option. In anticipation of a dry Spring there is a desperate need for

help to water the new plants so if you are able to, please take some water to give the new plants a drink.

It's aimed to install an information board near the fountain, which will have pictures of it in its original state, its history and information about the trees in that section of the Wood.

You're welcome at monthly work days (2nd Saturday of the month – 10am -12noon followed by tea/coffee on the club house terrace) or if you wish to join and help in other ways, email [bill@curiousferret.com](mailto:bill@curiousferret.com).

## News from the SRA

A well-attended open meeting was held at Harris Primary School in February.

Clr's Mary Cooke (Shortlands) and Nicky Dyke (Bromley Town) outlined actions by Bromley Council which principally affect Shortlands.

Mark Dempsey, chairman of the Shortlands Residents Association (SRA), spoke on the Association's aims and activities, then Danny Miller, the development officer, spoke on trends in local planning applications.

Questions and issues raised related to improving life in Shortlands: better traffic flow, plans to deal with the problem of parking in side streets, the future of the proposed 'Sainsbury' site in the Village and ownership of the forecourts in front of the shops.

Some topics discussed will inform the Autumn consultation about Transport for London's plans to 'transform communities' in Shortlands. These include redesigning dangerous road junctions and creating 'pocket parks', one potentially around the War Memorial.

Questions also covered cleaning up the Ravensbourne river, lighting to be installed on the railway foot bridge at the bottom of Kingswood Road and a network of public charging points for electric cars.

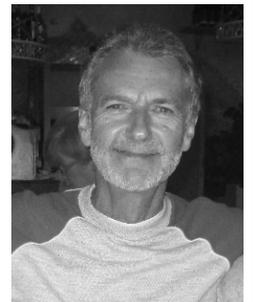
The chairman set out the SRA's future goals, appealing for new members and for volunteers to become more involved in its organisation.

*Keith Mills*

## Desert Island Discs

A series based on the Radio 4 programme featuring people who live or work in the parish with the eight tracks of music they would choose to have with them if marooned on a desert island, and why.

This month, Tony Chase, Scout Group Chair, 'Friend' and SPAN photographer, chooses his music:



1. A Whiter Shade of Pale (Procol Harum) – A classic - Pat and I wanted it at our wedding but the organist couldn't play it!
2. Pictures at an Exhibition (Emerson Lake & Palmer) – One track filling a whole album! Exciting, and great musicianship; performed at the first rock concert I ever went to.
3. Will You (Hazel O'Connor) – Almost entirely a soaring saxophone solo. Find it online and listen with your eyes closed!
4. Zombie (The Cranberries) – Powerful anti-violence song with a menacing bass line – should be played loud!
5. California Man (The Move) – Good old-fashioned rock 'n' roll – takes me straight back to '70s parties and stacked-heel boots.
6. Free Bird (Lynyrd Skynyrd) – Known for the triple guitar 'solo' that takes over half way through – never fails to raise the spirits.
7. Total Control (The Motels) – A reminder of our first trip to Oz in 1980 – the radio stations played it all the time.
8. Bridge Over Troubled Water (Simon & Garfunkel) – Arguably the best pop song ever written; in my top eight if only for that reason alone.

Nothing classical in my selection I'm afraid, except that Mussorgsky wrote the 'original' of number 2. I have mainly '60s and '70s rock running through my veins – incurable at my age I fear!



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- 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**

- 17.30 Evening Prayers

**Every Wednesday**

- 10.00 Holy Communion

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

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Mr. P. Stotesbury	8650 3259
Mr. S. Buchanan	8777 8008
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**PARISH OFFICE Tel: 8460 5682**

e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.church  
Open 9.30am - 12.30pm weekdays.  
Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these

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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

Scouts (Fri)	Mr. R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon)	Mrs. P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
Cubs (Tues)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954 437658
Beavers	Ms E. Hay	07932758801

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

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Guides (Fri.)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Wed.)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Mon.)	Ms. E. Bingham	07947347068
Brownies (Thurs.)	Mrs. S. Tight	8460 8122
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		or 07960 988552
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Mission Chairman	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
Douai Link	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
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**LOCAL CONTACTS**

Clr. M. Cooke	020 3665 0357
(Email: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)	
Clr A. Cuthbert	
(Email: aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk)	
Residents' Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

**SPAN INFORMATION**

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