



St. Hilda's Newsletter

December 2023 – January 2024

Remembrance Poppies at St. Hilda's



Photos by Melvyn Rouse and Sara Moggeridge

How can Artificial Intelligence help your parish magazine?

Thursday 2nd November 2023

I checked in with Sara this evening; she has had no articles for the newsletter. It would be a great shame to lose it – but the role of the editor is to collate articles, not to write them. Being me, I offered to write something.

I was discussing the problem with my family over dinner and my daughters recommended Chat GPT, suggesting that if I listed a few bullet points, Chat GPT Artificial intelligence would put them into an article that I could then adapt. I threw together a few ideas about the first few months of being a church warden and asked ChatGPT to make it amusing and whimsical. Below are the original few paragraphs and following that – the 10 second response from ChatGPT. (It's a few ideas - not a carefully considered list of thanks or even necessarily 100% accurate, so please read with a handful of salt).

The Original

I think the job of Church Warden is almost as difficult to fill as the job of church Treasurer.

Even the book supplied by the Church of England warns prospective wardens that they probably don't know what they are in for. When I was sworn in, the Archdeacon talked about the huge pressure borne by Church Wardens and a few previous incumbents of the post patted me on the back knowingly and said "good luck" in that way that was immediately obvious as having a greater intensity than the mere words imply.

So the first few months have been interesting.

I've done the inside church bit of parish breakfast and been the speaker, dealt with the loss of a treasurer, been part of the group producing the Parish Profile to advertise for a new priest. We've delivered a very successful summer fair, a couple of concerts and tomorrow is the autumn fair. As part of the house team, I've inspected St Hilda's House and organised the grounds maintenance, secured a grant to replace the roof of the Church hall and install solar panels, obtained planning permission for the same,

negotiating a commercial let for our pre-school. The PCC had to regain access to our bank account and deal with cheque payments to suppliers expecting us to pay electronically and to top it all the thing that got to me the most was having to go to the hall in the rain last night because our cleaner had let us down.

The point of this article is actually nothing to do with being Church Warden! The point of this article is to record my gratitude to everyone in the congregation, everyone on the PCC, Frances and Bobbie who continue to supply wisdom and support unstintingly and just now and in particular Elizabeth Bate and my lovely daughters Sian and Ellie who came out last night and ensured the kitchen and all the toilets were clean and the bins emptied for our regular hirers this morning. It is true many hands make light work and I was both honoured and humbled by what they did. Thank you very much!

ChatGPT's article

The Trials and Tribulations of a Church Warden

You might think that being a Church Warden is a piece of cake. After all, how hard can it be to look after a building and a bunch of people who share your faith? Well, let me tell you, it's not as easy as it sounds. In fact, it's more like a roller coaster ride with twists and turns, ups and downs, and the occasional scream.

The Church of England has a book that tells you what to expect as a Church Warden, but I don't think anyone reads it. I certainly didn't. I just said yes when they asked me, thinking it would be a nice way to serve God and the community. Little did I know what I was getting myself into.

The Archdeacon who swore me in gave me a hint of what was to come. He said something about the huge pressure that Church Wardens face, and then he gave me a pat on the back that felt more like a push off a cliff. He said "good luck" with a tone that implied "you'll need it".

And boy, did I need it. In the first few months, I had to deal with all sorts

of challenges and tasks. I had to organise a parish breakfast and give a talk, find a new treasurer, help write a profile for our new priest, plan a summer fair and two concerts, inspect St Hilda's House, get a grant for the roof of the hall and solar panels, get planning permission for the same, negotiate a lease for our pre-school, sort out our bank account and payments, and much more.

But the straw that broke the camel's back was when our cleaner let us down and I had to go to the hall in the rain to clean the kitchen and toilets for our regular hirer the next morning. That was when I realised that being a Church Warden is not just about managing buildings and people, but also about getting your hands dirty.

But this article is not really about me or my woes. It's about the people who helped me along the way, who made my burden lighter and my joy greater. It's about Elizabeth Bate and my wonderful daughters Sian and Ellie, who came with me to the hall that rainy night and cleaned everything with me. They were my angels in disguise, my heroes in need. They showed me what true love and service are all about. Thank you so much!

They also showed me what teamwork means. Teamwork is when you work together with others towards a common goal. Teamwork is when you support each other and share your skills and talents. Teamwork is when you have fun and enjoy each other's company. Teamwork is when you make a difference in the world.

I am so grateful for my team at St Hilda's Church. They are more than just fellow parishioners or friends. They are my family. And together, we can overcome any challenge that comes our way.

Of course, none of us are alone. But with Jesus ahead of us and the amazing team at St Hilda's we are stronger together than apart."

As you can see the result is breathtaking! So, I asked ChatGPT how it can help me write an article and here is the response:

ChatGPT is a powerful AI chatbot that can help you write an article in various ways. Here are some of the things you can do with ChatGPT.

You can use ChatGPT to brainstorm research questions, thesis statements, or topics for your article. For example, you can type summarize [book title] to get a brief summary of a book, or generate three possible research questions for a paper on [topic] to get some ideas for your research question.

- You can use ChatGPT to create an outline for your article. For example, you can type outline an article on [topic] to get a suggested structure and main points for your article, or outline a paragraph on [subtopic] to get a more detailed outline for a specific section of your article.
- You can use ChatGPT to generate literature ideas for your article. For example, you can type find sources on [topic] to get a list of relevant web articles, books, or academic papers on your topic, or find sources that support [argument] to get sources that back up your claim.
- You can use ChatGPT to paraphrase text for your article. For example, you can type paraphrase [text] to get a different way of expressing the same idea, or paraphrase [text] in a more formal/informal tone to adjust the tone of your writing.
- You can use ChatGPT to get feedback on your article. For example, you can type give feedback on [text] to get some suggestions for improving your writing or give feedback on [text] focusing on [aspect] to get more specific feedback on a certain aspect of your writing, such as grammar, style, or clarity.

The moral of this story is – that with just a few thoughts you can get AI to write an article for you – so please give it a try!

Paula Gething

Thanks, Paula. This shows that there really is no excuse for not contributing to the newsletter! - *Editor*

Brass Plaques



Following Rosemary's article about two of the brass plaques in church: This plaque is on the wall to the right of the high altar, behind where the servers always sat.

Fred and Mary were long time members of the congregation, and their two daughters were brought up among the church family. Fred was a local boy who attended Woodthorpe Road School, and Mary was from the Middlesborough area. It is thought that in her single days she worked for the Bishop of Durham and that she met Fred during the war when he was in the army.

They were a couple who supported all areas of church life and for many years Fred was a server, eventually taking on the role of head server. Mary was a loyal member and supporter of the Mothers' Union. She loved children, made beautiful knitted and crocheted garments and was a skilled baker.

They lived all their married lives in Ashford and when eventually they needed some care, they shared sheltered accommodation at White Gates in Laleham village where they were regularly visited by members of the congregation.

The small brass plaque is a constant reminder of all they contributed to the life of St Hilda's.

Joyce Rouse

St Hilda's Entertainers - *Jack and the Beanstalk*

I am happy to confirm that rehearsals for St Hilda's Entertainers' pantomime, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, are going well.

The cast is a lovely mixture of established members who have been with the Entertainers for many previous productions, those who joined last year for *The Mermaid's Tale*, Diane Stahlmann (now Piccalilli the Witch), Lois Clark (Queen Apricot), Graham Sheath (King Crumble) and Shannon Clark (Scarper), and those who have joined us for the first time this year, Kath Shore (Jack), Leah Dent (Princess Charlotte), St Hilda's very own Tyler Pannone (Dame Dotty Dimple), plus Rina Sachdeva (Chorus).

Rehearsals are great fun, and the cast and everyone else involved, backstage, costumes, music, choreography, lights and sound effects are looking forward to passing that fun on to you. As always with a St Hilda's pantomime there's plenty of humour, romance, drama, singing and dancing and a lot of audience participation giving all-round entertainment for everyone, whatever their age.

Performances are at St Hilda's Hall in **December**, on
Friday 1st at 7.45pm,
Saturday 2nd at 2.30pm and 7pm,
Friday 8th at 7.45pm, and
Saturday 9th at 2.30pm and 7pm.

Tickets are £12 for adults and £10 for children and senior citizens. They are available online, via the Entertainers' website www.sthildasentertainers.com or by phoning 0333 666 3366.

As in recent years, there will also be a performance on the first Saturday (2nd December) at 10.30am. This is offered particularly to local groups such as Rainbows and Brownies, but if you would like tickets for this morning performance, please speak to Chris Davenport (01784 252170).

Mike Davenport

St Hilda's Mother's Union Update

Our branch has a Corporate Communion on the first Wednesday of each month and a lunch meeting in church, with a speaker or an activity on the second Tuesday. All are very welcome to join us and you do not need to be a member.

The Mothers' Union Wave of Prayer Service was held by St Hilda's Branch on 10th October 2023. It was led by Rosalyn Young our LLM and a member of our branch at our lunchtime meeting. Fifteen members joined together to thank God for the unity of the Mothers' Union throughout the world, and especially in our linked dioceses in America, Australia and Africa. Everyone joined in with singing *The Lord's My Shepherd* and the prayers, including the *Mothers' Union Prayer*, *The Lord's Prayer* and lighting special candles. In all, it was a memorable and a moving occasion.

We ran a very successful cake stall at the recent Frost Fair and send a big thank you to all the members of the congregation who so generously donated cakes. We have some extremely talented bakers among us.

The Mothers' Union is taking part in this year's Big Give Christmas Challenge and the money raised will be used to support families in Tanzania who are living in extreme poverty. There is more information about the appeal on the M.U. notice board at the back of church and we have donated £100 from our branch funds.

Our branch is in the process of handwriting a greeting in 500 Christmas cards from the London Diocese M.U. for all the ladies who will be spending Christmas in Bronzefield Prison.

Joyce Rouse

Merry Christmas

We would like to wish all our readers and contributors a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Hatton Musical Theatre – *Oliver!*

I hope all those of you from St Hilda's who managed to get to the Rhoda McGaw Theatre in Woking at the end of October thoroughly enjoyed Hatton Musical Theatre's hugely entertaining production of *Oliver!* The very successful team of Jack Griffin, Director, Charlie Booker, Choreographer, and Adam Blossie, Musical Director, once again made sure that five months of twice-weekly rehearsals at St Hilda's Hall resulted in a production of an almost professional standard.

Audience reaction at every performance was very uplifting and rewarding. For the cast, it is so good to know that we have achieved our main aim of providing good quality entertainment when we hear the clapping and cheering and look out at a sea of smiling faces. The children in the show played their part brilliantly, whether in the workhouse, on the streets of London or in Fagin's gang. In these ever-changing days it shouldn't have been a surprise to find that Hatton's *Oliver Twist* was, in real-life, a girl. Gracie Aston had beaten all the other contenders at the auditions and gave a heart-warming performance in the title role.

What can I say about the singing and dancing of the chorus and principals? To my mind it was spectacular. Watching from the sidelines, as I did at many rehearsals, filled me with amazement at the non-stop energy being so readily expended.

For my part, I was delighted to be the kindly old gentleman, Mr Brownlow. Chorus dancing is rather beyond me now, particularly the quick and complicated moves, which the younger Hatton members seem to lap up with such ease. My dialogue as Mr Brownlow, particularly with Doctor Grimwig, played by Nick Gething, suited me just fine, as long as I was sure to remember all my words.

I did, sometimes with a little bit of paraphrasing which I could only hope the audience wouldn't notice. My biggest potential pitfall was one of my first lines. I dreaded "My pocket has been picked!" leaving my lips as "My picket has been pocked!" There was a close call on the first night, but after that I managed to make sure there were no slip-ups.

I am particularly grateful to Hatton for giving me the opportunity to take part in *Oliver!* I have a very fond memory from many years ago, 1960 to be precise, of going to Wimbledon Theatre to see a preview of what was, at that time, an unknown musical show on a test run before it transferred to the West End. I remember being mesmerised from the outset, from the first appearance of the workhouse boys singing "Food, Glorious Food" to the final bows – pure magic, which Hatton have done their very best to recreate.

Mike Davenport

Advent and Christmas Services

Every Sunday except 24th	10am	Parish Eucharist
Every Wednesday	11am	Holy Communion

Sunday 3rd *3pm* *Lodge Bros Memorial Service*

Sunday 10th *4pm* *Christingle Service*

Wednesday 13th *4pm* *Ashford CofE School*

Friday 15th *all day* *St. James School*

Sunday 17th *6pm* *Carol Service*

Sunday 24th *10am* *Crib Service*

11pm *Midnight Mass (with the Bishop of Kensington)*

Christmas Day *10am* *Holy Communion*

Queen Mother's Clothing Guild Support St Hilda's House

Earlier this year the Queen Mother's Clothing Guild (QMCG) were put in touch with St Hilda's because they had heard about St Hilda's House and were keen to support us.

QMCG was established in 1882 when the matron of an orphanage in Dorset asked Lady Wolverton for 24 pairs of knitted socks and 12 jerseys for children in her care. She started a small Guild amongst her friends to provide not less than 2 garments for each child at the orphanage and to supply clothing for other charitable institutions. The Guild grew quickly and by 1894 The London Needlework Guild (as it was then known) was making and distributing over 52,000 garments a year.

During WW1 the Guild sent over 15.5 million articles of clothing and surgical items, estimated to be worth over £1 million to troops overseas. The Guild also provided much needed help to the women and families at home, through donations to hospitals and parishes. Queen Mary became the patron of the Guild in 1910, followed by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother from 1953 – 2002.

Every year QMCG source and purchase brand new items for the charities that they support, and they even have a team of hundreds of knitters from all over the country who donate beautiful handmade items.

I went through the application process which took a couple of months, and Ruth - the Executive Chair of the charity visited us at St Hilda's for a chat and a cuppa. We were so pleased when she said they wanted to contribute and add us to the list of charities that they support. They were very impressed with how we help the ladies being released from Bronzefield and the links that we have created with the prison, Spelthorne Council and local community.

Shortly after approval, I received an invitation to their 'View Day' in London. This is where they display a variety of items for donation, talk about the year ahead and everybody gets to pick up their donations.

As we are 'small scale' we didn't need to hire a van, so on Wednesday 11th October, suitcase in hand, I hopped on the train to London to their headquarters - St James' Palace.

With a quick glimpse of the changing of the guard we were all welcomed into the Royal Household. Once inside we were given a small tour and shown to the lavish banquet hall. Here there were lots of stalls heaving with all different sorts of clothing: leggings, underwear, sweatshirts, cardigans and warm knitted hats, gloves and blankets.

St Hilda's had a special mention in their presentation speech about what we do, and everybody was keen to have a chat afterwards.

The lovely ladies that work for the charity helped load up my suitcase and I set off back to Ashford.

As this is our first year with QMCG they have donated mainly handmade knitted items – cardigans, blankets, hats and gloves which will hopefully be a nice comfort and something bright for the ladies that we support.

More information on QMCG can be found on their website

<https://www.qmccg.org.uk/>

Laura Goodman



Confessions of a Van Driver

As some of you will know, I have been driving a van for a while now. However, there are van drivers and van drivers and then there are couriers.

The courier company I work for specialises in transporting high value items in and out of the airport, including Pharmaceuticals and Biological Specimens, but also occasionally pieces of art and high-end fashion items.

This does include some very odd trips including collecting samples kept in liquid nitrogen from a university in Scotland and taking them in a sealed van down to a secure warehouse near Heathrow Airport, ready to be flown abroad. I have also once taken samples straight from the cargo centre at Heathrow to a laboratory in Glasgow and driven straight back so as to climb into bed at 3.45am and wish Paula a happy birthday!

I was also once sent to collect a sample from a medical practice in central London specialising in memory loss and dementia. The transport office sent me to their old address, whereupon I walked into the foyer to find the lights on, but nobody home! I was able to find their new office just round the corner and I explained what had happened. To be fair they did laugh when I told them.

The fashion items also included Louis Vuitton collections (amongst others) from the cargo centre in Heathrow and delivery to fairly random addresses across London. I had one such delivery and the person collecting wasn't in. I rang the contact number to find out what was happening to be told "she isn't far away. I am sure she won't be long." Half an hour later, still no sign. So, I rang again to be told "I think she may have gone for a walk". I had thought that I was delivering to a fashion magazine staffer, so I thought this was a very odd approach to running a business. In the meantime, two other drivers appeared and shot off again as they couldn't wait. Half an hour later again, this diminutive person appears, casual as you like. I asked her to sign for the boxes and

I did a double take on the name. Phoebe Dynevor! Yes, Phoebe Dynevor from Bridgerton. A few weeks later my daughters showed me photos that had been published of her wearing the clothes I had delivered, and they were definitely taken in the flat that I delivered to.

Nick Gething



Rainbow over Ashford by Rosemary Greenwood

Frost Fayre

The Frost Fayre held at St. Hilda's on Saturday 3rd October raised over £1500.



Photos courtesy of Paula Gething

Want to contribute?

It would be preferred if all submissions were between 250 and 500 words to save on editing time. Please write in Calibri 12 point.

Pictures/photographs are encouraged, but please select only one or two that you want included with the article.

We would welcome contributions for a children's page, or articles about the wider church.

Please email all contributions to the **NEW** email address:

editor@sthilda.org

Church contact details

If you would like help or to speak to one of the ministry team, please contact the parish office:

Telephone 01784 253525

Email office@sthilda.org

Christmas Carol Word Search



S	I	L	E	N	T	N	I	G	H	T	M	C	E	T	O
I	E	Y	X	G	M	Q	S	U	S	I	V	A	W	E	C
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S	T	A	R	O	F	T	H	E	E	A	S	T	B	G	M

Find the Christmas carols listed below:

JOY TO THE WORLD
 THE FIRST NOEL
 I SAW THREE SHIPS
 LITTLE DONKEY
 SILENT NIGHT
 STAR OF THE EAST
 O HOLY NIGHT

WE THREE KINGS
 DECK THE HALLS
 JINGLE BELLS
 AWAY IN A MANGER
 O CHRISTMAS TREE
 MARYS BOY CHILD
 CAROL OF THE BELLS

