



St. Hilda's Newsletter

December 2024 - January 2025

50 Years of membership



Rosalyn Young presents Beryl Rickson with a special certificate

St Hilda's Mothers' Union

At our September meeting Rosalyn Young presented Beryl Rickson with a special certificate to celebrate well over 50 years of her membership to St Hilda's Branch of the Mothers' Union..

During this time Beryl has had various posts at Branch, Deanery and Diocesan level including two terms as our Enrolling Member, Chair of Spelthorne Deanery M.U., Deanery Chair on the Diocesan Council, Faith and Policy Speakers' Officer, Kensington Area Vice-President, responsibility for marketing at the Speaker's Office and a Trustee of the Kensington Diocese.

We are very proud of Beryl and all she has done for the Mothers' Union and we are grateful for her service.

Joyce Rouse

The Welcome

Hello to St. Hilda's.
We've not been coming long
But from Day 1 we felt it,
The welcome was so strong.
Smiling faces greet us
As we come through the door;
Hymns and readings always special,
Who could ask for more?
Would we stay for coffee?
We do, and chat with friends.
Sunday morning at St. Hilda's,
Where joy just never ends.

Thank you all.

Brenda & John Ellaway

Bible Reding Fellowship Notes

For some years now I have been ordering BRF Notes for members of the congregation. BRF Ministries has been publishing Bible reading notes since 1922. Each series has a distinctive approach to suit different needs and preferences, offering a variety of ways to resource your spiritual journey and help you understand and apply scripture to your daily life.

[New Daylight](#): is for everyone on their daily journey with God.

[New Daylight Deluxe](#): all the content of *New Daylight*, but with bigger text

[Guidelines](#): Bible reading notes aimed at church leaders, students and those who seek to interpret and apply the biblical text with confidence in today's world.

[The Upper Room](#): written by its readers all over the world, *The Upper Room* focuses on finding God in daily experience.

[Day by Day with God](#): this series is written for women, by women who have themselves found the Bible a source of strength and inspiration for life.

[Bible Reflections for Older People](#): these Bible reflections aimed at older people will bring hope, assurance and sustenance to the reader.

If you would like to know more about any of these reading notes please see me after the main Sunday Service.

Liz Brian

Goodbye

Dear friends,

I am sorry to say that this is to be my last edition of the St. Hilda's newsletter. As most of you will be aware, I have moved out of the area and will no longer be able to continue the role of editor. My husband and I have, at last, been able to find a house in Dorchester in Dorset, close to family. I was blessed to secure a job at a local college and felt it was the perfect opportunity for us to be able to live together without the endless commuting between Dorchester and Staines. There are some photos on the next page.

So, a new adventure begins! I will miss my family at St Hilda's. You have all made me feel so welcome and I have enjoyed every celebration and role I have been part of, whether that be serving on Sundays or washing up after breakfast. You are a warm and wonderful community.

I also want to say thank you for the lovely card and gift I was very touched to have been presented with, on my last Sunday with you. I will plant the daffodil bulbs and send you photos of them in their new home when they come up.

Finally, your newsletter is a wonderful way for you to share your thoughts and experiences with the wider community, including those who are not able to attend the services. It is, I believe, a way for people to feel involved and I sincerely hope that you will continue to support it.

I hope to be in the area on occasion and would love to pop in to see you all when I can. Meanwhile, I wish you all, a very happy, peaceful and joyful Christmas.

With much love
Sara x



Top Left Our new house; *Above* The new office! *Top Right, Below* Views from the office



My Rural Journey continued (Part 6)

1981

There was a seismic shift in my personal life at the end of 1980 and beginning of 1981. The travelling backwards and forwards to Pietermaritzburg was to enjoy seeing my family and a boyfriend. Saturday was family. Sunday was going to a service at a Methodist Church in Boshoff Street and then socialising with the boyfriend for the rest of the day. We were in a routine: out for lunch and then Sunday movies. Comfortable, companionable but going nowhere!

I came to the realisation that I had to get on with my personal development and career as I was heading towards being an old maid at the age of 28. Step one was to ditch the boyfriend, Step 2 was to plan to get a further qualification, and Step 3 was to cut the apron strings and start to socialise in Bulwer!

My teacher qualification was a 4-year diploma, specialising in Home Economics and Biology. As such I was paid a salary of D grade. It was about R500.00 a month. To earn more I had to get to E Grade. I enrolled at UNISA (the University of South Africa) to study English, Biblical Studies and Ancient Greek. So, you can get an idea of where my thoughts were going! I would not get to Grade E if I studied the same subjects as for my first qualification, strange, but true!

During 1980 I had met, and become friends with, Penny. She was of a similar age and was the receptionist for the local, one and only, doctor. On a Tuesday night I would go to her family home in the village of Bulwer. They had mains electricity and colour TV. The purpose of the visit was to watch Dallas! Due to apartheid and the ban imposed by the British Actors' Equity Association, South Africa had no British soaps or mini-series. All our overseas programmes came from the USA.

This friendship grew and in 1981 we started to do pottery classes in the nearby (40km away) village of Underberg, every Thursday. A little Queen stove would keep us warm in winter, and a few glasses of medicinal wine finished off the lesson. We took it in turns to be the driver as the road home was windy, pitch black and often had sheep or sleeping goats lying on the warmish tarmac. Needless to say, the wine drinker probably saw more goats and sheep than were actually present! We planned an overseas trip together for June 1981. This was to visit Reunion, Mauritius and the Seychelles. But my weekends were most often spent in Pietermaritzburg, still.

The local Women's Institute of Bulwer was very active, and White. However, Penny's mother was very proactive in the local Black Women's Institute, known as Zenzele (sen-sella). Translated this means 'do-it-yourself' This group of women were go getters and sewed, knitted, preserved, looked after livestock and kept families healthy and safe. The Bulwer Zenzele arranged a big Zenzele meeting for the district for Saturday 16th May 1981. It took a bit of persuading, this was the weekend after all, but I agreed to do a few cookery demonstrations for them.

I sat with a group of women so they could help me to plan food dishes which would be practical and helpful to them in their family kraal. (Kraal is a group of huts/houses of the same family. It can also include a penned area for livestock.) Their resources are usually shared. The dishes we settled on were within their skills and affordable. They were a modified tzatziki, marmalade, and traditional beer bread.

The tzatziki was made from strained amasi and home-grown cucumber and onion or spring onion. Amasi is full cream milk that has been allowed to ferment and go slightly sour. It can be used as a drink (Nelson Mandela had a cup of amasi on his windowsill, every day, while he was imprisoned), over porridge, or strained to make a thicker mixture. This can be made into a cheese similar to cottage cheese.

The second product, marmalade, was a little more expensive as the sugar had to be bought from the shop. The women were familiar with making berry jams. Black berries grow wild all over Kwazulu-Natal, thanks to the horse food brought over in the 1800's. We always thought South America, but maybe not! The black berry is called 'jigjol' and we still eat jigjol jam here in the UK! The other berry was an indigenous one called 'umsobo'. It is a small round purple berry of the black nightshade, *Solanum retroflexum*. It is a labour-intensive task to pick enough for a couple of bottles of jam. The kids (umfana) would be given the job. So all in all, marmalade was a good skill to acquire.

The bread! This was a sneaky addition by the women. Pay day was often weekly or biweekly. The men would receive the cash and head off to the bottle store to buy a crate of Mahewu. This is an alcoholic drink made from fermented corn meal. It is the traditional beer and is vitamin and mineral rich. The men drink it at any time of the day and it does not make them drunk there and then. The Mahewu ferments further in the stomach and intoxication then happens. The women told me that they wait for this mellow state to develop and then they could steal a pint of beer for their bread! Beer for liquid and raising agent and flour and a bit of salt were all the ingredients needed. This product was affordable and easy to cook in a black cast iron pot in the coals of the fire.

Penny arrived at the end of the meeting and said I couldn't drive to Pietermaritzburg so late in the day. In fact, I could stay with her as her parents were overseas, and there was a birthday party on a local farm. It took a bit of persuading as I had not ventured out much into the local community, and did I really want to?

Well, the rest is really history! The party was a 30th and it was a Pyjama party! No PJs for me though, what with these total strangers who had a reputation for partying hard. By midnight I was dancing with one, and only, one man. 3 weeks later I did not even want to go

on the dream holiday! But I did. In amongst the holiday clothes were my assignments for Bib Studs and Ancient Greek, after all, nothing was a given in this life!

July 29th, 1981, was another landmark day at PI. Permission was given for the school to have a non-school day. Large TVs were hired for both the Boys' and the Girls' hostels. I sat with the girls while we joined 74million other people to witness Charles and Diana getting married. The girls chatted throughout and commented on everything. Diana's huge wedding dress caused much consternation though: it was not ironed, or if ironed, very poorly! Just look at the creases!

To be continued, as and when ...

Wendy



Above: The author, at the door to her cottage

Next page: A snowy day at PI. The only road in and the only road out.



Social and Fundraising Diary Dates

Event	Date	Location
Pantomime	Friday 6 th December	Church hall
Pantomime	Saturday 7 th December	Church hall
Christingle	Sunday 8 th December	Church, 4 pm
Pantomime	Friday 13 th December	Church hall
Pantomime	Saturday 14 th December	Church hall

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

Please email any contributions for the newsletter to editor@sthilda.org



*Wishing all our
readers*

A Merry Christmas

and

*A Peaceful
New Year*

Colour in the nativity scene below

