

October
2020

EDGEWAYS

The Sacred Heart Parish magazine

Vol. 32 No. 7

sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk



Michael Hamilton retires
Long-standing sacristan lays
out his last robe
The unexpected £1 million gift

* FREE * but donations are always welcome

EDGEWAYS – now in its 32nd year – is published every month except August. Thanks to the Parish Council, it is now free, although any donations towards our running costs are more than welcome in the box to the right of the inner church doors. Articles from readers are always welcome.

Contact the Editor

John Symes

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07745 100 596

or via our mail basket by the bookshop in the Presbytery, or email editoredgeways@icloud.com

Advertising

Our very reasonable rates are as follows:

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For details, contact David on **07716 284 28**

email dthurst52@googlemail.co

Please make cheques payable to **Sacred Heart Parish**

**Our next edition will be published when Covid-19 allows.
Look for details on the parish website**



**SACRED HEART PARISH
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President: Rev John Clark

Chairman: Sr Patricia

We are a small group of friends doing a large amount of work to facilitate the Social aspects of the Sacred Heart Parish.

We organise and fund a Senior Citizens party in January every year. We organise an annual BBQ for the Parishioners. We provide bar facilities to various Parish Organisations. We donate surplus funds to various Charities.

- Manna, Passage
- Raphael Pilgrimage
- Sacred Heart Youth, Sacred Heart Church

We also partly fund, maintenance of the lounge.

Our Opening Times

Fridays 9.00-10.30. Sundays 8.30-10.30

To Join please contact: Sr Patricia – 07973 950755

An outstanding gift

This month's edition sees the return of our Church Appeal turrettometer, something that I'd stowed away in my "Might be needed – sometime" folder when the Covid-19 lockdown began.

The meter had been hovering at the £150,000 mark as, almost a year after it was launched, the fundraising drive had yet to begin in earnest. The diocese had still to give the go-ahead for necessary refurbishments (the whole point of the appeal) because of ongoing wrangles with the Jesuits over ownership of the church and presbytery. This in turn had delayed our applications to major grant-awarding bodies, such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Aside from some individual and parish group fundraising initiatives, it looked like the appeal had stalled, before it had really got going. Then came Covid-19...

But by an extraordinary, even miraculous, turn of events, the appeal has been kick-started back into life by the incredibly generous donation of £1 million by a donor who, in the finest tradition of Christian charity, wishes to remain anonymous.

As Canon John noted in his weekly News and Views, once Gift Aid has been reclaimed, the amount will increase to £1.25m. "This is a quite unexpected answer to our prayers," he said.

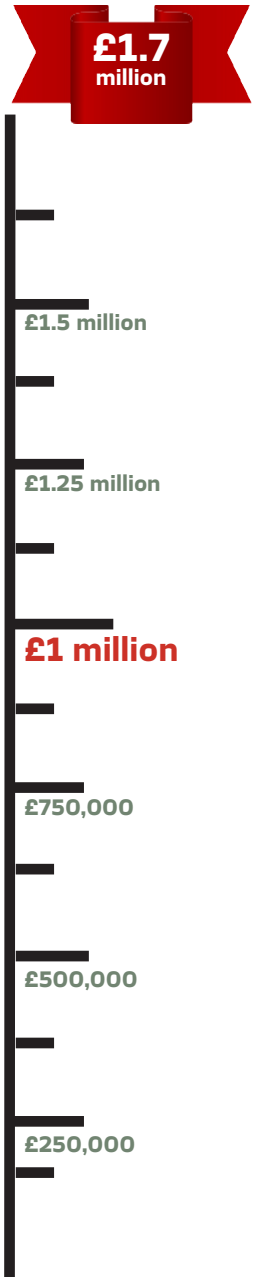
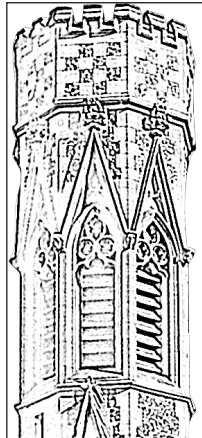
Canon John has been in contact with Archbishop John Wilson to ask for permission to obtain new tenders for these essential works while the legalities of ownership are being completed.

So the appeal is now well on the way to meeting the £1.7 million target, although prices may well have risen since the initial estimates were made.

That aside, it certainly looks as if, although her beloved Jesuits may have departed, the spirit of Madame Edith Arendrup continues to smile benignly upon her creation in Edge Hill, SW19.



Save our Heritage
Sacred Heart Church Appeal



Our sacristan retires

Michael Hamilton, who for 28 years served as the Sacred Heart's behind-the-scenes "stage manager" for Masses and other ceremonial sacraments, has left for well-earned retirement. Never one for blowing his own trumpet, Michael did open up to DAVID HURST in 2015 in an interview with Edgeways, from which the following is an edited version



Everything in its place: Michael Hamilton at work in the sacristy

After nearly 30 devoted years as parish sacristan, Michael Hamilton has laid out his last robes.

Michael started the job on 25 September 1992, and remembers his first day well – it was the same day that Fr Frank Walsh SJ became parish priest. Having hired the new part-time sacristan, Fr Frank promptly suggested, “Well, now that you have the job, you can take over tonight!”

You may ask, “What does a sacristan do?”

The sacristan is involved every time you attend Mass or any other service in church. From renewing the hosts, the altar wine and the candles (both altar and votive), to maintaining all the precious silverware and altar dressings in pristine condition, our sacristan has been in charge.

When I asked Michael Hamilton to summarise the job of sacristan, his answer was immediate. “That’s easy:” he replied ,

“everything has to be in the right place at the right time for all church services.”

Michael draws a parallel between the support needed for church services and the theatre in that, if the senior (often adult) altar server is the Master of Ceremonies, then the sacristan is the behind-the-scenes Stage Manager who is responsible for the myriad ‘props’ and ‘costumes’ needed for all of the services in our church.

Although still officially part-time, the sacristan’s core role is a supervisory one helping others to prepare for and manage some 22 Masses each week, plus additional services on the altar and in the church as required. Before Michael and until 1992, Brother Joseph Logue SJ was the full-time sacristan, whereas even Michael’s part-

time role has a job description stretching to four pages

All the parish vestments, including albs, chasubles and stoles, need looking after and the older and more valuable chasubles are kept in the giant vestment chest in the centre of the inner sacristy.

The parish owns a collection of historic vestments from the Jesuit era but nowadays priests now bring their own. The modern vestments are machine washable, while the older ones still need to be dry-cleaned. The altar servers’ garments, the familiar cassocks and cottas, are all stored in cupboards in the outer sacristy.

The parish altar cloths and particularly

Continued on page 8 ♡



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As sacristan of long standing, Michael was one of the church's leading volunteers. Here he is at a volunteers evening with Faye McGillian and Potty Connelly

the altar pieces, including our chalices, ciboria and monstrances, are locked away in a huge safe after use and taken out only when needed, or when they have to be repaired or polished. Altar cruets, candle holders, thurible and incense holder are stored away safely as well.

Supplies of church consumables such as hosts (in two sizes), altar wine, candles, charcoal, incense and votive lamps need checking and stocking up regularly.

Our communion hosts are still made and supplied by Carmelite nuns in Wolverhampton, and are gluten-free on request. We have a standing order for 5,000 red metal votive lamps each month.

Michael was also in charge of maintaining the parish registration records particularly for marriages for which by law the register is locked in a safe.

The parish keeps continuous records of baptisms, first communions, confirmations, receptions into the Catholic faith, marriages and deaths, some of which date

back to 1884. A historical treasure trove indeed.

During his time Michael has seen the parish through significant changes, not least in "the management", but the behind-the-scenes role of sacristan remains the same and is vital to the smooth running of the parish and the services led by our priests.

The Sacred Heart church sacristy houses everything safely and is a veritable and venerable dressing room, safe store, props cupboard and wardrobe. Michael has served five parish priests as sacristan: Fr Frank, Fr Gerard Mitchell SJ (now parish priest at St Anselm's Church in Southall), Fr Keith McMillan SJ (now the treasurer to the British Province of Jesuits), Fr Nick Hudson (now Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster) and, since 2013, Canon John Clark.

Michael's successor as sacristan is Paul Davis, the parish's current Master of Ceremonies. ■



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John Hawkins: 1927–2020

We were very proud and privileged to work with John Hawkins who was headteacher at Sacred Heart School for 27 years.

We started to work together at a time of great change in education with the introduction of the National Curriculum and Local Management of Schools. These new innovations required a lot of teamwork to establish them correctly in the school and John facilitated this and encouraged staff throughout the process.

John ensured that the ethos of the school remained constant throughout this time. He had created a community-based school which allowed past and present families to feel welcome at all times.

The children saw the school as an extension of their own home, which made it a happy place to learn and grow.

As the Sacred Heart Parish school, John strengthened links between both by encouraging regular visits by the children to the church in Edge Hill and held a weekly Mass in the school, which one of the Sacred Heart priests celebrated.

Frequent visits by the clergy to the school also took place. This included visiting the children in class, as well as the provision of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion.

The parish halls was used on regular occasions for concerts by the children as well as many social events arranged by the school's active PTA. The parents at the school contributed hugely to the sense of community in the school.

Family Fun Days in the summer and



Christmas Fairs were always highlights of the year.

In fact one special year John was actually Father Christmas, disguised so well that the children did not recognise him!

The parents also arranged many monthly activities which included discos, quiz nights and barn dances.

John encouraged many staff social occasions which contributed highly to the effective team work in the school. Staff enjoyed free time together and this developed friendships and collegiality that benefited the school as a whole.

It was a great testament to John on the occasion of his retirement, when parents showed how much they respected him by planning a huge surprise party at Sacred Heart parish hall. He was gifted an all-expenses paid and planned holiday in Italy as well as many other very thoughtful gifts. He was overwhelmed by this and fully appreciated their kindness.

Following his retirement John was always a welcome visitor to the school, where he worked with the children as well as accompanying them on school trips.

John's death will have been sad news for anyone who knew him and will be especially sad of course for his family but also for members of the Sacred Heart community.

Ann McShane and Carole McAleese

Neither rain nor virus holds back parish Mass for Creation



Showing they care for creation: The readers from Year 6, Sacred Heart Primary, with artwork created by year 3 and 4 pupils

Sacred Heart parishioners were undeterred by rain storms and virus in October, turning out on a cold Thursday evening to celebrate a special mass for Creation, organised by the parish environment group.

Planned as an open-air celebration, the rain forced us to take shelter inside the church, but that didn't matter. It was a wonderful opportunity to give thanks for God's gift of creation and to ask for his help to care for our world.

Covid-19 meant no congregational singing, but everyone enjoyed the hymns recorded especially for the occasion by year 6 at the Ursuline Preparatory School and prayers and readings from pupils at Sacred Heart Primary and other parishioners.

The church was decorated with artwork made by pupils in years 3 and 4 at Sacred Heart, as well as photographs taken by parishioners for our 'Caring for Creation in Lockdown' project. Some of these are now on display at the back of the church.

Canon John asked everyone to consider what they could commit to in order to care for creation over the next 12 months.

For example, walking as often as possible instead of using the car, planting a tree, picking up litter, donating or campaigning with CAFOD.

He concluded with a prayer by Father Michael Fitzsimmons of CAFOD:

Lord, allow my ears to listen to the cry of the earth, the voices of my sisters and brothers, those who face the harsh reality of climate change;

allow my eyes to see the beauty of creation, in flowers, creatures, forests, and cities alike; allow my voice to speak out for justice and ensure people living in poverty are heard;

allow my hands to care for the earth, to toil, to reap, to celebrate;

allow my feet to take the path less trod, to walk the extra mile, to take your message out to the world. Amen

David pulls out the stops at St Paul's



The Sacred Heart's organist David Gammie was invited to play a recital at St Paul's Cathedral, London, on Sunday, October 11.

It being St Paul's, it wasn't just any old organ, but the Grand Organ (with a capital G and O, if you please).

Although the cathedral is currently closed for sightseeing on Sundays and is open only for services, it does open its doors for the weekly guest organist Sunday recital. Masks not required for the star organists, one notes.



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The Upper Hall gets up-sta

Despite all the limitations imposed by the Covid-19 lockdown, the Sacred Heart has not stood still.

The stage in the Upper Hall had a mighty facelift over the August bank holiday weekend, thanks to three industrious “heroes” – the Edge Hill Players, Peter Brown, Ken Elston and Graham Fairclough.

They identified and repaired badly damaged stage floorboards and then sand



Who are these masked men?



Examples of the work that needed to be done off-stage, included badly splintered floorboards.



aged

he down and varnished the lot, then carefully repainting white guidelines that provide useful information such as where the curtain falls. While they were at it, they went backstage and repaired some highly dodgy electrics (see the photo below).

At this time of the year, the EHP would be gearing up for the new year's panto, Aladdin, which alas, will not be staged. But see the box below for news of the next production.



done in the Upper Hall, both on-stage and floorboards and dangerous electrical wiring



A job well done!



Log on for Zoomalongadongdong!

While the planned production of Aladdin in the new year will not now go ahead, the Edge Hill Players have not rested on their laurels. They have concocted a 'virtual' variety show to be streamed in late October that you can watch in the comfort of your own home - no social distancing required, but you'll have to provide your own bar!

All the stars of previous pantos and musicals, with the usual

age range of three to late eighties, have been filming themselves and hoping to remind us all that parish life still goes on under the Covid radar.

The production will be streamed live at 7pm on Friday, October 30, or you can download it to watch later.

To access it, go to the EHP website at edgehillplayers.com (Wendy Tansey recommends you don't miss the countdown).

The greatest commandment

THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

The Pharisees tried to catch Jesus out by asking him which of the Ten Commandments was the greatest. Use the code to find out what Jesus told them

1	R	U	T	O
2	E	S	A	H
3	G	N	D	M
4	L	I	Y	G
5	V	S	W	R
	♥	☀	☁	☺



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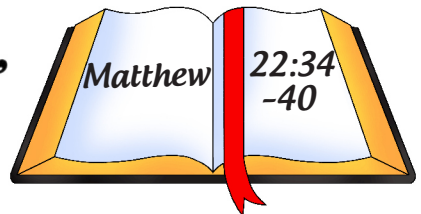
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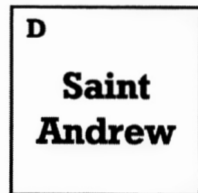
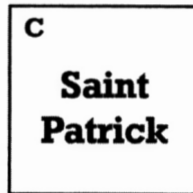
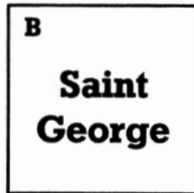
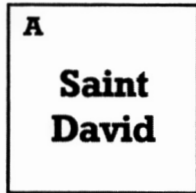
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The saints in heaven

ALL SAINTS' DAY – NOVEMBER 1

Someone who has lived a life of outstanding goodness and who is already with God in heaven is called a saint. Countries, places, professions and even families often have a patron saint who is specific to them. Can you match the patron saint to his country?



A and

B and

C and

D and



CHUCKLES

Patient: Doctor, doctor! I think I can see into the future!

Doctor: **How long have you been suffering from this condition?**

Patient: Since next Monday!

Q: Did you hear about the man who invented Tic Tacs?

A: *He made a mint!*

Q: Why did the invisible man turn down a job offer?

A: *He couldn't see himself doing it!*

Q: Want to hear a joke about a building

site?

A: *Sorry, I'm still working on it!*

Q: Why did the scarecrow win an award??

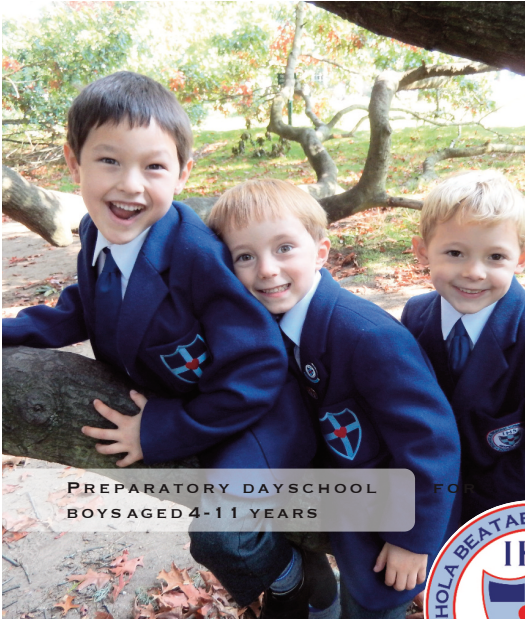
A: *Because he was outstanding in his field!*

Q: Did you hear about the robbery at the Apple Store?

A: *Police are appealing for iWitnesses!*

Q: Did you hear about the Vicks VapoRub lorry that overturned on the M25?

A: *There was no congestion for eight hours!*



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An ill wind that blew no good

For parishioner ELINOR PISAREL, the Covid-19 lockdown immediately conjured up thoughts of Chernobyl and the great disaster that befell it on a fateful night of April 26, 1986. Here, she recalls a visit she made to its ill-fated – and now abandoned – service town, Pripyat, in Ukraine



It looks so peaceful now: A view of the Chernobyl reactor

Over the past several months, during the global pandemic, we have all shared the experience of fighting an invisible, deadly enemy. We know it might be anywhere and everywhere, yet it remains undetectable to our nervous eyes. Putting my faith in a flimsy paper mask as my defensive weapon in this fight, I'm reminded of a trip I took with my intrepid mother, to Chernobyl, in Ukraine, some time ago.

There, too, an invisible but lethal enemy struck without warning and asserted dominance over the human world, and fighting back felt as ineffectual as beating back an elephant with a fly swat.

It was a bright and sunny day when we set out from the clean and wide-paved capital city of Kiev to visit the ghost town of Pripjat, but a gathering sense of darkness overtook our small group as we

learned the truth about that watershed day in history: 26 April, 1986. The explosion of Chernobyl Reactor No. 4 was equivalent to the bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki put together. A second explosion would have been ten-times bigger and would have wiped half of Europe off the map. Yet the residents of Pripjat, the modern, bustling Soviet town built to service the nuclear station, were assured everything was sound; they were totally safe.

First, 2,000 helicopters flew in, pilots throwing sandbags onto the blaze. All died. Then 600 firemen were sent in to drain the water from underneath the site. All died. Then miners were made to dig, with no protection or ventilation. 2,500 died before they reached the age of 40.

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of soldiers and civilians would be sent in to liquidate Chernobyl, in what is considered the last battle of the Soviet Union.

Robots were sent on to the roof of the reactor to remove the deadly graphite blocks, but the radioactivity was so strong that even the robots went berserk; one threw itself off the roof. So they had to send 'bio-robots' instead: men. Russian soldiers, wearing

homemade lead plates for defence, worked for 40 seconds at a time, clearing a couple of shovels-full each, before being overcome.

It was difficult to reconcile these images of utter chaos with the sunny, peaceful countryside we made our way through, dotted with small, abandoned houses. At



The abandoned Music room in School No. 3

the first of multiple checkpoints, as we reached the Chernobyl exclusion zone accompanied by our camouflage-wearing military escort, our passports were checked, then we were taken to sign a waiver. Issued with a Geiger counter each, to be carried at all times, we were given orders not to touch any vegetation, object or structure, and – above all else – not to step on the moss.

We passed not a living soul on the road to Pripjat, only vast blue skies and green trees as far as the eye could see. A poignant sculpture of the initial firefighters who sacrificed themselves, and without whose efforts the disaster would have been so much worse, was dedicated 'To those who saved the world'.

There was no sound to be heard – the animals of the area had to be shot, as their fur trapped radiation – but the constant chirping of our dosimeters, measuring the radiation levels, which suddenly ratcheted up to a screaming alarm as we passed the Red Forest. Our driver floored it.

We entered Pripjat itself over the Bridge of Death, so named because ☞



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residents had come to stand there to see the fire that night, and the cruel wind had blown straight at them. All were to die.

Left on our own to explore the town, hopping to avoid the ubiquitous patches of treacherous moss, the sense of silence, abandonment and decay were overwhelming. Glass crunched underfoot in the classrooms of School No. 3, in the empty swimming pool, basketball court and gymnasium. An amusement park, which had been due to open five days after the disaster, was a touching reminder of the lively, life-filled town this had once been. Swings that never held laughing children; a Ferris wheel forever frozen in time; a brightly blooming apple tree whose poisoned fruit lay in red heaps on the ground, destined to rot and be replaced season after season for the rest of time.

After a lunch of mashed potato and pickled carrots in a surreally pristine Soviet-style cafeteria – all food is brought in from ‘outside’ for obvious reasons – and a glimpse of the toilets where cut-up sheets of notepaper take the place of loo roll, we passed, wide-eyed and very briefly, opposite Reactor No. 4 itself. A monument has been erected to those who built the now-collapsing sarcophagus that encased the disaster site in a heroic, but ultimately quixotic, attempt to contain the damage.

Climbing gingerly along the disused wooden railway bridge, we could observe the legendary giant catfish of Chernobyl,

swimming lazily like sharks in the shadow of the half-built and forever-abandoned Reactors 5 and 6.

There was total silence when we reached the checkpoints on our way out of the town. Military police approached our vehicle, wielding long-poled Geiger counters to check the vehicle’s levels. Tension mounted until, unsmiling, they raised the barrier and we were allowed to drive through. At the final checkpoint, we had to have our radiation levels measured individually by passing through a row of scary-looking machines.

Feet positioned on metal pads, faces to the side, hands placed on either side, and breath held until we were released to begin the journey back to Kiev.

My thoughts from that day have reverberated in my mind during the past few months. No matter how arrogant humans become, no matter how advanced and sophisticated we may think our species, the tiniest particles – of radiation, of a virus – can defeat us. Humans, however, have a way of making something good come out of the bleakest of experiences. Just as the Chernobyl disaster led to improved safety measures and increased respect for nuclear power around the world, so we trust that the lessons we have learned from the current pandemic will leave us better prepared for, and protected from, future attacks by invisible foes such as these.

Remembrance Sunday

November 8

Prayer for Peace

Come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come and guide us and
teach us how to live in
peace. You are Love and
Peace. Teach us how to live
our lives, loving and caring for
one another, so that we may
experience Your Peace – the peace
that Jesus left us, the peace that
the world cannot give, the peace
that sustains us in all our
difficulties.
Come, Lord, come. Come and help
us live in peace. Amen.

