

July 2025

EDGEWAYS

# Sacred Heart Parish Magazine

Vol. 36 No. 7

[sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk](http://sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk)



***His Excellency Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía,  
Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, presides at the  
Sacred Heart Feast Day Celebration Mass***

- Pope Leo welcomes Wimbledon College students and staff in Rome (pp.8–9)
- ‘Be Well Hub’ initiative explained (pp.10–11)
- Merton Interfaith Walk 2025 (pp.14–17)

**\*FREE\* but donations are always welcome**

## What do priests do?



*A reader writes to Canon David...*

Dear Canon David,

What do priests do after Mass on Sunday? – go home and read the Bible all week?

Not quite: chance would be a fine thing! Our days can be very busy, with a variety of duties.

First and foremost, we pray with and for the people of God. In the last week alone, I have received requests for prayers for the departed, those seriously ill, someone starting a new job, and many other needs.

Most importantly, priests celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Acting in the person of Christ, priests recite the words and perform the actions of Christ, representing Christ's saving self-sacrifice, and thus priests feed the people of God with the Body and Blood of Christ. Speaking personally, I never tire of offering Mass, which is just as well on days when I celebrate two Masses.

Priests preach Christ's Gospel: I have been greatly heartened by parishioners who have thanked me for various homilies. We are also teachers of the faith; this we do in various contexts, including this Edgeways article, in catechetical classes, in our Catholic schools, and so on.

To preach and teach, priests must always be students of the faith by studying the Scriptures and Church documents and keeping up with their spiritual reading. An annual retreat is also a requirement.



Priests baptise. This is always a joy, creating new members of Christ and his Church, and giving the newly-baptised the promise of eternal life. Priests also conduct marriages; witnessing the couple's promises and blessing the new relationship is another joy.

Priests visit the sick, especially if they are hospital chaplains. My experience of hospital visiting is that at the first meeting, a patient may worry that the chaplain has come to give them bad news but, once they have been reassured, they are very grateful to have been visited, even if they are not practising their faith. Hospital staff also appreciate having chaplains around. Priests offer counsel to many people with many different problems and concerns, and, at the least, priests often know where the person can get more expert help.

Priests also conduct funerals. Families are at their most raw and sorrowful on these occasions, and are very grateful to the priest for leading the funeral and offering

comfort and hope in the resurrection of the faithful departed.

Sometimes, priests can find themselves caught up in a warzone or some other dangerous place, but the priest stays with his people; he doesn't abandon them. Fortunately, Wimbledon is not in this category, although in my last parish, I had to do an emergency stop when a kamikaze badger shot in front of my car when I was returning from Chevening House!

Sometimes, a priest is called to be a foreign missionary. I have not been called to this apostolate, but Fr Jackson finds himself in a country not his own.

Priests are always on call, mostly to administer the Last Rites to someone who is dying. As this invariably happens when one is relaxing, it is initially vexing, but one always returns buoyed up: it is as if the dying person and their family are ministering to me rather than the other way round.



Thursday 11 –  
Saturday 13 September

Edge Hill Players is excited to present *Annie*! This popular show includes an exceptional array of some of the best well-known musical theatre songs ever written. Our production boasts brilliant choreography and a talented cast of children and adults from the parish and beyond, all accompanied by a live orchestra. Tickets are limited and this year, seats will need to be reserved – so put the dates in your diary and book your seats now at [edgehillplayers.com!](http://edgehillplayers.com!)

There are also, of course, numerous administrative responsibilities: the priest will find himself a governor of one or more Catholic schools, a coordinator of rotas (especially in this busy parish), and generally an administrator. As Parish Priest, I have to ensure all Mass intentions are offered, invoices paid, donations banked, that our buildings are maintained, and that parish employees are supplied with coffee and cake.

All in all, the priest's week is very varied and seldom dull, and it is only with the grace of God given in our Ordination that one can fulfil all these tasks and enjoy the best job satisfaction of any profession.

*Canon David*



Do you have a query you would like to ask Canon David? Please send your question to the editor at:

[wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk)

## First Holy Communion



Would your son or daughter like to make their first Sacrament of Reconciliation and first Holy Communion in 2026? Complete the online application form at [tinyurl.com/shwfhc26apply](http://tinyurl.com/shwfhc26apply) before Monday 8 September!

## Glorious sunshine!

This month, your monthly parish magazine reports when, bathed in glorious sunshine, on Sunday 29 May, the parish welcomed our Parkside neighbour, His Excellency Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, who celebrated the 12 noon Mass and enthusiastically joined our annual **Sacred Heart Feast Celebration** (pp.6–7).

The event was entirely run by volunteers with plentiful food, drinks, and stalls bearing flowers, books, a tombola with bottles of wine, and even a display of all 400+ editions of past Edgeways. Not forgetting our Youth Minister, Rob Hitchcock, who has discovered his 'superpower' of running the ever-popular 'Hook a Duck in a Paddling Pool'!

Live music was, once again, provided on the steps of the church by Cathy Rogers and smiling members of the Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Choir and others. It was a truly joyful day for all to enjoy!

If it is said that to see the Nuncio is to see the Pope, some of our younger parishioners missed the memo and went straight to the top: **Pope Leo XIV welcomed Wimbledon College** students and staff in Rome to introduce Citizens UK's *Called to Action* toolkit (pp.8–9).

Back at home, Canon David unpacks **life as a priest** (pp.2–3). As part of a Merton Citizens and South London Citizens initiative, the parish is setting up a **Be Well Hub** to improve the mental health of parishioners of all ages and the local community. Graham Kennedy, our Be Well Hub Coordinator, introduces what this means for us (pp.10–11).



Also from Merton Citizens, we report **South London Citizens' Celebration and Award Ceremony** (p.18) and the success of **Merton Refugee Week** (p.19), in which we celebrated the contributions of asylum seekers and refugees through storytelling and creativity under the inspiring heading of *Community as a Superpower*.

We congratulate parishioner **Corrado Amari** on becoming a knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem at a ceremony at St George's Cathedral (p.13), and we profile a recent Newman Circle talk by parishioner Julian Hoskins on his work in **rebuilding positive relationships in prison** (p.12).

Around the parish, Dr Marianne Rankin offers her reflections on the **Merton Interfaith Walk** (pp.14–17), in which a large group was welcomed by six faith venues in Merton. We are pleased to report that our church and parish have been invited to be one of these venues on future walks.

Turning towards our past, we celebrate **100 years of Motspur Park** (pp.20–21) and look back at the **Edgeways archives** from 1997, 2000, 2006, 2010, 2015 and 2019 (pp.22–23).

As always, the production team at Edgeways hopes you enjoy this packed issue. Now that we are taking a welcome break for the summer, the next issue will be in early September, when, *inter alia*, we will say farewell to Frs Jackson and David and welcome their replacements. Until then, we eagerly welcome your letters, feedback, and article suggestions – at our new email address (see below).

David Hurst

**Production credits:** David Hurst (*Editor*, [wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk)), and Matteo Baccaglini (*design and layout*)



We're looking for spoken word artists, poets, musicians, and creatives.

Open to artists ready to speak, sing, and share from the Spirit.

If your art speaks truth, hope, or the heart of God  
We want to hear from you!



To register your interest please scan the QR code:

Location: Sacred Heart Church, Wimbledon.  
Date: 27th of September 2025  
Hosted by: @poetsandprophets.events

[poetsandprophetsevents@gmail.com](mailto:poetsandprophetsevents@gmail.com)



**We have a new email address! Send your letters, feedback, and article suggestions to [wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk).**



**Jodie always cheers me up**

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People you can get on with



## Sunday 29 June Sacred Heart Feast Day Mass and Celebration



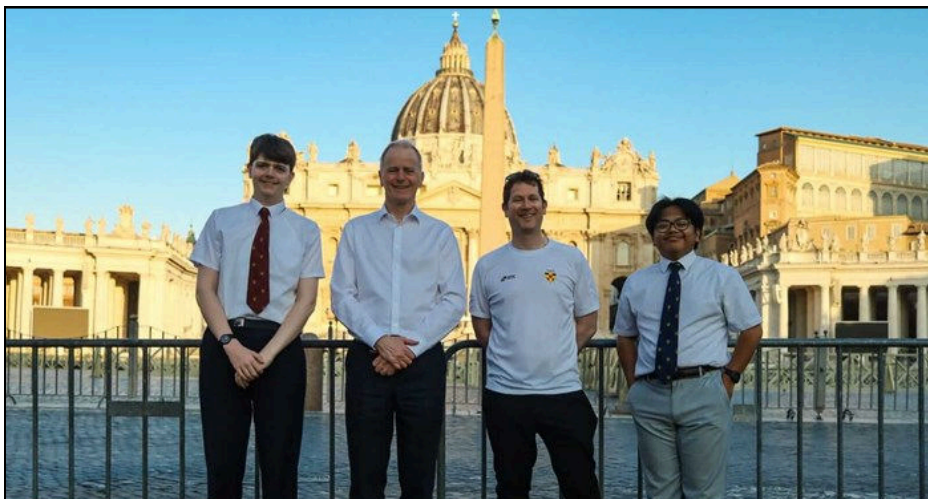
Photographs by John Stone

This year, our parish celebrated its feast day in excellent weather with His Excellency Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain. His Excellency celebrated the 12 noon Mass along with Fr Andrew Coy, his Private Secretary, before leading the congregation to the feast day celebration featuring food and drink; a raffle and tombola; stalls selling bottles, toys, books, and jewellery; children's games; and entertainment, including the Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Choir.

Canon David thanks Ruth Naylor, who coordinated the celebration, and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make it an outstanding and enjoyable event. For her part, Ruth thanks Ale and his team for preparing, cooking, and serving the food; Thelma D'Costa for organising the raffle and coordinating from the Parish Office; Bill and his team for lending and putting up the gazebos; George McLennan for setting up and clearing away the grounds; and all the volunteers 'who ran stalls and serenaded the day with wonderful music'.



## Students and staff from Wimbledon College meet Pope Leo XIV



In a remarkable affirmation of faith-inspired civic engagement, students and staff from Wimbledon College, as well as various other Catholic school community organisers from across the country, were welcomed at the Vatican by His Holiness Pope Leo XIV during the General Audience on Wednesday 25 June.

The visit marks a significant moment in the journey of an initiative around *Called to Action*, a toolkit launched in 2024 to support Catholic schools and colleges in living out the principles of Catholic Social Teaching through community organising. Developed by Citizens UK in partnership with Catholic school organisers from member institutions, the toolkit aims to place the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and the common good at the heart of Catholic education in a practical and lived-out sense.

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‘Pope Leo had a kind smile for everyone. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I’d take part in anything like this. It’s really strengthened my faith and desire to share that loving kindness with others.’

— Thomas, a Wimbledon College student

Pope Leo XIV offered ‘special greetings to the members of Citizens UK Catholic movement’. The organisers presented the Pope with a copy of *Called to Action* and other symbolic gifts from the schools. His Holiness graciously signed photographs and items, which will now be displayed in the schools as a reminder of the visit.

Pope Leo was also presented with a copy of *Not Only with Words*, a report telling the story of parishes in Citizens UK who have also been community organising to live out the Church’s teaching on social justice and synodality.

“

‘It was a fantastic opportunity to attend the papal audience, raising the profile of Citizens UK and the positive work that the schools have undertaken improving the lives of others.

‘It was a real privilege and faith-affirming moment to be in the Vatican and to meet the Pope in person in this Jubilee Year of Hope. He showed a genuine interest in our pupils, who were proud ambassadors of the College, as he spoke with them. The items he signed will have a special place at the College.

‘In addition, being able to visit many of the sites closely connected to St Ignatius of Loyola, including praying in his chapel, made the visit an even more memorable occasion.’

— Adrian Laing, Headteacher

Other schools represented included St Antony’s Primary School (East London), St Bonaventure’s (East London), St Thomas More Catholic High School (North Tyneside), Cardinal Newman College (Brighton), and Greyfriars Catholic School (Oxford).

“

‘It was an incredible experience. I am hugely passionate about the work that is going on day-in, day-out in Citizens UK alliances across the country. It has been a privilege to be part of this group of inspiring young people and adults. I hope these partnerships between Catholic schools and Citizens UK continue to strengthen and grow, because I think there is so much potential for us to contribute to the betterment of our local communities.’

— James Potter, Chaplain



This article was adapted from the original ([tinyurl.com/54abx7jr](https://tinyurl.com/54abx7jr)) on the website of the Archdiocese of Southwark, kindly provided by James Potter.

Photographs: Mazur/[cbcew.org.uk](https://www.cbcew.org.uk)



**Carer needed:** A part-time female carer is required for an elderly parishioner with dementia based in SW20. For further details, please contact Mary on 07957 657879 Thank you.

## What is a Be Well Hub?



*As the parish prepares to launch as a Be Well Hub, we are delighted to introduce a series of articles by Graham Kennedy on what this means for us. Graham is an NHS Trained Mental Health and Be Well Champion, and our parish's Be Well Hub Coordinator.*

Be Well Hubs are an initiative by South London Listens, a partnership between three local mental health trusts, Citizens UK (including Merton Citizens), local authorities, and community organisations.

A Be Well Hub is a local, community-driven space or programme designed to improve the mental health and overall wellbeing of residents. These hubs are typically set up within existing community organisations such as faith centres, schools, local businesses, or community halls. They are built on the idea that support for mental health should be easily accessible, destigmatised, and integrated into the fabric of daily community life.

The core aim of a Be Well Hub is to create a welcoming environment where people feel comfortable seeking support, connecting with others, and accessing resources that promote mental wellness. A key feature of many hubs is the training of 'Be Well Champions' – individuals from within the community who are equipped to offer peer support, listen empathetically, and guide people to relevant services.

### How can I benefit from a Be Well Hub?

Be Well Hubs foster mental wellbeing and community connection.

**Accessible mental health support:** Be Well Hubs provide a safe and informal space to talk about mental health struggles without fear of judgment. This ease of access can be crucial for those who might hesitate to approach traditional health services.

**Stronger community connections:** By bringing people together, Be Well Hubs combat social isolation and loneliness, which are significant contributors to poor mental health. You can meet others, share experiences, and feel more connected to your community.

**Early intervention:** By offering readily-available support, Be Well Hubs aim to address mental health concerns in their early stages. This proactive approach can prevent issues from escalating and reduce the need for more intensive interventions later on.

**Guidance to further help:** While not offering clinical therapy themselves, Be Well Hubs excel at signposting. They can connect you with appropriate local charities, statutory health services, or other organisations that provide more specialised support, such as counselling, therapy, or practical assistance for things like debt or housing.

**Empowerment and voice:** Many Be Well Hubs involve community members in shaping the services and activities they offer. This means the support is tailored to local needs, giving residents a direct voice in improving mental health resources in their area.

**Reduced stigma:** By integrating mental health support into everyday community spaces, Be Well Hubs help to normalise conversations around mental wellbeing and break down the stigma often associated with it.

In essence, a Be Well Hub acts as a valuable local resource, promoting a more supportive, connected, and mentally-healthier community.



### How can I get involved?

Watch out for what Sacred Heart is doing to pilot its Be Well Hub. We're planning to hold 'Be Well Gatherings' in parallel with the parish's monthly Sunday continental breakfasts from October, and a 'Be Well Celebration' in March.

We are also inviting parishioners to train as Be Well Champions. You might be able to spot Be Well Champions soon at some of the meetings of our parish's vibrant groups!

If you would like to learn more, to volunteer your talents to help launch our parish's Be Well Hub, or to train as a Be Well Champion, please get in touch with me at [wimbledonbwhc@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:wimbledonbwhc@rcaos.org.uk).

## Monday 14 July: Sacred Heart pupils present 'Pirates of the Curry Bean!'



Headteacher Mrs Dolan-Walsh cuts into her leaving cake (right)



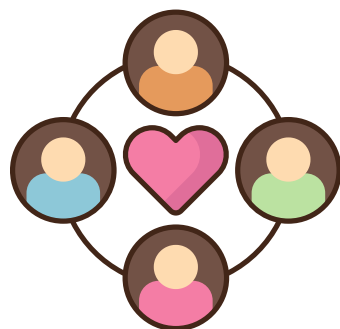
## Wednesday 24 May: Family services and building positive relationships in prison

In May 2025, our parish's Newman Circle was treated to a presentation by parishioner Julian Hoskins on the critical role of family and significant others (FaSO) in supporting individuals within the criminal justice system. Julian is the National Strategic Lead of Family Services in the Reducing Reoffending Directorate at HM Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS).

In his presentation, Julian emphasised the vision of ensuring no-one serves their sentence alone, promoting rehabilitation through sustained, positive relationships.

The session introduced the Every Contact Matters initiative, a peer-to-peer mentoring programme designed to support prisoners who are estranged or have limited contact with FaSO. Participants in the initiative include foreign nationals, women, and individuals whose offences have led to family estrangement. Research, including the Farmer Review, highlights that prisoners who maintain family contact are 39% less likely to reoffend.

The Building Positive Relationships programme, launched in partnership with the charity NEPACS, has trained over 50 mentors and supported more than 400 prisoners at HMP Durham. It has since expanded to multiple prisons across England, including HMP Low Newton, HMP Bullingdon, and HMP Frankland. The programme includes mentor training, community day planning, and through-the-gate support, with ongoing evaluation through data analysis, service user feedback, and outcome assessments.



The broader Family Services Strategy aligns with HMPPS's mission to reduce reoffending and intergenerational crime by fostering a 'Think Family' culture. Julian shared key statistics, such as that 200,000 children are affected annually by parental imprisonment and the high rates of trauma among incarcerated women. The strategy includes family engagement services, video calling support, and performance measures like the Family Ties self-assessment.

Julian's presentation concluded with a call for collaborative working across agencies to enhance family support, improve prison outcomes, and ultimately contribute to safer communities.

**For more information or to find out how to get involved, please contact Julian at [julian.hoskins@justice.gov.uk](mailto:julian.hoskins@justice.gov.uk).**

**The Wimbledon Newman Society meets regularly for events on a broad range of topics relating to our faith. Check the parish's weekly newsletter to learn of upcoming events!**

## Saturday 21 June: Parishioner Corrado Amari honoured at St George's Cathedral

On Saturday 21 June, long-standing parishioner Corrado Amari, joined Canon David as he was made a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem at St George's Cathedral, Southwark, in a ceremony conducted by John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark.

The Order is a Catholic order of knighthood under the protection of the Holy See, with Pope Leo XIV as the Sovereign of the Order. It is an internationally-recognised order of chivalry with some 30,000 knights and dames organised in 60 'lieutenancies' around the world; its primary mission is to support, through practice and prayer, the Christian presence in the Holy Land.



The Order was founded by Godfrey of Bouillon in 1099, with an intriguing history stretching back to the Crusades. The Order's motto is *Deus lo vult*, meaning 'God wills it'.

If you are interested in joining the Order, do speak with Corrado or Canon David. Although it is officially an 'equestrian order', these days no horses are involved!

On behalf of the parish, we offer our congratulations to Corrado for this great honour.

**Would you like to learn more about the history of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem? Read pages 8 to 9 of July 2024 Edgeways at [sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk/edgeways!](http://sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk/edgeways!)**



## Saturday 31 May: 'Peace, People and Planet' Merton Interfaith Walk 2025

Dr Marianne Rankin offers her reflections on a truly inspiring day.

On Saturday 31 May, a group of about 75 people could be seen walking along the streets of south London. Who were they?

A couple of them (right) were holding placards, announcing the South London interfaith organisation on one side and, on the reverse, one had a Jewish Menorah and the other an OM symbol – sacred to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs.

They were members of a range of religious traditions and interfaith groups, and those interested in spirituality, on an organised walk, taking in eight venues over a distance of about five miles.

Richard Smart, a Blue Badge Guide, had arranged the day, the timing, and even a Salvation Army bus for the less-mobile to get from one stop to another in comfort. Richard found himself responsible for chivvying us to leave the most welcome refreshments that every venue had provided and to make our way to the next faith site. We all owe him a huge debt of gratitude.



Captain Nick Ward of the Salvation Army

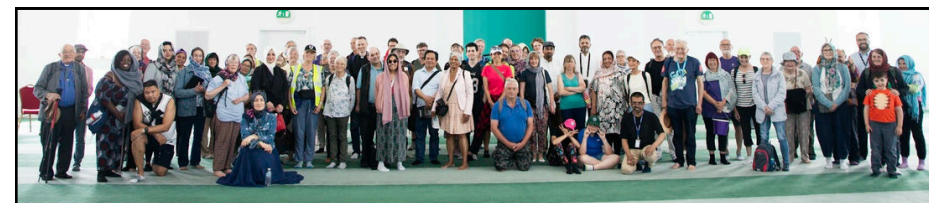


PC Suzanne D'Cruze, Faith Engagement Officer for Merton London Borough Council, and two uniformed officers accompanied us throughout the walk. The proceeds raised were for Faith in Action.

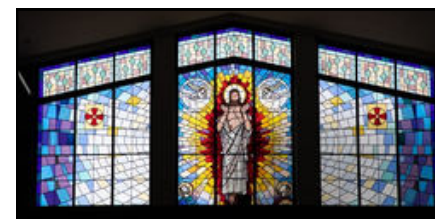
People had come from all over the country to join the walk. Some were local, showing their own places of worship or charitable initiatives, while others, like my daughter, photographer Eleanor Dailey, and I had come from Gloucestershire.

We didn't know what to expect, but were excited at the prospect of exploring a range of religions – and kick-starting a joint project, *Contemporary Religious and Spiritual Experience: An Illustrated Guide* ([crse.uk](http://crse.uk)).

The day began at Merton Civic Centre, where we were treated to a wide-ranging 'Sacred Text' exhibition in Morden Library, illustrating major religious traditions and their beliefs. Representatives were happy to answer our questions. People began to mingle and to introduce themselves over refreshments.



Next was St John Fisher Roman Catholic Church – a light, peaceful place, enhanced by soft music and brightly-coloured stained glass windows (below). We were welcomed and shown (right) the exquisite vestments used for different liturgies, the sanctuary lamp, the tabernacle, the sacred vessels, and the ornate golden monstrance.



Then we set off to the beautiful Baitul Futuh Mosque (above), where we were warmly welcomed. This is the largest mosque in Europe, and represents the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, who base their faith on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, as interpreted by their Khalifas. The spacious building can accommodate up to 10,000 worshippers in a number of roomy spaces. Before leaving, we were treated to delicious samosas (left).





Off we then went to another beautiful venue: **St Mary's Church**, Merton, with its remarkable graveyard. Lord Nelson would worship in this ancient church, parts of which date from before the Domesday Book of 1086. Once again, we were made most welcome and offered refreshments.



Next was the **Wimbledon Spiritualist Church**. The leader explained that rather than retain the original name of Christian Spiritualist Church, it had been decided that although recognising Jesus, no creed should be imposed on its members. We heard of how she had come to recognise a spirit guide who enabled her to make contact with the deceased and to help those mourning the loss of a loved one. There were so many questions that Richard had some difficulty in moving us all on.



We then made our way to the **Salvation Army Hall** for a most interesting talk by Korean Captain Kook, explaining the history and work of the Wimbledon Korean Corps Church and Community Centre.

Then we heard of the wide-ranging activities of the **Faith In Action** group (left, bottom). These remarkable people of various religious persuasions certainly live up to their name. They run a drop-in centre twice a week, offering overnight accommodation, meals, support, advice and practical help to homeless and vulnerably-housed people. We heard moving stories of some of the desperate people they had helped. We ourselves were then treated to a delicious lunch buffet and a welcome rest.



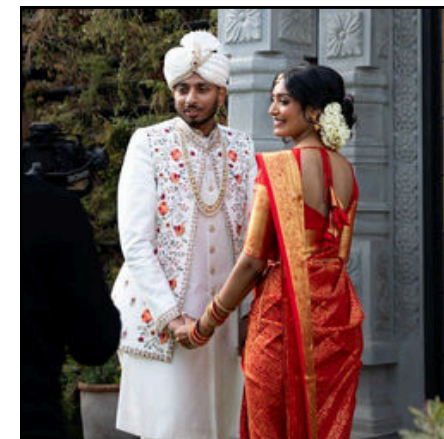
The **Seventh-day Adventists** were next, offering presentations by their elders and a performance by a group of children. Again, there was a range of questions as many of us were not familiar with their beliefs. They provided packs of information, as well as more refreshments.



Our final venue was the stunning Hindu **Shree Ghanapathy Temple** (above), dedicated to Lord Ganesha. Opened in 1981, it happily welcomes members of any faith to their worship. After an explanatory video, we explored the brightly-coloured and gilded shrines in the main hall.

A final treat was the arrival of a stunning young couple celebrating their wedding, who were happy to pose for photographs and answer questions.

We were presented with Completion Certificates and that was the conclusion of a most remarkable day. Although we were exhausted, we felt enriched and enlightened, having been shown so many different aspects of religious and spiritual life in south London. Wherever we went, we were made welcome and over the course of the day we met many like-minded people – at the faith sites and in the group. As religion so often gets a bad press, activities such as the Merton Interfaith Walk should be more widely known.



Future Interfaith Walks may include a visit to our beautiful Sacred Heart Church and community. Watch this space ... !

This article was adapted from the original at [crse.uk/interfaith-walk](https://crse.uk/interfaith-walk), where you can also find more of Eleanor Dailey's stunning photographic coverage of the day.



## Would you like to write for Edgeways?

Do you have an article that you think would be a great addition to YOUR parish magazine? We're always open to contributions! Please contact the editor at [wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk).

## Tuesday 3 June Volunteers recognised at Delegates' Assembly



Panel at St Luke's Church, Peckham

Merton Citizens, of which our parish is a founding member, is part of the wider group of South London Citizens, which comprises community alliances across six London boroughs, representing over 100 organisations with thousands of people. As the host of its recent delegates' assembly pointed out: 'That is a lot of power if the groups work together for community justice!'

Significant achievements by South London Citizens groups – WINS – have included the Living Wage Campaign to pay (at least) £13.85 per hour to low paid workers; leading a campaign to settle 25,000 Syrian refugees through the community resettlement programme; building the second Community Land Trust in Sydenham that will stay affordable forever; securing a cap on payday loans; and making a range of mental care innovations through our work with the NHS.

At the delegates' assembly held at St Luke's Church in Peckham, a series of awards recognised and celebrated members' work in their communities:

- *Leader of the Year*: Laura Marzial (Creating Ground) and Jojo Ford (St Barnabas' Church)
- *Young Leaders*: Iqra Primary School, Lambeth
- *Institution of the Year*: Merton YMCA
- *Alliance of the Year*: Lewisham & Greenwich
- *Campaign of the Year*: Southbank Living Wage Campaign
- *Services to Organising*: Ranjeet Kaile, NHS

The next assembly for South London Citizens will be on Tuesday 21 October at a venue to be confirmed. If you are interested in knowing more and/or attending, please email David at [dthurst52@gmail.com](mailto:dthurst52@gmail.com).

## Thursday 19 June: Marking Refugee Week

Under the uplifting theme of 'Community as a Superpower!', Merton Citizens hosted a Refugee Week event to celebrate the wide contributions that refugees, both past and present, have made in Merton.

Over 70 people met in the Arts Space at Wimbledon Library for the celebration, which included a series of high-energy performances and presentations. Attendees included representatives from our parish, students from fellow Merton Citizens' member, Wimbledon College, and five elected councillors.

Students from St Mark's Academy in Mitcham gave testimonies and sang personal songs about their lived experiences. Anya Bondarchuk, a Ukrainian refugee who now practises locally as a therapist and counsellor, shared her moving refugee story. Laura, whose mother runs an Arabic mental health charity, shared a poem, and we heard historical refugee stories from Polish, Tamil, and Ukrainian refugees.



Finally, Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah reiterated Merton Council's desire to make Merton as welcoming as possible for refugees and sanctuary seekers. It was announced at the event that Merton Council has submitted their application to become an accredited Borough of Sanctuary, following the example set by Lewisham Borough.

Watch out in Edgeways for more on what being a Borough of Sanctuary means for you and our parish, and how you can get involved!

Photographs courtesy of Merton Citizens.



## Saturday 12 July Motspur Park celebrates 100 years

Even beyond Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, at the far southwestern edge of our parish's boundaries lies the quiet suburban village of Motspur Park – an unassuming parade of shops, with direct trains whisking commuters to London Waterloo in just 25 minutes. And on Saturday 12 July, the village marked a major milestone: Motspur Park railway station celebrated 100 years of operation.

Though the railway line was laid through the area in 1859 as part of the Wimbledon & Dorking Railway, the land remained largely rural. It wasn't until the line's electrification in 1925 that a station was opened, anticipating the arrival of suburban development. Legend holds that the railway authorities rejected the older local name for the area – 'West Barnes', i.e. the barns at the western limit of Merton Priory – to avoid confusing passengers with Barnes by Richmond. So they took the name of a nearby farm, and appended 'Park' to lend the station a more genteel and attractive ring.



Bunting outside Ecklee



Bunting at the station



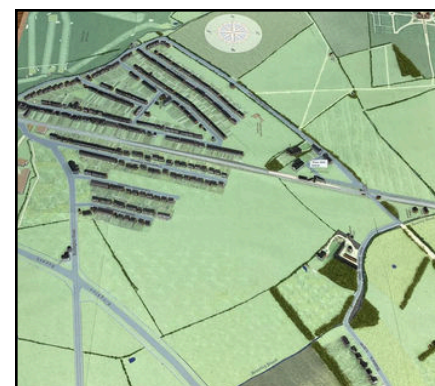
Bunting outside Kami's Barbers

Development quickly followed. Just a year earlier, Sidney Parkes, a constructional engineer and manufacturer of folding boats, had founded a company to develop much of the area. Several roads were named after his children ('Phyllis Avenue', 'Arthur Road') and literary greats ('Byron Avenue', 'Tennyson Avenue'). Wates, another developer, built houses west of the Beverley Brook and on the parade, including the village's distinctive mock Tudor houses. In 1937, the Earl Beatty was licensed, designed by A. W. Blomfield, chief architect for Watney pubs.

Over the decades, Motspur Park has hosted a number of notable employers, including Decca of gramophone fame, Shannon for typewriters (hence 'Shannon Corner'), Bradbury-Wilkinson for security printing (now Tesco's), and Eni SpA (now Blossom House School). The village was the site of a railway crash in 1947. In sports, the training ground now occupied by Fulham FC has welcomed legends such as Sydney Wooderson and Roger Bannister, while another sports ground, now derelict, was once owned and used by the BBC.

Today, the village retains its community spirit and its parade is lined with many independent shops – including the ever-popular Ecklee supermarket. As for the station, it was recently renovated with new lifts and upgraded facilities.

The centenary festivities began on Friday 11 July as Rev. Christopher Henly, Church of England Railway Mission Chaplain to Wessex, blessed the station. Next door, West Barnes Library hosted a two-day cartographic and photographic exhibition, complete with a model of the station and village as of 1925.



The model of Motspur Park in 1925. Thankfully, more roads to the station have since been developed!



Rev. Christopher Henly and others with one of the station's original platform signs

On the morning of the centenary, celebrated railway historian and journalist Christian Wolmar delivered a talk at the library, followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the station attended by the Mayor of Merton and Paul Kohler MP. Rev Canon Rachel Taylor of Holy Cross Church blessed the station again.

In the afternoon, a community picnic at Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields included a barbecue courtesy of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Wimbledon Scouts, a book sale, a plant stall by the Motspur Park Horticultural Society, and a performance by West Barnes Singers. Blossom House School also opened its gates for its summer fair.

The character of the village will soon change. Two major developments are planned on its outskirts, including on the site of the iconic gasholders. In the meantime, these centenary celebrations offer a timely and heartfelt bookmark in the history of a much-loved and happy place. Happy 100 years, Motspur Park!

*Photographs courtesy of '100 Years of Motspur Park' on Facebook ([facebook.com/profile.php?id=61572169018961](https://facebook.com/profile.php?id=61572169018961))*

## This month back then – an Edgeways history of YOUR parish!

This month, we include back issues of Edgeways showing what was happening across the parish in July 1997, 2000, 2006, 2010, 2015 and 2019.



Back issues of Edgeways are available to borrow by emailing David at [wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk). Issues from March 2020 are available in the digital archive at [sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk/edgeways](http://sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk/edgeways).

### July/August 1997 (Vol. 9 No. 7) *top-left*

- The parish celebrates the Feast of the Queenship of Mary
- Deanery Council covers the Laity Commission Report
- Champagne and strawberries at the Parish Social Club

### July/August 2000 (Vol. 12 No. 7) *top-centre*

- The parish stages the Mystery Plays
- Churches Together hosts a Pentecost Picnic at Wimbledon College
- Venture Scouts attend St George's Day Parade at Windsor Castle

### July 2006 (Vol. 18 No. 7) *top-right*

- Fr Gerard Mitchell SJ leads the Corpus Christi Procession
- Mozart Requiem concert raises over £10,000 for CLIC Sargent charity
- Sacred Heart Choir sings at Westminster Cathedral

### July 2010 (Vol. 22 No. 7) *bottom-left*

- Archbishop Peter Smith installed as Archbishop of Southwark
- Good progress on relaying the church floor
- Raphael Pilgrimage holds a reunion

### July/August 2015 (Vol. 27 No. 7) *bottom-centre*

- Friendship Group celebrates the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Magna Carta
- Wimbledon College Choir reports from Venice
- Accordion Orchestra plays at the Catenians' Fundraising Weekend

### July/August 2019 (Vol. 31 No. 7) *bottom-right*

- Bach Mass launches the Summer Season!
- Two Wombles lead Westminster Climate Change demonstration
- Newman Circle hosts The Common Good speaker for Raynes Park Festival

## Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

We welcome into the family of the Church the following who have recently been baptised: Flavia Jace, Massimo Edoardo Vettori Korolev, Matteo Vettori Korolev, Thomas Arthur Jones, Chloe Marie Echeverri Neumann, Matilda Elizabeth Wilson, Raife Jonathan Albert Wilson, Gabriel Xavier Gatto, Jack Bear Drew Hayne, and Clementine Bay Rowland.

We congratulate those who have recently been married in our church: Veronica Sara Carton and Henry Thomas Pickup Wilkinson.

We offer sympathies to the families and friends of those who have died recently: Matthew Flaherty, Wan Yung Tseung, Josephine Rochford, Michael Thomas Cairns, Tony Brook, and Dominic Francis Proctor.



AND FINALLY ...

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