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EDGEWAYS

Sacred Heart Parish Magazine

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Fr Edwin and Fr Peter greet parishioners after Mass



'Poets & Prophets' returns (pp.8–9)



Wimbledon College students speak to South London Citizens Assembly (pp. 14–15)



Your editor stares mortality in the face! (pp.16–20)

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

November: Month of the Holy Souls

In the Catholic Church, November is the month of remembrance and of the Holy Souls. This tradition goes back to the 11th century, when St Odilo of Cluny started an annual day of commemoration of all the faithful departed on the day after All Saints' Day. It consisted of almsgiving, prayer, and sacrifices for the relief of the suffering souls in purgatory. The practice gradually spread to other Benedictine monasteries and then the wider Church.

The Dominicans instituted the practice of each priest offering three Masses on All Souls Day. During World War I, Pope Benedict XV extended this privilege to all priests, mindful of the huge number of war dead and the destruction of so many churches, where Mass could no longer be offered. It is, perhaps, a coincidence – or should one say, providence – that since 1918, Armistice Day or Remembrance Sunday has also fallen in November.

Remembering – and often *praying for* – the dead is a common practice in most cultures. In our church, during November, a box before the altar carries the names of our departed. To add your departed loved ones, write their names on a piece of paper and place it into the Holy Souls envelope at the back of the church. Any donations enclosed will go towards Masses for the Holy Souls throughout the year.

While simple remembrance of those who have gone before us is an element of our November observance, All Souls Day and the month of November are particularly dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, known as the Church Penitent. The Church teaches that the purification of Holy Souls in Purgatory can be hastened by the efforts of the faithful in the Church Militant – that is, by us.



How old is the Church's teaching? In the Old Testament (2 Maccabees 12:42–45), the practice of having a sacrifice offered for the departed is described as 'an altogether fine and noble action' and 'holy and devout'. Many of the early fathers of the Church, such as Tertullian and St Cyprian, speak of how early Christians prayed for the dead.

Closely connected is the doctrine of Purgatory. Purgatory is the place or state of temporal purification, where those who have died in the grace of God but who are not yet perfect – for only what is perfect can exist in heaven – undergo cleansing (or, we might say, *decontaminating*) of their sins, before they can be admitted to the Beatific Vision. Our Lord's words in Matthew 12:32 and St Paul's in 1 Corinthians 3:11–15 also suggest this concept.

The concept of Purgatory, and thus of the efficacy of praying for the souls there, has been long held by theologians in both the

Latin West and the Greek East. St Epiphanius, a bishop in Cyprus who died in 403, even reckoned the denial of the usefulness of prayers for the dead to be a heresy.

St Thomas Aquinas, as so often, clarifies the situation for us: it would truly be bad news if our good works and prayers could not help our beloved dead. That would mean that death is stronger than love. The basic purpose of Purgatory is rehabilitation, not retribution: the perfection of souls, not punishments for sins. God created Purgatory out of love and mercy, not merely justice.

Aquinas uses an analogy. Our lungs do not directly touch our kidneys, yet each helps the other and is essential for our bodies' good health. Likewise, the Church – on earth, in Purgatory, and in Heaven – is one spiritual organism. Our good deeds and prayers for the Holy Souls are, in this

understanding of the communion of saints, a necessary part of the good health of the whole Church.

Just inside the church you will see a wall box marked 'Holy Souls'. By diocesan rule, every £10 received makes up a Holy Souls Mass. Alternatively, you can book Holy Souls Masses in the usual way by contacting the Parish Office. Sometimes, Masses for the Holy Souls are listed in the Mass Intentions in the weekly newsletter; at other times, they are offered by the concelebrating priest, and so they are not announced.

The practice of Holy Souls is a laudable one to keep up. Not only does it benefit the souls currently in Purgatory, but we shall want our successors when we have died and are in Purgatory to maintain the practice, for our own good.

Canon David

The Thursday Group

The Thursday Group was formed over 30 years ago and has continued ever since. The purpose of the group is to offer support in a safe and friendly setting to anyone with mental health problems. It provides an opportunity for sharing, confidentially, any difficulties people might be experiencing. Close bonds and friendships have been made and support has been shared by many over the years.

We currently meet every Thursday in the Lounge between 3.00pm and 5.00pm. We start by looking at the Sunday's readings, followed by a short discussion on what they mean to us. We then have time to chat over a cup of tea and biscuits/cake. We warmly invite you to come and see us one Thursday, with no strings attached if it's not for you.

For more information, please call Sister Peggy on 07749 300964 or email peggySSA14@yahoo.com.

I nearly wasn't here!

Well, what a month! I nearly wasn't here to edit your monthly parish magazine as, on Tuesday 23 September, I was in Barts Hospital having **open heart surgery**. My ADHD means I have to write down the experience which, if you choose, you are welcome to read about (*pp.16–20*).

Onto more normal contents, in this month's edition, we **welcome Fr Edwin and Fr Peter**, who are shown on the front cover greeting parishioners outside our church. Then, Canon David tells us more about November as the **month of All Souls** (*pp.2–3*).

Rob Hitchcock shares his talk to the Newman Circle on **Evangelisation** (*p.5*), and a participant shares their experience of **A Day with St Ignatius** (*pp.6–7*).

Our beautiful church is adorned with nineteen **statues of saints and blessed**s. November being the month of All Souls, we provide clues and invite you to spot them (*p.13*)! Keep your eyes peeled for more on this church tour theme in future editions of Edgeways.

Resident psychotherapist Anthony Lee continues with the third of four articles on mental health as he separates **truth from myth in psychology** (*pp.10–11*).

Our Young Adult Catholics report on a second popular **Poets & Prophets** evening, with music in the Upper Hall (*pp.8–9*).

Wimbledon College students spoke at the **South London Citizens Health and Housing Assembly**: over 950 community leaders and supporters filled St George's Cathedral to celebrate collective progress and call for further change (*pp.14–15*). The event was awesome!



After your editor's heartfelt tale of his surgery, we end with a review of **six past Edgeways** to look at highlights of what was happening 'way back then' in and around your always-exciting parish (*pp.22–23*).

To quote the Sondheim song from *Follies*, 'I'm still here', and I look forward to editing many more future editions of Edgeways – cos, if I didn't, who would?!

David Hurst

We welcome your letters, feedback, and article suggestions! Please email the editor at wimbletonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk.

Production credits: David Hurst (Editor, wimbletonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk) and Matteo Baccaglini (design and layout).

Correction: In September 2025 Edgeways, a photo of the Memory Lane Club celebrating its tenth anniversary was miscaptioned as a Be Well Hub celebration ('Sacred Heart Wimbledon recognised as Merton's 13th Be Well Hub', *pp.6–7*). We apologise for the mistake.

Wednesday 24 September Evangelisation at the Newman Society

On the evening of Wednesday 24 September, Rob Hitchcock, our parish's Faith Minister, spoke to the Wimbledon Newman Society on the topic of evangelisation. We are grateful to Rob for sharing some notes from his talk with Edgeways.

Evangelisation is the sharing of the Good News. This call is at the core of the Church's DNA, as it is a direct command from Jesus himself in the Great Commission: 'Go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19–20).

All the baptised are called into this mission, meaning it is not the responsibility of theologians and missionaries alone, but of everyone. This mission is carried out not through winning theological debates, but through witnessing to the close and personal relationship into which God himself has called you.

The Great Commission begins with a personal encounter with God, and the fruits of these encounters call us into action. Scripture is filled with examples; just to name a few, these include:

- Mary Magdalene on the day of the Resurrection
- The Woman at the Well (John 4)
- The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35)

When we receive good news, our natural instinct is to share it. We know what Christ has to offer: eternal life. It is an expression of love for others to invite them into this knowledge. Pope Francis reminds us that 'the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus' (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013).

Evangelisation consists of three elements:

1. witness,
2. proclamation, and
3. accompaniment.



Witness is a way of living that reflects the light of Christ to the world through our actions. Remember: 'You are the light of the world' (Matthew 5:14). People may recognise something different within you — the presence of Christ — even if they cannot yet name it. This is where you come in: to help and journey with them so that they, too, may recognise that Christ lives within them.

Proclamation is speaking about Jesus and the hope he brings to the world. It involves being ready to answer a simple yet profound question: 'Why do you believe?'

Accompaniment is exactly what Jesus did. He walked alongside the Apostles for three years, showing them how to live. Accompaniment requires patience and, at times, can be challenging or even painful, but it is essential to the mission.

Evangelisation happens in the ordinary, everyday moments of life, across all hours of the day. Every act that is oriented toward God is evangelisation, as it provides glimpses of heaven and a taste of the eternal reward.

The Wimbledon Newman Society meets monthly for talks, film screenings, and other events on a wide range of topics related to our faith. Keep an eye out in the parish newsletter for future events!

Saturday 11 October: Ignatian Prayer Day

On Saturday 11 October, our parish hosted an Ignatian Prayer Day, led by parishioner and prayer-leader Adelita Thursby-Pelham, Mary Goggin from the London Jesuit Centre, and Sr Anne Boland. One parishioner shares their experience.

The day invited us to look at the story of St Ignatius of Loyola and find our own story within.

What was my conversion moment? What brought it about? Where did it lead me to?

By looking at the life of St Ignatius, we were drawn to see something of our own life's story.

Originally, Ignatius was a man full of ambition, self-centred, proud and full of vain glory who transformed into a man for God and others.

It all began with the tragedy of a broken leg. His experience of conversion began on a sickbed by reflecting on what was happening within. He became aware of alternating moods of joy and sadness, but he experienced a joy that remained long after he read the life of Christ and the lives of the Saints. Meanwhile, sadness followed soon after a short-lived excitement while reading books on the great tales of chivalry.

These insights led to Ignatius giving us the gift of discernment of spirits. What gave him joy and energy and what brought on sadness and despondency?

Ignatius' conversion story highlights the importance of noticing and becoming aware of what is happening within and then choosing the path that leads to more life, energy, and love.



Praying and meditating on the life of Christ was so important to bring about this transformation in Ignatius that we too spent a good portion of the afternoon in prayer.

We looked at the different types of prayer, praying with Art, praying with the Word, Lectio Divina, praying in Nature and Praying with the Imagination. The experience of actually praying the Examen was a very important part of the day.

Our prayer exploration was followed by a time of actually engaging in imaginative prayer on Scripture on Jesus' question: 'Who do you say I am?'

The day ended with a reflective reading of 'The Journey', inviting us to reflect on our personal faith.

Some echoes from participants ...

'It was lovely to meet and talk to people who are seeking to deepen their prayer life. I would highly recommend the day to anyone who wants to learn more about Ignatian spirituality.'

'I'll try to remember a simple examen at the end of each day.'

'I felt the joy of St Ignatius' way of finding God in the minutiae of my everyday life. Thank you for the lovely experience of prayer.'

'The Examen was a really helpful way to pray. The day encouraged me to stop, make space for prayer, and simply be with God.'

'This peaceful and prayerful day is so much needed in our challenging times we are living in.'

'Thank you, Lord, for today. Sorry for anything what wasn't Christ-like. Help me, Lord.'

'The Examen was such a beautiful way to pray, especially coming into God's presence and moving into gratitude.'

'The opportunity to be still was such a gift.'

Saturday 11 October: Poets & Prophets returns!



On Saturday 11 October, Poets & Prophets returned to our parish's Upper Hall. It was a joyous event that encapsulated over 16 different poets and musicians and spoken word artists expressing their work through the night!

As artists performed, in the background, audience participants engaging in painting from the inspired sights and words of the evening. There were laughs, tears and fellowship made.

This was a second trial of poets and prophets and we have one more trial of these events that will be announced in the new year!

If you want to get involved, donate, or support in any way, please email Grace at poetsandprophetsevents@gmail.com. Do also follow Poets & Prophets on Instagram at [@poetsandprophets.events](https://www.instagram.com/poetsandprophets.events).

Grace and Kanar



Photographs courtesy of Poets & Prophets



Thank you!

Following her musicianship appeal in September 2025 Edgeways, **Grace Oskiera-Vooght** writes to thank our readers for their generosity.

Thank you to those who have donated – I have only £100 more to raise to £700. Glory to God!

This will help equip me better to lead First Monday Adoration worship and bring more music and praise to our parish. Thank you so much; I am very grateful for your support. Blessings and love!

Please get in touch if you have any musical gifts and would like to be part of the Monday Adoration at graceov_1@yahoo.com. Thank you.

You can learn about and donate to Grace's musicianship appeal at gofund.me/10ba5d7d.

My View of Psychology – Truth from Myth

As the parish prepares to launch as a Be Well Hub, we continue a feature-series of articles discovering what this means. This month, Anthony Lee, our resident psychotherapist, discusses what psychology means.

Hearing the word ‘psychologist’ causes which mental image to appear in your mind? A mind-reader? A fortune-teller? Someone who only works with ‘crazy’ people?

I encounter these types of myths during every session in my practice. Furthermore, they are not harmless. Such misconceptions prevent people from seeking psychological support that could benefit them.

The truth

Psychologists possess no ability to read minds, nor do they possess future prediction capabilities.

We help individuals better understand their mental processes, emotional reactions, and behavioural responses.

Our approach uses conversations, observations, and evidence-based techniques to help clients develop self-awareness before effecting change (BPS Code of Ethics, 2021; APA, 2020).

Therapy serves purposes beyond assisting people who are experiencing a mental breakdown. The majority of my clients manage everyday issues, including stress, anxiety, grief, relationship conflicts, and career changes.

These are not signs of mental illness. These experiences belong to the human experience.



What is the relationship between psychological and mental health services?

Psychological and mental health services are intertwined. Psychological therapy combines psychiatric medication and community support as well as wellness programmes as part of its comprehensive service delivery model. Combining these recovery approaches provides strong and enduring solutions for mental health recovery and wellness (WHO, 2016).

Psychology is a scientific field that examines human mental functions and behavioural expressions (APA, 2020).

The Doctorate in Clinical Psychology represents the minimum educational requirement for clinical psychologists in the UK to become registered members of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, 2024). Psychotherapists need a master's degree, substantial supervised clinical practice, and registration from professional bodies, including the BACP, UKCP, and other approved organisations (BACP Ethical Framework, 2018).

Our practice exists in theoretical frameworks, but genuine human relationships have a fundamental influence.

Psychiatrist or psychologist?

The main distinction between psychiatrists and psychologists lies in their professional training.

Medical doctors who specialise in mental health diagnosis as well as prescription of medication make up the profession of psychiatry.

Instead, psychologists dedicate their work to therapy by utilising structured therapy approaches, including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), person-centred therapy, and psychodynamic methods to help clients manage emotional and behavioural issues. We collaborate with psychiatrists to support clients' complete wellbeing (WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme, 2016).

Who should see a psychologist?

The short answer: anyone. Therapy helps people who experience anxiety, life transitions, identity issues, parenting difficulties, and those who want to understand themselves better. According to Public Health England (2022), mental health difficulties affect one in four people yearly, yet most do not seek help.

Therapy does not require a crisis for you to start sessions. You can begin therapy whenever emotional numbness or feeling stuck or overwhelmed occurs. The early start of therapy proves most beneficial when it stops patterns from becoming deeply embedded, according to NICE CG123 (2021). Therapy operates as an emotional prevention strategy beyond emergency responses to breakdowns.

The treatment process

The assessment process begins with a session where we examine your personal history, present worries, and desired outcomes. We work together to establish a therapeutic plan. The therapy process includes scheduled appointments and self-reflection sessions alongside developing coping mechanisms and examining established beliefs. CBT, together with other evidence-based therapies, show proven effectiveness in treating anxiety, depression and trauma, according to Roth and Pilling (2007).

Psychological services need purposeful implementation to achieve their objectives. Choose a qualified therapist. Be open. Ask questions. Stick with the process, even when it is challenging. The therapy process might not be simple, but it has important advantages.

Therapy does not attempt to transform your identity into something else. Through therapy, you discover your inner perception alongside your inner power. The process reveals how you respond emotionally while revealing past hurts so you can develop healthier ways to move forward. Multiple clients discover that their ability to cope evolves into thriving after an extended treatment period.

Psychological services need purposeful implementation to achieve their objectives. Choose a qualified therapist. Be open. Ask questions. Stick with the process, even when it is challenging. The therapy process might not be simple, but it has important advantages.

Act now

If you have been wondering whether therapy is 'for you', the answer is probably yes. Do not wait for the crisis. Do not let stigma silence you. Help is available — and it works.

Do not be afraid. Understand and seek the truth. Reach out early. Healing begins there.

Anthony provides free counselling and psychological services to parishioners. All services are strictly confidential and adhere to the codes of ethics set by professional regulatory bodies. To make an appointment with Anthony, please contact Thelma in the Parish Office: call 020 8946 0305 or email wimbledon@rcaos.org.uk.

Sunday 5 October: Sale of olive wood items to support Christians in the Holy Land



On Sunday 5 October, we were blessed to be visited by the Holy Land Group, a missionary group from Bethlehem, who spoke at Sunday Masses about the beleaguered Christian communities they support in the Holy Land. The group later wrote to Canon David:

'Christian greetings and the peace of Our Lord be with you always. We would love to thank you by allowing our group to come to your church and sell the olive wood religious articles, the result of which was very beneficial and rewarding for our needy Christian families. We raised £9,363.55. Your help is a great support for us, and for our Christian families in the Holy Land.'

'We don't have enough words to thank you, but make sure that you are always in our prayers. If anyone has missed the carvings display, you can place an order online directly at tbng.co.uk. God bless you all. Love and blessings from The Holy Land Group.'

FAITH IN THE PARISH ...

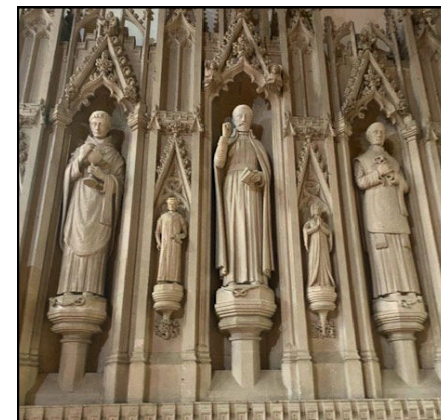
Edgeways' All Saints' Day Challenge: The Saints of Sacred Heart Church

A challenge to our newsletter readers for All Saints' Day! Walking around our beautiful church, can you spot where the following 19 saints and blessed have their statues in our church?

Starting easy, can you find **Our Lady of Lourdes** (Mary is foremost among the saints!), **St Mary Magdalene**, and **St John**? What about **St Joseph**?

Next, we have several martyrs of the English Reformation:

- **Bl. Margaret Pole** (1473–1541), whom King Henry VIII described as 'the holiest woman in England';
- **St John Houghton OCart** (d. 1535), a Carthusian priest;
- **St Thomas More** (1478–1535), formerly Lord Chancellor;
- **Bl. Thomas Sherwood** (d. 1578), a layman;
- **Bl. Thomas Percy** (d. 1572), who led the Rising of the North;
- **St Ralph Sherwin** (1550–81), the first martyr of the English College in Rome; and
- **St Edmund Campion SJ** (1540–81), who wrote pamphlets defending the Catholic faith.



We have some Jesuit saints who died young: **St Stanislaus Kostka SJ** (1550–68) was described by his novice master as 'a model and mirror of religious perfection'; **St Aloysius Gonzaga SJ** (1568–91) died while caring for plague victims; and **St John Berchmans SJ** (1599–1621) was noted for his brilliant mind.

Among the founding Jesuits, we have **St Ignatius Loyola SJ** (1491–1556) and his companion **St Francis Xavier SJ** (1506–52), who led the first Christian mission to Japan. **St Francis Borgia SJ** (1510–72) was the third Superior General of the Jesuits.

Finally, **St Alphonsus Rodríguez SJ** (1532–1617) served as a porter at a college in Majorca for 46 years, while **St Peter Claver SJ** (1581–1654) worked with enslaved people in Colombia and is the patron saint of interracial justice.

Did we miss anyone? Let the editor know at wimbledonedgeways@rcaos.org.uk.



Tuesday 21 October: Wimbledon College students at the Health and Housing Assembly

On Tuesday 21 October, about 950 people gathered at St George's Cathedral in Southwark to celebrate another year of South London Citizens organising and campaigning and to secure further commitments from decisionmakers who have the power to say yes to our demands.

The evening began with a performance by Latin American family dance group Empoderando Familias. Students from Wimbledon College (*right*) then told the room how their organising and campaigning work had led to an invitation to the Vatican, where they met Pope Leo XIV, who welcomed the students and offered his blessing and prayers for the organising work of Citizens UK.

The students then handed over to the evening's co-chairs: Martin (Wimbledon YMCA), Janet (St William of York RC Church, Lewisham, and LCLT), Pastor Steff (Brandon Baptist Church, Southwark) and Humaira (Iqra Primary School, Lambeth).



During the evening, NHS delegates committed to:

- continue to support Be Well Hubs;
- work with South London Citizens to set up a community partnership to support and inform pregnant mothers about the process, costs and policies, especially creating more clarity on fee waivers for parents facing destitution caused by medical charging during pregnancy and childbirth; and
- continue to champion the Living Wage and encourage hospitals to join the Living Hours scheme.

Delegations of local government and NHS officials also promised to work together to provide free alternatives to costly GP letters for residents whose need to prove to housing providers that health has been affected by poor quality housing (e.g. unattended damp and mould), and to secure unused NHS land for affordable housing projects, with sites being explored in South East and South West London.



Merton Council and South West London also announced that, as a result of South London Citizens' campaigning, they are now working together to make vacant buildings in Mitcham available for temporary housing in the next few months. These buildings have stood empty for years and 'could have remained empty for another decade' but are now on course to provide shelter for people who would otherwise have been homeless.

Attendees also celebrated the national government's recent commitment of £11 million to help families in temporary accommodation access essentials like Wi-Fi, laundry, school travel, and uniforms. This commitment is a huge national win that began in South London, and promises to make a real difference to hundreds of families in our communities and beyond.

To celebrate the achievement, Janet invited those who had worked on the campaign to stand, at which point dozens of participants stood up and received the warm applause and thanks of the whole cathedral. It was a touching moment that reminded everyone that change is possible through community organising.

South London Citizens is an alliance of local organisations that fights for justice through the method of community organising, to which our parish is associated through our membership of Merton Citizens. As part of the national organisation, Citizens UK, South London Listens focuses on building relationships, developing leaders, and strengthening institutions in order to build power and win change.

This article is adapted from a press release by South London Listens.

Jodie always cheers me up

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visit: gacarers.co.uk/wimbledon

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On recovering from a real 'broken heart': David Hurst, aged 73 ... and a bit

(Opening soundtrack: 'What becomes of the Broken Hearted?', Jimmy Ruffin, June 1966)

My cardiac surgeon, Mr Benjamin Adams, told me afterwards: 'We opened up your chest like a book and your recovery will be the equivalent to your heart having been hit by a bus!'

This is the same surgeon who, when I asked at the post-angiogram consultation 'Is this serious?' replied: 'Yes'.

DH: 'Would you go on the Rhine cruise we have booked and paid for?'

BA: 'No.'

DH: 'How many of your patients walk out of hospital?'

BA: 'All of them – so far!'

At 2.00pm on Tuesday 23 September at St Bartholomew's Hospital, aka 'Barts', two anaesthetists (one a former 'Flying Doctor' in Dubbo, NSW – but that is another story), four doctors, and five scrub nurses cut nine inches down my sternum and, err, messed around for five hours inside my chest cavity.

Barts is the oldest hospital in the country, founded on the same site in 1123, and has recently opened William Hogarth's murals for the public to see in person for the first time in 300 years.

The diagnosis ...

'Problems' with my heart were diagnosed after an ECG during a pre-op assessment at University College London Hospitals for a second cryotherapy prostate cancer operation. (The first had been in 2012, but now I have a new lesion.)



Subcutaneous titanium clips now hold my sternum together – apart from setting off airport scanners, who will get them after my cremation ... ?

'You need to get that [heart] checked out before you can have any other surgery' the anaesthetist said, straight-faced.

A PET-CT scan and a rhubidium (nuclear medicine) contrast scan later, and I was lying on the angiogram bed in one of twelve 'cath labs' at Barts watching my pulsating heart on a full-screen monitor.

'Is that me?'

'It certainly is. If you look there, there and there, those are three arteries, including LDL, the artery known as 'the widow-maker'. They should not be white, which means that they are blocked and you could have a heart attack at any time. And if you look at the top where there is unusual scarring, that shows that at some time in the past, you have had a 'silent' heart attack.' Wow!

That probably explains the pains in the top left of my chest three months earlier that I felt when walking one Saturday morning to join our weekly Walk & Talk. Breathless, I sat down to recover, which I did, and ... carried on. I did not see my GP.

The procedure ...

Just 18 days after the consultation with Dr Adams, I don't recall first coming around but at 7.30pm, I awoke groggily in ICU asking: 'Have you started yet?'

Lying in bed in one of ten theatres on the first floor of the King George V building in the Cardiothoracic department of Barts – the largest of its kind in Europe – I had been 'in good hands'.

The 'procedure' (scary word) is called coronary artery bypass graft (CABG). I was in for CABG to unblock three arteries, including LDL. Not that I know anything about it, but they had stopped my heart and put me on a heart-lung bypass machine. Then they took three arteries (or veins?), one from each leg and a third from my chest – from a mammary artery which is redundant in men – and then they ... errr, stitched away before reconnecting my heart. Mr Adams said that he found a fourth blocked artery, but decided to leave it alone.

The recovery ...

During a routine night-time check by two doctors while I was in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), I stopped breathing. They were at my bedside looking at the heart monitor above my head and ... my lungs froze.

Frantically waving my arms, I pointed to my mouth. I was gasping for air, but nothing was going in.

One of the doctors immediately replaced the nasal air flow with a very large oxygen mask and ordered me to 'calm down'.

'CALM DOWN? — I CAN'T EFFING BREATHE!!!' I gestured still waving my arms and pointing at my mouth.

After what seemed like an age but was probably two minutes, I managed to get miniscule breaths of oxygen into my lungs. You cannot believe how beautiful OXYGEN tastes and feels! Ever so slowly, I managed to take small and then larger breaths, savouring each one like it was my last. When my breathing had returned, I asked the doctors what had just happened. 'Probably just a panic attack that locked your breathing tube.'

'Just', I thought, 'JUST a panic attack!' I really thought that I was going to die! (Needless to say, I didn't.)

Other problems were that my heart rate went below 50 beats per minute and atrial fibrillation, a common post-operative irregular heartbeat, controlled by medication. During my recovery, my heart rate was adjusted remotely by a pacemaker, a small box on my chest that was 'wired in' to my heart. When my heartbeat dropped, they just turned a dial and ... up it came to 70 plus.

'Can I adjust that myself?' I asked cheekily. 'NO, YOU CERTAINLY CANNOT!'



MRTWRWM ... that's Multi-Racial Teaching Ward Round – With Machines!

On the wards ...

After surviving three days in ICU, I progressed to the High Dependency Unit (HDU). Same multi-functional hospital bed, but fewer monitoring machines and shared nurses rather than one-on-one care. Three days later, I moved to a normal ward.

Night is not quiet on a male surgical heart ward, especially with each of four beds having its own heart monitor going 'bleep, bleep' on every patient's heartbeat – but the alternative, the dreaded FLATLINE, would be far worse! Thankfully, that never happened to any patient during my stay.

A constantly-groaning man from Belfast lay in the bed next to mine. He was on his twenty-ninth operation in two years after being run over by his ex-wife! I asked if he had been back to see her; he replied acidly: 'If I did, I would effing kill her!'

Mr Adams kindly visited me and I asked if he knew the main difference between the wards. Even he had not noticed that you get served silver cutlery and pottery cups and plates on the ward, whereas the ICU and HDU use wooden cutlery, cardboard cups, and paper plates. Apparently, this is to improve hygiene and reduce 'bugs'.

No one warned me that, post-anaesthetic, my dreams would be off-the-scale psychedelic! Like taking LSD (I have never been there), I dreamed of sparkly bright lights and scenes that make science fiction look tame. 'Ah, that'll be the codeine; it'll stay in your system for up to six months,' the ward doctor explained calmly. I wish they had warned me.

Visitors ...

Helen kept my heart going by visiting most days. Preparing for my daughter

Izzy, niece Sophie, and friend Gerald, all visiting one afternoon in my second week, I was able to shed my backless hospital gown and put street clothes on. My still-bed-ridden neighbour said I looked like I was going to the Henley Regatta. As if ... !

I asked Sophie in advance to get one question about being in hospital from each of her three kids. In the end, the only question I got was from the eight-year-old boy, who was concerned that I could get WiFi to stream movies in hospital. I could.

Receiving the Sacraments ...



Fr Antigon Bahati AA (from Malawi – but not that day) turned up on the Monday. Before receiving the Sacraments, I asked for him to hear my Confession. He kissed his stole and put it over his head to start. I surprised him by asking, in all sincerity: 'but what is sin?'

I explained that I know sin is anything that creates a barrier between me and God. I confessed that I was truly sorry for anything that may have created such a barrier. This was clearly a 'first' but he gave me absolution and penance and on we went with Communion.

I thought that Jimmy McGovern might like this as a plot to add to his brilliant TV series, *Broken*, about a disillusioned Liverpool priest played by Sean Bean. Perhaps I will send it to him.

Convalescence ...

I was discharged from hospital on the tenth day. Four of my stipulated six weeks of convalescence were kindly provided by Helen, who claimed she was 'channelling her inner Kathy (*Misery*) Bates' onto me, then by younger sister, Jane, in Arnside near Morecambe and, finally, by my older sister, Ruth, in Bolton. Nurse Ratchett was mercifully absent!



... having his afternoon 'nap'!



'So, who loves ya?'

If you want to know who loves you in life ... have open heart surgery and see who sends you messages.

I have never received such love, kindness, and gifts from so many people. Over the ten days in hospital, 63 different NHS staff came to my bedside of 42 different nationalities. I know that because I asked each one of them their name, their job, and where they were from, and wrote these in my notebook.

(The need to persistently ask questions and to process information by writing it down logically is one indication that I have ADHD – but then I knew that!)

My impressive 9-inch scar inspired a friend to give me the t-shirt pictured above. A Spanish friend pointed at my chest, laughed and said, *cuerno de toro*: it looks as if I have been gored by the horns of a bull. Meanwhile, in the USA, I am now a member of the 'Zipper Club'!

The operation hasn't cured my propensity to talk too much – a good friend is disappointed that they didn't remove my larynx while they were at it!

Thank yous ...

After an accidental diagnosis, someone asked me: 'What has it been like to face your own mortality?' I replied existentially: 'Having heart surgery is not exactly the end of the world – but you can see it!'

So, I have to thank – from the bottom of my re-furbished heart - Benjamin Adams and his surgical team and all the doctors, nurses, students, caterers, receptionists, cleaners, etc., at Barts Hospital.

Thanks also to the many, many people who heard about my situation and visited me either in hospital or after, or who have sent me get well messages and gifts. If you can be bothered to plough through this over-long story, it is for you.

And, of course, thank you to my three nurses, Helen, who keeps my heart working in a good way, and my sisters, Jane and Ruth. 'Thank you all. X'.

Finally, I thank God for taking care of me as, in the words of the Sondheim classic from 'Follies': 'I'm still here!'

(Closing soundtrack: 'Total Eclipse of the Heart', Bonnie Tyler, 2009)

David Hurst

An active parishioner since moving to Wimbledon in 2012, David Hurst has been a member and then Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council. He continues as a foundation governor of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and, at the invitation of Canon David, he has been the editor of the monthly Edgeways magazine since December 2023.



'Bring me sunshine?' No chance – this is Morecambe!



Confirmation 2026

Are you in Years 8 to 13? Would you like to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation next year? Registration is now open! Please ask your parent or guardian to complete the online form before Monday 5 January 2026: tinyurl.com/shwconf26. If you have any questions, please contact Rob, our Faith Minister, at wimbledonpfm@rcaos.org.uk.

OUR YOUNG ADULTS ...

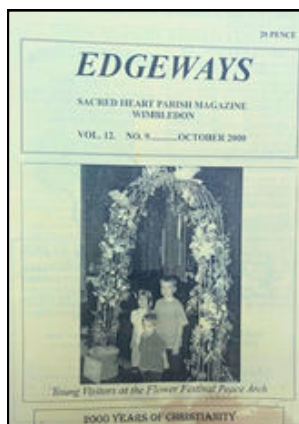
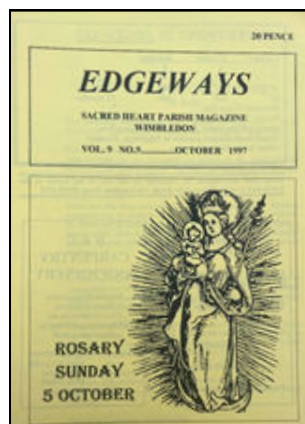


tinyurl.com/3p5svfsk

This one-day retreat will be an opportunity for young people in and around London to come together in this new year to explore faith, build relationships and find hope. Join us for a jam-packed day of prayer, teaching, friendship, and fun!

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

Enjoy and remember some headlines of stories from back issues of Edgeways in October 1997, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2020.



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

October 1997 (Vol. 9 No. 9)

- Racial Justice Sunday: One World Mass
- Common Good and Catholic Social Teaching
- St George's Harare Boys' Choir performs at Wimbledon College

October 2000 (Vol. 12 No. 9)

- Sr Dorothy joins the Parish Team
- Wendy Tansey explains how to mount a Mystery Play
- The Venture Scouts report on their Romania Expedition

October 2005 (Vol. 17 No. 9)

- Michael Peters reports from World Youth Day in Cologne
- James Potter calls for Young Parishioners
- Christine Hennessey on Volunteering

October 2010 (Vol. 22 No. 9)

- Pope Benedict XVI visits for the beatification of John Henry Newman
- Gerald Cook is our new Youth Minister
- One year of the Friendship Group

October 2015 (Vol. 27 No. 9)

- Canon John Clark calls for a parish response to the refugee crisis
- Rehana Edun-Noys relates her personal RCIA journey
- David Hurst looks at 30 years of music at the Family Mass

October 2020 (Vol. 31 No. 9)

- Sacristan Michael Hamilton retires
- Parish fundraiser receives £1m donation from generous donor
- Upper Hall gets Covid refurbishment

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

We welcome into the family of the Church the following who have recently been baptised: Mia Ewa Alchimionek Borkowska • Oliver Wilbur Lake Rees • Kiyera Miyel Sujeewan • Harley Monroe Azzopardi • James Patrick Lee Meredith • Peter Alexander Wood • James Brendan McKavanagh • Feliks John Antoni Lasocki • Nancy Rose Powell • Monty James Cobbold • Edward William David Cheetham • Max Arthur Keeling • Johann Caelou Gumapac • Celine Ilona Del Toro • Luke Fry Woods • Ada RoseHann Chapman • Ellie Mulroe • Luca Joseph Dos Santos-Pires

We congratulate those who have recently been married in our church: Remi Nakul Rafal Shah & Rachel May Barter • Peter Sean Gallagher & Angeline Devona Rajasooriyer • Mark John Paget Skelin & Victoria Elizabeth Mance • Ayodeji Stefan Olonilua & Magdalen Mary Elizabeth Christie • Matthew Lewis Haines & Lucy Elisabeth Peck

We offer sympathies to the families and friends of those who have died recently: Agnes Margaret Salmon • Betty Amelia Gibson • Margaret Mary Duffy • Francis Charles Christopher Foulger • Kit Hing Kwok • Paul John Cecil • Edmund Anthony Middlehurst • Aaron Marcel Perry • Rosalie Ann Elwes • Jean Margaret Murphy

CALLING ALL SINGERS!

Can you help us create a
Big Choir of 100+ voices?

Katy Lees, Giles Kennedy and Katy's Songbirds
invite you to lend us your voice for an
evening of festive music ...

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION CONCERT

Thursday 18 December 2025 – 7.45pm

Sacred Heart Hall & Church, Edge Hill, Wimbledon, SW19 4LU

Pre-concert rehearsal 6.30pm



REHEARSALS

Mondays: 10, 17, 24 Nov; 1, 8, 15 Dec

(Come to as many as you like!)

8.30pm—9.30pm

Sacred Heart School, Burlington Road, New Malden, KT3 4ND

TO REGISTER CONTACT:
katylees3009@gmail.com

**Whatever your experience, join us to raise the roof together,
proving that music has the power to change lives...**

Supporting:
Breast Cancer Now & BEAT Eating Disorders