

October
2024

EDGEWAYS

Sacred Heart Parish Magazine

Vol. 35 No. 8

sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk



Welcome, Fr David!
Sacred Heart Primary School
Choir sings at Mass (p.12)

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

The madness of 'new things'

It was recently reported that eleven dioceses in the Church of England have stopped using the word 'church', as people don't know what it means, and instead are using the expression 'new things'. This is not a spoof; I wish it were!

Quite how 'new things' better communicates its purpose to everyday people than 'church' is beyond me. Nonetheless, it set me thinking about changes in the Catholic Church. Perhaps we should consider a name change: instead of 'The Catholic Church', we could become 'wesaveanysoul.com'.

Faced with a shortage of priests, there have been reports that Rome is experimenting with Confession machines, or 'Automated Theology Machines' (ATMs). These have been nicknamed 'soul-in-the-wall machines'.

Each penitent is issued with a Penitent's Identification Number (PIN). The machine asks the penitent which of the Ten Commandments he/she has transgressed and how many times, and the penitent uses the number keys to answer. After saying their Act of Contrition, the @gmail.com machine issues an Absolution and Penance.

Unfortunately, in early trials of the English-language version, the machines had great difficulty understanding the Acts of Contrition spoken by those with Geordie accents.

Meanwhile, some radical transformations will highlight the Church's commitment to becoming gender-equal. The Diocese of Menevia will have to be renamed. It is



worse for the Church of England: both the dioceses of Manchester and Sodor & Man will have to be renamed.

It remains to be seen if Scripture will have to be rewritten, e.g. 'the Child of Person' instead of 'the Son of Man'. The *Our Father* is at risk, while 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son...' may have to become 'In the name of the Creator, and of the Redeemer...' To avoid the equality police, we may have to revert to speaking Latin, although the Department for Education has warned that this would fall foul of its 'British Values' policy.

Another possible development is the use of robot clergy. They have several advantages over human beings: apart from an occasional service like your car, they require little attention; they don't need a whole presbytery to live in; and they don't need paying. As long as they have a driverless car, they can celebrate

several Masses a Sunday in different churches, and can be programmed not to preach for more than seven minutes!

Oh, and apparently this may not be a joke after all: rumour has it that the Archdiocese of Westminster has been using these robopriests for a number of years and no-one has noticed!

Driverless cars have been trialled in Greenwich. Another new technology being tested in Greenwich – quite why the Royal Borough has been chosen for these trials is a mystery not even the Holy Spirit knows – is automated delivery machines. These are a sort of metal box on six small wheels. If you obstruct their progress, they politely ask you in a robotic voice to move out of their way. If you continue to obstruct them, they impolitely call the

police. Unfortunately, they suffer from the same problem as the Daleks in *Dr Who*: stairs.

The Safeguarding team is currently assessing whether or not these automated delivery machines, if they deliver Holy Communion to the housebound, will require a DBS disclosure to visit a vulnerable adult, while the Liturgy Commission is debating if they need to be commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

Some change is good, desirable perhaps, necessary even. But not all changes are for the better.

Canon David

Sunday 29 September New parishioners' welcome tea

On the afternoon of Sunday 29 September, the Parish Pastoral Council hosted a very friendly gathering in the Lounge for new parishioners.

Everyone who had signed up through the website since January was invited. We were pleased to welcome 25 people of all ages.

There was a real feeling of joy and energy in the room with lots of warm conversation and enthusiastic questions.

The leaflets left by some of our parish volunteer groups were great talking points and demonstrated how blessed we are as a community.



Thank you to everyone who provided cakes and snacks and served drinks, and thank you to all who came.

We look forward to seeing you again soon!

I was the first David, thank you

As if it wasn't bad enough being relegated from 'David' to 'David H.' last year, a second Fr David means I'm now going to have to start calling myself not even 'David Hu.', but 'David Hur.'! But, having met and interviewed our newest priest (pp.6-7), I can safely say that it's a small inconvenience I'm willing to suffer for the good of the parish.

At the Edgeways Production Office (yes, I know!), we are delighted to have received so many stellar articles from contributors this month. **Kate Shanahan** blesses us with her testimony of Sr Dorothy's RCIA course (p.5), while **Daniel Berrevoets** reflects on his time as a school governor at Sacred Heart Primary School (p.13).

On clergy, we get to know **Fr David Hunter** (pp.6-7), say goodbye to **Fr Matthew Donnelly** (p.8), and congratulate **Rev'd Alastair Newman** on becoming the vicar of our Anglican neighbour, St Matthew's Church on Durham Road (p.9).

We learn about **A Day with Mary** (p.10) and **welcome new parishioners** (p.3).

On the musical side, we review 'The Full Broadway' of the Edge Hill Players' mega-production of 'Kiss Me, Kate' (pp.14-15) and listen to the returning **Kong-Affonso piano duo** who performed, inter alia, Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring!* (p.16) They were 'incroyable'!

The **Sacred Heart Primary School Choir** sang the most beautiful *Ubi Caritas* antiphon that I have ever heard at the Family Mass on Sunday 6 October (p.12).



In parish groups, the Newman Circle learned about possibly the first published woman writer in the English language, **Julian of Norwich** (p.11).

The next meeting on 23 October shows *The Letter: A Message for our Earth* (2022), a film about *Laudato Si'* (2015), in anticipation of the revival of our parish environmental group.

The **Memory Lane Club** was entertained by 'the Pielarks', a choir of English traditional harmonists (p.18), while the **Friendship Group** heard a moving poem on Grenfell Tower by Ben Okri (pp.20-21).

In other articles, **Anthony Lee**, our parish counsellor, describes a journey through therapy for marriage communication skills (p.17), and Patricia Turner appeals for volunteers for the **Parish Flower Group** (p.19). Thanks to Jenny Cairns, we profile **Lise Cotte**, our centenarian, who will celebrate making her 'ton' in November (pp.20-21).

Finally, and best of all, **Canon David** shows us his witty side with a sideways view of our Church in the modern world! (pp.2-3) Really a lot to enjoy!

David Hurst

'Rediscovering my Catholic faith'

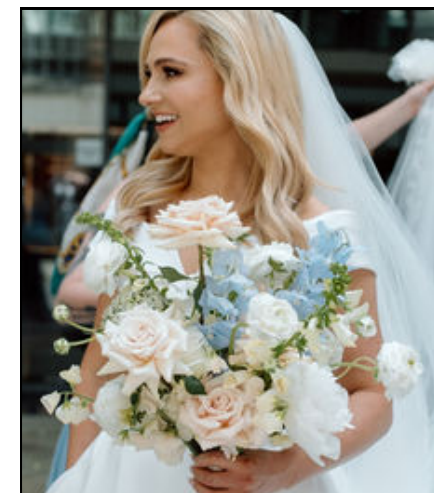
Sr Dorothy Perrott OSU has generously run our parish's Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) programme for many years. Newly-returned parishioner Katie Shanahan gives us her personal experience.

Everyone's journey with faith is different. Sometimes you're fully committed, attend church every Sunday, and pray morning and evening. Other times, when life gets in the way and you fall out of practice with faith, you can feel as though something's missing.

That's been the case for my path with faith over these recent years. When I got engaged, I wanted to rediscover my connection with God before I got married. It's given me hope, direction, and a whole new community, making Sunday Mass something I always look forward to.

I was religious when I was younger, got baptised, went to a Church of England school, and learned a lot about religion through extracurricular activities. But when I was at university, playing international hockey and studying for a degree, it meant that faith took a back seat. It shouldn't have, but it did. Lots of my friends weren't religious and I found it hard to connect with God as I wasn't practising my faith on a regular basis.

After getting engaged and settling into life here in Wimbledon, I decided to get confirmed. Better late than never, right? My late grandma had always wanted me to get married in a church and I thought that this was the perfect time to kick-start my relationship with faith. So, Sister Dorothy kindly offered to help me get confirmed through the more adult route,



as most people tend to get confirmed when they are much younger!

We had weekly sessions where I learned all about faith – the Mass, the Bible, and the very basics of being Catholic. These sessions were brilliant. I learned ever so much, and it allowed me to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation alongside others, with my supportive husband watching on.

So even though I fell out of love with religion for a decade or more, I'm glad I found a way back. I now attend church every Sunday with my dad. I always wave to Sister Dorothy when I enter, with Sunday Mass being my escapism.

I don't feel as though something is missing anymore. Sundays are now the highlight of my week.

Welcome, Fr David Hunter!

Your editor gets to know Fr David Hunter in his first face-to-face interview.

Fr David has a warm and engaging personality, which will be welcome in his second placement with a parish. His last was at St John the Baptist in Purley, where he had been very happy for three years after his ordination to the priesthood at the end of lockdown on 17 July 2021 by Archbishop John Wilson at St George's Cathedral in Southwark, alongside Fr Matthew Donnelly.

At the start of our interview, I asked Fr David the cheeky question: 'Who writes your sermons at Mass – do they come from a book?' He told me firmly that, after studying 'homiletics'* (a new word to this editor) as part of his six years of priestly training at the, now-closed, St John's Wonersh Seminary, he definitely writes his own sermons. His first opportunity to preach was at his family church of St Simon Stock in Ashford (the Kent one). Fr David points out that, although the five in his seminary class were all taught by the same priest, they all preach in very different ways!

He was born and brought up as a Catholic in Ashford, making him a 'proud man of Kent'. Fr David has an older sister with two children living in nearby Battersea.

His mother is an Irish-born Catholic but he travelled by bus each day to Kent College, a mixed Methodist school in Canterbury.

His favourite subject at school was history, which was nurtured in the family by visits to castles, battlefields, and other



museums. He left school at the age of 16 to take up an apprenticeship with Balfour Beatty and he achieved an HND in Civil Engineering.

Fr David explains further: 'My passion for railways was nurtured from birth by my parents, who took me to lots of heritage railways and railway museums. At the age of just 14, I started volunteering on the Kent & East Sussex railway. This is a standard gauge heritage railway that runs for 10.5 miles from Tenterden in Kent to Bodiam in East Sussex; I regularly helped with steam locomotive maintenance and overhaul. It helped me to get my apprenticeship with Balfour Beatty.'

He worked on the upgrade of the East London Line from New Cross to Shoreditch and on track renewal on the London Underground. So, if you feel safe on the Tube, you know whom to thank!

To continue with his interest, on his days off, you might find Fr David manning an old-style gated level crossing or helping in the locomotive depot, both on the aforementioned Kent & East Sussex Railway. And he says that he may even put up his extensive 00 gauge model railway in the presbytery sometime soon!

When I asked Fr David the key question about his faith and vocation, he openly shared that, at the age of 14, 'it was like a light switch being turned on – I know that there is a God and that this encounter means that He is interested in me!'

To go deeper, he read a lot and at the age of 20, after his apprenticeship and qualification, he discerned that 'this priest thing is not going away'. He met with the Catholic vocations director, Fr Stephen Langridge, who challenged him with: 'So, what is stopping you?'

But Fr David waited to apply until he was on the road to obtaining a full degree. With the help of day release from work, Fr David topped up his HND to a BENG from Bangor University. Still, the pull from God did not go away and he told me that he would wake up asking himself: 'Why am I not a priest yet?'

So, in 2013, he applied for the priesthood and, after a rigorous selection process (don't ask!) and an interview with the archbishop, he was accepted.

Being Jesuit-educated myself, I asked if Fr David had considered Holy Orders. He said that he considered it briefly but could only picture himself as a diocesan priest.



Never one to hold back in an interview, I asked Fr David about his vow of celibacy. His reply was firm and considered: 'If I give my life to God, I know that He will fulfil me.' Moreover, his parents told the younger David: 'If joining the priesthood makes you happy, then we will support you.' Fr David is grateful for their ongoing support, especially providing somewhere for him to go on days off or holidays that isn't a workplace!

Apart from his interest in railways, Fr David played soccer at seminary. He played in the last Wonersh Seminarians' team, which beat their arch-rivals from Allen Hall, Chelsea. Regrettably in his final couple of years, the Wonersh team lost every game!

Welcome to our parish, Fr David, and we hope that you flourish!

** homiletics: applying rhetoric to the art of public speaking, especially preaching.*

Friday 27 September Fr Matthew's leaving party



There was a packed Lower Hall and much merriment for the farewell party held on Friday 27 September in honour of Fr Matthew Donnelly. After his first post-ordination position with us, Fr Matthew has now started at his new parish at St Mary's Church in Croydon.

Canon David's warm words summed it all up about the hard-working and very popular Fr Matthew: 'Like the famous Heineken advert, Fr Matthew reached the parts of our parish community that others had not, and, for this, we thank him!'

Thanks are due to everyone who helped with this wonderful and happy event, including Sarah, Thelma, Annette, and Giovanni, with apologies to those we have missed.

As a leaving gift, Canon David gave Fr Matthew a full-colour photobook of the church and its people, which he received with a wide grin.

The book contains magnificent exterior photographs and shows the seven altars and significant artistic features that adorn the inside of the church.

The page order follows the trail in Richard Milward's iconic *Portrait of a Church: The Sacred Heart Wimbledon 1887-1987*, and the photobook is supplemented with photographs of many of the performances and concerts that we are fortunate to have enjoyed over the years.

The donated book closes with the personalised message: 'Thanks to Fr Matthew, from all of your friends at the Sacred Heart.'

As the group photograph shows, there was dancing to live music and Fr Matthew showed us that he still has the moves!

Good luck and may you fare well in your new position, Fr Matthew!

Wednesday 4 September Licensing of Rev'd Alastair Newman



At an evening Mass on Wednesday 4 September, the Reverend Alastair Newman, formerly curate in the Wimbledon Anglican team, was licensed as the Team Vicar of St Matthew's Church, Durham Road, by the Right Reverend Dr Martin Gainsborough, Anglican Bishop of Kingston.

Alastair has represented St Matthew's at Churches Together in West Wimbledon since 2021. Representatives of all member churches were in attendance, including a number from our parish.

The service was followed by a reception in the hall attended by Alastair's spiritual director, Fr Michael Barnes SJ. This was a joyous occasion enjoyed by a mixture of parishioners of St Matthew's, ministerial colleagues, and Alastair's family, friends, and godparents.

All of us at the Sacred Heart wish Alastair well in his ongoing Anglican ministry in Wimbledon.

Saturday 28 September

A Day with Mary



Jesus wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.

—Our Lady of Fatima, 13 June 1917

On Saturday 28 September, an enthusiastic crowd of over 300 people gathered in our church to spend a day of instruction, devotion, and intercession with Mary, based on this message given at Fatima in 1917. There, in that Portuguese village, three shepherd children reported Marian apparitions at the Cova da Iria, which has ever since been a destination of faith and history, attracting millions of pilgrims every year.

An entrance procession placed the Marian statue on the Sanctuary, surrounded by flowers. Fr Jackson then celebrated Mass in honour of Our Lady with the Five Joyful Mysteries.

After the exposition and procession of the Blessed Sacrament, Fr Jackson and Fr David offered sermons on Our Lady, followed by silent Adoration and meditations on the Passion of Our Lord.

Fr David reflected: 'It was wonderful to see Sacred Heart so full of people come to adore the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and to venerate Our Lady.'



'Some, of course, were our own parishioners, but many travelled from further afield. Fr Jackson and I preached sermons about Our Lady and Canon David consecrated our parish to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Priests were kept busy in the confessionals and many prayers were said devoutly, including all the mysteries of the rosary.'

'Amid our busy world, having events like this, which are focussed on prayer and our lives of faith, are so important. Each of us has been given Our Lady as our Mother (John 19:26-27) and A Day With Mary is truly a 'mother's day' wherever it takes place. Being a loving son or daughter of Our Lady leads a person to become a better disciple of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Ave Maria!'

Please visit adaywithmary.org for further information on A Day with Mary.

Wednesday 11 September

An evening with Julian of Norwich

On Wednesday 11 September, the Newman Circle was delighted to welcome Fr Brendan Callaghan SJ to discuss *The Revelations of Divine Love*, a collection of mystic meditations by Julian of Norwich.

Dated to the closing decades of the 14th century, *The Revelations of Divine Love* are the oldest writings in the English language known with certainty to have been written by a woman. In two texts, Julian meditates on visions of Christ that she received while she was ill and thought to be on her deathbed. Most scholars date the visions to 1373.

Julian was an anchoress – though she may have entered her cell in St Julian's Church, Norwich, only after surviving her illness. Anchorites were hermits prevalent in medieval England; they lived in secluded cells, usually attached to a church, where they followed a life of contemplative and intercessory prayer. A famous anchoress lived near us in Shere; she left her cell in violation of her vows, but soon regretted it and asked the Pope to be readmitted!

Julian's times were dangerous and febrile: the Black Death had wiped out perhaps half of England's population, irreversibly changing its social and economic structures, while Lollardism challenged the Catholic faith. Julian's meditations reflect an author who has known deep suffering, and she regularly highlights her fidelity to the Church's teachings.

Though suffering is a central theme of *The Revelations of Divine Love*, I finished *The Short Text* feeling surprisingly comforted.

Aside from Julian's famous adage – 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well' – the theme of God as caring for us, even in a motherly way, resounds throughout her writing. I leave the final words to Julian:

- 'He made everything that is made for love; and the same love sustains everything, and shall do so forever... God is everything that is good, and the goodness that is in everything is in God.'
- 'For if I look solely at myself, I am really nothing; but as one of mankind in general, I am in oneness of love with all my fellow Christians; for upon this oneness of love depends the life of all who shall be saved; for God is all that is good, and God has made all that is made, and God loves all that he has made.'
- 'Ah, wretched sin! What are you? You are nothing. For I saw that God is all things: I saw nothing of you. And when I saw that God has made all things, I saw nothing of you; and when I saw that God is in all things, I saw nothing of you.'

Matteo Baccaglioni

The Newman Circle meets again at 7.30pm on Wednesday 23 October in the Lounge to watch 'The Letter: A Message for our Earth' (2022), a documentary film about the papal encyclical 'Laudato Si' (2015).

Sunday 6 October Sacred Heart Primary School Choir sings and speaks at the 10am Mass



Photographs by Tanya Bastian

Reflections of a school governor

At the end of last term, I was sad to attend my final meeting as a Governor of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School.

Both my daughters had been past pupils, so when I was asked in 2014 if I would consider a governor role, I was pleased to accept. Ms Julia Waters, at that time Executive Head of Sacred Heart as well as Ursuline High School, explained how the Governing Body supported the Head and staff in delivering the school's objectives, ultimately to all the children's benefit.

The role of a school governor can be described as a 'critical friend'. Governors not only advise on and approve policies on matters such as the curriculum, admissions, educational achievement, safeguarding, complaints, and ethos; they also oversee budgets, staffing, building maintenance, and health and safety.

The school was going through many changes and as a chartered surveyor, I chaired the Resources Committee, working closely with the School Business Manager. During my time, the school has installed new air conditioning, replaced the boiler, added new flooring and fire doors, and refitted the staff room.



The Head, Senior Leaders, Clerk, and the Governing Body meet regularly in term time, although the demands on time are not excessive. School visits are actively encouraged.

I can honestly state that being a governor of and supporting Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School has been a very worthwhile and satisfying experience. Our primary school is happy and thriving under the leadership of our Head, Ms Lorraine Dolan-Walsh, and the new Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors, Ms Sharna Quirke and Mr Patrick Brien.

If anyone is considering or has been suggested for a governor role, I would be pleased to elaborate on my experiences – in the first instance, please contact Ms Faye McGillian, Clerk to the Governors, and she can put you in touch with me.

Daniel Berrevoets

'Kiss Me, Kate'

Right from the opening number, the exuberant *Another Opening, Another Show*, the full house at the Edge Hill Players' opening night knew that they were in for a good evening in safe hands.

Always ambitious in her choice of musical from *Oklahoma* to *Anything Goes*, director Marie-Claire Lindsay presented Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate* as her latest show. This is the Tony Award-winning comic adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, which ran for over 1,000 performances in 1948 and 1949 on Broadway.

For the first time, the Edge Hill Players' local cast was strengthened by the addition of performers from the Lantern Arts Centre, another excellent amateur dramatic company in Raynes Park.

Choreographer Bonnie Rodger excelled with her more-than-capable dance troupe in the foot-tapping, show-stopping *Too Darn Hot*, which brought our audience to their feet with a standing ovation.



The double act of Martin Welsh and John Keefe performing the hilarious *Brush Up Your Shakespeare* has replaced Alan Nicholas and Joe Ruston, whose swaggering rendition of the Flanagan and Allen classic *Underneath the Arches* still stirs fond memories.

Musical director Bob Rathbone conducted a mainly professional group of musicians, whose instruments were amplified to fill the Upper Hall as if we were in the concert halls of central London. Who needs West End prices and big names from the telly when we have talent like this?

The only discomfort came from Porter's occasionally anachronistic and rather misogynistic lyrics, such as: 'Where the chain of command in family life requires a woman to be struck regularly – like a gong'. Please!

The next Edge Hill Players presentation will be *Dick Whittington and his Cat*, an original pantomime by Wendy Tansey and Terry Marsh, which will be on stage on Saturdays 1 and 8 February 2025.



Photographs by John Stone

Saturday 5 October Kong-Affonso Two-Piano Recital



Photograph by Alison Lobo

On Saturday 5 October, we hosted the return of the amazing Korean Tschong-Hie Kong and Alexis Affonso in a two-piano recital.

Kong and Affonso launched as a duo in 1983 at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam to a packed hall and enthusiastic reception. The same was true at the Sacred Heart, where we heard Witold Lutoslawski's *Variations on a Theme by Paganini*, Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances, Op.45*, Maurice Ravel's *La valse, poème chorégraphique pour orchestre*, and would you believe it, Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* – though this time, there were no riots!

Introduced by our Musical Director, Bob Rathbone, this was the fourth recital by the Kong-Affonso duo since 2011, when they inaugurated our beautiful Steinway concert grand, this time matched by a Yamaha.

With no charge on the door, donations were invited for Cancer Research UK and, once again, the audience was very generous.

ps. Giles Kennedy shared with me the great and scientific care which is taken to nurture the living wood in these two magnificent pianos. He has promised to elaborate on this topic for a future Edgeways...watch this space!

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! Contact the editor at dthurst52@gmail.com.

Therapeutic insights: practical marriage communication skills

Anthony Lee is our parish councillor and psychologist; he supports individuals dealing with a wide range of concerns. Here, Anthony describes a patient's journey to better marriage communication through therapy.

A 70-year-old man, married for 45 years, expressed this frustration to his therapist: 'Why? Why does my wife always yell, yell, yell?'

During the first session, he voiced several complaints about his wife: she urged him to seek therapy; she insisted that he say 'good night' every night; she accused him of being rude when he swore at her for yelling; she bought unnecessary items; she restricted him from the kitchen; and she overshared their problems with friends, including about the therapist.

When asked to describe his wife's positive traits, he hesitated. The man eventually mentioned her qualities as a friendly house manager and responsible person – noting that these were essential qualities for a housewife, but nothing particularly special in his view.

The therapist introduced a metaphor to help him reconsider his perspective. He was asked to imagine carrying two bags: one on his front containing his wife's negative traits, and one on his back containing her positive traits. Upon reflection, this metaphor helped the man realise that he had been overly focussed on his wife's flaws. The therapist explained that by shifting his focus to her positive aspects, his feelings towards her would also change.

The man then wondered what strategies he might employ to respond to his wife's yelling without resorting to swearing. Over the next few sessions, he came up with his answer: taking deep breaths to relax and walking away, before returning to the conversation with a smile.

By the fifth session, he reported some progress: 'My wife calls me a 'good boy' when I say good night to her.'

He also shared insights from reading *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* (1992) by John Gray, which discusses differences between men and women in terms of emotional needs, communication styles, stress coping mechanisms, and love expression.

In the sixth session, he reflected on the progress he had made. He recognised the value of seeking counselling. He admitted that asking for professional help, especially as a man, requires courage, but that it was essential for resolving marital conflicts. He understood that acknowledging vulnerabilities is not a sign of weakness: resolving conflict begins by examining both the positive and negative aspects of a relationship.

For the next phase of therapy, he wished to further explore the differences between men and women and continue to improve his communication skills with his wife.

To book a free appointment with Anthony, please contact Thelma in the Parish Office on 020 8946 0305 or email wimbledon@rcaos.org.uk.

Memory Lane Club

The long-standing parish Memory Lane Club welcomes people living with dementia and their carers to a friendly meeting each Wednesday from 11.00am in the Lounge.

Different activities are arranged, including lavender bag-making, giant card bingo, and, of course, playing snooker on our full-sized table. All of this is followed by cups of tea, coffee, and homemade cakes.



'Hat-en-shun!'...stand by your cues...

Recently, the group welcomed 'Pielarks', a community singing group based in Kingston that practises and performs traditional English songs in harmony. They regularly perform for care homes and homes for the elderly, as well as making frequent appearances at the Memory Lane Club – and, boy, do they sound professional!

Here they are, in traditional costumes, entertaining their appreciative audience...



'Your Sacred Heart Flower Group needs you, petal!'

Our Parish Flower Group is made up entirely of volunteers, who give 2–3 hours a month to the group.

Many of our volunteers have given years of dedicated service to the parish, but we would welcome new members. No experience is needed, but we ask for a willingness to learn and to make a commitment to the group. This is a lovely way to volunteer just a few hours a month for the parish.

Many of us started with little or no experience, but over time have developed our flower-arranging skills with the support of our fellow volunteers.

Each week, a team of between three and five members comes together under the leadership of one of our group buyers to arrange the flowers for the following week. This is usually done on a Thursday afternoon or Friday morning, fitting around services and other activities taking place in the church.



We ask each member of the group to be flexible, to work as part of a team, and to help to share the workload throughout the whole week.

This can include collecting and sorting flowers before the flower arrangement, helping to supply greenery if possible, watering the arrangements during the week, and clearing at the end of the week.

Much planning is done to organise the rota across the year and it is important that all members are able to communicate well with both the buyers and other group members.

Patricia Turner

If you are interested and would like to find out more, please email Patricia at sacredheartflowers@outlook.com. Thank you.



Lise Cotte, soon-to-be centenarian

On the occasion of her 100th birthday on 14 November 2024, we are delighted to send our love and very best wishes from the parish community to Lise, who has been a parishioner of Sacred Heart for more than half a century.

Lise Cotte was born in Mauritius, a small island country in the Indian Ocean and, at the time of Lise's birth, part of the British Empire. One of ten children, five boys, and five girls – Lise was the ninth – she remembers a happy childhood with great affection: her mother busy, looking after all the children, making clothes for them, and ensuring that they got to school while her father worked as a furniture-maker.

As they grew up, some of the children decided to spread their wings, wishing to see a bigger world. A number of Lise's siblings moved to Australia, but Lise and her older sister, Suzanne, decided to come to England. They arrived in London in 1962 after a long sea voyage which called in at numerous ports along the way. She still remembers the impression that Marseille made on her: 'Wonderful, everyone spoke French!'

In England, they were met by a family friend who put them up for a couple of weeks and found them a room to rent. They had little money and couldn't speak the language but, undeterred, they enrolled for an evening class in 'English for Beginners'.

They made their way to the Labour Exchange, where they soon obtained jobs as machinists in the sewing room at Atkinson Morley Hospital – and so a move to Wimbledon. Lise spent many



happy hours working for the hospital service until retirement and remembers her colleagues with great affection.

As well as being sisters, Lise and Suzanne were very good friends to each other and to those they encountered. They worked hard in their early years in this country and also saved hard, which meant that they were able to progress from renting a single room to a self-contained single flat and finally, in 1975, to a two-bedroom flat, where Lise still lives independently.

As they became established, Lise and Suzanne were able to pursue their interest in travel. Lise says: 'We went to such a lot of places, but France was always my favourite because I spoke the language.'

Sadly, Suzanne died in early retirement – a huge blow for Lise.

After Suzanne's death, and especially as Lise progressively lost her sight, Lise's continuing independence has been greatly assisted by help with the household jobs from her loyal and caring friend, Sharon. 'I couldn't have managed without her – she has helped me so much and I am so grateful to her,' says Lise.

Mass with the Sacred Heart parish community was important to both Lise and Suzanne. In their younger years, they would also sometimes travel up to the Church of Notre Dame de France in Soho,

where they could celebrate Mass in their first language and meet and chat with fellow French-speakers.

As Lise became less mobile, the parish lifts to Mass became a boon, as was the parish's Friendship Group. Before the pandemic, she also valued being able to keep in touch with the parish by regularly attending and enjoying the afternoons of prayer and Mass followed by tea and chat organised by the Sisters of St Anne in Murray Road.

Lise is now housebound with little sight, but her happy, calm, uncomplaining, and quiet acceptance of her situation is an inspiration to those privileged to know her. Happy birthday, Lise!

Jenny Cairns

Holy Mass for Lise's birthday intentions will be offered on Monday 18 November.



'Grenfell Tower 2017' by Ben Okri

The parish's Friendship Group meets in the Lounge at 2.30pm on the first Friday of each month. The year always starts with a poetry reading hosted by Wendy Tansey. This year's poems were chosen and read by Wendy, Simon Potter, the former Head of English at Wimbledon College, and David Hurst.

As the Grenfell Report was published on the seventh anniversary of the tragedy just days before the gathering, David read a chilling poem by Ben Okri, extracted below. You can read the poem in full at benokri.co.uk/news/grenfell-tower-2017-poem-ben-okri/.

It was like a burnt matchbox in the sky.
It was black and long and burnt in the sky.
You saw it through the flowering stump of trees.
You saw it beyond the ochre spire of the church.
You saw it in the tears of those who survived.

You heard it in the voices loud in the streets.
You heard it in the cries in the air howling for justice.
You heard it in the pubs the streets the basements the digs.
You heard it in the wailing of women and the silent scream
Of orphans wandering the streets.

You saw it in your baby who couldn't sleep at night
Spooked by the ghosts that wander the area still trying
To escape the fires that came at them black and choking.
You saw it in your dreams of the dead asking if living
Had no meaning being poor in a land
Where the poor die in flames without warning.

You will breathe the air thick with grief
With women spontaneously weeping
And children wandering around stunned
And men secretly wiping a tear from the eye
And people unbelieving staring at this sinister form in the sky.

You will see the trees with their leaves green and clean
And will inhale the incense meant
To cleanse the air of unhappiness
You will see banks of flowers
And white paper walls sobbing with words
And candles burning for the blessing of the dead.



Natalie Oxford via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0)

You will see the true meaning of community
Food shared and stories told and volunteers everywhere
You will breathe the air of incinerators
Mixed with the essence of flower.
If you want to see how the poor die, come see Grenfell Tower.

Make sense of these figures if you will
For the spirit lives where truth cannot kill.
Ten million spent on the falsely clad
In a fire where hundreds lost all they had.

Five million pounds was offered in relief
Ought to make a nation alter its belief.
An image gives life and an image kills.
The heart reveals itself beyond political skills.

In this age of austerity
The poor die for others' prosperity.
Nurseries and libraries fade from the land.
A strange time is shaping on the strand.
A sword of fate hangs over the deafness of power.
See the tower – and let a new world-changing thought flower.



'Grenfell Tower remains' by ChiralJon via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Parish Diary

Sun 13 October	9.00am – 11.00am	Continental breakfast in the Lower Hall
Sun 13 October	Sunday Masses	Appeal for parish volunteers
Sat 19 October	11.00am – 4.00pm	Day of Retreat & Reflection in the Upper Hall
Sun 20 October	11.00am	Café after the Family Mass in the Lounge
Sat 26 October	9.30am – 4.30pm	Building a Better Marriage Day
Sun 27 October	11.00am	Café after the Family Mass in the Lounge
Thu 31 October	6.30pm	Young Adults' talk at St George's Cathedral
Sat 9 November	8.00pm	'Handel: Jephtha – A Dramatic Oratorio' in the church
Fri 15 November	8.00pm	Ronnie Scott's Jazz Players in the Upper Hall
Fri 22 November	8.00pm	'Purcell: The Fairy Queen' in the church



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

Tuesday 17th December 2024 – 7.45pm

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

Pre-concert rehearsal 6.30pm

REHEARSALS:

(Come to as many, or few, as you like!)

Mondays 4th, 11th, 25th Nov

2nd, 16th Dec

8.30 – 9.30pm

Sacred Heart School (Music Room), Burlington Road, New Malden, KT3 4ND

(plus 18th Nov – Sacred Heart Church)

**Familiar faces or first-timers?
Whatever your experience, join us to raise the roof together
– proving that music has the power to change lives.**

In aid of Rose's Gift and the Royal Marsden Hospital

**TO REGISTER PLEASE CONTACT:
katylees3009@gmail.com**

