

St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter

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May 2021

May is a joyful month when we celebrate the beauty of Spring, with its new growth of flowers and blossoming trees. In the church calendar we are still in Easter Season, celebrating the new life of resurrection. This May we have extra cause for celebration as some of the lockdown restrictions are starting to ease and there is the hope of full lifting of restrictions in late June – pandemic permitting. This is a month of hope, of new life, and new opportunities as we slowly emerge from darker, colder times. We are fortunate to be surrounded by beautiful countryside which will be at its best at this time of year.

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Psalm 46:10

Ashridge is blessed with an abundance of deer although I know many gardeners do not consider this to be a blessing. If you happen upon a herd of deer on your walk it can be an enchanting moment. There is a stillness required in looking at deer. They scare easily, but there is an atmosphere of gentleness and serenity that surrounds them. I recently enjoyed a peaceful moment on a walk, when I happened upon a small group of deer - what appeared to be a family, including a larger male with impressive antlers, a smaller adult who I assumed to be a doe, and five others, slightly smaller, who I interpreted to be teenage fawns. But that is perhaps more a reflection on my motherly mind than any knowledge of wildlife. Holding the gaze of the deer forced me to slow down, step out of the business of life for a moment, and stand in appreciation and respect for the beauty of nature. It is in moments of stillness that we are receptive to hearing God and feeling God's presence around us.

"..ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls."

Jeremiah 6:16b

A year ago, when we were in the peak of the first lockdown restrictions, I started walking a circular winding path in the woodlands as if in a prayer labyrinth. Labyrinths are ancient pathways found across the world, one of the most famous being in Chartres Cathedral. The winding paths help us to 'unwind', to let go and rest in God. Recently labyrinths have been created in churches, retreat centres, schools and cathedrals to offer spiritual space for prayer and reflection providing a stilling space in a busy world. A labyrinth is different from a maze. A maze is full of dead-ends and designed to get you lost. A labyrinth has only one path that always leads to the centre... to God.

Whether we are able to go outside for country walks or just enjoy the natural world from a window, may we encounter God through the beauty of His created world. Let us learn to tread gently on this planet, treasuring it as a precious inheritance to pass on to future generations.

Revd Miranda Seldon



Phakamisa Update

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Phakamisa Board have appointed Zethu Kuzwayo as the new Director with effect from the beginning of February. I met face to face with all the staff yesterday morning and made the announcement.



Zethu has impressed during these last months. She is a strong character and has the support of the staff. There are gaps but we're confident she has the ability, willingness and enthusiasm to learn, and will grow into the position in the months to come.

Notwithstanding all the setbacks and obstacles, we ended the year in a really positive position. The courses were completed, and through prudent financial management and savings achieved (especially with the vacant Director position), Phakamisa ended the year with a small surplus – the first for many years. It's an achievement for which we give thanks to God and to all our many supporters and donors.

Neil Purdon – Chairperson Phakamisa South Africa.

I'm sure you will join me in praying for Zethu (and the team) as she enters into this challenging role and seeks to lead Phakamisa through the next phase. Zethu was Thokozani's assistant for the past 6 years and it has been great to see how well Thokozani had helped in the training and nurturing of Zethu as she stepped in to lead Phakamisa for the last 6 months following the sad passing of Thokozani. I have met her on skype and she is indeed a lovely, enthusiastic and humble person who has a burning desire to serve God at Phakamisa.

Marilyn Pain

PHAKAMISA is pronounced pa-ga-mee-sa, a Zulu word meaning 'to uplift'.

Editor's Note: Phakamisa is one of the charities supported by St Mary's Church.



Praying with a Finger Labyrinth

In her article on page 1, Miranda mentioned her circular winding path in the woodlands. You can pray without having to go outside by using a finger labyrinth.

Sit comfortably and trace the labyrinth path with a finger, letting your thoughts come to the surface. You are never alone, Jesus is always with you.

When you reach the centre, stay for a while and spend some time in prayer and reflection.

Return along the path prayerfully and as you exit the labyrinth, give thanks and praise to God.

Farewell to Jenny

This article is the text of a tribute made to Jenny Hoare, the Church Organist and Choirmaster for many years, on the day she retired from her post.

Jenny may be out of sight of the congregation most of the time, but she is not out of mind and certainly not out of earshot!

Jenny has been with us for so long I have forgotten when she joined St Mary's but for many reasons she quickly became a cornerstone of the worship.

Apart from Jenny's panache and accomplished organ playing , her infectious enthusiasm is what has contributed so much to St Mary's community life. I have never seen Jenny miffed or sulky, though there must have been times when such emotions would have been justified. She is always perky and excited about the musical life of the church and this has enhanced the services for us all. But not just the services. Jenny's enterprise and 'can-do' attitude has resulted in wonderful concerts by visiting organists and international choirs, which have been greatly enjoyed.

Jenny is very passionate about what she does, and her love for St Mary's organ is clear. She has nurtured it and coaxed it through difficult times , she knows how to get the best out of it , and if she very occasionally pulls the wrong organ stop it is probably an intentional ploy to startle me when I look to be nodding off.

Jenny's inventiveness was on display in the wonderful hymnathon she organised to raise funds for the organ repairs. It raised our knowledge and appreciation of hymns old and new to a new level.

Jenny has brought new members to our choir, and her personality has provided the glue which holds it harmoniously together. She notices when a choir member needs encouragement, and she nurtures and reassures them accordingly. She cares.

Jenny - you will be a tough act to follow. We will greatly miss you.

Andrew Dobbie 11th April 2021

Children's Society Collection Boxes

For many years there has been a faithful group of supporters who have had a Children's Society Collection Box which we have collected in around Christmas time and sent off. Times have changed! Covid made collection difficult and we could not do this in 2020.

With restrictions slowly lifting we ask that if you still have a box, please contact Charlotte and Gareth on 866141 to arrange for us to collect it from you; we would like to complete this by 16th May.

We hope that you may be able to continue to support the Children's Society. Donations in future can be made through its website

www.childrenssociety.org/uk

or by telephoning its Support Care on 0300 303 7000.

Thank you so much for all that has been contributed over the past years. It has been much appreciated.

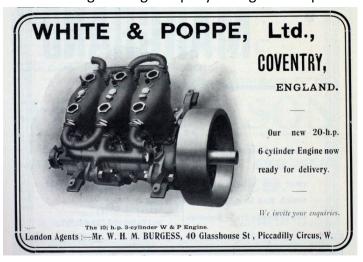
Charlotte and Gareth Pritchard



Who Would Live in a House Like This?

Woodcock Hill - Part 4

In 1925, Woodcock Hill was purchased by Alfred James White. White owned the engine and gearbox manufacturing company White & Poppe Ltd which had its base in Coventry. The company also manufactured motorcycles. The son of a watchmaker, Alfred White was born in Coventry in 1870 and trained as an engineer. Whilst working as the works manager at the Austrian National Small Arms factory at Steyr in 1897 White met designer, Peter Poppe, a Norwegian who was the same age as him, and they soon became friends. It was White who suggested that Poppe move to Coventry with his family, and in 1899 they set up the new engineering company. Using their experience



gained from the manufacture of small arms White & Poppe pioneered the interchangeability of automotive engine parts and produced their first motor bike engine in 1903. Three years later, they became the preferred engine supplied to Dennis Brothers and soon developed a larger clientele base, including vehicle producers Morris and Ariel.

During the First World War, the company manufactured small arms and munitions for the British army as well as continuing to develop their own vehicle engines. In 1917, White & Poppe Ltd was given the royal seal of approval when their factory was visited by Queen Mary, her party arriving in seven White & Poppe powered Siddeley Deasy cars. By 1918 the company was employing 12,000 employees.

Following the end of the war, and the subsequent economic recession, Dennis Brothers purchased White and Poppe in a share exchange worth £204,365. In

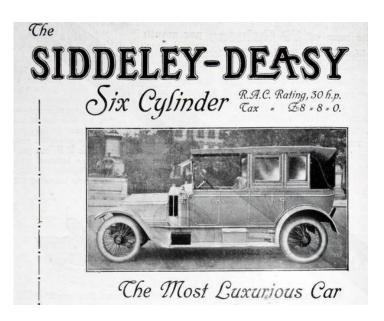
1919, White was offered a knighthood, but turned the offer down as Peter Poppe, being a Norwegian national, was not eligible for the honour. White remained at Dennis Brothers until 1922 when, having sold his shares in the company, he joined Rover as their Chief Engineer. It was through the sale of his shares in Dennis Brothers that White raised the necessary funds to purchase Woodcock Hill.

Alfred White died in October 1939, leaving an estate of £188,224. Three years later, his widow, Marie, sold Woodcock Hill to the Carmelite nuns.

As a result of the sale Woodcock Hill underwent several major internal changes including the conversion of the large drawing room into a Chapel. Spending much of their day in silence and contemplative prayer, the new Chapel formed the centre-point of the nun's daily life. The nuns were to remain at Woodcock Hill until 1951 when they moved to Presteigne in Wales. With their departure Woodcock Hill was converted into three private residences. The house was last on the market in 2017 for £1,650,000.

https://www.fineandcountryberkhamsted.com/property/berkhamsted/woodcock-hill/p646.html .

Richard North



PARISH PANTRY @ St Mary's



Food needs for May

The following items are in short supply as we meet the needs of our community through May.

Can you help, please?

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Tuna fish
Cereals
Tinned meats/pies
Tinned vegetables
Tinned fruit
Tinned/packet soup
Tinned custard
Stock pots/cubes
Tinned Rice Pudding
Coffee
Pasta sauces

The donation box can be found on the table just inside the side door of the church.

The Coronavirus has changed our country and our church in ways we could have never anticipated.

The Church of England, being present in every community, is well placed to lead and co-ordinate efforts to help those who find themselves in need.

2021 will be a time of adaptation and innovation for the church and we all need to be part of it.

The Parish Pantry

St Mary's Church runs one of the Northchurch Community Pantry venues and is open daily for donations or if you need help.

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If you are interested in offering a hound a loving forever home, all the relevant information and an application form can be found on our website. Viewings are now by appointment only.

Appledown Rescue & Rehoming Kennels, Harling Road, Eaton Bray, Beds LU6 1QY 01525 220383 (10am-1pm & 2-4 pm) e-mail: appledown.kennels@btinternet.com

Website: www.appledownrescue.co.uk

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram!

Hello from everyone at St Mary's Northchurch and we do hope that everyone is safe and well. Please do remember that we are here to help and support our community. If you or anyone you know is experiencing difficulties during this time, please do get in touch. St Mary's Church runs one of the Northchurch Community Pantry venues and is open daily for donations or if you need help.

- Our Sunday morning service is at 10am every Sunday morning.
- Every evening at 10pm, we have a short Night Prayer (Compline) service on Facebook.

Look at our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/stmarynorthchurch for these services and for more information.



Contacts for the Newsletter: Currently we are only able to publish online.

Editorial by email to the Editor, Jill Hipson Jill.hipson@live.co.uk. Copy date is 25th of each month.



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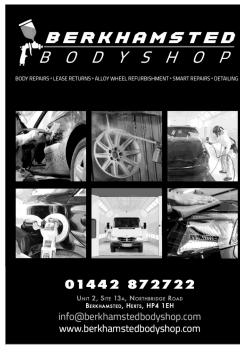
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A candle prayer

God. Wherever you are, I have no words to pray. I am in the darkness, Aching, Lost, In pain.

As I light my candle, I reach out to you, For my family and friends, For the world around me, For myself. Give me strength To face another day. Shine your light into my dark places And help me to know I am not alone.

Amen

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