

AUTUMN 26

# PARISHMATTERS

ST MARY'S  
CHURCH  
MERTON



# FAMILY LOSES £630,000 TO INHERITANCE TAX

## Mother fails to take advice.

I remember being in a room after a mother's death, witnessing a family overwhelmed by the Inheritance Tax they had to pay. Beneficiaries paid over £9 billion in Inheritance Tax in the last year and this continues to soar. It's going to affect you.



## Advice is needed and needed now. Ignorance isn't always bliss.

Supportive Financial Planning is here to help, with highly qualified advice that works, so your children inherit more.

## Actions to take now

- **Update your Will:** Is your will as flexible and tax-efficient as it could be? Chances are, it isn't.
- **Review your Pensions:** Who are the beneficiaries? Problems with Probate and Inheritance Tax?
- **Trusts & Lifetime Tax Planning:** Controlling who, when, and how your money is inherited is just as important as how you invest it.
- **Review Tax Efficiency of Investments:** Have you considered both income and Inheritance Tax?
- **Multiple Properties:** How should they be structured and sign-posted for future changes?
- **Secure your spot now with a free consultation.**

**Call us on 0345 257 8494 or 07762 528 922**  
**Email: [cliveperks@supportivefp.co.uk](mailto:cliveperks@supportivefp.co.uk)**  
**Visit: [www.supportivefp.co.uk](http://www.supportivefp.co.uk)**



# PARISH MATTERS

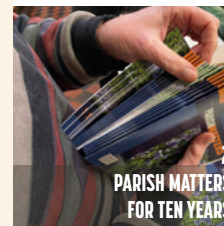
AUTUMN 26

During this year's ferociously hot and dry summer, the green (or temporarily brown) spaces around St Mary's Church provided a haven of shade and tranquillity, not just for us humans, but also for a surprising variety of wildlife, as we read on page 8.

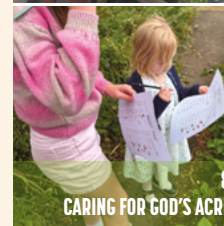
In this issue we also mark the tenth birthday of Parish Matters by delving back into the history of parish magazines in Merton (page 2). Looking to the future, as they move on to new challenges beyond Merton, we also have contributions from two of our young people, reflecting on their time at Rutlish School (page 13) and in St Mary's Choir (page 16). We profile Chris Abbott, local theatre expert, whose latest book has just been published (page 19).

We are pleased to add to our regular features – a look at another of the church's stained glass windows (page 21) and a walk suggestion (page 23) – a new column from the Vicar (page 6). Finally, St Mary's is now on Instagram: sign up details are on page 28.

Simon Hillson, Editor



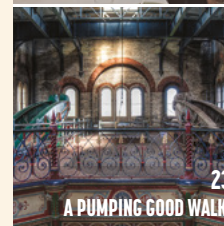
2  
PARISH MATTERS  
FOR TEN YEARS



8  
CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE



15  
FELLOWSHIP AND  
SUNDAY LUNCH



23  
A PUMPING GOOD WALK!



26  
PARISH TOGETHER

St Mary's Church is open daily 9am–4pm and Sundays 7.30am–7.30pm

Vicar: The Revd Ali Milne. [vicar@stmarysmerton.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmarysmerton.org.uk)

Parish Office: 020 8542 1760

[office@stmarysmerton.org.uk](mailto:office@stmarysmerton.org.uk)

Parish Hall Bookings: Laura Crosby 020 8543 4777

[bookthehall@stmarysmerton.org.uk](mailto:bookthehall@stmarysmerton.org.uk)

Editorial: [office@stmarysmerton.org.uk](mailto:office@stmarysmerton.org.uk)

Advertising: [debraswsavvy@gmail.com](mailto:debraswsavvy@gmail.com)

St Mary's Church Merton, Church Path, Merton Park, London SW19 3HJ  
[www.stmarysmerton.org.uk](http://www.stmarysmerton.org.uk) Registered Charity Number 1134108

# Parish Matters is ten years old ... but its roots are so much older

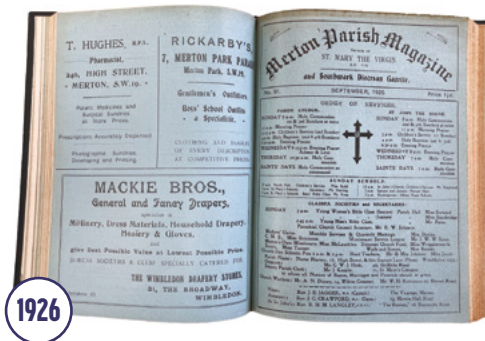
**‘Parish Matters’ has been landing on your doormats for a decade. Richard Price discovers the history of St Mary’s parish magazines and reviews the last ten years.**

This edition marks the tenth anniversary of the quarterly magazine *Parish Matters*, the successor to *St Mary’s Parish Magazine* which dates back to 1888. In that year the Vicar, the Revd E A Kempson initiated a three page monthly magazine, called *The Merton Church Monthly*. Its aims and objectives were not so dissimilar to those of *Parish Matters* when it was launched, except that the circulation 138 years ago was just to members of the regular church congregation whereas *Parish Matters*, thanks to an army of volunteers, is distributed to all 3,000 homes in the parish. In his introductory editorial in 1888 the Vicar explained that the magazine would cover short biographies, ‘a useful and well written story’, Temperance and Missionary News and articles on cooking and gardening.

He also acknowledged the contribution that advertising could make to the success of the magazine, and adverts appeared in the first issue from the local family butcher, dairy, fishmonger, stationers and the local registry for servants.

By the start of the twentieth century the magazine was well-established and had expanded the number of pages to include a monthly calendar of events and lists of marriages, baptisms and deaths.

In the 1920s the magazine was absorbed within the *Southwark Diocesan Gazette* but by the time of the Second World War it had become an independent publication again and was called *St Mary’s Parish Magazine*, with a black and white photograph of the church on the front cover.



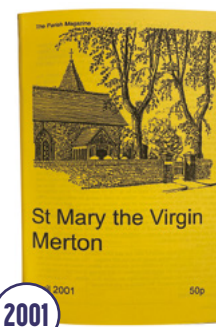
1926



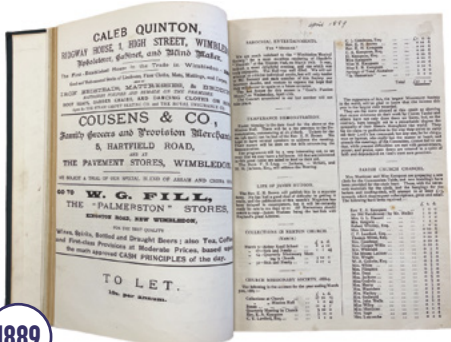
1940



1994



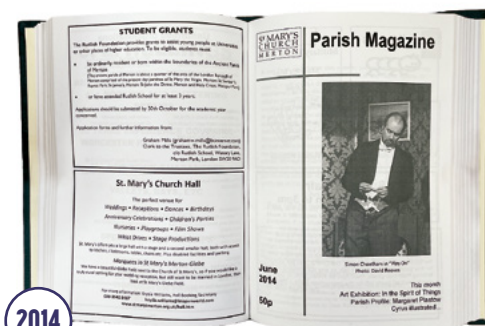
2001



1889



1905



2014

In the 1950s longer articles started to be published and the ‘Vicar’s letter’ became a staple feature. This tradition continued for the next 60 years, and has been recently revived by our new Vicar, the Revd Ali Milne. In the 1980s the magazine changed its name to *Crossing* but by the turn of the 21st century it had become *The Parish Magazine* once again. Crosswords and some humour lightened the tone, with amusing anecdotes, articles from a cat and a range of cartoons.

However, production of a predominantly black and white magazine each month was becoming a challenge for the editor: it was time-consuming, and the format was not very attractive for local advertisers, whose financial contribution was limited. A charge was made to those who received the magazine – 1d in 1888 and 50p in the 2000s, and collecting subscriptions was another difficult task.

It was time for a rethink. Led by local designer Amanda Berry, a small editorial team, with a grant from the Parochial Church Council and professional advertising support, set out to produce a quarterly magazine in full colour which would be paid for by local advertisers and distributed to every home in the parish. The aim was to become self-financing, and over the last decade this has been achieved. The magazine has twin objectives. It seeks to explain and inform about the activities of St Mary’s, celebrating the major festivals of the Church’s year and highlighting key services and events in the church and the Parish Hall. It also provides information about local charities, businesses and community projects and about local historical figures. The Victorian founder would no doubt have been pleased that we have continued his tradition of providing articles about cooking.

Looking back over 40 editions of *Parish Matters*, we can see the significant part played in British history by Merton Park

## QUALITY CARE ACROSS WIMBLEDON AND SOUTH WEST LONDON



WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOME  
EXTRA HELP AT HOME OR FULL TIME LIVE-  
IN CARE, WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

Contact us today on 0208 176 6989 or email  
[wk@goodoakshomecare.co.uk](mailto:wk@goodoakshomecare.co.uk)

through people who lived here or are buried in the graveyard and have become well-known names over the centuries. During the last decade we have published articles about Merton Priory and the Statute of Merton 1235, the tombs of Sir Gregory Lovell and Admiral Sir Isaac Smith, about Lord Nelson (whose hatchment and pew are in the church) and Lady Hamilton, William Rutlish, John Innes, the architects Henry Quatermain and John Sydney Brocklesby, Doris Lackington and Rose Yates, the Merton Park suffragette. We have also reviewed the development of the parish through the arrival of the railways and later the Northern Line, and places well-known nationally but long gone from our area, such as the John Innes Horticultural Institute (now in Norwich) and the Merton Park Film Studios.

St Mary's celebrated its 900th anniversary just before Parish Matters was launched and several articles have appeared about aspects of the history of the church, such as the roof, the stained glass windows and the historic bells. Each edition has provided information about 'what's on' in the church, from regular Sunday services to special festivals and other events, plus articles giving insight into the meaning of seasons such as Lent, Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

Music plays an important part in the life of St Mary's. The 'Music Matters' column includes

news about the music team, the choristers and the choir, and the Occasional Singers, as well as the various concerts that take place in the church.

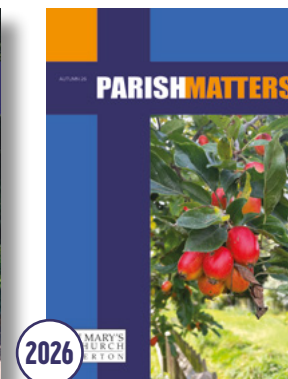
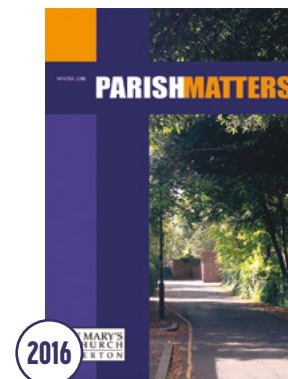
The Parish Hall, recently renovated, is in constant use and so Parish Matters has reported on the classes and other groups which use the hall, including the cubs, brownies and scouts, the Parish Players, the regular fellowship lunches, the Wednesday Club and various study groups.

Feature articles about charities supported by the church have covered Faith In Action, the Spires Homelessness Project, Mercy Ships, the Children's Society, Save the Children and Christian Care. Concern for the environment has been reflected in articles about the Glebe Field, trees in the churchyard, bats and bees near the church, 'Sustainable Merton' and 'Abundance Wimbledon' and the parish's commitment to the 'Eco-Church' project.

Looking toward the wider community, we have had contributions about the Nelson Medical Practice, local tennis clubs, restaurants, hairdressers, florists, coffee shops and wine bars, and trades ranging from tree surgery to pest control. Encouragingly, feedback indicates that local businesses appreciate the opportunity of becoming better known through the

magazine's editorial content and advertising.

So it seems that Parish Matters has found a successful formula, providing a link between St Mary's church and the wider community of the parish. Looking forward, we hope that the tried and tested topics that have made the magazine popular to date can be integrated with new ideas to ensure that it continues to have a long life.





## Vicar's Reflection

As Parish Matters marks its tenth anniversary, we are thankful for the quiet faithfulness that has gone into it: the gathering of stories, the sharing of news, the celebration of local lives, and the steady weaving together of our parish community.

In recent issues, the reflections on St Mary's stained-glass windows have reminded us that life often begins with learning how to look.

A church window may be admired for its colour, craft, and history. Yet its deeper purpose is to draw the eye beyond itself, to see those lives portrayed within the glass being brought back to life every dawn, their colours shown anew by that light which lies beyond. George Herbert, priest and poet, says this beautifully in *The Elixir*:

"A man that looks on glass, On it may stay his eye;

Or if he pleaseth, through it pass, And then the heav'n espy."

That feels a fitting thought for September. As familiar routines begin again, we may see only meetings, school terms, appointments, errands, and notices. Or we can look through them, and notice signs of grace: kindness, patience, service, beauty, prayer.

Perhaps that is true of our new social media presence too! Even a screen, used well, may become a kind of window through which light can pass.

Revd Ali Milne

SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
NOVEMBER

WHAT'S ON

AUTUMN 26

**Regular church services**  
see page 28

**Sunday Club**  
see page 28

**Children First Eucharist**  
see page 28

**Parish Matters is distributed to 3250 homes in the parish of St Mary's, Merton, thanks to a goodly number of volunteer deliverers.**

**A different member of the editorial team edits each issue. We welcome your feedback.**

**Winter issue copy deadline: 9 October**

**Editorial**  
office@stmarysmerton.org.uk

**Advertising**  
debraswsavvy@gmail.com

**Design**  
amanda@fourberrys.co.uk

**Proofreading**  
Adrian Berry

**Photography**  
Tim Milner,  
Adrian Berry

**Delivery coordinators**  
John and Judy Sargeant

**Print**  
Impress Print

**Patronal Festival.** Sung Eucharist

Sunday 6 September 9.30am, followed by refreshments in Vicarage garden (weather permitting).

**Parish Players 70th Anniversary Pantomime 'Sleeping Beauty' (January 2027)**

Read-through, 8 Sept 7.45pm; auditions 15 Sept 7.45pm; rehearsals every Tuesday from 22 Sept – Parish Hall.

**Fellowship Lunches**

Sundays 13 September, 1 November, 29 November. Noon for 12.30pm. Tickets £6. Book at 020 8543 3764.

**Harvest Festival.** 'Children First' Eucharist

Sunday 20 September 10am.

Harvest Lunch 12 noon in the Parish Hall.

**The History of Church Bells and Bellringing**

Short illustrated talk by Milica Reardon of Surrey Association of Church Bellringers, and demonstration on the St Mary's bells. Monday 28 September 7.30pm in St Mary's Church. Free entry. Joint event with John Innes Society.

**Sunday walks from the church**

Sundays 27 September, 18 October, 22 November 10.40am. Short walks up to six miles involving public transport. For details see the weekly pew sheet in church.

**Dedication Festival.** Sung Eucharist, Sunday 4 October 9.30am.

**Concert with Hannah Dienes-Williams (soprano) and Gregory May (piano) in the church**

Saturday 24 October 7.30pm. See page 17 for details.

**All Saints' Day.** Sung Eucharist, Sunday 1 November 9.30am.

**All Souls' Service.** Sunday 1 November 6.30pm.

**Remembrance Sunday.** Sung Eucharist

Sunday 8 November 10am.

**St Mary's Christmas Market.**

Saturday 5 December 11am – 2pm.

Cleanki/



House mice...  
Wasps in the wisteria  
Pigeons in the parlour  
Ants in the attic  
Squirrels in the shed  
Rats in the summerhouse  
Cockroaches in the cellar

Award-winning  
pest control services

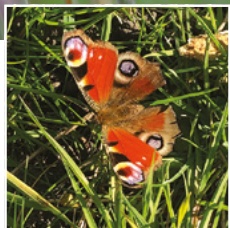
0800 056 5477  
info@cleankill.co.uk



cleankill.co.uk

# Caring for God's Acre

The Revd Judith Bersweden describes two recent surveys of wildlife in St Mary's churchyard.



St Mary's churchyard is one of over 25,000 burial grounds in the UK, and this is the second time we have submitted sightings to the Caring for God's Acre charity ([www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)) during its Count for Nature week in June. This helps to build up a national picture of the flora and fauna in cemeteries and graveyards across the country, and is the type of citizen science project which provides invaluable data over time about the health and biodiversity of our green spaces.

This year we contributed the results of two counts. On a sunny Sunday morning in early June, Sunday Club had a wonderful time

exploring the paths around the church and noting what they saw, which included worms and snails, bees and earwigs, nettles and herb robert, a spider and butterfly, a wren, magpie, blackbird and robin, a squirrel and a fox. A great variety of flora and fauna in a short space of time, and they eagerly shared their results with the rest of the congregation at the end of the morning service.

The following Thursday, on a grey, overcast afternoon after a wet morning, an additional six of us wandered around with ID apps at the ready, and with their help, recorded many more species of plants, but few birds and mammals. But we all gained from the

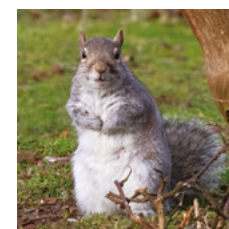
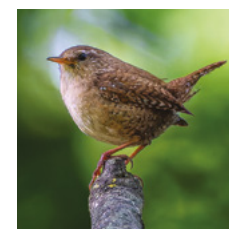
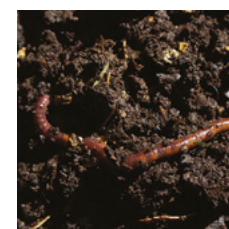
opportunity to slow down and look closely at what was around us. As a result, we've submitted a list (by no means exhaustive) of over 50 plants, including trees, bushes, grasses, and flowers. The names of the grasses are a poem in themselves: crested dogstail, Yorkshire fog, grassland sedge, field horsetail, wall barley, cocksfoot, annual meadow grass.

In addition, Nick Foxton (see his article in Parish Matters, Winter 2024 at [www.stmarysmerton.org.uk/magazine](http://www.stmarysmerton.org.uk/magazine)), conducted a bat survey on a warm evening about that same time. His equipment picked up their echolocation sounds in a number of places, although it's hard to determine whether this was from one persistent and fast-moving bat, or several individuals. The photo gives an indication of the routes travelled.

Also, one of the St Mary's chorister parents has kindly undertaken to keep an ongoing record of the birds he hears and sees whilst waiting for his daughter during choir practice! His list thus far stands at 26 species, including larger birds such as great spotted woodpecker, herring gull and sparrowhawk, as well as smaller ones like wren, goldcrest, and longtailed tit.

It is good that there is so much interest in this special place, which provides a calm and restoring environment for so many who pass through.

If you would like to learn more about how to help with the upkeep of this wonderful churchyard, contact the Parish Office – [office@stmarysmerton.org.uk](mailto:office@stmarysmerton.org.uk)/ 020 8542 1760 and your email or message will be forwarded. Merton Council has the responsibility for it as a whole, but the St Mary's Churchyard Working Party oversees its month by month care, and works to increase its biodiversity and attractiveness to the flora and fauna that know it as home.



Nick Foxton's bat survey indicating number of bat passes

## Gardens Galore!

One-to-one garden buddy to mentor and work alongside you

Specialist pruning of roses, wisteria and grapevines

Sonia on 07985 521578  
[soberding2016@gmail.com](mailto:soberding2016@gmail.com)

The Gardeners Guild • Public Liability Insurance

## Probate and Estate Planning Services

Helping you protect what matters most

### Efficient Assisted Probate

Practical support to help families manage the probate process following the loss of a loved one.

### Protective Family Trusts

Careful estate planning designed to protect your assets and help preserve wealth for future generations.

### Inheritance Tax Planning

Strategies designed to help reduce potential Inheritance Tax and preserve more of your wealth for your family.

TSP Wills and Estate Planning is a family owned business who has supported other families and individuals with Probate, Estate Planning and Financial Advice for decades.

To arrange a complimentary initial meeting - Speak to our team to understand your options and the steps you may wish to take.



rita@tsp-wealth.com  
tspwillsandestate.com  
0203 758 9980

**TSP**  
WILLS & ESTATE  
PLANNING



Scan the QR code  
to download your

**FREE ESSENTIAL  
GUIDE TO  
INHERITANCE TAX**



# Help secure the future of Faith in Action's Homeless Drop-in

**Bernie McAlister, Chair of Trustees**  
explains the current predicament  
of this important local project.

“The impact they have on the lives of homeless and vulnerably housed people in this borough is profound. I hold an immense sense of pride representing a constituency that is home to an organisation of this calibre, and I wholeheartedly encourage everyone to help secure its future.”  
**Paul Kohler, MP for Wimbledon**



Faith in Action Merton has run a Homeless Drop-in every Wednesday and Friday since 2002. We welcome around 60 homeless and vulnerably-housed people, providing hot drinks, breakfast and a healthy two-course cooked lunch, as well as access to hot showers, a laundry service, sleeping bags, clothing and food parcels. Working with our partners, we're able to change lives – helping people to find accommodation or employment, access benefits, open bank accounts, obtain ID documents or access health services.

Sadly, we have now been served notice to leave our current premises in South Wimbledon by April 2027. We therefore have less than a year to find and secure a new home for the project.

“It was directly because of Faith in Action that I've found my long-term home, and it's one that's beyond what I could have dreamed of. My life has changed, I can start buying back all the tools I lost whilst homeless, and think about going back to work and having a life again. My gratitude to Faith in Action is enormous and eternal, thank you!”  
**Trevor, former service user**

**We're inviting key stakeholders, partners and supporters** to a focused solutions meeting to help identify premises, funding opportunities and practical support. It will aim to generate solutions and form action groups to help secure the future of our Homeless Drop-in.

**Date:** Thursday 17 September 2026 at 7pm.

**Venue:** Council Chambers, London Borough of Merton, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

**Can you help?** We're particularly seeking individuals and organisations able to offer:

- Property, planning or development expertise
- Fundraising or grant-funding knowledge
- Legal, financial or governance support
- Links to landlords, businesses or property owners
- Influence within local or national government
- Practical resources or services

If you have expertise, contacts, resources or practical assistance to offer, we'd be delighted to hear from you. To find out more, and to attend the meeting, please email us at [team@mertonfaithinaction.org](mailto:team@mertonfaithinaction.org)

**Together, we can ensure this vital service continues to support people experiencing homelessness in Merton.**

## A FRIENDLY, LOCAL FAMILY-RUN Building Service

### WYNNMAN SOLUTIONS LTD

|                         |                                        |                             |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Property<br>Maintenance | Plastering<br>Painting &<br>Decorating | Electrical<br>installations |
| Kitchen fitting         | Tiling                                 | PAT testing                 |
| Bathroom fitting        | Carpentry                              | Fencing                     |

PLEASE CALL US WITH ANY QUERIES

**07774 820 545**

or email [wynnmansolutions@gmail.com](mailto:wynnmansolutions@gmail.com)

15 Elm Walk, London SW20 9EF

FOR  
BOYS & GIRLS  
3 – 14 YEARS



# OCTOBER CAMP

MONDAY 26 OCTOBER  
TO FRIDAY 30 OCTOBER



1:8 COACH/  
PLAYER RATIO

## TIMETABLE

### Main Camp (Year 1 to Year 9)

#### Full day sessions only

|                |            |         |
|----------------|------------|---------|
| Full day       | 9am-3.30pm | £58.50  |
| Full week      | 9am-3.30pm | £263.25 |
| Early drop off | 8-9am      | £8      |
| Late stay      | 3.30-5pm   | £12     |

### Tots Tennis Camp (ages 3 & 4)

For players in nursery & reception

8.15 – 9am £13 / day

£55 for a 5 day week

Learn new  
skills & make  
new friends

Spaces are limited so, to avoid disappointment, please  
book early and online: [booking.wiltontennisclub.co.uk](https://booking.wiltontennisclub.co.uk)  
[coachingadmin@wiltontennisclub.co.uk](mailto:coachingadmin@wiltontennisclub.co.uk) 07877 571349

Coaching at Wilton Tennis Club is contracted to 'Wilton Coaching Ltd.'  
All lead coaches hold a LTA/PTR qualification and are first aid trained. All staff over 16 are DBS checked.

28 WILTON GROVE · WIMBLEDON · LONDON · SW19 3QX · [WWW.WILTONTENNISCLUB.CO.UK](https://WWW.WILTONTENNISCLUB.CO.UK)

## Reflections of a Rutlish student

A resident of Merton Park all his life and a chorister in St Mary's Choir since the age of eight, Matthew Hopkins looks back on his time at our local boys high school.

### Why did you decide Rutlish was the right place for you after primary school?

First and foremost it was local, just a short walk from home, but my parents and I were impressed with its educational reputation, and I felt completely at home when we visited the Rutlish Open Day. It is quite a big school – I joined an eight-form entry – but it has never seemed overwhelming.

### How were you impacted by the pandemic?

The first lock-down began during my first year (year 7) when I was still making new friends, so that was quite difficult. I had old friends from Poplar Primary there, but new friendships definitely suffered. It wasn't until years 8 and 9 that wider friendships were able to develop.

### How did being a choir member at St Mary's help during the pandemic?

It helped a lot, as Helen Smee (then Director of Music) arranged regular Friday evening rehearsals and socialising time for all the choristers via Zoom, and I was able to maintain online music theory, piano and vocal lessons. We were also later able to return to singing services, although still maintaining social distancing, which was a bit weird!

### How would you describe your time in 6th Form, especially the link with Ricards Lodge Girls High School?

I've really enjoyed it. The walk to Rutlish is still a great advantage, but even the 30-minute walk to Ricards is enjoyable.

My 'A' levels have been Maths at Rutlish, and 3D Design and Physics at Ricards. I also completed the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) in year 12. As I'm hoping to study Motor Sport Engineering at uni, my project was on the future of fuelling cars, which was very interesting.

### How do you feel going to an all-boys high school has impacted on you socially?

I don't think it's been a problem, particularly as our 6th Form is shared with the girls at Ricards. I have also benefited from being a member of St Mary's Choir which has a mix of girl and boy choristers right up to age 18. And there's a lot to be said for having school friends within walking distance!

### What else has Rutlish offered during your seven years there?

The school has a relationship with the All-England Club, so I was able to apply, and be selected, to be a Wimbledon ballboy in 2023 and 2024 which was a fantastic experience. I was part of the sports leadership team in year 10, helping the younger years with their sports lessons and extracurricular activities as well as joining the Rutlish Junior Leadership Team in year 11. One of the projects I got involved with was the 'First Give' charity initiative. My team chose Dons Local Action Group to champion, which we had to pitch against other teams' chosen charities. Although we didn't win, it was a really good experience.



**GREENFINCH**  
Plumbing & Heating

- Boiler installation, service, repair
- Gas safety inspections
- Underfloor heating
- Powerflushing
- Heat pumps
- Fully insured, work guaranteed
- Free quotations on request



**07950 144 976**  
info@greenfinchheating.co.uk  
greenfinchheating.co.uk



**Green Man Gardening Services**  
Experienced Gardener - References can be supplied  
Lawns tamed, borders weeded  
General Garden Maintenance

Call Steve on  
07831 857 052  
Email green38a@gmail.com



Public Liability Insurance

**HIRE THE VALE CLUBHOUSE**

Looking for a venue in Raynes Park?

Parties & Celebrations • Fully Licensed Bar  
Community Groups & Meetings • Accessible  
Free Parking

Prince George's Playing Fields, Grand Drive, SW20 9DZ  
For bookings contact Danny at events@rpvc.com



**Beddington**  
Insurance Services Wimbledon

**If you can insure it, we can cover it**

Commercial • Residential • Tradesman's Liability • Professional Indemnity  
Travel • Retail • Shop • Surgeries • Offices • Restaurants • Wine Bars  
Hotels • Taxi • Commercial Vehicles • Fleet • Agricultural

**Independent, family run business, established in 1975**  
One-to-one personal service  
Always someone at the end of the phone  
Highly competitive and able to price match

**Telephone 020 8543 5181**




157A Hartfield Road, Wimbledon SW19 3TJ info@beddingtoninsurance.co.uk www.beddingtoninsurance.co.uk

## At St Mary's, fellowship meets Sunday lunch!

Graham McCubbin introduces one of your local parish church's outreach projects.



**A**t St Mary's, we each live out our Christian faith in our own ways, and one of the most important to me is the idea of service.

The idea for our Fellowship Lunches was unashamedly stolen from my sister who has been involved in a fortnightly lunch at Martin Way Methodist Church for many years.

The personal experience of some very dear friends suggested that many people on their own can find Sundays a very lonely day, so the idea of a Sunday roast in the company of others seemed like a good idea. Initially with a team of eight of us, we offered lunch about four times a year, but now the team has grown to 16 who provide lunch every two months. In rotation, six people from the team cook and serve the lunch and, after washing up, repair to another team member's house to have lunch together. Fellowship is thereby both offered and received!

**"Fellowship Lunch is the perfect opportunity to enjoy a superb lunch and the fellowship that comes with it, including the opportunity to sit with new or different people each time."** Brenda Richards

You do not have to be on your own to join us, nor be attenders at St Mary's. A friend of mine once said (adapting words of Archbishop William Temple) that the Church of England is a strange club in that it exists as much for its non-members as for its members!

Indeed, I believe that one of the strengths of this community is that people who seldom attend a service can be relied upon to support us, for example at the Summer Fair or Christmas Market. We have a group of residents of Andridge Court who join us regularly and attend as a social group in their own right.

We feed between 30 and 40 people but can stretch to 42 if given reasonable notice.

If you are one of our regulars, we're delighted to serve you. If you have never been, why not give us a go. Invite a friend for Sunday lunch then bring them along to us!

For £6 a head you get a glass of wine or soft drink on arrival, a good cooked lunch, a pudding and a cup of tea or coffee with an *After Eight* mint!

And even better, someone else does the washing up!

## Harvest Lunch

**Why not join us to celebrate Harvest with a simple Ploughman's lunch of bread, cheese, gammon and pickles?**

Sunday 20 Sept in St Mary's Parish Hall.  
12 noon. Tickets £8. £4 for secondary school age and free for those at primary school or younger (tickets are needed so we can assess quantities). There will be an honesty bar.

Tickets from Graham McCubbin.  
Email grahammccubbin1947@gmail.com  
or mobile 07990 927091.

**Please book by Sunday 13 September**

# Moving on from St Mary's Choir

**As she prepares to take up a choral scholarship at Southwark Cathedral in September, Chloe Ellam looks back on her years in St Mary's choir.**

I'm informed by Tristan's spreadsheet that I joined St Mary's Choir in March 2017, but it feels like I've been hanging out with my St Mary's friends since forever. I'm also told by people who can do mental maths better than me that therefore I joined the choir at age eight, so it's true: I've been in the choir community for over half my life.

I've grown under the guidance of Helen Smee and Tristan Weymes (and Hattie Burns and Ian Tindale), from a not-very-tuneful eight-year-old to the choir leadership team member I am today, always doing at least four things at once in a service - none of which are necessarily me paying attention to what I'm singing! I've been in the choir so long that I know most of the pieces by heart anyway. Thank you, Tristan, for introducing some new pieces in the last few years.

## St Mary's Merton Choir is looking for new recruits for a September start.

If you know of anyone aged 7-18, regardless of background or musical experience, who might be interested in joining, please contact Tristan at [dom@stmarysmertonchoir.com](mailto:dom@stmarysmertonchoir.com) to register interest. We're particularly looking to recruit boys into the choir, but all are welcome to join. We also offer a Music Theory and Musicianship Club on Wednesday afternoons after school, which is open to all in the community.



It's always entertaining to hear Ava complaining even though she's fully capable of singing them. Although I've grown in skills, unfortunately I haven't grown much in height.

Choir trips are some of my core memories. Singing a round in the Ely Cathedral Lady Chapel, a song about the London Underground at the Leith Hill Music Festival, doing Evensong at Westminster Abbey three times (still jealous I wasn't there that time Princess Catherine came)... The singing and the fun, like making a truly terrible iMovie on the way to Ely when we were about nine years old, will always stick with me and

make me smile. Bring on the Gloucester Cathedral tour!

I'm hugely excited that I will be a choral scholar at Southwark Cathedral next year, where Helen is now Director of Music! I can't think of anything better than getting to follow in her footsteps. Although I probably won't be able to

come back for Christmas this year (because, well, cathedral), I know I'll be back all the time when I can. I think a lot of St Mary's former choristers feel the same way - it's really special to know you can return to a community which will make you feel entirely at home, any time.

I'm going to really miss being part of St Mary's Choir. If I had a hard week at school I would always look forward to Friday evening's rehearsal to cheer me up - even during lockdown. The choir sticks together through thick and thin, and it's bittersweet leaving it now I'm grown up.

"Hannah Dienes-Williams' radiant soprano impresses... she brings much emotional involvement and intelligent communication of the text" - Opera Today

**The Life of Significant Soil**

Hannah Dienes-Williams *soprano*  
Gregory May *piano*

The first of a new concert series at St Mary's, featuring Thomas Adès' 'Five Eliot Landscapes', and songs by Sibelius, Respighi, Birtwistle, and Tansy Davies

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2026**  
7.30pm

St Mary the Virgin, Merton Park  
SW19 3HJ

£10 tickets, £8 concessions on the door

**GSB Wimbledon**

Contact: Glenn Smith

Email: [glennsmithpm@icloud.com](mailto:glennsmithpm@icloud.com)

**07768 113755**

**Property Refurbishment,  
Maintenance & Repairs**

**General Building**



"If you're searching for the true essence of Indian cuisine, Bombay Delight is your destination. Indulge in the rich, vibrant flavours of India, crafted to perfection—an experience not to be missed!

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK | 271-273 THE BROADWAY, Wimbledon, SW19 1SD  
+44 20 4568 6294 | [bombaydelight.co.uk](http://bombaydelight.co.uk)



## PARISH PEOPLE

# Chris Abbott

Richard Price talks to Chris Abbott about his interest in theatre and his new book.



After several years living in Raynes Park and coming to St Mary's, Chris and his wife Hazel moved to Merton Park in 2002. Chris has been involved in amateur theatre since leaving school in Salisbury and so it is not surprising that he has played key roles for more than 20 years with Parish Players, both acting in various plays and directing several productions.

To mark the 70th anniversary of Parish Players Chris will be directing the next annual pantomime 'Sleeping Beauty', which was also the title of the first pantomime put on by Parish Players.

Chris's interest in popular performances and children's theatre has led him to review theatrical productions all over the country. After 22 years teaching children with special needs and then almost 20 years working in the Department of Education at King's College London on assisted technology for special needs, in retirement Chris has been able to devote more time to the theatre. He has published several books including titles about repertory pantomime and about the last traditional touring puppet company.

His latest book, **The Salisbury Comedians**, has just been published (see box) and is available directly from the publisher, Hobnob Press <https://tinyurl.com/5n6zmpyd> or can be ordered at bookshops.

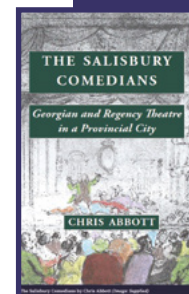
Chris's writing skills made him the obvious candidate to take on editing and producing the monthly Parish Magazine. He was the last editor of that publication, introducing some colour to the traditional black and white printed booklet and he was instrumental in advocating the change to a full colour quarterly magazine which became Parish Matters.

Thanks are due to Chris and Hazel for collecting together all past issues of the Parish Magazine dating back to 1888 and funding the production of bound volumes so that they are easily accessible for anyone to view. They are now held in a bookcase in the Parish Hall and can be seen by appointment via the Parish Administrator.

## The Salisbury Comedians: Georgian and Regency Theatre in a Provincial City by Chris Abbott

The Salisbury Comedians were the main company of actors in the city. They and their successors were part of a great theatrical era in Salisbury which has been all but forgotten.

However, Salisbury was an important location on the theatrical touring circuit and many famous actors appeared there. Chris Abbott has brought this theatrical period to life so that it can be celebrated alongside later and current achievements.



**LANTERN**  
ARTS CENTRE  
Creativity & Community

A Shining Light in the Heart of Raynes Park



Acclaimed Theatre & Live Music  
Weekly Activities for Under 5s  
Children's Theatre Club & Youth Theatre  
Free Film Club  
Lantern Arts Choir

Lantern Youth Choir  
Costume Hire  
Room Hire  
Acting & Dance Classes  
The Hub well-being venue



WWW.LANTERNARTS.ORG

Judy

Wimbledon, Mitcham  
& Morden

bluebird  
care®

Making your  
mum feel *special*.  
And you.



We're here so your loved one can stay home, where they want to be. Where things are safe and familiar and they have the best chance to live a full and meaningful life.

Whether it's everyday companionship or everyday errands, 24 hour Live-in Care or 30 minute Home Care visits, our highly-trained Care Experts will give your loved one the support they need to live in the place they feel best: home.

See how we can support you.

It's good to  
*be home*

Call us for a friendly chat on

020 8088 3002 *Find out more*

Email

merton@  
bluebirdcare  
.co.uk



## The Abraham window

Simon Hillson invites us to look at the Burne-Jones window depicting the first of the Hebrew patriarchs.

Remaining in the south aisle of St Mary's Church amongst the Burne-Jones windows, we focus in this edition on the patriarch Abraham, who can be seen in red robes next to Moses in the first of the pair of windows at the west end of the aisle.

The narrative of Abraham's life takes up over a quarter of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, and includes some of the best known stories in the Old Testament: Abraham's journey from Mesopotamia to the land of Canaan; God's promise that his descendants will be as many as the stars in heaven, and the miraculous birth of Isaac to Sarah, Abraham's wife, in her old age; and, perhaps most famous of all, the testing of Abraham, when God commands him to sacrifice his son Isaac but at the last minute sends an angel to stay his hand.

While the internal biblical chronology suggests that these events occurred around the turn of the second and third millennia BCE, very few scholars today believe that the stories can be treated as historical narratives. They have their origin in oral traditions, which, while they may well contain memories of some early historical events, only began to take shape as written texts during the first millennium. They did not come into their present form until after the return of the Hebrew people from the exile in Babylon towards the end of the sixth century BCE. As such, the prominence of Abraham in Genesis reflects the events of that period, during which the distinctive identity of the Hebrew people was being consolidated.



Nevertheless, the stories about Abraham's faithfulness and the promises made to him by God are, for Christians, fundamental building blocks in their understanding of God's work of salvation. It is significant that Abraham is mentioned 72 times in the New Testament, notably in St Paul's letters. But perhaps as striking as this in our multi-religious society is that Abraham is also revered as a foundational figure by both Muslims and Jews. In him, says God in Genesis, 'all the families of the earth shall be blessed'. As we contemplate the figure of Abraham in our window, perhaps we can use this as an opportunity to remind ourselves that, despite our diversity, God's promises made to the first patriarch speak to the whole of humanity.

# HALE HAIR BOUTIQUE



**FALL IN LOVE WITH  
YOUR HAIR THIS  
AUTUMN!**

**TRANSFORM YOUR LOOK AT  
YOUR FRIENDLY LOCAL SALON**

**WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING  
FOR VIBRANT COLOUR,  
VOLUME OR EXTENSIONS...**

**OUR EXPERTS HAVE  
GOT YOU COVERED**

**BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY, BECAUSE  
GREAT HAIR IS ALWAYS IN SEASON!**

**EXPERT ADVICE. HIGHLIGHTS & REDKEN COLOURS  
GIFT VOUCHERS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND INSTORE!**

**BOOK ONLINE AT**  
halehairboutique.com

or call 020 8540 1632

Follow us for updates @halehairboutique



**FIND US**  
Opposite the Nelson Hospital  
11 Merton Park Parade SW19 3NT

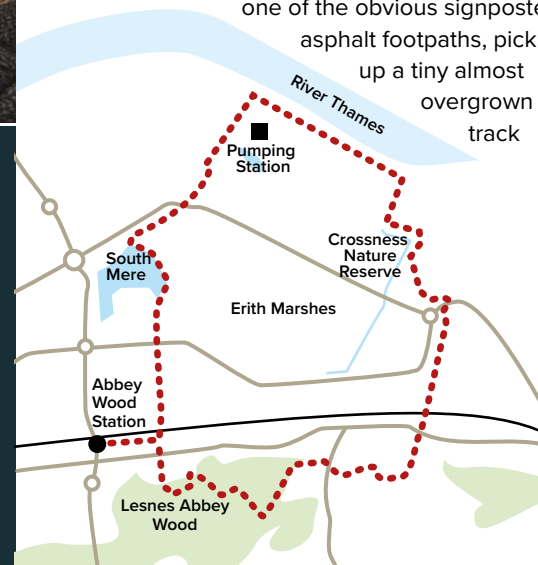
## At the end of the Elizabeth Line

**Simon Hillson suggests a walk in south-east London which takes in both ancient woodland and a marvel of Victorian civil engineering.**

**T**he Elizabeth Line has opened up some areas of south-east London which were previously difficult to reach. A surprisingly varied walk of about 5¾ miles begins and ends at Abbey Wood station (take the Northern Line from South Wimbledon to Moorgate and walk through the subway link to Liverpool Street for the Elizabeth Line).

From Abbey Wood station, walk east along Fendyke Road – at the far end take the steps up to a north-south overhead walkway. Here you join a pleasant pedestrian landscaped green corridor through the huge 1960s Thamesmead Estate which takes you to South Mere lake. Following the edge of the lake you reach a quiet road with a path on the other side leading up to an embankment. Follow the embankment until you pass under the A2016. At this point, instead of taking

one of the obvious signposted asphalt footpaths, pick up a tiny almost overgrown track



(not shown as a right of way on the OS map) leading north-east, and after a couple of hundred yards you come out into an area of trees and grassland with scattered ponds which has a delightful almost 'wilderness' feel.

Continuing north-east, you will arrive at the south bank of the Thames and the Crossness pumping station. This extraordinary Victorian Grade 1 listed building was the end point of the sewage disposal scheme designed by Sir Joseph Bazalgette (resident of Morden and Wimbledon and buried in the churchyard of St Mary's Wimbledon) following the 'Great Stink' of 1858. It would be fun to do this walk on one of the days on which the steam pumping engines are demonstrated ([www.crossness.org.uk](http://www.crossness.org.uk)). Walking east along the Thames path you also pass the adjacent modern sewage works, the largest in Europe, with a huge incinerator to generate electricity from sludge.

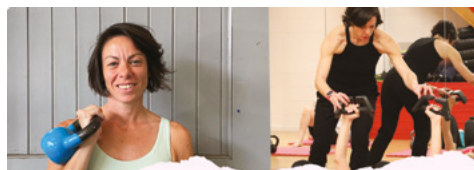
You then turn away from the river to cross the marshes of the Crossness nature reserve and after a little road walking enter Lesnes Abbey Woods, a large and beautiful tract of rare ancient woodland. Lesnes Abbey itself, founded in 1178, was active for nearly 350 years until its suppression in 1525. Although the buildings were demolished, some significant ruins and the outline of the monastery are visible within a large and attractive area of parkland (complete with a tea kiosk). From there it's a short walk back to the station, retracing your steps down the stairs from the overhead walkway.

| ESTABLISHED LOCALLY OVER 30 YEARS |  
**K.D. RAYNSFORD**  
 | LANDSCAPE GARDENING AND BUILDING |



Paving, patios, brickwork, garden walls / Fencing, trellis and decking / Lawns and artificial grass  
 Tree pruning and garden tidy up / Patio cleaning and waste removal / Painting and decorating  
 Kitchen and bathrooms fitted / Guttering, roof repairs / Complete renovations to small repairs

**Call 0800 2 118 618 / Mobile 07946 338 456**  
 Free estimates and friendly advice



Women-only  
**LEARN TO LIFT**  
 Friday mornings classes in South Wimbledon

**Build Strength & Confidence**

- Small classes
- Friendly atmosphere
- Learn correct technique

**Rosalia** | Personal Trainer & Menopause Coach

**Book your first class**

Use code **NEWME** for 50% off your first class  
 Spaces are limited. Booking is recommended



[www.yourmenopausecoach.net/classes](http://www.yourmenopausecoach.net/classes) | [rosalia@yourmenopausecoach.net](mailto:rosalia@yourmenopausecoach.net)



**Bring your mind and  
 your body back to life**

- private and duet appointments
- group reformer classes
- online mat classes and privates
- Pilates teacher training with BASI Pilates
- we've been delivering excellence for over 20 years
- expert teachers to guide you
- learn to move intelligently with more strength and less pain

[www.thepilatesclinic.com](http://www.thepilatesclinic.com)  
 3 Red Studio, Elm Grove, SW19 4BX 07961 495 297



# More strength, less pain

Richard Price talks to Lisa Lamberti,  
 owner of the Pilates Clinic.



Pilates has become increasingly popular in recent years and within the Wimbledon area there are about 25 places offering Pilates classes or individual tuition. So it can be quite a challenge to decide where to go.

The Pilates Clinic in Elm Grove, Wimbledon can, however, claim to be one of the longest established Pilates studios, offering a variety of Pilates classes and private sessions to suit all levels of fitness from beginners to advanced Pilates enthusiasts.

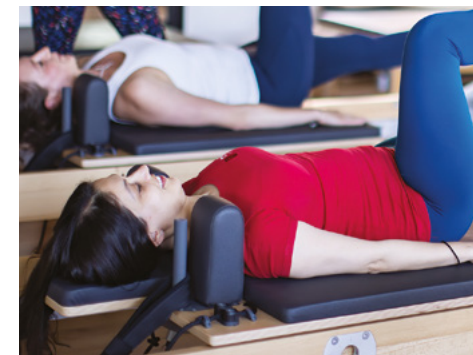
Lisa Lamberti, who has operated Pilates studios for over 20 years, founded The Pilates Clinic in 2002. After a career in IT project management, she trained as a Pilates teacher and started her own business and has built up considerable experience in running Pilates studios. Today she also trains Pilates teachers using the BASI method of education. Based in California, BASI Pilates is now a global leader in Pilates teacher training

that seeks to blend traditional Pilates with contemporary scientific insight.

Lisa employs 10 BASI trained Pilates teachers at the Clinic in a studio that uses a full suite of equipment from mats to working on your own body weight using springs and pulleys. The Clinic provides Reformer classes, mat classes and private rehabilitation sessions. This autumn Lisa is launching a monthly membership scheme.



For more information see  
[www.thepilatesclinic.com](http://www.thepilatesclinic.com)



# PARISH TOGETHER

In addition to our services in church, St Mary's offers a range of activities which are open to all in our local community. You are sure to receive a warm welcome.



Thursdays Classes at St Mary's Church Hall  
BOOK TODAY FOR YOUR FREE TRIAL

Your baby was born to love music...  
Try our award winning classes for babies from 3 months

Contact Lucy  
wimbledon.merton@monkeymusic.co.uk  
020 8543 4525  
www.monkeymusic.co.uk

Nurturing a lifetime of music  
www.monkeymusic.co.uk



City of London  
NPTC  
100% SECURE

green  
indusTree

Professional Tree Services  
Pruning, Felling, Reports & Advice

Family run, local business with  
over 20 years experience.  
Safe, efficient and cost effective  
solutions for all your tree needs.  
INSURED • TRAINED • QUALIFIED

call for a  
free site visit

07514 280460 020 3652 7018  
charles@greenindusTree.co.uk  
greenindusTree.co.uk



## Wednesday Club

Meeting in the parish small hall every Wednesday 2.30–4.30pm. The monthly programme includes film sessions, afternoon teas, quizzes and lively talks with plenty of opportunity for chatting too. Suggested donation of £5pp.

For further information  
**Barbara Moreland** 020 3874 7149  
bmoreland43@gmail.com  
**Lindsey Jones** 020 8715 6398  
lindsey6456@hotmail.co.uk



## Fellowship Lunch

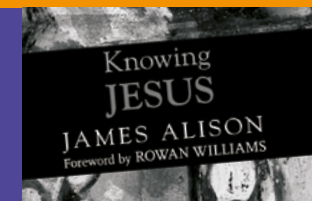
Join us for an inexpensive lunch in good company – especially for those who might not cook a Sunday roast for themselves. Sundays. Noon for 12.30: 13 September, 1 November, 29 November.

To book call **Anita Simpson**  
020 8543 3764  
07960 324 371  
adsimpson68@yahoo.co.uk



## Bible Study Group

Meeting in the parish room at 10.30am alternate Tuesdays. Details can be found on the pew sheet in the church or for more information contact **Hugo Summerson** 07808 959869



## Pilgrim Group

The group meets on alternate Thursday evenings, and offers an opportunity for informal study, prayer and fellowship. For further information contact **Simon Hillson** simonhillson@me.com



## Book Club

Meeting monthly in different houses across the parish. About two hours.

For further information contact  
**John Combs**  
johncombs46@gmail.com



## Occasional singers

A friendly group who enjoy singing but are unable to make a weekly commitment to St Mary's Choir. They enjoy leading the music when the choir is on holiday.

For further information contact **Nick Roberts**  
slicknickroberts@hotmail.com



## Walking Group

The Walking Group meets five or six times a year after the Sunday Parish Eucharist for short walks (maximum six miles), usually in the Surrey countryside.

For further information contact  
**Simon Hillson** simonhillson@me.com

## Regular Sunday Services

**8am** Said Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer, fourth Sunday of each month)

**9.30am** Sung Eucharist ('Children First Eucharist', third Sunday of each month)

**NB.** On some Festivals the main morning service is at 10am

**6.30pm** Evensong (choral most Sundays)

### Monthly midweek Eucharist

Third Thursday of each month said Eucharist 10.30am (30 mins)

### Sunday Club for children. 1st Sunday of the month

Meets in the Parish Hall at 9.30 am, and joins the end of the service in church.

Children 3+ welcome. Parents/carers are asked to stay with under 3s.

[judithbersweden@stmarysmerton.org.uk](mailto:judithbersweden@stmarysmerton.org.uk)

### Children First Eucharist. 3rd Sunday of the month

A family-friendly service at 9.30am. Please check website for details, or contact

[judithbersweden@stmarysmerton.org.uk](mailto:judithbersweden@stmarysmerton.org.uk)

## Church

**St Mary's Church Merton**

Church Path, Merton Park,  
London SW19 3HJ

**The church is open daily,  
at least between 9am–4pm**

[www.stmarysmerton.org.uk](http://www.stmarysmerton.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number 1134108

## Parish Hall

Information about hiring the hall or  
glebe field and events and activities  
in the hall is displayed on our  
website (see under 'hire the hall').

For more information contact Laura  
Crosby on

**020 8543 4777** or Email:

[bookthehall@stmarysmerton.org.uk](mailto:bookthehall@stmarysmerton.org.uk)



All the production  
and paper elements  
of this magazine  
have been carbon  
balanced

## Parish Office

Open four mornings each  
week from 9.30am–1.00pm  
(closed Wednesdays).

Email:

[office@stmarysmerton.org.uk](mailto:office@stmarysmerton.org.uk)

Telephone 020 8542 1760

## Stay connected

Did you know that your parish  
church is now on  
Facebook and Instagram?

Keep up to speed with news,  
services, music and life at St  
Mary's and in our parish.

Scan the QR codes to visit our  
pages.



## Could you be a companion?

Could you offer company, conversation, and culture to someone who'll truly value it? We're looking for kind individuals in Wimbledon and Kingston to make a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults.

Our shortened companion specific induction focuses on what truly matters: empathy, reliability, communication, and kindness.

Whether it's a stroll through the park, a matinee show, or simply good conversation over coffee, your time could mean the world to someone.

### Get in touch today:

[homeinstead.co.uk/wimbledon-kingston](http://homeinstead.co.uk/wimbledon-kingston)

0208 942 4137 [wimbledon@homeinstead.co.uk](mailto:wimbledon@homeinstead.co.uk)





# tennison

PROPERTY

SINCE 2008



We are family run and independent with a professional, friendly approach. We handle sales, lettings and management, guaranteeing customer satisfaction.

We are experts in the art of estate agency.

**EXEMPLARY SERVICE LOCAL EXPERTISE**

# 020 8543 0074

**SALES • LETTINGS • MANAGEMENT**

Tennison Property is the fastest selling agent in the area, securing the best offer for your property in 8 weeks! That's three weeks faster than any other local agent and at 100.1% of the asking price!

**As seen on [GETAGENT.CO.UK](http://GETAGENT.CO.UK)**

**LOCATED OPPOSITE WIMBLEDON CHASE STATION**

312 Kingston Road • Wimbledon SW20 8LX • [info@tennisonproperty.com](mailto:info@tennisonproperty.com) • [tennisonproperty.com](http://tennisonproperty.com)