

WINTER 2023

# PARISHMATTERS

ST MARY'S  
CHURCH  
MERTON



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BOYS & GIRLS  
3 – 14 YEARS



# PARISH MATTERS

WINTER 2023

## CHRISTMAS CAMPS

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WEEK 2: TUES 2<sup>ND</sup> – FRI 5<sup>TH</sup> JAN



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3  
THE ROOFS OF  
ST MARY'S MERTON



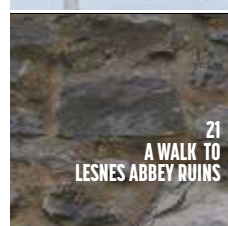
6  
THE SEASON  
OF ADVENT



10  
THE CHOIR SINGS AT  
WESTMINSTER ABBEY



LAND'S  
END  
2023



18  
A RETIREMENT  
CHALLENGE

21  
A WALK TO  
LESNES ABBEY RUINS

This edition marks the season of Advent and Christmas with an explanation of the tradition of Advent wreaths and candles (page 6) and information about the Christmas celebrations at St Mary's (page 12). When visiting the church we also encourage you to look up at the historic roofs (page 3).

Musical highlights include St Mary's choir at Westminster Abbey (page 10) and another superb guitar concert (page 13).

Major events include the Christmas Market on 2 December (page 15) and the pantomime from Parish Players in early January (page 17).

With more books to read, a report of a marathon cycle journey, the opportunity to have a fine Italian meal locally as well as joining in a range of local activities we hope there is much to enjoy in this issue.

Richard Price, Editor

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# The Roofs of St Mary's Merton

Alan Hay explains why we should look up when entering the church

The beautiful chancel roof dates from between 1380 and 1400

As anybody involved in the care of old buildings knows, one of the first things they are taught is to keep water off the property. If you do nothing else, we are told, make sure the roof and guttering are sound. It's unsurprising, therefore, that old church roofs are often among their most striking features.

St Mary's parish church is one of the oldest in London. Back in 2015 we spent the whole year on a series of events celebrating its 900th anniversary and it is more than likely that a few young parishioners, now alive, will survive to see its millennium.

On entering the church from the west door, among its most obvious features are the four huge tie-beams stretching across the breadth of the nave, fixed to the pillars on either side, and immediately below the roof. Imagine the nave without the side aisles: these were added in Victorian times as the arrival of the railway and the consequent explosion in the population of the parish demanded a bigger church. Previously the exterior walls were where the pillars are now and these tie-beams provided stability to the ancient walls, simultaneously supporting the roof above.

Each beam consists of a single oak tree from Windsor Forest. They date from either 1225 or 1227. In each of those years, Henry III made a gift of oaks to Merton Priory "for the works of their church." The roof above, which they originally supported, has long since been replaced, although the present nave roof is in itself of considerable antiquity, installed in 1500.

The nave provides a magnificent perspective on the much older and even more striking hammerbeam roof of the chancel, one of the church's oldest features.

But first, and for the sake of context, let's take a look at the proportions of the chancel itself. One of its most obvious features is the series of arches on either side which do not lead anywhere – and, in fact, they have never led anywhere. This is an architectural device called 'blind arcading.' The chancel is less than 15 feet wide and their purpose is to



The four huge tie-beams; the chancel and east window

give the impression of grandeur to what is a small space. This begs the question of why it wasn't provided with a stone-vaulted roof which would have been easily constructed in a space of this size.

The second immediately striking feature of the chancel is the magnificent east window. Built around 1400 it is clearly placed too high in the wall, its apex disappearing into the roof. Both window and roof are of similar date – certainly within 30 or so years of each other – and clearly it would not have been constructed in this way. But during the 18th century the owners of one of the vaults under the chancel floor wanted to place another coffin there, although it was already full, so the floor was raised. That put the window – the church's main focal point – out of proportion to the overall space, so the window was simply hoisted further up the wall.

The chancel roof is a beautiful example of its type, dating from a period when timber framing was at the most innovative stage of its development. It's a very grand structure

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for a parish church so it's unlikely it was built for St Mary's. It doesn't quite fit the chancel walls so it may have been made for Merton Priory, possibly for the nave of a chapel there. The word nave means the same as 'naval', or even 'navel'. Clergy, then as now, taught in imagery their congregation understood and stories were told of souls being saved in upturned boats. It's not difficult to visualise this magnificent structure as the ribs of a ship. It is constructed from chestnut wood, which is resistant to death watch beetle and other burrowing vandals, and dates from between 1380 and 1400.

St Mary's is a microcosm of Merton Park's history over nearly a millennium, a source of fascination and joy for anybody interested in our historical context. Next time you visit, take a minute to look 'up' as well as 'around,' and appreciate the contribution of these ancient craftsmen to this heart of our community. ■

# Sudoku

		4				2	7	
5			6					8
		7	4		9			
	3		8					
	2						6	
					1		3	
			3		6	9		
7					8			6
	4	2				1		

Solutions on page 28



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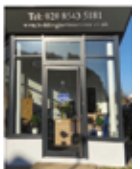
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**Simon Hillson investigates the traditions of Advent wreaths and candles**

# The season of Advent

Advent Sunday falls this year on 3 December. To many people, perhaps it just marks the beginning of the final run-up to Christmas. For Christians, however, its significance is much deeper. From at least the fifth century, Advent (the term derives from the Latin word for 'coming' or 'arrival') has been observed as a season of penitence, expectation, and preparation. It anticipates not just the incarnation celebrated at Christmas, but beyond that the ongoing presence of Christ in Word and the Sacrament, and the ultimate fulfilment of God's purposes on earth to which Christians look forward. For a millennium it has been recognised in the Western Church as the beginning of the Christian year.

It is not surprising that over the centuries various traditions have sprung up around Advent. Apart from the Advent calendar, perhaps the best known is the Advent

wreath, a circle of evergreen foliage surrounding four candles, one lit on each of the four successive Sundays in Advent, with sometimes a fifth one at the centre lit on Christmas Eve. The origins of this practice are obscure. They may be rooted in pagan observances surrounding the keeping of the winter solstice: a ritualising of the need for more candles to be lit as the days grow shorter, in anticipation of the return of the sun, with the evergreen foliage symbolising new life. It is easy to understand how such practices might have been appropriated by the Church, and combined with ancient Christian symbolism associated with lighted candles representing the presence of Christ.

However, there are no clear references until the time of the Reformation, when Advent wreaths of some kind may have been used by some German Lutherans. In fact, it was only from the middle of the 19th century that

they began to gain popularity, initially in the context of domestic piety in the home rather than in church. An important figure was Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808-1881) famous for his missionary, social and educational work amongst the poor and underprivileged in Germany. The story goes that in 1839 he used an old cartwheel to create a wreath out of twenty red and four white candles to help children in his mission school count the days until Christmas. The red candles were lit on weekdays and Saturdays and the white ones on Sundays. The practice is said to have been spread by German immigrants to the United States and was gradually adopted widely by Christians of various denominations, including Roman Catholics

are violet, the traditional penitential colour used in church during the season, and also in Lent. The third Sunday is known as Gaudete Sunday (from the first words taken from Philippians 4 of the Latin introit, or entrance song, set for the mass of that day: Gaudete in Domino semper – rejoice in the Lord always). Pink investments are traditionally worn, so a pink candle is often used. If there is a fifth candle for Christmas, it is usually white, the Church's festal colour.

As for the symbolic significance of the wreath, the circle reminds us of God's endless love and mercy, while the evergreen leaves represent the hope of eternal life brought by Jesus Christ. In a general sense,

**See page 12 for details of all the services and celebrations at St Mary's this year. We look forward to seeing you!**



and Anglicans, and introduced into church services. Readers of a certain vintage may recall the boost given to the tradition in Britain in 1964, when Blue Peter made what they called an 'Advent Crown' with a metal coat-hanger, tinsel and four candles.

Strangely, there is no uniformity either in the number and colour of the candles, nor in the meanings attributed to them. Sometimes the four Advent candles are red, or sometimes blue. But often – and this is the practice followed at St Mary's – the candles for the first two and the fourth Sundays of Advent

the candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world, but there is a variety of understandings of the meaning of the four individual candles. In some churches they are taken as representing the Christian concepts of hope, peace, joy, and love. Another tradition associates them with the prophets who predicted the coming of Jesus, Bethlehem representing the journey of Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and their joy, and the angels proclaiming peace. But for those who attend services at St Mary's, and many other Anglican churches, the meanings which most naturally attach to the candles follow from the Sunday readings heard in church during Advent: first about the patriarchs on the first Sunday, secondly the prophets, thirdly John the Baptist, fourthly the Blessed Virgin Mary, and finally on Christmas Eve Christ, represented by the white Christmas candle. ■



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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.

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

DECEMBER  
JANUARY  
FEBRUARY

WHAT'S ON

WINTER 2023

**Regular church services**  
see page 28

**Sunday Club**  
see page 28

**Children First Eucharist**  
see page 28

#### Covid arrangements

Now the impact of Covid has eased, and after taking medical advice, we have restored the use of the chalice at the reception of holy communion.

#### 'Children First' Eucharists (45 mins)

9.30am Sunday 19 November, 21 January, 18 February.

#### Christmas Market

Saturday 2 December 11am–2pm. See pages 15 and 16

#### Advent Carol Service by candlelight

6.30pm Sunday 3rd December

Christmas Week Services. See page 12

#### Carol singing around the parish

7.20pm Monday 18 December. Meet at corner of Sandringham Avenue and Kingston Road SW20 8JY. Singers and collectors for 'Crisis' welcome. Followed by refreshments

#### Family Pantomime. Jack and the Beanstalk.

Thursday 4 January, Friday 5 January 7.45pm  
Saturday 6 January 2.30pm (matinée) and 7.45pm  
St Mary's Church Hall

#### Fellowship Lunches

12 noon for 12.30pm St Mary's Parish Hall  
Sunday 28 January and Sunday 3 March.  
Tickets £6 from 020 8543 3764

#### Ash Wednesday

7.30pm Wednesday 14 February  
Lent begins with this Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes

#### Mothering Sunday

10am Sunday 10 March. Eucharist for all the family with blessing of flowers and simnel cake



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# A Day at the Abbey

**In August St Mary's Choir sang Choral Evensong at Westminster Abbey. David Reeves reports on a memorable occasion.**

As is the norm at every English cathedral, Westminster Abbey's world-renowned choir have a well-earned break over the summer months giving other choirs, both from the UK and overseas, opportunities to maintain the fine, uniquely Anglican, choral tradition of 'cathedral' Evensong sung daily across the country and also broadcast on BBC Radio 3 every Wednesday at 3pm.

St Mary's Choir, led by our Musical Director Tristan Weymes, was invited to sing Evensong at the Abbey on 22 August,

having provided recent recordings to show that we are of a musical standard able to maintain the excellence the Abbey - and its congregations - demand.

Family holidays unfortunately meant that several of our young choristers missed out on such a wonderful opportunity to sing in place of the Abbey choir who, only a few months before, had enchanted a worldwide TV audience at the King's Coronation. However, a strong group of 27 of us arrived at the Abbey around lunchtime on a

## Richard Price writes:

It is almost 50 years since I sang Evensong with the Westminster Abbey Choir when I was a deputy Lay Vicar. There were two notable differences from my last visit. So many more people were attending a weekday service and I had to queue for 20 minutes to take my place in one of the transepts. Secondly I was able to see the choir which was in the past only available to the few who sat close to the choir. However today there are television screens placed strategically around the abbey so everyone has a view of what is going on.

When you are in the choir stalls it is not easy to hear those who are in the opposite choir stalls and to hear the overall sound. Sitting in the transept I was aware of the magnificent acoustic in the Abbey and the glorious sound of the music sung on that day was a tribute to the high standard achieved by St Mary's choir. It is no surprise that they have been invited back to the Abbey.



Congratulations to Ellie Roberts, a member of St Mary's Choir who auditioned successfully to join the new girls' choir at Westminster Abbey which sings in St Margaret's church.

blisteringly hot day, where we were directed up to the song room reserved for visiting choirs. A run-through the Evensong music included a first look at the day's Psalm and the unfamiliar - and quite tricky - chants (these form the music to which Anglican psalms are sung) set by the Abbey.

A final rehearsal in the Abbey choir stalls was preceded by a walk-through of the procession into and out of the stalls, led by a lovely verger who made us all feel very welcome, and hopefully helped to brush away any nerves.

The Abbey insists on providing one of their own organists to play at their services, so at that final rehearsal Tristan had to rapidly build an understanding with him, despite the distance between the choir and the organ loft.

In the meantime, the congregation had started to arrive including a good number of supporters from St Mary's, many proud chorister parents among them.

Then suddenly we were fully robed and lined up in the Abbey cloisters awaiting the clergy's appearance, and Evensong was underway. A congregation of around 500 were packed into the stalls alongside the choir, and in both transepts to the east. More people were watching a televised feed in the Abbey nave.

A memorable day ended with a photograph taken in front of the Abbey High Altar, and was further enhanced by many lovely comments from members of the congregation about how well the choir had sung. But probably the ultimate accolade was an invitation from the Abbey to come and sing again for a future service!

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## Christmas celebrations

St Mary's Church welcomes everyone to join the Christmas celebrations.

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

### Candlelit Advent Carol Service

Sunday 3 December 6.30pm

### Nine Lessons & Carols by candlelight

Sunday 17 December 6.30pm

### Christmas Eve Christingle & Nativity Services

Sunday 24 December 3.30pm & 5.00pm

The Christingle orange and its decoration symbolise important aspects of the Christmas season.

### Christmas Eve Midnight Eucharist

Sunday 24 December 11.30pm

The "Midnight" service marks the start of Christmas. Candlelight dispels the midnight darkness as we celebrate Holy Communion at Christmas.

### Christmas Day

Monday 25 December 10.00am

Communion of Christmas Morning

With seasonal music and well known carols we celebrate the joyful Birth of our Saviour.

### Epiphany

Sunday 7 January 2024 9.30am

Sung Eucharist is celebrated as the arrival of the Three Kings concludes the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

### Epiphany Carol Service

Sunday 21 January 2024 6.30pm



## Another Night of the Guitar at St Mary's

Tim Milner

Following the superb first concert by Bulgarian guitarist Pavel Ralev of this innovative series of recitals in May, an appreciative audience was treated to another guitar masterclass in October, this time by British musician Michael Butten.

Described by Classical Guitar Magazine as a player of "exceptional accomplishment, distinguished by a natural warmth of tone and finely judged nuance of expression", Michael is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, winning in his first year the Julian Bream Prize, adjudicated by the famous British guitarist Bream himself.

Michael's performance career has since blossomed, and at St Mary's he presented an eclectic British programme, juxtaposing lute works by Tudor composers John Dowland, Daniel Bachelar and Philip Rosseter with modern guitar pieces by Peter Fricker, John McLeod and Benjamin Britten.

Although Dowland was Tudor England's most renowned lutenist, it was fascinating to hear works from his contemporaries, in

particular Bachelar. Music reviewer Elizabeth Roche commented on the current neglect of his music, suggesting that one reason is the "difficulty of his ornamental style, including arpeggios, trills, and even the dazzling tremolos that conclude his variations". In his demanding piece 'Monsieur's Almaine'. Michael demonstrated his considerable technical skill and virtuosity by closing part one of the concert with this work.

The concert ended with Britten's remarkable 'Nocturnal after John Dowland'. Written for Julian Bream, it is considered one of the most influential works written in the twentieth century for classical guitar. Michael richly deserved the warm final round of applause after brilliantly executing such a demanding piece. ■

The Nights of the Guitar series continues in 2024 with Emmanuel Sowicz and Laura Snowden. Look out for local promotion of these next year, and in future issues of Parish Matters.





Christmas wreaths • Jams & chutneys • Cakes & sweets  
Mulled wine & mince pies • Raffle • Model railway  
Bookstall and so much more...

St Mary's Church • St Mary's Church Hall • Vicarage Garden  
Church Path, Merton Park. SW19 3HJ

## Christmas wreaths



The volunteer flower team delights in continuing the tradition of creating door wreaths for sale at the St. Mary's Christmas market each year.

The wreaths are made with the traditional greenery and pine cones gathered from local gardens, the churchyard and the church hall.

Although the production of the door wreaths is time consuming we get great pleasure from seeing these Advent welcome wreaths on the front doors of houses around the parish.

We shall have our wreaths on sale in the church on Saturday 2 December when we shall also take orders for Christmas table decorations.

The wreaths usually sell out quickly so be sure to visit us at the beginning of the market!

Photos by Teodor Burt, Slava Sidorov, Pexel - from Pixabay



## Cakes and biscuits

This year's cake stall will showcase traditional Christmas fruit cakes as well as delicious Christmas puddings. You will also find a variety of cakes and biscuits including rock cakes and shortbreads.

Festive fare is always very popular and sells out every year so again come early to find the best bargains.

## Food & refreshments

This year the kitchen chefs offer chick pea curry and sausage wraps as well as tea and coffee and cakes. Available from the hall kitchen.

Don't forget to come by the small hall on your way through the market.





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# Jack and the Beanstalk

Parish Players' January pantomime will be Jack and The Beanstalk, written by Ben Crocker – the “wittiest and most original writer working in pantomime today”. Directors are Caryl Court and Tash Rewrie and Amy Jo Blackwell returns as musical director.

**St Mary's Parish Hall**  
Church Path, Merton Park, SW19 3HJ

**Tickets**  
£15.00, £12.00 & £6.00\*  
\*(matinee only)

Jack must win the affections of the King's daughter Demelza and what better way than by defeating the Giant Blunderbore and his wicked henchman Slimeball. Meanwhile his mother Dame Trot struggles to pay the rent and her cowman Simon struggles to be brave. When Jack sells his mother's beloved cow Daisy for a bag of beans, a giant beanstalk appears. Now Jack can climb up to the Giant's lair and defeat him, not before

encountering ghosts and ... cockroaches?!

Expect all the usual panto ingredients – song, dance, jokes, booing, hissing, cheering, slapstick and fun for all the family.

This is the fifth time that Parish Players have performed Jack and the Beanstalk.

The first time was back in 1964 – nearly 60 years ago – and the last time was 2004. Several members of the cast of the upcoming production were also in the cast in 2004 and one member, David Golder, has been in all five productions.



**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK**  
by Ben Crocker

**4th-6th Jan 2024**

Show starts at 7.45pm  
(bar opens 7.00pm)  
Saturday matinee at 2.30pm

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**noda**  
A Parish Players Production



Inspired by the book **Britain's Best Bike Ride**, Nick Carroll planned his first retirement challenge for him and his wife ...

# Land's End to John O'Groats



On the 23 June, we straddled our bikes outside Penzance station, checked the route and set off for Land's End, the start of our bike ride.

Riding along Cornwall's north coast to Newquay the views were superb, but the steepness of the twisty descents and climbs made the going very tough indeed. It was a real test of grit and determination but we reached the day's destination although we were so tired it was an effort to speak.

The next day we rode away from the coast along more short steep Cornish country lanes, up onto the fabulous Bodmin Moor. The day finished at Launceston with a dirty pint (that's a drink in your cycling kit before getting changed for dinner), a sunset view and conversation. From Launceston, we set out on yet more steep, narrow, sunken gravelly lanes to Oakford and a great meal in the Red Lion where the landlord treated the bikes with such deference, he stored them in the cellar with his ales!

Leaving the uplands we rode narrow lanes, high hedges and steep blind descents and climbs to Taunton, where things began to

level out (phew!). The next day was a short one. However, it began with a ridiculously steep climb and ended with one, making it quite arduous carrying 10–12kg of luggage.

We rode along the Bristol to Bath bike path, over the Severn Bridge and into Wales and the Wye Valley. We visited the market town of Ludlow and although it was a bit drizzly, the Wye Valley continued to be stunning and eventually we arrived at Shrewsbury, where we enjoyed our first WarmShowers stay – a sort of BnB network for cycle tourists.

However, we woke to the unwelcome sound of heavy rain which stayed with us all the way across the Cheshire Plain to Warrington, along the Mersey and through leafy paths and bullrushes to Lowton, near Wigan. We then rode up the hill past Angelzarke Reservoir and on into the beautiful Ribble Valley. The day ended with more WarmShowers in Ramsgreave and a walk on the fells with a view to Blackpool Tower.

It was a very long climb over Waddington Fell. Then down into Slaidburn, another long climb to High Bentham and over the fells to Gawthrop and down into the cobbled streets of Dent. The route went on north out of Yorkshire, through Sedburgh into Cumbria



Leaving Merton Park



A welcome break in Monmouth



Newquay



A bridge on the River Spey

and then up through Westmorland to our stop at the welcoming Belted Will Inn.

The ride to Yarrow in the Scottish Borders was one of the highlights. The scenery was simply beautiful and the gradients steady.

We continued through Innerliethen (home of Scottish Mountain Biking), then climbed out of the valley through Dewar to take in spectacular views of Edinburgh from the south. From Edinburgh we rode over the Forth and on to the cobbled centre of Scotland's former capital, Dunfermline.

Then across the Kingdom of Fife to Birnam (as featured in *The Scottish Play*) to our third WarmShowers hosts. The kind weather afforded great views across rich agricultural land. The downside was the mud-splattering, bone-shaking, grip-reducing, energy-sapping, slip-sliding, nettle-stinging, tyre-puncturing, narrow overgrown singletrack section of the round Perth cycleway which lodged a piece of glass in a rear tyre to inflict a first puncture. The only redeeming feature of this section were the wild raspberries we enjoyed.

From Birnam we went up the Spey valley to Kingussie, then on through Inverness to Dingwall. From Dingwall we rode north into a wet and hideous headwind through the beautiful, desolate and exposed Highlands to the straight-out-of-Wodehouse Altnaharra Hotel. Fortunately we teamed up with Marius, a Bulgarian living in Kent, enabling us to slipstream (a line of cyclists cycling very close to each other it makes it easier for the one at

the back) and tackle the hardest eight miles up to the wind farm at the top of the pass near Crask before five miles downhill.

The penultimate day's ride began alongside Loch Naver and its river – but things are not always easy. Just before Strathnaver and our first sight of the Atlantic since Cornwall, a sharp, stinging, soaking shower struck leaving us needing coffees and towels in Bettyhill's Store shop and café. After this the weather brightened considerably, so we took the opportunity to relax at the MacMillan Cancer Support picnic area with its views across to Orkney. We made it over the last 20 miles to Thurso in time for our last dirty pint and a walk down to the harbour before dinner to enjoy more clear views out to sea.

The final day was splendid, with views of the Orkney Islands all along the north coast. At John O'Groats we celebrated with photos, cappuccini and empire biscuits and sizing up the best souvenir fridge magnet and postcards for our WarmShowers hosts.

Then it was back on the bikes to ride to Wick, the 4 o'clock train to Inverness and the Caledonian Sleeper to Euston. We toasted our success with a bottle of fizz as we watched the sky darken from our seats in the dining car.

Now all we have to do is plan our next adventure. ■



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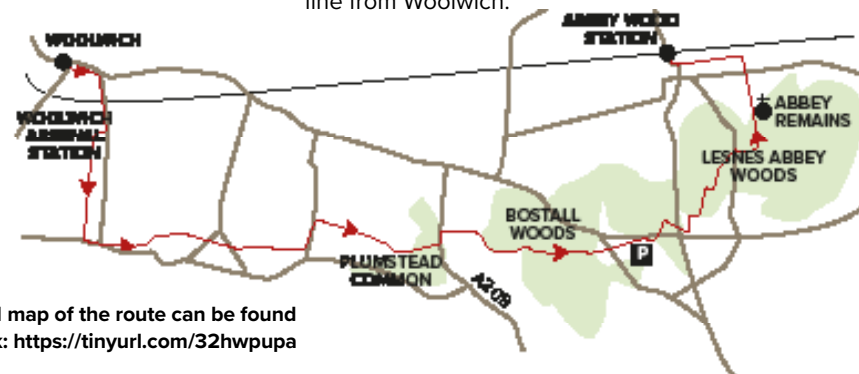


Simon Hillson takes a walk with  
St Mary's Occasional Walking Group to

## Lesnes Abbey

The Elizabeth Line has made new areas perhaps not familiar to walkers from Merton easily accessible. The station at the end of one of the eastern branches is called Abbey Wood. The abbey in question is Lesnes Abbey. Founded in 1178, it was never a large community but it struggled on for nearly 350 years until it was finally suppressed by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525. The buildings were demolished, but the site was excavated early in the twentieth century, and some significant ruins and the outline of the monastery are now visible within a large and attractive area of parkland managed by Bexley Council. The adjoining woods (hence Abbey Wood) comprise a large and beautiful tract of rare ancient woodland.

A walk from Woolwich to Lesnes Abbey makes an enjoyable and interesting short outing (approximately 4½ miles) following part of the Green Chain Walk. It takes only about 50 minutes to reach Woolwich Elizabeth Line station from South Wimbledon underground station (changing at Moorgate, where there is a pedestrian tunnel link to the Elizabeth Line at Liverpool Street). From there, after an admittedly unpromising mile through the streets of Woolwich, the remainder of the route follows a remarkably tranquil green corridor. As you pass through Plumstead Common and Bostall Woods and Heath, before finally entering Lesnes Abbey Woods, you would often scarcely know that you were actually in the heart of busy south-east London. If you visit in the spring, make sure to explore Lesnes Abbey Woods further to see the wild daffodils and bluebells for which they are famous. After tea at the Lesnes Abbey refreshment kiosk, return home from Abbey Wood station, which is just one stop further down the line from Woolwich.



A detailed map of the route can be found at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/32hwpupa>

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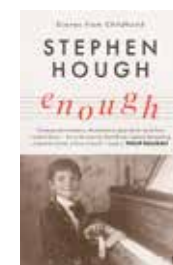
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# A good read...

More book recommendations from the editorial team...



## Enough: Scenes from Childhood Stephen Hough

Stephen Hough is something of a polymath, not only perhaps Britain's most distinguished contemporary pianist, but also a talented composer, writer and artist. This is not a conventional memoir, but something more subtle. In over a hundred short sections, each just a page or two, Hough offers a series of what he calls vignettes from his early life, beginning with childhood in Cheshire and ending with his time at the Juillard School in New York, which launched his career, aged 21. Hough is a Roman Catholic who as a young man explored a calling to the priesthood, and whose thoughtful and spiritual approach to life is reflected in his writing. The book is gently and lucidly written, and is full of affectionate, sometimes humorous and often moving portraits, nearly always suffused with gratitude, of the many people who played a part in his formation.



## God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain Rosemary Hill

Perhaps more than anyone else, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin was responsible for the revival of the Gothic architectural style which until relatively recently dominated

Britain's urban landscape. This fascinating biography is long and scholarly, but elegantly written in a highly readable style, peppered with amusing anecdotes and asides. It charts the short and, in many ways tragic, life of this extraordinarily driven, talented, controversial and eccentric character, the volume and breadth of whose creative output in architecture and interior design, from the time when he received his first commission at the age of 15 until his death in 1852, aged only 40, is arguably unparalleled. Along the way we are also offered glimpses into the tortured personal struggles which accompanied the revival of Catholic faith and practice in England in both the Anglican and Roman churches during the first half of the 19th century.



## Kissinger, 1923- 1968: The Idealist Niall Ferguson

Born in 1923 the first half of Henry Kissinger's life is usually passed over lightly. But in this riveting book we learn what he

achieved before his appointment to the Nixon administration in 1968. A Jewish refugee from Hitler's Germany, action in the US Infantry during WW11, the interrogation of Nazis after the German surrender and then as a young Harvard professor who was consulted by President Kennedy. But it was a trip to Vietnam that changed everything. Totally engrossing.



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Richard Price talks to Paolo Restaino, owner of Pizza Euforia

# It's not just Pizza!



For the last 12 years he has been involved full time in the restaurant and is proud of the team's commitment to using high quality ingredients and for the good relationships he has built up with reliable suppliers.

Like many local businesses the impact of the pandemic and the closure of the restaurant led to a difficult three years but the take-away business continued throughout this period and provided a constant revenue flow.

Travelling down Kingston Road close to the Nelson Health Centre, it is easy to miss the Italian restaurant round the corner towards Watery Lane. However its loyal customers have known that for over 20 years Pizza Euforia has supplied high quality pizzas both within the restaurant and through its own delivery service.

What is perhaps less well known is that Pizza Euforia also offers a range of starters and pastas that rival the excellence of their pizzas and is available to all those who dine in the restaurant.

Paolo Restaino says the restaurant is not a typical pizzeria. It is a small restaurant with space for up to 20 people, supervised by the owner with a talented team of chefs providing Italian food freshly cooked on the premises with a friendly ambience for people dining on their own or with friends and family.

Paolo was born in Turin and came to the UK in 1988. After a career in banking he helped finance the business and established the restaurant in Merton Park in 2000.



PIZZA euforia



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For further information contact:  
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[bmoreland43@gmail.com](mailto:bmoreland43@gmail.com)  
**Lindsey Jones** 020 87156398.  
[lindsey6456@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lindsey6456@hotmail.co.uk)

### Book Club

Meets monthly in  
different houses across  
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For further information  
contact John Combs:  
[johncombs46@gmail.com](mailto:johncombs46@gmail.com)

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### Pilgrim Group

The Pilgrim Group, which  
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For further information,  
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### Walking Group

The Occasional Walking  
Group meets five or six  
times a year after the  
Sunday Parish Eucharist  
for short walks (maximum  
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Surrey countryside.

For further information  
contact Simon Hillson  
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# Dried orange slices

Dried oranges are simple to make and can be used in various ways. Get creative... you could decorate your tree or add some colour to your home-made wreath... enjoy them dipped in chocolate or simply floating in your Christmas cocktails.

Thinly slice oranges, then blot with paper towels to remove some of the wetness. Place in a single layer onto baking parchment on a metal tray.

Bake in the oven at 120C for an hour or two. Check before time is up as the thinner you cut them, the quicker they dry out. You don't want to burn them!



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## 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)

6.30pm Evensong

Midweek Said Eucharists 10.30am (30 mins), third Thursday of each month followed by refreshments in church

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

**Sunday Club for children** meets monthly 3 Dec, 7 Jan, 4 Feb, 3 Mar in the hall at 9.30am (except Children First Eucharist days), before joining the end of the service. Children 3+ welcome. Parents/Carers asked to stay with under 3s. [judithbersweden@stmarysmerton.org](mailto:judithbersweden@stmarysmerton.org).

**Children First Eucharist** a family-friendly service at 9.30am on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Please check website for details, or contact [judithbersweden@stmarysmerton.org](mailto:judithbersweden@stmarysmerton.org)



St Mary's Parish Office is open four mornings each week from 9.30am–1pm (closed Wednesdays).

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## Solution for Sudoku page 5

3	6	4	1	8	5	2	7	9
5	1	9	6	7	2	3	4	8
2	8	7	4	3	9	6	1	5
1	3	5	8	6	4	7	9	2
4	2	8	7	9	3	5	6	1
9	7	6	5	2	1	8	3	4
8	5	1	3	4	6	9	2	7
7	9	3	2	1	8	4	5	6
6	4	2	9	5	7	1	8	3



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