

WINTER 25

PARISH MATTERS



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PARISH MATTERS

AUTUMN 25



2
MIDNIGHT MASS



10
RAYMOND BRIGGS



12
REMEMBRANCE



18
TURN AGAIN WHITTINGTON



25
EASY CHEESY

I am writing this welcome on a chilly October day, looking ahead to the winter. You will receive this edition in November, so we will be looking back at Remembrance Day – cast your eye over the article about war graves in the churchyard and research into the causes of death.

Christmas is rushing up to meet us. Judith Bersweden tells us of the wonderful services in St Mary's. You are all invited to celebrate this festival together.

It's good to have community events in the winter that bring companionship and cheer – there's the Panto in January and on page 26 we are reminded of social gatherings open to all in the parish. Do come along.

We also look back to the BBC Proms and introduce two ladies with local connections who were involved. Do let us know if you've been involved in other major events (not necessarily musical). It would be fun to write about them.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Krysia Williams, Editor

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

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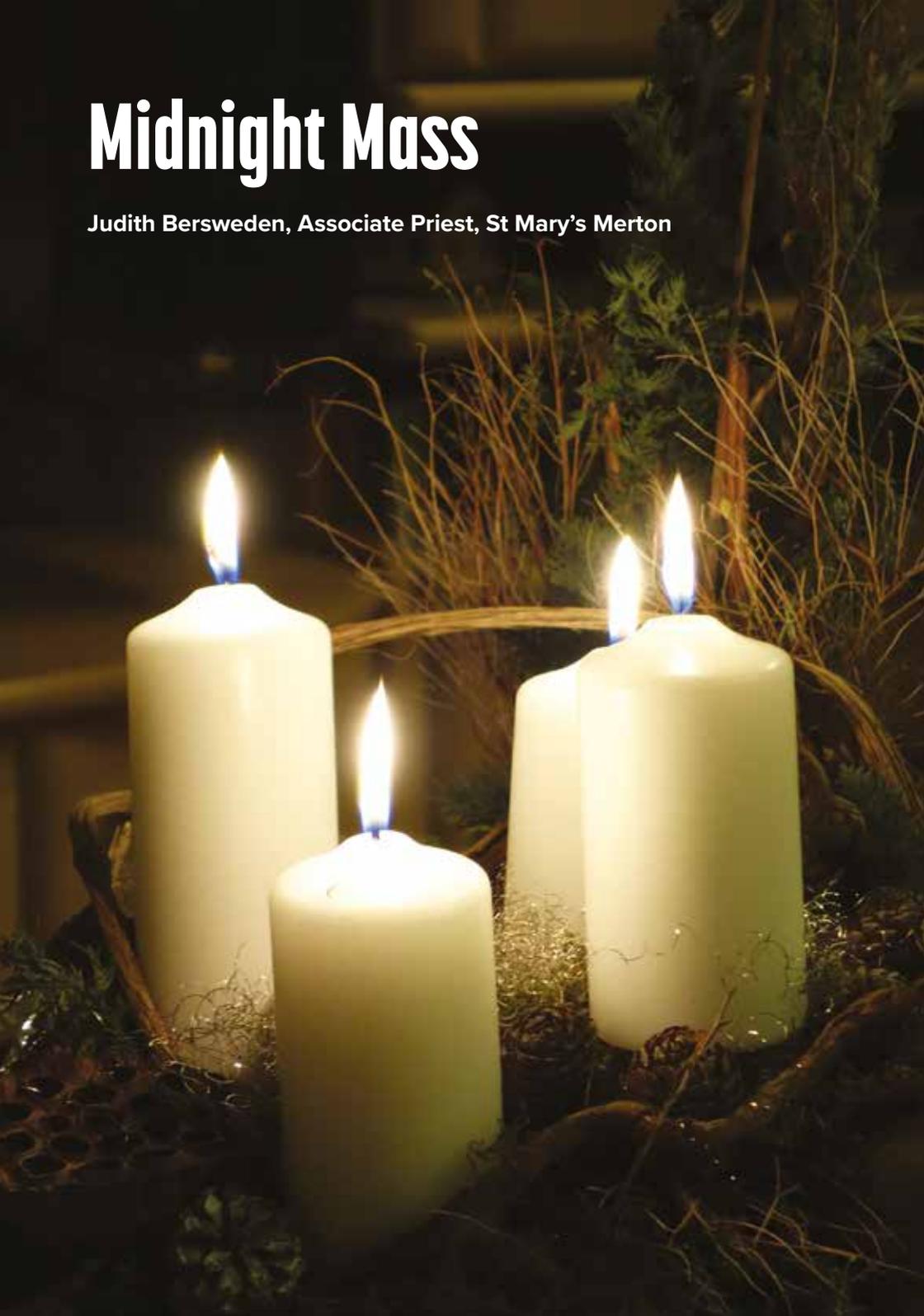
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Cover photo Tim Milner

Midnight Mass

Judith Bersweden, Associate Priest, St Mary's Merton



The Midnight Mass (known also as the Eucharist of Christmas Night) is held in churches throughout the world as a celebration of the Nativity of Jesus, and as its name suggests, is usually held at the very first opportunity to honour his birth as Christmas Eve gives way to Christmas Day. Richard Crashaw, in the extract (right) from his longer poem, 'In the Holy Nativity of our Lord God: a Hymn Sung as by the Shepherds', draws our attention to the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation – of 'Heaven in earth and God in man' which Christmas celebrates.

So no wonder that a candlelit service in the middle of the night draws people to come and worship, to share in its joyful celebration and absorb its atmosphere of reflection and wonder. For in a world of AI and instant access to knowledge it is a powerful experience to be reminded of what we do not fully know or understand. Candlelight, music and ritual all speak to us in thoughts too deep for words. In addition, there is the symbolism of a midnight service held to herald the birth of Jesus, the light of the world. We are called back to a deeper part of ourselves, where we can know again what it is to be both in and out of time.

The tradition of Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve was first chronicled by Egeria, a wealthy Hispano-Roman Christian woman, who went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the early 380s. Here she witnessed a midnight vigil in Bethlehem, followed by a torchlight

Welcome all wonders
in one sight!

Eternity shut in a span,

Summer in winter,
day in night,

Heaven in earth and
God in man.

Great little one whose
all-embracing birth

Brings earth to heaven,
stoops heaven to earth.

**Richard Crashaw
1612-1649**

procession to Jerusalem, arriving at the Church of the Resurrection at dawn. By 430 Pope Sixtus III had instituted the practice of a midnight Mass in the Basilica of St Mary Maggiore and this gradually became more widespread especially in the medieval period.

In some cultures Christmas Eve is seen as the most important part of the celebration, and so the Midnight Mass is especially significant, not least during this time of global uncertainty, when we long for peace. A few years ago, Archbishop Desmond Tutu reminded

the Church in the Province of South Africa that 'It was precisely in the darkness where it looks like there was no way forward that the light which lightens everyone came into the world. And not into an ideal world. Christ came into the world that was at war, was rife with injustice, into a people under army occupation. This is the reality of so many. And in the Incarnation God breaks into this and says: "I am Emmanuel, I am God with you".'

And so if you come to St Mary's this Christmas Eve, for our Midnight Eucharist at 11.30pm, you will be joining many others who are drawn by the music, the candlelight, the readings and carols, by the God made known in bread and wine, as we celebrate the birth of Christ in the middle of this most holy night, and glimpse the great gift and goodness that is revealed at the heart of things. A gift that 'brings earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.'

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Come and join us at St Mary's to celebrate Christmas together

Candlelit Advent Carol Service

Sunday 30 November 6.30pm

Candlelit Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 21 December 6.30pm

Christmas Eve Christingle Services

Wednesday 24 December
3.30pm & 5.00pm

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of the Christmas season.

Christmas Eve Midnight Eucharist

Wednesday 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

Thursday 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 4 January 2026 9.30am
Sung Eucharist is celebrated as the
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Epiphany Carol Service

Sunday 18 January 2026 6.30pm

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DECEMBER
JANUARY
FEBRUARY

WHAT'S ON

WINTER 2025

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.

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Children First Eucharists

9.30am Sunday 16 November, 4 January, 15 February

Fellowship Lunch

Sunday 30 November, 18 January 2026

Noon for 12.30pm Tickets £6: 020 8543 3764

St Mary's Christmas Market

Saturday 29 November 11am–2pm Parish Hall.

See advert on page 7

Candlelit Advent Carol Service

Sunday 30 November 6.30pm

Charity Carol Singing led by St Mary's Choir

Wednesday 10 December 6.30pm

The Leather Bottle, 277 Kingston Road, SW19 3NW

There is no carol singing around the parish this year.

Donations welcome to www.crisis.org.uk

Candlelit Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 21 December 6.30pm

Christmas Services

See page 5

Parish Players' Dick Whittington

Family Pantomime St Mary's Parish Hall. 7.45pm

Thursday 8, Friday 9, Saturday 10 January

See page 18 for more details and to book

Epiphany Carol Service

Christ made known to the world

Sunday 18 January 6.30pm

John Innes Society Quiz Night

Saturday 31 January

Raymond Briggs and Rutlish School

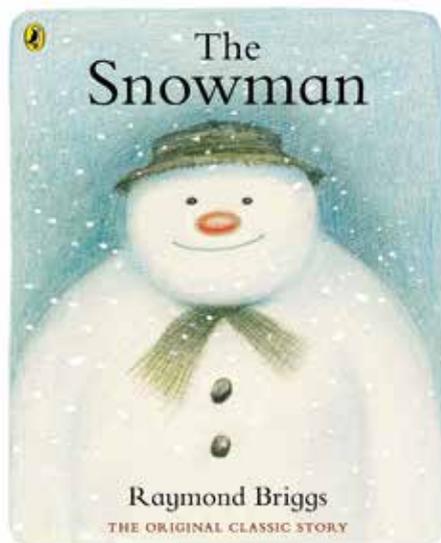
Krysia Williams

When considering book recommendations for this edition, our thoughts turned to Christmas and 'The Snowman' by Raymond Briggs naturally came to mind. This book, and film, is so much a part of many families' memories. Hannah Reeves-Hill has written of her feelings about it below.

But did you know that Raymond Briggs went to Rutlish School?

He was born in Wimbledon Park in 1934, his father was a milkman and his mother a lady's maid. In 1944 he gained a scholarship to Rutlish, then a grammar school. However for the first two terms his parents had to pay until the Education Act came in to force. In an interview with The Telegraph he said that his father was a hard worker ... getting up at the crack of dawn to do his milk round, then off on his bike in the afternoon to do painting and decorating. In his other famous Christmas book 'Father Christmas', the grumpy old man who hates delivering presents in all weathers is based on him.

He also said that his parents were horrified when he left school at 15 to go Wimbledon School of Art in Merton Hall Road. Nevertheless he developed a successful career as an author illustrator, and his



parents were proud of his achievements. In 1998 he wrote a graphic novel 'Ethel and Earnest' which was an affectionate portrait of his parents.

Quiz Night question: Who sang the song "Walking in the Air" in the 1982 animated film The Snowman?

Whilst Aled Jones seems inextricably linked with this song, due to the 1985 hit single he released, he did not sing the version featured in the original film. Many people don't know that it was actually sung by Peter Auty, a 13-year-old choirboy at St. Paul's Cathedral.

Hannah Reeves-Hill writes:

I love Christmas. The music, the films, the food, the lights, the hope. I throw everything into finding the joy and magic in every festive season. My Christmas decorations grow in number every year and my Christmas jumper collection has only been hampered by the arrival of my two children needing their own Christmas clothes to rival mine. One of my absolute favourite Christmas songs to sing along to and pretend I'm still a chorister at St Mary's is 'Walking in the Air' from The Snowman by Raymond Briggs. Watching the film has been a Christmas tradition in my house since I was small, and continues to be today.

My memories of watching The Snowman as a child evoke feelings of comfort, warmth, safety and magic. I remember sitting with my brothers to watch the beautiful animation, cackling with laughter at the snowman swapping his tangerine nose for a pineapple, being swept away by the music of Walking in the Air, and sharing in the sadness of the melted snowman at the end. As we got older, we still insisted on watching it every year, and added Father Christmas (also by Raymond Briggs) to our Christmas Eve tradition.

The magical thing about having children in your life, especially at Christmas, is the excuse to go back to your own childhood and introduce your own children to your favourite traditions.

Watching The Snowman with my toddler on Christmas Eve 2020, when the world had shut down and we'd been told to cancel Christmas, will forever be a magical memory. I watched it through his eyes for the first time and was catapulted back to being small and feeling the excitement of

the impending visit and gifts. It transported us away from the unprecedented times of the year we were itching to say goodbye to, and reminded me that the magic of life is in the small moments. The cuddles on the sofa, the hot chocolates on the walk in the woods, the special song playing in the background while your warm dinner cooks in the oven.

When the world feels dark, heavy, and seemingly full of hate, it can be hard to remember to treasure these moments, but films like The Snowman pull me back to more innocent times.

My daughter will be two this Christmas, and I'm so excited to bring her into our Christmas Eve tradition of hot chocolates, Christmas pyjamas, and The Snowman on the TV.



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Remembrance Matters

Richard Price discovers a link between many of the Commonwealth war graves in St Mary's churchyard



On Remembrance Sunday (9 November) and on Remembrance Day (11 November) we remember especially those who have died in the two World Wars of the 20th century.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is the organisation responsible for ensuring that the sacrifices of the Commonwealth war dead are permanently and equally honoured across the world and within the UK.

St Mary's churchyard has 27 recognised graves by the Commission. Very little is known about many of those who are buried

at St Mary's as often records were not kept or have been lost. We know that some grew up in Raynes Park and Merton Park but have no information about their families. For some we now know about the circumstances of their death and for some others we can reliably conjecture what might have happened to cause their death.

The link between many of them is how many died not in conflict overseas but in this country through being involved in accidents which led to them losing their life.

For example, **Lewis Potter** an air mechanic in the Royal Flying Corps Training Squadron died aged 41 in 1917 from an accident before the Squadron had been deployed to France towards the end of the First World War.

In the Second World War **Gunner Leonard Hales** aged 20 was killed accidentally on active service on the south coast during the early phase of the Battle of Britain in July 1940.

In May 1942 **Sergeant Charles Blackwell** was part of 228 Squadron, Royal Coastal Command which was involved in anti-submarine and reconnaissance patrols. He died aged 25 in July 1942 having sustained fatal injuries in a major air accident. His aircraft crashed while landing in a loch in the Oban area of Scotland. It hit the water with a severe bump, bounced into the air, turned over onto its back and sank tail first. Three airmen were killed. Sergeant Blackwell was pulled out of the water but

died two days later. He was married to Florence who came from Balham.

Sergeant Richard Fuller of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve was killed in a training accident in January 1944 during a night flying exercise from RAF Stradishall Suffolk. The aircraft made an erratic take off, veered off its usual course at about 100 feet and then crashed into the bomb dump and burst into flames. Richard Fuller was 21.

Perhaps the most unlikely accident occurred during the First World War involving **Able Seaman Samuel King** who was serving in the Royal Navy on HMS Glatton. At the outbreak of the First World War the British government purchased the ship from the Norwegian navy and refitted it for the Royal Navy. This took until September 1918, just two months before the end of the War. The ship sailed for Dover but, before she had even gone into action, as she approached the harbour there was a low order explosion in the mid-ship magazine which ignited the cordite stored there. The commander ordered the magazines to be flooded but the crew were unable to flood the rear magazines. An ammunition ship, HMS Gransha, was only 150 yards away and there was a risk of a massive explosion if the fire from Glatton ignited Gransha's ammunition which could have resulted in huge devastation in Dover with considerable loss of life. The Vice-Admiral, who was also in charge of Dover, took the painful decision to order HMS Cossack to torpedo Glatton. The ship capsized and the fire was doused.

60 men were killed outright and of the 124 who were injured 19 later died of their burns. Among them was Samuel King who died on the 19th September aged 31, the son of Mrs Ellen King who lived at 1 Trafalgar Terrace, Abbey Road in Merton.

The men highlighted in this article formed part of a relatively small group of British military personnel who died as a result of accidents. It is difficult to give precise figures of accidental deaths, as in both World Wars these deaths were often recorded alongside other categories relating to injuries, disease and "other non-combat deaths". We know that deaths did occur as a result of either training and drilling accidents or vehicle and railway crashes, ship collisions, aircraft accidents, munitions accidents and some friendly fire incidents.

It is estimated that about 25,000 (circa 3% of the total number of British military deaths) died in the First World War due to accidents. The number who died from accidents in the Second World War is less due mainly to improved medical care and changed operational circumstances and is estimated to be about 15,000 (circa 4% of the total British military death toll).

Although these percentages can seem small, when viewed from the perspective of those remembered in St Mary's churchyard, accidents were the main cause of many of their deaths. Their stories remind us of the tragic and often unexpected consequences that can occur when a country is at war.



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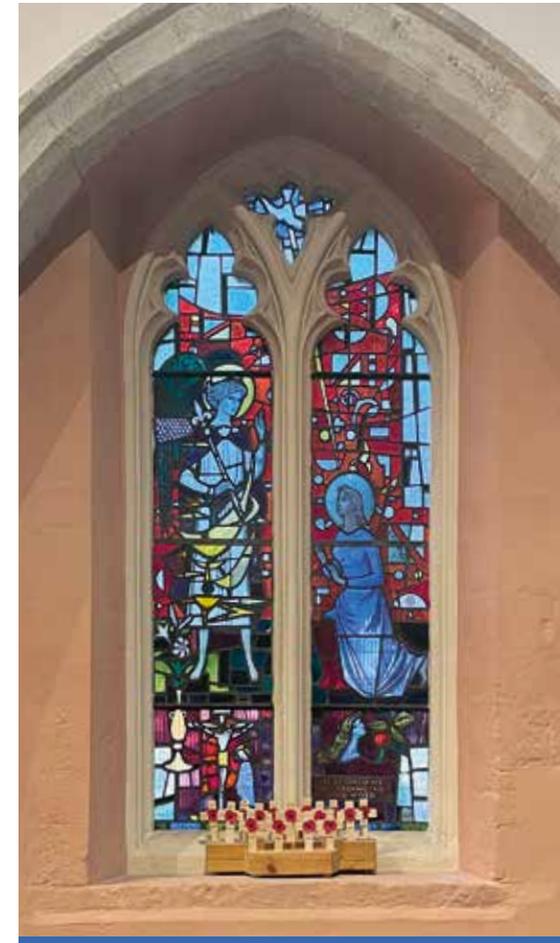
The Annunciation window

Simon Hillson looks at the striking window in the chancel of St Mary's Church.

Arguably the most striking stained glass window in St Mary's Church is slightly hidden away on the north wall of the chancel, to the right of the organ, and is easily missed. It is a shame that in a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary this depiction of the Annunciation – the episode in Luke's gospel in which the Angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will bear a son named Jesus whose kingdom will have no end – is not more prominent.

The window was installed in 1970 in memory of Harry May, vestry clerk for 21 years and clerk to the new Merton Council. It is the work of Tom Carter Shapland whose designs, which can be seen in a variety of churches, including Southwark, Chester and Peterborough Cathedrals, are much admired. He died at the age of only 47 in 1972 so our window must have been one of his last. We see in it the use of vivid colours and abstract shapes which were characteristic of his later work.

The Church's rich symbolism associated with Mary is powerfully employed. Gabriel holds a white lily – the sign of Mary's purity – in the form of a fleur-de-lys. Lower down, we see her kneeling at the foot of the Cross at the bottom of the left lancet. The inscription at the bottom right of the window ('Be it unto me according to thy word') and another lily link Mary's humble acceptance of her part in the plan of salvation with the pain she will suffer. To the right of this is Eve from Genesis and a very tempting juicy-looking red apple from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This picks up the theme of Mary as the 'Second Eve', the



one who – in contrast to the disobedience of Eve in the Genesis story which resulted in the Fall – obeys God's call and makes possible his plan for the salvation of humanity through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus.

It is with the Annunciation that the Christmas story really begins. So this is a good time to search out this beautiful and evocative window and to spend a few minutes contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation which we celebrate at this season.



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MUSIC MATTERS

Did you listen to Last Night of the Proms this year?



Were you aware that two musicians have strong connections with Merton Park: Celia Waterhouse, a violinist in the Orchestra and the star Soprano, Louise Alder.

Celia has played with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at over 30 Last Nights. She says that she really enjoys it because it is very different from any performance during the year. For her, it's a party full of goodwill – an end of season celebration. For the orchestra it marks the end of the performing year, a turning point towards the next musical season which starts after a welcome week's holiday.

For Celia, a memorably joyous Last Night was in 2012, when British Olympic medallist Rowers came onto the stage to sing Rule Britannia alongside the audience.

Another memorable evening occurred four days after 9/11, the destruction of the twin towers in New York, when the American Conductor, Leonard Slatkin led a more sombre occasion, opening with Samuel Barber's, Adagio for Strings'. It is said that this performance has become the most viewed piece of classical music on YouTube.

Of course this year's Last Night was also very special. One of the soloists was the soprano Louise Alder who, when she was a school girl living at home, had babysat

for Celia, whose garden backs on to that of Louise's parents.

Louise was christened in St Mary's and went to Wimbledon Chase school, where she loved to perform in the school productions.

After a summer singing at Glyndebourne Opera as the Countess in The Marriage of Figaro, Louise sang at the Proms and then on the Last Night. In the first half Louise sang two Operatic Arias by Gounod and Lehar and a medley from My Fair Lady. A further 'once in a lifetime experience' was singing the solo with Brian May and Roger Taylor in their performance of 'Bohemian Rhapsody' to mark its 50th anniversary.

Then there was the traditionally overstated dress that Louise wore in the second half, for the finale of Sea Songs.

The stunning dress was designed by an internationally renowned British Set and Costume designer, Nicky Shaw, and then Glyndebourne Opera generously offered to make the dress for Louise. Her parents are both professional musicians who worked regularly at Glyndebourne, so Louise has been 'playing' there since she was 2 years old, as child and performer.

It's possible to see the performance on BBC iPlayer. Don't miss Celia, Louise, trumpeter Alison Balsam, Brian May and Roger Taylor from Queen, the dress ... and Bill Bailey playing the typewriter, and the organ!

Time to “turn again Whittington”

Parish Players will be presenting Dick Whittington as their pantomime this year, and it's a title they have presented before, in 2005, 1994, 1989, 1979 and for the first time in 1963. Chris Abbott looks at its history.

Dick Whittington is not quite as popular among professional producers as it used to be; this year it is the 7th most produced title, but it can still be seen up and down the country, with Dick marrying Alice after his faithful cat Tommy rids a faraway kingdom of the rats that over-run the country.

It makes a good pantomime story because it's a quest, an adventure in which our hero overcomes difficulties like poverty and false accusations of robbery before making his fortune in a distant land. The range of locations, from the City of London to far off Morocco provide a colourful setting but much can be changed without losing the essential story.

But who was Dick Whittington? Did he really become Lord Mayor? And did he have a cat? The answers to some of those questions are known – but not all of them. An excellent exhibition held appropriately at the Guildhall Library last year gave some fascinating insights. It was appropriate not just because the Library is in the City of London, but also because it was money left by Richard Whittington that funded the first Guildhall Library in 1425.

The exhibition included a fascinating biography of Richard Whittington by Ann Martin. He was, it seems, born in Gloucestershire in the 1350s and travelled

funding everything from a public lavatory to a home for unmarried mothers. After he died in 1423, the money he left was used to fund everything from public fountains to the rebuilding of Newgate prison.

And the cat? Well, nobody quite knows when that was added to the story, but certainly by the 17th century. The Guildhall Library showed two versions of a fascinating portrait of Whittington from the 1590s, wearing his robes of office. He was originally shown with his hand resting on a skull but, as the cat legend caught the public imagination, an opportunistic print seller changed the skull to a rather peculiar looking cat. Somehow, an upright and respected alderman got linked to a much older tale found in many cultures and involving a cat dealing with a plague of rats.

And that's why we will be seeing the story of Dick Whittington once again at the Parish Hall from 8-10 Jan '26.

to London to be apprenticed. He did make his future there, but through trade and moneylending rather than with the help of a visiting Fairy! He did marry Alice Fitzwarin (Fitzwarren in the pantomime) and he seems to have been a highly respected member of society. He was generous to good causes,

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Walking along the eastern stretch of the Regent's Canal

Simon Hillson continues his walk along one of London's finest canals

Last winter's edition of Parish Matters outlined a walk along the first half of the Regent's Canal from Paddington to Islington. Now, when days are again short and the countryside is wet and muddy, is a good time to walk the second half. A route from Angel station (accessible on the Northern line from South Wimbledon station) to Limehouse Basin, where the canal meets the Thames, and then onto Wapping station, is a little under six miles.

To reach the towpath where the canal emerges from the Islington tunnel, turn right out of Angel station and after a few hundred yards take Duncan Street on the right. From now on until Limehouse the route is extremely straightforward, simply

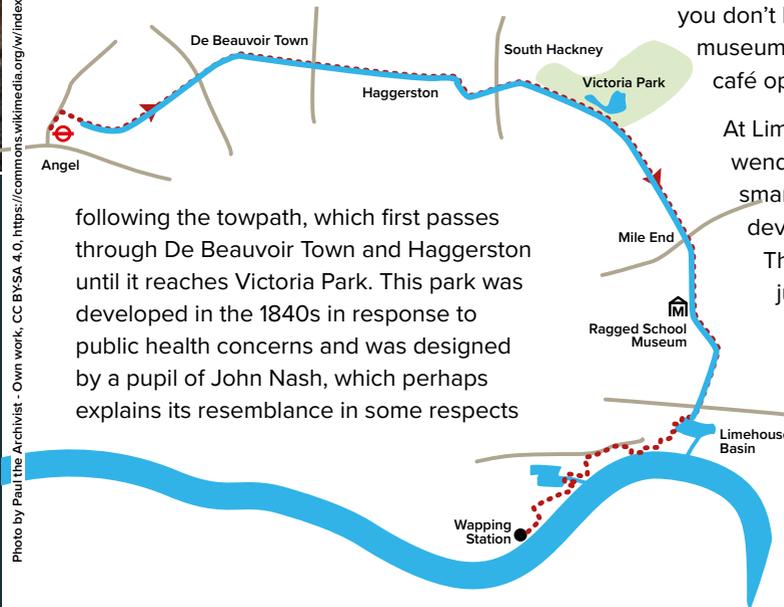
to Regent's Park. In 2011-12 it underwent a major refurbishment funded by the National Lottery. For many people in the crowded and insanitary East End of the 19th and early 20th centuries this was the only significant green space they would ever encounter.

After Victoria Park, the landscape, previously unremittingly urban (albeit enlivened by the activity of the canal), opens up, with a surprisingly green fringe to the left as the waterway passes through Mile End. A place well worth stopping off at as you approach Limehouse is the Ragged School Museum which tells the story of London's largest Victorian 'ragged school', opened by Dr Barnardo in 1877 and serving the poor of the East End for 30 years. Even if you don't have time to explore the museum fully, there is an excellent café opening onto the towpath.

following the towpath, which first passes through De Beauvoir Town and Haggerston until it reaches Victoria Park. This park was developed in the 1840s in response to public health concerns and was designed by a pupil of John Nash, which perhaps explains its resemblance in some respects

At Limehouse Basin, the route wends its way through the smart residential and marina developments to pick up the Thames Path. Walking west, just beyond Shadwell you will arrive at Wapping station. Use the Windrush (overground) line to return to Wimbledon via either Clapham Junction or the Jubilee line and Waterloo.

Photo by Paul (the Archivist) - Own work. CC BY-SA 4.0. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/index.php?curid=72685455>





...eat, drink, enjoy indian

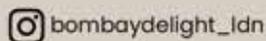


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Business Matters

Richard Price meets Ajay Chaurasia, the owner of the award winning restaurant Bombay Delight.

Ajay Chaurasia established his Indian restaurant opposite the Polka Theatre in the Broadway in 2021 after a long search for suitable premises in the Wimbledon area. Having proved that he could run a successful restaurant (Mumbai Delight) in Vauxhall, which had been open since 2012, he was keen to take up the challenge of being as successful in Wimbledon and in larger premises where he could cater for up to 140 guests.

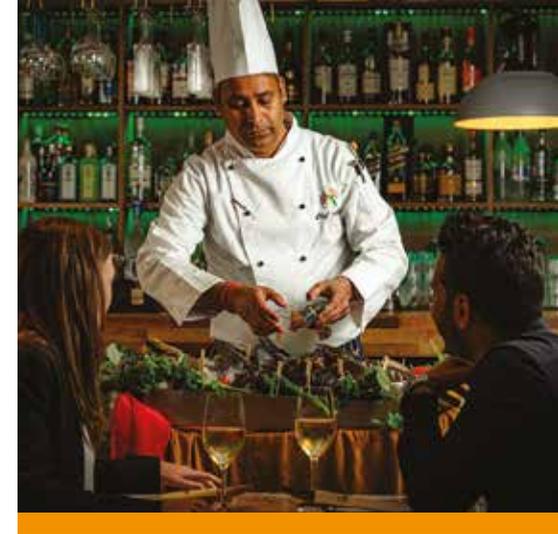


Four years later Ajay is pleased at the progress to date and the positive response from the local community. This year at the recent annual

Merton Best Business Awards, Bombay Delight won both the "Champion Business Award" and "The People's Choice Award".

Ajay believes this recognition is a tribute to the people whom he has trained to produce and serve authentic Indian cuisine which involves a careful mix of spices and flavours and a meticulous attention to detail.

The training he has passed on to his colleagues comes from a wealth of experience working in kitchens around the world. He began his career as a chef with a three year apprenticeship at the Taj President hotel in his native city of Bombay. After working as a chef in another international hotel (JW Marriott) he spent a year working on a cruise ship going to Australia and was part of a team serving 1550 passengers and 650 crew.



His next destination was London and he worked for many years at the Hilton Docklands Hotel and Grosvenor House, a JW Marriott Hotel which has the largest banqueting kitchen in Europe catering for up to 2500 guests.

Although by now experienced in cuisines from all over the world, Ajay decided that he wanted to use his expertise and passion for Indian cuisine through setting up his own business. Over the last decade he has sourced a mixture of ingredients from across India for his restaurants. Dishes like "Avocado chat" or "Sticky Tamarind Wings" and his signature dish of "Hariyali Marsala" and "Lamb Angora", unusual in Indian restaurants, demonstrate Ajay's innovative approach which also includes providing a fish trolley as well as vegetarian and vegan dishes.

Bombay Delight offers a private dining room for up to 36 guests which can also be used for business meetings and seminars. A take away service with delivery around the parish is available as well as outside catering for weddings and family events.

At a time when the hospitality industry is facing considerable challenges it is good to know that Bombay Delight is a local thriving business.



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Easy cheesy nibbles

So simple and so delicious!

You will need

- 120g cold butter
- 120g strong cheddar
- 120g plain flour
- 50g rice krispies

Grate the butter and cheese into the food processor, then add the flour and rice krispies. Then blitz it. The longer you blitz, the smoother the biscuit.

Press the mixture together and divide into four. Roll each piece into sausages – to a diameter about the size of a pound coin. You don't have to do it in four parts, but it is easier to handle.

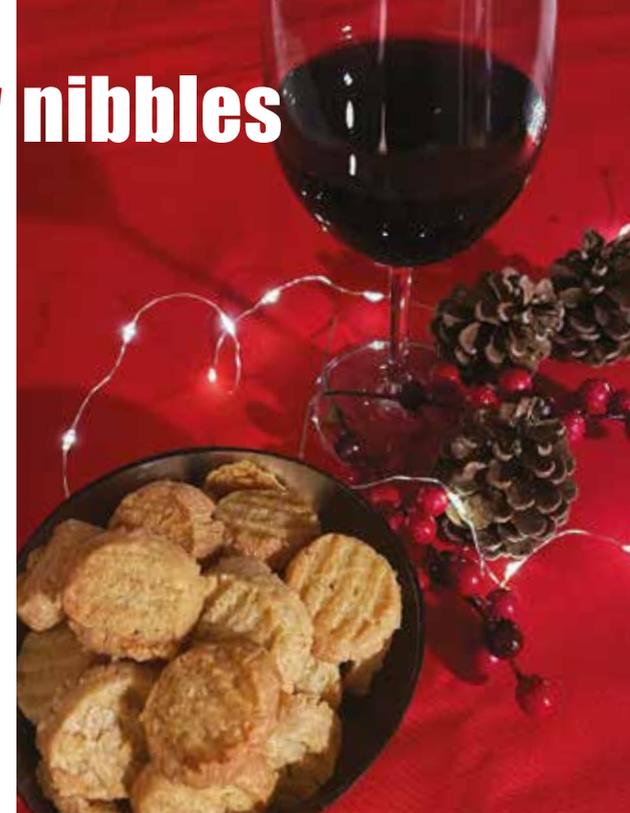
Cool in the fridge for at least 30 mins.

Turn the oven on to 180C.

Cut each sausage into small pieces – each sausage will be make about twelve.

Place on a floured baking tray and press gently with a wet fork, then bake for about 15 minutes.

Leave to cool and enjoy with a glass of something festive!



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WEDNESDAY'S IN TERM TIME
 4.30 - 5.30 PM




Come along to the Wednesday Club

The Wednesday Club is a social club that meets in the Parish Hall every Wednesday afternoon at 2.30pm. All are welcome for a chat, maybe a film, a short illustrated talk along with tea, biscuits (and sometimes cakes).

It is run by a team of volunteers and is open to the local community, to give people a chance to meet with friends ... and make new ones.

About three times a month a film is shown. You can see the next scheduled film in the printed pew sheet in church. A short interval gives the opportunity for a chat and tea.

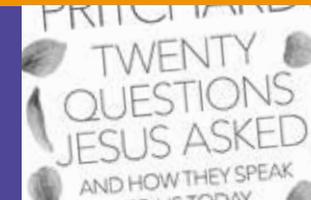
Once a month there will also be a quiz or an illustrated talk. These have included travel talks about cycling trips to Rome or walks along the Camino de Santiago. Personal safety and protection have been discussed, even pest control. Recently the local Councillor, Ed Foley has talked about his role in Merton.

So do come along for a film and a chat. There is a £5 voluntary donation. We are also always happy to see more volunteers to help with the organisation ... and if you feel you have an interesting topic that you can talk about, and perhaps illustrate, we'd love to hear from you.



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.



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, 12 noon for 12.30:
30 November, 18 January.

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

Bible Study Group

Meeting in the parish small hall 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 Occasional 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

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

Parish Office

Open four mornings each week from

9.30am–1pm (closed Wednesdays).

Email office@stmarysmerton.org.uk

Telephone 020 8542 1760

Parish Hall

There is information about hiring the hall or glebe field and events and activities in the hall displayed on our website (under 'hire the hall'). For more information or to hire an event space please contact Laura Crosby on 020 8543 4777 or Email bookthehall@stmarysmerton.org.uk



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

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

The Letter in The Window...



When I first saw the advert in the pharmacy window, it broke my heart. I thought, 'That could be my own mum in a few years time'.

I wasn't looking for a new career or anything, but I knew I could give someone a bit of help here and there. So, when I saw the ad, I went for it and called the number.

I spoke to a lovely lady called Sophia who filled me in on what Home Instead Wimbledon and Kingston were looking for and how they helped so many older adults. Honestly, it really didn't feel like I was talking about a job. For the first time in ages, I felt like I could really contribute something good to another person's life.

Deciding to offer a few hours of my week was a simple decision. Those few hours quickly turned into a full-time commitment. Leaving my job at the shop wasn't easy, but what I've found in return is so much better.

Home Instead stands out because everyone is so friendly and welcoming. The immersive training was incredible - it really felt like being in Betty's flat. It didn't just prepare me for the everyday tasks I'd need to do but it helped me understand depth of care, the importance of dignity, and the value of companionship to someone's life and wellbeing.

Now, four months in, I can't imagine doing anything else. The clients I visit, the stories I hear, the smiles we share - I love it. So, to anyone who felt the same as me when they read that note in the window, I'd say, make the call.

Caring and companionship, giving back to the community, that's what life is all about.

All the best,
Aanya



HomeInsteadWimbledonandKingston



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