

THE GRAPEVINE

The Newsletter of St. Mary and St. John the Divine, Balham

As ever, there is a lot happening at St Mary's Balham and particularly as we come to warmer summer weather—something on offer for everyone!

Firstly, we have the wonderful celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. St Mary's is holding a Jubilee Tea Party on Sunday 5 June after church, with huge thanks to Graeme Calf for being the organiser-extraordinaire.

Then two weeks later on Saturday 18 June, we have our Parish Boundary Walk—a chance to walk the parish boundary, find out interesting historical facts on the way and raise funds for our church's mission. It will also include a shorter walk for children with quiz questions en route.

The St Mary's Concert series is now up and running again. Come along to the next concert on Saturday 18 June with Richard Lea.

Our series of St Mary's Talks continue on Thursday 23 June with a talk by Rosie Slater-Carr on the Church Commissioners. Do we all know what the Church Commissioners do? Sign up and find out!

St Mary's is a wonderful community—come and be part of it and join in!

--THE GIVING GROUP--

The Giving Group helps to increase the level of giving at St Mary's via stewardship and fundraising. It acts as catalyst to the efforts of the whole St Mary's community. We meet regularly and plan for stewardship appeals (NB: the next one is on Sunday 19 June!), for reminders about updating wills, and for a wide range of events that are partly aiming to raise funds. These include our series of online talks, and events such as the Beetle Drive; Pies, Peas and Quiz; and, coming up on 18 June, our exciting joint Charity Walk with TSM round our parish boundaries. We also make funding applications to Trusts or other funding bodies. The members are Mthr Berni, Sarah McDermott, Lynn Beattie, Karen Gray and Andrew Purkis (Chair). We'd love to hear from you if you'd like to help in any way.

--WHERE IS THIS?--



This plaque commemorates the first World War. Do you know where it is in the church?

From the Kitchen of St. Mary's

Jubilee Sponge

Ingredients

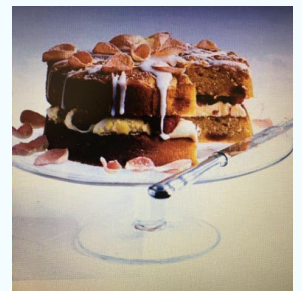
- 175g golden caster sugar
- 175g butter, softened
- 4 large eggs, separated
- 100g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 100g ground almonds
- a few drops of almond extract
- 125g punnet raspberries

For the filling

- 227g clotted cream
- 125g punnet raspberries

For the decoration

- 2 pink roses
- 50g - 85g golden caster sugar
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten to a froth
- 100ml icing sugar



Make frosted rose petals day before. Separate petals and spread caster sugar over plate. Holding one petal at a time, paint both sides with egg white. Spoon sugar over it, then using tweezers, shake off the excess. Dry on baking parchment for a day.

Preheat oven to 180C/gas 4/fan 160C. Butter two 20cm/8in round sandwich tins and line bases with baking parchment. Tip sugar into a mixing bowl and add softened butter. Beat for a minute until pale and fluffy, then beat in egg yolks.

Sift the flour and baking powder over the cake mixture. Fold in as lightly as you can using a large metal spoon, then fold in the almonds and extract. Stop folding as soon as the flour traces have gone. Whisk the egg whites until they just hold their shape. Gently fold a third of the egg white into the cake mix, using the whisk. Repeat with another third, then the final third. Take care not to over-mix and lose the lightness of the egg whites.

Lightly fold in the raspberries. Divide between the prepared tins and level the mixture using a round-bladed knife. Bake for 30-35 minutes. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then turn out, peel off the lining paper and leave to cool completely.

Set one cake on a serving plate or cake stand. Spoon the cream on to the cake with a dessert spoon. Scatter the raspberries over and put the other cake on top. Blend the icing sugar with 1-1 1/2 tbsp cold water until it is smooth and coats the back of a spoon thinly. Drizzle the icing over the cake. Scatter the rose petals over and around the cake, dust with icing sugar and serve.

BOOK REVIEW:

THE ALCHEMIST, by Paulo Coelho

Colin Snaddon

I'm terrible at reading but even for me, this gripping book is a short read and one I couldn't put down. It tells the story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd, who has many adventures. The book appeals to me as it is truly spiritual, without being religious per se. There are many religious references, drawing on all three of the Abrahamic faiths but also on the deep spirituality that lives within each of us – expressed in the sun, moon, stars, wind, desert, stones, sea, birds, animals and of course, people. Our shepherd meets many important people, one of whom is an alchemist and the analogy and unity between alchemy, life and death, love, the Soul of the Universe, dreams, omens, treasure, travel, happiness and everything else is presented beautifully. A book that makes one feel optimistic and inspired and highly recommended.

--UPDATING YOUR WILL--

It has long been the church's teaching that part of good Christian stewardship is to update your will from time to time. Otherwise, those who survive you may face stressful decisions and your true intentions may not be carried out. It is also a way, if you so choose, to support the mission of the church so that future generations can experience the same blessings as we do from our life and worship together. There are leaflets to help you review your will at the back of the church: please take and use them.

--GARDENING NOTES--

At the beginning of May, the gardening team felt that we'd reached a significant point: the restoration of the front borders was complete and even the weeds were under control—for a moment! The team (Lillian, Sarah, Kamalini, Caroline, Nigel and Marian) sometimes get together on a Saturday morning, otherwise playing our part whenever we can during the week.

With the warmer weather, we are welcoming TSM children into the Oasis Garden during school hours and they have planted up small pots which adorn the paved area.

The first bloom from the new roses was Darcy Bussell, a beautiful deep red. Cornelia (in the north bed) is flowering well, bearing small, pink blooms. With fresh food and light, roses planted long ago have reappeared! The lilac tree, the spiraea and ceanothus have also given great pleasure, and now the deep red weigelia. The white roses and wistaria on the pergola in the Oasis Garden have been looking superb, thanks to our gardeners of former times. This is all fitting for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as we embark on national celebrations.

--PEN PORTRAIT: DAWN DUKAR--

Dawn's contribution to our church is not obvious to most of us, as she does the invaluable work of Secretary to the PCC (Parochial Church Council). Born in Hitchin, Hertfordshire to parents who travelled to the UK from Dominica, one of the Windward Islands, she lived in Birmingham from 1970. Her mother, a devout Roman Catholic and a strong influence in Dawn's life, sent Dawn to St. Paul's Convent School for girls in Edgbaston. Dawn did very well there but chose not to go to university until much later. She has given secretarial support in a variety of jobs. In 2000 she started a degree course in Social Sciences at Birkbeck College and followed this with a post-graduate course in Criminology. Her choice of subject was inspired by her work at the Centre for Justice Innovation at the Oval. While working there, she met Kenneth, who worked in the same building at the time.

Ken invited Dawn to come to his church with him, although this was an Anglican church - St. Mary's, Balham. Ken's mother is Georgina Ansah, who is well-known to the Wednesday Eucharist congregation. Dawn was very impressed with the warm welcome that Fr. Robert gave her and the invitation to join in. She joined the Giving Group first, before becoming PCC Secretary.



Fr. Robert and Mr. Berni officiated at their wedding in October 2019. Dawn's mother, having by now returned to live in Dominica, was here to witness the marriage. Ken, a Ghanaian, and Dawn have found that their respective cultures share many traditions and they are enjoying visiting the two countries. Dawn has got back in touch with her father and other family members. Her 32-year old son, Ryan, lives and works in London.

Dawn is currently working as Executive Manager for a pharmaceutical company which has its headquarters based in Switzerland. The drugs they produce include one used for patients in intensive care (e.g. Covid patients) so Dawn has been able to work (from home) continuously. Living in Plaistow, East London, means about an hour's drive to church for evening meetings and on Sundays.

RESTART WORKSHOP--"FANTASTIC FIXING!"

On Saturday 14 June we welcomed a new venture to St Mary's – the Restart Workshop. It is a chance to bring along items which need mending, to have help or to learn how to do it yourselves. Far better to mend and reuse rather than to throw away, waste precious metals and litter our planet. The next probable date with us is Saturday 24 September 1-4pm. You need to book in to secure a slot. You can find out more and see photos at this link:

<https://www.transitiontooting.org/2022/05/fantastic-fixing-at-our-1st-balham-restart.html>

