

# THE GRAPEVINE

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

## A MESSAGE FROM MOTHER BERNI...

*How wonderful to see this issue of Grapevine packed full of the stories of community life. Our stories reflect our attention to the stewardship of resources; people, place and money, and our call to tend, nurture and harvest the many and diverse fruits on offer. Turning now in the season of the church to "Ordinary Time" and the journey from Candlemas to Ash Wednesday, let us all embrace the season as one steeped in light and hope and growth. Just as the signs of greenery pop through the hardened earth so may the signs of this growth be paid attention to in every aspect of our lives.*

## THE CHOIR IS BACK!



After a difficult time singing during COVID, the choir is seeing a resurgence. We now have 12 members and are keen to welcome even more. We don't sing every Sunday, so don't feel you need to commit every week. With Easter coming up, we would love to see the St. Mary's choir up to strength.

We were sorry to say goodbye to Paul Swinden, our organist, from his regular Sunday slot, but he will return for festivals and high days. We have a wonderful raft of organists, including Lizzie Davies, to cover for future services. If you are interested in joining the choir, please do contact Sarah ([sarah.mcdermott@virgin.net](mailto:sarah.mcdermott@virgin.net))

## GARDEN UPDATE, JANUARY 2022

The rose-planting project is now under way! The long border in front of the street wall has been restored and we are waiting for the manure to enrich the soil. In the autumn, we were lucky enough to have the assistance of The Good Gym to help clear the weeds. This is a group of runners who, at the end of a run, like to take on a physical task in the community. We were waiting for them at 7 p.m. on two dark, wet Monday evenings, with enough spades and forks for eleven people. Over the weeks, two or three of us have weeded again, added manure and planted seven roses with more roses to plant when the worst of the cold weather is over. We look forward to the different blooms from June onwards.



## From the Kitchen of St. Mary's

### Vegetable Chow Mein

1 packet of egg noodles  
80zs cooked meat ( chicken, pork, beef or prawns )  
80zs frozen mixed vegetables  
1 onion and a few spring onions  
2 cloves of garlic, 2 tomatoes  
2 teaspoons of dark soy sauce  
1/2 teaspoon Chinese Five Spice

1. Cook noodles as directed on packet
2. Heat oil in pan and saute onions, garlic, tomatoes
3. Add meat, mixed vegetables, soy sauce, spice and seasonings

## WHERE IS THIS?



*This is a beautiful bas-relief of Christ being carried to the tomb. Do you know where it is in the church?*



## BOOKS DO FURNISH A ROOM

Mike Shaw

Lockdown confined us physically but books allowed us to roam, to travel even, to party and meet friends. Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time* was a perfect reminder of the world of events, work, parties and friendships as we followed Nicholas Jenkins' learning curve. Such narrative skill rearranges our mood showing us what we often miss in the actual moment of doing it. And we can travel too. Joseph Conrad's novels give us the genuine fear and excitement of the sea (*Typhoon*) or of foreign places (*Lord Jim*).

This makes you see a real piece of life and *Nostromo* gives us a wholly imaginary country, the immense exotic land of Costaguana with its remote Pacific port, its township and its railroad, its whitewashed church and its bronze equestrian statue, its vista of rocky, blue, snow-capped mountains eternally behind "at twilight country...with its high shadowy Sierra and its misty Campo for mute witnesses of events flowing from the passions of men short-sighted in good and evil." It is one of the greatest novels, and the least typical, in the English language.

So, I fear Lockdown has almost passed by, with little more effort than required to turn a page. But enough of that. There are things to do! 'Good heavens!' as archdeacon Grantly exclaimed in the Trollope novels I have also enjoyed reading and thoroughly recommend. To end with A Pub Quiz Question: Who is the only fictional character to die standing up?

## BEAUTIFY BALHAM

Balham is very lucky to have a special voluntary organisation set up to tidy the public realm. It is called Beautify Balham. You can learn more on its website, <https://beautifybalham.org/>. Volunteers can join the litter picks on the first Saturday of each month. Last summer saw the first Balham in Bloom competition, encouraging local people to make the most of their front gardens. Together with local councillors, Beautify Balham has also persuaded Network Rail to paint the railway bridge and are pushing for some lighting. Let's all work together to make Balham beautiful!

## PEN PORTRAIT: PAULINE LACEY

Pauline, who has been a churchwarden at St. Mary's for six years, was born in Jamaica, the eldest of seven children. She became close to her maternal grandmother, "Mama". Her parents' emigration to London in the early 1960's, followed afterwards by the children, was a culture



shock for them all. Her grandmother eventually joined the family here. Pauline went to school in Stockwell and then trained to be a nurse in a community hospital in Sevenoaks, Kent. She had decided at a young age to become a nurse and was encouraged by her grandmother. She much enjoyed her career and is still working two days a week as a District Nurse in Southwark. Pauline has now embarked on her training as a SPA (Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary), having obtained her Bishop's Certificate in 2019. Determination to succeed has played a large part in her life. Her interests include flower-arranging and dancing. She brings music and dance to some of her house-bound friends, whom she enjoys visiting. One date she never forgets is the date of her Confirmation. One of the hymns sung on that occasion was also sung at her grandmother's Confirmation, many years before: "I am here, Lord". We wish Pauline well as she continues her life of service to God and the wider community.

## BIG GREEN EVENT, 25TH SEPTEMBER

In advance of COP 26 (the 26th U.N. Climate Change Conference of the Parties) in Glasgow last November, St. Mary's hosted "A Big Green Event" in and around the church building. Many different voluntary organisations and craft enterprises were unearthed so that the widest possible representation from our Wandsworth community could be present. For visitors and participants alike, it was a day of exploration and inspiration. Networks were created and reinforced. Parents from Ravenstone School assisted Lillian Mathieson in the planning of the day. Our TSM children made wonderful installations, displayed inside the church, to represent the damage we are doing to our planet. It was a fun and busy day and we all learned something new to guide us on the right paths to a cleaner planet. Feedback from participants was enthusiastic and we think the day is best summed up by this message: "It was an amazing event....I think it really positioned St. Mary's and, through you, churches generally in the forefront on climate change....Though the buzz and chatter die down quickly, I think the day will have a lasting impact." We very much hope so!

## 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.



### THE GRAPEVINE EDITORIAL TEAM

Sarah McDermott, Marian Shaw, Wendy Newall, Lillian Mathieson, Hannah Sommers, and Brenda Turner

If you have any contributions for us at The Grapevine, please email them to

Sarah McDermott at [sarah.mcdermott@virgin.net](mailto:sarah.mcdermott@virgin.net)

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Please note that issues of "The Grapevine" are now available on the church website:

<https://tinyurl.com/StMaryGrapevine>



St Mary and  
St John the Divine  
BALHAM

St. Mary and St. John the Divine  
Balham High Road, SW12 9BS  
Telephone: 020 8673 1188  
[stmarybalham.org.uk](http://stmarybalham.org.uk)