

# THE GRAPEVINE

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

*Welcome to the March edition of the Grapevine. We are now in Lent, a time of self-discipline and a chance to deepen our relationship with God before celebrating the Great Feast of Easter. The Grapevine has been running for a year. Do you think the Grapevine is interesting and keeps our community informed on what is going on? If you have any views or ideas for articles please do contact the editorial team—we would be delighted to hear from you.*

## TRINITY ST. MARY'S NEWS

"Kindness, Unity, Courage" is the school motto, worked out by the children themselves and linked with the Gospels. This half term's exhortation is Forgiveness. Children and staff have come through the pandemic well and the areas where catch-up is needed have been identified. Pastoral care at the school is second to none.

The school's links with our church are very strong. Several members of the congregation are school governors. Mtr. Berni encourages the staff to bring the children into the church during the week and a group visits on Thursday afternoons to explore the building and make discoveries. Even the vestments have been tried for size!

Since the start of the pandemic, links have been made with some of the independent schools, e.g. Hornsby House, who brought meals for the staff; and Emanuel School, who invite Year 5 for weekly Science lessons. Emanuel's bus fetches the children, who much enjoy this whole experience.

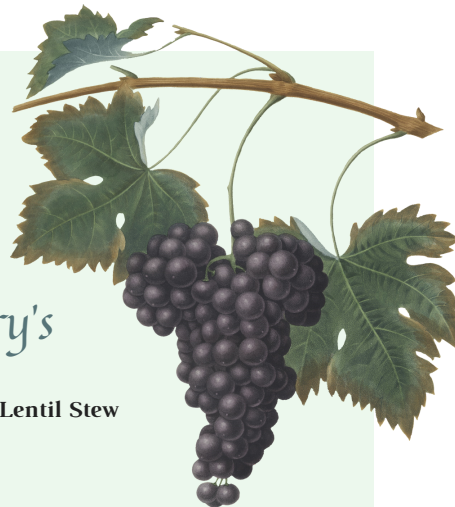
Parents' coffee mornings are held on Fridays in the Music Room or the garden at the church. This has become a popular event, strengthening the link between school and church, also enabling parents to get to know each other. We are hoping soon to start up again Mystery Readers, when members of the congregation read to classes in the school. Watch this space!

The school has started raising funds for a new playground, so please look out for their publicity and be generous!

## BALHAM BRIDGE

Have you seen the beautiful railway bridge in Balham? Every evening it is lit up with changing colours – a fine sight for Balham. The Mayor of Wandsworth officially turned on the lights and thanked the technical teams, local councillors, Beautify Balham and particularly the people of Balham who successfully campaigned for a bridge we can be proud of.

## From the Kitchen of St. Mary's



### Lenten Mushroom Lentil Stew

Serves 3

8oz mushrooms  
1 onion  
1 large carrot  
3 cups vegetable stock  
3/4 cup green lentils  
Dried Sage and Thyme

Sauté the onion, carrots and mushrooms in a large pot until soft.

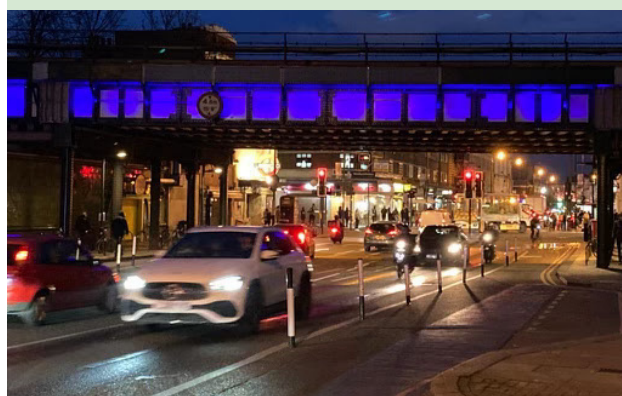
Add the stock, lentils and herbs and seasoning.

Simmer for 30 minutes until the lentils are cooked.

## WHERE IS THIS?



This is a small sample of original stencilled frieze from 1882. Do you know where it is in the church?



Brenda Turner

Although you might think this all sounds rather depressing, I would really recommend it as a beautifully written novel of love and loss but also so much more.

*Spot the literary character!*



*Answers in the next issue!*

## PEN PORTRAIT: DIANE HOLMES

Born and bred in Balham, our kind and self-effacing church warden, Diane, has shown leadership qualities throughout her life. She was baptised as a baby in St. Mary's Church, where her parents had been married. She attended St. Mary's Primary School (now TSM), where she remembers the wych elm tree in the middle of the playground. This spreading tree, which gave shelter from the sun on hot days, exists no longer but is illustrated in the stained glass window in church. She fondly recalls her teacher, Miss Ellis, who taught her handwriting in the italic style (using rectangular chalk on the blackboard). Diane then attended Garratt Green School (now Burntwood), where she eventually became Captain of Rosalind House.

Diane trained as a teacher at Whitelands College. She was encouraged to take up teaching by a family friend, Eileen Serbutt, who was then the Sunday School teacher. Diane's B.A. Degree in History and Religious Education and the completion of a PGCE led her to secondary school teaching in her subjects. Her main jobs were teaching at girls' schools in Thornton Heath and Shirley, where she became Head of History and a Head of Year.



As a young girl, Diane joined the Brownies and the Girl Guides. In due course she became a Guide leader. She was asked if she would temporarily become a Brownie leader - and she never left the job! She has received the award given for over forty years of service to the Girl Guide Movement. Today, there are 25 Brownies in her pack and the numbers are growing, giving credit to Diane's leadership skills. Her work with the Brownies enabled Diane to see children in a more positive light when she was having a hard time as a school teacher!

Diane met her late husband, Keith, at St. Mary's. Keith was church warden here more than once, his last incumbent being Mtr. Wilma, and Diane became a deputy church warden. This must have been the training ground for her current post as an efficient church warden. Keith and Diane enjoyed taking holidays in Suffolk and on a Greek island called Thassos. As we know, Diane enjoys cooking, while gardening and reading books (especially historical novels) fill the rest of her time, once church duties are fulfilled.

THE GRAPEVINE EDITORIAL TEAM

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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>



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