

SEPTEMBER 2023 - NOVEMBER 2023

DENHAM PARISH NEWS

DENHAM AIR CADETS
ST MARY'S FESTIVAL
ALUMNI 4



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Cover photo: By St Mary's War Memorial

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FROM THE EDITOR

How do you start something new? A new recipe / school / essay / job / life after loss? Maybe you talk and listen to other people, or you look online or read a book. Maybe you have a vague idea and then write lists (lots of them) to guide you through. But sometimes it's just tough and it really helps to have someone alongside you. One of the ways my mum coped after my dad passed away was by walking. Her lovely friend Maggie asked if she would like to go for a walk with her, so she did, and they continued to meet regularly over the coming months. In time, my mum started to send us updates on the amazing number of 'steps' she had walked, frequently topping 10,000 a day!

In this autumnal issue of Denham Parish News, we hear from Tim Keller who was himself 'walking through the valley of the shadow of death' (p.24) and from Brene Brown's beautiful book, "Atlas of the Heart," as she skilfully illuminates the subtle variations in our emotions during challenging times (p.26). Please join us for a special 'remembering loved ones' service on 26th November.

Stephen, our organist, is a shining example of how to 'start something new' with a real zest for life and completing new challenges (p.16). Staying on a musical theme, Jill sends out the offer for you to start something new and join the choir (p.18) and there is a short musical quiz (p.12).

Brian, our roving reporter catches up with our local Air Cadets (p.14) whilst we go down memory lane with Rosemary Doran (p.8) and Sheila Crunden (p.10). Azita updates us on the events leading up to her ordination as priest and the joy she is finding in serving our community (p.4). With good book ideas (p.30), Golden Rose Awards (p.13) and photos of our recent prayer space (p.20), we hope there is something for everyone!

May I also extend a very warm welcome to join us Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th September for our special 900-year anniversary events – please see back page for more details, it will be fun!



Blessings,

Cathy Macqueen

magazine@denhamparish.church

MESSAGE FROM AZITA JABBARI TRAINING CURATE



Dear friends,

The past year has been an incredible journey, filled with love, support, and the grace of God. I still can't believe that it has been nearly a year since I embarked on this path, and what a transformative year it has been. Recently, on the 23rd of June, I was ordained as a priest, marking a significant milestone in my life. Before the ordination, I underwent a period of preparation, to reflect, pray, and deepen my understanding of my calling. This time of solitude and spiritual contemplation was crucial in preparing me for the responsibilities ahead.

During the ordination, I made solemn vows and commitments. These vows encompassed my dedication to serving God and His people, my willingness to uphold the teachings of the Church, and my commitment to a life of integrity, humility, and continuous spiritual growth. It was a moment of profound surrender and submission to the will of God.

On the following Sunday, I had the privilege of leading Holy Communion for the first time at St. Mary's Church. It was an immensely heartwarming and fulfilling experience that touched the depths of my soul.

Some have asked me what being ordained as a priest truly means.

Does it make me a proper vicar? To me, being ordained as a priest means that I am called to be a faithful servant of God, a conduit of His grace, and a source of spiritual guidance and support for those entrusted to my care.



The weight on my shoulders feels heavier now, not in a burdensome way, but in a profound sense of responsibility. I am aware that the role of a priest is one that requires great sacrifice, humility, and a willingness to put the needs of others before my own. It is a vocation that demands constant self-reflection, growth, and a deepening of my own spiritual journey.

With this new role, I am entrusted with the task of leading worship, Holy Communion, and providing pastoral care to the community. I have been called to be a source of solace, hope, and inspiration to those who seek guidance and support during times of joy, sorrow.



Yet, along with the weight of responsibility comes a sense of fulfilment and joy. The opportunity to be a vessel of God's love, to witness the transformative power of faith, and to be present in moments of profound spiritual significance is a privilege that I do not take lightly. It is a calling that requires me to continually seek God's wisdom, guidance, and strength, knowing that I cannot fulfil this role on my own.

As I embark on this new chapter as a priest, I am reminded of the words of Jesus when He said, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." These words encapsulate the essence of my calling. I am called to emulate the selflessness of Christ, to be a servant leader, and to humbly walk alongside those who seek a deeper connection with God.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to you. It is because of your love, support, and prayers that I stand before you today as an ordained priest. Your presence and participation in this

journey have been invaluable, and I am truly blessed to have such a caring and vibrant community to serve.

As we move forward together, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. With your continued support, we can deepen our spiritual connection, foster a sense of unity, and create a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and loved. I am committed to walking alongside each of you, sharing in your joys, providing solace in times of difficulty, and guiding you on your spiritual path.

Together, let us embrace the future with hope and enthusiasm. I am honoured to serve you, and I am confident that through our collective efforts, we will experience growth, transformation, and a profound sense of God's presence among us. Thank you for your unwavering support, and I look forward to the journey ahead, as we continue to grow together in faith, love, and service.

Azita



17th CENTURY NUN'S PRAYER

Lord, you know better than I know myself
that I am growing older and one day will be old.
Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must
say something on every subject
and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to
straighten out everybody's affairs.

Make me thoughtful but not moody;
helpful but not bossy.
With my vast store of wisdom
it seems a pity not to use it all;
but you know, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details,
give me wings to get to the point.
Seal my lips on my aches and pains,
they are increasing and love of rehearsing them
is becoming sweeter as the years go by.
I dare not ask for grace enough
to enjoy the tales of others pains,
but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory,
but for growing humility and a lessening cocksureness
when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others.
Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally
I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet;
I do not want to be a saint, some of them are so hard to live with,
but a sour old person is one of the
crowning works of the devil.
Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places
and talent in unexpected people,
and give me O Lord the grace to tell them so. AMEN.

Thank you to Joyce Hobson who shared this prayer with us.

LOOKING AFTER ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD

CHRISTOPH LINDNER, RECTOR



While many village churchyards are now closed, we are blessed with an open churchyard that has burial space for years to come. It is a place of **beauty**, reflecting our Creator God in different ways all through the year. It is a place of **peace**, inviting us to stop, to rest, to know the presence of God in the stillness. It is like an open **history book**, telling the story of Denham and the people who have lived and died here through the centuries. It is a place of treasured **memories** of people who played an important part in our lives. It is a place of **reverence**: uncounted people have laid their loved ones to rest here, have grieved and prayed. It is a place of **hope**. The symbol of the cross reminds us that God loved us so much that he gave his only Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us so that we could trust in him and have eternal life. Our churchyard will not remain a resting place for ever – one day the dead will rise to new life.

Special places need special care

It needs all of us to look after our churchyard – our church community, the families of those who are buried here, and the local community. Every community needs rules for how they will live together and get along. Therefore each diocese issues clear regulations about churchyards. They explain what kinds of materials can be used for headstones and memorial plaques and what kinds of



words and symbols are appropriate on them. They also set out which decorations can be put on a grave or alongside a plaque, and for how long. This ensures that our churchyard remains a harmonious place of peace, that it's safe for all and helps us to look after the churchyard. Our church office has the full text of the churchyard regulations and can email them or print them for you.

Remembering a special person

Did you know that St Mary's has a Book of Remembrance, in which the name of a loved person can be inscribed? You could also adopt one of our beautiful churchyard roses in their memory. Contact our church office to find out more.

Losing someone we love is a painful experience. Many people have found it helpful to be part of a supportive group. **THE HAVEN** is our monthly bereavement drop-in, where everyone is welcome. Find out more at www.denhamparish.church/haven.

MEMORIES OF A DENHAM GIRL

BY ROSEMARY DORAN

PART 2: COUNTRY LIFE



Rectory Lodge in the 1940s and 50s had no modern facilities. Our one outside toilet was an Elsan model but my father, Jack Wilkins, made a very posh seat for the unit and it was emptied once a week by a rather 'aromatic' black lorry, which was always given a wide berth!



Our only lights were candles and a brightly polished brass paraffin lamp. Imagine needing to visit the toilet when it was dark, and the wind blew the candle out, particularly in winter. In the scullery part of the kitchen, there was a large boiler resting on blocks. Under the boiler a fire was lit to provide hot water – our only modern convenience was lovely sweet piped cold water, from Rickmansworth Water Company, ending in one tap in the stoneware kitchen sink. Drainage from the sink

was primitive, just a pipe through the wall allowing the wastewater to flow down the garden path towards the vegetable and flower garden!

Apart from the boiler our other antiquity was the black range, which needed to be blackened to keep it in good condition. All the cooking and baking by my mother was done on this range. Not far from the cottage was a small spinney where we could forage for wood to keep the boiler and range well provided for.

Our living room was in the centre of the cottage and my father extended the small fireplace in the centre of the middle wall. This radiated out a lot of heat to the living room and the bedrooms on either side. We considered this to be a primitive form of central heating!

Every Sunday my mother and I would walk to St Mary's Church for the morning and evening services and I was expected to go to Sunday school in the afternoon. Wearing my best dress all Sunday was a real problem as I had very few presentable dresses and getting one messed up was a crime.

At last, the gas company began to install gas pipes along Rectory Lane. Can you imagine the excitement; we

could have gas lighting, a cooker, water boiler and even a gas iron. A gas light was installed in the kitchen and two in the living room. The gas cooker replaced the old black range; although I wonder whether perhaps my mother was a little nostalgic about losing the old range, which she fully understood and on which she prepared lovely meals particularly at Christmas.

Before the gas iron arrived, my mother had frequently to heat up the iron on the range whilst doing the ironing. I still have that iron, now in use as a bookend on a bookshelf!

We were also delighted by the new large gas water boiler which, by the flick of a switch and a lighted match, provided hot water within an hour or so. Prior to the gas installation, filling the tin bath each Friday was a real chore, using kettles, saucepans etc. from the scullery boiler and heating water on the range. On bath nights my mother, my cousin (who lived with us) and myself used the same water – my father used the facilities at the police station as he was a Special Constable. Being last in line usually meant I had lukewarm, rather murky water!

As a family we loved listening to music. I had a wind-up gramophone and we also had a radio that required a very heavy lead oxide battery, this frequently required charging. My father would hang the heavy battery from his handlebars and cycle to **Walt Baker's garage** for the battery to be charged and, of course, a pleasant time was spent chatting with Walt whilst leaning on the fence by the Misbourne stream.



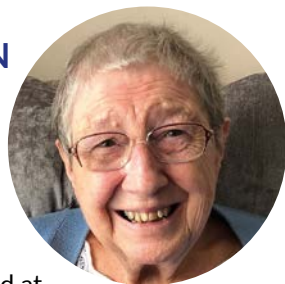
In the summer I would often sit with my gramophone at the end of the garden listening to classical music and reading a book. It seemed that the cows, in the field at the end of the garden, also enjoyed music, as they would gather, with heads over the fence, apparently listening!

Another delight was my own piece of garden where I could grow vegetables and stand proudly at the backdoor clutching a bunch of carrots or some broad beans. Sometimes I could even beat my dad with his offerings! In later years I was given a boxer dog, Sally, and we had a hard job to stop her rampaging through our vegetable plots.

Since Part 1 of this story was told, Rosemary has been able to sit once again under the apple tree in the garden of her Wilkins grandparents' home in Old Mill Road.



GOD IN THE LIFE OF SHEILA CRUNDEN AS TOLD AT CAFÉ CHURCH ON SUNDAY 2 JULY 2023



For many years Sheila was supported by Denham Parish Church in her work for Wycliffe Bible Translators. But she has known one member of our church since her teenage years: Marion Francis was a good friend of Sheila's guide captain. After she became a Christian that guide captain invited her to her church, where Marion was a member!

When the American preacher Billy Graham came to London in the 1950s, it was a hot topic of discussion among her friends. They wanted to find out for themselves, hired a coach and attended one of his events. Sheila felt God was present as Billy Graham spoke and she was determined to find out more. She started to read the Bible, became a Christian herself and has never regretted it. Looking back on her Sunday school days she remembers that the people she was most impressed by were missionaries - she could see Christ in them and wanted what they had! Already, during her school days, God was preparing her for her later work of translating the Bible: In secondary school a teacher encouraged her to study classical Greek, which later helped her with the study of New Testament Greek.

While at university she attended a talk by a member of Wycliffe Bible Translators, who worked in a remote area of Brazil. That sowed a seed, which

eventually led to Sheila being trained at a bible school and sent out to Africa as a bible translator. She travelled by boat from Liverpool and the farewell from her family was hard. Once in Africa, all communication was by post. Once, British postal workers went on strike for seven weeks!

Sheila began to work with Monica, who is still a friend, to translate the Bible into the Bassar language - first in Ghana, then in Togo. This was (and is) pioneer work: there was no linguistically based writing system for the language, so the first job was to develop one. In fact, Sheila's first role was to run adult literacy classes.



One early member of the translating team was Samuel Nabine. He was a tailor by profession and loved making beautiful clothes. When God called him to join the translating team, he realised that God wanted him to "sew robes of righteousness" for his people!

1980 was a critical year for Sheila. Her father became unwell, but his condition didn't seem to be too concerning. The next thing she learnt (due to the long delays in communication) was that he had died. She did manage to travel back for the funeral. During the same year, Sheila had started to work as a translator. With a team she was working on St Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth. As she studied the text in detail to translate the meaning, she realised she didn't know the Bible as well as she thought, so during her home leave she took a few more courses!



Before she left for Africa, Sheila had promised her mother that when she was too frail to look after herself, she would consider it God's call to return and care for her and so in 1987 she returned to the UK. At the time Sheila

thought this would only be for two or three years as her work in Togo was so important! In the end it was seven years, but Sheila experienced God's blessing during that time and she was able to show her mother the completed New Testament in Bassar - the result of many years of her life.

After returning to Togo she became a translation consultant, helping other teams with their translation work. Eventually she needed to come home, because she was - in Sheila's own words - "too old". Before she returned to the UK, she recommended that another Samuel, Samuel Kpagheri, would carry on her work and he is one of our mission partners today. He was part of the team that completed the Old Testament and in 2015 it was dedicated. Like Sheila before him, he is a translation consultant today and the work of giving every person the Bible in their heart language continues.

Watch the full interview here:
www.denhamparish.church/sheila

Here is an example of the fascinating work of bible translation from the Wycliffe website:
www.wycliffe.org.uk/story/love

**Wycliffe
Bible
Translators**

What kind of music does God listen to?

'Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs'

(Colossian 3:16, NIV version)

Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other... And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

(Colossians 3:16, The Message version)

The Psalms are filled with references to instruments and singing.

The Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134) were sung by Jewish pilgrims as they travelled up to Jerusalem for the great feasts.

The shortest Psalm is Psalm 117 at just two verses long.

Hebrew Bible version

1. אֲהַלְלוּ אֶת יְהוָה כָּל גּוֹיִם ;
שְׁבַחְוּהוּ כָּל הָאֲמִים.
2. בִּי גִבֹּר עָלֵינוּ חֲסִדּוֹ
וְאַמֶּת יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם.
הַלְלוּיָהּ.

King James Version

*O praise the LORD, all ye nations:
praise him, all ye people.*

*For his merciful kindness is great
toward us: and the truth of the LORD
endureth for ever.*

Praise ye the LORD.

When is music first mentioned in the Bible?

Genesis 4:21

'His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes.'

Who was the first woman to sing in the Bible?

Miriam – she leads Hebrew women in singing, dancing, and playing drums

(Exodus 15: 20-21).

What is the oldest song in the Bible?

The first song of praise is by Moses
(Deuteronomy 32:1-43).

And finally...

JS Bach said,

"All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub."

He headed his compositions: "JJ" – "Jesus Juva", which means "Jesus help me". He ended them "SDG" – "Soli Dei gratia", which means "To God alone the praise".

Do you have a favourite hymn or chorus? What words of praise will you sing today?

B&M Care Golden Rose Awards, UK

By White Plains Care Home www.bmcare.co.uk/our-homes/white-plains/

The B&M Care Golden Rose Awards celebrate the outstanding contributions of staff members across the B&M Care family in the UK. The Rose Model is the framework used to provide the best possible care for residents with dementia. The Rose Model Ambassador Award recognizes individuals who exemplify the values of B&M Care, and who enhance the lives of residents.

On Saturday 24th June, residents at White Plains Care Home, Syd and Janet, had an unforgettable evening as they accompanied the home's Engagement Lead, Wendy Jefferies, to the 2023 B&M Care Golden Rose Awards UK, at Shendish Manor Hotel, Herts. Wendy was nominated for the B&M Care Rose Model Ambassador Award, and to everyone's delight, she won. Wendy's dedication and passion have made her an exceptional ambassador for B&M Care. She is an integral part of White Plains Care Home, creating a warm and inclusive environment, facilitating residents to not just survive but to live a thriving and flourishing life.

Syd and Janet were thrilled to attend the awards ceremony with Wendy. They see her as not just an Engagement Lead, but also a dear friend who brings joy and happiness to their lives. When Wendy's name was called as the winner, the room erupted in applause. Wendy thanked the residents

and her colleagues for their support, acknowledging her work as a true calling to make a positive difference in the lives of the elderly residents she cares for. Her dedication and the affection from residents like Syd and Janet serve as a shining example of the positive impact that caregivers can have on the lives of those they care for.

The event reminded everyone of the immeasurable value of fostering meaningful connections in the realm of care, making it a celebration not just of Wendy's individual achievement, but of the collective spirit and compassion that thrives at White Plains Care Home.



2370 (DENHAM) SQUADRON AIR TRAINING CORPS BY BRIAN O'REGAN



In 1938 Air Commodore Sir John Chamier came up with a plan to form an Air Defence Cadet Corps (ADCC). His idea was to attract and train young men who had an interest in aviation, from all over the country. He planned to set up squadrons of young cadets in as many towns and cities as possible and ask local people to run them.



Towards the end of 1940 the government realised the true value of the work done by the ADCC and agreed to take over its control. This meant a large number of changes to the corps and brought about the birth of a completely new organisation, called the Air Training Corps. On the 5 February 1941 the Air Training Corps (ATC) was officially established, with King George VI as Air Commodore-in-Chief, issuing a Royal Warrant setting out the Corps' aims. 2370 (Denham) Squadron was formed the same year, based at Denham Aerodrome off Tilehurst Lane.

The number of young men responding to this new ATC was spectacular. Within the first month the size of the old ADCC had virtually doubled to more than 400 squadrons and after 12 months it was about 8 times as big.

The new ATC badge was devised by Air Commodore Chamier with the motto *Venture Adventure*. Each squadron has its own motto and Denham's is *Contend to Win*.

I recently joined the squadron at one of their twice-weekly meetings. It was the evening of the formal inspection carried out every two months. Half of the squadron's 50 cadets attended and lined up to be scrutinised by the commanding officer, Flight Lieutenant Michael Easter. Cadets are typically aged from 13 to 18, and I was impressed by the discipline and respect they all showed. There was no whispering or fidgeting or shuffling of boots during the twenty-five minutes as Flt Lt Easter gave close inspection to each one. The standard is high – as Flt Lt Easter spotted a tie not perfect, a dusty belt, boots not gleaming in the evening sun. The cadets listened respectfully as everything was recorded on a marking sheet to be posted on the noticeboard. Perfection is hard to attain, but all aspire to it.

The inspection over, I met with four of the cadets. I wanted to find out how they took to the discipline which is a corner stone of our serving forces. The responses had common themes.

Cadet Gagea said, "My mum is delighted as my bedroom is no longer a war-zone!" The ATC encourages help in the community and he volunteers at the Chiltern Open Air Museum.

Cadet Numemyi manages her time better and learned new skills such as first aid. She added, "Before joining the group, I was uncomfortable socialising. Now I am more confident and happier in myself."

Cadet Marshall was convinced of the benefits of being a member of the squadron – "I have no regrets about joining and want to become an RAF pilot."

Cadet Warrant Officer Naughton has been with the ATC for six years and has earned an ATC pilot scholarship. He said "I enjoy all aspects of the ATC, but particularly fieldcraft." (This is the skills you need to survive and navigate yourself around outdoors, in unfamiliar places). The discipline required of the cadets has helped Cadet Marshall take pride in himself.

Cadets sometimes return as volunteer adult members and Flt Lt Michael Easter did just that. He has a management role for an engineering consultancy and his time as a cadet and subsequent volunteer helped him develop leadership skills benefitting his career. He is a qualified pilot instructor and although the ATC is not an RAF

recruiting organisation, cadets can get a 12-hour flying scholarship from the RAF. Nationally, the RAF provides funding of £12.5m for flying activities. All cadets can experience the thrill of flying a GROB Tutor T1 at RAF Benson, even at the age of 13! Some go on to fly solo. But there are many more activities on offer including rock climbing. There are four week-long summer camps cadets can sign up for, at RAF airfields such as Shawbury and Henlow. These summer camps are heavily subsidised so that parents only have to pay £60 for a week-long all-inclusive camp.

The ATC philosophy is to be open to all youngsters and so subscriptions are affordable at £1.50 per night. Most of the uniforms are also provided on-loan by the squadron. There are two intakes of new cadets a year, in March and early autumn. I was most impressed by what I found with this group of young people. Confident without being arrogant, courteous, polite and proud of being a committed member of 2370 (Denham) Squadron ATC.

To learn more about the ATC and how to join as a 13-17 year old, use one of the contact details below.

Tel: 01895 834522
(Monday and Thursday evenings)

email: 2370@rafac.mod.gov.uk
www.facebook.com/2370Sqn/

"Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray."
Proverbs 10:17

INTRODUCING STEPHEN ARMSTRONG

BY CHRIS MACQUEEN

"It's about wanting to remain at heart as young as I've ever been, but with life experience, so I don't make so many mistakes! I feel that I've been gifted this life and – like in the parable of the talents – I don't want to be the one who only offered the one talent back."

I'm chatting with Stephen Armstrong and spread out before me are two thick ring binders that document Stephen's life to date. In one is his meticulous record of all the notable things he has experienced over the years: countries and cities visited, airlines flown, plays, concerts, museums, sporting events, movies, books, restaurants, historic places – page after page. It's an impressive record of a life full of rich and diverse experiences. Even just one category – books read – exceeds my own tally many times over. Stephen reads four books every month, dividing each into daily portions to ensure he completes them all at the month's end, before starting a new set of four the following month. "Recording everything like this orders it in your mind and helps inspire you to keep going – it reminds you of what you haven't done and spurs you on", he says.

In the other binder is an equally detailed record of all the pieces of music Stephen has performed or conducted – literally hundreds of them. All the major orchestral works are

there. I find the sheer volume astonishing, given that any conductor must have a very good grasp of a concerto or symphony to be able to direct each section of the orchestra. I ask him how he manages to learn so many musical works to that high standard. "You learn to be able to look at a musical score and immediately hear how the music goes in your head", he says. Stephen is clearly a very accomplished musician, and we are blessed that from the beginning of this year he formally became the organist and leader of the choir here at St Mary's, driving over to Denham from his home near Cambridge on Sundays to support us.

Stephen was born in London. Music was present in his life from the very beginning. His mother played the organ at the Mothers' Union, and at the age of four Stephen was already having piano lessons. It was after gaining a place at the Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe, under the tuition of a gifted organ scholar there, that his musical career really began to take off. He secured the organ scholarship at Queen's College, Cambridge, and threw himself into the musical life of the university. After graduating he stayed on in Cambridge leading a choir called the Fairhaven Singers and starting a musical festival in a local village that was later relocated to Ely Cathedral. It was during this time that he chose orchestral conducting as his main love.

After a few years a friend who was now heading up music at the Royal Grammar School (RGS) back in High Wycombe offered him an interim position as deputy head of music, and a permanent teaching job followed. Stephen continues to teach piano at the RGS, mostly online since COVID. He also directed the High Wycombe Choral Society and Orchestra for a total of 38 years – adding many pages to his conducting playbook. Since then his latest venture has been to establish a new choir in Cambridge, called aLUMNI. We attended their Carols by Candlelight in December, and their concert of English and French choral music in March and can highly recommend them!

During our conversation Stephen's Christian faith surfaces from time to time. His sense of God's all-pervading, loving presence is clearly a strong foundation for his life. A life that he is determined to live to the full – during Sunday lunch with us he learned that our son Tim was working not far away from his home and booked an evening with him to watch speedway racing, and he also encouraged us to consider moving to Cambridgeshire by finding a couple of lovely homes on Rightmove for us. And then, like a whirlwind, he jumped into his car and was off.



Stephen Armstrong

Stephen's love of music is evident as he tells his story, but what really brings his face alive is when describing the joy of seeing his gifted students go on to fulfil their musical potential – soloing in a major concert or securing a musical scholarship at a top institution. He beams and delights in describing their achievements like a proud father.

Watch Stephen in action as he conducts aLUMNI 4 at St Mary's festival, Sunday 10th September, 4.30pm in St Mary's Church. More information on page 35.

Book your ticket at www.denhamparish.church/festival or call our church office.

SINGING IN THE ST MARY'S CHURCH CHOIR

BY JILL SANDS

My earliest memories are of singing in school. Our singing teacher told me at a very tender age that I could not sing. When it came to prize giving, I could stand on the front row for the singing part of the ceremony and could open my mouth, but not let anything come out!

However, undaunted I persevered. Believing in myself I learnt to play the piano as a youngster which gave me a good grounding in music. In later life I took up the trumpet and enjoy fortnightly practices with Peter when we play along together. My dream is to play at the Albert Hall but seriously I just love the sound of the trumpet. Something must be going right!

I joined the choir at my local church but found it hard to sing in a small choir with a strict organist who was not very encouraging. Sharon Williams said "Why don't you come to my church" and so I ventured forth. Christoph immediately spoke to me and welcomed me. He introduced me to the other person in the pew and I didn't look back. Then Louise encouraged me into the choir. She gently let me find my feet and was so believing in me which allowed me to blossom and reach my potential, for which I will be ever grateful. Thank you so much Louise, I owe you a lot.

Now we have Stephen to keep us on our toes. We are learning new anthems and other items to sing. We have new members in the choir as it has ever changed and evolved. At present we have more sopranos so Natalie and I often join the altos to even up the choir stalls.

We are a friendly bunch who not only support each other in our singing but in our personal lives too, new members are always welcome. We practise before and after the Sunday service with Stephen and once a month on a Thursday evening with Christoph.

Singing is good for your lungs and health in general and it is fun singing with others in a choir. Why not come and give it a try?



What's Happening

AT DENHAM PARISH CHURCH?



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rector@denhamparish.church

HARVEST *Thanksgiving*

Sunday 1 October

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

10.45am
St Mary's

Sunday 12 November

Remembering LOVED ONES

Sunday
26 November
2.30pm



Prayer Space

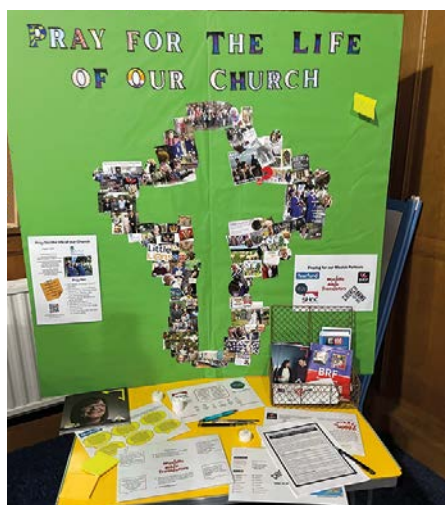
by Kath Sole

Every year between Ascension Day and Pentecost, Christians around the world unite in a “global wave of prayer,” with the Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative. This year at St. Mary’s the Vestry was transformed for three days into an interactive prayer space, with Church members invited to sign up and come to pray for an hour. Some people came on their own and others as a group but all came to spend time in the presence of God and to engage in prayer in a new way.

There were ten ‘stations’, each with a specific theme and creative ways to inspire prayer. For example, the prayer station for our local community included a map of our local area and drawing pins to mark the road or area that had been prayed for. Another station had a mirror for participants to contemplate Psalm 139, part of which says: *Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother’s womb. I thank you, High God - you’re breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvellously made!* (The Message)

Some stations were creative in nature where participants could pray and thank God while colouring a cross or celebrate God’s creation by making a playdough model of something from nature. There was also a reading corner with a selection of Bibles and inspirational books to allow quiet contemplation and meditation on the Word of God.

I spent one hour with my Bible book club in the space. We started by praying together then went to the



station that most inspired us. It was a beautiful experience to be together in prayer. When the hour was up, I was left wanting more and was glad I had signed up for another hour on my own. The hour on my own was incredibly special and peaceful. One special moment was when I put lectio365* on my phone and chose to colour in a cross whilst I listened. The experience helped me to really focus my mind on prayer and the different stations gave me inspiration on what to pray for.



Over the three days many people came to pray in the Vestry and were inspired by their time in prayer. One participant said it was 'a wonderful experience, but the hour went too fast.' Another said it was 'calming, inspiring and informative.' It was a new experience for some, and one participant said that they felt 'daunted at first', but once inside the space she felt it was 'wonderful and engaging and did not want to leave.'

Alongside the prayer space, there were three facilitated prayer sessions in the Church. This was a chance to come together as a larger group to pray and worship. On Saturday 27th May the group session was aimed at encouraging families to pray and included refreshments, music and a special Cheeky Pandas video.



If you would like to know more about prayer, perhaps you have never prayed or you have prayed all of your life but would like to explore new ways of praying, here are some helpful resources:

www.trypraying.org

*Lectio 365 app www.24-7prayer.com/resource/lectio-365/
(available in various languages)

www.24-7prayer.com/how-to-pray/help-me

You can also follow the St Mary's Denham prayer trail in the churchyard all year long.

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24.06.23 Simon Michael Steptoe and Amanda Michelle Lomas
22.07.23 James Daniel Lee and Jade Sian Mary Ratchford

BAPTISMS

07.05.23 Nathan Sigurdur Williams
07.05.23 Jonathan Sigurdur Williams
28.05.23 Theodore Taylor Swift
28.05.23 Everlie-Rae Swift
04.06.23 Michelle Jayne Scott
04.06.23 Amanda Chelsea Godbolt
04.06.23 Lily Hope Godbolt
04.06.23 Leila Celeste Godbolt
04.06.23 Louie David Wood

BURIALS

18.04.23 Audrey Baker
07.04.23 Rita Loris Bishop
01.05.23 David Anthony Webster



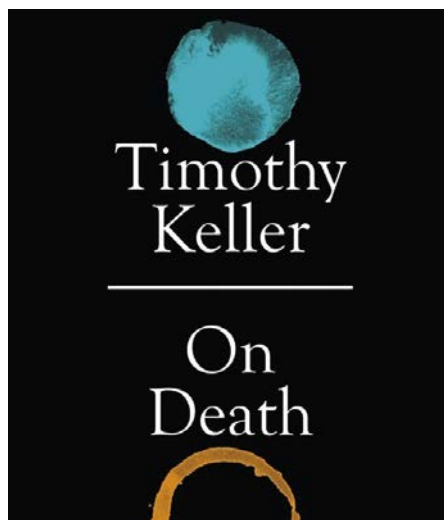
TIM KELLER: ON DEATH

Extracts from Tim Keller: *On Death* (2020). Tim Keller was a Christian pastor of a church in New York and author. He died of pancreatic cancer this year.

Death is the Great Interruption, tearing loved ones away from us, or us from them. Death is the Great Insult, because it reminds us, as Shakespeare said, that we are worm food. It is not the way life is supposed to be, and our grief in the face of death acknowledges that.

Modern people write and talk endlessly about love, especially romantic love, which eludes many. But no one can avoid death. It has been said that all the wars and plagues have never raised the death toll—it has always been one for each and every person. Yet we seem far less prepared for it than our ancestors.

The human race as a whole can't *not* fear and hate death. It is a unique and profound problem. Religion gave people tools to help in facing our most formidable foe, and modern secularism has not come up with anything to compensate for its loss. Rather than



living in fear of death, we should see death as spiritual smelling salts that will awaken us out of our false belief that we will live forever. When you are at a funeral, especially one for a friend or a loved one, listen to God speaking to you, telling you that everything in life is temporary except for His love. This is reality. Smelling salts are very disagreeable, but they are also very effective. But as you're waking from your illusions, be at peace, because here's what Jesus Christ offers to us if by faith we have him as our Saviour: If Jesus died so you don't

have to pay for anything in your past and he has risen to be your living Saviour, then what can death do to you?

Christians have a hope that can be “rubbed into” our sorrow and anger the way salt is rubbed into meat. Neither stifling grief nor giving way to despair is right. Neither repressed anger nor unchecked rage is good for your soul. But pressing hope into your grief makes you wise, compassionate, humble, and tender-hearted. Grieve fully yet with profound hope! This will give you more strength than stoicism and more freedom to lament than hopelessness.

While people have many reactions to being in the presence of death, there are two opposite mistakes we can make when we’re in the presence of death: One is to despair too much; the other is to shrug it off and not learn what we should from it. Neither will be of much benefit to you, so we must do as the Bible tells us to do in the face of death: We should grieve, yet we should have hope; we should wake up from our denial and discover a source of peace that will not leave us; and finally, we should laugh and sing. Grieve with hope; wake up and be at peace; laugh in the face of death, and sing for joy at what’s coming. If you have Jesus Christ by the hand, and he’s got you by the hand, you can sing.

Many people are unaware of the condemnation that has been pronounced over them, or else they are unacquainted with its magnitude, except perhaps for a nagging sense of unease. When facing death, however, our enemy allows us to see the full scope of our cosmic treason, and what answer do we have then? Only this—that Jesus has taken our punishment and set us free, and there is now no condemnation left for us. Rejoice!

George Herbert says, “Death used to be an executioner, but the Gospel makes him just a gardener.” Death used to be able to crush us, but now all death can do is plant us in God’s soil so we become something extraordinary.

Remember that when you walk into the valley of the shadow of death, it is Jesus, the Shepherd, who has led you there. He has comfort to give you and ways to strengthen, deepen, and grow you that would be otherwise impossible. So, give thanks for his presence, refuse self-pity, and seek him in prayer even when you don’t feel him present (because he is). Jesus himself walked into death, solitary and rejected by everyone (Matt. 27:46) so when we face the death of loved ones or even our own, we will never be alone.

[Please join us for our service
“Remembering Loved Ones” on
Sunday, 26 November at 2.30 pm.](#)

THOUGHTS FROM 'ATLAS OF THE HEART'

PART 4: PLACES WE GO WHEN WE ARE HURTING

BY JANET ALLEN

Brene Brown's beautiful book, "Atlas of the Heart," skilfully illuminates the subtle variations in our emotions during challenging times. Rather than merely labelling our feelings as "sad," she encourages precise descriptions to foster understanding, healing, and growth. Hopelessness, despair, sadness, grief, and anguish each hold unique significance.

This article summarises Brene's thoughts on hopelessness and despair, offering valuable skills to prevent sinking too deeply. We explore ways to navigate these emotions with resilience and strength.



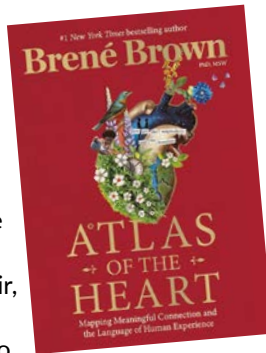
Hope

To understand hopelessness and despair, we have to dig deeper into hope. We need hope like we need air. To live without hope is to risk suffocating on hopelessness and despair, to risk being crushed by the belief that there is no way out of what is holding us back, no way to get what we desperately need. But hope is not what most of us think it is. It's not a warm fuzzy emotion that fills us with a sense of possibility. Hope is a way of thinking – a cognitive process. Yes, emotions play a role, but hope is made up of a, "trilogy of goals, pathways and agency".

We experience hope when:

We have the ability to set realistic **goals**, (I know where I want to go)

We are able to figure out how to achieve those goals, including the



ability to stay flexible and develop alternative **pathways**. (I know how to get there, I'm persistent, and I can *tolerate disappointment* and try new paths again and again)

We have agency – **we believe in ourselves**. (I can do this).

Hope is a function of struggle – we develop hope not during the easy or comfortable times, but through adversity and discomfort. Hope is forged when our goals, pathways and agency are tested and when change is actually possible. Unfortunately, there are times when hope isn't sufficient to combat entrenched systematic barriers. It doesn't matter how much hope we have if the deck is stacked against us or the rules apply to some but not others – that is actually a recipe for hopelessness and despair. We think we should be able to overcome an obstacle; however, the system is rigged so there is no possible positive outcome.

It's also important to know that hope is learned. Children most often learn the habit of hope from parents. To learn hopefulness, children need relationships that are characterised by boundaries, consistency and support. Children with high levels of hopefulness have experience with adversity. They've been given the opportunity to struggle and in doing that they learn how to believe in themselves and their abilities.

As hard as it is to watch your children struggle, a good saying to bear in mind is, "Prepare the child for the path, not the path for the child". One thing that can bolster commitment to letting our children figure things out for themselves, that are developmentally appropriate and possible, is thinking about the alternatives: hopelessness and despair.

Hopelessness and Despair

While hope is not an emotion, hopelessness and despair are emotions. Hopelessness arises out of a combination of negative life events and negative thought patterns, particularly self-blame and the perceived in-ability to change our circumstances.

Hopelessness stems from:

- Not being able to set realistic goals, (we don't know what we want)
- Even if we can identify our goals, we can't find a pathway to achieve them
- If we do attempt to achieve the goals, we give up when we fail, as we can't tolerate the disappointment and we can't reset.

- We don't believe in ourselves or our ability to achieve what we want.

Hopelessness is serious. Many years of research have shown that there are strong links between experience of hopelessness and suicidality.

While hopelessness can apply to a specific situation, (for example feeling hopeless about getting a job or our financial future), despair is a sense of hopelessness about a person's entire life and future. When extreme hopelessness seeps into all corners of our lives and combines with extreme sadness, we feel despair.

The path away from hopelessness and despair involves new thinking about what we want to achieve and why. We need to reality check our goals and the pathways to them and to take the shame out of having to start over many, many times when our first plan fails. Setting realistic goals is a skill and a pre-requisite for hope.

We all fear pain and struggle, but they are often necessary for growth, and more important, they don't present the level of danger that hopelessness and despair brings to us.

To move away from hopelessness and despair, in addition to cultivating our hope skills, we can also think about how to make ourselves more resilient. The research of psychiatrist, Martin Seligman on resilience, especially his 3Ps (personalisation, permanence and pervasiveness) can help:

Personalisation: When we experience despair and hopelessness, we often ►

in our life. Nothing good is left.
Force your brain to shift onto thinking
about the good things in your life,
small or large.

“We need hope like we need air”

Once again, the Bible is a source of wisdom and understanding of our humanity and what we need to thrive. The Bible gives us many verses that show how faith and trust in God allows him to transform our lives and gives us strength and resilience in the struggles of life.

Isaiah 40:31 - But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Romans 15:13 - May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Pervasiveness: Sometimes when we are struggling, we fall into the trap of believing that whatever we're up against has changed every single thing

Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.



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A GOOD READ

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PCC MEMBERS

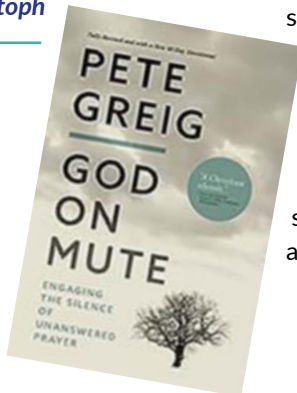
Richard Osman:
The Man Who Died Twice
(Thursday Murder Club, Book 2).

Edda and I have just finished reading this gripping story with a cliffhanger at the end of every chapter. We loved the warm characterisations. It's a funny and easy read, sprinkled with profound reflections on life, relationships, what makes life meaningful and the challenges of ageing. Health warning: While the tone is light throughout, this is a murder mystery with some gore! If you'd like to start at the beginning, you might want to consider reading Book 1 first.

Christoph

Pete Greig:
God on Mute

In this book Pete Greig, the inspiration behind Lectio 365, explores the experience of God's silence in

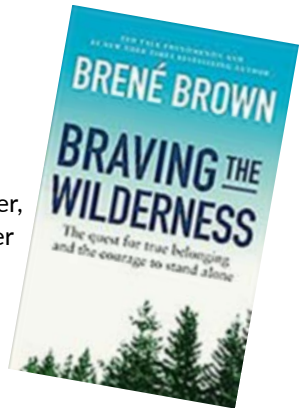


the midst of suffering. In a world where many see God as some kind of spiritual ATM, Pete Greig reminds us that first and foremost it is not what we are asking for in prayer that matters but whom we have the privilege of asking. This book is a wise and helpful road map for navigating the strange and unexpected contours of unanswered prayers.

Nnamdi

Brene Brown:
Braving the Wilderness

A must read for everyone, whatever gender, older or younger or in between. It is about "belonging and the courage to stand alone"



As a research professor she is obviously academic but her touch is gentle and her writing immediately relevant. An easy-to-read book about courage, vulnerability, love, belonging, shame and empathy - a self-help book at its absolute best!

Sandy Wickenden

Victoria Hislop: *The Sunrise*

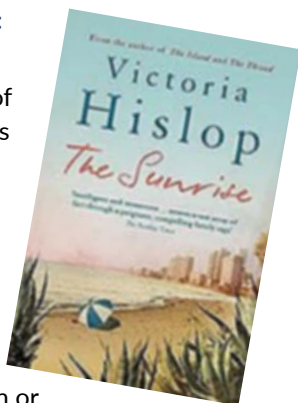
I have read all of Victoria Hislop's books because she sets her characters in the midst's of significant moments in history usually in Greece, Spain or

Cyprus and I love learning about the history of these places.

My favourite by far is *The Sunrise*.

It is set in Cyprus in 1974, in the town of Famagusta, at the time the town was a bustling tourist resort with fancy hotels and extravagant lifestyles, but now a ghost town occupied only by the Turkish Army. The book follows the lives of two families, one Christian and one Muslim, at first neighbours living peacefully side by side, then divided when the Turkish Army invades the north of the Island and everyone in the town is forced to flee. The book was such a page turner, but if you like a happy ending this one is not for you! It is a very human story of survival when everything is stripped away.

Kath Sole



and meticulous research on a multitude of eras, coupled alongside page turning storyline and deep character profiling makes him a master of his craft and really captures my imagination.

His latest effort, 'Act of Oblivion' focuses on the period following the pardoning of all those who took up arms for King Charles I in the English Civil War, with exception of those directly involved in condemning the King to death in 1649. The book proceeds at breathless pace, charting the obsession of a small group of men bent on tracking down these so-called regicides, who flee across the Atlantic to New England in search of safety and a new life in the New World.

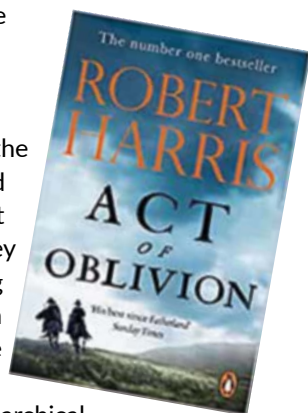
Many of them Puritans, the book provides a fascinating insight

into the simple faith and lives

led by these individuals, coupled with the challenges and ongoing threat of betrayal they faced by being 'on the run' on account of the strength of

their anti-monarchical

feelings. I'd heartily recommend this, as well as many other of Harris' works, which provide brilliant insight on bygone periods in such an engaging way.



Robert Harris: *Act of Oblivion*

A favourite genre of mine is historical fiction, where the author compiles a compelling fictional storyline around real historical events. Robert Harris is the best in the business: his extensive

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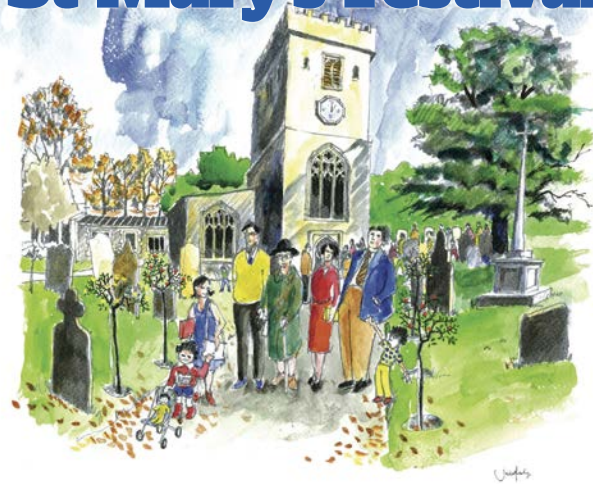


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St Mary's Festival



900 YEARS

Join us for a community celebration in and around St Mary's Church Denham. The earliest historical record for St Mary's Church is from 1123, so this year we are celebrating 900 years!

Please check our website for all details.

Saturday 9 September 2023



10am-12noon

Let's pick some litter!
Meet at St Mary's



2pm-5pm

Open Garden
The White House



4-4.30pm

A Slice of Denham History
St Mary's Vestry

Sunday 10 September 2023



10.30am

Celebration Service for
all ages with Ian Jennings



12-2pm

Barbecue
St Mary's



12.30-4pm

Children's Activities
Around St Mary's



1.30pm

Chime St Mary's Bells
St Mary's Bell Tower



2-4.15pm

Vestry Teas
St Mary's Vestry



4.30pm

Concert with aLUMNI 4
St Mary's

All proceeds will help us maintain St Mary's Church Building and Churchyard.

www.denhamparish.church/festival