

MARCH 2024 - MAY 2024

# DENHAM PARISH NEWS



**THE FAYRE IS BACK!**  
**MONDAY MAY 27TH**



THE GIFT OF FAMILY  
AND COMMUNITY

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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**Spring.** What a joy it was on Sunday to see the first clump of purple crocus in the churchyard, signalling a new season is coming! This issue of Denham Parish News captures the creativity of the spring season, celebrated through Mothering Sunday (craft activity p.21) and Easter (poem p.16). Do come and join us for our special services at St Mary's (p.14).

We reflect back on lives well lived (Stephanie Hilhouse p.8) and have a glimpse into the childhood of our regular reporter, Brian (p.30). The Bible Detectives explore the theme of what the Bible says about families (p.24), whilst our Atlas of the Heart series picks up the themes of awe and wonder (p.12).

**Pause.** The busier I become with work, church activities and family life, the more important I find it is to pause and be still, especially at the start of the day. The Lectio365 App that I use starts with *'As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-centre my scattered senses upon the presence of God'*. Do you remember the stillness and quiet that could be found during Covid lockdowns? When there wasn't the noise of traffic and you could hear nature sing? Activities had to stop or be completed in different ways. One event that had to stop was the annual Denham Village Fayre. However, we are so pleased that it was only on 'pause' and that it is back again this May 27th Bank holiday – see p.6 for further details. When you come to the Fayre, why not bring the centre pages of this magazine with you, and use the guide to find out more about the amazing 900-year history of this historic building and the people who have lived and served here – better still, join us on a Sunday and experience the ongoing life of the church in Denham!

This Spring season, may you have opportunities to pause and watch nature sing!



Blessings,

*Cathy Macqueen*

magazine@denhamparish.church

# TIME FOR A REST?

## MESSAGE FROM CHRISTOPH LINDNER, RECTOR

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*Dear friends,*

**We live in restless times. There are always more demands on us than we have hours in the day. We were promised that technology would save us time (remember the days before microwaves?), but these days many of us spend much time staring at screens – whether it's at work or on our phones, tablets, TVs and game consoles. The 24-hour news cycle and social media keep us distracted and contribute to rising levels of anxiety.**

But we are made for a healthy rhythm of engagement and rest. One of the Ten Commandments says: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” The idea of one rest day per week is not a modern invention, but built into the fabric of Jewish and Christian teaching from the beginning.

The first book of the Bible (Genesis) describes how God made the world and then... he rested. Not because he was tired. Not because he was bored: After creating the world, God looked around and saw that “it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). God did not just take a break; he stopped and enjoyed what he had made. “Sabbath” means stopping to enjoy God, to enjoy his creation,



to enjoy the fruits of our labour. The whole point of Sabbath is joy in what God has done.

What makes you happy? What gives you energy? What makes you feel truly alive? What feeds you? These might be helpful questions to decide what to do during your day off.

God liberated his people when they were slaves in Egypt, and in Deuteronomy 5:12–15, God ties the Sabbath to freedom from slavery. Anyone who overworks is really a slave. Anyone who cannot rest from work is a slave—to a need for success, to a materialistic culture, to exploitative employers, to parental expectations, to the compulsion to constantly check social media or emails. These slave masters will abuse you if you are not disciplined in the practice of Sabbath rest. Sabbath is a declaration of freedom.

Jesus knew our need for deep, restorative rest and the constant pressures we are under. In Matthew 11 he says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” When we discover that he loves us unconditionally, we can begin to learn what deep rest means.

Here are some ideas to improve the quality of your Sabbath rest:

- **Take some time to just ‘be’.** Don’t overschedule your day off. Enjoy the fact that you don’t have to do anything. Learn what helps your body, mind and soul to rest.
- **Do things that you wouldn’t normally do during the rest of your week.** If your work is mostly physical, engage your mind. If you work mostly at a desk or behind a screen, be physically active. Be refreshed by beauty – walks in nature, music, drama, a good film.
- **Consider whether you are an introvert or an extrovert.** Extroverts are recharged when being with people. Introverts will need some time on their own to be refreshed.
- **Don’t necessarily count family time as Sabbath time.** Family time is important, but parents need to be very careful that they don’t let all of their regular Sabbath time be taken up with parental responsibilities. Keeping all of these things in good

balance may be virtually impossible when your children are very young, but this too will pass. Ask family members or trusted friends to babysit for you every now and then.

- **Accept that there are seasons where Sabbath rest is easier or harder.**

A new job may demand a period of hard work and long hours. But don’t justify long periods of overwork by saying you’re “going through a season” when in actual fact that season never ends.

**May we all (re-)discover the joy of working from rest, not resting from work!**

P.S. From the middle of May, Edda and I will be on a **Sabbatical** – three months away from church ministry to be refreshed, renewed and learn new things. Ministers in the Church of England are encouraged to take a Sabbatical every ten years and we very much look forward to this time and to being back with you in Denham from mid-August.



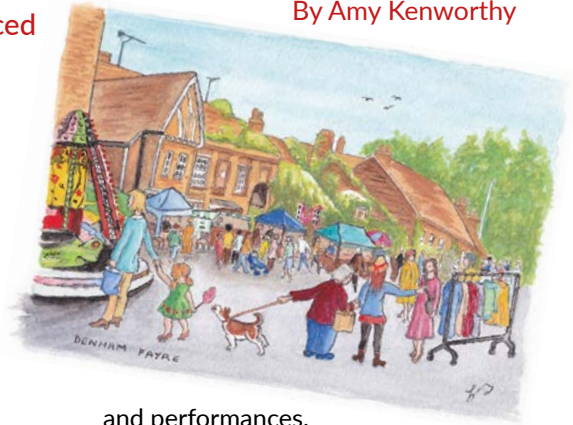
*Christoph Lindner*

# Denham Village Fayre

Monday 27th May 2024, 10am - 4pm

After a four-year hiatus enforced by the global Covid pandemic, we are delighted to announce that it has finally been confirmed that the Denham Village Fayre is set to make a return this year on Monday 27th May.

By Amy Kenworthy



As reported by Christoph last year, the PCC were unable to bring the Fayre back after restrictions were lifted as they did not have a suitable group to run the event. In 2024 there is a new committee made up of a dedicated group of villagers and locals who have put themselves forward, with the primary focus of bringing back this great community event which has been so sorely missed. The revered event, whose origins date back to 1227 where it was a Monday market, is a celebration of community spirit, tradition and merriment, raising much needed funds for our village church, St Mary's, ensuring it is kept in good repair and condition throughout the year.

The Denham Village Fayre attracts visitors from far and wide and is testament to the village's enduring heritage, vibrant atmosphere and eclectic mix of activities, delights

and performances.

From lively music and dance performances to traditional games it promises to be a fantastic day for all ages. Families can immerse themselves in many engaging stalls offering crafts, local produce and delectable treats - truly showcasing the finest offerings of Denham and its surrounding areas.

What truly sets this Fayre apart is its essence of community. The event serves as a platform for locals to come together, forging connections and celebrating the bonds that define the village. Volunteers passionate about preserving their heritage, have dedicated countless hours to breathe new life back into this cultural extravaganza. Their unwavering commitment and determination to revive this historic tradition stand as a testament to the unity and spirit of Denham Village.



## Childrens Churchyard Activities include hook-a-duck, teddy tombola, splat the rat, facepainting and many more.

This year's Fayre is not just an event, it is a moment for us to reconnect and ensure that we do not lose the charter to hold this annual event. However, to make this event a success it is crucial that we have volunteer support. If you are able to offer any time on the day assisting with car parking, serving tea's and coffee's, working on a stall or set up/take down, or are a keen baker and can bake a cake/scones for the Vestry or Memorial Hall cafés please contact Amy Kenworthy at [amykenworthy1@gmail.com](mailto:amykenworthy1@gmail.com).

We are so excited for the event and hope we are blessed with good weather, great experiences and good friends.

Steeped in history, the event has something for everyone including:

**Brass Band**

**Local Choirs**

**Morris Dancers**

**Punch & Judy**

**Fun Fair Rides & Stalls**

**Ice Cream**

**Local Craft Beer**

**World Foods**

**Artisan Spirits**

**Classic Cars**

**Vintage Vespa's**

**Thai and Indian Food**

**Hog Roast**

**Burgers and Hot Dogs**

**Fish & Chips**

**Toasties**

**Cakes and Desserts**

**Local Craft Stalls**

**Grand Raffle**



# MEMORIES OF STEPHANIE HILHOUSE

## 'A LADY LOVED BY ALL'

### 5TH MARCH 1924 – 7TH DECEMBER 2015

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**Steffie as we used to call her was a 'one off'. She was a great character and was always happy, looking for the best in any situation.**

She led a very interesting life, being one of four daughters. She and her sister Agnes were members of St Mary's for many years, Stephanie serving as Churchwarden in more recent times. They were both single ladies and lived together in a large house in Uxbridge which contained many interesting family artefacts. Their father Stephen gifted the church with the piece of land which is behind Cedar Cottage.

When we used to enjoy Parish walking holidays in the Forest of Dean, Steffie and Agnes would accompany us, but instead of walking they would drive to the location where we planned to have our picnic lunch and be waiting for us complete with their camping table and chairs. As a family, before the war they used to camp all over Europe, complete with maid! The last time they did this they had to beat a hasty retreat as Hitler started to be rather threatening.

*Janet Drane*

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Stephanie and her sister Agnes gave many talks to Denham Wives group about their vast travels. They had films which in the early days were connected to the ceiling lights at St Marks Hall.

Unfortunately, the lead kept dropping out, causing lots of giggles from their audience. Everybody loved their evenings and they seemed to know people and friends however far they travelled and everything was real fun and adventurous!

Their father founded the Camping Club of Great Britain and I can remember him reading the lesson at Evensong - beautiful! Stephanie carried on this tradition, as well as leading intercessions and serving as church warden for many years. Living in Uxbridge they often missed the start of morning service - Stephanie's least favourite hymn was Shine Jesus Shine!

*Ann Collins*

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When their parents died, Stephanie and her sister Agnes inherited the large family home in Uxbridge. I so loved going to that house – it was like stepping back in time with all the wonderful treasures and mementoes that had been gathered in the lives of the Hilhouse family. I was especially taken with a postcard sent to Stephanie's father Stephen, when Lord Baden Powell got married and was on his honeymoon. He drew a picture of himself on board the ship. Being a Girl Guide myself at the time I was so impressed. I had met Olave, Lady Baden Powell once, but to see a personal drawing from Lord Baden Powell was something!



Stephanie left a hole in my life when she went and even to this day, I have lovely memories of sitting by the fire with her having our lunch.

### *Carole Wadlow*

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During WW2, Stephie served in the "Remount service" that rehabilitated horses wounded in battle. Post war, she became an Air Hostess for BOAC. Stephie was a very bold and adventurous character (as were her three sisters), and we shared numerous adventures with her.



Here she is on her 90th birthday - note the deathly grip she has on that sandwich in her right hand. Whilst everyone was enjoying the food, so popular was she, that she was unable to get at the food tables herself, thus it stood poised till she waited for an opportunity to dine.

### *John Gray*

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I first met Stephanie when I helped out at St Mary's during the vacancy in 2015. Her warm character and depth of faith shone brightly! After I was announced as the next Rector she wrote me a warm letter of welcome, which I treasure. Sadly, she passed away before I began my ministry in Denham.

### *Christoph Lindner*

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Stephie was a lovely, friendly lady who was a true Christian and would befriend and help anyone. She was awarded a silver medal in London by Prince Edward for her loyal service to the RNLI for whom she would hold sales at her house, with the living room covered in gifts to buy.

One of the charities that St Mary's supported in the 1980s were having a new child nursery school built in Nairobi, Kenya and Stephanie and Marion Francis flew out with our donations of pens, paper, pencils etc.

Stephie and her friend Shirley Kingsmill were members of the Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) and encouraged us all to read the bible every day and started the group - Journey through the Bible - which went through the Bible, lasting 3 years.

### *Hilary Richins*

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## BY KATHY PAINE

'Care for the Family is a national charity that aims to promote strong family life and to help those who face challenges. They offer courses, events, resources and training to equip people to support others and themselves in various situations. They provide support groups, counselling, and parenting courses.'

My first encounter with *Care for the Family* more than a decade ago, was the result of a thorough search into resources for parenting courses we planned to run at a local church. All this time later and with several courses under our belt, we have built up some really good relationships within the organisation and have firsthand experience of how all they do is rooted in Christian principles with great Christian compassion.

The primary focus beyond their Christian commitment is the role of the family presented with all its complex joys, hardships and challenges. It's interesting to think that three decades ago, its founder Rob Parsons and his wife Dianne, who were facing their own challenges in family life, stumbled upon a group of like-minded people from their church. They formed a home group and through this *Care for the Family* was born.

Today, *Care for the Family* offer training to equip a workforce of volunteers through local churches and beyond, to deliver courses covering the many aspects of family life including couples,

marriage, relationships and parenting. These are supported by well-designed resources, podcasts and literature and there is also a high level of accountability for volunteers to ensure that courses are run to a good standard and training is kept up to date.

In addition, there is support available for single parents and for those who are parenting a child with additional needs. *Care for the Family* have built up an army of people who, having lived through similar experiences, can offer a listening ear and become a befriender.

There is also a stream covering bereavement. At *Care for the Family*, they understand that everyone responds differently to bereavement and therefore there isn't just one way to manage grief. They have telephone befriending support along with specific befrienders for those widowed young. They also have bereavement support events by regularly hosting day and weekend events for bereaved parents or for those who've been widowed at a young age.

Over the last decade, I have seen how *Care for the Family* has remained up to

date and in tune with current changes in technology, family structure and needs. Materials are updated on a regular basis and partly due to Covid, they have introduced information on how to build your child's emotional wellbeing and mental health. A recent publication by Katharine Hill 'Left to their own devices?' looks at confident parenting in the world of screens.

On a practical level, both Edda Lindner and I are trained facilitators and recently delivered the 'Time out for Early Years' course. This covered what it means to be a parent, children's needs, play and listening, parenting styles and boundaries, managing behaviour and building strong families. It enabled participants to have time out to think about their families and to connect with others - to realise that their concerns are shared, and they are not alone in their triumphs and disasters! One parent said 'We both learnt loads and it has really helped to have some great tips to help the girls grow and develop. It was lovely to meet the wider group too'.

Although the courses are designed to strengthen families of all faiths or none, some of the resources are aimed specifically at those who want to share their Christian faith in the home situation and want these values to be the foundations of family life, such as the 'Kitchen Table Project' and 'Raising Faith' resources.

If you are interested in attending Early Years, Primary Years or Teenage Years events, please express an interest

through the church office and we'll contact you when these are available. In addition, we are hoping to host an anger management course towards the end of 2024.

**For information and details about upcoming national events and Care for the Family resources go to: [www.careforthefamily.org.uk](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk)**

Why not book up for the 'Big Parenting Questions' event at High Wycombe June 18th or Aylesbury 20th June.



## 'THOUGHTS FROM 'ATLAS OF THE HEART' PART 5: AWE AND WONDER BY JANET ALLEN

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*“One gift I would ask for each child in the world would be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantment of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial...”*

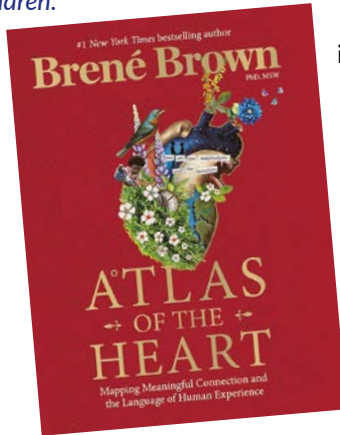
*Quote from Rachel Carson – The sense of wonder: A celebration of nature for Parents and Children.*



Both awe and wonder are often experienced in response to nature, art, music or spiritual experiences. In the midst of these moments, we can feel overwhelmed in a positive way, by the vastness of something that is almost incomprehensible – it almost feels like what we are witnessing can't be true.

Even seeing things we may fail to notice on a regular basis, like a starry sky or a butterfly in the garden, can stop us in our tracks on occasion. Both awe-inspiring events and the experiences that leave us filled with wonder often make us feel small compared to our expansive universe. Small but connected to each other and to the largeness itself.

We often use “awe” and “wonder” interchangeably, which makes sense because the experiences have a lot



in common. But there is a primary difference between our experiences of these incredible emotions. Researchers Weger and Wagemann describe it like this: “Wonder inspires the wish to understand; awe inspires the wish to let shine, to acknowledge and to unite. When feeling awe we tend to simply stand back and observe, to provide a stage for the phenomenon to shine.”

Awe and wonder are essential to the human experience. Wonder fuels our passion for exploration and learning, for curiosity and adventure. Researchers have found that awe leads people to co-operate, share resources and sacrifice for others and causes them to fully appreciate the value of others and see themselves more accurately, evoking humility. Some researchers even believe that awe-inducing events may be one of the fastest and most powerful methods of personal change and growth.

Psychologist, Dr Andy Tix is just one of many academics conducting research to further understand the connections between awe and spiritual experience.

In the Western world, the word “awe” stems from the 13th century Old Norse word “agi,” which literally translates as “terror” or “fright.” These views of awe were heavily influenced by religious perspectives. In fact, awe and wonder are among the most referenced concepts in the Bible and run through the entire Bible narrative. For example, there are 53 references to “awe”, 92 to “amazing”, 22 to “astonish”, 38 to “reverence” and 109 to “wonder”. For instance, after Jesus rebuked the wind, the disciples were described as being in “fear and amazement” (Luke 8:25). The women who found the tomb empty were described as “trembling and bewildered” (Mark 16:8). Those first filled with the Holy Spirit were described as being “amazed and perplexed” (Acts 2:12). Saul’s companions were “speechless” when Jesus appeared, and it would be fair to say that Paul’s conversion to Christianity involved being awestruck (see Acts 9:1-19).

It’s interesting then to recognise that what modern psychological research has shown, in terms of the effects that awe inspires, “co-operation, sharing, sacrifice for others, appreciation of the value of others and a sense of humility, are fully present in Paul’s letter to the Romans.

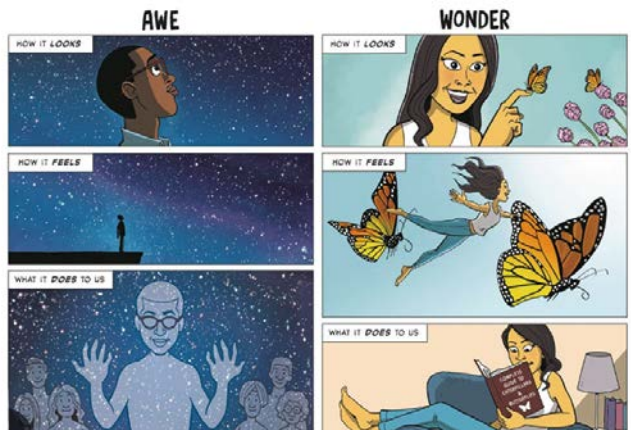
In Romans 12.1, Paul describes the worship of our God as becoming living sacrifices to our God, giving up seeking what we want from life and learning to know and serve

what God wants. That begins with using our spiritual gifts to serve each other in the church.

In Romans 12.3-5, Paul describes how the Church family should show humility and appreciate that everyone has their own gifts which can be used together in harmony for the greater good.

*“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”*

But we don’t need to be knocked off our horse like Paul, or stand on a cliff and see the Northern lights to feel awe and wonder. As a parent, simple moments with our children, from birth to a first smile, first steps, first words and onwards can render us speechless with awe.



# LENT AND EASTER at St Mary's Church



## Sunday 10 March: Mothering Sunday

10.30am Mothering Sunday Family Service



## Sunday 24 March: Palm Sunday

10.00am Palm Sunday Procession

10.30am Sunday Service with Sunday Club



## Thursday 28 March: Maundy Thursday

7.30pm Holy Communion Service



## Friday 29 March: Good Friday

10.30am An Hour at the Cross with Sunday Club

2.30-3.30pm St Mary's open for quiet prayer



## Sunday 9 April: Easter Sunday

9am Holy Communion

10am Easter Egg Hunt

10.30am Family Service



[www.denhamparish.church/events](http://www.denhamparish.church/events)

# BIG EASTER EGG HUNT

*311 eggs want to be found!*

*10.00-10.30am on*

*Easter Sunday, 31 March*

*St Mary's Church Denham*

**ALL WELCOME!**

St Mary's Church | Village Road | Denham | UB9 5BH  
[www.denhamparish.church](http://www.denhamparish.church)



# Where I stand in the most glorious morn

by Yubi Kang

At the nightfall

Gethsemane Hill, looked tranquil of sweet slumbering  
That spewed the tremor through veil of pitchy wall  
Spirit is willing, flesh is weak yielding  
Pride, false of followers to the end, surge  
Rudely scuttled down on the verge

I love you Lord

I love you, till the end although others turn their backs  
I love you, you know me sealed  
The rooster slashes each vow of love, one by one by three crows  
I don't know him, I don't know what you're talking about  
I don't know him, three manifestos swearing, cursing shout

On the day

Pontius Pilate washes his hands,  
Declaring the accused innocent convey  
His blood be on us and on our children, the multitude cries  
Slaughtering flame of the clamour rockets up the sky  
The troubled road to Golgotha, truly long and awry

The standing cross on the hill forlorn  
INRI inscribes wholly miserable and shameful  
The final cruel curtain of the claimed, Saviour worn  
The way, truth and life seemed lost disdainful  
Why have you forsaken me? It is finished  
He beseeched then, departed

At the morn

The dawn, exhilaratingly bright, breaking the dusk  
Beam of life transforming from the shadow of death torn  
The path to Emmaus so stirring and brisk  
The gloomy, sad faces of the women walking fret

To the empty tomb yet

Startlingly, glee and jubilee that priceless,  
They saw the living Lord standing next to the stone rolled away

The very first witnesses

Ready to proclaim the news, hope of eternity relay  
Their feet hurried for spreading out the Lord's resurrection  
At this triumphant and the most glorious morn





# Stepping into 900 years of history

BY CHRISTOPH LINDNER, RECTOR

This article originally appeared in the Denham Community History Project website: [www.denhamhistory.online](http://www.denhamhistory.online)

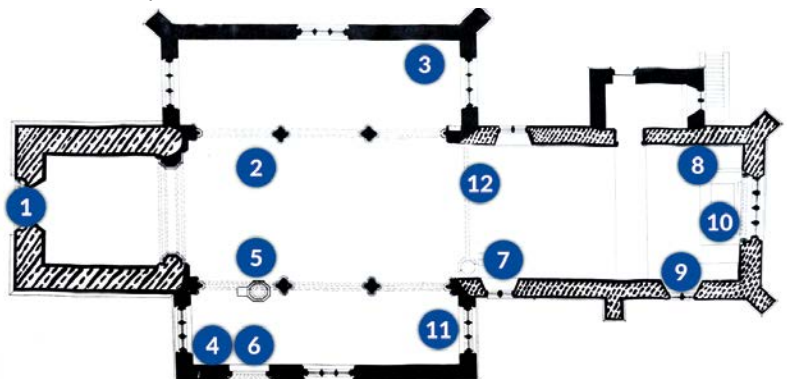
The history of a church is always the history of its people, to which bricks and mortar bear witness. In September 2023 we celebrated 900 years of St Mary's Church in Denham. One of our church members, Fay Williams, celebrated her 100th birthday in church earlier in 2023 and represents one ninth of that long history. Others, such as Ann Collins, were born and raised in Denham and can look back on more than 80 years of the church's life.

The church tells the stories of the broader village community as well as the stories of the influential and powerful who have been part of Denham's history and have sustained the life of the church over so many centuries.

Please use the map below to find out more about the monuments, memorials and special artefacts and learn about some of the history of the wealthy and influential whose names are recorded on those monuments and many others who have been part of the Denham community over the years. If you are reading this online, please click on the links for additional information found in back issues

of Denham Parish News. The numbers in the text refer to the locations on the map.

As you enter St Mary's through the beautifully restored west door [1], you find yourself in the oldest part of the building, dating back to around 1100-1120. The oldest proof of St Mary's existence dates back to 1123 in the records of Westminster Abbey.





### **The Bells, the organ, the pews and paraffin lights**

The floor of the church tower is where the bells would have been rung in the past and often wedding couples had their photo taken here. The eight bells were originally a ring of six from Biddlesden Abbey (North Bucks). They were brought to St Mary's by Sir Robert Peckham (more of him later) after Henry VIII's dissolution of the abbey and recast as eight bells in 1683. After major restoration work they were re-dedicated in 1948.

In the days when most people didn't own a watch and without the instant delivery of news, bells marked the working day, alerted to imminent danger and called the community to worship. We still mark special occasions (such as the coronation of King Charles III), weddings and Sunday worship by ringing them.

Today the bells are rung on the organ balcony, following the installation of a new church organ in 1983. The existence of a church organ is first mentioned in a report from 1637, curiously stating that a certain John Bull of the age of 93 years can remember the existence of two (!) organs as early as the 1570s.

During the first centuries of the church's life there would have been no organs

and - in fact - no pews. Churches were the largest gathering places in many communities, not just for worship but also for other meetings and as places of safety in emergencies. During the 18th century even the parish fire engine was kept under the bell tower and the churchwardens were obliged by law to maintain it. It is interesting that many churches have recovered the flexible use of space in recent decades by replacing the fixed pews with movable pews or chairs. The current pews were introduced in 1861 to replace closed pews.

The pews and organ are just two examples of how our church has always been updated. Two twisted brass rods, attached to the backs of two pews [2], are the only remnants of paraffin lights, replaced with electric lamps in 1923. More recently, we have introduced WiFi in the church, following the closure of St Mary's during lockdown, to enable us to stream our services on YouTube each Sunday.

### **The patrons**

Anglican churches have "patrons", whose main function is to select and recommend the appointment of clergy to the parish. The patron may be a private individual, the Crown, bishops, colleges, religious bodies, charities, etc. The patronage of St. Mary's is very much part of Denham's history and that of the significant families which for centuries have provided the church's patrons - the Peckhams, the Bowyers and the Hill and Way family members. Our current patron is John Way and he is very much committed to the life and future of St Mary's.

There are many stories about the Peckham family of Denham Place, but one story that concerns the church is worth telling here. In 1973 workmen uncovered a heart in the lining of a casket. After further investigation it was identified as the heart of Robert Peckham who died in Rome in 1586. He had stated in his will that he wished his heart to be put in the tomb of his ancestors at St Mary's.

Another of St. Mary's patrons was Sir Roger Hill (1642-1729). On his memorial [3], his son (also called Roger) is recorded as having died on the same day as his father. This is the story behind it as told by Hazel Harries in her booklet *One Thousand Years In A Village Church*: *"As his father lay dying, Roger was consumed by anxiety as to whether Sir Roger had made him or his eldest brother [a wastrel] heir to his fortune. Eventually the suspense was too much for him [...]. He found his father's will and discovered he was indeed the heir. [...] According to an old family record, Roger 'died from apoplexy caused by inebriation at his surprise at finding himself heir'. Through his greed he did not live long enough to enjoy his inheritance, but died a few hours after his father."*

### Monuments and Memorials

The story of St Mary's is also the story of its Rectors. By the South door [4] you can find a list of them, dating back to Osbert de Skypton in 1218. It contains several members of the patrons' families, including Charles Way (1939-1945), who had to lead the church during the difficult war years. Another incumbent Rector, R H Lathbury is the author of a very detailed history of Denham, published in 1904.

The book is a meticulous account of all the historical records Reverend Lathbury could find. As one of his successors, I wonder how he found the time for it. Maybe he left the day-to-day work in the parish to the curate (assistant priest) who lived next door in Hills House, while Robert Lathbury himself lived in what is now the Old Rectory in Old Rectory Lane, a safe distance from church and village.

One of the few surviving copies of the Reverend Lathbury's book has its own history. In 1975 it was given to Sir John and Lady Mills (who then lived in Hills House, next to St Mary's) by Lady Vansittart, who together with her husband had lived in Denham Place for many years. And then, in 2006, they gave the book to Hugh and Frances Stewart, the parents of our current treasurer Mike Stewart.

A church's history is a rich tapestry of its people's faith. By the South door we find the font [5], where many generations have been baptised. It dates back to the 13th century and is made of Purbeck marble. The oak cover is Victorian.

While baptism marks the beginning of a Christian's faith journey, the mural above the South door [6] illustrates the ultimate goal. It is the church's only surviving medieval wall painting of many, and it shows the dead being raised as Christ returns to earth on Judgment Day. At a time when many people couldn't read, this fresco showed the Christian vision of a future where there would be no more death and gave believers hope

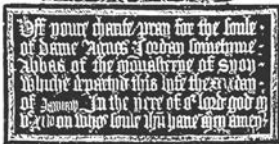


in the present, as well as a sense of accountability to God for how we live our lives.

The monument above the pulpit [7] records the death of Captain Arthur George Tillard in 1914 and that of his youngest son in 1929, whom he never met. The sparse words contain the double grief of a wife and mother. Mrs Tillard provided the lime trees for the Way and Tillard Recreation and Cricket ground in Denham Village, which was opened in 1920 and named after her late husband together with Lieutenant Colonel B.I. Way who gifted the land.



The most imposing monument can be found in the south-east corner of the church [8]. It is the burial place of Sir Edmund Peckham and his wife Anne. He was treasurer to Henry VIII. He became the first Lord of the Manor of Denham in 1541.



After Henry VIII's dissolution of the Roman Catholic

monasteries between 1536 and 1541, the abbess of Sion Abbey, Agnes Jordan, fled to Southlands Manor in Denham for sanctuary. She died there in 1545. A brass remembering her can be found under the carpet in front of the communion table.

A memorial which carries with it a story of the same religious turbulence of the Reformation is that of a Franciscan Friar on the south wall of the sanctuary [9]. The inscription identifies him as Johannes Pike, who died in 1440. It is thought to be the only brass to a Franciscan friar in existence.

This memorial owes its survival to the fact that it is a palimpsest, a recycled artefact. The Franciscans were bitterly opposed to Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and it seemed to Sir Edmund Peckham advisable to hide the image of a friar from view but he re-used the reverse of it for a brass of his daughter Amphillis. Thus the friar's image was hidden and survived until it was discovered by accident. When the church was renovated in 1861, the brass was thrown out and nearly lost, but a church member found and rescued it.

While the many memorials around the church largely tell the stories of people of influence and considerable income, it is the kneelers in the pews that tell the stories of others in the village community, commemorating anniversaries, special roles in church, a life well lived, as well as particular events in the life of the nation.

### Special artefacts

The communion table and reredos (wooden panelling behind it) [10] were

given by the King's Royal Rifle Corps after they returned from the war in 1919. A battalion of this regiment were trained at Higher Denham during the early years of the First World War and took part in Sunday services. They were one of the pals' battalions, groups of young men who signed up together. The high casualty rates they suffered left a lasting impact on the towns and cities they came from.

The 16th Battalion, which trained in Denham, was formed from Church Lads' Brigades and in 2019 a service at St Mary's marked the 100th anniversary of their return. Many members of today's organisation (now called Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade) from all over the country attended. The reredos displays a certificate given at the service.

In the south-east corner of the nave is our children's corner [11], underneath the youngest stained glass window, given in memory of Elizabeth Bickerton, who died in 1953 at the age of 14. The window shows a young girl (identified as St Mary by her blue dress) with her mother, who is teaching her to read. Tradition gives her the name Anne.

I was helped to identify the two figures in the Bickerton memorial by a visitor from Germany, who was part of a "Midsomer Murders" tour. St Mary's has been the location for various films and TV programmes (try the Midsomer episode "Death in Chorus").

The brass lectern [12] is unusual. Most church lecterns are in the shape of an eagle, while this one is a vine, taking its inspiration from Jesus' words "I am the

vine and you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit..."

Standing behind the lectern and looking out into the nave we can imagine the congregations through the centuries, how they have prayed and celebrated and mourned. St Mary's Church is in the shape of a cross and the centre of the Christian faith is expressed in Holy Communion (Eucharist, Lord's Supper) where Jesus' death for us is remembered.

The letters engraved in St Mary's communion table bear the first three Greek letters of his name (IES, with the Greek letter for E looking like our letter h). The goal of the architects, artisans and worshippers of St Mary's has always been to point to Jesus, the founder of the Christian faith.

St Mary's Church is not of course a museum, but the home of both a vibrant church family and a resource for the local community. Today the people of St Mary's are doing their bit to ensure that this will still be true when the building celebrates its 1000th anniversary in 2123, and when their stories will be told by a future generation.



# HOW TO MAKE A

Time it takes - Approx. 3 hours plus 24 hours to dry.

By Kath Sole

## You will need

Corrugated cardboard  
the type you get in a  
cardboard box

Scissors

Masking tape

A pencil

Print out of a letter  
template roughly A5 size

Newspaper

Plain paper

A ruler

PVA glue mixed with water  
(2 parts glue to 1 part water)

An old paintbrush

Acrylic Paint/emulsion paint  
or decoupage paper

Where to get  
craft supplies:

The Works  
Hobby Craft  
Uxbridge Market  
Charity shops

1

Draw round the letter template onto  
the cardboard. Cut out 2 letters.

2

Measure a strip of cardboard 2.5cm  
wide on the cardboard. It is important  
that the corrugated channels of the  
cardboard run at right angles to your  
strip; this will make your strip easy to  
bend around your letter. You might  
need to make several strips.

3

Stuff your letter with newspaper and  
place the second letter on top. Secure  
with masking tape at regular intervals.



# 3D LETTER

4

Cut lots of bits of masking tape. Use the tape to secure your strip of card to one of the corners and curves of the letter and secure in place at regular intervals with masking tape. Continue around the outside and inside of your letter.

6

Once dry, paint your letter with acrylic paint, household emulsion paint or decoupage it with decoupage paper using the same method you used for the newspaper.

5

Rip newspaper into small squares approximately 2cm x 2cm. Apply the glue and water mixture liberally to the letter with an old paintbrush, place the newspaper squares on top of the glue and smooth down with the brush. Repeat until the letter is covered. You might want to make another layer of plain paper to make your letter strong and easier to decorate. Leave to dry for 24 hours.

7+8

Further decorate your letter by sticking on embellishments like paper flowers, jewels, buttons or ribbons. I have decorated mine with pages from an old book decoupage onto the letter, and then added ribbon, leaf shapes cut from a magazine, small letters bought at a craft store and metallic pens.

Finally, why stop at one letter? You could spell out a word like MUM for Mother's Day or EASTER for a fabulous decorative feature. Have fun making!



# Bible Detectives

# Family

## What's the Big Idea?



Overheard by Christoph Lindner

### **Mothering Sunday seems to be a big thing in churches. Why?**

Historians will tell you that the original idea of it was that people went back to their mother church on that Sunday.

### **Mother church??**

Yes, the church where you were baptised. At baptism we are welcomed by the church and become a member of the Christian family.

### **So, it's nothing to do with our birth mothers?**

We take the image of a church family from the biological family, of course. One of the things that unites us all is that everyone has a birth mother and God has ordered creation in such a way that the best way for a child to thrive is within a loving family.

### **Family is a pretty flexible term, it seems.**

### **What are we talking about - two parents, one or two children and a dog?**

What you describe is sometimes called the 'nuclear family' and is a pretty recent idea. In ancient Israel, the basis of the family already was marriage, but people would usually have lived in an extended family - several generations,

servants and resident foreigners.

The most common word for family in the Old Testament can also be translated household.

The same word could also be used for a clan, a tribe and the whole nation. There is something special about the commitment and care in a biological family that can then be extended to larger groups. In fact, the Old Testament uses the idea of family to describe the relationship between Israel (his chosen people) and God, who is described as a father and sometimes also as a mother.

### **I know some people who haven't exactly experienced "commitment and care", as you put it, in their family!**

You're right and that is one reason that Mothering Sunday can be painful for many. Others aren't part of a nuclear family - single, childless, divorced and widowed people. That's why it's so interesting how Jesus handles the subject.

### **Care to say more?**

Jesus taught his disciples that his true family are those who do his Father's will.

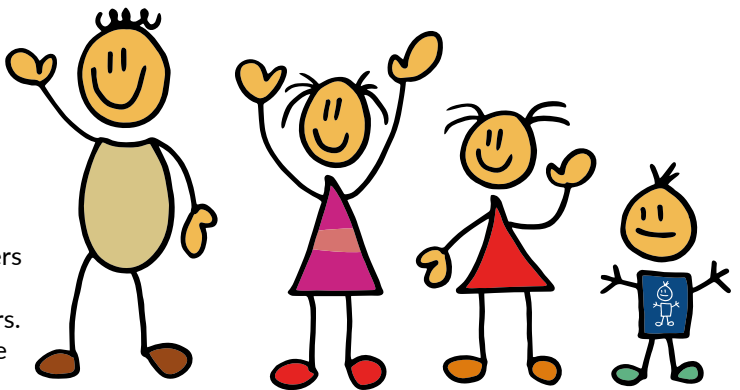


### **How did that go down with his 'nuclear' family?**

There is one story (you can read it in Matthew chapter 12, verses 46 to 50), when Jesus' mother and brothers demanded to see him. Jesus replied, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Then he pointed to his disciples and said, "Here are mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

### **That's pretty stark! And there I was, thinking Jesus was always loving...**

At the time, his mother and brothers thought that he'd lost it and wanted to save him from the trouble he would have to face if he went on like that (in that sense, they were right, of course, as Jesus' teaching and actions did lead to his crucifixion!). While he could not let them derail his mission from God, he never stopped caring for them. On the cross, in the last moments of his life, he asked his disciple John to look after his mother Mary (read the account in John 19.25-27). As followers of Jesus, our first allegiance is always to him, not to our biological family. That doesn't stop us from caring for them of course! In fact, Jesus affirms the commandment to honour father and mother and criticises those who make up rules to ignore this command (Matthew 15.1-6). Later we read that his mother and his brothers were part of the community of believers. They recognised in the



end, that he followed God's plan and was the Son of God. In fact, his brother James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

### **Thank you for mentioning 'church'. I wanted to find out more about something you said earlier: How is church like family?**

The first churches really were like extended families – meeting in private homes, sharing life together, caring for one another. Sometimes a husband and wife led these 'house churches' together (for example Aquila and Priscilla). The idea of church as family is tremendously good news for us all – whether we have a nuclear family or not. When Jesus' disciples say to him, "We've left everything for your sake, what's in it for us?" he answers, "You will receive hundred times as much in this life, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and eternal life in the age to come." That's a beautiful vision for what church should be like and everyone can play their part in making it a reality!

### **And that way, everyone can celebrate Mothering Sunday! That really is a big idea.**

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## ABOUT A (CATHOLIC) BOY BY BRIAN O'REGAN

---



My family lived in Acton, West London when I started school at four. St Stephen's was a Roman Catholic school in Shepherd's Bush run by nuns. My older sister and I joined up with three boys who were a little older and the five of us would cross the Western Avenue (A40) to catch the No. 607 trolley-bus to school. There was a newsagent near the bus stop where 2d (nearly 1p) would buy a packet of polo mints.

My Irish parents were devout Catholics but I have no memory of church in those early years, though we would not have missed Sunday mass. So, the impact of religion on me came from the nuns. I grew up with guilt: at school we used click-together bricks for counting. I wanted to show my mum, so in one lesson I slipped a couple of bricks into my pocket. The rest of the day I was in fear of being caught and was so relieved to get out of school. Mum was happy to see how my counting was progressing, but I felt like a thief even though I knew I would be returning the bricks the following day.

The school still exists, but not with a playground on the second-floor roof! Health & Safety wasn't in fashion in 1958. Lunch times were stressful. We took a short walk to a church hall, where the nuns would supervise dinner. The meat was often fatty and gristly and made me retch, but we had to clear our plates. When I couldn't pass the inedible parts into my handkerchief,

I tucked them to the side of my mouth, eating pudding before being able to spit out the horrible stuff on the walk back. There had to be a better way and I devised it. One morning, when called up for daily register and to pay the one shilling dinner-money, I presented sixpence to the nun. "Now Brian, you know dinner is one shilling, where is your other sixpence?" She held me upside down by my ankles until the missing coin dropped to the floor. I hated school dinners throughout my schooling.

We left Acton when I was six and moved to Marlow. The Catholic school next to the church was small and I entered the Headteacher Mrs Livingstone's class. She was rather fierce, walking on spindly legs exaggerated by very high stiletto heels. Serious misdemeanours were punished praying on one's knees in the graveyard. The school went to mass every Wednesday and after I was confirmed, would take Holy Communion. Mrs Livingstone's eyes were on us to ensure we followed her command "Do not let the host touch your teeth." She inferred it was a mortal sin.

Church featured a lot during these years. Mass on Sunday morning, Benediction, with intoxicating incense burning, in the evening and mass again on Saturday morning. I was an altar boy for all these services without gaining

much meaning as they were conducted in Latin. There was one particular server response on Saturdays which I couldn't get my tongue around. So, on the cue, I would develop a cough to avoid saying it. When the priest realised my problem, he had a word with one of the elderly congregation and she became my proxy.

Then there was confession on Saturdays to fit in. "Bless me father for I have sinned..." But what were my sins? I could make something up and then next time, at least I would confess to lying! No matter what my sins, the penance was much the same - "For your sins, say three Hail Marys and one Our Father." Well, that wasn't so bad, I could rattle those off whilst cycling home and reduce my time in purgatory.

I started cubs and was then mixing with non-Catholics for the first time. At the end of the evening, the "Proddies" would form a circle for prayers, and the "Roman Candles" would stay outside the circle. It was the wording of the Lord's Prayer which caused offence. How could the Proddies imply our God was an object? "Our Father, which art in heaven..." and why have they added "For thine is the kingdom..." It's definitely them and us - time to convert my best friend, Mark! (I failed).

Sometimes in the winter we missed the Sunday evening service and would say The Rosary as a family. I found it so boring, as I inched along ten rosary beads, one Hail Mary for each, and an Our Father at the end. We repeated this sequence five times! Mum and Dad looked very saintly: for me, I had no idea what it all meant.



I left the shelter of the Catholic school before my 11th birthday and went to Wycombe Technical School in Easton Street. They were nearly all Proddies, but the Catholic boys were able to excuse themselves from the worship part of morning assembly. Playing shove ha'penny football was a much better option and we were sanctified by having the sign of the cross which they didn't "In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti".

**"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"**  
**Psalm 133:1**

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE:**

For some readers, this article may stir up uncomfortable or painful memories of their own church experience as a child. Much has changed over the decades and many Protestant and Catholic churches now have a much better understanding of how to engage safely and in age-appropriate ways with children and youth. Today, Brian is an active member of St Mary's Church Denham.

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# LIFESAVING SKILLS IN OUR COMMUNITY: A GREAT SUCCESS BY MICHELE LEE MBE

---

In a positive demonstration of community spirit and proactive learning, the Parish Church, in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council, recently conducted a series of invaluable first aid training sessions. The initiative, aimed at empowering local residents with essential emergency skills, has been a resounding success, drawing excellent and positive feedback.

Spanning three initial sessions, this initiative has seen a remarkable attendance of 61 individuals, highlighting the community's commitment to health and safety. For 46% of the attendees, this was their first venture into first aid training. Others, although previously trained, had not refreshed their skills in over three years, emphasising the importance of this initiative in updating vital knowledge.

The response from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. An impressive 90% rated the course as excellent, while the remaining 10% marked it as good. In a testament to the course's effectiveness, 88% of attendees felt that it exceeded their expectations, and 92% praised the instructor's excellence.

All the participants agreed that the course left them well-prepared to use



their newfound knowledge and skills in real-life scenarios.

The practical approach, allowing hands-on experience with equipment, was particularly appreciated. Additionally, the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) located at St Mark's House was invaluable.



Feedback was very positive about the course's comprehensiveness, covering not only CPR and defibrillator usage but also how to assist in cases of choking,

heart attacks, strokes, and diabetes management. All participants felt that the breadth of knowledge boosted their confidence in emergency situations.

The reasons for participating were as varied. Many sought to update and improve their skills to be of service in the local community emergencies. The desire to be better equipped to aid children in distress was also a theme.

Word of the training spread through various channels, including church announcements, leaflets put through doors in the local community, word of mouth, community groups, St Mary's Church website, Facebook, and local social media. This wide-reaching approach was instrumental in the high turnout.

Looking forward, over half of the participants expressed interest in annual refresher courses. This enthusiasm underscores the



community's recognition of the importance of staying current with first aid skills.

In conclusion, this joint initiative between the Parish Church and Buckinghamshire County Council has not only equipped individuals with life-saving skills but has also fostered a sense of unity and mutual care within our community.

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# What's Happening

AT DENHAM PARISH CHURCH?

**Little  
Lions**

## TODDLER GROUP

Wednesday mornings in term time  
St Mark's Church Hall  
Contact: Kathy Paine  
[kathypaine16@gmail.com](mailto:kathypaine16@gmail.com)

## BEREAVEMENT DROP-IN

A place of safety, welcome and  
hope renewed.  
All welcome.  
St Mark's House  
(next to St Mark's Hall)  
Wed 27 March, 4pm.  
For more information and future  
dates, contact our church office

## CAFÉ CHURCH

Time to chat | Food for thought  
Coffee and cake  
Favourite hymns and prayers  
St Mark's Church Hall  
Sunday 3 March, 5 May  
Contact: Christoph Lindner  
[rector@denhamparish.church](mailto:rector@denhamparish.church)

## DESTINY

For young people  
aged 10 and older  
St Mark's Church Hall  
17 March, 21 April, 19 May  
10.15-11.45am

Contact: Azita Jabbari  
[azita@denhamparish.church](mailto:azita@denhamparish.church)

## Sign up for Email Updates

from Denham Parish Church:

[www.denhamparish.church/new](http://www.denhamparish.church/new)

