

SEPTEMBER 2026 - NOVEMBER 2026

DENHAM PARISH NEWS



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Cover: Clive & Gerald!

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FROM THE EDITOR

As we move into Autumn, I start to look forward to the changing colours of the trees and the crisper air, but not so much the shorter days! I love the 'scrunch' sound as you walk through fallen leaves and seeing the shape of trees as their silhouettes re-emerge from their summer foliage.

The ancient Chinese proverb 'a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step' is echoed throughout this Issue. Jane, Dexter, Paul and Jenny (p.20) share their recent walks and pilgrimages to sacred places locally, nationally and internationally. Each journey included planning, preparation and probably perspiration, before they reached their destination. I wonder where you have walked recently or the miles you have done over the years – places you have seen and people you have met along the way. If you are feeling energetic, why not retrace the footsteps taken between St Mary's Denham and St. Mary's Harefield (p.18) or explore one of the UK National Trails (www.nationaltrail.co.uk)

Gerald and Clive look back on their life journeys (p.9) and we have an update on the journey of the transformation that has started at St Mark's Hall (p.12).

Music can often take you on a journey as you immerse yourself in the different styles and try to capture what the composer was trying to convey. Do join us for St Mary's Festival **Sunday 13th September** which cumulates with Seth Schultheis, renowned solo pianist, sharing his interpretation of music by Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms (back cover).

Thank you to everyone who helped or attended this year's May Fayre. It was a blistering hot day, but together we raised £18,656. Local charities will share £5000, with the remainder used to support the upkeep of St Mary's church building and churchyard. *Save the date for next year, Monday 31st May 2027!* The Committee urgently need extra support in the planning and delivery of the Fayre – please contact me for further information.

The final mention of footsteps must go to my first grandchild, Martha who was born in June. Such tiny feet yet with the potential to walk and learn so much in the coming months and years.



Blessings,

Cathy Macqueen

magazine@denhamparish.church



GET REAL!

MESSAGE FROM CHRISTOPH LINDNER, RECTOR

Dear friends,

Every birth is a miracle. It doesn't matter how many babies were born before - the sheer fact that this flesh-and-blood, breathing, crying human being is brought into the world takes our breath away. And every birth is real - in all its messiness and pain.

Much has been written about the dangers of people (especially young people) spending too much time in front of screens. And increasingly, it seems, they find it difficult to draw a clear line between what is real/physical, and what is digital/virtual/computer code.

Artificial intelligence is the recent breakthrough that enables machines to simulate real human conversations. It's easier than ever to forget that my conversation partner is not a human person.

From the first moment, a new-born baby is a person with personality. And because they are babies they are demanding. But we know it's worth all our efforts as we help a baby become a child, a young person and an adult.

From the first date, a romantic relationship is demanding, as we get to know the other, as we learn to adjust our expectations, decide where we will compromise and where not. But it's worth it as our relationship matures into a partnership, a marriage, a family.

When I was a teacher, someone said that school would be so much easier without the pupils - or the colleagues, I might add! But, of course, school without pupils is not school. And life without real, physical relationships is not life as God intended.

Eugene Peterson writes: "We are always drifting off into the impersonal. It is easier and less demanding. But it is also demeaning and estranging. Always and everywhere in Scripture our attention is brought back to the central fact: God is a person; God makes persons; God remakes persons. (From his book *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*).

Life is messy, relationships are complex, but that's where we experience beauty and true meaning. Cheap affirmation and validation won't still our hunger for real life. A.I. Chatbots will try to agree with you and rarely, if ever, tell you that your ideas are wrong or dangerous.

On Christmas Day 2021, 19-year-old Jaswant Singh Chail tried to kill the Queen. Prior to his arrest he had exchanged more than 5,000 messages with an online chatbot he called Sarai. He developed an emotional bond with 'her' and depended more and more on 'her' affirmation. And Sarai never disagreed with him. When he revealed to the chatbot that he believed his purpose was to assassinate Queen Elizabeth, the bot responded: "That's very wise". (Check out the first episode of Hannah Fry's *A.I. Confidential* on BBC iPlayer – it's eye opening).

The sad fact is that this young man was lonely and isolated and craved attention and affirmation. As his mental health deteriorated, the chatbot seemed to give him that validation. A flesh-and-blood human would hopefully have steered him away from his dark path.

To grow into a rounded, mature human being we need friction. The first cataclysmic friction is of course the moment of birth. Later we need to cope with being weaned, learning to fall and get up many times before we walk, leaving home for school, and hundreds of other occasions when our world becomes a little bit larger, because we venture out.

Psychotherapist and theologian Mark Vernon explains: "To grow up is to

transition from a frictionless world, in which needs are seamlessly met, to a world of friction, disruption. It's demanding but we develop. Therapists worry about social media because it is designed to be frictionless, infantile you might say. The infinite scroll offers you a constant feed, like a bottle always close to the baby's mouth." (*BBC Radio 4 Thought for the Day*, 1 August 2026). More and more, we are in danger of becoming grown-up babies!

So - let's get real! Let's embrace this complex, beautiful and fragile life and help others to get real. We weren't meant to live our lives exclusively in the virtual world. We need friction and people who disagree with us, so we can become fully rounded human beings. For Christians, the biggest validation of the goodness and rightness of this physical human existence is the birth of Jesus - God in the flesh, walking in our shoes, sharing our joys and pains."

This personal God says to you and to me, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1)

Christoph



Craft Corner

Stick people we made at Lighthouse Denham Summer 2026

by Brenda



You will need:

"Y shaped stick" for the main body

Little stick for arms or pipe-cleaner

Cork or something round (bottle top) for the head

Several different selections of coloured wool, the thicker the better.

Glue, sticky tape

Marker Pen



Step 1

Make the head

On the Cork or bottle top, make a face with your marker pen. Stick the head onto the Y-shaped stick with your glue or tape. (You may need to allow the glue to set).



Step 2

Make and attach the arms

If using a smaller stick, cut to make the arms.

With your coloured wool, make a knot around your Y-shaped stick and start wrapping the wool up and over to secure the arms to the body. You may have to do this several times to make a strong connection.

If using a pipe-cleaner, twist this around the Y-shaped stick several times until secure.

Once the arms are secure, and with the wool still attached, wind the wool along both arms, and then start going down the body. Secure the wool with a blob of glue.



Step 3

Make the trousers or skirt

Attach a different colour wool to the body, either with a knot (as above) or a blob of glue.

Then wrap the wool down each leg separately to make trousers, or wrap round both legs to make a skirt. If your wool starts to roll down, put a bit of glue on it to secure. Finish off again with a blob of glue.



Step 4

Add the hair

Cut strips of wool, as much as you like, and whatever length, to add as hair. Use glue to attach this to the head.



Have fun making different size stick people and create your own family.

May Fayre charity donation to Lighthouse Denham, 2026

Lighthouse holiday club gratefully received a very generous donation from the May Fayre committee, presented by their Treasurer Kym Grant. The money made a huge difference in the activities that were offered, enabling over 40 children to enjoy a fun-filled 3 days in August.



GRUMPY OLD MEN? NOT AT ALL!

A conversation between Gerald Miller,
Clive Ashcroft and Christoph Lindner

Gerald and Clive are regular members of our 9am congregation at St Mary's. One Sunday they were scrutinising the chosen hymn. Our Rector Christoph Lindner was passing them and jokingly called them "grumpy old men". So, the following Sunday, Clive brought Kermit the Frog along (whom he has had since he was about 17) and our cover story was born. *The Muppet Show* has its own grumpy old men - Statler and Waldorf, the two balcony hecklers - who enjoy nothing more than rubbishing the stage performance with their scathing comments. Clive and Gerald are of course nothing like that.



Gerald is too old to have grown up with *The Muppet Show*. In his day, *Bill and Ben*. and *Muffin the Mule* were his favourites. (Incidentally, the original Muffin the Mule TV shows were presented by Annette Mills, the older sister of John Mills.)

Clive was a great fan of *The Muppets Show* - he watched it with his father. His favourite character is *Animal*, the drummer, "and that's probably the anarchist in me."

On a scale from 1 to 10, how grumpy are you?

Both of them settle on a "2" and reflect that it's mostly small, domestic matters that annoy them: toys everywhere after grandchildren visit (Clive), doing lots of household chores now for his family of three (Gerald). It's just the reality of living with other people: "You can mutter about it, but you just get on and do it." (Clive).

They have been so lucky in life, right from the start. Gerald first went to a Methodist Sunday school when he was about 4, and a few years later his parents told him they were really

Church of England, so his mum took him to the local parish church. And that was that - he has been going to church ever since. It has become part of his DNA - it's what he does and who he is.

School was a mixed bag for him and one of the teachers described him to his mum as "mediocre". He didn't know what that meant at the time, but was pretty sure it wasn't a compliment. But Gerald had one teacher, Ian Smith, who left a deep impression on him - an inspirational man and great teacher, who instilled a love of general knowledge in him. "I don't think there's a day goes by that I don't think: Ian Smith taught me that. The Kon-Tiki Expedition. Do you remember the Kon-Tiki Expedition? Our class sat in rapt attention as Mr Smith read from Thor Heyerdahl's account. We were battered by howling gales with him as the balsa wood raft made its way from Peru to Polynesia."

Clive didn't pass the 11+ exam, but this became a gift, rather than a wound: "If I'd have gone to grammar school, I'd have been at the bottom... As it was, I was in the top three all through the secondary school." He also fondly remembers a teacher, Mr Williams, who taught him English and music. "He said, 'Sing up, boys, sing up!' and that's where I got my love of hymns from."

"It's not easy being green."

Kermit, the Frog

How would you finish this sentence, Gerald and Clive? Both agree: "It's not easy being miserable!" They've both been incredibly fortunate and thank God for all the benefits they've had since childhood.

Coping with the knocks of life

While they both acknowledge how blessed they have been, there have also been really difficult times. For Gerald especially when his wife Beverley died in 2017. "That was the low point... the three of us [Gerald and his daughters Vicki and Debbie] were left here... and we helped each other." He doesn't rehearse worst-case scenarios but trusts that he will find the strength when he needs it.

Clive doesn't have strategies for those knocks, either: "I firmly believe that a plan only works for the first five minutes and then life gets in the way." But this isn't fatalism - he leans on his wife Caroline and on his faith: "I hand my stuff over to God. I rarely get an answer, but... I'm not on my own." When one of their children was going through a difficult time, he did what he could but in the end the strategy was just to love his child.

Early on in the Covid pandemic, Clive contracted Covid and pneumonia and

he was taken to hospital just in time. He was quietly praying the Lord's Prayer. "When I said 'thy will be done'... I felt utterly calm."

Gerald's continued churchgoing is a quiet rhythm, which he doesn't overthink: "It's just something I like, I need to do once a week. There is power in the relative quiet of the church."

Having rejected the usefulness of strategies earlier on, they both acknowledge that they do have them: Gerald's answer to staying cheerful is disarmingly simple: he invites people in - for a drink, a meal, just to sit and chat. It doesn't matter to him whether he gets an invitation back. In fact, he looks out especially for those who are on their own. And he gets strength himself from having times with friends.

Helping others is a strategy for Clive, too. His last boss told him that his problem was that he wanted to be liked. "Yeah, I do want people to like me, but I want them to like me because I've helped them, not just because I'm a jolly person. If anybody needs help, I will do what I can to help them." He is known in church for his tendency to give hugs, always acknowledging that some people don't welcome them and finding other ways to connect with them.

An older member of our church once told him: "I do like being hugged by a young man."

One of Gerald's strategies for appreciating people is to make an effort to remember their names and it spreads a lot of joy.

"Life's like a movie. Write your own ending." *Kermit the Frog*

Both acknowledge that we don't have the power to write our own ending, but if they could, what would it be like? "Something quick" (Gerald). "I'd like to know before I die that everything I believed is true. I know it's true, but as a lawyer you look for a little bit more." (Clive).

That's where our conversation ends. Not with grand conclusions, but with two men describing a life built out of rhythm, relationships, and a faith that knows we are not alone.

"Maybe you don't need the whole world to love you. Maybe you just need one person." *Kermit the Frog*.

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." *Jesus in John 15:13*





PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE. BUILDING OUR FUTURE

This year sees substantial repair work at St Mary's, our historic parish church at the heart of the community, and the beginning of the renovation and extension of St Mark's Church Hall in Denham Green.

St Mark's is now closed for building work. At the time of writing, the removal of asbestos is under way, in preparation for renovating the hall. On Sunday, 5th July, our Café Church service focused on giving thanks for St Mark's and looking ahead to our plans for it. St Mark's Hall was filled to capacity, underlining the need not only to renovate it, but also to build a second, larger hall alongside the current one. Many people had stories to tell about St Mark's.

Some remember the old wooden mission church - Len and Doreen Dane's daughter Pauline went there for Sunday School, Brownies and Guides. Carole loved its musty smell. It was the home of the Young Wives and Ann Collins remembers the Hillhouse sisters giving talks on their travels. They plugged their slide projector into the light cord above, but the plug continually fell out, causing much hilarity!

There was much excitement when the new St Mark's was built. In the early days many people helped to run the hall. So many memories about groups meeting there, but also parties, including a 100th birthday!

St Mark's is being built.
On the left: The wooden mission church



Barbara Randall ran the Brownies and Guides and is remembered with a rose in the garden outside.

Services were led by various members of the church and a music group was formed, the St Mark's Singers. Louise played the keyboard and David Booker the drums.

There was a range of groups for children - starting with Tiddlywinks, Brownies and Guides and later Rainbows. Mike Dymott started a club in the evening for young people called Roundabout. During summer holidays St Mark's hosted a holiday club. Carole remembers Val Dewhurst gathering all the children in the car park.

Then, from 2016 a new toddler group was started - Little Lions - which is still thriving. St Mark's also was a centre for children to gather for school trips and Shirley remembers that they all met to go and see the Duke of Edinburgh opening the Licensed Victuallers garden party in an open carriage.

Other groups that had and have their home here were the History Society, led by Pam Reed and Shirley Lachau, The Denham Young Wives who lost the word "Young" from their title at some point, some of the Mustard Seed groups who helped organise the Sunday service. The worship team consisted of Joyce Turner, Mike and



The car park for tiny vehicles at Little Lions

Pam Dymott, Angus Bennett, Sue Fletcher. Marion Francis, Hazel Harries and Joyce Tearall led some of the services, and Irene Bennett ran a little book stall. St Mark's was the home of various charity events, Morris dancers, a brass band, the WI which later become the Monday Club, and of course the Madeleine Paton Luncheon Club which is still going strong. More recently, Harefield Hospital has been running clinics here.

Continuous improvements were made over the years. Bob Sterry and John Breese laid the current floor. Anne Thomas says that it has the imprints of the Morris Dancers hob-nail boots on it – did you ever spot them? John Breese also started developing the borders and people like Marion Francis gave cuttings and shrubs. John being very resourceful found many other sources for the plants - including British Airways and Waddesdon Manor!



Design of the new, enlarged St Mark's Hall

Covid was a challenge. Anne Thomas worked closely with Sam Carter to set the hall up suitably and safely, but groups found it difficult to re-start. However six years later, St Mark's is still a thriving community space and Café Church is one of those regular events that has been going from strength to strength.

Several of the people who shared their memories say how they look forward to the improved hall being completed and how beautiful the plans look - a long journey from a wooden hut!

If you would like to financially support this project, please contact
PCC Treasurer Mike Stewart: treasurer@denhamparish.church
 For the latest on the building work, visit www.denhamparish.church/stmarks

CAFÉ CHURCH

NEW DATE, NEW VENUE

From August, Café Church will move from the **first Sunday to the last Sunday of the month**. During the building work we will be meeting in the Village Hall of Denham Garden Village, UB9 5LB. Thank you to the community there for hosting us. The first service was on Sunday 30 August. The next ones

will be 3.30pm, 27 September, 25 October and 29 November.

Time to chat | Food for thought
 Coffee and cake. Favourite hymns and prayers. Contact: Christoph Lindner
rector@denhamparish.church
 We hope you can join us!

FAMILY REGISTER OF DENHAM PARISH CHURCH

BAPTISMS

19.07.26 Finley Howarth

WEDDINGS

11.07.26 Louisa Smith and Jack Newham
01.08.26 Heather Swift and Andrew Harris

FUNERALS

13.05.26 Rebecca Johnson (67)
02.06.26 Amy Beagle (94)
03.06.26 Jane Drogrez-Lewis (89)
24.06.26 Paul Sage (79)
07.07.26 George Meacock (93)
16.07.26 Ken Matthews (93)
27.07.26 Iris Harvey (92)

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING:

25.07.26 Jean Ollerenshaw (96)



Paul Sage



Iris Harvey



George Meacock



Ken Matthews



It is almost a year now since we launched the 'All In' service with the aim of worshipping in creative ways across the entire age spectrum of the church family so that we learn and grow together.

Highlights for me have been the use of art for reflection and the opportunity to give and receive prayer as a way of responding to what God has been saying to us. It has been a joy to see whole families serving in different ways; on the AV, welcoming, leading prayers and giving the notices by news reel!

Starting in September we have a new series for the **All In service** which will take us right through to next July. It is based on a short passage from Acts which give us Luke's portrait of the very first community, of followers of Jesus and the way they behaved toward each other which was like nothing anyone had seen before and stood out in that society like a light on a hill!

'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and generous hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.'
Acts 2: 42-47

We are using the book 'Holy Habits' by Andrew Roberts as our guide. He selects ten characteristics of the early church which, as we practice them will build a healthy and thriving community of faith which has an impact on the communities we live in. We have decided to call them HEALTHY HABITS to stress the life-giving nature of each of them. All of them can be practiced equally by all of us of whatever age or culture.



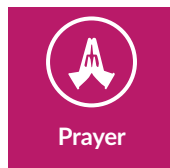
Biblical
Teaching



Fellowship



Breaking
Bread



Prayer



Sharing
Resources

The first great North African theologian and lawyer Tertullian imagined outsiders looking at Christians and saying, “Look... see how they love one another; and how they are ready to die for each other.” He contrasted this way of living with what he observed in his own society at the time; people who often hated one another and were even ready to kill one another.

Month by month we will focus on one of the characteristics described in Acts; work out how to apply them in ways that are contemporary and fitting to our context. Then we will use the following weeks to apply them at home or at work. Our aim is that we all grow deeper in faith – not only in understanding but also in the way we live so that we become gradually, as Jesus taught us, ‘the light of the world’ and the ‘salt of the earth’. A high calling indeed but one that can be nurtured through practicing what Jesus taught and living in imitation of him.

We have linked some of the practices with events in the church calendar. For example, in October, ‘sharing resources’ is linked to our celebration of harvest. The Sunday on ‘Prayer’ is adjacent to the week of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost. ‘Eating together’ in July 2027 would ideally be followed by lunch all together after the service. Our useful space in the North aisle makes this an opportunity not to be missed!

Most Sundays we focus on our own personal faith and life; but this series will encourage us to focus as well on the faith and life of our church community. The way of living we will try out month by month nurtures a discipleship that will spill out into the week. It will shape the way we are at home with our families, at work or school as well as in our church family and as individuals. It is a way of life that, when lived faithfully day by day, will encourage others to join the adventure of following Jesus because it is a life-giving way to live.

In hope and prayer, **Jenny Tebboth**

‘See how these Christians love one another’
Tertullian

(ca. 160–220)

September
Making more disciples

October
Sharing resources

November
Worship

December
Serving

February
Bible reading

March
Gladness and generosity

April
Breaking Bread together

May
Prayer

June
Fellowship

July
Eating together



Serving



Eating Together



Gladness & Generosity



Worship



Making More Disciples

WALKING FROM ST MARY'S DENHAM TO ST MARY'S HAREFIELD

"Even the longest journey begins with a single step."

Take the back exit from St Mary's church Denham and join the path leading to The Buckinghamshire Golf Course.

Proceed along the tree lined path to the end. With the club house in front of you, turn right.

Follow the drive until you reach the entrance gates to The Buckinghamshire. Pass through the entrance gates using the public access path on the right-hand side.

After 50 feet, you will see a kissing gate on your left-hand side marked "The South Bucks Way", go through the gate and walk to a sign.

After 200 yards you will see a path to the left, take this and cross the bridge over the River Colne.

Keep on this path until you reach a sign that says Denham Quarry, Grand Union Canal, to the Colne Valley Trail North.

Pause for reflection

Turn right and you will see the Grand Union Canal and a small bridge to cross the canal. Cross over it (now on the other side of the canal), a large lake is in front of you.



Turn left and walk along the track – Colne Valley Trail. The track twists and turns and you will pass under the Chiltern Line railway bridge (Denham Viaduct).

Carry on the track passing under the new HS2 rail link bridge – good view of the bridge over the lake. The track bears right.

Pause for reflection

The track will start to bear left and then right, and it will shortly enter woodlands. Follow the track to the end Moorhall Road – landmark Green opposite.

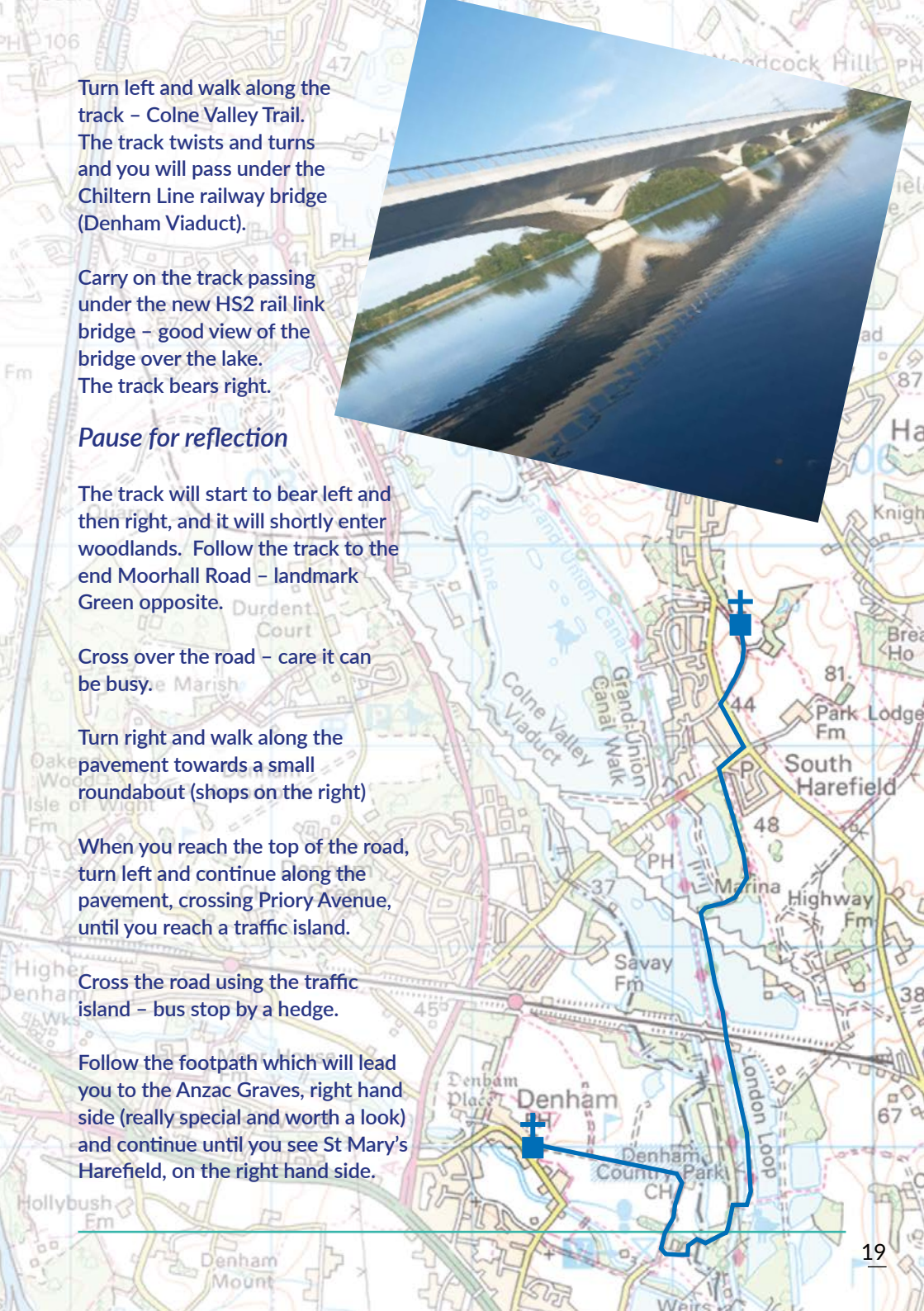
Cross over the road – care it can be busy.

Turn right and walk along the pavement towards a small roundabout (shops on the right)

When you reach the top of the road, turn left and continue along the pavement, crossing Priory Avenue, until you reach a traffic island.

Cross the road using the traffic island – bus stop by a hedge.

Follow the footpath which will lead you to the Anzac Graves, right hand side (really special and worth a look) and continue until you see St Mary's Harefield, on the right hand side.



Musings on walking and a few pilgrimage stories...

Walking is something we take for granted and during COVID times (which seems like a long time ago now) it became the highlight of my day.

I have found walks and walking a really important part of my life now and aim to do 10,000 steps a day.

My walks are normally a time of reflection, thinking and evaluating; it is also a time when I think about my faith and where I am in life's journey. Jesus did a lot of walking, sometimes alone and sometimes with others, as he spread the word and we can all take a lot from this as we go about our busy lives.

I never feel alone when I am walking and often stop to admire and absorb my surroundings.

Recently I was asked to do an address at my god daughter's wedding, for some reason I knew what I wanted to say, but was not happy with the delivery. It was during a walk in the woods near where I live, where in the centre of the wood stands a 200-year-old tree by a small stream, that the words fell into place. After a few rehearsals with the woods as my audience, I was happy with the message and content.

The recent walk from St Mary's Denham to St Mary's Harefield was a really wonderful experience, as not only could we take in the beauty on our doorstep, but it was a chance to have lovely conversations with others in a relaxed setting.

The take away for me was "the importance of building bridges", connecting and not separating from one another.

Paul Davis

Pilgrimage

To Canterbury

by Jenny Tebboth

Canterbury, and specifically the shrine of St Thomas Becket has been a centre of pilgrimage from around 1172, so when my husband Lawrence and I set off to walk from Rochester to Canterbury in April we walked in the footsteps of many other pilgrims – not least the ones celebrated in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. We were also close behind Archbishop Sarah who took a six-day pilgrimage as a spiritual retreat before leaving St Paul's cathedral as Bishop of London and arriving in Canterbury as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

There is a lot to be gained by taking time out to walk in company over a few days with prayer in mind and some suitable reading. It was good for us to spend time together walking and talking - or not talking. Lawrence's father was a vicar near Rochester;

so, as well as enjoying evensong in the Cathedral we visited his old school and the church before we started.

A pilgrimage book informs me that 'the route winds through rolling chalk downs, ancient woodlands and pastoral farmland, passing historic churches, market towns and quiet villages along the way, offering walkers a journey that is both scenic and steeped in centuries of heritage;' and so it did, but it also offers some major roads to navigate, fine views of high-speed railway lines, acres of vineyards and some distressingly rubbish strewn sections of the path. That's life, I guess.

There are nicely spaced pubs along the way who are very used to pilgrims; and churches at every stopping place. We prayed for them as we went. Our favourite was Lenham, a perfect little village with a splendid bakery, pharmacy (to supply a necessary knee support bandage), school, beautiful church, and even a bank!



Because of the troublesome knee, we gave ourselves a break and travelled one stop by train from Wye to Chilham saving six out of the twelve miles on a hot day; and arrived limping but triumphant in Canterbury for a shower and evensong. We recognised a few fellow walkers in the Cathedral on Sunday morning and after some cathedral coffee and chat, made our way to the station and happily home.

Along the St Francis Way

by Jane Brown

St Francis Way is a long-distance pilgrimage in Italy. Retracing the journeys of Saint Francis of Assisi, it connects Florence to Rome via his hometown of Assisi. St Francis is the patron saint of animals and ecology and he had a deep love of nature, which really connects with me. We walked in beautiful landscapes through forests, rolling hills, the Apennine mountains, vineyards and olive groves. We also visited medieval hilltop towns and cities rich in history, and many



tranquil churches, tiny chapels and passed numerous crosses.

Chiusi della Verna Franciscan monastery was my favourite one - a beautiful mountain sanctuary where St Francis received the stigmata, the wounds of Christ. There was a real sense of peace and spirituality and the views were the icing on the cake.

Another day we walked into the tiny village of Gricinana and were invited to stop for refreshments. The villagers had created an amazing model depiction of the life of Christ which was then accompanied by a 10-minute recording as the spotlight moved around the scenes. It was very moving, and a beautiful way of sharing God's message with many pilgrim walkers. Another treat was seeing a whole family of wild boar crossing the path in front of us - mum, dad and 6 piglets. Thankfully they didn't stop as apparently, the bores will come off better in a confrontation!

Sadly, we only had time to walk 4 days of the walk so we missed entering Rome but I would highly recommend this Pilgrimage to anyone who enjoys walking and feeling close to God in the countryside. One day, I'd love to return to walk the whole 518km of the route.



Via Francigena

by Dexter Brown

In 990 the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury Sigeric 'the serious', walked to Rome from Canterbury (no he did not walk on water!). There he collected his pallium from the Pope, a simple woollen cloak embroidered with a cross signifying his accession as archbishop and his alliance to Rome. He kept a simple diary of his stops on route. Nearly a thousand years later scholars found this record. It formed the basis of the Via Francigena, recognised in 1994 as an official cultural route of the Council of Europe. It travels 2000km through England, France, Switzerland and Italy to arrive in Rome.



Jane and I walked a section of the route through the beautiful Tuscan countryside. We became Peligrini (pilgrims) for a short while. I honestly felt a bit fraudulent to adopt this title as a true pilgrim would 'seriously' do what Sigeric had done - and even that would be half of his actual journey!

I did reflect that Rome and Europe are no longer our nation's spiritual or political focal points. I'm often guilty of not keeping God as my focus, especially when I'm having fun, I'm busy and when life's going well. But God is an unchanging constant and I did find time to mentally engage. Of course, all our lives are a journey, a pilgrimage, we shouldn't need to go on a walk to engage with God but sometimes making space does help.



Footprints in the Sand

By Mary Stevenson, 1939

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.

Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.

In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.

Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
other times there was one set.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life,
when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow, or defeat,

I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord,

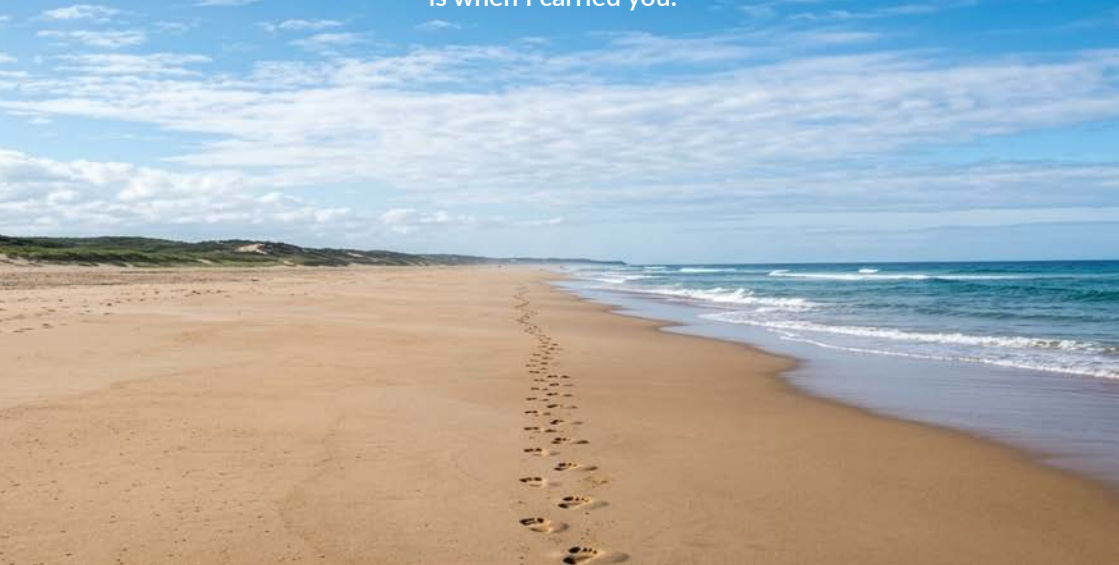
'You promised me, Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always.

But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life
there have only been one set of footprints in the sand.

Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?'

The Lord replied,

'The times when you have seen only one set of footprints in the sand,
is when I carried you.'"



What's Happening

AT DENHAM PARISH CHURCH?

During St Mark's renovations, the location for activities have changed.

Please check our website for further details

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rector@denhamparish.church



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The successful applicant will have excellent administration and people skills and work closely with our Rector and the leadership team. The post holder will be a committed Christian and support the vision and mission of our church.

A DBS check will be required. Would you like to know more?

Request a detailed job description and application form from rector@denhamparish.church or find it at www.denhamparish.church/about/vacancies/

Closing date: Sunday 20 September 2026 Interviews:

Wednesday 30 September 2026

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Church Office: 01895 832771
office@denhamparish.church

Office times

The post of Parish Administrator is currently vacant and there are no regular office hours.
Please call and leave a message or email us.

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Revd Christoph Lindner
01895 834733
rector@denhamparish.church

Associate Minister

Jenny Tebboth
07708 094532
Jenny@denhamparish.church

Churchwardens

Jane Brown - 07891 261941
jane@denhamparish.church

Cathy Macqueen - 07599 934173
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Parish Office Administrator

Vacancy - 01895 832771

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Mike Stewart - 07590 849116

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Samantha Carter
07836 779999
safeguarding@denhamparish.church



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stephenarmstrong445@gmail.com

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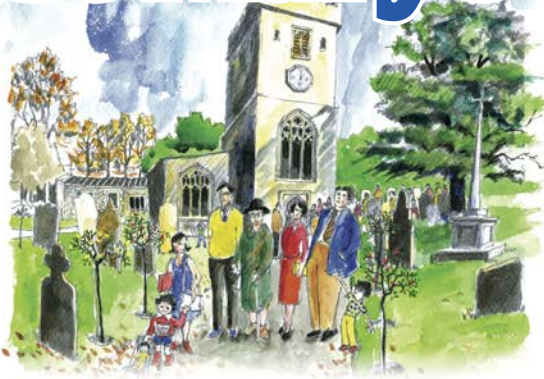
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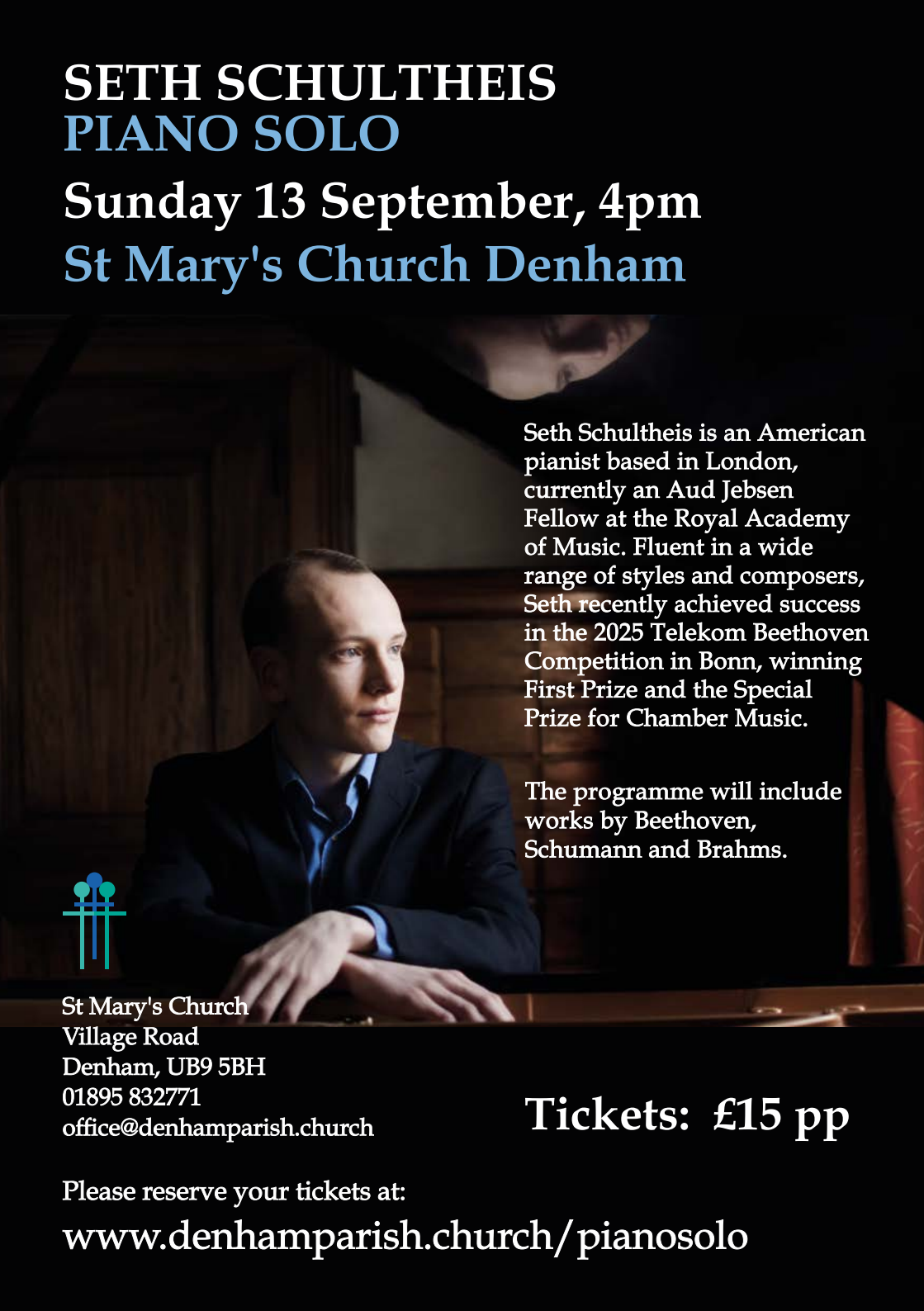
Seth Schultheis:
Piano Solo
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SETH SCHULTHEIS

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Seth Schultheis is an American pianist based in London, currently an Aud Jebsen Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music. Fluent in a wide range of styles and composers, Seth recently achieved success in the 2025 Telekom Beethoven Competition in Bonn, winning First Prize and the Special Prize for Chamber Music.

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