

ST MARY'S CHURCH, THAMES STREET, HAMPTON

The Parish Link

CHRISTMAS 2017



CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS
AT ST MARY'S



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www.hampton-church.org.uk

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Please visit our website for all the latest news, events and activities for all age groups.

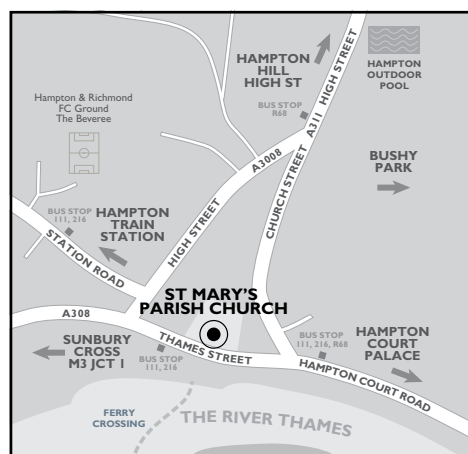
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Nally Fernando, safeguarding@hampton-church.org.uk

Choir Director and Organist

Contact: **David Pimm, CertRCO** 020 8399 2404

New choir members, adults or children, are encouraged.

Worship Band email: john@hampton-church.org.uk

John Winterburn07816 855941

Bell Ringers

Beginners or experienced ringers are always welcome.

Contact: **Alison Ward** 020 8979 9848

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. JOHN 1:5

There are many great traditions that come at Christmas time: perhaps you have dinner with your family, exchange presents, sing carols or, as is in our household, debate vigorously whether the tree I bought is far too big for the room. Our customs bring us together, feasting together and having fun celebrating this amazing time of year.

I've noticed, over the past decade or so, a less joyous tradition. I have not seen the article yet this year, but I know that soon it will appear in one of the newspapers, or it might be a witty moment on TV from the modern day comic polymaths. As someone explains to us that Christians have appropriated this festival from ancient celebrations of the winter equinox or Saturnalia or something similar.

There is some truth to these claims. We don't have a birth certificate for Jesus, nor do we know the exact date. The Bible doesn't tell us a precise time. In fact the story tells of shepherds out on the hillside with their sheep and, as it gets very cold in Israel at this time of year, it is likely this occurred in the spring or autumn rather than in winter.

However we chose December as the time of year to celebrate the birth of Jesus. This means that as Christians for thousands of years have chosen this date to mark the birthday of the Christ, we should be attuned to the symbolism this time of year brings.

I'm sure you've noticed but it's dark. I've been constantly wrestling with the timer that turns on the flood lights of the church and have become aware of just how early it gets dark and also how long the night is. The school run in June was in glorious sunshine, and now it is in gloom.



However the turning of the year brings a promise. Tomorrow will be brighter. The sun will rise a little earlier and set a bit later. Tomorrow will have more light. Cold will give way to warmth, dark will be overcome by light, and goodness will triumph over all that is wrong with the world.

This is the promise of Christianity at Christmas time. That this baby born was not just a sweet baby, good man or wise teacher. He was the light and life of God himself. Who came not as a disinterested bystander but as the One who would overcome darkness with light.

So however bright or dark your Christmas is this year; know that Jesus offers new, bright, vibrant life.

Come and join us in celebrating that darkness is never victorious. Spring always breaks through for Easter is coming.

Ben Lovell

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From the Registers

Baptisms

15 October Benjamin John Arthur Lewis

26 November Ethan Jacob Chow

. Elijah Joseph Chow

Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child

22 October Luke George Amparo



Funerals

18 September Margaret Elsie Costa, aged 89 years, of Lacey Drive,
to South West Middlesex Crematorium

20 September Olive Rose Vaughan, aged 76 years, of Myrtle Road, Hampton Hill,
to South West Middlesex Crematorium

12 October Leigh Martin Sinclair, aged 51 years, of Beach Grove, Feltham,
to St Mary's Church, then to South West Middlesex Crematorium

20 October Peter Gurney Allen Bucknall, aged 91 years, of Hogarth Way, to South West Middlesex
Crematorium followed by a Memorial Service in St Mary's Church on 8 November

Interment of Ashes

7 October Wendella Anne Rhys

SERVICE TIMES AT ST MARY'S

SUNDAYS

8am Holy Communion

(1st Sunday of the month) A quiet, traditional service

9.30am Holy Communion

A choral service with traditional hymns

11am 'Sunday Praise'

An informal service using a mixture of old and new music (Children's groups and crèche)

6.30pm Prayer Book Evensong

A gentle, traditional service

or

6.30pm Refresh Informal Service (4th Sunday)

WEEKDAYS

9am Morning Prayer (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday)

9am Holy Communion (Wednesday)

10am First Steps (Alternate Wednesdays)

A service for pre-school children with craft, games and refreshments.



Questions about life?

We all have questions about life. The Alpha Course gives you the opportunity to discuss these in a comfortable and informal environment. The course consists of important topics such as 'Who is Jesus?' and 'Why should I pray?'

The course is totally free and runs for 8 weeks. Each session begins with a meal and you can come and go as you please; you don't even have to attend every session if you don't want to.

You can find out more or sign up at hampton-church.org.uk/alpha

Here are the thoughts of John, one of our participants from last time:

"I have to admit to a degree of concern why, in my mid 80s, a lifetime member of the C of E, steeped in the formality of the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible, I would be driving to the Alpha course one evening in October.

My concern was slightly alleviated by the friendly reception from Ben and the other 8 considerably younger members of the group, and even more so when we sat round a table to enjoy each

other's company and some hot shepherd's pie.

Having watched a very interesting and well produced DVD, entitled 'Is there more to life than this?', we settled down to an interesting discussion, closing with prayers and looking forward to the next session.

The eight week course is well constructed with interesting topics, I fully recommend it. Included was a full day mainly devoted to aspects of the Holy Spirit, which we attended along with other churches at St John's, Hampton Wick.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who provided our ample and very tasty meals, which were very much appreciated and certainly set the evening off to a good start. Despite my initial concern, I really enjoyed the companionship and content of the course, and would certainly recommend it, regardless of age and experience."

**Our next Alpha starts 24 January 2018.
Sign up at www.hampton-church.org.uk/alpha**



Introducing our new curate...



In October we announced that Cara Lovell has been appointed to be Curate at St Mary's Church from the summer of 2018. A Curate is someone who is ordained and then works with a church to continue their training 'on

the job' for about three years. We asked Cara to introduce herself and explain her new role:

"Hello! I moved to Hampton in May along with my husband, Ben (the vicar at St Mary's) and our two children – Emily (aged 7) and Zoe (aged 3). We have enjoyed settling in to Hampton over the past six months, getting to know the local area, local community and church family.

Not many people guess that I was born in the USA (my accent doesn't give that away!) and moved to England when I was 7 years old. I grew up in

Tunbridge Wells in Kent and went to university in Canterbury to study Occupational Therapy. I moved to Harrow in North West London after university and worked as an Occupational Therapist at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore for over 14 years.

Since 2015 I have been training for ordination at St Mellitus College (near to Earl's Court) and I am now in my third and final year. The training involves a combination of academic study and practical ministry experience, so I am serving my last placement at St Mary's Hampton. I will be ordained at St Paul's Cathedral in June 2018 and will then start my curacy at St Mary's.

My curacy is going to be a part-time curacy and will consist of one day a week working at the church during which time I will be helping to develop and grow a variety of church ministries. The rest of the week I will be undertaking some further academic study and will be working towards a Doctorate in Theology.

I am really looking forward to starting my curacy at St Mary's Hampton...but as I'm already around, do come and say hello if we have not already met!"



Good Seeds in Fertile Soil – Child Support in Mandimba, Mozambique

Written by Fiona Rowett

Amazingly, this is our 11th year of supporting orphans and vulnerable children and young people to attend school in Mozambique. From small beginnings with five children, we have slowly increased the numbers and for the last two years we have supported 100 children: 30 in the Julius Nyere Primary School and 70 in the Samora Machel Secondary School.

These young people need our help to attend school for a number of reasons. Many have experienced traumatic events in their young lives such as the death or serious illness of one or both of their parents. Some have had to leave school to care for their sick parents or younger siblings, or to work to provide an income for the family. For others, their family has not been able to afford the school books, compulsory uniform and (for the secondary school) registration fee to enable them to attend.

Mozambique is one of the world's poorest countries and it can be very challenging for relatives taking in extra children. Siblings may be separated and children can be uprooted, sometimes having to move to a new town or even a different country. Mandimba is right on the border with Malawi and some of our children have stayed with relatives over the border for periods of time.

The 'Good Seeds' are selected by a local committee according to need, regardless of faith. The local community has also recruited a team of volunteer mentors to support them with practical help and guidance.



Antonietta



Rajabo

In 2010 I met Tomas and was very moved to discover that at the age of just 18, he was solely responsible for his seven younger brothers and sisters. He worked in the market in the mornings to support them. With our help, he was able to return to school for afternoon sessions, to complete his education. Children only move up from one school year to the next if they pass their exams. Pupils returning to school after a break will pick up their education where they left off, so to have a 12 year old and a 16 year old in the same class is not that unusual.

In 2014 we were pleased to see that students with additional needs such as Antonietta, had joined the project.

In parts of Africa, disability carries social stigma, so this evidence of inclusiveness was welcome. Some children's stories have been very hard to hear. Belina told us that her mother made her 'marry' men she did not like, so they had an income. She moved to live with her grandmother but life was very

hard for them. She was incredibly grateful to receive sponsorship so she could go to school.

We have received many messages of thanks over the years. One of this year's pupils, Rajabo, told us ***"If it were not for this support I could not get to attend school, but with this support I am very satisfied, my problem is behind and thank you for the help. My dream is to be a Teacher."***

One of last year's school leavers, Jorgina, has now asked if we can help her study to become a teacher. She wrote:

I would like to thank ...the Good Seeds Association ... because I am an orphan with no father nor mother. I also would like to thank you with all my heart and faith for having taken care of me with love and tenderness, and for the patience you had throughout all the mistakes I have made. Finally, I would also like to thank you for having supported me financially with my studies from the 8th to the 12th grade.



Jorgina

I would like to request the Good Seeds Association for a place in the teacher's course in Niassa.

This project is amazingly good value! This year, it has cost £25 for each secondary pupil and £16.50 for each primary pupil. Jorgina's fees will be more, but we have committed to support her take this next step and enable her to give something back to her community.

We are planning another visit to Mandimba next year and look forward to meeting the young people, their teachers and supporters. Thank you to everyone in the church and from the wider community who has supported the Good Seeds. They and their local community are so grateful. Together we are helping to make a real difference to young people's lives.

Fiona Rowett
Good Seeds Co-ordinator
November 2017

10 Facts About Mozambique

- 1** Mozambique is a beautiful, wildlife-rich country in Southeast Africa.
- 2** It is bordered by Malawi and Zambia to the northwest, Tanzania to the north, Swaziland and South Africa to the southwest and Zimbabwe to the west.
- 3** The total land area of Mozambique is 308,642 square miles... that's more than 3 times the size of the UK!
- 4** Mozambique's population was 25,303,113 in 2015... that's less than half the population of the UK!
- 5** Residents here are known as Mozambicans
- 6** The capital is Maputo; it covers an area of 134 square miles and had a population of 1,187,000 in 2015.
- 7** Mozambique is home to a wide range of wildlife, including elephants, manatees, lions, aardvarks, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, giraffes, snakes, buffalos, crocodiles, leopards, bushbabies, monkeys, cheetahs, panthers and hyenas!
- 8** Despite boasting a total of 98 airports, only 21 have paved runways!
- 9** Did you know that Mozambique is the only one-word country name to feature all 5 vowels? That's a good one to remember for your next pub quiz night!
- 10** The average life span here is 53 years.



St Mary's Home Groups

Written by Dan & Jo Adams

Whilst our Sunday services at St Mary's are an important and vibrant opportunity to worship and learn together, they can often be busy times with only a few minutes to snatch a conversation over coffee before or after the service.

This can mean there are limited opportunities to get to know others and have others genuinely get to know us – something we can all feel in our busy lives in 21st century London.

Our church – and every church – exists to build bridges, make connections, increase unity and community cohesion as we seek to be 'one body'; it is a core principle of the Christian gospel that no one be isolated or excluded.

Home Groups – **midweek groups of between 6–12 individuals meeting in homes around Hampton every fortnight** – are therefore an integral part of life at St Mary's, as they are one way in which the larger church family can relate on a more personal level for members of the church and newcomers alike.

Ever since the first gatherings of Jesus' followers, small groups have met in homes to learn, support and worship together; indeed, Jesus himself gathered twelve individuals to specifically share his life with on a deeper, personal level.

We therefore believe passionately that Home Groups are a good model to follow (!) and one of the key

ways in which we help each other to grow in our faith, support each other and to discuss together how we could practically apply what we've learnt at our Sunday gatherings.

(If the Sunday service is like a piece of steak, Home Groups are the opportunity to chew on it and digest it!)

In our Home Groups:

- Newcomers are welcomed and – along with those who are established attendees of St Mary's – are able to ask questions, find answers, raise doubts and encourage one another.
- Genuine, encouraging and accountable friendships are formed, allowing us to identify and meet areas of practical need within the church and the local community.
- We spur each other on in our journeys of faith through prayer and exploring how the Bible offers a rich, credible and relevant application to our everyday lives.

There are currently seven different Home Groups which run in or around the Hampton area. They meet on a range of different days and reflect the diversity of our church family, so there should be one for everybody to 'find a home' in.

If you want to find out more, please fill in the form at www.hampton-church.org.uk/home-groups and we will put you in touch with the leaders of the most relevant group for you.



University life

Written by Felix Murray

As you may know, I moved into university at Imperial College London in October. I'm right outside the museums on Exhibition Road, and live about 2 minutes away from campus. What a dream! One of the most satisfying things about being at Imperial so far is that I'm loving the course. I do Design Engineering, which is a mix between creative product design and proper engineering maths, along with electronics, material science, and project management, so it's a bit of everything. It does mean that there's a lot of work – but I suppose I didn't sign up to sit around and do nothing!

Because I'm living in halls, it's been quite a change of scene in every way – I'm now living in central London, cooking for myself and choosing when I get home in the evenings (or mornings – sorry Mum). It's actually not always as glamorous as it sounds, I've found it can be pretty exhausting if you go clubbing every night for a week, and it makes getting out of bed for lectures even harder than it already is. Luckily, everyone basically realises this at the same time (even people who claim to be hard-core partiers) and life has settled down a bit since freshers' week. I love going out, particularly discovering really cool places to eat and drink around London – there are so many. It also turns out being able to cook theoretically doesn't always translate into real life very well, but I'm still alive so I must be okay!

There are some really lovely people on my floor and in my halls, including a couple of Christians,

and we all like going out and having fun, which has made the whole experience even better. There's a real sense of community and we're all very good friends already. One of the other things that has really helped me settle in was finding my own church – HTB Onslow Square – because it gave me another community to be part of, and a good way to be refreshed in my daily walk with God. Being at university has made me realise how much I have to be thankful for – I couldn't have even got here in my own strength, let alone settle in and find such nice friends, and feel so at home.

My advice to people going off to university would be to make the most of the opportunities on offer, and have so much fun. There's nothing quite like leaving home for the first time and being in a completely new place with new people. It's terrifying, but also exhilarating and really worth embracing. Do all of it with God – he loves it even more than we do when we enjoy things and have a good time, and he's also there when everything gets a bit much and you just want to go home.

If you're worrying about how people might respond to your faith: from my experience, as soon as people saw that I was a normal person, and later realised I was a Christian, they were pleasantly surprised. After all, even Christians drink a little bit too much occasionally! It's nice to be able to challenge that preconception that a lot of people have, that Christianity is boring and about rules and regulations, and it's also a really good platform to share your faith in a non-confrontational way.

The Parish Link

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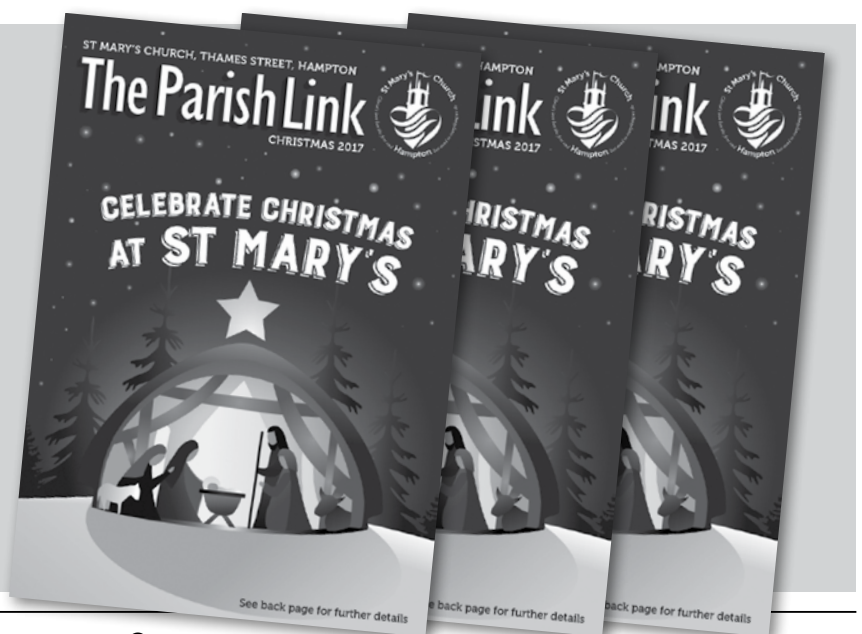
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Rich in Years 2017

Written by Enid Cuthbert

Thank you to the team who organised our second trip to Worthing for three wonderful days with the theme 'Rich in Years'.

It was a very friendly group of 32, and we gelled immediately with lots of laughs and banter. We had two very good speakers, who I am sure were an inspiration to all with contributions from two of our congregation.

Music was also provided by two of our church members. We had a very moving video one evening, and various board games, table tennis, pool and skittles were also available to those who had the energy!

Hand massage was very generously provided free of charge, and members contributed £60 which was sent to 'The Dogs' Trust'.

There was plenty of free time for walking along the seafront and spending money in the many shopping arcades and coffee shops.

We enjoyed our stay at The Chatsworth Hotel, a family run hotel right on the seafront that served very good food and provided comfortable rooms. We were so lucky with the weather – very warm and calm on the Thursday!

I am now looking forward to next year, to the fellowship and the undemanding time to refresh my thoughts.

Our grateful thanks to the team.



News from our school

Although I have only been Headteacher at St Mary's for 8 months now, it feels like much longer! In fact, I have felt a spiritual connection to the school since before it opened. Years ago, Nick Neilan (of MTV Youth fame!) and I attended the same church and the same home group. It was at home group one evening that Nick asked us to pray for the possible opening of a new church school in Hampton. It sounded very exciting and we were pleased to join Nick on the journey in praying for St Mary's church to win the bid to open the school. I always suspected that God might have plans for me that somehow connected to St Mary's school. I was so incredibly happy and excited to accept the governors' offer to become Headteacher last December. Mine was truly a divine appointment! I love St Mary's school. I love the children,

the families, the staff and the wonderful sense of community that has been built. It is a privilege to serve local Hampton families and to build a school where children excel academically, physically and spiritually. It is such a pleasure to lead the school and I can honestly say that I have never enjoyed my job more than here at St Mary's. I am very excited about the future direction of the school as we continue to grow to full capacity. We are so proud of our children and the wonderful qualities they show day in, day out.

If anyone locally would like to volunteer their help, you would be very welcome. We really want to reach out into the local community and to find ways to serve you.

Wishing you God's richest blessings in the run up to Christmas.



Matt White
November 2017

Children and Young People at St Mary's

First Steps

**A simple and fun
worship service for
babies and toddlers**

Alternate Wednesdays
during term time

10-11am in church

Bible stories, songs, craft,
drinks, snacks and time
to chat or play.

For further details contact
Sam Waako 07923 331108
sam.waako@hampton-church.org.uk



**For young people of
secondary school age**

F.A.B. meets in church on
some Sunday mornings
at 11am and most Sunday
evenings for discussion,
games, acting, eating and other
activities. In the programme
there are also occasional socials
and trips to Soul Survivor.

For further details contact
Sam Waako 07923 331108
sam.waako@hampton-church.org.uk



**For infants
3 to 7 years**

Mini-COSMOS begins in the
church service and then the
children leave for their own
activities in the church hall.

We meet on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th
and 5th Sundays of the month
during our 11am service.



**For children of
junior school age**

COSMOS meets in the hall
during our 11am service for
activity, craft and fun.

We meet on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th
and 5th Sundays of the month
during our 11am service.

We come back in time for a
blessing in the service.



**Come and join
our group for
carers, babies
and toddlers**

We meet during term time
on Mondays at 1.30-3pm in
St Mary's Community Hall
for play, craft, story, songs,
coffee, chat and friendship



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W.I. Blues

Written by Ian & Vera Macrae

St Mary's Drama Group's loyal audience was recently rewarded with a treat in the shape of John Peel's clever comedy of manners, *W.I. Blues*, at the Hampton Hill Theatre.

Director Jean Wood, recently honoured with an Arts Richmond Swan Gala Accolade celebrating her long career, was drawn to this five-hander of stalwarts fighting to keep out the threat of 'incomers' invading 'their' *W.I.*, whilst they bicker amongst themselves, by her daughter and son-in-law's recent enjoyment of the play.

The small cast cooperated skillfully, interpreting the author's portrait of contrasting personalities revolving around Norma Beresford's unlovely harridan, Grace, an aspiring middle-class monster à la Hyacinth Bouquet/Bucket, a petty tyrant whose main target is Fiona, an exceptional rendering by Jean Kay of a self-effacing but decent farmer's wife. Grace aims her barbs at Fiona for her supposed shortcomings in furnishing, clothes, catering and choice of husband, the latter compared unfavourably to Grace's paragon of a husband.

Fiona endures all this stoically, but we the audience are by now aching for Grace's downfall, as she turns her attention to Gina Way's Jane, adroitly presented as more dynamic and sexually-liberated than the others, the flaws in her present relationship pointed out by Grace, but Jane, G&T. glass in hand, seems unfazed, especially when she helps herself (and the others), to Grace's husband's Old Malt, one of several assaults on Grace's self-satisfied image. Hazel then arrives, Sue McMillan playing her as a rather strait-laced senior



member of the party, but it's Hazel who initiates the first crumbling of Grace's pretensions. To our delight, Hazel slips off her coat to reveal an identical dress to Grace's, who has just presented this as a "little designer number"; which is in fact off-the-peg. The ongoing 'business', a series of mysterious phone calls, dismissed by Grace as "wrong numbers", offers some interesting questions; does Grace herself have a secret, and why is Hazel appearing more and more concerned? The answer to the latter question emerges when Hazel drops her bombshell; the last phone call contains bad news, that Hazel has a serious illness.

Pippa, a telling portrait by Bobbie Ennals, comes in for her share of Grace's disdain for her lifestyle, supported by her professional footballer husband. Pippa, however, has her own marital problems, happily pointed out by the others. To Grace's mortification, earlier on Fiona has artlessly revealed that her farmhouse furniture, denigrated by Grace, has actually been highly valued by the experts. Things continue on their downward slide for Grace, culminating in the revelation that her paragon has, in fact, 'done a runner', taking her treasured car and much else. At the end of this terrific piece of ensemble acting, the ladies rally, reverting to *W.I.* solidarity, and Grace supplies the sting in the tail: the mystery phone calls are in fact from her anonymous lover; but even here Grace's plans are subverted by the well-meaning intervention of the ladies.

The cast, under Jean's faultless direction, plus the high standard of acting, offered the audience a comedy treat with serious undertones. None of this could have been achieved without the sterling work of the 'back of house' team; too many to name individually, but worthy of their own accolades; but what happened to the chicken?



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SMDG Quiz Saturday 3 February 2018

We are delighted to announce that Andy Smith and Margaret Lamb have again agreed to host our **Quiz Evening** which will be held in **St Mary's Community Hall** on **Saturday, 3 February 2018** at **7pm** for a **7.15pm start**. Quiz Evenings are most enjoyable events and not to be missed so come along and be sure that, win or lose, you will be guaranteed a very enjoyable evening.

This year we will again start the evening with a meal of fish/chicken and chips which we aim to serve as near to 7.15pm as we can manage. The quiz itself will start around 8pm with a short interval half way through. Wine, beer and soft drinks will be available for purchase by the bottle or the glass. Come as a group, or teams of up to 6 can be formed on the night.

Put the date in your diary now!





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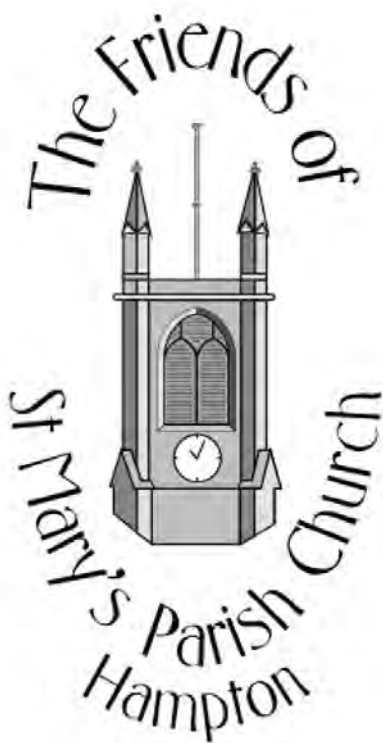
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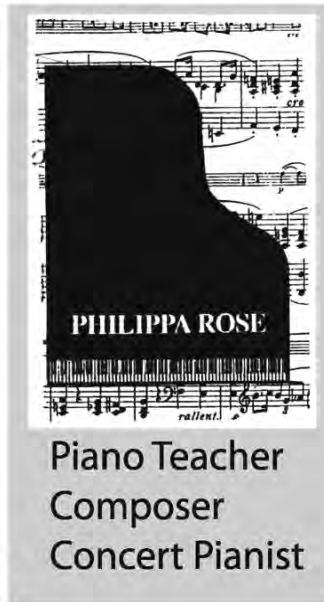
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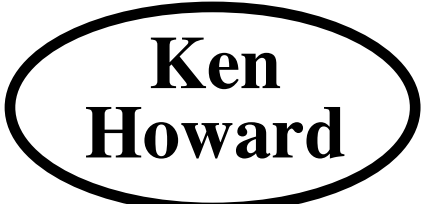
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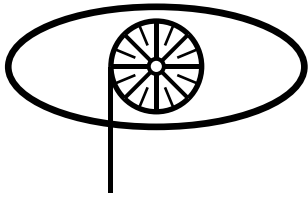
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