ST MARY'S CHURCH, THAMES STREET, HAMPTON

The Parish Link



JUNE 2018





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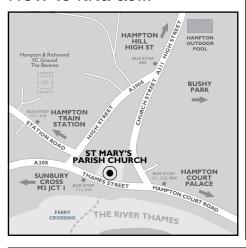
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St Mary's Parish Office Church Street Hampton TW12 2EB Tel: 020 8941 7221 parish.manager@hampton-church.org.uk

How to find us...



·		
Vicar: The Reverend Ben Lovell		
The Vicarage, 7 Church St, Hampton TW 12 2EB		
Asst Priest: The Reverend Geoffrey Clarkson	020 8977 1434	
	020 0000 2002	
Asst Priest: The Reverend Alan Jackson 7 Uxbridge Road, Hanworth TW13 5EG	020 8898 3093	
Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers)		
Pat Felstead, 69a Ormond Drive, Hampton TW12 2TP		
Rosemary Cumberland, 27 Chichester Close, Hampton TW	'12 3QJ020 8941 2546	
Parish Office	020 8941 7221	
Parish Manager: Jane Holmesparish.ma	anager@hampton-church.org.uk	
Parish Administrator: Elizabeth Waitemail:	admin@hampton-church.org.uk	
Churchwardens		
Nally Fernando, 35 Longford Close, Hampton TW12 IAD	07968 805243	
Hilary Hart, Banchory, Old Farm Rd, Hampton TW12 3QT.		
Deputy Churchwardens		
Mike Bowen, 33 Falcon Road, Hampton TW12 2RA	020 8979 5973	
Mike Fraser, 12 Springfield Avenue, Hampton TW12 3DT		
Kel Razza, 26 Coleshill Road, Teddington TW11 OLJ		
-		
Hon Treasurer Nigel Francis, 18 Rushbury Court, Station Road TW12 2DD	020 8941 1467	
Recorder for Christian Stewardship		
Martin Hart, Banchory, Old Farm Road TW12 3QT	020 8979 5665	
•		
Hall Bookings		
Patricia Lewis, 7 Manor Gardens TW12 2TXhall-booking@hampton-church.org.uk		
Church Flowers		
Michael Harris, 74 Wensleydale Road, Hampton TW12 2LX	020 3560 5796	
Youth Pastor		
Nick Neilannick.neilan@hampto	n-church.org.uk / 07469 147137	
Facilities Manager		
Kel Razzake	l.razza@hampton-church.org.uk	
Safeguarding Officer		
Nally Fernandosafegu	arding@hampton-church orguk	
,	ar ding whampton-charch.org.ak	
Choir Director and Organist	020 0200 2404	
David Pimm, CertRCO	020 8399 2404	
Worship Band		
John Winterburnjohn@hampto	n-church.org.uk / 07816 855941	
Bell Ringers		
Alison Ward	020 8979 9848	

LIVING WITH PASSION

Written by Ben Lovell

missed the royal wedding. Although, due to my daughters' interest in it and the miracle of on-demand TV, I have now seen certain bits of it several hundred times (or so it seems). It's a wonderful occasion, wonderful celebration and, in the midst of it, a wonderful sermon.

Although I didn't watch the wedding live it was apparent from the news coverage that the sermon was receiving as much, if not more,

attention than the dress, the vows or the party afterwards. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry spoke of love with such a passion that it, quite literally in some

up and take notice.

cases, made the world sit

As someone who wrestles weekly with what to say and how to explain a text I listened with fascination to what was a rhetorical masterclass. Energy slowly built up during the talk, drawing us all into Bishop Michael's exploration of what love is and what love can do.

loving is something we need to choose and return to constantly.

PASSION TURNS US OUTWARDS

I missed The Wedding because I was at another wedding. Although to the happy couple, and to me, the wedding I was at was The Wedding of the year. I was preaching at the wedding of a young couple who

I have known for years. The bride was a member

of my youth group from years ago. She is someone I have seen grow from a small 12 year old girl to an

incredible woman who will, along with her new husband,

shape the world.

In the Bible reading during their service they were encouraged to clothe themselves with compassion. In my sermon I reminded the couple that this meant they should be more passionate about the other than themselves. To champion the other's interests, vocation and needs above their own.



I don't think there is anyone who would not disagree that they are for more love in the world. We all want to be loved, to love others, and to see people love each other and this world. However it does not take long to see that this is not lived out around us. How can it be that we have a world where everyone wants to love but love seems so distant to so many of us.

Passion brings about in us a decisive choice that we continue to embark on. Passion means we return to a value, activity or task again and again. Passion means our zeal for something which could fade. We choose to be passionate. It means turning again and again back to that which our heart desires and not giving up.

To be passionate about 'loving God, loving others and, while we are at it, loving ourselves' is not something which continues unabated and unchecked. Passion to see love in the world, and to be more

One of the delights of the royal wedding was seeing a couple passionate about each other. That there was obvious delight in seeing the other flourish.

PASSION IS INFECTIOUS

John Wesley, the great 18th century evangelist, is reputed as saying 'Light yourself on fire with passion and people will come from miles to watch you burn.'

Passion tells the world what we are for, what we value and what we think is important. Choosing to allow passion to burn within us for an injustice to be put right, for a cause to be championed or, as Bishop Michael extolled, for love to be the foundation of our lives will mean others join us. They will see our excitement and desire and that is infectious.

We, at St Mary's, are passionate about 'seeing this old world made new' by the love of Jesus and the power of His Holy Spirit. Perhaps you might want to join us.

From the Registers

Baptisms

18 March...... Abigail Praise Waako15 April..... Darcie Sydney Hook20 May..... Eli Charles Benjen Pain

20 May..... Reginald George Newstead

Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child

20 May..... Jacob William Maningas Western 20 may..... Grace Olivia Maningas Western

Funerals

9 April Alan Geoffrey McArthur

Interment of Ashes at Hampton Cemetery

25 April Joan Maud Jamieson

Shout with joy to God, all the earth!

SUMMER FULL CHORAL EVENSONG

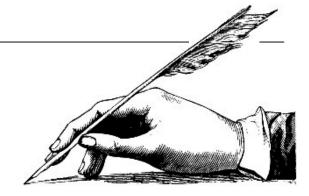
followed by Light refreshments in the Church Gardens 6.30pm Sunday 15 July• St Mary's Church Hampton

Purcell – Rejoice in the Lord (extract), Stanford in C – Magnificat and Nunc dimittis Stanford – Glorious and powerful God

Rejoicing in song led by the expanded choir of St Mary's, Hampton, Evensong will follow the Book of Common Prayer. This can provide a wonderful moment of reflection and peace, surrounded by beautiful English choral music and ending with our triumphant organ.

Weather permitting, light refreshments to follow will be in the church gardens, serenaded by the full church bells, rung by the Middlesex bell ringers.





Introducing our new Churchwarden

Written by Ivan Powell



ally Fernando has recently been appointed Churchwarden but to many of us he is better known as one of the members of the church choir (a tenor). In addition he is St Mary's Safeguarding Officer and he has also

undertaken to oversee the Evensong service on Sunday evenings. He is clearly going to be kept very busy.

Nally was born in Enfield but now lives in Hampton Hill, married to Anne Marie and has two daughters, Isabel and Lucy. He has always enjoyed music and singing and was encouraged by a family member to join St Mary's choir and since then he has welcomed the opportunity to become part of the family at our church and it is an important part of his life as demonstrated by his commitment. He is a keen

sportsman but his real love is cricket. He plays for Hampton Hill CC and is an all-rounder, coaches at the club and has also been the Chairman of the club. I also share his love for the game so as you can imagine we got a bit diverted from the task in hand!

During his varied career he has never lost sight of the need to do charitable work particularly where such work can bring joy and pleasure to disadvantaged children. He has been a volunteer worker for Hosanna House & Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT), a charity which travels with disabled and disadvantaged children on pilgrimage to Lourdes. One of Nally's goals is to visit every cathedral in England and Wales and although there are 42 he is well on the way having already visited 15.

When the time came for Nally to leave I enquired whether he was on his way home. 'No, no' he said. 'I am off to St Mary's for worship band practice as I am part of the backing group.' Now that's what I call commitment and thank you Nally.

SERVICE TIMES AT ST MARY'S

SUNDAYS

9.30am Holy Communion

A choral service with traditional hymns

I Iam Sunday Praise

A family friendly contemporary service with youth and 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 Toddler Praise (Wednesday)

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





Sam's Reflections

Our Children and Families Work Leader, Sam Waako, reflects on his time at St Mary's before he leaves us to begin life as a Curate in Old Woking

'In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.'

PROVERBS 16.9

must confess, that coming to St Mary's after I had left my previous job was never my plan, it was indeed

God's plan. In fact, I thought I had a 'good' job (still in ministry) waiting for me in London, where I had done extended interviews with one of the Churches where it all looked set for me to commence work with them sooner rather than later. While waiting, my prayerful wife suggested 'looking around' while we waited - she was on to something but she didn't want to tell me directly, other than, "We can't put all our eggs in one basket." The short story is, what I thought was my job in waiting fell through, and at almost the same time, I was offered the role of part time Children and Families Work Leader at St Mary's Church Hampton. This was in April 2014. Although I took on the job reluctantly (as with most jobs since pursuing any form of ministry calling), it's been the most rewarding opportunity to serve.

The highlight for me has been seeing growth happen, not just in children's ministry but also in the whole of the life of St Mary's. Growth in numbers and growth in discipleship. I believe this has happened and continues to happen due to a number of things. Among them;

 The clergy, starting off with Derek and now with Ben, who are seeking to grow the Church in all aspects of its life and ministry.

- An excellent team of volunteers who freely give up their time and passionately seek to impart faith in the lives of especially the children of St Mary's.
- PCC and ministry team members that continually look out for the interests of the Church and the parish in general.
- The families that keep on bringing their children and young people to Church on Sunday, Midweek and one off events – If they didn't, we (kids ministry) would not have a job to do.

Aside from work and Church, God has blessed our time at St Mary's as a family. Some of the things that have happened since we have been here include;

- The birth of our baby daughter (Abigail-Praise)
- The recommendation for training and subsequent three years of theological training

Lastly, my word of encouragement would be, let's seek to pray and listen to God. When we do, the Bible promises that He listens and he answers us, and when He does, we shall know that

'His plans are to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us a hope and a future.' (JER 29.11)

At least that's one lesson I have learnt in my time at St Mary's Church Hampton.

Be blessed, Samuel



On the evening of Saturday 19 May FAB took a group of young people to the *Thy Kingdom* Come celebration at St Alban's Cathedral. The gathering, which

was a collaboration between Soul Survivor Watford, local and national youth organisations, the Diocese of St Albans and the Cathedral, was just one of many events which took place around the country as part of the *Thy Kingdom Come* prayer initiative. Now in its third year the annual global prayer movement invites Christians of all denominations to come together to pray between Ascension and Pentecost for people to come to know Jesus. It was great to see our young people get involved and hear how it has impacted them:

'Soul Survivor at St Albans was really fun and a great way to learn loads from some inspirational people. The preacher from the royal wedding was there, as was the Archbishop of Canterbury which was amazing. The Archbishop talked on identity and love, and paired with the worship it was a brilliant evening.' Philomena Murray (13).

We look forward to getting involved again next year.

Nick Neilan

FAB, for young people of secondary school age, meets in church on most Sunday mornings at 10.45am for discussion, games, acting, eating and other activities, plus occasional socials and trips to Soul Survivor.

For further details contact Nick Neilan 07469 147137 nick.neilan@hampton-church.org.uk

First Steps Toddler Praise Easter Celebration

Written by Charley Robinson, Preschool Room Leader at Buttons Day Nursery

Nursery have attended a Christmas and an Easter celebration morning at St Mary's Church aimed at babies, toddlers and preschool children.

At the Christmas celebration the children sang Christmas songs, watched a video about the birth of Jesus and created a mosaic of Mary,



Joseph and baby Jesus in the stable. On

the day of our visit Buttons had OFSTED visiting. The OFSTED inspector came along to the celebration and in her report wrote that, 'The manager and staff are creating strong links in their local community to develop the children's understanding



of the world. For example, children attended a story and singing session at their local church to help them learn about different cultural events.' We had so much fun at St Mary's church that we asked if we could come back for another visit.

The team at St Mary's church very kindly invited us to their morning Easter celebration. We were all very excited! For the Easter celebration the children sang some action songs and watched a video

about the celebration of Easter. The children also looked at items related to Easter, including lambs, Easter bonnets, and eggs. During our visit we also created colourful Easter egg stencils and ate hot cross buns which were extremely yummy!

The children and staff at Buttons Day Nursery love our visits to St Mary's Church and we will continue to do so in the future.



An opportunity for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups to get together for singing, stories, crafts and Jesus.

Every Wednesday during term time at 10am.

St Mary's Church, Thames Street, Hampton TW12 2EB

Contact Cara Lovell for further details: Telephone: 07879 404 201 cara.lovell@hampton-church.org.uk

BIBLE STORIES SINGING CRAFT & JESUS



FOR BABIES, TODDLERS & THEIR GROWN-UPS

A safe space for your little ones to play while you relax, have a cup of tea and make friends.

Our weekly activities include craft, singing and story-telling. If your baby is still too young to join in with some of these activities then we have baby mats so your baby can still enjoy watching the older toddlers play.

We are here every Monday during term time, 1.30–3pm

St Mary's Community Hall, Church St, Hampton TW12 2EB

Contact Mary Collins for details: Tel: 07415 814 195 maryjcollins86@gmail.com

TOYS CRAFT STORY SONGS COFFEE CHAT FRIENDSHIP



As MTV Youth approaches its 7th birthday it seems a good time to consider why the youth club was formed and why we continue to do what we do.

The club was set up in 2011 in response to concerns raised in the local community over a lack of support for young people and rising anti-social behaviour.

Keen to do something to help we started free football coaching with a few kids from the Oldfield Road Estate. Within 6 months of that first football session we launched the Friday night youth club on the same site (now St Mary's Hampton CE primary school).

None of us had ever set up a youth club before but we could see an obvious need and had a deep desire to make a positive difference to the lives of the young people in Hampton.

Seven years on, having worked with several hundred young people, that desire to see lives transformed and potential fulfilled is stronger than ever and is the reason we have continued to push for a permanent base for the club.

Since October 2016 we have had to run the youth club off two sites (an indoor club at Hampton Baptist church hall and an outdoor club at St Mary's Hampton CE primary school) whilst continuing to negotiate with the council to secure suitable premises. Finally we are beginning to make real progress. Although there is much work to be done we are very hopeful that we will see MTV Youth back on one site at some point during the forthcoming Autumn term, thus enabling the club to sustain and enhance the support we offer to young people in the community.

MTV Youth, Hampton is a local youth project run by the community for the community. If you would like to support the club financially or join us as a volunteer please contact info@mtvhampton.org.uk.

Nick Neilan

REV'ING UP

Written by Cara Lovell

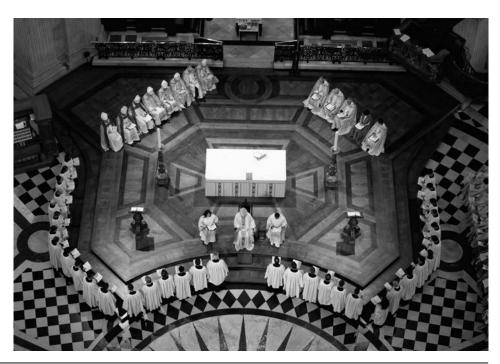
On Saturday 30 June at 3pm I will walk down the aisle of St Paul's Cathedral. But I won't be at the cathedral to admire the soaring height of the famous dome as a tourist. I will be walking down the aisle with about forty other men and women to be ordained as the newest 'reverends' in the London Diocese of the Church of England. I will be ordained by the new Bishop of London, Bishop Sarah Mullally – the first women to occupy this role.

This will be the culmination of a long journey of many years. There is a story in my family that, when I was a teenager who had fairly recently become a Christian and started attending church, my granny said to my mother, 'I think Cara would make an excellent vicar's wife,' to which my mother replied, 'I think she'd make an excellent vicar!' Turns out both of them were right!

I started to seriously explore whether God was calling me to ordained ministry in 2012. At that point I was an occupational therapist working in the NHS, Ben had recently begun training for ordination, and we had a two-year-old daughter. The selection process in the Church of England is lengthy and it was protracted further by the arrival of our second child in 2014. I finally commenced my training in September 2015 at St Mellitus College in central London. Over the past three years I have enjoyed training alongside a wonderful group of people from all walks of life and am in the process of completing an MA in Theology.

After my ordination at St Paul's Cathedral at the end of June, I will be serving as Curate at St Mary's Hampton. This will be a part-time role as I am also going to be working towards a doctorate in theology through Durham University. I am delighted that I will be able to serve my curacy at St Mary's and among the people of Hampton.

The photograph below is of Ben's ordination in 2014 and give a flavour of what's in store for me.



The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, Bishop of London Written by Hilary Hart



n Saturday, 12 May, I was lucky enough to be present in St Paul's Cathedral, at the Installation of Dame Sarah Mullally as the 133rd Bishop of London. This was a historic occasion as she is the first woman to hold such a senior position in the Church of England. Legislation to allow female bishops was formally adopted by the Church of England in 2014.

As we queued up outside the Cathedral, before the doors opened, Bishop Sarah mingled amongst us.

Bishop Sarah is a former Chief Nursing Officer and was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 2005 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to nursing and midwifery. So it was rather apt that 12 May was Florence Nightingale's birthday. She takes over from Dr Richard Chartres who retired in February 2017.

Bishop Sarah now holds the third most senior position in the Church of England, having previously been the Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter and the Canon Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral.

The service at St Paul's was attended by many dignitaries from the City of London, including the Lord Mayor, clergy from across the Diocese and representatives of world faiths, as well as representatives from the laity within the diocese.

After the welcome and bidding, Bishop Sarah performed the tradition of striking three times on the Cathedral's Great West door with her pastoral staff.

In her sermon, Bishop Sarah preached on the theme of 'being subversive for Christ' – noting that 105 years ago this week, suffragettes placed a bomb underneath the same seat upon which she had been enthroned as Bishop of London. The bomb was defused before it did any damage. She called for a culture that 'challenges deference and the abuse of power' and for victims of abuse to be listened to.

She added: 'We need to speak up for the whole of London, to work to challenge the violence and the crime that have led mothers to clean their own children's blood from our pavements. Could there be a starker image or a more urgent wake-up call for all who love this city, who believe it can have an even better future?'

After all the pomp and ceremony, as we left the Cathedral, the St Michael and All Angels Steel Band, Brent was playing on the portico outside, which continued to lift our spirits after an awesome service.

As Bishop Sarah leads the church in London, we pray for the Holy Spirit to guide her in all she does and help her to nurture her own spiritual life in Christ and to inspire others.



ON THE GREEN

Sunday 1 July 2018 11am to 4pm



It's a Chaplain's Life

By Paul Barker

am privileged to serve as a chaplain at
Heathrow Airport, as well as our local football
team, Hampton & Richmond Borough FC. Both are
very different, yet similar. The ethos of both Sports
Chaplaincy UK and the Multi Faith Chaplaincy, at
Heathrow, is virtually the same. This is to offer
pastoral and spiritual support to those of all faiths
and those of none. There ends the similarity!

Heathrow Airport has a working population of nearly 80,000 and around 79 million passengers passing through its 4 terminals. H&RBFC, on the other hand had an average attendance of just 590, for the season that has just finished.

I am lead chaplain in terminal 2 and interact with staff as well as passengers. The staff range from senior terminal management to those who keep the building looking clean and tidy and as far as I am concerned all have a vital role to play. Passengers vary greatly as well. I see the regular business traveller, who is always in a rush, and the elderly couple who are travelling for the first time to see their grand-children on the other side of the world.

In 'The Great Commission' at the end of Matthew's gospel the disciples were commanded to 'Go into all the world'. I have no need to 'go' as the world comes to me! Travellers come from all parts of the globe and the workers are also from many nations and represent many faith communities.

As I set out on my daily rounds I never know who I might meet or what situation I may find myself in. It is vital that I ask God's Spirit to guide me. Many conversations are just general chit chat, but others want to talk about a family crisis or bereavement.

The chaplaincy team is 'on call' 24/7, 365 days a year. We act as an additional emergency service, as and when the need arrives. The most common

call out is for a death on board. We are on hand to offer comfort to the travelling companions of the deceased and to the airline crew, who find such an event traumatic.

Thankfully I have not had to deal with anything quite as dramatic as that at the football club, although there were a lot of very disappointed folks as 'The Beavers' lost their recent play-off final in a penalty shoot- out. I offer pastoral support and a listening ear to the largest 'congregation' in Hampton. The 'congregation' includes everyone at the club, players, supporters and volunteers.

I have been extremely fortunate that the now departed manager, Alan Dowson, allowed me access to the changing rooms to speak to the players before matches. Following that visit I conducted pre-match prayers for any players that wanted to join in. I am delighted that 5 or 6 out of the squad of I6 joined in regularly. I am praying that the new manager will allow me similar privileges.

I write an article for the match day programme, called 'Chaplain's Corner'. This column also appears on the club's website and usually links a football or sporting theme to a Christian message. I have received many positive comments, from all sorts of people, in the club, which is very encouraging.

Many folks ask me why do I do chaplaincy work? The answer is quite simple really. When Jesus was going about His ministry He went and met people where they were, rather than expecting them to meet Him in the Synagogue. So, if it was good enough for Jesus, then it's good enough for me!! With church attendances falling and a world still needing to know God's love, the 'church' needs to learn to play away, rather than on its own patch. This is THE challenge before Christian Church in the 21st century.



FLING WIDE THE GATES



The Crucifixion

by John Stainer, libretto by William John Sparrow-Simpson
St Mary's Extended Parish Choir, St Mary's Church, Hampton, 25 March 2018

Review by Mark Aspen

In 2018, the supreme sacrifice may seem a concept almost infinitely remote for most of us. But, the ultimate sacrificing of one's own life for another is part of the implicit covenant made by all recruits into the military, and what parents would not risk their own lives for those of their children? Taking the place of another who is facing death is perhaps a step further, but not remote.

Just a day before Palm Sunday 2018, when the extended choir of St Mary's performed Stainer's oratorio, at a supermarket near Carcassonne, the French gendarme Arnaud Beltrame did just that. He offered himself instead of the young woman being held hostage by a terrorist gunman, and was brutally killed as a consequence. (A few days later, President Macron was to place France's highest award for bravery on Beltrame's coffin as he was posthumously made a commander of the Legion of Honour.)

In a reflection in the brief mediation that preceded the oratorio, Ben Lovell, the Vicar of St Mary's paid homage to Beltrame, whose actions mirrored the even greater sacrifice of Christ, which would be marked that coming Friday. On Good Friday Christ offered himself for all of mankind, as God's gift at Easter.

The reading in the mediation was from Isaiah 53, a passage well-known not only to the faithful, but also to all aficionados of the oratorio through the most

sublime passages in Handel's Messiah, 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ... despiséd'.

Under the inspired leadership of St Mary's Choir Director and Organist, David Pimm, an occasional series of sacred choral music, requiems and oratorios, has gained a wide following amongst music lovers and those who are moved by these remarkable works.

Musically, the Palm Sunday concert was magnificent. Even before entering the church, the evening's music was embellished by ringing of the changes by an extended team from the Middlesex Bellringers on the church's Major of eight bells, cast by Thomas Mears in 1831.

This was a significant year. The organ, restored in the summer of 2017, was a gift from King William IV, and the present church was consecrated on I September 1831, exactly one week before William's coronation. Moreover, as Duke of Clarence, he had been instrumental in the church's rebuilding.

Not only is the organ an outstanding instrument, but for Stainer's Crucifixion it was played by Nat Keiller, an award-winning Royal College of Organists graduate. As introductory music before the service, Keiller played Charles John Stanley, Organ Voluntary No 3 from his Opus 5 Ten Voluntaries for Organ (1748).

Stainer's Crucifixion is a wide—ranging piece for the organ, with a number of virtuoso passages. The St Mary's organ was extended shortly after the oratorio was first performed at St Marylebone in 1887, when Stainer was Professor of Music at Oxford. Whilst in the format of the various Passion oratorios by Bach and others of a century and a half previously, Stainer's Crucifixion is typical of the expressive church music of the late 19th century, with its unshakably ardent belief in the Gospel. It is this that makes the piece so remarkable in its range from aching tenderness, through painful despondency, to majestic triumph.

The oratorio is very much an ensemble piece, choir and organ working in a finely entwined discourse, which is most evident in the powerful chorus piece, Processional to Calvary, which opens with a solo organ overture, expansive and stately, rising to a forte trumpeting, before the chorus demands, "Fling wide the gates". This is almost immediately juxtaposed with a beautifully expressive solo, originally written for tenor voice but here transposed for the choir's outstanding lyrical soprano Fiona Rowett.

Much of the work however, takes the form of dialogues between male soloists and narration involving the chorus. The majority of this interchange was undertaken by Jonathan Williams, an assured accomplished tenor soloist and William Ormerod, who is remarkable in being able to extend the baritone register both high into the tenor range and down towards the bass. The Agony, written as tenor and bass solos and chorus, and based on text from St Mark's gospel, which opens the piece, is a case in point. Ormerod develops the weightiness of the mood as it descends in questioning desolation though Christs' words interspersed with the chorus' reflections, and narrated by Williams' recitative, with the cynical taunting of the Pharisees provided by Graham Beresford's rich bass. The increasing abjection of Christ is underlined by the descent of the organ down its own voice register.

The tenor solo The Majesty of the Divine Humiliation was finely delivered by Williams, pointing up the oxymoron in the contrast of majesty and humiliation, sustaining 'sublime' in 'Thou art sublime, far more awful in Thy weakness', and rising to a strong crescendo as 'crownless' is surmounted by 'in glory interceding, Thou art King'! This then develops into the centre-piece of the oratorio, God

So Loved the World from St John's gospel, a lyrical a cappella chorus figure, opening pianissimo, rising to a forte crescendo with the words "everlasting life", before a diminuendo into silence.

The dialogues depicting the first hours of the crucifixion, 'Father, forgive them', a tenor and male chorus recitative, and the bass and male chorus, 'One of the malefactors' gave further demonstration of the strengths of St Mary's choir, with the secure bass of John Sutton and the distinctively decorated tenor of Nally Fernando.

The final hours on the cross are largely depicted by the organ, notwithstanding fine passionate chorus and solo singing, such as the 'When Jesus therefore saw His mother' tenor solo with male chorus and the 'Is it nothing' baritone solo. When the organ lowered its voice in 'There was darkness over all the land', the atmospheric rumbling shaking the building was awe-inspiring.

The 'Is it nothing' motif is picked up in the chorus' The Appeal of the Crucified, in a pianissimo 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?', which builds brutally into the cry of the crowd 'Crucify!' Then the music and words fade away with 'for why will ye die'... 'Come unto Me'.

This working of volumes, of amplitude and silence, is one of the many strengths of the work, and indeed after the final recitative 'After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished', Stainer's score implies silence. Silence from choir, from organ, from congregation... and by implication, from the world.

Reprinted from Mark Aspen reviews: www.markaspen.wordpress.com/2018/03/30/crux

ST MARY'S CHURCH CHOIR

For keen and able singers of any age. Practice Friday evenings 7.45pm, for 9.30am Sunday services.

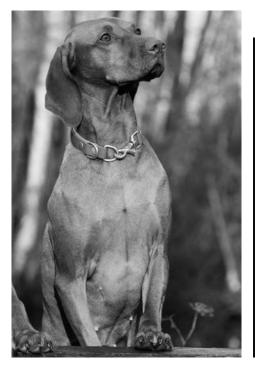
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That's what Friends are for

Written by Didie Bucknall

A beautiful new pennant flies bravely from the flagpole above St Mary's church. Over the course of the next months it will become torn, tattered and weathered by wind and air pollution. The pennant was a donation by the Friends of St Mary's. Some might wonder who are the Friends of St Mary's? They are just people who love and value the old building and want to see it looking at its best. The Friends are by no means all churchgoers, though of course many of them are. Membership is by donation which can be as little or as much as desired.

All churches need Friends, they are the ones who give new notice boards, comfy pew cushions, carpeting, refurbish old kneelers, renovate precious altar frontals and replace tatty pennants – all the things which left to their natural order become dreary and bedraggled.

The Friends of St Mary's run the Toiletries stall both at the Christmas Fayre and the Fete, where more information about them and their future plans can be found. The Friends open the Church on the afternoons of the third Sunday of the month from 2.30pm to 4.30pm and, on 16 September there will be a talk and exhibition of 'Treasures from the Vestry' by Nigel Francis, the Chairman of the Friends, and all are very welcome.



The Friends of St Mary's help care for the up keep of the building by fundraising and social events.

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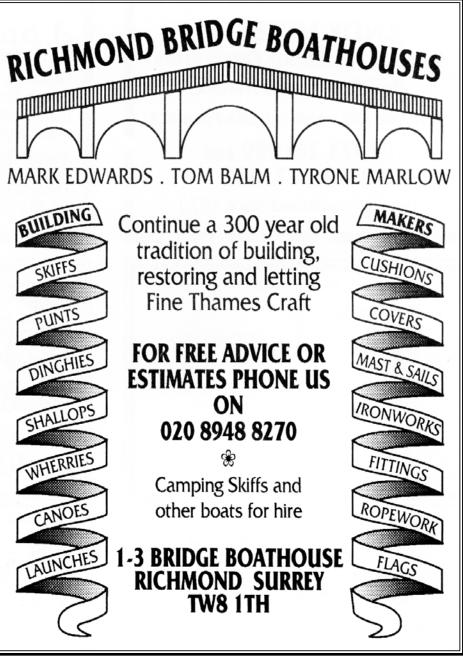
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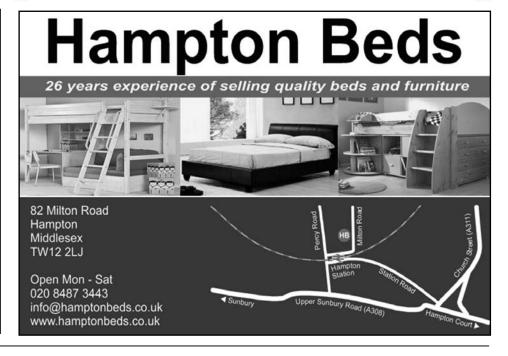
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