

The Spire

NOVEMBER 2010

New organist is
music to our ears

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Gone, but not
forgotten

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War and Peace

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THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



Heroes

Remembrance Sunday, 14 November

9.45am
service

The Spire

St James's Church
Registered Charity No 1129286

This Spire is produced nine times a year on behalf of the PCC of St James's Church.

We make no charge for this magazine but we hope that you will contribute towards the production costs, enabling us to expand our important outreach across the parish.

If you are a regular reader please consider making an annual donation. Cheques should be made payable to 'The PCC of St James' and sent to Spire Appeal c/o the Parish Office.

Thank you.

GET IN TOUCH

STORIES, FEATURES

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

WELCOME

November 2010



We are fast approaching the time of year when we remember both family and friends at All Souls and also those who have given their lives in the various conflicts from the two world wars to current battles. Jack Gosling has written a very moving piece about his brother and what Remembrance Sunday means to him and I have written about some places and acts of remembrance which have made an impact on me.

Details of the All Souls Service and our Remembrance Day Service, which includes a short service at the War Memorial, can be found in this issue. You are most welcome at these services.

Our year-long hunt for a permanent organist has ended — and how lucky we are to have Sam Draper! There is a profile of him in the News Bulletin. Sam started playing last month and we look forward to his playing and working with the choir.

Best wishes

Janet

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SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER

Sundays

8am Holy Communion
9.30am Parish Communion

7 November — 3rd Sunday before Advent
Job 19.23-27a; 2 Thessalonians 2.15-, 13-17
Luke 20.27-38

14 November — 2nd Sunday before Advent

Remembrance Sunday

Parish Communion starts at 9.45am

Malachi 4.1-2a
2 Thessalonians 3.6-13
Luke 21.5-19

21 November — Christ the King

Jeremiah 23.1-6
Colossians 1.11-20
Luke 23.33-43

28 November — First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 2.1-5
Romans 13.11-14
Matthew 24.36-44

4pm Service for the beginning of Advent

A reflective act of worship. There will also be services on December 5 and 12, again at 4pm

Mondays-Fridays

(but not Tuesdays)
9.15am Morning Prayer

Tuesdays

9.30am Holy Communion

1st Wednesday in month

3 November
7am Commuter Communion

1st Thursday in month

4 November
2pm Holy Communion

THE LEADER COLUMN

WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS MEAN WHEN SOMEONE APPEARS TO BE UNREPENTANT?

Forgive and forget?



On a Saturday one of my small pleasures is to read the book reviews in whichever newspaper I have bought. I like to get an idea of any good books that have just been published. Besides fiction, I tend to read history.

Over the summer a particular book title caught my attention: *The Perfect Nazi*. The secondary title of the book explains: 'Uncovering my SS grandfather's secret past and how Hitler seduced a generation.' The writer, Martin Davidson, goes on a search to discover more about his grandfather's past. Things had been hinted at, but never stated explicitly. Davidson discovers that his grandfather had been an early joiner of the Nazi party, and an ardent convert to Hitler's way of thinking.

The picture that emerges is of a man formed by particular circumstances, certainly, but also of a very unattractive character who never seemed to have found it necessary to question the values and attitudes that led to his collusion with the Nazi state.

Davidson writes of his sister being collected from their grandfather's flat in Berlin by a friend of hers: 'Bruno [the grandfather] had answered the doorbell, and his instinctive reaction to Giorgio's very Jewish appearance was one of complete physical recoil.' The consequences of such a 'recoil' are very present on Remembrance Sunday, this year on 14 November.

Forgiveness is also the theme of this month's *In Thought and Prayer*, written by David Bell. He is in training for ordination, and writes of his experience of a quiet day at Alton Abbey in Hampshire. Remembrance Sunday presents us with some challenges in this regard. What does forgiveness really mean when someone appeared to be as unrepentant as Martin Davidson's grandfather?

Yet forgiveness is central to Christianity. I am struck, though, by another of its aspects, and that is judgement. It is hard to come to terms with it today when frequently people are urged to be non-judgemental. Yet does 'judgement' always have to be negative? I remember well spending a day with a circuit court judge and seeing the speed with



Peter Vannozzi

'As we recall the great inhumanity, our judgment of it can lead to the alternative — true humanity, expressed in love, compassion, bravery, sacrifice and forgiveness. Truly human, and truly divine'

which he had to reach a judgement on the basis of the evidence before him. The judge's decision-making struck me as having more to do with discerning the best, or least worst, path rather than condemnation.

In this sense, judgement has a place on Remembrance Sunday. Positively, a judgement upon people who unleashed such horrors in the Second World War is to recognise that there is a better way. What might this be?

Martin Davidson writes this: 'The central abomination of Nazism wasn't just its militarism, or its craving for war, but its insistence that any values that put the *human* at their centre were weak, corrupting and irrelevant.'

The judgement, in these words, points to something better. A Christian view affirms, I believe, what Davidson says about values that put 'the human' at their centre, but also goes a stage further. For Christians the human and the divine, humanity and God, are so closely linked, that one points to the other.

The Christian focus for the divine is a human being: Jesus himself. In that sense, 'the human' is at the centre, one with God. As we recall on Remembrance Sunday great inhumanity, our judgement of it can lead also to the alternative — true humanity expressed in love, compassion, bravery, sacrifice, forgiveness. These are values that are truly human, and truly divine.

IN THOUGHT AND PRAYER

Back in March this year, Alton Abbey was waiting for spring to burst through, although there was no winter chill in the welcome that we received for our quiet day. This is a special place, steeped in prayer and run by the rules of St Benedict, who told his brethren to always be ready to offer hospitality to the world. We were led in our reflections on the topic of **forgiveness**, starting from the Benedictine approach to humility, which is the foundation for the community in living out their vows. Each monk at Alton is encouraged to set aside any resentment before nightfall. We were challenged to face up to forgiving others and being forgiven as a way of opening a window on a more fulfilling Christian life.



I enjoyed the thought-provoking talks and the opportunity to pray or contemplate in silence either in a corner of the grounds or in the church. I recognised that this was one of the most difficult aspects of being fully human — to sincerely forgive a wrong and the person committing it. For me this made the gift from Christ, who forgives our transgressions unconditionally before we receive the Eucharist, even more prized.



During the summer, I had cause to forgive someone who had caused hurt by their actions, and Alton came flooding back to me. Those of you with experience of this, will, I'm sure, not be surprised to hear that the reality of even trying to forgive is tough, really tough. At first my thoughts were, 'Of course I don't mind and I won't let resentment get a hold of me, as that would be childish.' I resolved to say that I forgive them for not thinking...but when I see them I shall let loose and make sure they know how I feel in no uncertain terms! A sort of pretend forgiveness that looks good, but isn't true. I could live with that. After all, I'll be seen as weak if I don't retaliate in some way and, eventually, there will be a way.

I had the choice, and it is a real choice, to forgive or not forgive. I could accept that the past was as it was and bring this before God, or I could attempt the impossible and hold the idea that the past should have been different from how it was. The latter option would, I think, become more and more untenable and cause deep unhappiness to me and those close to me.

Here we are at the tail end of summer, with autumn waiting to blow through, and it would have been easy to put all this off; after all it's really difficult... but I've made my choice.

And I'll be back to Alton.

David Bell

NEW ORGANIST WELCOMED; CURATE DEBBIE TO LEAVE

Music to our ears



WE WERE DELIGHTED to welcome our new organist, Samuel Draper, on 10 October. Sam was born in 1983 and grew up in Twickenham, where he still lives. 'I started to play the piano at the age of six,' he said, 'and took up the horn when I was 11. At the age of 13, I went to King's College

School, Wimbledon, as a music scholar. They had recently installed an organ and the headmaster asked if I would be interested in taking it up. I jumped at the chance and became an organ scholar there.

'This involved playing at occasional services outside school, such as evensong at Westminster Abbey, as well as school services and taking choir rehearsals. When I was not playing, I sang in the choir and played in many orchestras, developing an interest in conducting.'

In 2001, Sam went with an organ scholarship to University College, Oxford, where he read medicine. 'We had two organ scholars at the college and we were in charge of all the chapel music. I had always thought about doing music professionally, but had to reconcile it with also wanting to be a doctor. In my final year at medical school, having done some conducting, I decided to pursue music further.'

After he qualified, Sam won a scholarship to the two-year post-graduate conducting course at the Royal College of Music, graduating this summer. Besides working with international conductors, Sam has done some freelance conducting. He is the Bob Harding Bursary holder with the Havant Symphony Orchestra until September 2011.


'I am very much looking forward to working with a choir again, which also gives me a chance to be involved with so much musical repertoire that an orchestral conductor does not do; standard orchestras rarely play music written before 1750 and there is so much beautiful Baroque and Renaissance music that forms the core of the church choral repertoire. My own tastes are broad and I hope the church can look forward to hearing a fair balance of early music and Romantic and 20th century repertoire.'

We are very grateful to Martin Hinckley for overseeing the church music during the past year. The choir is looking forward to continuing to develop the musical life of the church. We are pleased to have such a talented and enthusiastic young organist playing for us.



Debbie to leave for pastures new

CONGRATULATIONS to the Revd. Debbie Oades, who will be leaving St. James's in the new year to take on a full-time, paid post as Assistant Vicar of the Parish of Maybush, Southampton in the Diocese of Winchester. There will be further details in due course about saying 'goodbye and thank you' to Debbie for her ministry in Hampton Hill.



One million tonnes of greenhouse gases are pumped into the UK atmosphere every year by appliances left on standby. Make it a habit each evening to unplug appliances, such as TVs and washing machines. If we all did we'd save enough energy to power 2.7 million homes for a year.

ECO TIP

REGISTERS FOR SEPTEMBER

Baptisms

5 Oliver James Robinson, Singapore

5 Jaya Delila Gupta, Charlbury

19 Jocelyn Jane Mesher, Hampton Hill

Weddings

3 Leon Patrick Francis Spight and Suzanne Maria Deacon

4 David Eric Hounson and Jane Mary Boulton

24 Simon Andrew Clemmey and Rebecca Joanne Ives

Wedding Blessing

26 David William Hetling and Nicola Margaret Brown

The ultimate sacrifice

November is the month when we remember all those who have served in the armed forces and in many cases given their lives for their country. This includes not only those who served in the two World Wars and war zones since, but those servicemen and women working in Afghanistan today. **Janet Nunn** reports from three places linked with remembrance that have made an impression on her.

Many years ago David and I had the privilege of attending The Act of Remembrance at the **Royal Albert Hall**. I had always watched the service on TV, but like all great events it is not the same as being there and absorbing the spectacle and the atmosphere. There are three parts of the event that always bring a lump to my throat. Firstly, all the various branches of the services parade across the arena, with the final contingent of Chelsea Pensioners in their scarlet uniforms marching in slow time. Secondly, the War widows – some widows from the two World Wars so many years ago now and some as recent as Afghanistan. What courage it must take to walk in front of so many people to remember the life of a loved one killed for your country.

Thirdly, at the end of the evening all those taking part return to the arena for a short service followed by two minutes silence when poppies fall from the roof of the Royal Albert Hall. Everyone stands and there is utter silence – each with their own thoughts – no one moves and the poppies keep falling down. It is truly a great tribute to the men and women who have served our country and still do today.

Quite by chance one day I came across **The Guards Chapel** in Birdcage Walk next to Wellington Barracks and The Guards Museum. The Guards Chapel is the spiritual home of the Household Division. The first chapel was opened in 1838. It was a plain rectangular building with a double tier of galleries on three sides to enable as many Guardsmen as possible to attend Divine Worship.

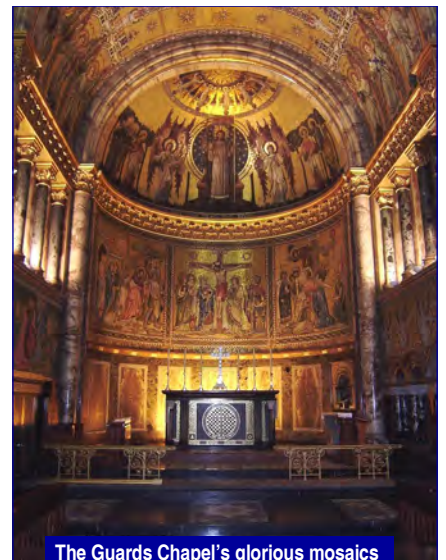
On Sunday 18 June 1944 the chapel was hit by a flying bomb at 11.10 am during Morning Service, killing 121 worshippers, including the officiating Chaplain. Many others were injured. The cross and six candlesticks on the altar survived undamaged and the six candles remained burning throughout the incident. The cross and candlesticks are still used today for Sunday services.

After the war a hut was erected within the ruined walls and services resumed on Christmas Day 1945. The new chapel, completed in 1963, was designed by Bruce George and incorporated the existing apse and font. As you enter the modern building, your eyes are immediately drawn to the glorious mosaics depicting the Easter Story.



The poppies fall during two minutes' silence at the Royal Albert Hall

On the south side of the chapel there are six small chapels, one for each of the Guards' regiments. They are made of stone and have a candle burning and in gold lettering either side of the altar are the names of the battles which the regiments have fought in. On the right hand side of each chapel is a long etched glass window. The Welsh Guards have a particularly striking window, **pictured right**, which was etched by Laurence Whistler and shows a coal mine and a daffodil. His brother Rex Whistler was in the Welsh Guards and was killed in 1944.



The Guards Chapel's glorious mosaics



The Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel, opened in March 2000 to stand as a 'living' memorial to all those killed in the war in 1982

The current Book of Remembrance in the chapel is a very poignant reminder, containing the names of those who have been killed in Afghanistan.

The chapel is open for visitors Monday-Thursday 10am-3pm and Friday 10am-2pm. Every Sunday there is a service at 11am, at which the choir of the Guards' Chapel and one of the bands of the Household Division play and anyone is welcome. The chapel is an oasis of calm – there is a very strong feeling of the service men and women have given to this country and the building itself is well worth a visit.

Back in 2007 whilst walking the Thames Path we saw a signpost to the **Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel** at Pangbourne College. On the TV that evening we discovered the Queen had been to Pangbourne to attend the 25th Anniversary Service for the ending of hostilities in the Falkland Islands.

A few weeks later we went to visit the chapel, dedicated to those who died in the 1982 Falklands war. All have their names recorded on a plaque in St Paul's Cathedral and on the memorial at Port Stanley. The Chapel was built in the grounds of Pangbourne College in the hope of inspiring future generations – and because many service personnel from Pangbourne College served in the South Atlantic. The chapel is used by the school and was officially opened by the Queen in March 2000.

Outside the chapel there is a Cairn of Stones, pictured right, which underlines the involvement of the Scots Guards in the Falklands. It was a Scottish custom for warriors to bring a stone from home to the battleground, survivors collected their stones on the way home, leaving only the stones of the fallen to form a memorial. It was started in 2002 by and for the bereaved families and is still added to today.



This was a very unexpected discovery but one which we found very moving. It is possible to visit the Chapel in the school grounds and details are on their website as well as photos of the altar window.



The Queen places a stone on the cairn as part of commemorations to mark the 25th anniversary of the end of the Falklands war

These are three very different examples of acts and places of remembrance which have made an impact on me. As we approach 11 November, and Remembrance Sunday on 14 November, these words will be said on many occasions:

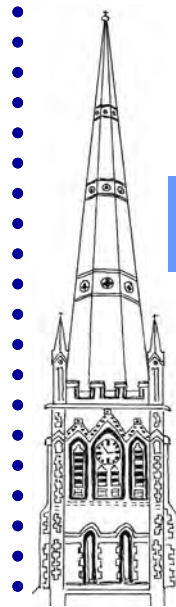


*When you go home tell them of us and say,
for your tomorrow we gave our today.*



The window at the Pangbourne chapel

The chapel was designed appropriately in the shape of a ship. Natural light flows down the walls into the nave and gallery from the glass panels in the roof and through tall window slits around the walls. As you enter the chapel, where the atmosphere is both inspiring and peaceful, you are drawn towards the magnificent stained glass window above the altar. It was designed by John Clark and depicts the heavy seas around the Falkland Islands with the Cross of Christ in the centre. It is a very powerful work of art.



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AROUND THE SPIRE

NEWS FROM HAMPTON HILL AND BEYOND

Three cheers for three celebrations

Several members of our congregation have had cause for celebration since we last went to press:

■ Two members of our Parochial Church Council, **David Hetling** and **Nicola Brown**, were married on 25 September. The following day, a service of blessing with Holy Communion was held at St. James's, jointly conducted by Peter Vannozi and David's father, Bill Hetling.



■ Congratulations to **Jack** and **Ruth Gostling**, who celebrated their 65th (blue sapphire) wedding anniversary in September with a party at their home.



■ Congratulations to **Geoffrey** and **Tiffany Nunn** on the birth of their son Henry Lewis (both family names) on 27 September, a brother for Philippa and a grandchild for John and Debbie Nunn.

The Ark, a great success story...and now a year old



■ **The Ark**, our group for toddlers, parents and carers, marked its first birthday with Holy Communion and the cutting of a cake. There are more photos of the event in the family corner together with an Ark banner, given to the group by Ann Peterken and Catherine Gash. We would like to thank them, and all the volunteers who run the group.

■ **WE REMEMBER** with affection **Rose Frier**, who died on 2 October at the grand age of 94. Rose was a member of our congregation until moving to sheltered housing in Hampton. In 1999 she came by coach to the G8 Summit in Cologne and is pictured, playing an active part. On hearing of her death, a fellow traveller said: 'What a role model - no way we can think of hanging up our campaigning hats for at least another quarter of a century if we are to follow in Rose's footsteps!'





All-age Communion

There are four parts to the All-age Communion:

We gather, We listen to God's Word, We share in Holy Communion, We go out to serve God.

3b. We share in Holy Communion and 4. We go out to serve God



The Lord's Prayer

Our in heaven,
 hallowed be your,
 your come,
 your will be,
 on as in
 Give us our daily
 us our sins
 as we forgive those whoagainst us
 us not into temptation
 but deliver us from
 For the kingdom, the,
 and theare yours
 now and for
 Amen.

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. So Jesus taught them a prayer that has come to be called "The Lord's Prayer". He used it as an example and guide by showing them, and us, the things to bring into our own prayers.

He also encourages us to act on these things in our everyday life. The Lord's Prayer is a basic Christian prayer and is used everywhere in the church's life.

- Choose from the following to fill the gaps above:
 (earth, sin, Lead, kingdom, evil, name, done, glory, bread, Father, Forgive, power, ever, today, heaven.)

- Sort the letters to make the sentences

Breaking of the (DBARE)

We remember (EJSSU)
 sharing bread with his disciples.



Giving of (MOCNNIMOU)

The (SIEPRT) invites us to receive the sacrament (the bread and wine). We then go to the (TRAAL) and receive communion or a blessing.



The ciborium, a container, holds the wafers for communion. The priest gives each person a wafer which represents the bread.



The chalice, or cup, holds the wine for communion. Each person is given a sip of wine from this cup.

- Answer the following questions:

1. What is a chalice?
2. What does the ciborium hold?
3. What does a wafer represent?
4. Where is the wine kept?
5. What two things are given to each person taking communion?

6. What does the blessing pronounce?



We go out to serve God

The blessing pronounces God's favour and goodwill. It shows that worship leads on naturally to our daily life in the world.



Revelations

A view of the wider world

Remembrance

November is traditionally the end of both autumn and the holiday season. All Souls' Day, following All Saints' Day on 1st November, is for our remembrance of the faithful departed, then after the festivity of the 5th we have the solemn period leading to the 11th, Armistice Day, and Remembrance Sunday. Over the past few years Remembrance Sunday has become more poignant as we remember not only those who died in the two world wars, but also those who are still falling in ongoing battles. We will be remembering not only our own soldiers but those civilians injured or killed, and those who have had their lives devastated by bereavement. The First World War was 'a war to end wars' and for many years the memory of the slaughter of trench warfare made most countries fear another conflict. Nearly all of us regard the Second World War we fought as a just war. Since 1945 some battles we have chosen to fight have arguably been just wars. But some have not, and Remembrance Day reminds us of this also.

Leadership

Immediately following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001 there was a world-wide feeling of sympathy for the US. The initial US air strikes against the Al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan were regarded as justified actions against a dangerous enemy. There was muted approval even from Tehran, particularly since Shia Iran had, and still has, no love for Al-Qaeda. The initial easy success of the first ground operations in Afghanistan led to the strategically disastrous decision to invade Iraq in 2003. The subsequent loss of the almost worldwide respect for the US is as tragic and dangerous as the colossal waste of lives and resources in these wars. Some past US presidents have had the vision and moral strength in times of danger to use their country's huge resources wisely for the good of the world as well as their country. Such leadership has never been needed more than now.

Papal Visitors

John Paul II's pastoral visit to this country in May 1982 was greeted with few reservations, and his almost theatrical skill with large audiences won great praise from his many devoted admirers, and friendly acceptance from most other observers. Pope Benedict VI had a hard act to follow in his short state visit here this September, and it was made all the more difficult by the recent revelations about the treatment of children by a small number of his clergy. He has a high reputation as a scholar but he is not a skilled diplomat, and some of his statements were poorly considered. However, he was, to the surprise of many, received with great enthusiasm. But Benedict's beliefs are very much the same as John Paul's, expressed bluntly without the latter's diplomacy. We know where he stands quite unambiguously. We know also that in several matters many sincere Catholics neither agree with him nor keep strictly to all of his rulings. This move towards being prepared to think honestly for oneself and obey conscience rather than priestly authority seems a very healthy development in the Catholic faith.

Dick Wilde

what's on



All Souls' Service

Sunday 31 October, 6pm, St James's Church
This is a service to remember friends and loved ones who have passed away. Everyone is welcome. Names may be added to a list in church for inclusion in the service.

Charity Christmas Cards and Fairtrade stall

Sunday 7 November, in the hall
Cards supporting various charities will be on sale after Parish Communion, as will Fairtrade food, crafts and cards for Christmas on our monthly stall. Come prepared!



London Community Gospel Choir

Wednesday 10 November, 7.30pm, Landmark Arts Centre, Ferry Road, Teddington TW11 9NN
The Landmark Festival of Song closes with the dynamic gospel choir, whose appearances include Live 8, Glastonbury and the FA Cup Final. Early booking recommended. Doors open 6.45pm.
Tickets £18/£15, telephone 020 8977 7558 or email lesley@landmarkartscentre.org

An African Answer

Friday 12 November, from 6.30pm, Friends House 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ
More than a thousand people were killed following disputed elections in Kenya in 1997. Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuyue, former militia leaders turned peace-makers, were invited to mediate in the worst-affected district. Cameras followed their bid to bring healing and reconciliation and both of them will be at this public premiere of the film.

Greencoat Forums

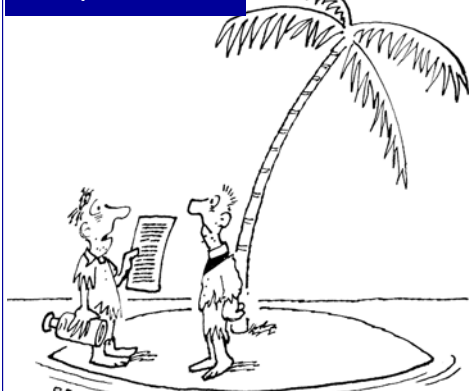
Capitalism Towards the Common Good — Regulation or Culture? Tuesday 23 November, from 7.15-9pm, 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD.
Following the financial crisis, can banking and big corporations develop a culture of integrity and service to the common good?

Refreshments from 6.30pm. The talks are free, with a collection for expenses. Places are limited. To book please telephone 020 7798 6000 or go to www.uk.iofc.org.

Fairly Traded Products for Christmas

Saturday 27 November, 10am-4pm, Teddington Baptist Church, Church Road, Teddington TW11 8PF
A large selection of crafts, food and Christmas cards.

Vicar's View



It's a letter from your church. They want to know if you've done the flower rota, the cleaning rota, and have you ordered the mince pies for the carol concert?

Concordia Voices: The Sacred Banquet

Saturday 27 November, 6pm, St Luke's, Luke Street, Chelsea SW3 6NH
The programme includes *Love Divine, Ave Maria, Pater Noster and Hail, Gladdening Light*. The Musical Director is Neil Ferris and the organist Paul Ayres. Tickets cost £12 (concessions £10) on the door.

Services for Advent

28 November, 5 and 12 December, 4pm, St James's Church
A reflective act of worship, seen, each week, through a different person's perspective.



Annual Leaf Sweep and Gutter Clean

Saturday 4 December, from 9.30am, St James's Church
This is an important part of our maintenance that is undertaken by the Properties Committee. All gutters of both the church and the hall are cleared of leaves that have built up over the year, after which the gutters and drain pipes are flushed through to ensure the free passage of water. The courtyard and car park are also swept of leaves. The committee is looking for able volunteers to help. If you are free and would like to help, please contact Bryan Basdell on 020 8979 2040 (home), 078 6782 9196 or at bryan.basdell@uk.fujitsu.com



Christingle Service

Sunday 5 December, 9.30am, St James's Church.
This annual service supports the Children's Society and is a chance to bring together children, family and friends, forge stronger links between church and schools and celebrate the Christmas message. Money raised at the service, and afterwards by collections, will help to improve the lives of thousands of children trapped in poverty.

Teddington Choral Society's Festival for Christmas

Saturday 11 December, 7pm, St James's Church
With organ and trumpets, the programme will include Henry Purcell's *Te Deum Laudamus* and *Welcome to the Pleasures - an Ode for St Cecilia's Day*, as well as carols for choir and audience. Tickets £9/£7, available from Albert's Music Shop, Heath Road, Twickenham TW1 4BN, on the door, or by telephoning 020 8977 5986.

St James's Carol Service

Sunday 19 December, 6.30pm, St James's Church
Everyone is invited to help us celebrate Christmas and to join us for mulled wine and mince pies in the hall after the service.



Cantanti Camerati's Christmas Concert

Saturday 18 December, St Mary Magdalene Church, Paradise Road, Richmond TW9 1SN
Join Geoffrey Bowyer for a seasonal concert. Look out for details in pew sheet nearer the time.

St James's Christmas Services

Christmas Eve: Crib Service at 4.30pm and Midnight Mass at 11pm
Christmas Day: Holy Communion at 8am (Book of Common Prayer) and Parish Communion at 9.30am

War and peace in our time



As Ruth and I first knew it, Remembrance Day related to the 1914-1918 Great War. Ruth's father and mine both underwent the horrors of trench warfare in France. Both were awarded medals: my dad the Military Medal for 'bravery in the field'; Ruth's dad the Distinguished Conduct Medal for 'conspicuous gallantry'.

The war ended in an armistice, signed at 11am on 11 November 1918, the anniversary of which was commemorated yearly as Remembrance Day when throughout the land at 11 am everything stopped for a two-minute silence.

In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles set out terms under which Germany lost part of the Rhineland and all her overseas territories. The Sudetenland became Czechoslovakia. Her army was limited to 100,000, and tanks, poison gas and aircraft were expressly forbidden.

As Ruth and I grew up in the 1930s, neither her father nor mine spoke of what they had undergone in the 'War to end all wars', but watched with growing disillusionment as, in 1936, Germany re-occupied the Rhineland and commenced re-armament, a significant part of which was the formation of the Condor Legion, forerunner of the Luftwaffe.

In April 1937, intervening in the Spanish Civil War, the Condor Legion carried out an air raid on the Basque city of Guernica, destroying three-quarters of it and killing some 250-300 civilians. Britain began a belated expansion of the RAF and of Civil Defence as Hitler developed his plans for European domination.

The Munich agreement in 1938 sacrificed Czechoslovakia, gaining time for our re-armament. Early in 1939, gas masks and stirrup pumps were issued to our civilians. Plans were laid to evacuate children from our cities.

The invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 was followed by our declaration of war against Germany two days later. May 1940 saw the 'blitzkrieg' as German forces swept across Belgium and France. Of the British Expeditionary Force, some 330,000 soldiers were evacuated from Dunkirk, but most of their tanks and artillery were lost.

Conscription of men aged between 18 and 41 began a slow re-building of our forces. My brothers Peter and Frank were called up in 1941, aged, respectively, 20 and 28. Both elected to serve in the RAF. Peter opted for ground-staff duties, while Frank chose aircrew in the category PNB (Pilot/Navigator/Bomb-aimer).

Peter saw service in Ismailia and Aden. Frank's training included crossing the Atlantic by sea to Canada, and thence to a US Air Force base in Georgia for pilot training. Failing to qualify, he made the return sea crossing, arriving in Liverpool on Christmas Day 1941. After spells at Regent's

Park and Eastbourne, he was re-mustered as an Observer, undergoing navigational training on Ansons from September 1942, and surviving a forced landing on the Isle of Man. December 1942 saw him at Operational Training Unit, Upper Heyford on Wellingtons, surviving a crash-landing.

Following a Heavy Conversion Unit spell on twin-engined Manchesters, Frank was posted to 619 Squadron, Woodhall Spa, flying Lancasters, and carrying out raids on Krefeld, Wuppertal, and Cologne, all involving four-to-five-hour flights. A raid on Turin, crossing the Alps, entailed a nine-hour flight. Other targets were Nuremberg, Berlin (twice) and Hamburg (also twice). In all, 15 operational sorties.

Frank's last operation, on 6 September 1943, was against Mannheim, over which their plane was attacked by a night-fighter. Fortunately, and unusually, he was wearing his parachute pack, and as the plane broke up, he was sucked or blown out and briefly lost consciousness before coming to and landing by parachute in some trees. None of the remaining six members of the crew survived. (That same night, in England, Frank's son, Terry, was born.)

Frank had landed near the small town of Pirmasens, in which there was a German barracks, and he was soon picked up and put in the local jail for a few days before being transferred to a small POW camp near Frankfurt for interrogation. Then came a three-day rail journey to a larger camp at Heydekrug, near the Lithuanian border. July 1944 saw him transferred to Follingsbostel, on Luneberg Heath.

In April 1945, some 700 of the prisoners there were ordered to march eastwards, possibly to be used as a bargaining counter. In a wooded area, Frank and two others made their escape and set out westwards, raiding a farm for food on the way. After two nights in the open they met up with a unit of the Eighth Army (the Desert Rats), who directed them towards Brussels and eventually onto a Lancaster and back to England.

Throughout their captivity, POWs were poorly fed, mainly on thin soup and black bread. Red Cross parcels became a vital part of their diet, but even so they were terribly undernourished. Frank weighed just seven stones. However, a rehabilitation course restored him to eleven stones.

His return to civilian life, his re-building our construction company to the substantial concern it later became, and his award of the OBE 'for services to the construction industry' is another story.

He died in March 2007, at the age of 93. He had known at first hand the waste and devastation of war, and regretted causing the loss of innocent lives. He would have understood that Remembrance Sunday honours those, combatants and civilians alike, who have died in past wars.



Songs of Praise

The story behind the hymn

Christ is the King, O friends rejoice!



Christ is the King, O friends rejoice!
Brothers and sisters, with one voice
make all men know he is your choice.
Alleluia.

The first apostles round them drew
thousands of faithful men and true,
sharing a faith for ever new:
Alleluia.

Then magnify the Lord and raise
anthems of joy and holy praise
for Christ's brave saints of ancient days:
Alleluia.

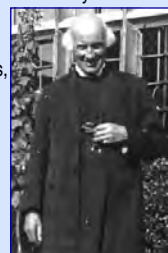
O Christian women, Christian men,
all the world over, seek again
the Way disciples followed them:
Alleluia.

Christ through all ages is the same;
place the same hope in his great name,
with the same faith his word proclaim:
Alleluia.

Let love's unconquerable might
God's people everywhere unite
in service to the Lord of light:
Alleluia.

The Feast of Christ the King is on 21 November, the last Sunday of the current Christian Year. A new year begins the following Sunday, the First Sunday of Advent. Christ the King is a day celebrating the reign of Christ before the period of Advent begins, focusing minds on the kingdom to come in all its fullness. A hymn that will be sung on 21 November has words written by George Bell (1883-1958), pictured, one-time Bishop of Chichester. Bishop Bell was something of a pioneer — an early advocate of better relations between Christians; an opponent of Fascism and Nazism before it was that widespread; a critic of wartime saturation bombing of Germany; and a campaigner against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Bell opposed the abuse of power, as he saw it, regardless of its form.

As the lights went out across Europe in the 1930s, Bell wrote this great hymn to Christ the King — all the more surprising when we think what was happening around him. As George Bell watched his world collapse into power-hungry violence, he knew that here of all times was the need to celebrate true power and the true King. As congregations sing it today, it helps them to focus on the ultimate source of power in our world, and puts those who exercise power in their place. It can still be a great assertion of faith in difficult times.



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