

Sweet peas, starfish and hope

I am writing this on one of those glorious Spring days when the air seems to be alive with promise. I have just returned home from taking the Wednesday Holy Communion service at St Mary's, and have put 92 sweet pea seeds in the garden.

In our Lent Home Study Groups we have been following a course called 'Challenging Poverty'. We have looked at situations round the world as well as closer to home and considered how we can respond to the challenge.

We reflected on the story of the boy and the starfish (not from the Bible).

A boy was walking on the beach where many hundreds of starfish had been stranded. He was picking one up and throwing it back into the sea. A man pointed out that the beach was full of them and throwing back a few wouldn't make any real difference. 'Perhaps not,' said the boy, 'but to the one I have just thrown back it has made all the difference in the world!' A challenge to each of us to find even just one small thing which might make a difference.

During our conversations we discovered many very positive things which are going on even in just the Beckenham area and it made us think we should be more optimistic about life rather than being brought low by the constant reiteration of bad news on the television. There are real areas of hope if we but look for them.

On this beautiful, sunny, hopeful morning, having planted those seeds, I have hope of vases of sweet-scented flowers in the summer. Beneath the earth things are happening, seeds are germinating.

As Christians one of our main characteristics is hope. Hope in Jesus, hope in his resurrection after Easter, hope in eternal life with him, hope that things can get better for the vulnerable and marginalised.

But let's start with one starfish and move on from there. We can all make a difference.

Rev Jane Peters

If you are concerned about debt you can find information about help here: <https://capuk.org>



SAY IT WITH FLOWERS: a dedicated band of flower arrangers work hard to make the church look beautiful, especially on Easter Day.

Special Events and Services

Thursday 14th May - Ascension Day

8.00pm Holy Communion

Sunday 17th May

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Responses: Smith

Canticles: Walmsley in D minor

Anthem: How Beautiful upon the mountains

Sunday 24th May - Day of Pentecost

10.30am Family Communion

Sunday 31st May - Trinity Sunday

10.30am Family Communion

Stay in touch!

To keep up with news from St. Mary's in between editions of SPAN, you can like our page on Facebook or follow us on Twitter – search for 'St Mary's Shortlands'.

Don't forget our website

www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk





From the Registers

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Meg Shepherd 1 Apr aged 88

Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

22 March Paul Douglas

Remembering

Meg Shepherd

Meg was born in Didsbury in Manchester, and trained to be a teacher at St Katharine's College in Liverpool. The college was evacuated to Keswick during the War, where she developed a lifelong love of the Lake District.

She became a schoolteacher and met Bill through a college friend. Meg and Bill were married in Preston in 1949. Bill was employed by the United Africa Company and Meg followed him to live in the Gambia.

Her family remember her great knack for storytelling – stories about schoolteaching and raising her children in Africa, but also about the many places she visited with Bill in their 'travelling days'.

Bill and Meg came to live in Shortlands forty years ago. They were very much involved in the life of St Mary's: Meg became a leader of the Children's Church. She was also involved with the link with the church of St Therese in Douai.

Meg was a regular attender at St Mary's until she became unwell, but she continued to take an interest in parish life and to take Communion at home.

Meg had an ability to connect with people of all races, colours and creeds, putting them at their ease and sharing experiences. This talent protected her in the last few years, when she had to be dependent on strangers for so many aspects of her daily life.

She never spoke a bad word of anyone – she always saw the best in everybody and took an interest in other people whether family, friends or the professionals caring for her. She and Bill learned French when in their 50s so as to get to know their granddaughter and her family. Support for others was her key quality – quietly, unobtrusively, no matter what was asked.

Meg was no stranger to death and despite having many tragedies in her life she maintained a very strong faith which supported her through very difficult situations.

She also showed her sense of humour to the end, choosing 'Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye' as the exit music from the crematorium – so that everyone left with smiles and not tears.



PICTURED, left to right: David Loades, his sister Barbara and brother John in Sparrows Den at the bottom of Corkscrew Hill, during the war. The playing fields of today were then covered with fully-grown wheat

Wartime memories

On 8 May we commemorate the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe ('VE') Day, which marked the end of World War II in Europe.

I was seven at that time, and lived with my parents, sister and brother in a brand new council house in West Wickham.

During the war, when German bombers were approaching, it was made known by a loud siren at the top of a pole near to our house. My brother and I slept in the cupboard under the stairs, but on one night, when bombing was close, I was carried to the safety of a neighbour's concrete air-raid shelter.

Once a small bomb landed in our front garden, blowing in the front door and windows. We had to live for a short while with my grandparents, but the council quickly repaired our house and we moved back.

At last the council gave us our own air-raid shelter, made of corrugated iron: its concrete base was four feet below ground level. My father put rockery stones and earth on the roof and planted flowers in the earth.

One day a German fighter plane flew low down West Wickham high street, and the shoppers had to take cover in the shops from the gunfire.

My father did night duty as a member of the 'Special Fire Patrol'. Their job was to eliminate incendiary bombs before their burning fuse set off the explosive. They were supposed to carry a bag of sand to cover the bomb, but instead they carried dustbin lids which they put down over the bomb and held down with a foot.

For most of the war, it wasn't a Government requirement that children be evacuated from West Wickham. In 1944, when flying bombs named 'doodlebugs' started to fall, we children were finally evacuated to Nottingham, where we stayed until the end of the war.

After the war, I found an unexploded incendiary bomb in the trees lining the golf course. I stupidly brought it home: my father took it and I didn't see it again..

David Loades

Calling all Beavers and ex-Beavers

Please come to thank our retiring Beaver Leaders. Polar Bear, John Westropp, started the 7th Bromley Beaver Colony in 1990. He was joined by Kestrel, Pat Chase, and Racoon, Karen Pleasance.

14th June 10.30

Parade Service and Parish Picnic in church grounds (or hall if wet)



Mission of the month

Christian Aid

During Christian Aid Week (10-16 May) volunteers in Shortlands, together with thousands of others across the country, will be taking part in house to house collections raising money to help some of the world's poorest people.

For 2015, Christian Aid Week focuses on people like Loko in Ethiopia, who walks alone for 8 hours a day to gather and sell firewood so she can feed her children. Thorns pierce her thin shoes and she is frightened of being attacked by hyenas. It's a job she dreads but if she doesn't do it her children will starve. Loko dreams of owning a cow one day; its milk would help her children to grow strong and she could also sell some and save to set up a small business. Just £150 is enough to buy a cow and a promising future for someone like Loko.

Our world is one of vast resources and amazing technological advances. Yet throughout the world there are communities where people struggle for food, education and access to the medicines and technology that others take for granted. Christian Aid is committed to long-term development to eradicate the causes of poverty, working to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all regardless of faith or nationality.

When people work together, the world can be changed. So please look out for the red Christian Aid Week envelope that will be posted through your letter-box early in the week of 10th May, and be aware that an authorised collector will call back during the week to collect it.

For more information about the work of Christian Aid see the display at the back of church or www.christianaid.org.uk.



During Lent a series of simple lunches were held for good causes. At a lunch hosted by Anne-Marie Jefferys, £150 was raised for the Whitechapel Mission.

Parish Picnic & Barbecue

Sunday, 14 June

in the church grounds following the
10.30am Family and Parade Service.

Bring your own picnic -
barbecue food and refreshments available to buy.

Bouncy castle and games for all the family.

Come and join the fun!

Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel

On your behalf, the Ward Panel (SSNWP) works closely with the Police including Shortlands' own Dedicated Ward Officers. It is by the strength of representation on the SSNWP, drawn from equally dedicated Shortlands ward residents, that we engage with the Police and ensure the protection we need to keep us all safe.

From the bi-monthly Panel meetings, and the open sessions for all Shortlands residents, priorities for Police action are decided. These priorities often dovetail into the new (and successful) policing methods and criminal targeting now adopted by the Police.

Shortlands Ward is one of the safest Wards and I'm sure we all want to keep it that way.

As residents, we too have a part to play by being more aware of suspicious behaviour, taking greater care of our properties and looking out for our more elderly and vulnerable neighbours. Showing criminals that we are not an easy target in Shortlands gives the Police support in protecting us all. If you see anything suspicious, don't hesitate to report it by calling 101 (or 999 if a crime is actually happening).

If you would like to join the confidential email listing for regular Police crime updates and advice, contact graham658@hotmail.com with your name and postal address – or look for details of meetings on the board in Shortlands station ticket office.

Graham Pyefinch, Chairman, SSNWP

FRIENDS OF SOUTH HILL WOOD AND KINGSWOOD GLEN

Welcome you to
The South Hill Community Event
Saturday 13th June
2pm - 5pm

In Commemoration of The Great War
South Hill Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital

We have the
Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Living History Group,
and BYMT New Generation Big Band, Highfield Junior School
and Highfield Infants' School Choirs, a Jason's Totally Tennis
tournament, children's entertainer "Gingernutt the Clown",
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10.30	Family Communion, except the first Sunday in the month in term time. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 0-18.
10.30	All Age Eucharist or Parade Service (1st Sunday in the month, term time).
18.30	Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday in the month)

Every Monday

17.00 Evening Prayers

Every Wednesday

10.00 Holy Communion

Further information about all services can be obtained from the Parish Office.

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar	Rev. M. Finch	8464 8065
(Sat - Thu)	revfinch@btinternet.com	
Associate Vicar	Rev. R. Finch	8464 8065
Associate Vicar	Rev. J. Peters	07531 617302/
(Sun, Mon, Wed)		8460 5682
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Reader	Mr. P. Stotesbury	8650 3259
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	Mrs. D. Speller	8466 1184
	Mrs. M. Westropp	8650 5178
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Assistant	Mrs. E. Parker	8460 5682
Churchwardens	Mrs. A. Swatton	8650 1114
	Dr. D. Jefferys	8460 6030
	Mrs. P. Chase	8464 6188
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	Mr. S. Clark	8464 0696
	Mr. D. Cooper	8460 0682
	Mr. B. Waring	07957 186027
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Treasurer	Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884
Assistant Treasurer	Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0031
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Assistant Organist	Mr Daniel Beach	8289 6510
Electoral Roll	Mr. N. Stoffel	8460 0063
Stewardship	Mr. J. Westropp	8650 5178
Junior Church	Mrs. S. Aldred	8460 3978

PARISH OFFICE Tel/Fax 8460 5682

e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.plus.com
Open 9.30 am - 12.30 weekdays. Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these hours.

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Mothers & Toddlers	Mrs. J. Runicles	8650 4553
Mothers' Union Fellowship Group		
	Mrs. P. White	8460 9357
Friends of St. Mary's		
	Miss J. Rambridge	8650 0947
Scouts (Fri)	Mr. R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon.)	Mrs. P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
Cubs (Tues.)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954 437658
Beavers/admissions	Mr. J. Westropp	8650 5178
For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies & Guides please tel: 08001695901 or go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested		
Guides (Tues.)	Ms. N. Keast	07516 650940
Guides (Fri.)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon.)	Miss. K.	8462 3285
Brownies (Wed.)	Mrs. R. Kateswaran	8249 0984
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LOCAL CONTACTS

Cllr. M. Cooke	020 3665 0357
(Email: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)	
Cllr D. Jefferys	020 8460 6030
(Email: david.jefferys@bromley.gov.uk)	
Highfield Infants' School	8464 7804
Highfield Junior School	8460 2597
Residents' Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

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