

## Packing away the Christmas Lights



Twelfth Night, on 5th January, is when we should stop celebrating Christmas and take down the decorations and lights.

The following day is Epiphany, when we remember the arrival of the wise men to worship Jesus. Each Christmas, in our living room, the three kings are moved slowly along the window ledge towards the crib beside the Christmas tree. Predictably, they always arrive just after the Christmas decorations, lights and tree are taken down; just in time to be packed up with the nativity set and put away with the lights and decorations in the loft for the next eleven months.

Outside in the January cold, without the Christmas lights which have decorated houses and the streets for the last month or more, it feels very dark and wintry. It seems a long time until the clocks go forward, the evenings get lighter and we begin to anticipate Spring.

Over the centuries, the brief biblical reference to the wise men has been added to; wise men have become three kings with names, identities and specific gifts. This easily hides the deeper truth of the original story. Epiphany is about the non-Jewish world discovering Jesus and worshipping him. The God previously only known by the Jewish people, is revealed through Jesus to the wider world. Without the Christmas lights we are reminded what a cold and dark place the world can be, but we still celebrate Jesus revealed as the light of the world.

During our worship in January we look at some of the promises that God made to the Jewish people; promises of



a world that would focus on justice, peace and righteousness. We see Jesus beginning to fulfil these promises for the whole world; Jesus as the light of the world. There is still darkness, but Jesus is the light that can guide us through the darkness; a light we can share with others who are lost or seeking the way. Jesus is a light that can't be overcome by the darkness; a light that God wants to share with everybody.

**Stuart Buchanan**

**THANK YOU:** Susie Shelton and Julie Fox from the Pre School committee and former members of the Pre School came together to thank Pat Chase on her retirement. See more on page 2.

### Special Events and Services

**Sunday 20 January**

**4.00pm Choral Evensong**

*Responses: Ayleward*

*Canticles: Noble in B minor*

*Anthem: There shall a star - Mendelssohn*

### Stay in touch!

The Parish Office email is [office@stmaryshortlands.church](mailto:office@stmaryshortlands.church)  
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](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk)





## From the Registers

### At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Ann Gimson 28 November



## Remembering

### Ann Gimson

Ann was born Elizabeth Ann Morris on 12th June 1926 in Birmingham. As a child she was given her choice of name, and chose Ann.

At the time of her birth, Ann's father was a Church of England Priest. He was a dedicated pacifist and had become Chairman of the Peace Pledge Union, following his friend and colleague Canon Dick Shepherd. Ann remembered members of the Union such as Bertrand Russell, Vera Brittain and Sybil Thorndike coming for meetings.

Having initially wanted to study Medicine, she went to Kings College Hospital to study Dental Surgery, having been advised that the first year of this course was similar to that of Medicine and it might be possible to swap courses. However, she fell in love with dentistry, and gained her degree, the Wallis Prize for preventative dentistry and her Licentiate in Dental Surgery in 1949.

Ann first taught at the Dental School at Kings, and then joined the Metropolitan Police as a Dental Surgeon in 1951.

Ann and Arthur Gimson (better known as 'Gimmie', a lecturer in the Prosthetics Department at Kings) were married in 1953. They lived in the Wimbledon area before moving to St Mary's Avenue in 1959

For a short time Ann worked in her father-in-law's dental practice, keeping it going following his death until it could be sold. Jillian was born in 1957 and Carolyn in 1960. Ann went back to teaching part time at Kings in 1966 including a year running the Hygienist course until a permanent teacher was recruited. She retired from dentistry in 1979 when Gimmie became unwell.

On Gimmie's death in 2004, Ann stayed in St Mary's Avenue until 2009 when she moved to sheltered accommodation in Blenheim Court: she spent nine years in its friendly, caring and kind community. When her health deteriorated, something she found difficult as she valued her independence, Ann moved to be closer to her daughters.

Ann loved reading, crosswords, music and poetry and the theatre before her mobility and hearing made these visits more difficult. In her younger days, she was an enthusiastic ballroom dancer. She loved to travel: she visited her brother in Florida several times and attended the Oberammergau Passion Play. Her one regret was that she was never able to visit the Holy Land.

Ann became a regular member of St Mary's in 1962, joining first the Young Wives, becoming its leader for four years as well as being a member of the Mothers Union. She became the first ever woman churchwarden at St Mary's, before being encouraged to train as a Reader, and was licensed in June 1979. Whether it was leading prayers, preaching or taking funerals, she always strove to make things relevant, personal and accessible to all.

She was always there to lend an ear or provide advice, available for anyone in need. She took great joy in serving at St Mary's until she finally retired as a Reader Emeritus after 35 years, although she continued to help out with services at Durham House and would organise the Christmas Carols at Blenheim Court.

Her faith meant a great deal to her and upheld her through bad times and good as did her fellowship with so many loving and faithful friends.

Many people have reason to be grateful for the love Ann showed, for her stoicism in the face of ill health, for her patience, encouragement, service and inspiration. She used all her senses in the service of her beloved Lord and of us at Shortlands.

### UPDATE:

We have deferred our search for a new vicar until the New Year. Sometimes it takes a while to find the right person but we will let you know when we have made an appointment.



### Juniors on song!

St Mary's Junior Choir are a real asset to the choir. Where possible they sing at all Sunday services, including Choral Evensong once a month, and at all Christmas and Easter services. In addition they get the chance to sing at some of our great Cathedrals such as Rochester, Southwark, St Edmundsbury and Exeter.

The Juniors start at the age of 6 to 7 and go up to age 18. They rehearse from 7-8pm on a Thursday and are joined by the adult choir at 7.30pm. They learn to read music, following the Royal School of Church Music training scheme ('Voice for Life'). Once a year they get an opportunity to win the Paul Baker Friends' award.

The Junior Choir receive a small payment each term for their commitment to the Choir and are a really fun bunch of children to be around.

If you would like to be part of our Junior Choir please contact the Director of Music, Claire Tillotson: [claire.tillotson@ntlworld.com](mailto:claire.tillotson@ntlworld.com)

### St Mary's sing-along

What a belter! That was the general reaction to the November sing-along for the residents of Durham House. The singing was led by a motley crew consisting of the team who regularly support services at Durham House, including one of the voluntary pianists, plus choir and music group members to swell the sound.

The residents enthusiastically joined in with well-known songs from stage, screen and the crooners of yesteryear. Some additional rousing old drinking songs seemed particularly popular! The afternoon was rounded off with copious amounts of tea, cake and conversation. It was a wonderful opportunity to share time with people in the wider community of our parish.

### End of an era

Last month saw Pat Chase retire from St Mary's Pre-school, where she has worked since 1994. She took over as Leader in 2004, and has taken Pre-school from strength to strength, ably embracing the many changes that have taken place in Early Years education.

Known by many families in Shortlands through her work with Beavers as well as Pre-school, she has cared for, encouraged and inspired successive generations of children. Working closely with local schools, she and her excellent team have helped prepare countless children for their transition to primary school over the years.

Among her many talents, Pat has shown the children how to grow sunflowers and potatoes and written delightful rhymes and songs for the children. Many parents and members of the congregation have enjoyed seeing the children performing at special services such as Harvest and Mothering Sunday, or at the Pre-school end of year services.

Pat – how can we thank you enough? For all your hard work, loving care of the children, all the outings, capable leadership, and yes, for wading through all that paperwork. You leave a wonderful legacy for our new leader Christine Hall.

**Susie Shelton**



### Have your say!

Have you got a story to tell? Some news or insights to share? What would you like to read about in SPAN?

We are pleased to feature stories of general interest to the community of Shortlands.

We can't promise to publish, but if you have an idea for an article in SPAN please contact the Parish Office.

**CHRISTMAS CHEER:** nearly 400 people enjoyed St Mary's Christmas Fair, raising over £3,000 which will go towards the cost of repairing the Church and Hall heating system.



### Desert Island Discs

## Mission of the month

### The Leprosy Mission

There are presently over three million people suffering from leprosy-related disabilities. A new case is diagnosed every two minutes and more than 200,000 new cases were diagnosed globally in 2016 - more than 60 per cent of which were in India.

Sadly, despite continuing laboratory research, there is still no specific vaccine against leprosy. However, a cure in the form of multi drug therapy (MDT), which has been freely available since 1982, will, within a week of commencement of treatment, prevent patients from spreading the disease. Treatment with MDT in the early stages of leprosy will avert disabilities including possible blindness and paralysis, but early diagnosis and treatment is essential and many sufferers are slow to seek treatment.

The consequences of the disease can be devastating for those who go undiagnosed and untreated. Fear and stigma associated with the disease can lead to social exclusion which can be more damaging than the physical symptoms.

Discrimination against people affected by leprosy continues and only recently in 2018 a Bill was passed in India amending the law by striking out leprosy as a ground for divorce.

The Leprosy Mission, founded in 1874, is a leading international Christian organisation transforming and empowering the lives of people affected by leprosy. It is a charity that has been supported by St Mary's for many years. Further information is available from the display at the back of the church throughout January and you can find out more at [www.leprosymission.org.uk](http://www.leprosymission.org.uk)

A new series based on the Radio 4 programme featuring people who live or work in the parish with the eight tracks of music they would choose to have with them if marooned on a desert island, and why.

This month John Westropp chooses his music:

1. Johnny B Goode (Chuck Berry) - the ultimate rock'n'roll record by the ultimate rock'n'roll star.
2. Smoke on the Water (Deep Purple) - possibly the greatest guitar riff of all time
3. Zadok the Priest (George Frederic Handel) - because I'm an ardent royalist
4. Hoochie Coochie Man (Muddy Waters) - The Blues - as important as the Psalms to me
5. Comfortably Numb (Pink Floyd) - close your eyes and lose yourself in the music
6. Caroline (Status Quo) - if I had my life over again, I would be in Status Quo
7. Capriccio Italien (Tchaikovsky) - I have loved this for years. I always wanted to put a film to the music
8. Won't get fooled again (The Who) - the greatest band of the sixties. And I've seen all the above musicians live - except Handel and Tchaikovsky!




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- 08.00 Holy Communion
- 10.30 Family Communion, except when notified. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 0-18.
- 18.30 Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday in the month)

**Every Monday**

- 17.30 Evening Prayers

**Every Wednesday**

- 10.00 Holy Communion

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

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Vicar	8460 5682
office@stmaryshortlands.church	
Licensed Lay Ministers	
Mrs S. Aldred	8460 3978
Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
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Mr. P. Stotesbury	8650 3259
Mr. S. Buchanan	8777 8008
Pastoral Assistants	
Mrs. S. Harrison	8464 0284
Mrs. M. Westropp	8650 5178
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Assistant	
Mrs. E. Parker	8460 5682
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Mrs S. Maurel	01689 331793
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Mr. T. Dawson	8460 5884
Assistant Treasurer	
Mr. R. Hogg	8290 0613
Organist and Director of Music	
Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
Assistant Organist	
Mr Daniel Beach	8289 6510
Safeguarding Officer	
Mrs Kay Coleman	07879337567
Electoral Roll	
Mrs S. Maurel	01689 331793
Junior Church	
Mrs. S. Aldred	8460 3978
Stewardship	
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**PARISH OFFICE Tel: 8460 5682**

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

**ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS**

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

For admissions to Beavers, Cubs & Scouts please contact email: 7bromleyadmissions@gmail.com

Scouts (Fri)	Mr. R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon)	Mrs. P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
Cubs (Tues)	Mr. J. Griffiths	07954 437658
Beavers	Ms E. Hay	07932758801

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies & Guides please tel: 08001695901 or go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested

Guides (Tues.)	Ms. M. Bowman	07885604457
Guides (Fri.)	Mrs. G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon.)	Miss. K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Wed.)	Mrs. R. Katheswaran	8249 0984
Brownies (Thurs.)	Mrs. S. Tigh	8460 8122
Rainbows	Ms. H. Last	8460 1705
Pre-School	Mrs. C. Hall	8290 6704
		or 07960 988552
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Mission Chairman	Mrs. S. Shelton	8402 3299
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**LOCAL CONTACTS**

Cllr. M. Cooke	020 3665 0357
(Email: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)	
Cllr A. Cuthbert	
(Email: aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk)	
Residents' Association	8460 4060
Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood	8721 2614

**SPAN INFORMATION**

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Editorial Parish Office 8460 5682  
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