

# Dates in the Diary

Last month I wrote about the joy of St. Mary's being 'open for business' and how I am, as I hope you are, looking forward to resuming discussions around the Future Generations Project here at St. Mary's and what that might mean for our community here in Shortlands.

The response was very positive: many people are clearly looking forward as we continue to ease ourselves out of lockdown. It is clear that we are all now adding dates to our diaries with a little more (cautious) hope than we have had for some time.

My diary is starting to fill up with meetings with friends and family, even a family break has been dropped in, but I am also focused on church and community life.

Resuming Sunday church services was very exciting and we now resume Wednesday services from 19<sup>th</sup> May. We are also looking to other dates, especially those that allow us the opportunity to gather together as a community, utilising the church and its wonderful grounds.

St. Mary's will be opening a Community Café every Wednesday 11am-1pm, starting 19<sup>th</sup> May. This will be a café providing free refreshments to those that would like the opportunity to meet with others, to drop in on your own, to share a sense of fellowship with each other. Whatever your reason for visiting, you will be assured of a warm welcome.

As the name suggests, this is a café for the community so if you would like to be involved in some way, whether by helping or using the opportunity to host a talk on something of interest to the community, then please let me know.

Our Craft and Chatter and Mobility groups resume on 18<sup>th</sup> May at 10am and 2pm respectively, and the annual Parish Picnic returns to the church grounds on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July. This is an event that I encourage you to add to your diary; it's a wonderful opportunity to meet with others from within our community.

Opening wide the church's doors and continuing to make our church grounds accessible to all people: this is an important part of the life of St. Mary's today and for the future.

Please continue to keep an eye out for key dates and start adding them to your diary.

*Love and Blessings, Revd Gary Best*



## Special Events and Services

**Sunday 9 May**

**6.30pm A service led by the Music Group**

Services will take place in church and will be streamed via Facebook. All activities may be subject to change based on government COVID restrictions. Any updates will be shared through [www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk](http://www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk) and [www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands](https://www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands).



## From the Registers



### At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Sheila Morgan 20 Mar age 89

### Interment of Ashes

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Michael Ring 24 April

### Next steps

Viewers of St Mary's services which are streamed via Facebook are now enjoying much improved image quality, due to the new audio-visual facilities. We look forward to providing access to services such as weddings and funerals for those who aren't able to attend in person – and to reaching wider audiences with concerts and other events, once COVID restrictions allow.

The audio-visual system, the installation of a kitchen facility at the back of church and full servicing of our organ are important steps forward, with more to come.

As we come together again in communal worship and prayer, we are turning our attention to the next phase of our 'Future Generations Project'.

Watch this space next month for an update on planning to enhance the quality of local community life through our well-used and well-loved buildings.

**Tim Dawson**  
(Chair, Future Generations Steering Group)



St Mary's baristas were practising their skills at the recent plant sale



### Stay in touch!



To keep up with the latest news from St Mary's you can 'like' our page on Facebook [www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands](http://www.facebook.com/stmarysshortlands) or follow us on Twitter - search for 'St Mary's Shortlands'

If you're not sure how to do it, contact the office and they'll put you in touch with someone who can give you an introduction to 'social media'

### My Day Job

I was born and brought up in South Africa. I left in 1987, sailed across the Atlantic on a yacht and ended up in London. For five years I was a media planner with a large advertising agency.

When my children were born I became actively involved in the National Childbirth Trust and the PTA.

When my children took up swimming with Beckenham Swimming Club, I became secretary of the club. I am an Honorary Life President of Beckenham Swimming Club, and a Past President of London Swimming and of Kent County Swimming. I am a British Swimming official and officiate at galas both locally and at a high level. I currently run the Arena Swimming League South, which is one of the biggest swimming leagues in the country.

My family has always been involved in the church. When I moved to Shortlands in 2014 I was delighted to be welcomed into the family at St Mary's and was a regular member of the Wednesday communion service. I like the simple Millennium chapel and the sense of community.

I travel a lot and I seek to worship wherever I can. The communion service is so entrenched in my life that I feel a kindred spirit with wherever I am visiting. One of the highlights of my recent travels was a trip I did with St Mary's to the Holy Land. I went as a pilgrim and came back as a disciple.

On Wednesday 11th March 2020 I flew to South Africa. A combination of travel restrictions and responsibility for an elderly relative in South Africa means that I have not returned to England. I have managed to worship here but lockdown has meant those opportunities have been few and far between. I wake up every day and praise God that I am healthy and not having to home school any children.

**Kathy Hook**



### The taste of success



St Mary's first wine tasting since Covid started was held on Zoom, with over 40 people taking part.

Six wines (including a Malbec, a Pinot Noir and a Chenin Blanc) were decanted into 25cl bottles and delivered to all those taking part.

People tasted one wine at a time and then Tim and Andy from Refreshers in Shortlands Village each gave a review of the wine. Only one review was correct – participants had to work out which it was as well as completing two quizzes.

A great time was had by all and about £130 was raised for the Church organ fund.

# MISSION OF THE MONTH

## Christian Aid

In Kenya, extreme weather is making it harder and harder to survive.

Droughts are now more frequent and more intense due to the climate crisis and, without reliable water

sources, many people struggle to have enough food.

The Coronavirus pandemic has only increased the urgent need for families to have a reliable source of water.

Drought forces people to walk further and further to collect water, and this daily burden robs them of the chance to farm and grow food. At 67 years of age, Rose walks for six hours a day to fetch water for her grandchildren. The jerry cans she carries hold 40 litres of water which weighs 40kg.

Your donation can help provide an earth dam for a community so, when the rains do come, water can be stored closer to people's homes. Just a simple earth dam could completely change the lives of Rose and many others.

During Christian Aid Week (10-16 May), we will again be delivering red Christian Aid envelopes to homes in Shortlands. This year we will not call back to collect the envelopes but are asking you to return your envelope and donation to St Mary's Church. Further details will be given on the envelope. Donations can also be made online at [www.christianaid.org](http://www.christianaid.org).



# Parish Picnic



**Sunday 11 July from 12noon**

**In the church grounds**

Activities for the whole family

All are welcome – come and join the fun!

Bring your own picnic –  
barbecue food and refreshments  
available to buy

In the church hall if wet

## Ewan MacColl

We've been featuring blue plaques commemorating notable people in our parish – we're now venturing just outside the parish boundary.

Ewan MacColl (1915-1989) is known to most people as a songwriter and singer. He was a committed socialist all his life and this underpinned all his creative activities. His art reached huge numbers through the folk clubs, his recordings and the radio.

He was a member of the Young Communist League and was an activist in the unemployed workers' campaigns and the mass trespasses of the early 1930s. One of his best-known songs, 'The Manchester Rambler', was written after the pivotal mass trespass of Kinder Scout. He was responsible for publicity in the planning of the trespass.

In 1932 MI5 opened a file on MacColl, after local police asserted that he was 'a communist with very extreme views' who needed 'special attention'. For a time the Special Branch kept a watch on the Manchester home that he shared with his first wife, Joan Littlewood. MI5 caused some of MacColl's songs to be rejected by the BBC.

In 1957, while living in Stanley Avenue, he wrote 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' for his then wife Peggy Seeger. This song became a No. 1 hit in 1972 when recorded by Roberta Flack and won MacColl a Grammy Award for Song of the Year.

He was married three times: to theatre director Joan Littlewood; to Jean Newlove, with whom he had a daughter, the singer/songwriter Kirsty MacColl; and to American folksinger Peggy Seeger.

The Blue Plaque is at 38 Stanley Avenue.



## PLANT SWAP / SALE

*In the church grounds*

*10am – 12 noon*

*Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May.*

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*Future Generations*

*Project*



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