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NEWS

No 3 Winter 2017

news and features from St Margaret's

LENT 2017

Lent may originally have followed Epiphany, just as Jesus' sojourn in the wilderness followed immediately on his baptism, but it soon became firmly attached to Easter, as the principal occasion for baptism and for the reconciliation of those who had been excluded from the Church's fellowship.

This history explains the characteristic notes of Lent – self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, and preparation for Easter. Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; from the middle ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the Cross.

The calculation of the forty days of Lent has varied considerably in Christian history. It is now usual in the West to count them to the end of Holy Week (not including Sundays).

The Ash Wednesday services being held in Westminster Abbey to mark the beginning of Lent are noted below, as are details of Holy Week services at St Margaret's and in the Abbey.

PRE-LENTEN ART EXHIBITION AT ST MARGARET'S Sacred Space: drawings and paintings by Lottie Stoddart



Over the course of 2016 I was given the wonderful opportunity to spend an intensive period drawing inside Westminster Abbey. My first visit, following in the footsteps of William Blake, was with the Royal Drawing School, and formed the idea of returning and engaging with the Abbey's interior for a longer period.

My work investigates spaces that evoke the sacred. My previous works on this theme have included London graveyards, ancient woodlands and most recently tree veneration in India. Many evocations of Westminster Abbey concentrate on the monumental, but I have sought out the personal and intimate where visual juxtapositions have occurred through time, architectural style and changing use. The Abbey's central shrine and surrounding chapels have made me consider how sacred spaces are glimpsed, hidden and revealed. This was essential to creating the drawing reproduced left, *Towards the Shrine*.

Colour is very important in my work and I have used specific combinations to act like musical chords playing over the Abbey.

Alongside a carefully restricted colour palette, both drawings and paintings are simplified or slightly abstracted in a conversation between the subject and my own internal narratives.

Visiting the Abbey over such a long period – several days per months over the year – has

strengthened my connection and relationship to this sacred space, and I hope the viewer can share my experience.

I am deeply indebted to Scott Craddock for coordinating my visits to the Abbey and I would like to thank all those at the Abbey and St Margaret's who have enabled this project and my first solo exhibition.

~ Lottie Stoddart

Lottie Stoddart

Lottie Stoddart is a painter based in London. She studied English literature at Warwick University before attending the Drawing Year at the Royal Drawing School. Lottie has just finished a three month artist residency in India where she taught drawing at an arts institute near Delhi.

The Sacred Space exhibition will be on display in the church from Friday 10th through Thursday 16th February, during church opening hours.

Lent and Holy Week at St Margaret's and the Abbey

Wednesday 1st March: 8am, 12.30pm, 5pm

Imposition of Ashes, Westminster Abbey

Sunday 9th April: 11.15am

Palm Sunday Eucharist and procession,
Westminster Abbey

Thursday 13th April: 5pm

Choral Eucharist with washing of feet in the
Abbey, with watch at St Margaret's until 9pm

Friday 14th April: 10.30am

Good Friday Matins and Litany, St Margaret's

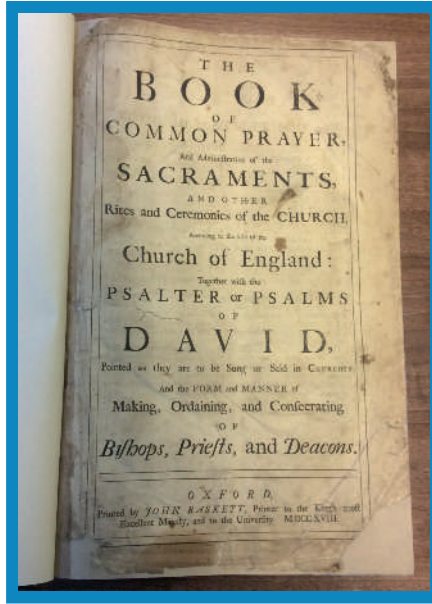
VESTRY REPAIRS

A mishap during the comprehensive works to the roof of the vestry resulted in the ceiling beneath being breached. The contractors will be repairing the hole and the Abbey is taking the opportunity to update the decorations in the vestry, using a lighter colour scheme.



1718 PRAYER BOOK

A Book of Common Prayer with an interesting history is being returned to St Margaret's after nearly 75 years. It has been restored by Lambeth Palace library conservators. A new display will be officially opened on Sunday 29th January at 12.30pm, after the Eucharist.



LAY ASSISTANTS

To help with administering communion when too few priests vicar are present, four members of the congregation have trained to become Lay Assistants. Those appointed are Carolyn and Paul Dimond, and Kim McManus and Iain Murray (below), who are on a rota to administer the chalice.



RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS: SCHOOLS AT ST MARGARET'S

Did you know that on average, during school term time, 500–600 secondary school pupils per week are welcomed to St Margaret's for their school assemblies? In addition we also welcome primary and secondary school children for educational activities in the church, often related to the National Curriculum requirements for learning about Christian buildings and beliefs.

St Margaret's is regularly used by Grey Coat Hospital, Harris Westminster Sixth Form, and Westminster City School all of which are within walking distance of St Margaret's. During 2016 the church hosted a total of 34 school assemblies, nine school services, two school concerts, and three other major school events. A Sixth Form Question Time in November was attended by 240 sixth formers from a range of schools across the south-east of England. Panel members of national standing answered questions on a wide range of topics including the refugee crisis, euthanasia, and education. Film clips of the Sixth Form Question Time may be viewed online at www.westminster-abbey.org/education/uk-schools. The church organ in St Margaret's is also used regularly by budding school-age organists from Westminster School under the watchful eye of their organ tutor, Ben Bloor.

Of course, all these events are held on week days in St Margaret's. In addition to these mid-week activities, Westminster Under School provides the boy choristers who sing on the front row of St Margaret's Choir for the Sunday morning Sung Eucharist from time to time.

A number of St Margaret's church staff help to maintain these school links day to day: The Reverend Canon Garry Swinton (Priest Vicar) is Chaplain to Grey Coat Hospital and Westminster City School; The Reverend Mark Birch (Minor Canon) is Chaplain at Harris Westminster Sixth Form; Aidan Oliver (Director of Music) recruits and manages the church choristers from Westminster Under School; and, as a Governor, I regularly visit Westminster School and Westminster Under School.

I hope that you are as delighted as I am at the sheer range of contacts with school pupils and staff which we have at St Margaret's. Generous hospitality and the promotion of good learning lie at the heart of the Christian gospel, and of the Benedictine tradition in which we share as part of Westminster Abbey. Please do pray for the flourishing of all those staff and students who enjoy St Margaret's week by week.

CONGREGATIONAL MILESTONES

Birthdays, and thank you

Friday, 6th January: Rowan Felix Horbury celebrates his 1st birthday

Thursday 12th January: David Tisdall marks his 80th birthday, to be celebrated at a wine party on 15th January.

Thursday 15th December: Nigel Harris has asked us to pass on his heartfelt thanks for the kindness and care of staff and congregation on the death of his father in December.

Baptisms

Sunday, 15th January: I I am – Sung Eucharist and baptism of Jasper Aaltonen

Sunday 5th February: John Frederick Houston (Freddy) Rosemont, Abbey Wright's grandson, was baptised at St Margaret's by the Rector on 26th November 2016. He will be introduced to the congregation on 5th February.

Funerals, death

Monday, 28th November: Members of the congregation and his legal firm remembered the service of longtime sidesman Raymond Jones, who died on 31st October.

Thursday, 16th December: Many celebrated the life of Prof Jack Fowler, an eminent scientist in radiation and oncology, and regular member of the congregation, who died 2nd December.

Tuesday, 20th December: Lord Jenkin of Roding, frequent attender of St Margaret's, died

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Opening of 1718 Prayer Book display

Sunday 29th January: 12.30pm

Sacred Space: exhibition of drawings by Lottie Stoddart

Friday 10th – Thursday 16th February

Explorations in Faith

(including bring and share lunch)

Sundays 5th, 12th and 19th March:

12.45pm – 1.45pm

We will be discussing the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book *Dethroning Mammon* (Bloomsbury 2016), available in paperback from Church House Bookshop, Great Smith Street, or online.

St Margaret's Congregational Forum meetings

Mondays 16th January and 13th March: 6pm

St Margaret's Annual General Meeting

at One Great George Street

Wednesday 8th March: 6pm

Poetry and Arts Group

Saturdays 28th January and 25th February:

check notes in weekly service sheets for times and venues, and contact Alan Stourton for further information

STEWARDSHIP

Fundraising initiatives are being planned for 2017. In the meantime, we are looking to increase congregational giving throughout the year. The widest possible use of Gift Aid and standing orders will help greatly.

The latest available figures for congregational giving, in the three months to September are:

July – £2825

August – £1361

September – £2100.

Contacts for St Margaret's

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Newsletter: queries, suggestions and distribution list matters by email to Becky Wallower:

e: becky.wallower@dial.pipex.com

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Carols abounding

The Advent period is always busy at St Margaret's, but the 2016 calendar was particularly full, with 17 carol services during December for external organisations, 10 of which required the services of St Margaret's sidesmen and the Abbey's honorary stewards. Almost 7400 people attended in total.



The bodies holding services included charities with an international remit: for relief in Syria and for child amputees. Six schools and other local and national organisations were also represented, including The Passage at Westminster Cathedral for homeless people, Westminster School parents, Blue Badge Guides, a local law firm, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Department for International Development. As usual, the largest service of all was the Parliamentary carol service for MPs and

staff in the Palace of Westminster. The church was also full for our own service of lessons and carols, as people queued beforehand (above) and others were redirected to St Margaret's from a packed Abbey where Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* was being sung.

OPENING OF THE FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE

Royal visitors to St Margaret's



On 10th November at 11am, His Royal Highness Philip Duke of Edinburgh and His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales opened the Field of Remembrance. They were welcomed by the Dean of Westminster; and our Rector, Canon Jane Sinclair, said prayers.

After planting their own crosses, Prince Philip and Prince Harry spent time speaking with guests representing all parts of the services among the 250 plots covering St Margaret's churchyard. Among those present and paying tribute to the fallen of all the wars were cadets from Westminster City School, where Priest Vicar Gary Swinton is chaplain.

Prince Philip and Prince Harry were then led into St Margaret's where they signed the visitors book and were presented to Priest Vicars and members of the Congregational Forum.



DID YOU KNOW...?

St Margaret's sundials

Until the 1980s, clocks adorned the faces of St Margaret's tower, perhaps somewhat redundant given the proximity of the clock in Parliament's Elizabeth tower.



They were replaced with the blue steel sundials to commemorate an ecumenical service held in the church in 1974 on the occasion of the 20th annual session of the North Atlantic Assembly. Attended by members of the Parliaments of NATO countries, the service was led by the Chaplain of the Speaker of the House of Commons, assisted by clergy from across the member countries.

As recorded on a plaque in the north porch of the church, the sundials were the gift in 1982 of Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, who had been Parliamentary Private Secretary to Prime Minister Clement Attlee 1945-1946, and was president of the Assembly 1976-1978. On the exterior of the tower a blue plate gives time corrections. Designed by Christopher Daniel in collaboration with Edwin Russell, the sundials were made by Messrs Brookbrae Ltd. The inscription on the north face reads: Let the People Praise Thee, O God.

PRIEST VICAR PROFILE

The Reverend Alan Boddy

Because availability on Sundays is a prerequisite for our priests vicar at St Margaret's, they offer an interesting window into ministry outside the mainstream parish structure. Alan Boddy brings to us long experience as a chaplain in the prison service that clearly informs his faith and outlook. A vocation to the priesthood manifested itself in early adulthood but at the time there were no opportunities to serve as a worker priest. Having decided that a career as a Spanish teacher was not for him, he began a career in the Home Office instead. This brought him into contact with the Prison Service and, after ordination, to serving on the Parole Board for England and Wales at the invitation of Douglas Hurd.

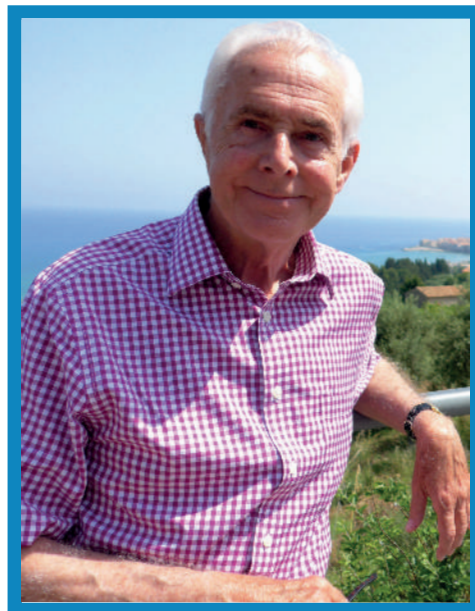
Throughout his career, he developed links to several London churches through worship and, especially, singing in choirs as a counter-tenor. He finally decided to offer himself for full-time ministry and trained for the priesthood at Ripon College Cuddesdon, where the Reverend Paul Bradshaw was Vice Principal. Ordained Deacon in 1984, he served his title at St Lawrence Eastcote, and was priested there in 1985. From there he went on to St Mary Abbots in Kensington, London, but when his Bishop suggested a relocation to Australia, Alan decided to take stock. Having enjoyed his work with prisons, prisoners and the Parole Board, he was drawn to the prison service, and became chaplain at Brixton Prison in 1990. After serving in several other prisons, he finally moved to

Wormwood Scrubs where he headed a chaplaincy team of 32 ministers of all faiths. The chapel was larger than St Margaret's. Unsurprisingly, the work was challenging but fascinating, and Alan welcomed the chance to serve such a wide range of people, from all categories of inmate to all prison staff.

On the very day he retired from the Scrubs in 2002, he had a telephone call from Canon Robert Wright, who had heard of Alan through his godson who sang in the Abbey choir. Alan took up Robert's offer to become a priest vicar without hesitation. And when he gave his mother the news, he felt it was meant to be: she told him that his first trip out as a tiny baby had been to St Margaret's to attend a family wedding. Now that he's retired he also assists occasionally at his local parish church in Battersea, and spends time in Dorset, but singing the Eucharist (no longer as a counter-tenor) at St Margaret's remains central to his life. 'I do love the people, the Christian family at St Margaret's,' he says, 'The wonderful traditional form of worship and outstanding choral and organ music I find genuinely uplifting and transforming.'

And to find out more about Alan behind the dog collar, we posed our quick fire questions...

➤ **What's your favourite scripture?** I Corinthians 13 on love
Setting? Darke in F, as I sang in Harold Darke's church for years
Season? Lent, for concentrating the mind on matters spiritual and the best music in the liturgical year.



➤ **And your favourite film?** 'Kind Hearts and Coronets' – I never tire of the Ealing comedies and Sir Alec Guinness in particular
Work of art? a Cezanne still life painting in the National Gallery – I was actually taught to paint in the style of Cezanne
Food? My list of prerequisites for heaven includes smoked salmon, champagne and raspberries.
Holiday destination? I am absolutely fascinated by Egypt, having been an amateur Egyptologist since the age of 11.
➤ **Who has influenced your life the most?** Mum and Dad, for providing the examples of how to be a decent human being; Nelson Mandela for inspiration and through my love of South Africa
➤ **What's your guilty pleasure?** OK, I'll admit it: one Big Mac a year, and it's delicious!

FABRIC RESTORATION

Cavendish window repaired

Stones thrown through the window at the west end of the south aisle caused damage to two of the panels during the summer – the top right one (below) and bottom row second from left.



Repair and restoration of the damage was completed by Canterbury Cathedral workshops and the panels reinstalled before Christmas.

The window is dedicated to the memory of Lord Frederick Cavendish MP, who, as the newly appointed Chief Secretary of Ireland was a victim of the infamous Phoenix Park murders in 1882. On their way to meet the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he and Thomas Burke, the most senior Irish civil servant, were stabbed by an Irish nationalist. Five members of a previously unknown Republican group called the Invincibles were hanged for the crime. A brass beneath the window has an inscription by WE Gladstone, son of the Prime Minister.

The top lights of the window show angels, and the eight panels below illustrate scriptural texts of sacrifice. It was designed by Pre-Raphaelite Henry Holiday, who also drew the subjects of the Brunel window in the Abbey. Made by James Powell & Sons – often known as Whitefriars Glass – it is considered one of the best examples of Victorian art in the church.

PARLIAMENT SQUARE

Westminster Abbey Institute

The spring programme for Westminster Abbey Institute focuses on the theme of integrity, asking questions such as: What does it mean for a public servant to have integrity? Is it the same as being consistent? What if events demand a change of mind, policy or law? Is the creation of a public persona a failure of integrity or a way of protecting the personal self? Can institutions have integrity? Can they sustain important values when individuals lose sight of them? What of the people whom public servants serve: how can the public's integrity be understood and respected?

Professor Marilynne Robinson will give the annual Gore lecture on *Integrity and modern intellectual tradition* at 6.30pm on 7th March in the nave of the Abbey. In addition, three Westminster lectures will be presented in the Lady Chapel on 27th February, 14th March and 21st March.

See the yellow leaflet available in the church for details and booking information.