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NEWS

No 5 Summer 2017

news and features from St Margaret's

HOLY DAYS

From early times the Christian Church has celebrated those in whom it has seen, with particular clarity, the power of God to transform human lives. The first lives to be marked were those who first heard Jesus' teaching and followed his call,

those who received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and carried forward the Church's mission in its beginnings, and those who have succeeded and been inspired by them in subsequent generations.

These 'saints' or holy men and women are remembered on individual holy days, distributed through the Christian Year. The main festivals, commemorate the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Apostles and the Evangelists, who represent the first generation of the Church's life and the beginning of its mission after Christ. Lesser festivals

celebrate for the most part holy men and women who lived after the time of the apostles, down to our own day, the grace and power of God having been at work in every century of the Church's life.

ST MARGARET OF ANTIOCH

Inspiration in history

We don't know with any certainty when she lived or why she was venerated, or even whether she was an individual or a concatenation of several holy women, yet the influence of St Margaret of Antioch continues in many parts of the Christian world today.



The commonly held story is that Margaret, or Marina as she is known in Greek and in the Eastern Church, lived in the reign of Diocletian in the late 3rd / early 4th century in Antioch, part of modern Turkey. Most accounts relate that her father was a pagan priest, but that she was brought to Christianity by a nursemaid. Having refused to recant her faith upon the marriage proposal of Olybrius, a Roman governor, she was tortured and put in prison, where she was devoured by satan in the form of a dragon. As she prayed and crossed herself, her crucifix either irritated his throat, or perhaps split his belly open, resulting in her release. Olybrius ordered further ordeals, through hanging by her hair, fire and drowning (upon which a martyr's crown descended from heaven), before she

was finally beheaded. Much of the story was recorded in the 13th Century book of the lives of saints, the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine, from which the image above left is taken. In wide circulation throughout the medieval period, this book was one of the first publications of William Caxton, England's first printer, who was buried in the St Margaret's in 1491 (see p 3).

Despite her dragon-slaying being declared apocryphal in AD 494 by Pope Gelasius, the cult to St Margaret that probably arose not long after her martyrdom was a hugely popular one, probably fired by soldiers returning from the crusades with tales and talismans. In England more than 250 churches are dedicated to St Margaret, and medieval wall paintings recording her attributes or her life survive in several of these, from Northumberland to Dorset. Her popularity is explained to some extent by her status as patron of pregnant women and childbirth, and of those nearing death. The Catholic Church ceased to recognise her as a saint in 1969.

Although the church has been dedicated to St Margaret since it was first built some 900 years ago, we have only one representation of her remaining— the small 15th century carving (above, right) which is located in the sanctuary. This is a memorial to John Rankin Rathbone, MP for South Cornwall and St Margaret's churchwarden, who died in bombing operations in Europe in 1940.

The Victoria and Albert museum houses a particularly fine and detailed 16th century German altarpiece dedicated to St Margaret and depicting her legendary travails. The British Library holds many representations of her in medieval manuscripts, including several in the Queen Mary Psalter that belonged to Mary Tudor, and another in the breviary of Queen Isabella of Castile.

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FUNERAL SUPPORT

Before his funeral on 10th April, PC Keith Palmer who died in the Westminster Bridge attack, lay in rest at the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft in the Palace of Westminster where he worked. The Senior Verger Nigel Harris assisted the Speaker's Chaplain and St Margaret's Rector with arrangements.



3 MOTHERS

The exhibition of *3 Mothers*, the triptych of icons by the Reverend Regan O'Callaghan, continues in the north aisle through September. Regan preached the Trinity Sunday sermon on the subject of icons and hospitality. Further details about *3 Mothers* can be found on the cover of the last *News*.



CELEBRATIONS

Josephine Forster and Captain Gareth Brearley were married at St Margaret's on 27th May. Pictured below with Josephine's parents Victoria Dearborn and David Forster, both attend Sunday Eucharist regularly and Josephine, who attended Westminster School, is also a server.



RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS: TRUE OR FALSE?

Periodically I encounter assumptions about St Margaret's, about why we do what we do and about St Margaret's place in respect of Westminster Abbey. Here is a short quiz; you may be surprised by some of the answers. Which of the following statements are true, and which are false? Answers below.

- A Unlike Westminster Abbey, St Margaret's is a parish church.
- B We are part of a Royal Peculiar, so we can do what we like.
- C St Margaret's was built to serve the spiritual needs of Parliament.
- D At St Margaret's we are unique in the Church of England.

Answers:

A False. St Margaret's is not a parish church. It is part of Westminster Abbey, a Royal Peculiar, accountable solely to the Sovereign. St Margaret's was originally built by the Benedictine community of Westminster Abbey in the late 11th

century, in order to serve the local people of the area. It remained under the care of that community, and later the Dean and Chapter, until the mid-19th century. For a short period, 1840–1972, St Margaret's became a parish church within the Diocese of London. However, in 1972, with the passing of the Westminster Abbey and St Margaret Westminster Act, St Margaret's ceased to be a parish church and returned to the care of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

B True and false. St Margaret's is part of the Royal Peculiar which is Westminster Abbey, and is therefore outside the governing structures of the Church of England. The Dean of Westminster, advised by the Chapter, has responsibility for ordering the life of the Abbey and St Margaret's. Under the Dean's care and direction we use the services of the Church of England, and engage in Christian witness to the nation, and, at St Margaret's, to our neighbours in Parliament Square.

C False. St Margaret's first became associated with the House of Commons when, on Palm Sunday 1614, the whole House met in St Margaret's and took Holy Communion. Since then St Margaret's has become popularly known as 'the parish church of the House of Commons', and continues to host regular services for Parliamentary staff and members of both Houses.

D True and false. By virtue of being a part of Westminster Abbey, the church of St Margaret's is unique. We have a special vocation to serve those who work in and around Parliament Square, especially in Parliament. However, St Margaret's is not unique in providing a traditional language Eucharist every Sunday, welcoming school pupils for worship or assemblies, hosting exhibitions and concerts, and seeking to develop its outreach. We share much in common with many other churches in London, across the Church of England, and beyond.

PATRONAL FESTIVAL AND CONGREGATIONAL MILESTONES

St Margaret's festal services

Sunday 16th July, St Margaret of Antioch: Feast of Dedication

11.00am: Festal Eucharist followed by party in St Catherine's Chapel Garden

Thursday 20th July, St Margaret of Antioch: 8.00am: Eucharist, followed by coffee and croissants

Marriage, anniversary

Saturday 15th July: Tara Collins and Ryan Herr will be married. Like Josephine Brearley who was married in May, Tara is a former Westminster School student.

September: To mark the 350th anniversary of Milton's *Paradise Lost* on 20th September, a special talk on the memorial window in St Margaret's is planned. Look out for details.

Memorial service

Tuesday 12th September, 12.00: The memorial service will be held for Lord Jenkin of Roding PC at St Margaret's. Lord Jenkin regularly attended services at St Margaret's with Lady Jenkin, and their daughter Nicola was a member of the choir for many years. He died on 20 December 2016.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

St Margaret's Congregational Forum meetings

Mondays 10th July, 4th September: 6pm

'Excellent Women'

Mondays 11th, 18th, 25th September and 2nd

October, 6pm: a series of four provocative

lectures on significant Anglican women novelists

– Dame Rose Macaulay, Dorothy Sayers,

Barbara Pym and PD James – held in Poets'

Corner in the Abbey. For details about

lecturers and booking free tickets see events

pages of Abbey website.

Explorations in Faith

Sundays 24th September, 15th October,

19th November, 12.30-1.45pm: Sessions will

be held regularly after the service, and you're

invited to bring and share some lunch.

Poetry and Arts Group

Awaydays in July (to Salisbury, a park for a picnic, the Wallace collection), then on last

Saturday evening of each month from 30th

September: details of meetings, restarting

after the summer break, can be found in

weekly service sheets, or from Alan Stourton.

All are welcome.

Summer in the gardens

dozens of entertaining activities are to be held in the Abbey precincts over the

holiday period, including...

Choir School Summer Fete –

with stalls, crafts, games, prizes, food,

drink and music:

Dean's Yard, 8th July, 11am–3.30pm

Brass on the Grass –

free band concerts Wednesdays at 12.30pm:

College Garden from 19th July to 30th August,

and St Margaret's on 6th and 13th September

Plus... summer holiday family events,

Pride and Prejudice open air theatre,

classic films with Luna cinema and more

See the events listings on the Abbey website for all the details:

www.westminster-abbey.org/events

CONSULTATION RESULT

Following wide consultation with the congregation and staff of St Margaret's, and on the advice of the Chapter, the Dean as Ordinary of Westminster Abbey, has decided that the contemporary language order of service currently in use at St Margaret's on the second Sunday of the month will cease to be used with effect from 1st August 2017. This decision may be revisited at a future date in the light of changing pastoral or other circumstances, as advised by the Rector of St Margaret's. The Rector is very grateful for the detailed and considered contributions to the consultation.

PROFESSOR JACK FOWLER

A pre-eminent oncologist

After the funeral last December of Jack Fowler, who attended St Margaret's during his last years with his wife Anna Edwards-Fowler, many remarked that they hadn't realised what an important figure he had been. It was felt that his accomplishments should be better known, even if in a brief precis such as this.



After his first class degree in Physics from Exeter at the age of 19, Jack worked briefly in wartime radiation projects for Vickers before he settled into a career in medical physics, with initial training at Newcastle. Appointments followed at leading London hospitals, and as Director of the Gray Laboratory between 1970 and 1988, when its scientific output was world-leading. After his 'retirement' he spent many years at the University of Wisconsin, and as a visiting professor to European universities. Over his long career, he published more than 500 peer-reviewed manuscripts and dozens of book chapters, delivered hundreds of lectures and

presentations and received more than 30 honours and marks of distinction.

His greatest contribution to clinical oncology was to exploit knowledge of factors influencing the relationships between overall time, dose per fraction and number of fractions. His willingness and ability to engage with clinicians had an enormous impact on how radiotherapy is given today.

SERVICE FOR A NEW PARLIAMENT

St Margaret's welcomes all Parliament

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, gave the Address at the Service for a New Parliament at St Margaret's on 28th June 2017. Attended by MPs, peers, parliamentary staff and faith leaders, the service was conducted by the Reverend Jane

Sinclair, Rector of St Margaret's, and the Reverend Prebendary Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons.

The Right Honourable The Lord Fowler, the Lord Speaker, and the Right Honourable John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, read lessons. Prayers were said by the Speaker's Chaplain and clergy from the Abbey, Methodist Central Hall, and The Passage. The service was sung by the Choir of St Margaret's conducted by Aidan Oliver and Richard Pearce played the organ.



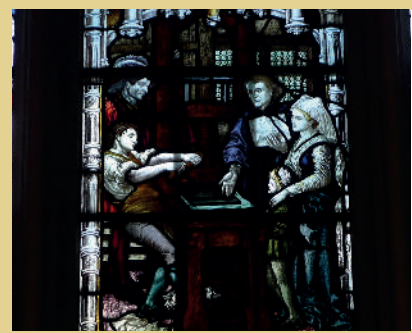
DID YOU KNOW...?

William Caxton

In his 14 or so years at Westminster, William Caxton revolutionised communications in England. He set up the first printing press in England here and in 1476 published his first book, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. From premises on the south side of the Abbey and at the western Almonry gate of the precincts he continued printing and dealing in books until his death in 1491/2.

Born in Kent in the 1420s, Caxton lived through the War of the Roses and gained the patronage of Edward IV. He traded widely in the low countries and Germany before returning to England with the technology and craftsmen to establish his press. An immediate success, he published some 100 books.

Caxton was buried in St Margaret's, but memorials were only erected centuries later. In 1820 the Roxburgh Club placed a memorial in the church after the Abbey had refused permission. A



window at end of the south aisle, dedicated in 1882, was destroyed in WWII, but a plaque near the main memorial records it. The small panel in the north aisle shown above is part of the memorial window of Edward Lloyd, a publisher. William Caxton (d. 1479) and Maude Caxton (d. 1490), who were also buried in the church, may be his father and wife or mother.

PRIEST VICAR PROFILE

The Reverend Ralph Godsall

Athlete, liberation theologian and rooted in an old Catholic parish in medieval Hereford – Ralph Godsall doesn't really fit a standard clergy mould.

He first came to St Margaret's in 2008 after taking a conscious decision to take early retirement, becoming a self-supporting rather than stipendiary priest. Having eschewed the 'preferment route' – ie moving up the ladder from one promotion to another – throughout his career, he had nevertheless taken on the role of Canon Precentor of Rochester Cathedral in 2001. Although he very much enjoyed it (and in fact recently returned there for six months as Interim Precentor), he thought he could offer more in a less bounded role, and a connection to a Royal Peculiar seemed the perfect starting point.

Before moving to Kent, he had served as Vicar of St Stephen's Rochester Row. He was familiar with the Abbey, and had found support in his parish work from both Deans of Westminster during that time (Wesley Carr and Michael Mayne, whom Ralph had known at Cambridge). He says, 'My eyes were opened then as to what a Royal Peculiar can provide and achieve, and I thought it could offer me a good combination of freedom and structure.' As well as serving as priest vicar, he has also filled in as a minor canon at the Abbey three times, but especially enjoys the wide variety of people here.

His public ministry has taken a roundabout route. Active in youth fellowship in Hereford, he was invited one afternoon to have tea with Bishop Mark Hodson, who came to nurture

Ralph's early vocation to the priesthood. Ralph read Classics at Queens' College Cambridge, before going on to read a full Part 2 in Theology. A key influence on his life, then and now, was Bishop John Robinson, then Dean of Chapel at Trinity, whose understanding of being 'the church in the world', and advice not to rush into ordination, were pivotal. So with a scholarship and £200 from Bishop Mark (who declared Ralph would come back a Marxist), he left for two years' research and travel, based in Columbia at the Universidad del Valle. He returned to the stark contrast of life as an ordinand at Cuddesdon. The principal there saw his difficulty with the change and allowed him to reflect on his time in Latin America instead in writing his thesis.

A fortuitous detour prior to ordination led to a year as an Outward Bound instructor in Devon. There he met his American wife Ellen, with whom he shares his non-standard career approach – she's just completed a spell working with Habitat for Humanity volunteers in India.

Despite the unusual start, he has nonetheless cultivated a love of liturgical worship and pastoral care in posts in Norwich, as Chaplain at Trinity Cambridge, in a parish of marijuana-cultivating hippies in Hebden Bridge – and of course at St Margaret's.

Ralph has always felt a tension between believing and non-believing and cherishes living on the boundary between the church and the world. Pushing himself physically is perhaps another manifestation of this – he's a keen



cyclist, won the Church Times Cricket Cup with the Diocese of London team, and has walked the Camino to Santiago di Compostela. He was also a soccer Blue at Cambridge, and somewhere in the Telegraph archives is a photo of Ralph heading a goal at old Wembley stadium.

To add to this compelling profile of Ralph, we posed some quick fire questions...

- ✦ **What's your favourite hymn?** O Thou who camest from above. **Setting?** Haydn's St Nicholas Mass. **Scripture?** John 1.1-14
- ✦ **And your favourite book?** Graham Greene's *Monsignor Quixote*. **Pastime?** Watching cricket. **Smell?** Frying bacon **Music?** Jools Holland.
- Possession?** Hip flask with a single malt.
- ✦ **If you had a time machine where would you go?** Mount Everest on my 70th birthday.
- ✦ **What's your greatest achievement?** Having climbed all 282 Scottish mountains over 3000 ft high, I'm a Compleat Monroist!

NEW POSTCARD

A welcome to visitors

The new free postcard introduced in May has proved so appealing that the initial print run of 10,000 disappeared in just a few weeks and had to be reordered. The brainchild of Stephen Wright, the Warden for Parliament Square and visitor experience and Becky Wallower, the Warden for communications, it contains a short background to the church's history, its relationship to the Abbey and Parliament, and some of the people who've worshipped here. It's being given away to welcome visitors and to encourage them to join us for Sunday Eucharist.



STEWARDSHIP

Report and plans

There have been many developments in stewardship at St Margaret's in recent months, but because they have been taking place behind the scenes, the impacts are not always apparent.

For example, a list of those who contribute financially to the church through standing orders has been provided to Edward Osterwald, the Warden for stewardship. With this list in hand, we will shortly have a procedure in place for how the weekly collection is managed for these individuals.

Standing Orders should assume even greater importance as they help ensure that the church's revenue will be more stable.

Following a recent request for volunteers from the Dean and Chapter, several members of the congregation have stepped forward to join a group that will be empowered to help raise money for the church, as and when needed. The initial meeting of the group will take place in September.

Lastly, data provided by the Finance Department of the Abbey shows that although

there has been a sharp increase in non-regular revenue in recent years (eg from special services and events), regular receipts (ie service collections and donations to candle boxes) are down slightly, which demonstrates why use of more Standing Orders is important.

The latest available figures for congregational giving, in the three months to May 2017 are:

March	£ 872	April	£ 737
May	£ 1115		

SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

Churches Together in Westminster have alerted us to a rising incidence of thefts in churches both of and from handbags, backpacks and other bags that are left unattended when their owners go up to take communion.

Although our security is good and sidesmen are always in position at the back of the church, members of the congregation should consider taking their bags with them to the altar rail, or tucking them out of reach. Please also remain alert during refreshments after the service.