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NEWS

No 8 Spring 2018

news and features from St Margaret's

EASTERTIDE

The Great Fifty Days of Eastertide form a single festival period in which the tone of joy created at the Easter Vigil is sustained through seven weeks, and the Church celebrates the gloriously risen Christ. Early Christians gave the name Pentecost to this whole fifty-day span of rejoicing, which Tertullian calls 'this most joyful period' (laetissimum spatium). The Alleluia appears frequently in liturgical speech and song; Morning Prayer begins with the traditional collection of Pauline texts known as the Easter Anthems, and white or gold vestments and decorations emphasize the brightness of the season.

On the fortieth day there has from the late fourth century been a particular celebration of Christ's ascension. He commissions his disciples to continue his work, he promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then he is no longer among them in the flesh. The ascension is therefore closely connected with the theme of mission. The arrival of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost completes and crowns

the Easter Festival.

*Triumphant in his glory now,
his sceptre ruleth all,
earth, heaven and hell before him bow,
and at his footstool fall.*

(Fulbert of Chartres)

Inside...

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- Bell ringing profile
- Groundbreaking women
- Diary dates and milestones
- Did you know...?
- AGM report

...and more

THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE GALLERIES

New displays in Westminster Abbey's triforium open in June

From 11th June, visitors to the Abbey will be able experience both spectacular views and precious treasures, all from a long-hidden space 50 feet above ground in the medieval triforium.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries have been constructed in a star-shaped space that will be reached from a new tower located outside Poet's Corner, between the Lady Chapel of Henry VII and the 13th century Chapter House.



The displays from the Abbey's collection will cover four themes. **Building Westminster Abbey** charts the foundations of the Benedictine monastery in AD 960, through its life as Edward the Confessor's Church, and the repair works of Sir Christopher Wren as Surveyor of the Fabric (1698 – 1723). Displayed for the first time are a column capital from the cloister of St Edward's is an intricate scale model of the Abbey (1714-16) commissioned by Wren with a massive central spire, planned, but never built. **Worship and Daily Life** gives insight into a working church with daily worship at its heart. Artefacts demonstrating the long history of worship in the precinct include the Westminster Retable, (1259 – 69) the oldest surviving altarpiece in England from Henry III's Abbey, and the 14th century Litlington Missal, an illuminated service book made for the Abbey's high altar. Also displayed will be three 17th century alms dishes from St Margaret's. The silver gilt

dish pictured here features the Last Supper at its centre. It was made in 1691-2 by Francis Garthorne, who also made large pieces for the Court of William III and Mary II. The other alms dishes from St Margaret's to be displayed were gifts of Sarah, Duchess of Somerset in 1692.

Dealing with its wider role, **Westminster Abbey and the Monarchy** looks at the special relationship with the Crown as a Royal Peculiar and as the coronation church since 1066. Mary II's Coronation Chair (1689), created for William III and Mary II's joint coronation (the only joint coronation in English history), is on display. **The Abbey and National Memory** shows how Westminster Abbey has developed its role in commemoration and remembrance, not just of kings and queens, but also of notable Britons from Geoffrey Chaucer to Sir Isaac Newton and thousands more. Since 11 November 1920 the Abbey has also become a particular focus for Remembrance following the burial of the Unknown Warrior.

Archaeological projects which preceded the works revealed 19 medieval burials south of the Lady Chapel, and the triforium itself became an archaeological site when it was discovered that dust and artefacts had accumulated over many centuries undisturbed under the floorboards. Careful sieving yielded surprising finds – including clay tobacco pipes and 17th century tobacco wrappers, 14th to 19th century pottery, window glass, playing cards, coronation tickets, shoes, a medieval wooden patten, and all manner of animal bones – some of which are on display.

The Rector hopes to arrange a St Margaret's visit during the summer. Watch this space.

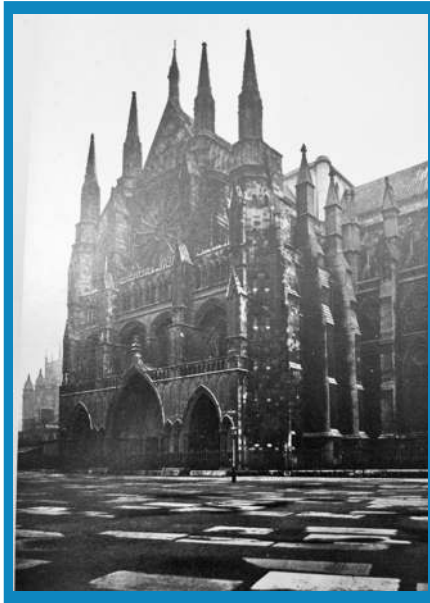
CHURCHES TOGETHER

Victoria Dearborn is St Margaret's new representative for Churches Together in Westminster, following on from Willem van der Lee. She will be encouraging visits to other churches in the borough and reporting on other events and news.



THE CHURCHYARD

In helping a film director who often works in Parliament with his family connections with St Margaret's, our verger Nigel Harris and Abbey staff turned up this rare photo of the churchyard (now North Green) before the gravestones were removed in 1888.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In March, St Margaret's hosted a National Crime Agency display on human trafficking and modern slavery. Striking photographs were on view outside St Margaret's, and the Rector welcomed Victoria Atkins MP, and senior NCA officials to view the exhibition.



RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS: LYDIA'S STORY

Lydia (not her real name) is in her early forties, an intelligent, articulate woman, born and brought up in the West Indies. She married young, but soon discovered that her husband was a violent alcoholic. He spent such income as they had on drink, regularly humiliated his wife in public, thrashed her at home, and sexually assaulted her whenever he felt like it. After several years enduring this abusive behaviour, Lydia confided in a friend of hers at church. The friend offered to help Lydia leave her husband, and to start a new life in the UK. Lydia had no money of her own, and was grateful for the offer.

When she arrived in the UK, Lydia was met by someone who introduced herself as a friend of her church contact back home. Lydia was hurriedly driven to a private address in the Home Counties. There she was shown to a small room upstairs, with only a dirty mattress on the floor, a tiny shower and loo, and a single bar electric fire. The family who lived downstairs seemed to be

wealthy to Lydia's eyes, but they treated her with contempt. Lydia soon discovered that she was expected to work seven days a week, cleaning, gardening, and doing any menial jobs the family wished. It took a while longer for Lydia to realise that, far from helping her, her church 'friend' in the West Indies had sold her into domestic slavery. Lydia's passport had been taken from her; she had no identity papers. The family lied to Lydia when they told her that she was an illegal immigrant, and that if she tried to run away, the police would arrest and deport her to the West Indies.

Lydia was trapped, captive in a foreign country, with no-one knowing her whereabouts except her captors. Fortunately, and unknown to Lydia, the UK immigration authorities did have some leads on the slavery network which had trafficked her. Four times the authorities came and searched the house where she was held. Four times her captors realized that the

authorities were about to call, and whisked Lydia away to another address, another family, and another sentence of slavery. Only on the fifth occasion were the immigration authorities successful. Lydia was freed, and her captors arrested and tried for their crimes. After seven years as a domestic slave, Lydia is now, thankfully, legally settled in the UK with work and a home of her own choosing.

Shockingly, Lydia's story is not uncommon. The Government estimates that at least 13,000 people are working as slaves in the UK today, many in the City of Westminster.

Slavery is utterly abhorrent to the Christian faith. To exploit and abuse fellow human beings is to demean their standing and ours as people made in the image of God. I hope that you will wish to join me and others in St Margaret's and Westminster Abbey in supporting local and national efforts to rid our society of the scourge of modern day slavery.

ANTI-SLAVERY INITIATIVES

CONGREGATIONAL MILESTONES

For further details about this issue...

Westminster Abbey's policy statement:
<http://westminster-abbey.org/legal/social-engagement-policy>

The Clewer Initiative enables Church of England networks to develop strategies to help detect modern slavery and provide victim care:
<https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/>

The UK's first independent commissioner:
<http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/>

Funerals

Monday 5th February: Jennifer, Lady Plunket, who had attended St Margaret's since her marriage here in 1951 to Robin Rathmore Plunket, later the 8th Lord Plunket.

Tuesday 13th February: Dame Beulah Bewley, whose work made a significant impact on the place of women in senior positions health care institutions in Britain.

See opposite for the stories of both women.

Memorial and baptism

Sunday 22nd April: the life of Margery Langdon-Green, a long-time member of the congregation, will be celebrated at a reception following the service

Saturday 28th April: Sienna Solani Huxley, daughter of Seema Solani and Andrew Huxley, both on the teaching staff at Westminster City School, will be baptised by The Revd Garry Swinton, Priest Vicar and school Chaplain.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Exploring Christian basics

Sundays 6th, 13th and 20th May;
and 3rd, 10th and 17th June:

For any adults who are considering baptism or confirmation, or who wish to refresh their understanding of the Christian faith. You are invited to bring some bring and share lunch.

St Margaret's Congregational Forum meetings

Monday 21st May, Tuesday 10th July,
Tuesday 18th September, Monday
12th November, all at 6pm

St Margaret's Poetry and Arts Group

Saturdays 28th April,

26th May (AGM), June (TBA):

details of these sociable meetings can be found in weekly service sheets, or from Alan Stourton. All are welcome.

Memorial concert

Wednesday 13th June, 4 to 5.30pm:

The Caroline Brown Memorial Concert will be given by The Hanover Band in St Margaret's. It will include a performance of the Requiem Mass by W A Mozart. Tickets will be available via The Hanover Band website.

Pilgrimage to Rochester

Saturday 18th August:

Led by Reverend Canon Ralph Godsal, former Precentor at Rochester Cathedral. Pilgrimage details can be found on the noticeboard at the back of the church.

EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN

Funerals were held at St Margaret's in February for two long-term members of the congregation, both born in 1929, with very different backgrounds and ground-breaking legacies.

Jennifer, Lady Plunket



Born in South Africa, Jennifer Southwell studied ballet with Marie Rambert and knew Noël Coward as a girl. A society debutante in London after the war, she married Robin, later 8th Lord Plunket, at St Margaret's in 1951. She and Robin became stalwarts of campaigns to break down colonial and racial barriers, promoting peace, democracy and the development of a new Zimbabwe from Rathmore, the family's forestry estate in Rhodesia. Within the Capricorn African Society, which from 1956 has worked for equality and of which she was Life

President, Jennifer established mobile units to bring education to women in rural areas, and set up pioneering women's clubs that became co-operatives promoting crafts, farming and financial skills.

The Plunkets famously took food parcels to political prisoners (including Robert Mugabe and Leopold Takawira) during the Smith regime, but refused to leave Rathmore, eventually torched by freedom fighters from neighbouring Mozambique unaware of their affiliations. Jennifer and Robin's hospitality in London and Rathmore and was legendary and informal, and their friends ranged across national and society boundaries. The Lady Elton represented HM The Queen at her funeral.

Dame Beulah Bewley



Made a Dame in 2000 for her services to women in medicine, Beulah Bewley made a truly positive impact as a physician and public health practitioner.

Born in Northern Ireland, she wanted to become a doctor from an early age, despite her parents urging dentistry as a more 'feminine' calling. She was educated and met her husband in Dublin before her early 'zigzag career' took her through general practice, baby clinics and family planning in five hospitals. At 40 – by which time she had five children under 11 – she became the first woman to

gain an MSc in social medicine from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Her research project on smoking among primary school children, expanded for her MD, was the first to make the link between cigarettes, poor attainment and lung disease.

Having experienced gender discrimination from the 1950s on, she campaigned resolutely for women in positions of power, particularly through the General Medical Council, where she served for 20 years, and as President of the Medical Women's Federation. And Beulah was equally positive in her personal life, as a musician, sportswoman, opera lover and, of course, churchgoer.

STEWARDSHIP

The latest available figures for congregational giving and donations in the three months through February 2018 are:

	collections	donations
December	£8,151	£687
January	£1,080	£293
February	£986	£2,179

DID YOU KNOW...?

Wenceslas Hollar

Artist, etcher and map maker, Wenceslas Hollar was a celebrated figure in 17th century London, eventually receiving the honorific title of 'scenographer' in 1666 from Charles II, whose coronation in the Abbey he depicted in the etching below. Many of his works are in the Royal Collection and his detailed depictions of London before and after the Great Fire are still key sources for scholars.



Born in Prague to an enobled Czech lawyer and his German wife, he was initially known for his scenes, fashion plates and etchings of fur. On his travels in Europe he met the Earl of Arundel, who brought him to England. Hollar mainly created etchings of Arundel's art collection, but also issued extraordinary birds-eye views and maps of London, and beyond. During the Civil War he retreated to Europe, but continued to publish from there, including his famed 5m long panoramic view of London. He returned in 1652. He lived with his family in Gardener's Lane just south of Downing Street, and was buried in St Margaret's.

An oval tablet is now fixed in the north aisle to replace the war-damaged original, which read, 'Wenceslaus Hollar, a Bohemian Gent. born in Prague, famous in arts, by his indefatigable labours has left many works to eternize his memory: being first encouraged by his noble patron beloved and esteemed by the curious, having perigrinated on earth (in many parts) at last was here deposited to rest. He lived in London and dyed in this parish 28 of March 1677, aet.[aged] 70'.

Contacts for St Margaret's

Vestry / Senior Verger, Nigel Harris:

t: 020 7654 4840

e: nigel.harris@westminster-abbey.org

Rector's Secretary, Pamela Carrington:

t: 020 7654 4847

e: pamela.carrington@westminster-abbey.org

Newsletter: suggestions for content, queries and distribution list matters to Becky Wallower:

e: becky.wallower@dial.pipex.com

BELL RINGING PROFILE

James White, Secretary of the Belfry, and the work of 60 bell ringers

James White knows exactly where he was on New Year's Eve 1996 – it was the first time he rang bells in St Margaret's tower. And a mere 14 years later, he took over from George Doughty as Tower Captain. This was another memorable year, in fact, as 2010 also marked the arrival of James's daughter, and the establishment of his own accountancy business from home in Fleet.

Secretary of the Belfry of St Margaret's Society of Change Ringers – the official title – is a job that keeps James busy. The bells were rung on 43 occasions in 2017, all of which needed to be coordinated with other bell ringing, events and services at Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's. Bookings range from weddings and baptisms, to funerals and thanksgiving services, to official occasions such as the opening of the Field of Remembrance and the State Opening of Parliament, to St Margaret's festal service in July. In addition, visitors from other towers are keen to ring when the schedule allows, and the band tries to practice monthly.

When ringing is required, James invites members from his list of 60 experienced ringers, who come from all the major groups around London. And is there such a thing as a 'typical' bell ringer? Civil servants and Whitehall office workers used to make up much of the list here but that's less true now. Some are self-employed and retired people, though the age level seems to be dropping. New people are welcome.

'As far as requirements go, you don't really have to be musical, but a sense of rhythm and

good coordination are essential,' says James. 'It's a physical activity, but involves teamwork, and an appreciation of mathematics and history as well.'

He suspects that bell ringing attracts people who are somewhat obsessive: many keep records of every peal and quarter peal, for instance, and are naturally well-organised. To prove a point, James refers to the log on his mobile, which shows that as of March 2018 he had rung 1541 quarters and 236 peals, in 661 towers. He is also a regular ringer at St George's Chapel Windsor, where he rang for the Maundy Thursday service this year, and teaches ringing to students at Westminster School and elsewhere.

Ringers are bound together too through a seemingly opaque array of terminology, much harking back to the 17th century origins of ringing. A rope has a 'sally' and a 'backstroke'; ringing patterns are 'methods', examples of which might be 'Plain Bob' or 'Grandsire'. The tower named a new method last summer: Big Ben Bob Caters marks the day the bells across the road went silent. 'Caters', which derives from French *quatre*, indicates nine bells being rung – it's all to do with the 'changes' apparently.

Bell ringers are paid for official engagements, but often ring gratis as well – annually, for the church's festival, birthdays of the Speaker and Lord Speaker, and, of course, New Year's Eve. The band also rang willingly for marathons in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and as Andrew Tremlett completed the 2015 marathon.

The tower is the second or third on the site,



with the first having three bells, and its 16th century successor five. That Tudor tower, partly rebuilt and enclosed in Georgian cladding, now houses ten bells – four are 18th century, and the others cast in 1939. And what makes the tower special? James thinks 'it's the location mainly, at the heart of Westminster, and the chance to ring for so many major national occasions.'

To get the measure of our Tower Captain, we posed a few quick fire questions...

- ✦ **What's your favourite method?** Grandsire Caters. **Musician?** Countertenor Andreas Scholl.
- ✦ **And your favourite animal?** My daughter!
- ✦ **Artist?** Constable or Turner. **Style of music?** Bach – or sometimes Romantic. **Time of day?** Evening, I'm definitely not a morning person.
- ✦ **If you had a time machine where would you go?** The 1851 Great Exhibition in Hyde Park would have been quite an experience.
- ✦ **And what's your guilty pleasure?** Tate Britain's chocolate cake is awfully tempting...

ANNUAL MEETING

Reports and plans

On 14th March, St Margaret's annual meeting was held for the second year across Parliament Square in Great George Street, thanks to the hospitality of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

The Rector explained that, with the agreement of the Dean and Chapter, it had been decided that elections for wardens would now be held every three years, to give both elected and appointed wardens time to build their roles. The standing order stating that wardens should serve a maximum of six years continues in place.

Reports reflected the exceptionally wide range of events and interests that feature at St Margaret's. Parliamentary Warden Sir Peter Bottomley noted that the monthly communion for Parliament continued to be well supported, and thanked the Rector for her continued support to members and staff. On behalf of the Congregational Forum, Sir Stephen Wright commented that moves to rejuvenate the congregation had progressed, with increasing participation by sidesmen, readers, servers and lay assistants. Support in the form of security briefings and microphone training was welcome. The newsletter had been produced for nearly

two years now. Much remained to do, including the final recommendations for the fabric; fundraising; greater outreach around Whitehall, and with Christians in government service.

Music Director Aidan Oliver reported that recent recruitment had been very competitive. The year had seen the music office relocating to the community room, strengthening links with Westminster School, and a successful summer concert series. From James White we learned that the St Margaret's Society of Change Ringers had rung on 43 occasions in 2017 (see also above).

Alan Stourton detailed the 25th year of the Poetry and Arts Group, at which 16 to 23 people had enjoyed a great mix of poetry and literature



at seven meetings through the year. Our new liaison with Churches together in Westminster is Victoria Dearborn, who reported on a visit to the Guards Chapel and a 'meet the neighbours' evening at St George's Pimlico.

The Rector gave thanks for the support and involvement of so many people in all aspects of the church and the services. Angie McDonald had been appointed to the new role of safeguarding coordinator, and we welcomed a new Priest Vicar in Andrew Zihni. After initial hiccups, the cleaning team was bedding in, and a new sound system had been installed. Activities included two sixth form 'question times' and two exhibitions. Sunday School would be restarting in April. The new Explorations in Faith sessions were drawing good participation. In the coming year she looked forward to greater interaction with the Abbey and local institutions. She flagged coming works to the tower and the marking of the 400th anniversary of Sir Walter Raleigh's death. She felt that great strides had been made in building hope and confidence and asked that we pray in the coming year, through text from Numbers, to be both blessed and a blessing.