

St. Hilda's Newsletter

April 2024 – May 2024

Easter Lilies



Previous Easter lilies, courtesy of Alison Garner

Easter Lilies (cont)

On Easter Sunday, St. Hilda's will honour the memories of our family and friends who have passed, by filling the church with Easter lilies. As with our displays in previous years, we wish to have a display at each of our eight pillars in the nave and displays in the Memorial Corner and at the High Altar.

Alison Garner

Unfortunately, by the time this newsletter is published the opportunity to purchase lilies for your loved ones will have passed. Hopefully you will have seen the order sheets and been able to participate this year. If not look out for them next year as I am sure they will be available again.

The Editor

Safeguarding at St Hilda's

Safeguarding is one of those topics that seems complex and when reported on television or in the newspaper, always seems to be mired in controversy. However, it simply means protecting a citizen's health, wellbeing and human rights; enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It is an integral part of providing a safe community and space for members of our congregation to be involved with. Safeguarding children, young people and adults is a collective responsibility.

It is also a legal responsibility for us as a church to have a safeguarding officer. We are also required to have formally adopted policies to help us recognise harmful behaviour and address it with a clear and fair process for the benefit of all of us.

I became the Parish Safeguarding Officer last year, following Gordon Clark's retirement from the post, as he and Carolyn were moving to Chertsey. As I had not been involved in safeguarding prior to this point, it was vital that I undertake the training that was necessary, for me to be able to carry out this role for the parish.

The diocese provides online training at various levels to cover the differing levels of responsibilities that you find within the church. The training for clergy is more in depth and requires action plans which are then to be monitored. Youth leaders and members of the PCC are all required to achieve the foundation course. However, I was required to achieve the leadership level qualification. This still included online training, some of which simply involves watching videos and then answering multiple choice questions, and some that require further thought and producing answers of 250 -300 words while other sessions included zoom calls with a trainer and other safeguarding officers within the diocese for a wider discussion and consideration of particular scenarios.

The training has made me more aware of how harm, abuse and neglect can take many forms, including the accidental exclusion of members of our parish for racial or cultural reasons. We have, in St Hildas, a fairly varied membership in our congregation, including West Indian and South Asian heritage, various European Backgrounds as well as those of Persian origin. We also have members of the LGBTQ+ community. My background as a middle aged and middle class straight white male does not necessarily help me see the challenges that all of the members of our church may experience or be seen as the best person to approach by everyone within our church, who has a problem.

I am therefore asking for help. I ideally would like to have a team of perhaps 3 to work with, that others might feel more comfortable approaching if they feel they are being excluded, being taken for granted or even bullied or harassed by anyone in the church and for any reason.

If you feel you can help, please contact me by email or phone or come and find me on a Sunday morning and I will be happy to discuss it further.

Thanks in advance

Nick Gething

07909 971294

Nick.getthing@icloud.com

RED HOT STRINGS

IN CONCERT

An electric/classic violin duo, the combined powerhouse of Lisa and Sarah are renowned for bringing classical music into the 21st century.

7.30pm
Saturday 27th April 2024

St Hilda's Church, Woodthorpe
Road, Ashford TW15 3QL

SCAN ME!



Tickets £15,
under 12's FREE

www.sthilda.org www.redhotstrings.com

St Hilda's Entertainers - The Midnight Raiders

Firstly, I must tell you that, this year, the St Hilda's Entertainers Play will, unusually, be in June not May. This is mainly because the work to replace St Hilda's Church Hall roof, which is scheduled to take place in March and April, restricts the time that would otherwise be available for rehearsals and scenery preparation.

This year's production is something rather different; a gritty historical drama set in 1817. The action of *The Midnight Raiders*, written by Bettine Manktelow and directed by Steve Smith, takes place in an inn on the Kent coast soon after a ship has been wrecked on the Goodwin Sands.

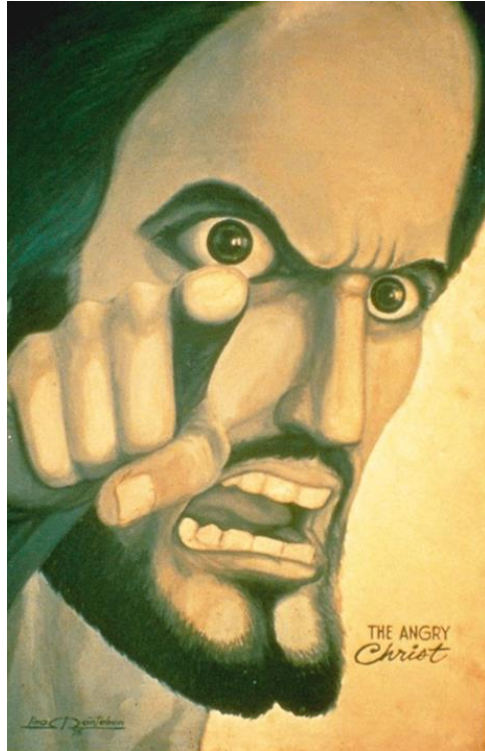
Performances are in St Hilda's Hall on Friday 14th June at 7.45pm and on Saturday 15th June at 2.30pm and 7.00pm. Tickets at £12 (concessions £10) can be booked via the St Hilda's Entertainers website www.sthildasentertainers.com or, alternatively, by phoning the box office on 0333 666 3366.

The actors who will take us back in time are Diane Stahlmann, Kath Shore, Rachel Barnes, Sophie Gane, Dave Palman, Neale Winter, Craig Entwistle and Mike Davenport.

Please be aware that this play is unsuitable for younger children. We very much look forward to seeing you at St Hilda's Hall on the 14th or 15th June.

Mike Davenport

A reflection on Sunday 3rd March's Service



I wanted to take a moment to share some profound reflections inspired by today's [3rd March] service sheet. The image of Jesus gracing the front page initially struck me as just another portrayal of anger—a man seemingly upset with the world around him. However, delving deeper into the narrative behind the picture unveiled a poignant story of compassion and righteousness.

The image depicted Jesus at a pivotal moment, witnessing his father's sacred temple being desecrated and transformed into a marketplace. His reaction, initially perceived as anger, was, in fact, an expression of deep reverence and concern for the sanctity of his father's house. It was a righteous indignation, fuelled by love and devotion, rather than mere fury.

What truly resonated with me was how Jesus’s response extended beyond this singular incident. Throughout his life, he consistently demonstrated compassion and forgiveness, even towards those who wronged him. It’s exemplified in his teachings, where he urged his followers to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

Moreover, his remarkable act of forgiveness during his crucifixion is etched into history. In his final moments of agony, he uttered the profound words, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). This poignant dialogue encapsulates the essence of Jesus’s character—his boundless love and forgiveness, even in the face of unimaginable suffering.

This revelation has left me in awe of the depth of Jesus’s compassion and the magnitude of his sacrifice. It serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of forgiveness and the enduring legacy of love.

I felt compelled to share these reflections with you, hoping they resonate with you as deeply as they have with me.

Nima Fazli

Stewardship Month – February

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

John 10:10

Generosity is at the heart of our faith, we believe in a generous God and our own generosity is a testament and hallmark of our faith in action. The ministry and mission of St Hilda’s Church is largely funded through the incredible generosity of those who give to it:

- We believe in a generous God, a God who gave up everything for us and gave us everything we could ever need.
- We are called by God to use the gifts He has given us to fulfil His mission and ministry within this community
- Generosity takes many forms. We can give of our time, talents and material possessions.

As you are all aware February was Stewardship Month when we were asked to consider what we give to St Hilda's Church through our time, talents and finances and how we can become a more generous Church.

It is too early to know how much impact this will have on Church life but there have been very encouraging signs of volunteers coming forward to take on roles; new Church members getting involved; more people moving from Standing Orders to Parish Giving and some people registering with the Parish Giving Scheme.

The advantages of the Parish Giving Scheme, are that you can set an amount, complete the form on paper or on-line naming St Hilda's Church and the scheme pays St Hilda's Church directly each month, also paying the Gift Aid amount if you are a taxpayer. This helps the PCC to know how much money we get each month and we do not have to do extra work claiming the Gift Aid.

The PCC are extremely grateful to all who have contributed and continue to contribute to the life of St Hilda's Church.

We will review how we have done later in the year with a view to a Stewardship Sunday at a future date.

Liz Brian

An Update on the Church Roof Replacement

Work planned from 25th March to 13th May (Approx)

Works to Replace the church hall roof and install solar panels will start on 25th March and will take approximately SIX WEEKS.

The scaffolding will arrive during that week and a compound will be set up at the top end of the car park. The bins will need to be temporarily relocated to the area behind the gate. The compound will be protected by Heras Fencing.

From Monday 2nd April the car park will be OUT OF ACTION during weekdays, except for funerals. All church and hall users will need to find alternative parking for this period. This is necessary for safety reasons, to allow the roofing contractors free movement. Access to the church will be via the pedestrian gate ONLY and access to the church hall, will ONLY be via the pedestrian gate in Stanwell Road.

During the weekends, the car park will be partially open but visitors are asked to take care on site and to avoid the compound and scaffolding areas. The contractors will use the toilets at the front of the hall during the holidays and the rear of the hall at other times.

To take off the existing roof and install a new roof, will take 7 working days. We therefore need to put the hall out of action for up to TWO WEEKS. This also allows for a few days delay in case of wet weather. We will have scaffolding up for approximately SIX WEEKS.

Work will commence on the roof on Tuesday 2nd April. The whole building will be out of bounds while the contractors are exchanging the roof sheets, which will hopefully be no more than two weeks from 2nd April and within the school holidays. Whilst

the building will be out of bounds during the day, some activity will be allowed in the Small Hall (Thornton Room) outside of working hours. Access will ONLY be through the side door.

The scaffolding will surround 3 sides of the hall, meaning the main door will also be out of use while the scaffolding is in place.

Once the roof sheets have been replaced, the remaining time is required to seal the roof, flashings etc and to install the solar panels. This may take up to SIX weeks. Therefore at least until the week of 13th May, the scaffolding and the compound will remain in place. Restrictions to access via the main door and the car park will remain in place until further notice or until the scaffolding and compound has been removed.

The church hall roof has leaked for many years and the internal damage is very visible. This work is mostly being paid for by a grant from Spelthorne Borough Council. We are aware it is likely to be disruptive, we are working very hard to keep the disruption to a minimum but would ask for your patience, particularly with the restrictions we have to impose on the car-park. The work is long-overdue, but safety of users is paramount.

*Paula Gething
Churchwarden
1st March 2024*

Church contact details

If you would like help or to speak to one of the ministry team, please contact the parish office:

Telephone 01784 253525

Email office@sthilda.org

My Rural Journey continued - Arrival Day!

On Wednesday, 13th April 1977, I set off from Pietermaritzburg, in my first car, a turquoise blue VW Beetle, down the R617, to Bulwer. I passed a few other vehicles on the 80-minute journey. It was an adventure as the road goes along a fairly flat plateau, before dipping down Lundy's Hill to the Umkomaas River. The climb out of the valley is steep and has many tight corners on its way up the side of a mountain. A Zulu village, Hlanganani, is towards the top of the mountain on that side of the valley. The river demarcates the start of tribal land, and the settlement of Hlanganani, and the surrounding area was, and is still, controlled by a local Zulu chief.



Umkomaas River from the top of Lundy's Hill



Hlanganani Village

Once I reached the top of the climb out of the valley, Bulwer mountain was in full view. It was sunny, bright and crispy clear, and I was excited!

I arrived at PI, Pholela Institution, in time for the start of the school day, 7.30am. The first buildings date from 1921 when the Presbyterian Church of Scotland started a rural boarding school for mainly Zulu speaking students. The main building, at the end of the long driveway, was built in the Cape Dutch style of architecture. I parked under a very old English oak and walked in to meet my new Headmaster, Ben. (I will refer to the people I write about by their first name only) However, I never called Ben anything except Sir as

was expected in those days! I went to his office and was told I would be replacing the present incumbent of the Biology post, as he wanted to move on and would be leaving on Friday. This teacher, Peter, only had one piece of advice. It was: If you say it will snow tomorrow, make sure it snows!



Pholela Institute circa 1977



The door to the classroom / makeshift laboratory. My home for 12 Of the 13 years I spent at PI. On the LH of the picture are tree ferns in a damp garden, which I planted to show and teach plant succession.

At lunch time, 1pm, all the students went back to eat a full dinner at their respective hostels. The Boys' hostel was about 50m from the back of my classroom, and the Girls' hostel was on the opposite side of the school. Lessons restarted at 2pm.

The staff, meanwhile, ate their packed lunches in their staff rooms. Yes! Staff rooms. The first of many eye openers for me and the reality of living in a country with apartheid. We were about 18 staff members, male and female and Black and White. The Black teachers were mainly Zulu speakers, but a couple were Sotho speakers. The White teachers were a mixture of Afrikaans and English speakers. Call me naïve, ignorant, unconscious of the reality of politics in South Africa or just plain stupid! You can guess! The Blacks had a staff room and the Whites had a staff room. Shock number 2 followed shortly: The Blacks had a toilet and the Whites had a toilet. I was horrified that I had to share a toilet with men, no matter the colour. A rather happier shock followed: Ben brought a woman about my age to speak to me as she was sure she knew me! Really? Here? It turned out that Margaret and I had been in the same primary school in Pretoria in the early 1960's!

Wednesday and Thursday night I stayed with Ben and his family and on Friday afternoon I returned to Pietermaritzburg for the weekend. To be continued...

Wendy Grantham

A Tribute to George (aka Bunny) Bernard-Smith

Does the name Bunny Bernard-Smith mean anything to you? If so, you are probably no longer in the first flush of youth and your association with St Hilda's, may go back for the best part of half a century or more. If not, let me explain who he was and why you should know of him.

The story starts in late 1959. Highlights of Bunny's own reminiscences describe it thus:

“Bunny Bernard and Texina (cowboy performers) came to live in Ashford...[Tina] was expecting our first child...I came across the then Vicar, Fr Philip Case, sitting outside the church in a watchman's shelter accepting cash gifts from the public...I wanted to know about baptism arrangements for our new son...When Fr Case found out about our show business background, he suggested I should start a group at the church and would arrange an initial meeting...”

Bunny goes on:

“That first meeting was attended by Tina and I, Patricia Davidson, Fred Greenhalgh, two ladies from St Matthews (who we never saw again)...Jack Lovell...and Stella Hudson...St Hilda's Entertainers was born.”

Jack became the group's stage manager for many years and Fred the first business manager. Others, including Dolly Hill, Les and Ivy Cash, the Nicholsons and Doreen Staples, came along soon after.

St Hilda's Entertainers is recognised as one of the most important community outreach activities of the Church and has enjoyed great support – and in some cases active participation – by successive incumbents (such as the fondly-remembered two-headed giant portrayed by Fr Blood and – then curate – Fr Loveland in 1969's Jack and the Beanstalk').

Without Bunny, St Hilda's Entertainers simply would not exist. That would have made much poorer, the lives of the family of St Hilda; the huge assembly of people (which by now numbers around 900 or more) who have been a part of the society over the years; together

with the many, many thousands who have watched and been thoroughly entertained by our productions over more than six decades.

Bunny taught the generations of Entertainers he touched directly, so many of the principles of stagecraft and traditions of the theatre. These have subsequently been passed on and are still very much alive today amongst our members, most of whom weren't even born when he moved away. Having trained as a draughtsman, when Bunny gave up 'showbiz' as a full-time occupation, he got a job with Shell in Egham. But he did not entirely give up entertaining: performing, amongst other things, occasional cowboy shows at fetes and other events and being a mainstay of "The Thamesiders" country dance band, led by fellow St Hilda's stalwart Jim Perry. Bunny's job eventually moved to a new location near Chester, taking Bunny and his family North, sometime in the 70's. Our loss, the North's gain!

Our current Chairman, Sue Pinfold, says that she only overlapped with Bunny for a year or two in her earliest days but fondly remembers him as being outstanding as a mentor to so many.

Speaking for myself, the Entertainers have been one of my most important influences. Without them, there can be no doubt that my life would have been very different indeed. The enjoyment and satisfaction I have gained from participating, the skills I learned that stood me in good stead at work and in other activities and above all, the relationships and lifelong friendships that had and have, their roots in the group. I'm sure that many others who have been part of our story over the years would say the same. None of this might have come to pass, but for Bunny.

Sadly, we recently heard that Bunny had passed away at the ripe old age of 96. Even more sadly, as seems so often the case these days, his final years were spent in a home, afflicted by dementia. A particular tragedy for someone once so vital. Hence this tribute. I and brother Michael (the Entertainers current stage manager) drove over four hours each way (on Valentine's day!) to attend Bunny's funeral and pay our last respects on behalf of the Entertainers. We felt he deserved it.

So, Bunny's gone, but very far from forgotten. His spirit lives on every time we rehearse or perform. I hope he would be proud of that remarkable legacy. We will remember him fondly.

Steve Smith

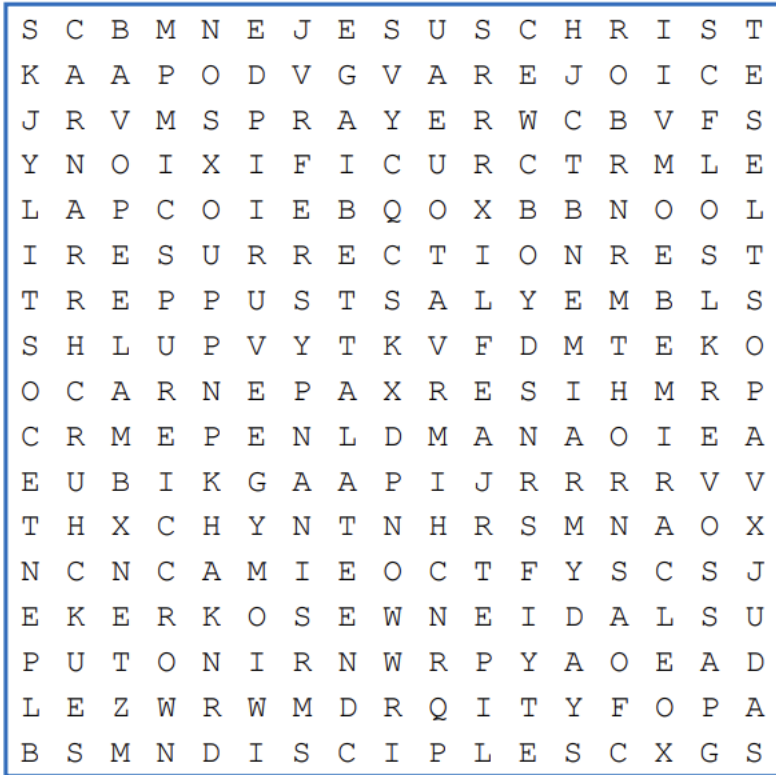
Vice-President, St Hilda's Entertainers



Easter Story

WORD SEARCH

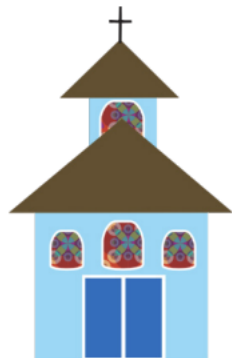
DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.



APOSTLES
BETRAYAL
CAVE
CHURCH
CROSS
CROWN
CRUCIFIXION
DISCIPLES
FAITH
GOOD FRIDAY

JESUS CHRIST
JUDAS
LAMB
LAST SUPPER
LENT
MARY
MIRACLE
PASSOVER
PENANCE
PENTECOST

PRAYER
REDEMPTION
REJOICE
RESURRECTION
RISEN
SAVIOR
SON
THORNS
TOMB



Social and Fundraising Diary Dates

Event	Date	Location
Concert – Red Hot Strings	Saturday 27 th April	Church
Jumble sale	Saturday 11 th May	Church
St Hilda’s Entertainers	Friday 14 th June	Church hall, 7:45pm
	Saturday 15 th June	Church hall, 2:30 & 7pm
St Hilda’s Got Talent	Saturday 29 th June	Church hall, 7 pm
Summer Fair	Saturday 13 th July	Church
Jumble sale	Saturday 21 st September	Church
Quiz night	Saturday 28 th September	Church hall, 7 pm
Harvest Supper	Saturday 5 th October	Church hall
Harvest Festival	Sunday 6 th October	Church, 10 am
St Hilda’s Day	Sunday 17 th November	Church, 10am
Bring & share lunch	Sunday 17 th November	After 10am service
Frost Fair	Saturday 23 rd November	Church
Pantomime	Friday 6 th December	Church hall
	Saturday 7 th December	Church hall
Christingle	Sunday 8 th December	Church, 4 pm
Pantomime	Friday 13 th December	Church hall
	Saturday 14 th December	Church hall

Please email any contributions to the newsletter to editor@sthilda.org