

# St. Hilda's Newsletter

June 2024 – July 2024

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## Red Hot Strings at St Hilda's



This was a very enjoyable evening despite my mistakes over the start time and a few technical hitches in the first half. Feedback on the night was that as a concert venue, St Hilda's is Ashford's best kept secret.

I hope to keep it a secret no-longer. Using the church for music was one of the objectives when the dais was installed, and we now have our name out there. The pianist on the night is interested in performing with us and I have a few other contacts now to follow up. After expenses, the concert netted just over £1000 towards church funds. More than half of the audience were not from our regular congregation and this is where I see future opportunities, both for mission and for raising money.



It would be great to hold concerts that YOU want to attend. But music is very subjective and pleasing all of the people any of the time is therefore not possible. However, you can always support and help to boost ticket sales by sharing the date with friends and family, putting posters up and if you use it – sharing on social media. This also brings into church people who would not otherwise cross the threshold. So many people only come to church for a funeral (not even a wedding these days). This makes a funeral an even more daunting prospect if you are not a church-goer. So, creating opportunities for people to enter St Hilda's and encounter us at a non-stressful time is very important to me.

*Paula Gething*

## **St Hilda's Choir**

I am thrilled to share with you my recent experience with St. Hilda's choir, where I have found a new sense of belonging and joy. As someone who had never participated in a choir before, I must admit I was initially apprehensive. The thought of keeping up with the hymns seemed daunting, and I wondered if I would be able to find my place among such talented singers.

However, from the moment I stepped into our beautiful sanctuary, I was greeted with open arms by our ministerial team and fellow choir members. Their warmth and acceptance immediately put me at ease, and I quickly realised that I was in a safe and supportive environment where I could learn and grow.

Under the guidance of our dedicated ministers, I began to learn the melodies and harmonies of our cherished hymns. Their patience and encouragement never wavered, and with each practice, I felt more confident in my abilities. It was truly a transformative experience to feel myself becoming part of something greater than myself, contributing to the beautiful tapestry of music that fills our church every Sunday.

Being in the choir has not only deepened my connection to our faith community but has also filled me with a sense of purpose and fulfilment. There is something truly special about lifting our voices together in praise and worship, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of it.

As I reflect on my journey thus far, I am reminded of the words of Psalm 100:2, "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing." Indeed, it is with gladness in my heart that I come before the Lord each week, singing His praises alongside my fellow choir members.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our ministerial team and all who have welcomed me into the choir with open arms. Your kindness and support have meant the world to me, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful community.

In closing, I encourage anyone who may be considering joining the choir to take that leap of faith. You will be met with open arms and endless encouragement, and you may just find, as I have, that the joy of singing praises to the Lord is a truly transformative experience.

*Nima*

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## **CHURCH HALL ROOF**

We have a brand-new roof and the gutters have been repaired, the old linings removed and a new liquid lining applied. We also have solar panels which are working and generating electricity.

The electricity we generate will be used and any surplus will go back to the national grid for which we will receive a small payment, (once we have settled all the bills with our contractor).

We had a grant towards the cost of the new roof and panels, but the grant was £22,000 short of the overall cost, and we had to borrow from our reserves to cover it. Part of the money we hold in reserve came from a legacy more than 20 years ago from the Durham family. This money was used to install the solar panels on the church roof. The revenue from those panels was used to repay the reserves before Fr Chris departed. Now the same money has helped us secure another set of solar panels and the savings from our electricity bills going forward will ultimately put the funds back into our reserves.

It was quite fitting that we remembered the Durhams in our memorial book in April. Their generous legacy is helping future worshipping generations at St Hilda's.

*Paula Gething*

## Mother's Union

We have been encouraged as an organisation to put our faith into action and as a result our branch members have embarked on an ongoing project to make 'Twiddle Muffs' for dementia patients. The idea was put forward by Rosalyn Young who provided the pattern with wool and needles if they were needed. The finished Twiddle Muffs are for the Dementia Ward at St Peter's Hospital and the Brain Injuries Unit at The Royal Surrey Hospital in Guildford. Christine Taylor is our link with them and delivers the finished items.

Over thirty beautiful Muffs have already been completed and delivered. Each one is completely different, apart from the basic knitted shape, and the decorations are innovative to say the least. Individual creativity knows no bounds with the use of many different textures, sparkles, beads, ribbons, tassels and buttons to name but a few on the outside and zips, cotton reels, press studs, buttons, more textures and little pockets on the inside to provide stimulation.

The Muffs go home with patients when they are discharged, and many become very attached to them. The hospital does not retain any for reasons of hygiene.

You do not have to be a member of our M.U. to make a Twiddle Muff and we can supply the basic pattern. The need for them will be ongoing and we would welcome getting more knitters on board.



*Joyce Rouse*

## Church Gardens

One day while we were meeting with the roofing contractors, a man introduced himself as Johnny, a gardener who lives across the road to St Hilda's. He said his wife had been into church recently and had felt very welcome.

He said whilst he could see the gardens were being tended, he wondered if we would appreciate any help. To cut a long story short – he turned up when we had our April Breakfast and cut the grass, tidied the bushes and did some weeding. This has given the gardens a much - needed facelift. We gave him breakfast and he promised to return.

In return, I promised him a shout out in this newsletter. He is Johnny and this is his colleague's business card. They do domestic and commercial gardening.



07791 782939



natuthrive@outlook.com

- Grass cutting
- Hedge cutting
- Boarders weeding, shaped & dressed
- Removal of debris / leaves
- Garden clearances
- Commercial & domestic grounds maintenance

*Paula Gething*

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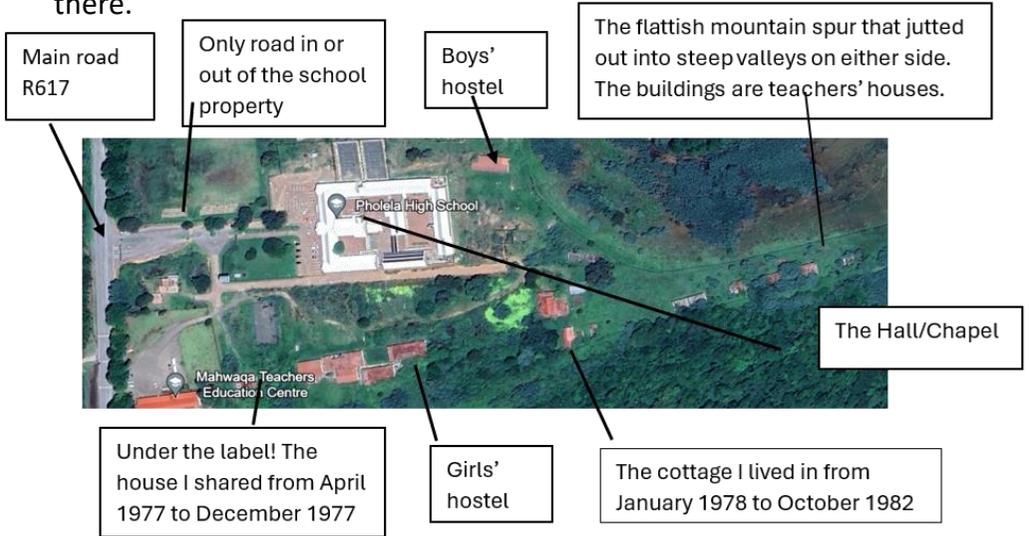
### May by Bernice Ross

Pen in mouth  
Head in hand  
They walk towards the door  
The handle turns  
Door opens wide  
To rows of desks and chairs  
It's May you see  
Exams all start  
Tummies churn, tears fall  
SATS and GCSEs must be endured  
For yet another batch!

Then of course there's hay fever!  
But thank heaven for the SUN!!

## My Rural Journey Continued

First days as PI as a full - time employee, help you visualise the layout of the school and its surrounding buildings. I have resorted to an image from Google Earth. This is as of 2021 when the new school was built onto the existing building. The surrounding buildings have not been upgraded and are as they were when I lived there.



The 21<sup>st</sup> April 1977, was the first day I became a full-time teacher at PI. The school had been cleaned by the students on Saturday. The girls cleaned the classrooms and the corridors. The verandas and corridors were polished in brick red wax and gleamed in the sunlight. (Teacherous really!) The boys gardened and trimmed the grass. Many of the plants in the garden reflected the heritage of the first Presbyterian missionaries who worked there from 1921. Azaleas, Rhododendrons, and Hydrangeas were grown in beds all around the school. In time, I planted an indigenous Aloe garden on the hot side of the Hall/Chapel of the school.

The school day started with a simple assembly in the chapel. A hymn, a Bible reading and a prayer. This was led by the full time, resident Reverend J Khonyane. The singing was always melodious and full

bodied and thoroughly enjoyable to everyone present. The boys sat on the left-hand side and the girls on the right-hand side, from the youngest in the front, to the oldest at the back.

All teachers had a register class, and all teachers taught every lesson during the school day. There was no such thing as a free period! In fact, it was not unusual to have to teach a class after school hours, as there were not enough hours in the day to teach all the students during 'school' time. Being a boarding school, it worked for PI.

My classroom/ lab had 3 rows of high tables, benches and stools. 36 students could be accommodated. Around one side, under big windows, there were cupboards. These cupboards, were filled with every piece of science equipment needed for school Biology. The back wall was bare, and between the windows, the walls were also bare. Not a poster, picture or shelf in sight. (A future project). The chalk board was an original black - board, and the chalk was of the very dusty variety. One of the great joys for me, was that at the end of the day, I washed the board clean, ready for the next day! I hit the jackpot when I requested coloured chalk and a very precious box was delivered.

Through an inside door was the storeroom. The Physical Science room on the other side was also connected to this storeroom. It was filled to the brim with chemicals, including arsenic, cyanide and nitric acid. Nothing was organised, the storeroom was just chaotic. I found it all very scary really. There were models of anything and everything related to matriculation Biology. Not one of each, but enough for a class to share. 10 eyeballs, 3 torsos, 3 large leaves, and all the other parts of the body and plant kingdom that would enhance learning.

The students were in mixed classes, and in the same year. I cannot write 'and of a similar age' though. About half the students were in their age- related year. The other half were older, some even older than me! Philip was 27. He had left school early to earn money for his family. He eventually became a taxi driver and saved up to come back to school and complete his matriculation. Edward had been a stable boy on a farm and was now back at school thanks to a farmer who

sponsored him. Doris was a new bride to a wealthy man, and he had sent her back to school as she wanted to be a nurse.

I spent much of the academic year of 1977 getting the Matriculation students (the Standard 10 students) up to scratch for their final exams in November. The other classes I taught were more enjoyable and relaxed, and I was able to forge great relationships with them.

My first register class was a Standard 9 group of students. We met before going to the chapel in the morning and again after lunch, before the afternoon lessons. It was rare for a student to be absent. I learnt that when asking if a student was absent, the answer was always no. I also had to undo the life - long training of standing when you greet someone. Zulu tradition was to sit, while the elder stands. The students also had to speak only English during school hours. Disruption of lessons, for any reason, simply did not happen!

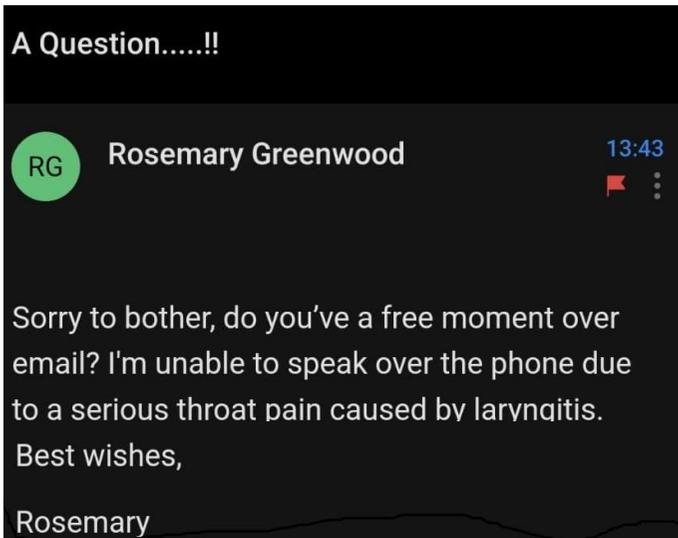
After school on that first day, I went to my school accommodation. This was in a shared house with a man called Piet. My bedroom was sparsely furnished. The blackened kitchen range, powered by anthracite, heated the hot water and was used for cooking. My allocated bath time was at night! The next shock was that there was no electricity, except that from an enormous diesel - powered engine. We had electricity from 6 to 9 every night. At other times candles, gas lamps and paraffin storm lamps were used. The dawn of a simpler life! To be continued ...



*Wendy Grantham Bulwer*

## It could happen to you!

I thought I was so careful online. Then I received WhatsApp messages from two friends querying an email they had received from me:



(Anyone who knows me well would be suspicious: I have a phobia of making phone calls and will nearly always choose email over a phone call without making an excuse!)

I investigated and found that I couldn't sign into my email. A panic-stricken phone call to my email provider (BT) brought me to a very helpful, patient agent. Half an hour later, using my landline, my mobile phone (to receive several PIN codes) and my laptop, I had my access back with a new password. With automatic redirection of incoming emails switched off and I had successfully received an email from my alternate email account. I then started to receive emails from friends and acquaintances who were responding to the scam email. It was warming to find how many people were willing to help, but it took some time to answer them all.

The email that had caught me out appeared to be from BT telling me about missed voicemail messages - [click here](#) to listen to them. Clicking

led to a login dialogue, which should have rung warning bells for me but unfortunately didn't.

The hackers, having obtained my BT email address and password, seem to have changed the password, set up a Hotmail account which resembled my BT account, redirected incoming emails to this new account, stripped my SENT box and used the addresses from there get a list of contacts to whom to send the above email.

I hear that anyone who responded to the initial message before I regained control of the account, received a second message that I have a niece with stage 4 cancer and for some reason I needed an Amazon gift card to help. I do hope that no-one responded to that.

The helpful man from BT told me that they never send emails about voicemail.

Lesson: Don't believe emails about voicemail messages, friends unable to phone because of laryngitis, or requesting gift cards.

And I apologise to anyone who was inconvenienced because I wasn't careful enough.

*Rosemary Greenwood*

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## **Newsletter Submissions**

I would just like to pass on my thanks to all those that have made submissions to the St Hilda's Newsletter – without you it would not exist!

It can be tricky getting the balance of articles right, and sometimes there is not enough copy to fill a monthly edition but too much for the bi-monthly version. Therefore, I try to prioritise time sensitive articles so if you have sent something in and it has not appeared it may well be published in a later edition.

We are starting to get a wider range of submissions, including poems and short stories. You can let me know if you would like to see more or less of a particular type of article by emailing [editor@sthilda.org](mailto:editor@sthilda.org) which is also the email address for articles.

*Sara Moggeridge (Lee), editor*

## Found on church noticeboards

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: *Jesus walks on water*. The sermon tonight: *Searching for Jesus*.

Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8pm in the recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

Don't let worry kill you off; let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang *I will not pass this way again*, giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be auditions for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

The Rector will preach his farewell message and the choir will sing: *Break forth into Joy*.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be *What is Hell?* Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members, and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Potluck supper Sunday at 5pm – prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

*Submitted by Daphne Tanner*

# **The Adventures of Mr. Walo – A short story by Nima**

## **Part One**

In the lively year of 1960, in the quaint English town of Ashford, lived a peculiar character named Mr. Walo. A man in his early 30s. Mr. Walo was known for his vibrant cotton candy stall, a whimsical splash of colour at the local fairs and markets. His real name was Walter, but to the townsfolk, he was affectionately Mr. Walo, a name that carried a sense of mystique and charm.

One crisp autumn morning, Mr. Walo set off with his cart, a rolling rainbow of sugary delight, towards the heart of Ashford. The town was preparing for the annual Harvest Jubilee, a festive celebration of the season's bounty. This year was special, as it marked the Jubilee's 50th anniversary.

Inside the bustling kitchen of the Ashford Community Centre were the familiar faces of the festival committee: Emma, the ever-efficient event organizer; James, the jolly treasurer; Lily, the choir leader and humourist; Daniel, the stern but kind-hearted mayor; and Thomas, the handyman with a talent for fixing just about anything.

The kitchen was abuzz with activity as preparations were in full swing. As Mr. Walo approached the community centre, he was greeted by the sight of Emma, frantically waving her arms. "Walter, thank goodness you're here!" she exclaimed, her usual composure replaced with an unusual urgency. "We've got a right mess in the kitchen.

The pies are burned, and we've no sweets for the children!" Mr. Walo, never one to shy away from a challenge, nodded solemnly. "Not to worry, Emma. I've got just the thing," he said with a twinkle in his eye. He wheeled his cart into the kitchen, where chaos reigned.

Flour dusted the air, pots clattered, and a faint smell of something burning wafted through the room. James and Lily were in the thick of it, their faces red from exertion. "It's a disaster, Walo!" cried Lily, holding up a charred pie. "What are we to do?" With a dramatic flourish, Mr. Walo unveiled his secret weapon: a fresh batch of his signature cotton candy. "Fear not, friends. This is more than just a treat; it's a miracle in a cone."

Intrigued, the others watched as he set to work, spinning sugar with deft precision. Soon, the kitchen was filled with the sweet aroma of spun sugar, and the previously chaotic scene began to calm. The

children, drawn by the scent, peeked in with wide eyes and hopeful smiles. Emma, ever the practical one, raised an eyebrow. "Cotton candy? How will that save the day?" Mr. Walo grinned. "Watch and learn." He began shaping the candy into elaborate forms – flowers, animals, even miniature Jubilee-themed sculptures.

The children were mesmerized, and the adults couldn't help but be impressed by his craftsmanship. Just as the mood started to lift, Daniel emerged from the kitchen, his face ashen. "We've run out of flour, sugar, and eggs!" he announced, wringing his hands. "And the festival begins in a few hours!" With a dramatic flair, Mr. Walo jumped onto his cart. "Right then, I'll make a quick trip to Canterbury.

They've got the best supplies there. Emma, you're in charge till I get back!" Leaving behind a flurry of whispered concerns and sceptical looks, Mr. Walo sped off. The road to Canterbury was long and winding, filled with a series of misadventures: a flat tire, an accidental detour through a muddy field, and a run-in with a rather unamused flock of sheep.

Each setback was met with Mr. Walo's characteristic cheer and ingenuity. He patched the tire with cotton candy, which held surprisingly well for a few miles, and coaxed the sheep away with sweet, spun bribes. Finally, Mr. Walo reached Canterbury, where he negotiated with shopkeepers, dazzling them with his tales and earning a discount with his irresistible charm.

He loaded his cart with bags of flour, sugar, and eggs, and made his way back to Ashford, a triumphant smile on his face. However, as he approached the community centre, the festival bell tolled ominously. Smoke billowed from the kitchen windows, and the sound of frantic shouts filled the air. Mr. Walo burst through the doors to find absolute chaos: Emma was desperately fanning smoke away from the fire alarm, James was struggling with a collapsed cake, Lily was trying to calm a group of wailing children, and Daniel was on the verge of a breakdown. Mr. Walo set down his supplies, surveying the scene. "What in blazes happened here?" he asked, bewildered. Emma turned to him, exasperation etched on her face. "The oven's on the fritz, the cake's ruined, and we're out of time! The guests will be here any minute!" Without missing a beat, Mr. Walo leapt into action.

He divided the tasks among the team, using his newly acquired supplies

and some quick thinking. They managed to salvage what they could, creating makeshift desserts and redirecting the guests to the courtyard for a surprise outdoor feast. But just as it seemed they might pull it off, a loud crack echoed through the community centre, followed by a low rumbling.

The makeshift oven began to sputter and smoke more violently. As the first guests started to arrive, the entire contraption exploded in a shower of sparks and sugary debris, leaving everyone stunned and covered in a sticky mess. Mr. Walo stood in the midst of the chaos, a look of determination on his face rapidly giving way to sheer disbelief. SIGHS...

“Well, that’s a fine kettle of fish.”

To be continued...

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WITHOUT GOD  
our week would be  
SINDAY  
MOURNDAY  
TEARSDAY  
WASTEDAY  
THIRSTDAY  
FIGHTDAY  
SHATTERDAY  
7 days without God  
makes ONE WEAK

*Submitted by Daphne Tanner*

### **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](mailto:office@sthilda.org)

## Social and Fundraising Diary Dates

| Event                   | Date                                | Location                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Parish Breakfast        | Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> June       | Church, 9.30 am            |
| Ambling Through Acts    | Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> June      | Church, 7.30 pm            |
| St Hilda's Entertainers | Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> June        | Church hall,<br>7:45pm     |
|                         | Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> June      | Church hall, 2:30 &<br>7pm |
| Quiz Night              | Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> June      | Church hall, 7 pm          |
| Summer Fair             | Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> July      | Church, 11 am              |
| Jumble sale             | Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> September | Church                     |
| Quiz night(?)           | Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> September | Church hall, 7 pm          |
| Harvest Supper          | Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> October    | Church hall                |
| Harvest Festival        | Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> October      | Church, 10 am              |
| St Hilda's Day          | Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> November    | Church, 10am               |
| Bring & share lunch     | Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> November    | After 10am service         |
| Frost Fair              | Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> November  | Church                     |
| Pantomime               | Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> December     | Church hall                |
|                         | Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> December   | Church hall                |
| Christingle             | Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> December     | Church, 4 pm               |
| Pantomime               | Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> December    | Church hall                |
|                         | Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> December  | Church hall                |

Please email any contributions to the newsletter to [editor@sthilda.org](mailto:editor@sthilda.org)