

LITTLE S. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE

February 2023: No. 608

NEWSLETTER



This newsletter contains:

A Personal View on ... Music & Revelation; Meet our Ordinand and Parish Assistant; an extended Garden News; plus the usual Vicar's letter, daily intentions for prayer and more...

Notable dates in February

Saturday 11th February

10.30am Resourcing Faith (*this time at S. Bene't's Church*)

Sr Gemma Simmonds CJ will speak about Prayer in the Ignatian tradition.

Sunday 19th February

Parish Lunch after the 10.30am High Mass (all welcome; £10 a head; sign up on sheet at the back of church)

Monday 20th February

7.30pm Food & Faith – our young adult group meets: The Rev'd Dr Cally Hammond, Dean of Gonville & Caius, speaks about the Rosary.

Wednesday 22nd February

Ash Wednesday: Masses with ashing at 10am, 12.30pm, 7pm (High)

Month of Accompanied Prayer, Lent 2023

The Ely Diocesan Spirituality team is offering a Month of Accompanied Prayer in Lent and March 2023. This gives the chance for a weekly meeting with a trained guide, either face-to-face or via Zoom or phone from 6th to 31st March. Face-to-face meetings are limited to Friday afternoons and held at 7 Brookside. There will be no charge for participation. The closing date for applications is Monday 20th February or very soon after.

The introductory sessions will be a chance to experience and reflect on a guided meditation, to be given further information and to ask questions about the month. The introductory session via zoom is on Thursday 2nd March from 7 -8pm; arrangements with guides will be made by email and telephone. The in-person opening session will be held in the chapel at 7 Brookside, CB2 1JE on Friday 3rd March from 2-3pm. This will be followed by a short meeting with your guide to make arrangements for your weekly meetings and a cup of tea or coffee. A previous participant wrote afterwards: 'We all felt as if] we had met God in some way, in our homes, gardens and through our imaginations. It helped us to revisit scripture afresh and talk to God freely.'

If interested, please email or ring for more details and an application form:

Kay Dodsworth: ekdodsworth@gmail.com 01223 234493 or 07786 910406

Romie Ridley romieridley@gmail.com 07941 862435 or 01223 842922

Lent, Holy Week & Easter at LSM

Our Lent Book

Bishop Rowan Williams, *Meeting God in Paul* (available from the back of church for £10)

Mondays in Lent

7.30pm Lent Group on Zoom, exploring Rowan Williams' book *Meeting God in Paul*; we end by praying the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. We will be following the Reading Guide at the back of the Lent Book. Please read chapter 1 and the Bible passages set for week 1.

Wednesdays in Lent

10.30am (after 10am Mass) Bible Study of St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians over coffee (one chapter each week of Lent)

Thursdays in Lent

5.30pm Silent Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament *followed by*
6pm Evening Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament

Guest Preachers in Lent

Lent II Sunday 3rd March

The Rev'd Daniel Parkinson,
Minor Canon, Durham Cathedral

Lent IV Sunday 19th March

The Rev'd Dr Jamie Hawkey,
Canon Theologian, Westminster Abbey

Stations of the Cross in Lent

Two Stations after the 12.30pm Mass each Friday of Lent

Wednesday 15th March 7.30pm

Tuesday 28th March 7.30pm

Holy Tuesday 4th April 8pm

Holy Week Preacher

The Rev'd Charlie Annis CR

Monk at the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield

Fr Charlie will preach for us from Palm Sunday until Easter Day.

Lent is an excellent time to make your sacramental Confession for the first time. Fr Robert & Fr Philip are very happy to provide help and guidance.

From the Vicar

7th February 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Since Christmas we have said goodbye to three longstanding members of our congregation: James Kinnier Wilson (funeral yesterday, 6th February), Daphne Foreman (funeral date to be confirmed) and the Rev'd Nigel Hancock (funeral Wed 1st March at 12 noon). The curious thing, however, is that the majority of the congregation will only have known and recognised James (the elderly chap in the wheelchair at the entrance to the Lady Chapel). Daphne and Fr Nigel have been housebound and then in a care home for a number of years and given the turnover of the congregation (accelerated by the disruption of Covid) it occurred to me the other day that those in the congregation who know who Daphne and Fr Nigel were are small in number.

On 22nd February, Ash Wednesday, Lent begins. The Gospel reading for Ash Wednesday says “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret”. Now what Jesus is not saying is do not come to church or only pray on your own! He is contrasting ostentatious prayer and prayer that is *merely* external with the prayer of the heart. Public and liturgical prayer are vital – Jesus worshipped at the Synagogue and Temple frequently – but we need to seek to make these prayers our own, and to have time of personal prayer too, where we go into the depths of our heart and spend time with the noise there and seek to find silence there.

For Daphne and Fr Nigel this was not an option to pursue in Lent but the reality of their Christian lives. Yes, they had Holy Communion brought to them every month, so that they were united with the Church Catholic and with our weekly celebration of the Eucharist, but from day to day they prayed on their own, in the secret of their heart, literally physically in a room with the door shut. Both maintained their faith to the end, a testament to the power of the Sacrament, their own diligence and formation in faith over many decades, and (of course) the gift of God.

Longstanding members of the congregation and the clergy and lay people who took them the Blessed Sacrament mourn and miss them. Yet even those who never met them or saw them in church were bound to them by membership of the Body of Christ and were strengthened in their faith by Daphne's and Nigel's having gone into their rooms, shut the door and prayed in secret. We pray now that their Father and ours, who sees in secret, will reward them.

Lent is our opportunity to go into the room of our heart and shut the door and pray to our Father in secret. Most of the time we are outside ourselves, busy in our external and day-to-day lives, and necessarily so; our hearts, however, can get cluttered in this situation, dirty, unused and unknown, a space we throw things into 'to sort out later' but never get round to it. Eventually all this will come to haunt us – even if we can keep it at bay for a surprisingly long time – and if *it* comes looking for *us* it's a sight less pleasant than if *we* have gone looking for *it*. Lent is our annual chance to declutter our hearts, by entering into the desert with Jesus for forty days and then uniting ourselves with Him in His self-emptying in Holy Week, that we may know His Resurrection on Easter Day and beyond.

On the previous page of this newsletter you'll find full details of how we're keeping Lent and the various activities which I hope will allow us to open up the secret rooms of our heart to the work of the Holy Spirit. Lent, Holy Week and Easter are the centre of the Christian year as we are invited to make the Lord's Passover – His movement from death to life – our own. Anything you can do to find time in your diaries and lives will be effort worth making and you will be richly rewarded. A weekday Mass, a weekday Office, ten minutes of silent repetition of a prayer word, twenty minutes of reading the Gospels or St Paul's Letters etc., will be sowing seeds that assuredly bear fruit.

I look forward to sharing this journey with you and promise you my prayers and ask that you would remember me, Fr Philip and the whole parish in yours.

With love & prayers, I am,
yours ever in Christ who dwells in our hearts,

Fr Robert.

A personal view on: Music & Revelation

by Ben Hewitson

*‘Caught in that sensual music, all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect’.*

Thus was Yeats’ anxiety in *Sailing to Byzantium*; it has been shared by Plato and countless figures in the church for generations. It seems taken for granted nowadays that music is an important aspect of worship, although this is often held sentimentally: one goes along to the Christmas service for the sake of the carols, whatever one’s beliefs. Music might be a good way of coaxing the agnostic to church, but it is worth considering more diligently the place of music in worship. Before evensong cast its sway upon me, I found myself drawn to the mystical by ‘popular’ music. Sometimes quite explicitly religious works, like George Harrison’s *All Things Must Pass* and Leonard Cohen’s *Songs of Leonard Cohen*. But even apparently secular music was caught up in that mystical feeling; a supernatural longing lingered in the form. Realising the depth of that longing opened the space within me for another being: for God. It was crucial in my conversion, as I realised He was not something apart from this world, but ever making His presence felt within. Yet, when music is felt more and more to be a commodity, consumed in the background for distraction, music ought not to be taken for granted. The heavens need not be disenchanted. The spheres are still ringing, though we hear them not: Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe.

The singing of the Psalms has long been an important form of musical expression, one which it would be immensely painful to neglect. But the psalmist had the courage to do this when he wrote:

As for our harps, we hanged them up: upon the trees that are therein.
For they that led us away captive required of us then a song, and melody in
our heaviness: Sing us one of the songs of Sion.
How shall we sing the Lord's song: in a strange land?



Antate
domino
cantiū
nouum
quia mi-
rabilia
fecit.

Salua
uit fibi

dextera eius: & brachium s̄ctū eius.

Notum fecit dominus salutare suū
in conspectu gentium reuelauit iusticiā
suam. **R**ecordatus est misericordiæ suæ,
& veritatis suæ domui israel.

Viderunt omnes termini terræ saluta-
re Dei nostri

Iubilate Deo omnis terra: cantate

Here the writer took the song seriously enough to forsake it. Richard Crashaw poignantly translates the psalm into verse, evoking the cruelty of being asked by enslavers to have songs of worship ‘carved to their ears’

Crashaw writes:

Sing? Play? to whom (ah!) shall we sing or play,
If not, Jerusalem, to thee?
Ah thee, Jerusalem! ah, sooner may
This hand forget the mastery
Of music's dainty touch, than I
The music of thy memory'

There is here the idea of the Lord Himself as musical – music inviting divine contemplation – and resonances between the musician and the poet. Ezra Pound, exploring these resonances, wrote as a preface to his translation of Guido Cavalcanti's sonnets that the 'science of the music of words and the knowledge of their magical powers has long fallen away since men invoked Mithra by a sequence of pure vowel sounds ... These are no sonnets for an idle hour. It is only when the emotions illumine the perceptive powers that we see the reality. It is in the light born of this double current that we look upon the face of the mystery revealed'.

Pound realises that when we are truly, deeply moved by a poem, it involves more than a subjective experience, but the subjective must not be forgotten. Through words substantial enough to become musical, the subjective emotions are mediated and heightened, and for a brief eternity encounter an objective yet elusive harmony. Wordsworth encounters something similar in the landscape, where he does not passively receive, but enters a relationship with the landscape through which he participates in the transcendent. And this *mediation* is crucial to understanding the power of music, since we ourselves are bodily creatures, and see dim glimmers of divinity in this world, as it strains towards perfection by God's loving will. The paradox of this world, redeemed and yet fallen, is expressed in music too. In its dissonances and resolutions, suspended in time, it reflects the time-boundedness that defines our worldly condition whilst longing for changeless rest. As Spenser writes in the *Mutabilitie Cantos*:

I well consider all that ye have sayd,
And find that all things stedfastnes doe hate
And changèd be: yet being rightly wayd

They are not changed from their first estate;
But by their change their being doe dilate:
And turning to themselves at length againe,
Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:
Then over them Change doth not rule and raigne;
But they raigne over change, and doe their states maintaine.

Over the course of a song or symphony, we find a melody or lyrical refrain profoundly changed, but changed into a greater thing. The return of a refrain is a deepening, much like we find ourselves deepened as we ascend towards greater love of God. These are aspects of music that we seem to grasp intuitively; if not by the intellect, then by sublime emotion. Plato saw in the very movement of the heavenly spheres a harmony to be expressed in musical scales, and this idea is crucial through to the Renaissance. In Shakespeare's late plays, music accompanies the revelatory moments - and even, perhaps, revives Hermione. Whilst not always so dramatically as this, music affects us. I have often been reminded of a song by the sunset, transforming my experience of both.



Recently, by Grantchester church, I heard *When the Sun Hits* by 1990s shoegaze group Slowdive cascading across the valleys of memory; the torrential echo of electric guitars like floods of light, accompanying the line 'When the sun hits, she'll be waiting', feels like the lover looking for her lily amidst the thorns in the *Song of Songs*, and chimes poignantly with Ruskin's vision, in which the 'whole sky from the zenith to the horizon

becomes one molten mantling sea of colour and fire ...and colours for which there are no words in language, and no ideas in the mind'. As Charles in *Brideshead Revisited* is chastised for always seeing second hand, via literature, I fear I see but faintly without the light of music.

Anthony Burgess said in an interview that 'Youth is not wise; youth knows nothing about life. Youth knows nothing about anything but a mass of clichés, for the most part through the medium of pop songs.' He certainly has a point; I am very fond of clichés, and I hope never to grow out of that youthful folly. Isn't there something wonderful about a great cliché, when it has been restored to the full force of significance by the hand of a great artist? It is the strength of pop music that it is overwhelmed by the paucity of ordinary language; for the transfiguration of tripe expression to ripe expression requires immense labour, yet only succeeds by affecting the humblest simplicity. To elaborate, it is worth exploring the most tired of musical genres: the love song. Here is the greatest theme, burdened by the greatest difficulty of expression. This emotion must be particularised; it must be worked out against the unyielding soil of language, until it is transformed. It is this process of working out through language that allows Bob Dylan to sing 'I want you' with such unbridled passion. That song, from his masterpiece *Blond on Blonde* (*Blood on the Tracks* is a worthy contender too), starts with a borderline cheesy pop intro before launching into a sweep of surrealist images. These focus the feeling, daring the listener to trace the connections between the disparate images:

The guilty undertaker cries
The lonesome organ grinder cries
The silver saxophones say I should refuse you
The cracked bells and washed-out horns
Blow into my face with scorn
But it's not that way
I wasn't born to lose you
I want you.

Dylan is playing with the sounds conjured by these images, each figure serving as a warning to his love; the intensity of these warnings justify the passion and simplicity with which he declares – defiant - 'I want you'. The song is best appreciated alongside the rest of the album, which slyly self-parodies the conventional pop song and Dylan's own status as *auctoritas*.

This parodying does not diminish, but only makes more intense Dylan's struggle to expand the range of feeling possible in contemporary pop music. In *Visions of Johanna*, each verse sprawls the city at night seeking revelation, frequently lapsing into absurdity, before culminating in a return to Johanna, the lost lover. Dylan's delivery is crucial to understanding the blending of irony and high-seriousness. One refrain that captures this brilliantly is:

Jewels and binoculars hang from the head of the mule
But these visions of Johanna make it all seem so cruel.

Here is condensed the bitterness of loss, alongside the sustaining flights of poetry that defy despair. The song ends:

Harmonicas play the skeleton keys in the rain
And these visions of Johanna are now all that remain.

The absence of Johanna is intensified by the song's descriptive flurry of everyone *but* her, then ends affirming her painful yet *real* presence in visions: the presence recalled by song. *Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands*, the last song on the album and probably the finest Dylan ever wrote, is a telling example of the ambivalent feelings music can evoke whilst still working towards redemption. Some, such as Michael Grey, criticise the song for its lyrics. However, he later greatly qualified his critique: 'When I read this assessment now, I simply feel embarrassed at what a little snob I was when I wrote it ... When I go back and listen, after a long gap, to Dylan's recording, every ardent, true feeling I ever had comes back to me. Decades of detritus drop away and I feel back in communion with my best self and soul. Whatever the shortcomings of the lyric, the recording itself, capturing at its absolute peak Dylan's incomparable capacity for intensity of communication, is a masterpiece if there ever was one'. Frankly, with Christopher Ricks, I criticise the sentiment that the lyrics can be bad but the recording good. Yet there is something misunderstood in Dylan when he is talked about in conventional poetic terms; the music ambiguously contradicts and complicates the lyrics in such a way that they communicate whilst defying comprehension. The song, bafflingly, pulls it off.

Although he is not a fan, Geoffrey Hill's argument that poetry must contain the condition of its judgement feels apt; the music provides the

conditions that allow one to assent to Dylan's vision. What has this to do with music as revelation? It is that Dylan's song is so gratuitously creative, as David Jones understood the work of art to be: a sign that represents the world in new terms, gesturing towards God's gratuitous, creating love. And the song acquires prophetic character in the chorus:

Sad-eyed lady of the lowlands,
where the sad-eyed prophets say that no man comes.
My warehouse eyes, my Arabian drums
Should I leave them at your gate?
Oh sad eyed lady, should I wait?

The question is not a dead end, but the culmination of the ascent, where one dwells in an ever-enriching waiting. He has seen all in vision with his warehouse eyes, and heard the heavenly melodies with his musical eardrums, but he can no more speak of it than to ask a question. The certain affirmations in the song are but the premise; the question is the revelation.

This detour into pop music, I hope, gestures towards the unexpected ways in which one encounters grace. One must not expect God only to be found in polite society; *'How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?'* Furthermore, the difficulties of analysing music are reminiscent of the difficulties of analysing faith. It is not an admission of defeat to say that there is much that defies our words – and indeed, our comprehension – but an admission of humility. Yet music has an eschatological dimension too, in its promise of fulfilment to our longing, which suddenly makes sense of the inchoate details one struggles to form into narrative shape. For the artist, the ending might be fairly arbitrary. Not so for the Creator:

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And He will make it plain. (*William Cowper*)

Till that time, when all shall be restored, there is hope in knowing that *our* endings are not final. So, if endings do deceive, let us part with a question:

It is time to consider how Domenico Scarlatti
 Condensed so much music into so few bars
 With never a crabbed turn or congested cadence,
 Never a boast or a see-here; and stars and lakes
 Echo him and the copse drums out his measure,
 Snow peaks are lifted up in moonlight and twilight
 And the sun rises on an acknowledged land.
 My love is young but wise ...
 We have eaten and the sun is up,
 We have only to sing before parting:
 Goodbye, dear love ...
 Where are we ? Who knows
 Of kings who sup
 While day fails? Who,
 Swinging his axe
 To fell kings, guesses
 Where we go?

Ben is a second-year undergraduate reading English at Magdalene College. His home is the north-east; he grew up in Northumberland, now lives in Durham, whilst his heart stays with the coast. To put off work, he spends most of his time reading, walking, and daydreaming. His passions include poetry, theology, music, Northumbrian churches and Taylor Swift.





Calendar and Intentions

for

February 2023

*The list of Thanksgivings and Intercessions offers a focus
for our daily prayer, both at the Offices and Mass,
and in our personal times of prayer.*

*The Vicar would be glad of suggestions or
additions to the list of daily intentions.*

Calendar for February

WED 1st S. Brigid, abbess

THU **2nd THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE**

FRI 3rd S. Anskar, bishop

SAT 4th *S. Gilbert of Sempringham*

SUN 5th THIRD SUNDAY before LENT – Septuagesima

MON 6th *The Martyrs of Japan*

TUE 7th of Requiem

WED 8th

THU 9th

FRI 10th *S. Scholastica, virgin*

SAT 11th S. Radegund, abbess

SUN 12th SECOND SUNDAY before LENT – Sexagesima

MON 13th

TUE 14th Ss Cyril, monk & Methodius, bishop, missionaries

WED 15th *Thomas Bray, priest*

THU 16th

FRI 17th Janani Luwum, bishop & martyr

SAT 18th of the BVM

SUN 19th SUNDAY next before LENT – Quinquagesima

MON 20th

TUE 21st Shrove Tuesday

WED 22nd ASH WEDNESDAY

THU 23rd *S. Polycarp, bishop & martyr*

FRI 24th

SAT 25th

SUN 26th FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

MON 27th *George Herbert, priest*

TUE 28th

February Daily Intentions & *Anniversaries of death*

Renewal of Religious Life in England	1 st
That we may let the light of Christ into our lives	2 nd
Christian renewal in Northern Europe <i>Dennis Barnard, Hazel Dunn</i>	3 rd
Homeless provision in Cambridge	4 th
Our Parish & People <i>Joyce Bishop</i>	5th
The Church in Japan	6 th
The Faithful Departed	7 th
The sick	8 th
Papua New Guinea Church Partnership	9 th
Benedictine Nuns <i>Ronald Mourhouse, Bill Thomas</i>	10 th
Jesus College, Cambridge	11 th
Our Parish & People <i>Margaret Webber, Enid Maycock</i>	12th
Our Parish Standing Committee <i>Alich Nilsson, Brian Poulter</i>	13 th
Those preparing for Holy Matrimony	14 th
SPCK & USPG	15 th
CamTrust	16 th
Courage among Christians	17 th
Better understanding of the Virgin Mary among Christians	18 th
Our Parish & People <i>John Lydon, pr., Audrey Sparrow</i>	19th
Cambridge South Deanery <i>Mary Stubbs</i>	20 th
Penitents & Confessors	21 st
Our keeping of Lent	22 nd
Better appreciation of the Church Fathers <i>Mary Dawson</i>	23 rd
Unemployed <i>Frank Joanes, Percy Hays, Roger Benton</i>	24 th
Friends of Fulbourn Hospital	25 th
Our Parish & People <i>Arthur Peck, James Townley</i>	26th
Our parish musicians	27 th
The world's response to man-made climate change	28 th



Meet our Ordinand: Gioia Barnbrook

Hello! Although I've been on attachment here at LSM since October, I realised that I've not yet actually offered a proper newsletter introduction. For that oversight, many apologies! My name is Gioia and I'm currently in my second-year of three training for ordination at Westcott House.

I was born and brought up in Birmingham, and took an undergraduate degree and then a PhD in Social Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen. As part of my work for my PhD, I spent nearly two years in a small indigenous community in north-west Quebec, Canada, where I

explored how changes in the environment were affecting traditional ways of life. I loved my time living in this community, and found it to be a really powerful and formative experience.

After I completed my PhD, I worked in Aberdeen as a tutor and research assistant on projects related to ecology and indigenous communities, but although I was still deeply passionate about my subject, I felt an increasing push to explore a sense of call to ordained ministry that had first come to me as a teenager. I took the plunge and undertook a year on a ministry experience scheme as a pastoral assistant in the Diocese of Gloucester, with whom I also began the discernment process.

I was accepted for training and started at Westcott in 2021. Alongside my formational studies here, I'm also reading for the Theology Tripos at Jesus College, and had a fantastic year on attachment at Jesus College Chapel last year.

It has been wonderful getting to know LSM these last few months, and I'm delighted that I'll be here at least until the end of this academic year. Thank you for your warm welcome!

... and our Parish Assistant Peter Douglas Banks

To all the congregation at Little St. Mary's Church:

Thank you all so very much for your warmest of welcomes to LSM over the last few weeks. To those I've not yet had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Peter, and I have recently started as the church's new Pastoral Assistant. You will probably see me around at the various Offices, at parish events, and more than likely in the Mill after Evensong and Benediction— please do come and have a chat!



I am currently living in Ridley Hall, just across Coe Fen, to which I moved after four years in The Netherlands, in the city of The Hague. I moved there to study at the University of Leiden, and while there I also worked in party politics– both domestically in Holland and remotely back home in the UK. I began to consider my vocation to ordained ministry about two years ago, while I was worshipping at the Anglican Church of SS John & Philip in The Hague, and decided to take this year to deepen my understanding of our faith and to continue the process of discerning God’s call. Philip in The Hague, and decided to take this year to deepen my understanding of our faith and to continue the process of discerning God’s call.

I was born and brought up in the village of Wickham, in the South Downs, a short distance from Winchester. I was active in the life of our small, rural Parish Church; between this and my time in the Diocese of Europe, LSM will present a whole series of new challenges in city ministry, student ministry, and ministry to a ‘gathered’, rather than parochial, congregation. I can’t wait to get stuck in!

Even in my short time here, I have seen the joyful sense of community which radiates from this church through your extensive charity work, numerous associated groups and societies, and faithful proclamation of the Gospel. It is a great privilege to be joining you. Of your charity, and aided by the intercession of our Blessed Mother, please do hold me in your prayers as I journey with all of you in the way of Christ.

The Forum Lunch

by Christine Tipple

For almost eight years (except during Covid) LSM has been inviting people to lunch once a month who were not as well as they used to be ,or not able to remember as much as they once could. They came at 12.30pm, on their own or with people who cared for them. Some carers liked to stay, others took the opportunity to pop into town.

After lunch, a twenty-minute entertainment was provided, something musical perhaps, a talk with slides etc. Anything of general interest that LSM could supply. It all finished at 2pm.

These lunches were started by the Friends of Fulbourn Hospital (LSM took over when St James, Wulfstan Way could not continue). Each guest pays £5 and any cash surplus goes to the Friends.

We used to have three or four tables of six for the guests and their helpers, but since restarting after Covid we have had a lower response from the many social workers that help with contacts. There was no lunch in January, nor will there be one in February, because of an expected lack of guests.

But the need continues. Many people may enjoy coming to this special monthly lunch and any help in finding them would be most welcome.

Garden News

Jeremy Musson reports on the current gentle rejuvenation of the LSM Wild Churchyard Garden.



The Vision:

The LSM garden is a haven; its peace is part of the mission of care and welcome of this ancient Christian church. All are welcome to enjoy this quiet space, an oasis of seclusion in the heart of the busy city during the day.

The Mission Statement agreed by the PCC in 2022:

1. The verdant and peaceful Wild Churchyard Garden west of LSM, bordered on all sides by historic buildings, is loved by worshippers, local residents, students of the University, and other places of study in Cambridge, and visitors from near and far. It is open every day at no cost to anyone seeking peace, and can be used with the Parish Room.

2. LSM's Wild Churchyard Garden contributes to the setting of several listed buildings and the designated conservation area. It is also a listed City wildlife site, recognised as a sanctuary, not just for people, but for butterflies, birds, insects and bats. This sense of nature in the city is important to the LSM community.

3. LSM is committed to balancing the 'wild' quality of the garden, with the need to keep the garden contained and managed in ways appropriate to the setting; to keep the paths clear, and to ensure that the garden can be enjoyed by all visitors, with benches and, in the future, a new level area, more accessible to all.

The current plans in action

The Churchyard Garden was created in 1925 by churchwarden Dr Robert Lachlan, who used fallen headstones to create paths, and planted species roses and other suitable plants.



The churchyard had been closed for burials in the mid-19th century and had become increasingly overgrown. There has probably been a

churchyard here since the 11th century, when there is the earliest record of a church on the site.

In 2003, a plan for the reworking of the by then somewhat overgrown churchyard was drawn up by designer Tessa Hobbs, well known for her work at Walsingham shrine, balancing the wild and maintained nature of the Churchyard Garden. An update was provided in 2018, including notes on roles of the volunteer gardeners. In 2022 the PCC confirmed the desire to pave a somewhat larger area outside the Parish Centre, which had been part of the 2003 Hobbs plan and much discussed since.

The additional paved area will provide a vital extra space for the church to be used for social events, music and spiritual reflections, and, importantly, will make the charm of the wild churchyard garden more accessible to older people and others with limited mobility who can thus be brought into a space from which they can enjoy the plants, vistas, sights and scents of this special place. However, the permissions required for such an area take time and patience, and the design and permission process is ongoing.

It was agreed by the PCC that plans for the paved area should only be set forward as part of a holistic and coherent plan for the whole LSM churchyard garden. Tessa Hobbs again has helped advise us and I drew up a plan in 2022, which helps to rejuvenate the garden with new plantings in the spirit of the 1920s Wild Churchyard Garden laid out by Dr Lachlan, and to keep an open aspect with through vistas to the church, Little St Mary's Lane, and the "Ark" as the Peterhouse library wing is known (it once housed the Museum of Classical Archaeology).

Much attention has been given to preserving the natural and wild feel, while also making the garden manageable. Petasites (or Butterbur), for instance, is invasive, but is regarded as a 'good' wild plant, giving shapely ground cover and flowering. It has historically been prized for healing qualities, and will be allowed to fill certain beds. Ground Elder is hard to deal with, so should probably be accepted and allowed to flower, but contained. Cow Parsley is also to be encouraged and retained as a 'good' wild flower element. However, some weeds such

as Alkanet are just too invasive and should be removed where possible and the roots dug out (although it too has some medicinal qualities).

Names have been given to the beds and borders to help build a sense of narrative and identity through the garden: The Little St Mary's Lane Border, the Magnolia Bed, the Little Bed (near the Parish Office), the Old Yew Bed, the Broken Heart Bed, the New Yew Bed, the Little Tomb Bed, the Little Trinity Bed, the Calvary Bed, the Tree of Heaven Bed, the Parish Hall Bed, the Peterhouse Border, the Ark Border. A plan will be pinned up on the church noticeboard for interest and information.

Tessa gave us detailed advice on cutting back and removal of self-sown suckers, and this was done last year by a local tree surgeon, Tom Jones, following a very precise marked-up document. This has already helped to re-establish views and give shape to the shrubs and lilac, and there will be much new growth in the spring as always. Tree pruning and removal was carried out by the City Council, following their own guidelines and in consultation with the Churchwardens. Two replacement trees will be replanted, probably including a new Saucer Magnolia.

Efforts have been made to give light and space to some important elements which have been rather lost in the overgrowth. For instance, there is a myrtle bush near the Calvary crosses (the Calvary Bed), planted in 2003, which flowers from late spring to early summer, and the whose leaves are popular in flower arrangements. They are regarded as symbolic of love. This has been cut back but will be encouraged to grow. The handsome tall Irish Yew in the adjoining bed (planted in 2003), very much like a Cypress tree in effect, is to be carefully protected.

The Old Yew Bed is dominated by the mature Yew tree, and has recently had the low-growing Elm scrub removed. The bed has been dug over by volunteer working parties and planted with Scillera (*Chionodoxa*) bulbs and Marsh Grass, and will have more wilder-looking Geraniums added. The plants have all been funded by kind sponsors from among the congregation and friends of members of the congregation.



The next bed to be tackled will be the LSM Lane Border by the railings, which will be weeded, dug over, and planted with some fifteen new Species Roses (a known feature of the 1920s Churchyard Garden and again, kindly sponsored by people among the congregation and friends of members of the congregation), along with other useful plants such as Geraniums which are good for ground cover.

A medium-sized and very lovely tree which is being considered for the garden, with different periods of colour throughout the year, is *Davidia involucrata*, otherwise known as the Dove Tree for its large white flowers in the summer. The symbolism is clear. This would provide a central note of colour through the year, and a sponsor is being sought.

All of the above is designed to help achieve a balance of wild and cultivated Churchyard Garden, suitable to the character of the place, and the significance of the setting. The plans were reviewed and

approved by the Vicar, Churchwardens and PCC in July 2022. The PCC approves any funding, or decisions requiring any expenditure, and is responsible for obtaining formal permissions. This plan is to be reviewed every three years and reapproved by the PCC. Working parties have already been arranged for the heavier jobs – please feel free to get in touch to join one, or sponsor new plants.

jeremy@jeremymusson.com