

To give or to abstain?

As you read this editorial the season of Lent is already under way, but what is Lent and how does it, or can it, affect our daily lives?

Lent is the six-week period leading up to Easter and is one of the most important times of year for many Christians around the world. This will be no different to St. Mary's here in Shortlands.

Lent is traditionally seen as a time of solemn observance and preparation for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter. From its start on Ash Wednesday until its conclusion on Easter Sunday, the 40 days of Lent is a traditional time for fasting or abstinence, chocolate and alcohol being the most favoured to abstain from. But I have often been challenged about why it needs to be about abstinence. What about giving? Rather than give something up for Lent, how about giving something for Lent?

Whilst I understand the theology of Lent, the understanding of Jesus' time in the wilderness, the preparation of ourselves for the passion of Christ and his resurrection, I am challenged as to why it must always be about personal abstinence.

How would it feel if we gave something to others? How would it feel... to contribute to society in a way that might feel uncomfortable to ourselves? ...if we stepped out of our comfort zone and gave some time to a charity that we might have supported financially but have no direct experience of? ...to knock on a neighbour's door to say hello, despite having nodded your head to them in passing for a few years, but having no idea who they are? ...if you made a conscious decision during Lent to make contact with a member of your own family with whom you may have had differences in the past: perhaps now is the time to pick up the phone or write a letter and simply say 'hello' or, dare I say it, 'sorry'?

Lent offers the opportunity to reflect on our own lives and what good we can do with them. Whatever you choose to do, may Lent be a time of reflection for you all.

Love and Blessings,

Revd Gary Best

Take a look... at the new website for the Shortlands Residents Association: <http://shortlandsra.org.uk>. The SRA will hold their Annual General Meeting on Thursday 16 April at St Mary's church hall from 7.45pm.

Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday is traditionally held on the fourth Sunday of Lent.

Today, it is a day when children give presents, flowers and home-made cards to their mothers. At St. Mary's here in Shortlands posies are given to all ladies in the congregation as a mark of respect for all they contribute to the community and society.

Centuries ago it was considered important for people to return to their home or 'mother church' once a year so, in the middle of Lent, this return became an occasion for family reunions.

Most historians think that it was the return to the 'mother' church which led to the tradition of children, particularly daughters working as domestic servants, or as apprentices, being given the day off to visit their mother and family. As they walked along the country lanes, children would pick wild flowers to take to church or to give to their mother as a small gift.

This year on Sunday 22 March St. Mary's will be holding a service for Mothering Sunday at 10.30am. We will be joined by the various uniformed groups from the community, celebrating all women who contribute so much to our lives and to society at large.



Special Events and Services

Sunday 15 March

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Responses: Ayleward

Canticles: Morley

Anthem: O Lord my God - Wesley

Sunday 22 March - Mothering Sunday

10.30am Family and Parade Service

Sunday 5 April - Palm Sunday

10.30am Procession of Palms and Eucharist for Palm Sunday

Stay in touch!

The Parish Office email is office@stmarysshortlands.church. To keep up with news from St. Mary's in between editions of SPAN, you can like our page on Facebook or follow us on Twitter – search for 'St Mary's Shortlands'.

Don't forget our website
www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk





Remembering

Ena Saward

Ena was born in Hammersmith in 1927. As a 13-year-old she was evacuated from London to Yorkshire to escape the Blitz.

She described her long life as a troubled one (due to the loss of her daughter Jane and then her husband just ten years apart) but 'in many ways a good one'. Ena found the strength to keep looking 'forwards' and enjoyed visits to and from her son David in America.

Her strong faith helped shape her life and she was a longstanding member of St Mary's congregation. She was a regular member of the craft and chatter group and every Christmas she knitted little stockings for the end of term presents for the Toddlers group. Ena will be remembered with a smile at St Mary's each year when we get out the knitted nativity set!

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

Charles Cooper	3 February
Muriel Cuthbert	12 February

My day job

My roots are in Northampton where I was born and bred. After attending school there and then university in Nottingham where I studied Chemical Engineering, I moved to London around 1974 to work for British Gas in Wandsworth. This was to change my life completely: not only have I lived and worked in London ever since, but I met my wife Bridget here in 1979 whilst living in Acton. We subsequently got married in Beckenham in 1981.



After 4-5 years working on research studies in Wandsworth I left to join the Estimating Department of the chemical contractor Davy Powergas, where I was initially employed in Baker Street before moving to brand new offices on the Marylebone Road. This set the course of my subsequent career since I then spent the next 35 years in Estimating at various levels of seniority for a range of different companies.

Having started off married life in a flat in Harrow we moved across London in 1985 to a house on the other side of Shortlands Village but, with an expanding family of three boys, we moved to our present house in Scotts Lane in 1992.

By this time I had been invited to join BP Chemicals in Victoria, a very easy reach from Shortlands. However, this then became Sunbury in South West London, a somewhat more testing daily journey. It was during this time that I began to see something of the world with particular visits to South Korea (an Acetic Acid project) and Malaysia (an Ethylene project).

My final employment before retiring in 2014 was for Bechtel in Hammersmith and then in new offices on the site of the old Guinness brewery at Park Royal.

I have been coming to St. Mary's since the move to our present house. You can see me around church helping out with sidesman's duties, reading on Sunday mornings, grass cutting, gardening and assisting with maintenance work.

Graham Smedley

SAVE THE DATE!

Douai 25th Anniversary

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gill@gill.dawson.name or 07767 365318

Healing and wholeness

Recently a number of members of St Mary's congregation have attended a course on 'Healing and Wholeness' run by the Diocese of Rochester.

They learned that there are three aspects to our humanity: mind, body and spirit which work together to make us healthy or otherwise. Participants learned how to pray for healing, and developed an understanding of why prayer isn't always answered as we would wish.

Stephanie Maurel said: 'I asked to go on the course as I felt drawn to understand more about healing prayers and wholeness and to explore how I can be a part of this for our congregation. We looked at some of the theological background and studied bible passages. I was incredibly moved, even to tears, at some parts of the course and in personal and healing prayer - this strengthened my faith, nourished me and gave me an extra spring in my step to be more involved and give support.'

Kay Coleman commented: 'I most enjoyed spending time with other members of my church family and sharing fellowship. It was a very worthwhile course which was thought-provoking. I left with a conviction that this ministry is one I wish to continue to pursue.'

Glo Sherman added: 'I wanted to continue distilling my own beliefs about prayer and its relation to healing and to see how these might affect participating in prayer ministry at St Mary's. I was touched by the spirit present at the anointing service at the close and came away confident that I can contribute to the prayer ministry at St Mary's.'

On the third Sunday of every month healing prayer is offered during the 10.30am service. Requests for prayer for individuals can also be placed on the Prayer Tree on the table just inside the church entrance.

Guided walk

Join a guided walk of South Hill Wood & Kingswood Glen on Saturday 18 April at 3p.m meeting at the Bowling Clubhouse on Tootswood Road.

Enjoy about an hour and a quarter on the history of the wood and glen (Mike Ricketts from the Shortlands Residents Association) and flora & fauna (Ishpi Blatchley), followed by tea and biscuits in the Bowling Clubhouse.



BURNS NIGHT: Members of St Mary's congregation celebrated in style in January.

Mission of the month

Acts 435

Acts 435 was inspired by the works of the early church, as described in Acts 4:32 to 4:35 when the early disciples of the risen Christ shared their possessions and passed money to the apostles to give to anyone who had need.

Acts 435 is a simple idea. It connects people who want to support those in poverty in a direct way, with their gift not going into a pot, but to a specific purpose eg a suit or train ticket for an interview. That way they can be assured that their gift will meet an individual's needs.

A church or advocate will post the requests, knowing that the needs, often very small, are genuine. Donors can respond on-line, knowing their gift will make a big difference, lifting a burden, or preventing a crisis for some of the most vulnerable in society. Acts 435 guarantees that 100% of the donation goes to the person in need. Our gift at St Mary's will be allocated at the end of the month to those individuals we decide most need support.

For more information visit <https://acts435.org.uk> or see the display at the back of church.

The Friends of St Mary's

are holding a

Quiz Night

Saturday 4 April

7pm for prompt 7.30pm start

in the Church Hall

Everybody welcome!

Fish and Chips supper Donations bar Raffle

Tickets £10 available after services and from the Parish Office from 1 March

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

This year, the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will be held on Sunday 29 March. The time of the meeting will be confirmed via our website (www.stmarysshortlands.org.uk), or through the Parish Office, and papers for the meeting will also be published on the website at least a week in advance.

At the APCM we have an opportunity to review the previous year at St. Mary's including a review of finances, as well as electing our Churchwardens, Deanery Synod representatives and Parochial Church Council members.

The APCM is also a time when we look forward to how the life and presence of St. Mary's might look in the future.

All are welcome to attend the meeting and if you are named on the church's electoral roll, you also have the right to vote. St. Mary's is your church so it would be great to see you at this important meeting.

If you have any questions, or require clarification on any point, please speak to Stephanie Maurel or Revd Gary, or submit your questions via email to stephanie.howarthmaurel@yahoo.co.uk.

Enid Blyton

This is the latest in a series of articles on blue plaques commemorating notable people in and around our parish.

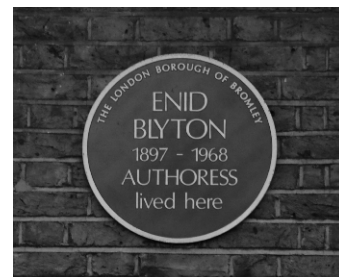
There can be few people who grew up as children in the decades after the Second World War whose lives were not profoundly touched by the stories of Enid Blyton.

She was an English children's writer whose books have been among the world's best-sellers since the 1930s, selling more than 600 million copies. Her books are still enormously popular, and have been translated into 90 languages.

Her work became increasingly controversial among literary critics, teachers and parents from the 1950s onwards, because of the alleged unchallenging nature of her writing and the themes of her books, particularly the Noddy series. Some libraries and schools banned her works, which the BBC had refused to broadcast from the 1930s until the 1950s because they were perceived to lack literary merit. Her books have been criticised as being elitist, sexist, racist, xenophobic and at odds with the more liberal environment emerging in post-war Britain, but they have continued to be best-sellers since her death in 1968. For those of us who, as children, devoured her books this was all irrelevant!

There is a modern legend that Enid Blyton based Noddy's house on the house at the junction of Shortlands Road and Bromley Road. If this were proved to be true it would certainly put Shortlands on the literary map!

She lived at 34 Oakwood Avenue with her parents in 1915. Her blue plaque is at 83 Shortlands Road where she lived from 1926 to 1929.



Easter Flowers

We will be decorating the church to celebrate Easter on Easter Saturday.



It's possible to contribute towards the beautiful Easter flowers in memory of a loved one. The names of all those who are remembered will be placed on the list on the altar.

Please send the name and your contribution to the church office by Monday 6th April.

Dates for Holy Week and Easter

Please join us at St. Mary's as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter:

April 5th - Palm Sunday 8am & 10.30am Procession of Palms and Eucharist at the 10.30am service

April 6th, 7th, 8th 8.00pm Compline and Reflection

April 9th - Maundy Thursday 8pm - Eucharist of the Last Supper

April 10th - Good Friday 10.30am - Family Communion; 2.00pm - An hour at the Cross

April 12th - Easter Day 8am Easter Eucharist; 10.30am Family Communion with Easter Egg Hunt



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- 08.00 Holy Communion
- 10.30 Family Communion, except when notified. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 0-18.
- 18.30 Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday in the month)

Every Tuesday

- 17.30 Evening Prayers

Every Wednesday

- 10.00 Holy Communion

Further information about all services can be obtained from the Parish Office.

PARISH DIRECTORY

Vicar Revd Gary Best 8460 0262
(day off - Friday) Vicar@stmaryshortlands.church
Licensed Lay Ministers

	Mrs S. Aldred	8460 3978
	Mrs C. Bingham	8460 0324
	Mrs A-M. Jefferys	8460 6030
Readers	Mr P. Stotesbury	8650 3259
	Mr S. Buchanan	8777 8008
Pastoral Assistants	Mrs S. Harrison	8464 0284
	Mrs M. Westropp	8650 5178
	Mrs D. Speller	07941415082
Parish Administrator	Ms N. Blake	8460 5682
Assistant	Mrs E. Parker	8460 5682
Churchwardens	Mr A. Williams	07914343495
	Mrs S. Leonard	07725313432
Deputies	Mrs P. Chase	8464 6188
	Mr S. Clark	8464 0696
	Mr D. Cooper	8460 0682
	Prof M. Fox	8650 3252
	Dr D. Jefferys	8460 6030
PCC Secretary	Mrs S. Maurel	01689 331793
Treasurer	Mr T. Dawson	8460 5884
Assistant Treasurer	Mr R. Hogg	8290 0613
Organist and Director of Music	Canon C. Tillotson	8460 7368
Assistant Organist	Mr Daniel Beach	8289 6510
Safeguarding Officer	Mrs Kay Coleman	07879337567
Electoral Roll	Mrs S. Maurel	01689 331793
Junior Church	Mrs J. Eade	3624 0559
Stewardship	Mr J. Westropp	8650 5178

PARISH OFFICE Tel: 8460 5682

e-mail: office@stmaryshortlands.church
Open 9.30am - 12.30pm weekdays.
Information regarding Baptisms and Weddings can be obtained during these

ST. MARY'S ORGANISATIONS

Toddlers	Mrs J. Runicles	8402 6599
Craft and Chatter	Mrs J. Boam	8460 7101
Friends of St. Mary's		

Miss J. Rambridge 8650 0947

For admissions to Beavers, Cubs & Scouts please contact email: 7bromleyadmissions@gmail.com

Scouts (Fri)	Mr R. Howe	8462 7132
Cubs (Mon)	Mrs P. Braithwaite	8460 4152
Cubs (Tues)	Mr J. Griffiths	07954 437658
Beavers	Ms E. Hay	0932758801

For admissions to Rainbows, Brownies & Guides please tel: 08001695901 or go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested

Guides (Tues.)	Ms N. Critten	07767242920
Guides (Fri.)	Mrs G. Dawson	8460 5884
Brownies (Mon.)	Miss K. Higgs	8462 3285
Brownies (Thurs.)	Mrs S. Tight	8460 8122
Rainbows	Ms H. Last	8460 1705
Pre-School	Mrs C. Hall	8290 6704
		or 07960 988552
The 2WW's	Mrs A. Swatton	8650 1114
Church Flowers	Mrs C. Willatt	8313 0246
Mission Chairman	Mrs S. Shelton	8402 3299
Douai Link	Mrs G. Dawson	8460 5884
Fair Trade	Mrs C. Willatt	8313 0246

LOCAL CONTACTS

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(Email: Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk)

CLR A. Cuthbert
(Email: aisha.cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk)

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