

# SPIRE ✠ TOWER

November/  
December 2020



The official magazine for the parish of  
St Andrew & St Mark, Surbiton, is back!

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## **This issue:**

Guest editor: the Curate  
Children's Corner: Julie Batsford-White  
Profiler: Olga Wickenden  
Cover photo: John Kelly  
Other photos as attributed

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#### ***From the (Guest) Editor:***

Welcome to the November and December edition of *Spire & Tower*! This is our first edition since our March/April issue, and it is wonderful to be back in print! This is also our first edition under the guest editorship of the Curate! I say guest editorship as we would love to hear from someone who would like to take on the job of editor of our magazine. Do get in touch if you would like to have a go!

This brings me to a note of thanks to Mike and Katie Smith for all they brought to our magazine as Editor and Creative Layout Editor respectively. I think you'll agree Mike and Katie made *Spire & Tower* not just any church magazine. So a big, big thanks to both of them. I have big shoes to fill!

Also a big thanks to Julie Batsford-White for putting together this edition's children's section! Thanks to her husband, John, to help illustrate the children's section.

Anyone who would like to submit items for future magazines is very welcome to get in touch!

*The Reverend Michael Johns-Perring*  
[sasmscurate@outlook.com](mailto:sasmscurate@outlook.com)

# A View from the Vicar

*“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.”*

These words from Isaiah have been spoken and sung so often that for many of us they are sunk quite deep in our subconscious. Written something like 2,700 years ago for an Israel that was about to be invaded, they speak to us today in a number of ways.

Before I get to the ‘darkness’, I think it’s worth sitting a little with the word that we often ignore: namely ‘people’. Most of the time in the 21st Century, we see happiness or unhappiness as a personalised experience, something that we can individually aspire to, or be exposed to, but is definitely unique to us. Yet that is not what is proposed here; the experience of darkness or light is not one that individuals enter into; it is something that the people did together. It affected the whole nation of Israel.

That is one of the things that resonates now. Granted that there are a few people who may have actively got happier in Lockdown; certainly, shareholders in Zoom may have a glint in their eye, and – closer to home – there are a number of people who have told me that their family life has improved, with the time they are spending with each other at home. However, even they are touched by the limits of freedom and the shadow of illness. For most, it has been really tough, and getting tougher, and I would go as far as to suggest that our nation is experiencing a kind of collective depression. Covid is something that we are going through together, as a people. And it can certainly feel like, as a people we are walking in darkness.

Moreover, in the short term, I don’t think there are easy solutions. I can understand both the people who want tighter lockdowns and those who want lockdowns ended, but it strikes me that both produce problematic outcomes. We can’t just wish our situation away.

All that said, there are absolutely clear grounds for hope. We have lived with the virus, but without a vaccine, for over seven months now; it seems to me to be likely that we won’t have to do the same again. By April next year, a vaccine will be rolling out, even if we haven’t got hold of one ourselves just yet.

And even in this time of darkness there is a huge sense of people looking out for each other, focussing on trying to live well, to love our neighbour and more. As I write, it is the most sublime autumn afternoon, awash with leaves turning colour.

I want our worship at Christmas to express something of hope and light. But just how we will do this is something we are still trying to figure out. One thing is for certain, it won’t be the same. Just take our Christmas lunch: we can’t host it as we normally have it hosted in a big room, with a party like atmosphere; but perhaps we will be able to deliver meals to people’s homes. The Church site normally gets to own Christmas a little; this year, it’s going to have to be more distributed, because we can’t “pack them in” without breaking regulations.

There are days when I find the whole thing depressing: we are walking in darkness after all. But there are definitely days when I see the light shine too. We’ll never forget this time; let us acknowledge the difficulties, sure, but also use it as well as we can, and live in hope, real hope. ✕

*The Reverend Robert Stanier is Vicar of St Andrew and St Mark, Surbiton*



# Curate's Corner: The Glory of the Garden

When I first arrived in Surbiton, I was told all the streets here look the same: “If you’ve seen one street, you’ve seen the Mall!”

On closer look you realise that each street is a little community and that within each street, every home has its own character—however similar it may be, architecturally to next door. One place where a home’s character can be seen is in its garden. I am sure you have enjoyed, as I have, the many rose beds dotted around Surbiton. Not everyone has the time or inclination to garden, of course—and can we delight in gardens not our own. I know many of you enjoy a trip to Claremont, Wisley or Kew.

One of things I have been very grateful for this year has been the garden and I have been busy both in the front, as well as the back. During the height of lockdown, particularly, I appreciated having a private bit of outdoor space. I know this is a luxury that not everyone enjoys. When we are busy, gardens can feel like “another thing to do”, but they can also be a welcome distraction!

Garden imagery can be found throughout the Bible, right from the start with the Garden of Eden. Some scholars have argued in Israelite society, Tabernacle and Temple were both attempts to re-create this formative garden—and like Eden, both were places to encounter God. In the Book of Revelation, we find a description of Eden restored, when all things will meet their maker.

I haven’t quite recreated Eden in the Curatage garden, but these photos show the fruits of my labours (my pumpkins were my most successful produce this year—they featured in our harvest displays). Of course, I am ably assisted by friendly bees (pictured). One of the best parts of the garden is the Maple tree, for which I claim no credit. It is currently ablaze with vibrant red leaves.





# *The big picture:*

## St Mark's, October 1940



*The church was gutted, but the spire remained*

On the night of 2nd October 1940 St Mark's Church Surbiton took a direct hit from a German bomb leaving the spire and a shell of a building. The flames from the church could be seen across Surbiton and the surrounding area. In October we marked the 80th anniversary of the incident—as well as the 60th anniversary of the church's consecration in 1960.

95 year-old parishioner Vera Palmer remembers 2nd October 1940 well. She saw the spire “completely red”. Recalling the scene, she said recently, “we stood there waiting for [the spire] to fall, but it didn't. It stayed.”

# Nativity



# ***The secret stories in your yummy Christmas treats***

There are so many great things about Christmas, from the Nativity at school to opening your presents on Christmas Day. Let's not forget the food too! There are all sorts of special foods that only come out at Christmas time...Christmas pudding, mince pies, roast chestnuts, gold coins, and Christmas cake. Can you think of any more? Many of these special Christmas foods have a religious story behind them, some from hundreds and hundreds of years ago.

## **Mince Pies**

The mince pies you eat today are round in shape and filled with lots of juicy fruits. When they were first baked 400 years ago, they were made in an oval shape to look like the manger baby Jesus slept in. Each pie was filled with meat and had a small pastry top that was a symbol of his swaddling clothes.

## **Christmas Pudding**

Tradition says that Christmas Pudding should have 13 ingredients in it to represent Jesus and his disciples. In the old days, every member of the family took turns to stir the pudding with a wooden spoon from east to west in honour of the Three Wise Men. Maybe your family still does this?

## **Gold Chocolate Coins**

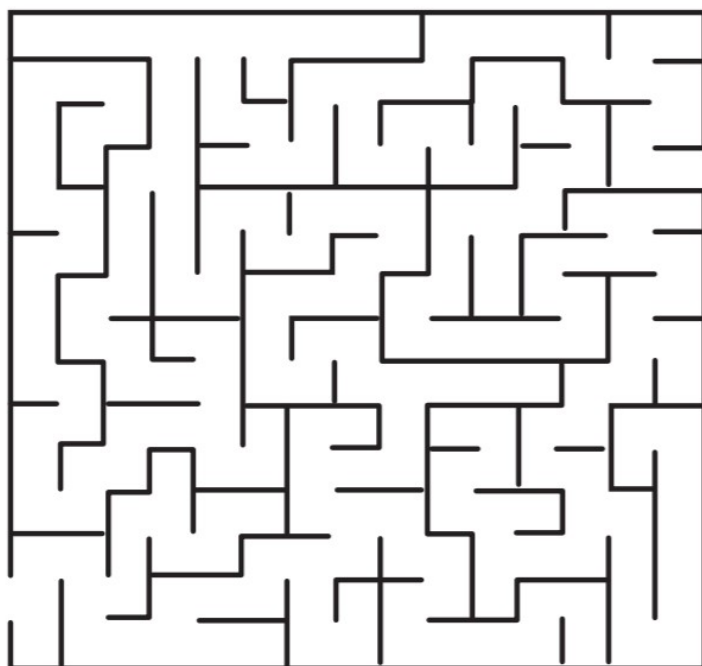
The best part of the Christmas stocking for sure. Do you eat yours quietly in secret when everyone is asleep on Christmas morning? Don't worry...we won't tell! These gold chocolate coins represent the real gold coins Saint Nicholas threw into poor women's homes in early December so they could have enough money to get married. This generous and kind act happened in the 4th century (that's a long time ago), but it is still remembered in the form of the gold coins you find in your stocking at Christmas. Thank you St. Nicholas!

## **Stollen**

This sugar-dusted cake is in an oblong shape and said to represent a swaddled baby Jesus.

## **WISE UP**

Help one of the three wise men find his way through the busy market to buy his Frankincense.



## CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

Find the hidden words from the Nativity

FRANKINCENSE

BABYJESUS

JOSEPH

STAR

DONKEY

MYRRH

MANGER

MARY

ANGEL

CAMEL

STABLE

F	B	V	D	L	E	M	A	C	S	G	H
R	A	T	S	F	M	W	G	P	R	F	S
A	F	B	K	L	A	N	S	T	K	F	F
N	N	F	N	F	R	F	F	J	F	F	M
K	F	G	F	J	Y	F	O	F	F	A	Y
I	F	A	E	F	E	S	F	F	N	F	E
N	F	M	E	L	E	A	E	G	F	F	K
C	F	Y	F	P	I	L	E	O	F	F	N
E	F	R	H	F	B	R	F	F	F	O	O
N	F	R	R	A	T	F	A	F	S	W	D
S	F	H	T	H	K	F	L	N	T	U	V
E	M	S	U	S	E	J	Y	B	A	B	F



What do you call a reindeer with bad manners?  
RUDE-olph!

What's yellow and swings from Christmas cake to Christmas  
cake? TARZIPAN

What kind of photos do elves take? ELFIES

What did one snow man say to the other snowman? DO  
YOU SMELL CARROTS?

What do cats like to eat at Christmas? MICE PIES



# ***Planting and praying***

At the last Family Worship of October, children planted daffodil bulbs in the grounds of St Mark's, praying that when the flowers appear in spring we will be closer to the end of this pandemic. Here are some of the photos, courtesy of Diana Lewis. Bulbs, trowels, dibbers and planters, courtesy of Mike Smith, our gardener.





# ***Branching out: MU Update***



Since the last AGM in January 2020, Moira has taken over leadership of the branch (she took over from Audrey Eldridge who did a great job of keeping the membership numbers steady, and by continuing regular meetings). During the previous year (2019), we held a brainstorming session where members contributed their ideas for charities, local and national, that we could support, that play a role in supporting family life. The committee met to discuss future plans for supporting these causes. All plans for adventurous fund raising are currently on hold, but will be reprised when possible to do so.

Before Covid 19 Lockdown took hold, in March, the Branch managed a meeting of Lent Reflections led by Revd Carole Bourne. Unfortunately the April meeting where Delyth Gadd was due to talk about the story of Linen, following her trip to Belgium, was postponed. Not to be defeated, Del put together an amazing, informative presentation very enthusiastically delivered via Zoom and well received by her audience in the middle of October.

With Zoom up and running in the Church Michael was able to fulfil his slot in May by talking about his own Faith Journey. This was a well-attended meeting which was opened-up to members and the wider congregation. It was inspiring to be able to hear Michael's personal account of how he came to train for ordination. Many of us felt we began to know Michael on a different level, discovering his sense of humour and his knowledge and understanding of MU.

Disappointment all round when the annual ploughman's lunch outing to Fetcham in June had to be cancelled. This is traditionally held in Christine's lovely garden, where for some reason, the sun always shines for us. However, once Covid is under

control, we will, once again, meet together to share food and fellowship. The same applies for our annual bring and share supper planned for October this year. It is postponed for now, but will be resurrected once restrictions allow.

Moira, Michael and Carole worked together to deliver a very moving Zoom session of Prayers for Lockdown. There was time for members to share their experiences of how they had been affected by Lockdown.

During the summer Rosie, a member's granddaughter, was due to go to Uganda to help build a children's playground. Obviously, this trip had to be cancelled, meaning she was unable to make her presentation at our branch September meeting. This would have been a follow-up to a presentation previously provided by Rosie following her trip to Dominica. We heard all about her role in wildlife conservation alongside her humanitarian intent.

During Covid 19 restrictions, Deanery and Southwark Diocese Mothers' Union branches have opened their online meetings to all. We have been able to go on a virtual trip to Morden Hall Park, participate in quizzes and share stories. Other branches enjoyed our members' memories of VE and VJ Day. We are now collecting Covid 19 Time Memories as living history for our branch records.

By the end of this year three of our members will have reached long service milestones in the Mothers' Union. Both Elizabeth Edwards and Frances Rogers have 60 years of service and Mavis Cracknell 40 years. Congratulations to all three! These women are stalwart members and we fully intend to plan a celebration with plenty of cake as soon as we can all safely meet.



We will continue with our planned programme of meetings alongside other events we hope to offer. We look forward to a time when we can meet again in person, and enjoy prayer, fellowship and companionship once more.

Meetings are open to all, you do not need to be a Mothers' Union member. For more information please contact Branch Leader Moira Greenfield 020 8241 4743.



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# Keeping faith in lockdown

## Coronavirus

by Anne Thomas

The world as we knew it was different,  
now the whole of our lives has been changed.  
Every day on the news,  
we hear top people's views;  
no wonder our friends feel estranged.

A virus has come to our country,  
and thousands of people have died,  
we must be aware  
of the danger that's there;  
wear masks when we're going inside.

Keep spaces between us when shopping,  
and don't got in crowds just for fun.  
Stay at home if you can,  
that's what governments plan;  
even working from home can be done.

Lockdown is the measure they're taking;  
strict rules must apply every day,  
the pubs close at ten:  
it's homeward bound then,  
or you're fined if you don't go away.

No singing in church and no crowding,  
the seats are all spread out a lot.  
No books handed round,  
a large screen can be found,  
and we follow the words on the dot.

The doctors will find us a vaccine,  
to deliver us out of this mess.  
Let's hope it will clear  
even sometime next year,  
and take away sadness and stress.



**Hope in the midst of lockdown**

Photo credit: Christian Manz

### ***A prayer of the Dean of Southwark*** (which we posted on our church doors)

*Loving God,  
source of healing and comfort,  
fill us with your grace,  
that the sick may be made whole,  
that those who care for us may be strengthened,  
that the anxious may be calmed,  
and those most vulnerable be protected  
in the power of Spirit  
in the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*



# The Red Balloon

## Janet Jones on nature imitating art

Anyone in their 70s or older may remember a mid 50s French film called *The Red Balloon*\*. It told the story, using no words (but with music) of a lonely little Parisian boy named Pascal, who found a magic balloon. After much tribulation – not allowed on the bus, or in school, and burst by a jealous gang of urchins – all the balloons in Paris came to the rescue and lifted Pascal into the sky. (It was, incidentally or intentionally, a hymn to Paris as well as a lovely story). It is one of my favourite films.

So much so that, when I was persuaded to enter a national embroidery competition with the subject My Favourite Things, I thought the balloon should be included. I eventually produced a page from an 'illuminated manuscript' with the balloon in the border.



On 26th March I looked through the front bedroom window to see how the blossom tree outside next door was doing, it has deep pink flowers which were starting to burst, but it seemed to have produced some rather different flowers: two silver star-shaped balloons. I am lucky enough (depending on your attitude!) to live between five under tens, and two of them were in their back garden playing with Dad, so we all looked at them together, me from upstairs and them from the front garden. We didn't know where they came from, and we didn't care, we just enjoyed the Stars in the Tree.

Later in the day, because of the strength of the wind, one of them escaped and settled in the sapling outside our house, so I can see it from my armchair. It won't last of course, the helium is gradually escaping, and when they eventually go flat and limp we shall have to get the long tree loppers and cut the strings free, particularly from the young tree. However, in the meantime, I am enjoying my special balloon. I don't expect to find dozens of silver stars coming to lift me bodily away from the Coronavirus, but the one I have is enough to lift my spirit.

\*The red balloon. Albert Lamorisse Doubleday Books 1956. There is also a DVD.



# *The organist entertains*

Find out more about **Simon Harvey**, our **Director of Music**—you will most likely have heard him play the organ or conduct the choir (sometimes at the same time!)

## **Where were you born?**

I was born in Kingston Hospital in 1971 and grew up in Thames Ditton.

## **What family do you have?**

I have a brother who is 3 years younger than myself who is married and has a very young daughter.

## **Job?**

Unsurprisingly, I am a musician by trade. When I am not being musical at SASM, I am a freelance piano accompanist and organist - I teach the piano in three schools as well as privately. I am also an examiner for the ABRSM and travel around the UK throughout the year in this capacity. In August 2019 I took part in my first international group examining tour to Hong Kong which was an amazing experience. Sadly, much of my work has been curtailed to a greater or lesser extent by the current Covid pandemic.

## **How long you have been attending St Andrews's & St Mark's?**

I joined the choir at St Andrew's way back in February 1987 as a 16 year-old fledgling tenor! I had previously been a treble chorister at St Christopher's Church, Hinchley Wood and had also been practising the organ there since starting lessons aged 12. By the time I was 16, I had outgrown the small pipe organ at St Christopher's and so I looked around for a new choir to join and a more comprehensive instrument on which to practice. I had attended several Ember Choral Society concerts in

St Andrew's around that time (my music teacher at Hinchley Wood School, John Sutton, was their conductor) and I fell in love with the building, organ and acoustics. I came to a service one Sunday morning and then got in touch with the then organist of St Andrew's, Donald Perkins, and the rest is history!

## **How do you relax?**

People often ask me "What music do you play for pleasure or to relax?" My response often surprises them. "Well I don't, really. Music is my job, not a hobby." To relax I like to watch television, go walking or read. I love to travel, too, but am not able to do much of that at the moment due to Covid.

## **What single thing would improve the quality of your life?**

To become a better and more skilled musician – I have always been my own worst critic. Musicians, however, are trained to think that way...nothing is ever perfect...it can always be better.

## **What is your favourite meal?**

A decent pizza and a good curry....but not usually at the same sitting!

## **Most enjoyable book?**

I particularly enjoy reading autobiographies of famous (and perhaps complex) characters. I am currently re-reading "The Kenneth Williams Diaries" which are fascinating.



### Where do you like to go for holidays?

In the UK, I love East Anglia, particularly the Suffolk coast and spend time there whenever I can. Abroad, I always find the USA great fun and a highly intriguing place to explore. I also have close friends in Denmark and like to travel there several times a year - Scandinavia as a whole is a relaxed and calming place to visit – they have a great work/life balance.

### What is your idea of perfect happiness?

A pint (or two!) of Adnams Broadside at the Lord Nelson pub in Southwold, Suffolk on a bright, crisp, autumn day.

### What is the most important lesson life has taught you?

That a sense of humour is vital!

[Ed: Simon's sense of humour was in evidence in the way he described this profile for the magazine: "It is not exactly the Richard Nixon interviews but should provide a suitably mediocre filler for which-ever future edition of Spire and Tower you might be desperately in need of copy for".

*Simon was questioned by Olga Wickenden*



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# **Christmas isn't cancelled. Jesus is our Emmanuel: God with us.**

From 5 November 2020, there will be a four week national shutdown.

This means there will be no services in church until early December, but we will be online.

We would usually list our November and December (including Christmas!) services in this edition, but we don't know yet what will be possible. Our worship will continue online and we promise to keep in touch to let you know what services are happening when. For further guidance, please contact the clergy or (16) the church office.



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# Contact Details

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### PARISH OFFICE

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Address: St Mark's church, St Mark's Hill, Surbiton, KT6 4LS

Open Tuesday to Thursday: 9.30-3.30pm, Friday, 9.30– noon. Please note that during the current pandemic, the office may not always be manned during these all these hours as Clare also works from home. It is always best to call ahead to save a wasted journey.

Please contact Clare in the parish office for all hall lettings and applications for banns of marriage. We have a range of different size rooms for hire, including a large hall. Both churches are also great concert venues. There are procedures in place to make sure our spaces are Covid secure.

If you are interested in you or your child being baptised, then speak to a member of clergy. You can email them or just catch one of them after one of the Sunday services.

[www.surbitonchurch.org.uk](http://www.surbitonchurch.org.uk)

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