

Hampstead Parish Church

Magazine for July & August 2026

**BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY OF
CHRISTIAN LOVE, FAITH, WITNESS AND ACTION**

Mthr Carol considers
The Desert Fathers
and St Ethelreda

Donald Towner
exhibition at Burgh
House

Charity News
Hestia

Book of the month
Malcolm Guite's
Arthuriad

Summer Music
Choral Evensong with
the BBC
Hampstead Collective
Organ Recital
As well as the music for
services in July



HAMPSTEAD PARISH CHURCH

[Registered Charity No. 1129264]

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Parish Office: 020 7794 5808 /
vestry@hampsteadparishchurch.org.uk
Website: hampsteadparishchurch.org.uk

Sunday worship:

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30am Choral Holy Communion (Common Worship)
5.00pm Choral Evensong (BCP)

Weekday worship:

Wednesdays Holy Communion at 10.15am

But please check the weekly email—sometimes, and particularly during the Interregnum which starts on 20th July, we may have to make changes to our pattern of worship*

For Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Home Communions and
Home Visits

Before 19th July - please contact The Vicar, Revd Carol Barrett Ford

After that please contact the office admin

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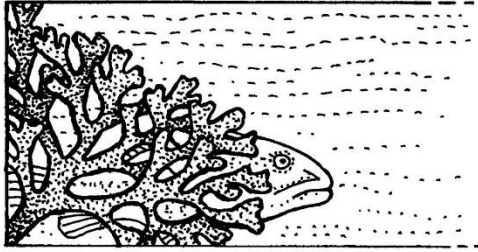
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July &
August 2026

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Diary for July & August

Thu 2nd 7.30pm The Hampstead Players production of “Emma”
Fri 3rd *Thomas the Apostle*

7.30pm “Emma”
Sat 4th 10.0aam Church Cleaning and Gardening
2.30pm and 7.30pm “Emma”



Sunday 5th Trinity 5

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Choral Holy Communion and Junior Church
5.00pm Choral Evensong

Mon 6th 7.00pm Hampstead Collective – see page 22

Wed 8th 10.15am Holy Communion
3.00pm Choral Evensong for Radio 3 – see page 20

Sunday 12th Trinity 6 (Sea Sunday)

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Choral Holy Communion and Junior Church’s
final session this term
5.00pm Choral Evensong

Wed 15th *St Swithun* (see page 29)
10.15am Holy Communion

Sat 18th 4.00pm Organ Recital: Cristina Brancato (see page 22)

Sunday 19th Trinity 7

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Choral Holy Communion followed by leaving
party for Mthr Carol in church
5.00pm Choral Evensong

Wed 22nd *Mary Magdalene*
10.15am Holy Communion

Sat 25th *James the Apostle*



Sunday 26th Trinity 8

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Choral Holy Communion
5.00pm Choral Evensong

Sat 1st August (*Lammas day – see page 24*)

10.00am Gardening group meets

Sunday 2nd Trinity 9

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion
5.00pm Evening Prayer

Mon 3rd 7.00pm Hampstead Collective – see page 22

Wed 5th 10.15am Holy Communion

Thu 6th *The Transfiguration of our Lord*



Sunday 9th Trinity 10

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion
5.00pm Evening Prayer

Wed 12th 10.15am Holy Communion

Sat 15th *The Blessed Virgin Mary*



Sunday 16th Trinity 11

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion
5.00pm Evening Prayer

Wed 19th 10.15am Holy Communion

Sunday 23rd Trinity 12

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion
5.00pm Evening Prayer

Mon 24th *Bartholomew the Apostle*
Wed 26th 10.15am Holy Communion

Sunday 30th Trinity 13

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Holy Communion
5.00pm Evening Prayer

Revd Stephen Tucker

At the time of going to print we had just received the news of Fr Stephen's death. Stephen was Vicar here from 2001 to 2016 and we are all greatly saddened to hear of his death. His ministry touched many people and much more will be spoken and written in the days and weeks ahead but for now our thoughts and prayers are with his family and all those who mourn his loss.

The Vicar writes

'Many times I spoke, and as a result felt sorry, but I never regretted my silence', so commented Abba Arsenius, a wealthy Roman who abandoned his comfortable upbringing and status to live as a hermit in the Egyptian desert. Along with St Anthony, he is perhaps the most well known of the Desert Fathers and Mothers—men and women who chose to leave the lures and distractions of the world and devote their lives to prayer, work and silence. Indeed, the third and fourth century AD saw thousands of monks and nuns journey into the desert to find space to engage with the reality of God's presence in their lives, to reject what they saw as the snares of society, and to live in solitude and silence.

If the Desert Fathers and Mothers were just as human as ourselves then it is reasonable to think that some of them, at least, did not love silence. For example, one Abba Moses was known for his jovial and

hospitable nature, but Abba Arsenius was notorious for his long silences. These are not *competing* but *completing* vocations—both are needed.

Embracing this austere and ascetic life, it would be easy to view them as spiritual heroes (or heroines). Yet they were simply men and women just like us. Fortunately, their sayings were collected from the earliest times and it is from those sayings that we have a window into their lives and their wisdom, anecdotes about their relationships with each other and the advice they gave to those who sought them out. They are also surprisingly witty and very human.

Their words have much to tell us about how we might live now, how we might live alongside each other. The decision of the Desert Fathers and Mothers to retreat to the harsh places in which they lived was not formed by a desire to *escape* others but to better live *with* others. Silence formed a vital part of that attentiveness, expressed in the core tenet of dying to oneself and binding one's life to another. As St Anthony the Great taught:

'Our life and death is with our neighbour. If we win our brother we win God. If we cause our brother to stumble, we have sinned against Christ'

Recently I have been dipping back into Rowan Williams' *Silence and Honey Cakes*, his book reflecting on the wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers, especially in relation to how we formulate our thoughts about how 'the church' should 'look' and 'feel' today. He has the following observation: '*a healthy Church is one in which we seek to stay connected with God by seeking to connect others with God*'. That is our task and our calling.

With best wishes
Mthr Carol

July & August

Judy East

After the busyness of June it may be something of a relief to enter July and find the calendar slightly less full. We've enjoyed much that was hugely entertaining but still – maybe there's room now for a slow-down, a lessening of the activity, to prepare ourselves for the autumn. And this autumn is, of course, going to be more challenging once we find ourselves in an interregnum. Some of us have seen all too many interregnums (interregna?) so we ought to be used to them but each one brings its own challenges. By September the report of the Archdeacon's Visitation should be with us - meanwhile, I'm sure the staff and churchwardens will keep things ticking along and will let us know what help they need.

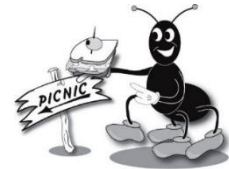
So what of July and August? Well, excitingly, the BBC will be doing a live broadcast of Choral Evensong for Radio 3 on 8th July at 3pm. It's a very long time since the BBC did a service here – it was a televised Morning Communion Service. I particularly remember because it was in the week before one of the Hampstead Players' productions and they took down all the lights I'd carefully focused! Funny how some things stick in your mind!! But not holding that against them I'll look forward to this broadcast – everyone is invited but we are asked to be in our seats by 2.45pm and **NOT TO MAKE A NOISE** during the service.

Later in the month we'll be having the last of our current series of Saturday afternoon organ recitals. Audiences haven't been large for these events and we need to reconsider what is the best time to do them. (It is noticeable that parents with small children do occasionally pop in for part of the recitals – in fact at the last one almost a third of the audience was under 5. Perhaps that's something we should be making a feature of?) Do read what Geoffrey has written about Cristina Brancato, the organist for the recital on 18th July, further on in this issue and come to support her if you can.

The Hampstead Collective continue into August with concerts on 6th July and 3rd August but will have a break in September. And the choir will be on holiday during August so the singing will be up to us!

Away from the church there's a Donald Towner exhibition at Burgh House – you can read more about who he was and what he bequeathed us further on in this issue and perhaps visit the exhibition.

Wishing you a restful, energetic whatever you like best summer.



Sermon

Matthew 10:21

Mthr Carol

During this coming week we will remember St Ethelreda who was the Abbess of Ely in the seventh century. Ethelreda was born in Suffolk into a noble family—she was the daughter of Anna, who was King of the East Angles. Like many royal women through history, marriages were motivated by politics. Her second marriage was to King Egrid, her first husband having died not long after they were married. Ethelreda was a devout woman who wanted to serve God and begged her husband to allow her to give up her status and goods so that she could live a monastic life. After much pleading and persuasion he finally gave his consent and Ethelreda entered the monastery of Abbess Ebba (King Egrid's aunt) at Coldingham. Bishop Wilfrid received her and she became a nun.

However, she did not have long to spend in the prayer and contemplation she so longed for. Instead she was called upon to become an Abbess herself just one year later, in the district of Ely. She built a monastery leading the other women in prayer and learning. Ethelreda did not make a distinction between herself and the other nuns—she wore simple woollen garments instead of linen and we are told that she seldom took a hot bath except on the eve of great feasts

such as Easter or Pentecost! (Bathing like this was seen by many as an extravagance!).

Even then, she humbled herself by helping all the other nuns to wash before attending to herself. It is written that she rarely had more than one meal a day and spent time in prayer in the early morning before the work of the monastery began. Ethelreda was Abbess for seven years and when she died in around the year 678 she was buried in a simple wooden coffin alongside the other nuns, with nothing to indicate her status.

The story of Ethelreda remind us that humility is an important part of being a follower of Jesus who humbled himself to take on our human flesh and to live and die amongst us. In our Gospel reading today we hear more from Jesus about the call to discipleship, and again some of it makes difficult or unpleasant reading. Many people find this passage from St Matthew really troubling—we do not want to hear Jesus speak about ‘bringing a sword’ or that he would ‘set a man against his father’. And yet, the road of discipleship is not always easy and we often have to give up the things we want to do—or, indeed, be willing to change—if we are to follow Jesus.

It is one thing to think about going out to proclaim the gospel and something else to actually do it. The disciples faced conflict and discouragement, it was very far from talking with Jesus and breaking bread comfortably together. And they must have worried that the message they faithfully carried would founder, like the seed cast on stony soil or eaten by the birds. This is the seed that when it takes root and flourishes transforms lives, transforms families, transforms communities. Jesus encourages the disciples to continue—despite setback and hardship—reminding them that God loves and values each and every one of us: ‘even the hairs of your head are counted’. This knowledge should equip us to keep on trying, to persevere in God’s service, to make his kingdom known on earth. For when the good news of the gospel is heard, received—treasured in the heart—then the whole of society will flourish: individuals, families and communities.

Jesus wants to remind us that no matter how difficult the road might be, no matter how much we must let go of the things we love and value, God is always with us.

I wonder how hard it was for Ethelreda to give up her comfortable life when it came to the crunch? After years of asking her husband to release her from her marriage, I wonder how it felt when he said yes? I wonder if she was frightened when she came before Bishop Wilfrid to make her vows. I wonder how she settled into her life as a novice, with no servants, no fine robes—just plain food and a small cell to sleep in. And I wonder what she felt when she was asked so very suddenly to give up this life that she had just gotten used to? I wonder what she felt when she was given back a measure of power and authority as an Abbess with financial, spiritual and temporal duties and obligations. We are not told if she struggled with this, but it seems to me very ironic that a rich noblewoman who has given up everything to serve God is elevated to a position of power. Perhaps this is why she would not take hot baths, ate plain food and was buried with no honour or grand memorial.

For each of us there is a path of discipleship that will mean some measure of hardship. It is completely individual—what is hard for me might be very easy for you, and vice versa! Jesus is honest—he tells us that it can be very costly indeed to follow him. There will be difficulties, there will be conflict and there may be discord with those who we count as our nearest and dearest. As one writer says ‘the gospel shakes up values, rearranges priorities, and reorients goals’.

We could argue that because she was born of noble blood Ethelreda’s function in life was to make a good marriage and bear strong healthy children, to secure the kingdom. If that is the measure of her life then she failed and let her family down. But we know that what Ethelreda did was to follow what she believed God wanted for her.

In Morning Prayer we say the Collect for Peace. I particularly like the version from the Book of Common Prayer because the language is so beautiful. It goes like this:

*O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord,
in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life,
whose service is perfect freedom:
Defend us thy humble servants
in all assaults of our enemies;
that we, surely trusting in thy defence,
may not fear the power of any adversaries;
through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

The phrase ‘whose service is perfect freedom’ beautifully encapsulates the dilemma of discipleship. While we know that there will be hard times, by serving God and our neighbour we become **truly free, truly ourselves in God**. This knowledge gives us the strength and confidence to meet the inevitable challenges. As Jesus reminds us: ‘So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows’.

Charity News

Hestia

Life Beyond Crisis

Hestia is the largest provider of modern slavery support in London and the South East.

Modern slavery

Modern slavery is a serious crime in which people are coerced or deceived into a situation where they are exploited for the purpose of making a profit. The offence is punishable by up to life imprisonment under the 2015 Modern Slavery Act.

Modern slavery takes many forms including trafficking for sexual exploitation (including being forced to sell sex in its many forms,

involuntary work in strip clubs, or in the pornography industry), domestic servitude (including working as cleaners, carers or nannies) and forced labour in work such as nail bars and car washes.

Hestia's domestic abuse refuges

Hestia provides domestic abuse refuges for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. We provide emotional and practical support and ensure that every woman we support has an up-to-date risk assessment and support plan tailored to their needs.

Community-based support

In addition to Hestia's domestic abuse refuges, our Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and floating support teams support people living in the community who are at high risk of domestic abuse.

Children

Across the UK one in five children experience domestic abuse. Hestia's refuges also provide tailored support for children through our Children and Family Workers.

During school summer holidays, Hestia runs a six-week Summer Play Scheme providing activities and outings for mothers and their children across our refuges.

Funded through generous donations from the public, the Summer Play Scheme provides women and children with a safe and supportive space to reconnect and create new happy memories.

UK SAYS NO MORE

UK SAYS NO MORE is Hestia's national campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Mental health & wellbeing

Every day, we support people across London and the South East who have experienced crisis and trauma to find safety, hope, and purpose.

Our dedicated mental health services are always evolving to meet rising needs.

Last year, more than 12,000 people turned to us for support with their mental health.

People come to us for many reasons – from homelessness or debt to family breakdown or isolation.

We offer tailored support depending on each person’s needs, with the aim of helping them move from crisis toward recovery and independence.

Our services range from supported housing for people with multiple needs to mental health Recovery Hubs and Houses for people experiencing crisis.

Their Get Help page lists a range of numbers for many kinds of abusive situations at www.hestia.org/get-help including banks and pharmacies that provide “Safe Spaces” where victims can find the safety to get through to the help they need.

You can donate to Hestia online at hestia.org/Appeal/donatenow or, if you want to donate by cheque, enquire about making a donation or have any questions, please contact fundraising.team@hestia.org.

How Hestia spends your donations

For every £1 donated to Hestia:

- **98.81p** is spent on delivering services
- **1.02p** is spent on raising more funds
- **0.16p** is spent managing investments

MUSIC SECTION

Music Notes ~ July 2026

Geoffrey Webber

This month represents perhaps the highpoint of our year-long exploration of the church music of Charles Wood, who died on 12th July 1926. The special Choral Evensong on Wednesday 8th July is described in a separate paragraph below, but on the 12th itself we perform his *Missa Sancti Patricii*, or Mass of St Patrick, that day, composed with St Patrick's C.o.I. Cathedral, Armagh, in mind, where his father was a tenor lay-clerk and where he and his brothers were choristers. (His elder brother William also became an organist, studying at the Royal Academy of Music and later becoming a Professor there and also Organist and Director of Music at Highgate School.) Having put together plans for the co-ordinated performance of all of Wood's church music in Armagh, Cambridge and London this year, I will in fact be away from Hampstead on the 12th, attending celebratory performances elsewhere in London, and Francesca Massey, who has been deputising for us as organist recently, will be at the helm. We have now advertised our post of Organist, and hope to have someone able to join us in this role (replacing Joshua Ryan) from September.

Irish connections remain strong on the 19th July, since we will perform a new work by bass choir member Eoghan Desmond to mark the final choral service with Mthr Carol as our Vicar, *Fáeth Fíadha*. Eoghan writes: 'The famous Irish poem *Fáeth Fíadha* is attributed to St Patrick, and comprises part of a larger text, *Lúireach Phádraig*, commonly translated into English as St Patrick's Breastplate. *Fáeth Fíadha* is often translated (erroneously) as The Deer's Cry, due to the word *fiadha* bearing a resemblance to the modern word *fia* meaning deer. *Fiadha* in this instance is likely more closely related to the modern word *fianna*, meaning "warriors" or "defenders", with *Fáeth* likely linking to a word meaning 'spell' or 'mist'. Hence my subtitle, 'A Mist of Concealment'.'

We also say farewell this month to alto Rebekah Nießer-Jones who has sung with us since January 2023. With the arrival of her first child due soon, she is moving to a lighter church commitment with just one Sunday service, the Jesuit Church at Farm St. She has served the choir brilliantly over the last three-and-a-half years, and there will be a chance to say thank you to her over drinks at the last Evensong in July (26th), after she sings for us the final 'Angel' section of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. Most of the music for the service has been chosen by Rebekah. Auditions are currently in progress to identify her replacement.

For Mthr Carol's final Holy Communion service on 19th July we will have an expanded choir to sing the *Jazz Mass* by Bob Chilcott. The music was in fact planned anyway for this particular Sunday, but it will certainly help make the service feel different and special. Unlike another Jazz Mass we performed a few years ago which featured a small instrumental group, Chilcott's setting will be sung with piano only.

At Holy Communion on Sunday 26th we will sing a new anthem by Philip Moore, whose *Messe Solennelle* we sang on Easter Day. Beginning 'We do not presume', the text is a mixture of the Prayer of Humble Access and the Prayer of Consecration. Unlike the grand *Messe*, this anthem is quiet and prayerful, ideal for performance during the communion. Our visit organists this month will be Joshua Ryan, Francesca Massey, Martyn Noble and a new addition, Tom Winpenny, who was Assistant Organist at St Albans Cathedral for 16 years before moving to freelance work.

Music List ~ July 2026

Sunday 5 July – 5th Sunday of Trinity

10.30 am. Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Psalm XXIII* Charles Wood

Introit Hymn 342

Mass setting (GI/S&B/AD) *Missa Ecce quam bonum* Hans Leo Hassler

Gradual Psalm 145.8-15 tone vii/5

Offertory Hymn 404
Communion Motet *Cantate Dominum* Hans Leo Hassler
Post-Communion Hymn 489
Organ Postlude *Old CXXXVIth Psalm* Charles Wood

5 pm. Choral Evensong

Organ Prelude *Andante Pathétique* John Stainer
Introit *My heart, O God is steadfast* Lucy Walker
Preces & Responses Thomas Morley
Psalm 56 John Stainer
Canticles *Evening Service in G* Charles Stanford
The Lord's Prayer Robert Stone
Anthem *Ave Maria* Felix Mendelssohn
Hymn 540
Final Amen Felix Mendelssohn
Organ Postlude *Fugue in A-flat minor* Johannes Brahms

Sunday 12 July – 6th Sunday of Trinity

10.30 am. Holy Communion with Baptism

Organ Prelude *Psalm Prelude* (Set 1, No 2) Herbert Howells
Introit Hymn 408
Mass setting (GI/S&B/AD) *Missa Sancti Patricii* Charles Wood
Gradual Psalm 65.8-end tone viii/I
Offertory Hymn 368
Communion Motet *Oculi omnium* Charles Wood
Post-Communion Hymn 516
Organ Postlude *Toccata on King's Lynn* (Three Fantasias) Francis Pott

5 pm. Choral Evensong

Organ Prelude *Benedictus* (Sonata Britannica) Charles Stanford
Introit *Cantate Domino* Claudio Monteverdi
Preces & Responses Thomas Morley
Psalm 60 Joseph Barnby
Canticles *The Second Service* Orlando Gibbons
The Lord's Prayer Robert Stone
Anthem *Te lucis ante terminum* Henry Balfour Gardiner
Hymn 475

Final Amen Felix Mendelssohn
Organ Postlude *Fanfare* Emma Louise Ashford

Sunday 19 July – 7th Sunday of Trinity

10.30 am. Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Bluesday* Iain Farrington
Introit Hymn 73 (omit v. 5)
Mass setting *A Little Jazz Mass* Bob Chilcott
Gradual Psalm 86.11-17 Anglican Chant
Offertory Hymn 388
Communion Motet *The Lord bless you and keep you* John Rutter
Post-Communion Hymn 432
Organ Postlude *Alleluys* Simon Preston

5 pm. Choral Evensong

Organ Prelude *Allegretto* (Sonata no. 4) Felix Mendelssohn
Introit *For he shall give his angels charge over thee* Felix Mendelssohn
Preces & Responses Thomas Morley
Psalm 67 Christopher Gibbons
Canticles *Evening Service in B flat* John Stainer
The Lord's Prayer Robert Stone
Anthem *Fáeth Fíadha* Eoghan Desmond
Hymn 401
Final Amen Felix Mendelssohn
Organ Postlude *Allegro con brio* (Sonata no. 4) Felix Mendelssohn

Sunday 26 July – 8th Sunday of Trinity

10.30 am. Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele* (BWV 654) J. S. Bach
Introit Hymn 436
Mass setting (GI/S&B/AD) *Mass in G* Franz Schubert
Gradual Psalm 119.129-136 James Turle
Offertory Hymn 439
Communion Motet *We do not presume* Philip Moore
Post-Communion Hymn 379
Organ Postlude *Allabreve* (BWV 589) J. S. Bach

5 pm. Choral Evensong

Organ Prelude *Fugue on BACH* (Op 60, No. 5) Robert Schumann

Introit *Ave Maria* Robert Parsons

Preces & Responses David Trendell

Psalm 75 Edward Hopkins

Canticles *The St Paul's Service* Herbert Howells

Anthem *Lord, thou hast been our refuge* (Gerontius) Edward Elgar

Hymn 454 (ii)

Final Amen Felix Mendelssohn

Organ Postlude *Fugue on BACH* (Op 60, No. 6) Robert Schumann

Aidan Coburn *Director of the Junior & Community Choirs*

Geoffrey Webber *Director of Music*



BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong

Wednesday 8th July 3 pm

Sung by the Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge,
directed by Matthew Martin.

**This is a live broadcast, and the congregation should be
seated by 2.45 pm.**

The service is repeated on Radio 3 on Sunday 12th
and will also be available on BBC Sounds.

As part of the Charles Wood centenary celebrations this year, the choir of Wood's principal Cambridge College, Gonville & Caius, will be coming to sing Choral Evensong on 8th July with a programme of music to mark the centenary of his death. Most of the music will of course be by Wood, and since he was an undergraduate at the newly founded Selwyn College in the 1880s, the setting of the Preces & Responses are those by the current Director of Music there, Sarah MacDonald. Two of Wood's stirring hymn-anthems will book-end the service, and the anthem will be his extremely moving *Expectans expectavi*, composed in memory of his eldest son, Patrick, killed in the

First World War, with the text written by another casualty of the war, Charles Sorley, whose father was a close friend of Wood. Matthew Martin and the Organ Scholars have also fashioned some psalm chants from fragments of other compositions by Wood, and the Office Hymn will be sung to the fine tune 'Cambridge', published in the Songs of Praise hymnal. The service will also feature my reconstruction and edition of Wood's *Magnificat and Nunc dimitis in A flat*, which survives in an almost complete fair copy and some sketches in the library at Gonville & Caius. The BBC's Choral Evensong is celebrating its own centenary this year, having begun its weekly broadcasts in 1926.



Final Organ Recital of the current series

Cristina Brancato

Saturday 18th July 4-5 pm

Our current organ recital series ends this month, with a visit from the distinguished Neapolitan organist and pianist, Cristina Brancato. She graduated with top honours in Organ and Organ Composition from the prestigious *San Pietro a Majella* Conservatory in Naples, and has built a distinguished concert career since the 1990s, performing both as a soloist and with various ensembles. She has been a member of the unique *Chant d'Oiseaux* Organ Quartet, a unique ensemble featuring four organists playing on a single console, with whom she has performed in Italy and abroad, including at the Salzburg Organ Festival. In addition to her concert activity, she has been teaching since the early 1990s, currently serves as Principal Organist at the *Basilica of Santa Maria di Piedigrotta* in Naples, and dedicates herself to exploring the organ's expressive potential as well as researching early childhood music education.



The Hampstead Collective

Monday 6th July at 7.00pm

Brahms: Liebeslieder Waltzes

Brahms' famous collections of love songs, *Liebeslieder-Walzer* Op. 52 and Op. 65, written for four voices and piano duet

Monday 3rd August at 7.00pm

Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome...
to the Hampstead Collective Cabaret

Tickets £15 available from thehampsteadcollective.com
or at the door



Celebrating the Musicals

Judy East

On a blisteringly hot evening in May a capacity audience crammed itself into the Juke Box Café (sorry, Crypt Room) for a Musical extravaganza. The Hampstead Players were kicking off their celebratory 50th year with songs from the shows – numbers from some of the musicals they've performed. The first was *The Glass Slipper* in 1991 when Barbara Alden grasped the nettle and decided they were ready to explore musical theatre. I have to say it was an inspired as well as brave move and they've never looked back. Only two years later there was *Follow the Star*, a musical nativity play, and then *Oliver!* and so on. They'd cracked it – the Players could definitely do musicals.

Some sixteen Players took part and it was good to welcome back some former members: Jo Sawicki (Siddall) launched the evening with *Do Re Mi* (and we were glad she led us in a community sing-along to

end the show) Ayla Lepine reprised *Climb Every Mountain* and, with David Gardner, sang *We'll always love him* from *Follow the Star* – I'm biased of course because it was my production, but was I the only one with a lump in my throat? Other returnees included Mary Clare, Kim Slater, Bonnie Taylor - but how long do you have to be away to count as a 'returnee'? I don't want to misrepresent anyone's connection to the Players so I'll stop there! It did cross my mind though that many of the participants weren't even born when the Players first stepped onto the stage (borrowed from another church and not nearly high enough, but that's another story).

The Crypt Room was effectively decked out in red tinsel and mood lighting which all added atmosphere, and apart from those performing many old friends had come back to cheer them on so the audience was at once enthusiastic and expectant. And they did not disappoint. It was magical and moving, sad and funny, a tribute to Ashley Collin and Richard Decker (who took part as well), Gaynor Basseby Fish, Matthew Williams and Valeria Garcia for the direction, the transformation of the crypt, the accompaniment and the lighting which all contributed to the whole. Whilst some of the participants were reprising numbers they'd sung in the shows – as well as Ayla, David and Jo there were Ulysses Wells as Prof Higgins, Jon Waters as Captain Von Trapp, Shereen Abdallah with the poignant Pearl's a Singer from *Juke Box Café*, others were stepping up to take on new roles - Adrian Hughes, for whom we could almost justify doing *Oliver!* again - Emma Lyndon Stanford, Nicki Siddall, Sarah Day, Jon Siddall with A little List from *Blue Stocking*, – regular Players but in different roles this time. Favourite moments? We all had our own particular favourites I'm sure and I'm not going to even attempt to pick anyone out because that would be to overlook something equally delightful. Except - possibly – our churchwarden, Angela Gardner, mug in hand, giving us a rousing Oom-pah-pah! And looking as if she enjoyed every minute of it!

Later in the year – September 19th – the Players will present a Gala evening in church with another opportunity to experience all the enjoyment they've brought us over the years, and then finally on 22nd November there will be a Thanksgiving service – where no doubt we'll

be able to honour all those who contributed so much over the years but are sadly no longer with us. All chances to laugh (and maybe cry) with them, to admire their enthusiasm and determination and, for some of us, to accompany them on a trip down memory lane.

August 1st is Lamma's Day

Lamma's Day traditionally marks the start of the harvest season as we reach the half way point between the Summer solstice and the Autumn equinox and the start of the grain harvest.



The name comes from the Old English phrase for loaf mass - celebrating the baking of bread made with the first fruits of the new harvest which would be presented at a church service on Loaf Mass Day.

While most celebrations are now left to traditional Harvest Festivals in October marking the successful gathering of the harvest, some churches still hold special services where freshly made bread is brought to the altar and blessed:

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
you bring forth bread from the fields
and give us the fruits of the earth in their seasons.
Accept this loaf, which we bring before you,
made from the harvest of your goodness.
Let it be for us a sign of your fatherly care.
Blessed are you, Lord our God,
worthy of our thanksgiving and praise

(Article from ACE – Association of Church Editors)

Donald Chisholm Towner, Artist and Ceramic Historian

Those of us who know Towner through his painting in the Lady Chapel (if you're not familiar with it do have a look) may be surprised to discover that he was more widely known for his interest in ceramics, and Creamware in particular. He wrote several books on pottery and only one, *Recollections of a landscape painter and pottery collector: an autobiography*¹ on painting.



Towner trained at the Royal College of Art and then moved to London, first to Mornington Crescent, then Holly Hill and finally to 8 Church Row where his mother, Grace, had bought a house. And this was where he discovered a love of antiques and in particular British pottery. Also, evidently, his association with the parish church. The altar painting depicts Christ in Glory over Church Row - he used his nephew as a model for St John, Dionys Moore, another resident of Church Row, for Mary and himself for Christ. Miss Moore was for many years a regular attender at Morning and Evening Prayer and I always wondered what it must be like to have your portrait facing you every day. Did the medieval painters of church frescoes also used local residents and was it quite routine to see yourself and your neighbours staring down at you? The cloak the Virgin Mary's wearing was later made into the cover for the wood behind the altar. He gave the painting in memory of his mother and the ashes of both of them are interred under the magnolia outside the Crypt room.

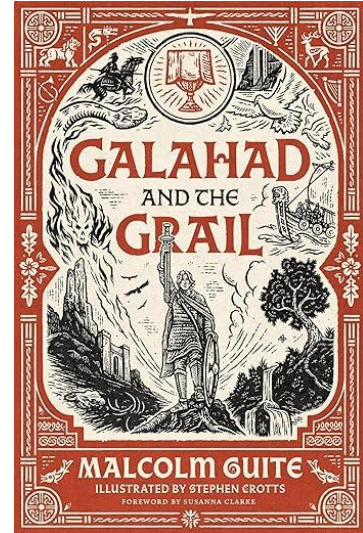
You can see a small exhibition of some of Towner's work at Burgh House – on until December but do check the opening times before you go.

¹ New York: Born-Hawes Publishing Limited. [OCLC 651971201](#).

Book of the Month

Galahad and the Grail: Merlin's Isle Volume I
(Merlin's Isle: An Arthuriad) by Malcom Guite

For many, the tales of Arthur and his knights are the stuff of bedtime stories or children's cartoons. But the origin of these tales goes back more than a thousand years, part of a Europe-wide storytelling tradition. In the past century, much of the Christian bedrock of these stories has been stripped away, losing their foundational themes, deeper character motivations, and the potency of the tales themselves. Now, bestselling poet Malcolm Guite re-enchants the legend of King Arthur for a new generation, restoring its original power and mystery in a sweeping four-volume series that blends myth, theology, and lyric mastery. Drawing on a lifetime of poetic craft and spiritual reflection, he offers a rich, immersive journey through Britain's mythic and moral landscape. In this first volume, Galahad and the Grail, we join the prophesied youth Sir Galahad as he sets out from Camelot to achieve the Holy Grail. This tale of adventure in ballad form plumbs the depths of the human soul, carries readers through the Wasteland, and sets us upon the numinous shores of Faerie in all its mystery and meaning. This is not an epic poem destined to be sequestered in the halls of academia, but a tale to be read by young and old alike, to be read aloud among friends, to be read and cherished for generations to come. Published in a beautiful hardback edition with woodcut illustrations by Stephen Crotts, this is a book to treasure and delight in.



(from Amazon website – used with permission)

Do you have a favourite book you'd like to recommend?
Let us know. You don't have to write a review, although of course
that would be even better.

But perhaps our Book of the Month should have been the Bible!

Book-sellers are reporting a record increase in sales of the Bible with sales in 2025 put at £6.3m as increasing numbers of Generation Z are said to be looking to the church.

Figures show sales are at record levels with a 134% increase in six years. According to a study by SPCK, (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), sales of religious books rose by 11% between 2024 and 2025. SPCK say the findings indicate a growing interest in Christianity particularly among young people with increasing interest among young men, and that a growing number of young adults are engaging with faith in a way that previous generations did not.

SPCK's CEO Sam Richardson said research shows that 62% of 18-24-year-olds describe themselves as "very" or "fairly" spiritual, a notable contrast to only 35% of those over 65. Additionally, only 13% of Generation Z identify as atheists - far lower than the 20% of millennials and 25% of Generation X who do. This suggests that Gen Z is approaching faith differently — not necessarily through traditional institutions but by exploring spirituality on their own terms.

"We are seeing an increased curiosity about Christianity. Events like the Covid-19 pandemic and the mental health crisis have caused many individuals to think deeply about their spirituality. Rather than relying on atheist thought leaders (or, for that matter, church leaders), we are seeing people want to draw their own conclusions by reading Christian books in general and the Bible in particular."

SPCK say that with rising levels of anxiety and depression, especially in the wake of the pandemic, many are turning to faith as a source of hope and reassurance. The Bible's messages of love, peace, and purpose resonate with those seeking comfort in difficult times.

Social media they say, has made faith more visible and accessible than ever. Online platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have created spaces where Christian creators share Bible-based content, making Scripture feel relevant and engaging for younger audiences. The hashtag #Bible has amassed billions of views on TikTok, highlighting the platform's role in increasing engagement with Scripture.

(Article from ACE)

Weather - *Thomas Hardy*

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly;
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at 'The Traveller's Rest,'
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh and ply;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

Although if memory serves cuckoos should be on their way soon:

Cuckoo in May sing all day
Cuckoo in June changes tune
Cuckoo in July away must fly
Cuckoo in August away they must
Cuckoo in September no one can remember

St Swithun's Day

St Swithun is apparently the saint you can blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15th July, it will then rain for 40 days after that. It all began when Swithun was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex. It was an important posting: Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and during the 10 years Swithun was there, Wessex became the most important kingdom of England.

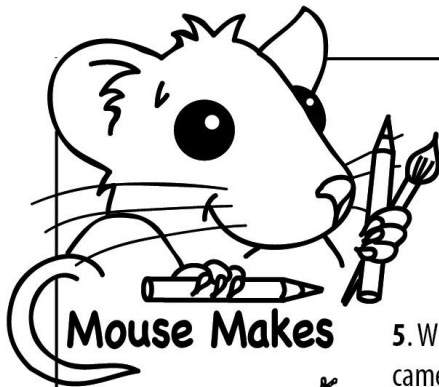


During his life, instead of washing out people's summer holidays, and damping down their spirits, Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he had been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers the English may have been spared over the last 1000 years. But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral with them. So finally, on 15 July 971, his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated into the cathedral.

That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of St Swithun. Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the middle ages. The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation and restored in 1962. There are 58 ancient dedications to Swithun in England.

(from Parish Pump)



Mouse Makes

1. What bird makes its nest on high?
Job 39:27



2. What ate the seeds along the path?
Matthew 13:4



3. The hair of which animal was used to make curtains?
Exodus 36:14

4. What insect can we learn from?
Proverbs 6:6

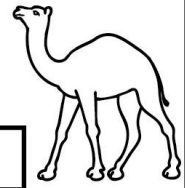
7. Which animal was Jesus compared to?
John 1:29



5. What plague came out of the River Nile?
Exodus 8:6



6. What animal would go through the eye of a needle easier than a rich person?
Luke 18:25



8. What bird did Noah release from the ark first?
Genesis 8:7



9 across. In what creature's mouth was a coin found?
Matthew 17:27



9 down. What lives in holes?
Matthew 8:20

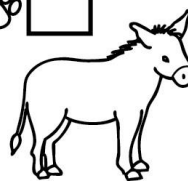


12. Which bird did the Holy Spirit appear as?
Luke 3:22

15. What insects did John eat in the wilderness?
Matthew 3:4



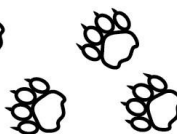
13. Which animal did Jesus ride on?
Matthew 21:7



14. What bird did God provide for food in the wilderness?
Exodus 16:13



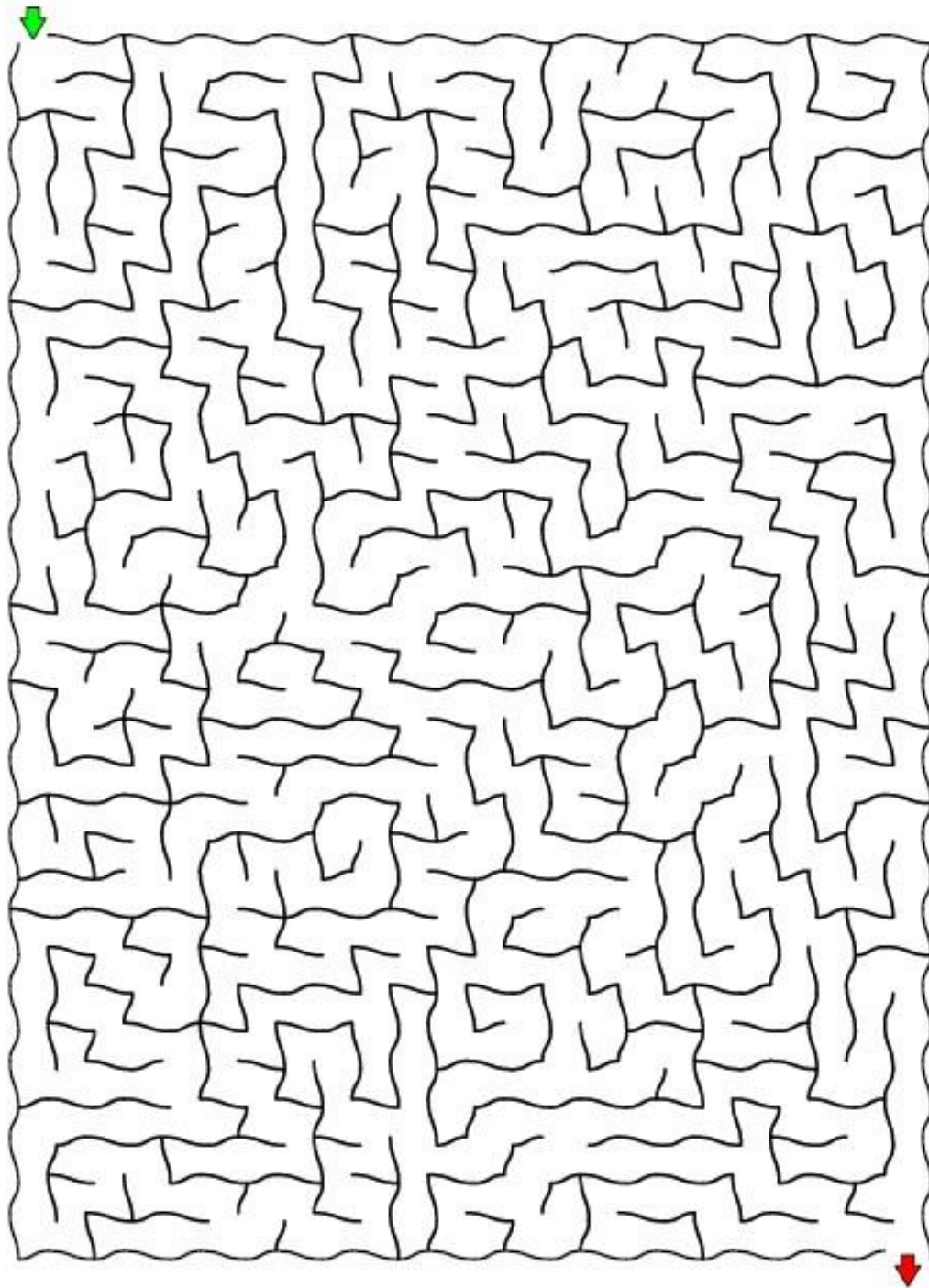
16. Which animal is the "mightiest among beasts"?
Proverbs 30:30



B I B L E

C R E A T U R E S

Can you find your way through?



Looking ahead

September

Sat 19th Hampstead Players' 50th anniversary Gala Evening

Sat 26th Church Cleaning

October

Sunday 10th Harvest Thanksgiving

November

Sunday 1st All Saints Day

Sat 7th Night Shelter starts

Sunday 8th Remembrance Sunday

Sat 14th Come and Sing Requiem

Sunday 22nd Hampstead Players 50th anniversary Thanksgiving service

Thu 26th – Sat 28th Hampstead Players' autumn production of A Winter's Tale

December

Fri 4th Community Choir Christmas Lights concert

Sat 5th Christmas Café

