## **Old Malden News**



# The Parish Magazine of St John the Baptist, Malden

September 2024

50p

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## **Old Malden News**

## The Parish Magazine of St John the Baptist Parish Church Malden

Church Road, Worcester Park KT4 7RY

Please send any articles or other material to:

St John the Baptist Parish Office

020 8330 2817

administrator@stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk

Advertising and Distribution:

Janet Flemming 020 8640 9377

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Copy date for the magazine is the 15th of the month and please only send submissions in Microsoft Word.

## ST JOHN'S HALL

411 Malden Road Worcester Park, KT4 7NY

Large and small halls available for hire with kitchen facilities
For parties, receptions, meetings etc
Reasonable Rates - Recently Redecorated

Details from the Bookings Secretary – Pat Sutton Tel: 020 8942 8321

# St John the Baptist Parish Church, Malden **Directory**

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Safeguarding Officers	Mrs Sally Pusey Mrs Margaret Barrington	020 8330 2817 020 8330 2817
Church Electoral Roll Officer	Mr Steve Clarke	020 8337 2392
Hall Bookings	Mrs Pat Sutton	020 8942 8321
Parish Website: Parish Office:	www.stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk administrator@stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk	

To receive the Parish Mailing please scan the QR code with your smart phone camera



## **Services for September**



#### St John's is OPEN

St John's is open for worship so please see the Parish Mailing for details Live Streaming of services will continue so you will be able to see services live via our YouTube Channel.

Sunday 8am - Said Eucharist

Sunday 9.45am - Sung Eucharist

Wednesday 11am — Said Eucharist

Coffee hosted by Mothers' Union after the first Wednesday service of the month.

Please make sure you are signed up to our mailing list to get up to date information regarding the services.

http://eepurl.com/gNz4Tf or scan the QR Code

#### Vicar's Letter

It is the middle of August as I write this. This afternoon as I was walking down the Manor Drive to Worcester Park, I passed a mum with her daughter, a child about five years old. The little girl was singing Jingle Bells with great gusto, while her mother looked at me very sheepishly. I said, "It's coming, Christmas will be here before you know it!" And the truth is it will, before we even know it. I realised that on the drive home up the 303 from Devon as our holiday came to an end. Christmas is the next big fixed point on the horizon, as August and the summer come to a close and September begins, a hive of activity with all the things to plan and do for the months ahead.

One of the things vicars always look for in September is just how many people return to Church after the summer break, where holidays can easily alter people's routines. As school and work commitments focus our attention and we get on with it, the Autumn is usually a time when different members of our congregations drop out and fill their Sunday mornings with other things. Many churches will keep a Sunday in September as Back to Church Sunday offering an opportunity to invite people to join them, others keep a longer Season of Invitation to re-engage with the wider community. At St. John's we have kept the Season of Creation over September, praying for the healing of Creation and looking at the ways we can protect our planet and the diversity of nature we share it with. This year's theme is To Hope and Act with Creation as Christians around the world thank God for the gifts he has given us in the beauty of the world and the resources he has made us stewards of, to share with all. It is my hope that the programme for the Sundays of September will appeal to you all and set the scene for our big Harvest Festival celebrations on October 6<sup>th</sup> as we welcome our children's uniformed organisations and they join us for our Parade service. The weeks ahead are our Back to Church initiative, setting the scene for All Saints Day, Remembrance Sunday, and the celebrations of Christmas to come. Is there anyone you think you could invite to join us?

This summer has been a busy one with changes and new opportunities coming to the fore. The process of sorting out the way St. John's PCC and committees work together and are updated in line with Church of England guidelines, is coming to fruition. We held a very successful PCC day to discuss the way forward and it looks as if many of our committees will become working groups under the auspices of a few official committees. This won't derail what we are already doing, but it will streamline our governance and, my hope, encourage others to join in for special projects/activities without feeling they have to sign their lives away and join a committee for the duration. Agility is the word because we will need to be as agile and responsive as possible if we are to fulfil our Mission Action Plan and make a greater impact. We are meeting Bishop Christopher's challenge to increase the number of children in Church thanks to our children' uniformed groups and our increased involvement with Malden Parochial. The next challenge is to "make new disciples for Christ" by showing grownups in the community that there is far more to the Christian faith than the stuffy, hide -bound, restrictive picture of Church they may have. Most of my ministry these 21 years has been about dispelling people's misconceptions of what Church is really about, With St. John's welcoming nature and lovely people, we are well placed to help so many see the

value of faith and what it can do to enrich all our lives. We need to keep being who we are and share our message of love and hope ever more widely.

As many of you know the work on the Church tower has had a blip in that our consignment of 100 bricks were badly damaged during the firing in the kiln. Given that these are bespoke, heritage bricks for our Jacobean tower we are having to wait for a new batch to be made, but this is in hand and we are hoping to see builders at work onsite by October. The great positive has been the response to our publicity for the Restore Project, at the school and church fairs and thanks to the leaflet drop across the Parish. I would like to thank everyone involved, especially those who have donated time and money to support us! Raising awareness has shown that there is support for the Church in the wider community for preserving our unique heritage and that many people want to see us continue serving others in need, as well as big new initiatives such as our emerging Nature Hub and Dementia Carers Support group.

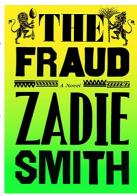
It has taken me a while, but I have realised that there is a rather large "hinterland" of people who used to attend St. John's but don't now for various reasons. There are also many people of other faiths and none, who nevertheless value the history and architectural legacy St. John's holds as the oldest building in our community. I would very much like to see the creation of a Friends of St. John's group who would like to be involved helping us raise money to do repairs and look after the church building, not our mission or teaching as many may not feel comfortable supporting that but love our building. An active Friend's group can make a very real difference because maintaining a Grade II listed building is a very expensive challenge. Such a group can also help us afford a regular programme of smaller work so that it doesn't all come at once and to such a high cost. It has been very hard getting the Restore Project off the ground, the sheer expense is daunting, but we need to prepare for the future as well unless we are content to see this as our last big project. The landscape will continue to change and grant-making bodies and charities are also subject to the ever-increasing secularisation of British society. I believe it will be much harder to secure funding for churches in 20 years' time so we need to prepare for any eventuality. I started a Friend's group in my first parish and several friends and colleagues also run one in their churches. One in particular raises between 30 and 40k pounds a year to maintain the Norman and Medieval church building in a parish that cannot pay their full Parish Support Fund to their diocese. The building is in excellent condition and open for an endless variety of community and church events and initiatives.

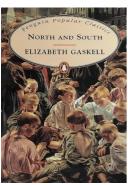
What I am proposing is if we had **two volunteers** to help me set up a group and recruit members once the official side of things is up and running. The resources for Terms of Reference, a constitution, etc are widely available and I have these from before. What I don't have unfortunately is the time to spin another plate on my own. My present commitments limit the time I have available. If you might be interested in being part of this or have any questions, do let me know. In the meantime don't be surprised by little ones singing Christmas carols. It is coming!

Michael

## St John's Reading Group September 2024

It would be true to say that we were rather misled by all the effusive comments made by the numerous newspapers and journals. Our choice for August was 'The Fraud' by Zadie Smith, which one could say, lived up to its title! The novel was set in Victorian England, variously from the 1830s and the 1870s. At the centre of the novel was the real-life trial of the Tichborne Claimant. This novel did have great potential but it was difficult to follow with the time changes and the numerous characters, none of whom were particularly endearing. The novel was a disappointment and achieved a low score of 5/10.

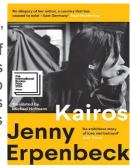


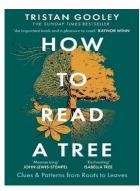


For our Summer Reading, we have selected Elizabeth Gaskell's 'North and South' by Elizabeth Gaskell. A Victorian 'social' novel published in 1854, after appearing in Dickens' weekly journal. It contrasts England's industrialized north and agrarian south and closely examines the changing class system of 19th-century England. Charles Dickens explores similar themes in his novel, Hard Times which was published about the same time. With our 21<sup>st</sup> century thoughts on the 'North-South' divide, it will be interesting to see the Victorian take

on the subject.

For our October meeting, we have selected 'Kairos' by Jenny Erpenbeck. This novel was the winner of the International Booker Prize 2024 and was originally written in German. It tells the story of two lovers through the ruins of a relationship which is set against the tumult of East Berlin in the 1980s and the final years of the GDR.





If you need a rest from novels, then perhaps 'How to read a Tree' by Tristan Gooley is the answer. It suggests how we might look for clues as we try to interpret what is revealed about the tree, its bark, leaves, roots and seeds. Trees are all around us but maybe we have a lot more to learn about them. Kew is already predicting that by the end of the century, many of our much-loved trees will have become 'extinct' due to drought and climate change. How important it is for us to value them as we discover more about

them.

In September, Tracy Chevalier's latest novel will be out in hardback – 'The Glass Maker', set in 15<sup>th</sup> century Murano. At the end of August another Jackson Brodie novel, 'Death at the Sign of the Rook' by Kate Atkinson will also be published in hardback. Future titles for our Reading Group?

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September at 8.00pm in the Church Coffee Lounge.

Marilyn

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!**

21st September: -Jumble Sale

20<sup>th</sup> October: -Vintage Afternoon Tea

30<sup>th</sup> November -Christmas Fair

The Fundraising Team



## Finding the Sacred in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Chris Benson attends the Modern Church Conference

There is a cartoon showing a vicar outside a church. "Come in here!" he says to someone in the street. "No, you come out here!!" is the reply.

That cartoon was referred to by one of the speakers at the Modern Church Conference, held at the High Leigh Conference Centre in Hertfordshire on 15-17 July, and it might be said to have been the underlying theme of the whole event, although the official subtitle was "new ways of looking at spirituality". Professor John Drane, in his introductory talk, reminded us that although fewer and fewer people now identify as Christian or have any intention of going to church, polls show that at least a third of the of the population say they are looking for some kind of spiritual experience, which in its broadest sense is whatever contributes to wellbeing and human flourishing, feeling good about oneself, one's body and one's sexuality, and "mystery".

Why is this? Possibly, said Professor Drane, because we are in "quantum shift", a phenomenon which (he said) occurs about every 500 years (the last being the upheaval of the Reformation and the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment), in which civilisation undergoes a major upheaval with no obvious outcome in sight.

In this environment, many people are now turning to so-called "alternative" spiritualities (but, as was pointed out, perhaps it is we who are now "alternative"?). We heard about people (including many young men) who find their spirituality in Heavy Metal, Tarot and crystals, Paganism (in its many forms — Druidry, Shamanism, Witchcraft, Wicca, Heathenism, etc.), video games, "psychic evenings", secular pilgrimage, ASMR videos (no, I didn't know what they are either: "Auto-Sensory Meridian Response" — relaxing sounds: have a look on YouTube!), and even Taylor Swift. People engaged with alternative spiritualties are reluctant to engage with Christians because they think (sadly not without reason) that their stories and spiritual journeys will be dismissed and devalued as wrong, stupid or even evil. But we need to be open to the possibility that we can learn from these alternatives. For instance, Paganism sets an example in caring for the Earth and rejection of patriarchy.

There was much talk of "safe spaces" where dialogue can take place between Christians and alternative spiritualities, non-judgementally, sharing our stories in a spirit of mutual enquiry and respect. Interfaith dialogue will get nowhere if it starts from fixed positions. Yet in these spaces, people will still respond positively to the Christian message, and (for example) value a prayer or a blessing if offered.

Of course, not all alternatives are necessarily good or healthy. One of our speakers, Anne Richards, in one of her several jobs for the Church of England, fields contacts from people who have been hurt or damaged in spiritual exploration. Some have been exploited by vulnerabilities and dependencies, financial or romance scams, grooming, conspiracy theories, and have been alienate them from their families, sometimes even to the extent of being persuaded their children *are* aliens. Often these are narratives of personal failure or domestic abuse. Often the word "church" is mischievously bandied about as a "trusted brand" to reassure victims. Anne listens to appalling stories in the course of her work: I asked her how she sleeps at night; "Sometimes I don't," she replied. We were challenged to think how the Church might be a sanctuary for the subjects of these stories and what that might look like. Deliverance ministry can help some. But the Church is sometimes part of the problem.

We also heard from people finding spirituality in social activism. We heard from a community organiser in Milton Keynes running a café, where people can share stories and experience often of deprivation and injustice. Jide Macauly gave a moving presentation describing growing up as gay man in the homophobic climate of Nigeria, where he underwent excommunication from his family's church, conversion "therapy" and marriage, before setting up House of Rainbow, a gay church, initially in Nigeria, before homosexuality was declared illegal, and then in London. It now operates in 22 countries. Anne Richards described her work in a youth café where teenagers, often involved with gangs and drug dealing, come to be safe, curl up in a ball, or just relax to background classical music. Elaine Graham talked about the TV programme *The Repair Shop* as a paradigm for what churches should be aiming to do for people, restoring the damaged and affirming their value ("Beauty for brokenness", a Graham Kendrick hymn).

These are just samples of a fascinating and challenging conference, which made me wonder what "going out there" might mean for St John's, and how we might engage with those in our community seeking spiritual solace but feel the Church has nothing to offer them, or might even reject them. Where are the "safe spaces" where we might encounter them and hear their stories?

Modern Church was founded in 1898 (then as The Modern Churchman's Union) to promote a Christian faith that is liberal and questioning, open to new insights, and seeking ways in which it can be presented in language that is relevant and accessible today. Its quarterly newsletter and more scholarly quarterly journal provide a stimulating insight into developments in liberal theology today.

https://modernchurch.org.uk/

# HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2024 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> September



St. John's will be OPEN for Heritage Open Days as follows:

Friday 6<sup>th</sup>
Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>
Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>
Monday 9<sup>th</sup>
- 11.00 am to 4.00 pm
- 10.00 am to 5.00 pm
- 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

Volunteers will be required to welcome visitors to the church. If you are able to help during any of the times listed above please fill in the form in Church (available later in August) or contact Pat Lovegrove (8942 7699) email: <a href="mailto:patlovegrove4@gmail.com">patlovegrove4@gmail.com</a>. You do not need to have knowledge of local history or architecture, just be friendly and welcoming.

The history timeline boards will tell the very long and interesting history of St. John's and Maeldune over many centuries from Early Iron Age to present time.

HOD's continue to celebrate all aspects of local heritage, with hundreds of events taking place locally and nationally - all of them free. For details about all other participating venues go to <a href="https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk">www.heritageopendays.org.uk</a>

Heritage Open Days is supported by The National Trust and People's Postcode Lottery.

#### SPONSORED RIDE AND STRIDE Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2024

This annual sponsored event for Surrey Churches Preservation Trust takes place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September. Unfortunately this does not coincide with HODs this year so the church will be open again on this date as well to welcome visiting cyclists. Cyclists and walkers visit as many participating churches as possible during the day. Any money raised is divided in two – half to their choice of church and half to the Trust for distribution to Surrey churches in need.

In recent years several families have had an enjoyable day out whilst participating in this event, so it would be good to have many others taking part this year helping to raise money for St. John's Restore Project.

Sponsorship forms will be available in church.



## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER – COMMUNITY <> CHURCH <> YOU



- St John's history dates from Saxon times.
- Its ancient fabric is now in poor state.
- The tower brickwork and parapet are crumbling, the roofs leak, and there is damp.

We offer weekly services, weddings, Baptisms, and funerals. Also, a variety of activities open to all.

Crochet & Reading Groups Men's Group

Monthly Sunday Lunches

Weekly Tea & Chat



Community Christmas Lunch

Parent & Toddlers Group

Angel Project supporting children Monthly Bereavement Cafe

- We are committed to continue supporting our congregation and community.
- We plan to expand our current community activities but need a sound, safe building.
- The Restore Project aims to repair our ancient building. If we don't the building will deteriorate further risking safety.

It will cost £45,000 (Ex VAT)

## The Problems are shown here

Crumbling tower bricks & mortar





Roof walling cracked







**Broken parapet** 



### Priest's vestry roof leaks





Chancel dormer window leaks onto choir!





Internal damp





#### **WORKS CAN PROCEED**

Local authority planning permission is in place Southwark Diocese has granted a faculty for works to proceed.

#### On granting the Faculty, the Chancellor says:

"This is an important church with an important ministry and I am pleased to see that the PCC is planning to put these extensive works in hand. There will be much to be done in terms of fund-raising and then organization, and I hope that everything goes as well and as smoothly as may be reasonably possible."

#### **FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The works will be undertaken in stages. Estimated cost for all the stages is £445,567 (Ex VAT, about £90,000 extra). More accurate pricing will be clearer in contractor tenders. Our Grants Committee has identified appropriate sources of funding and is now submitting applications.

#### **HOW YOU CAN HELP - PLEASE PRAY, BUT ALSO**

## Spread the word – what is happening and why Donations welcome – ways of giving are;

Cheque Donations: please make payable to: 'The PCC of St John's Old Malden' and mark it 'St John's Restore Project Fund'. Send it to: The Treasurer, C/o The Parish Office, St John's Church, Church Rd, Worcester Park KT4 7RY. Please Gift Aid your donation if you can.

Online Banking: donations can be made by contacting the Treasurer at <a href="mailto:treasurer@stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk">treasurer@stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk</a>. Please leave your telephone number, and the Treasurer will return your call and provide bank account details.



Using this QR code:

**St. John's website:** donations can be made via a *Donate* button on the homepage of our website: https://www.stjohnsoldmalden.org.uk/



Here is the programme of talks which will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month in the Church extension.

Tea, Coffee and biscuits etc will be available from 10.00am.

**September 14th**- A talk by Alastair Harris on the ABCD Charity and its work in Palestine

**October 12th-** A talk by Liz Goodman, health professional on respiratory care.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is home to around 12,000 Tamils – and Tamil is one of the most spoken languages within the borough. Many originally came to escape persecution in their native Sri Lanka, and we have been happy to welcome them, bringing their rich culture to add to our own community's diversity.

Having seen some of their beautiful and graceful dancers in New Malden on Tamil Heritage Day in January, we in Kingston Inner Wheel wanted to learn more. So we have a session of our "Try Anything Once Club!", to do just that – admire the colourful costumes, hear about the traditions, and to have a go ourselves at the dancing!

Tuesday, 24th September

The Glass Room, St. Andrew's Church, Maple Road, Surbiton, KT6 4AB at 7.15 pm

£5 per person ~ Book your place: <u>innerwheelclub-kot@hotmail.co.uk</u>
See the beautiful clothes and try the dances ~ Just the once....!
Bobby Child
07946 532 846

St John's Knitting & Crochet Group meets on the last Thursday of the month in the Church Coffee Lounge from 2.00 – 4.00pm.

Open to all – do come and join us! Learn to knit, follow a pattern, take up crochet!

You can also bring along your projects – tapestry/embroidery – a good opportunity to chat, drink and relax. Good for your 'mindfulness' time.

Do join us!

Marílyn

## TRY ANYTHING ONCE CLUB!

Looking for something different? Something new?

**Next Session** 

## TAMIL DANCING

## Tuesday 24th September

The Glass Room, St. Andrew's Church, Maple Road, Surbiton, KT6 4AB at 7.15 pm

See the beautiful clothes and have a go at the dances!

Only £5 per person

Book your place: innerwheelclub-kot@hotmail.co.uk and join our mailing list for details of what we are going to try next



KINGSTON INNER WHEEL



ORGAN RECITAL
given by
Barry Eaton
Saturday 19th October 2024
at 7.30pm

Includes works by
Purcell, J.S. Bach, Stanford &
Rheinberger

Admission by Programme £10.00 Includes light refreshments

# Vintage Afternoon Tea

Sunday 29th September

Join us at 3.30pm with tea served at 4pm

411 Malden Road Tickets £10 per person





There are boxes on the church porch bench for your donations to the Foodbank.

Foodbanks are now vital to so many people and our support is really important.

Please donate if you are able.

Tinned meat, Long-life milk, Coffee, Rice, Pasta sauce, Squash, Instant mash, Tinned vegetables, Pot Noodles, Oils, Ketchup and mayonnaise, Sanitary towels, Toilet paper, Washing up liquid, Household cleaning products, Washing machine tablets, Shaving foam, Men's and women's deodorant, Tinned potatoes, Crisps and treats, Tinned tomatoes, Shampoo and conditioner, Tooth paste and toothbrushes, Biscuits, Jam, Pasta, Cereals, Pulses, Baked beans, Soup, Tea.



Thank you to everyone who supported the Bereavement Cafe through the Co-op community Charity scheme! You raised over £1,100! The next meeting will be in the coffee lounge at St. John's on Tuesday 17th September 2:00- 3:30pm. We have been very fortunate to be trained and supported by Princess Alice Hospice, who will continue to work with us to provide this needed service for our community.



With things opening up again please help raise much-needed donations for St John's Old Malden - Repairs Fund when you plan ahead and arrange things to do! From booking staycations and getaways to tickets for concerts or other fun activities, remember to use #easyfundraising to raise FREE donations for us. Book now: <a href="http://efraising.org/fx3w1QPP7u">http://efraising.org/fx3w1QPP7u</a>

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- Hall available to hire for regular or single evening bookings
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    - Competitive rates



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