

# PARISH Magazine



St George's Church

The Heart of Christ in  
The Heart of Waddon

December 2022/January 2023 Minimum donation **£1.00**



## *In the News*

**St George's 90th Anniversary, a Confirmation service,  
The Separated Child Foundation packing day,  
'Lux Aeterna' concert, Black History Month,  
Festival of Christmas Cribbs and lots more**

# Regular service times

## **Croydon Minster**

Morning Prayer, Monday – Friday 8.30am

### **Sunday**

8.00am Said Eucharist

10.00am Sung Eucharist

5.30pm Evensong (Choral Evensong in term time)

### **Monday**

11.00am Said Eucharist

### **Tuesday**

11.00am Said Eucharist

5.30pm Choral Evensong sung by the Boys' Choir (term time only)

### **Wednesday**

11.00am Said Eucharist

5.30pm Choral Evensong sung by the Girls' Choir (term time only)

### **Friday**

11.00am Said Eucharist

## **St George's**

### **Sunday**

10.00am Eucharist

### **Thursday**

10.30am Eucharist

# Special Services, Advent and Christmas 2022

Regular services continue as normal; these are additional services

## **“PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD” – AN ADVENT PROCESSION**

**Sunday 27 November, 5.30pm**

A service of congregational and choir music with readings for Advent

## **NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS, Sunday 18 December, 5.30pm**

The traditional service of congregational and choir carols with readings

## **CAROLS ON THE GREEN, Thursday 22 December, 5–7pm**

(with Salvation Army band from 6pm)

Carol singing for the whole community with the Salvation Army Band

Hot dogs, vegan options, mulled wine, soft drinks

## **NATIVITY SERVICE, Saturday 24 December, 3.30pm**

A re-telling of the story of the birth of Jesus Christ with Christmas carols

Children are invited to come dressed as figures from the Nativity

## **MIDNIGHT MASS, Saturday 24 December, 11.30pm**

The First Mass of Christmas (Choral)

## **CHRISTMAS DAY, Sunday 25 December, 8am and 10am**

First Eucharist of the Day, 8am

Eucharist of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 10am (Choral)

*NB Choral Evensong is not sung today*

## **THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD, Friday 6 January 2023, 7pm**

Eucharist of the Epiphany of the Lord (Choral)

# Other diary dates

## Croydon Minster

### December 2022

- Fri 2 Eucharist to include Elis David Mynde Day, 11am
- Tue 6 'Croydon Sings!' event with our primary partner schools, 5.30pm
- Sat 10 Full Choral Foundation Christmas Concert, 4pm
- Sun 11 Sung Eucharist including presentation of grant cheque from the Cathedral Music Trust, 10am
- Children's Liturgy: St Lucy, a saint of light, 3.30pm
- Tue 20 BBC Radio 3 recording Choral Evensong, 4pm

### January 2023

- Sun 8 Children's Liturgy: Celebrating Baptism – The Baptism of Christ, 3.30pm
- No Choral Evensong – Deanery Service at St Michael's
- Tue 17 Baptism Enquirers Evening, 6.30pm

Lectio Divina takes place on Zoom at 12 noon on Tuesdays.

Lunchtime Recitals take place at 1.10pm on Fridays during term time:  
see posters and flyers for further details.

# In the News

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Welcome to a wide-ranging and stimulating edition of the Parish Magazine. If the life of a parish can be likened to a rich tapestry, then we have many vibrant, deep and colourful threads on its pages.

A landmark for St George's Church – 90 years since the consecration of the Church – is celebrated in an article by Lynne Kerwood. It rightly reminds us that whilst we cherish our church buildings, the Living Stones of the Church are its people. Over 90 years, many people from Waddon and beyond will have been part of the life there. In Lynne's article we hear of some of the people who make up St George's today, and she looks forward to 10 years' time and the Centenary of St George's mission and ministry to Waddon.

One of the great delights in the life of any Church, and signs of growth, is when new Christians come to faith through baptism or take hold of, and deepen, their faith through Confirmation. For those being confirmed, Confirmation is a great joy and landmark in the Christian life. In this edition we hear about what has drawn our candidates this year to be confirmed, and John Langridge and I look back to our own Confirmation. We should celebrate very much that five young people from our church are taking this step – what a great sign to us all!

I am sure many readers will welcome the return of Tiffany Willmer's 'Getting to know...' column, which introduces us in more depth to worshippers in our parish. Getting to know one another better is good for mutual support, concern and encouragement. The challenge, Sunday by Sunday, is to get to know people in person too.

One way many of us began to get to know each other that bit better, and meet people for the first time, was our harvest-related work with the Separated Child Foundation (SCF). This is picked up in two of the articles. It was a great

opportunity not just to give harvest gifts but also to roll up our sleeves and pack them up for the children who will receive them. Everyone present from St George's, the Minster and the SCF enjoyed the packing, and the lunch, and we discovered that we have some very nimble folders of T-shirts in our parish!

The theme of coming together is picked up in David Morgan's review of the recent concert *Lux Aeterna* sung by the Minster choir in conjunction with Whitgift School. David captures the feel of a beautiful and uplifting concert. It was lovely to be in the church for it, and it is now available online too.

October was Black History Month. Isabella Hunt offers some fascinating, challenging and hopeful reflections on the importance of that month in how people of all ethnicities can understand better the history that our forebears were wrapped up in and that have lasting consequences today. Isabella's article also gives an insight into the Ghanaian experience and contribution to the UK.

Since our last edition, Jon Blanchard, a regular contributor, has died. Jon always contributed thoughtful and intelligent articles to this magazine, that no doubt stretched the mind but also nourished the soul on a whole range of topics. Rodney Vaughn has written a personal tribute reflecting Rodney's time on the Parish Magazine team. Jon was a great exemplar of St Anselm's phrase about 'faith seeking understanding' and his articles reflected that. His Funeral Mass at St Michael's Church, attended by many people including some from the Minster, was an example of his love of the worship of the Church, in all its catholic richness, and desire to see all God's people engaged and active in it. Every member of the large congregation came forward to sprinkle his coffin as the choir sang *In Paradisum*. It was a sign of our shared baptism and, as the water trickled off the coffin, I was also mindful of the tears shed at his death. I had the honour of leading the prayers of intercession, giving thanks for his life as a child of God, and praying for Philip and all Jon's family. May he rest in peace. Amen.

Fr Andrew

# Memories of St George's 90 years on...

*Lynne Kerwood*

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The Parish Magazine team thought it would be fun for an article to be written about St George's – there were so many fond memories and quirky little stories, sadly we can only share a few of them here.

Many of our memories are recent, however some of our congregation can go back to the 1930s and '40s. Josie Collyer was a tiny babe in arms when her granny first brought her to St George's in 1934. Although Josie no longer attends our church services, her family are a big part of our extended family at the church. Louise, Josie's daughter, used to serve at St George's and attended the Sunday School in the '70s and '80s, and Andrea, Josie's younger daughter, always has a stall at the Christmas Fayre. Josie attended our 90th Anniversary celebrations at the end of October and met with lots of her church friends.

Andrew Sharp and his late wife Maureen were the first couple to be married at St George's. Andrew has many happy memories of life at the church.

Ethel Dixon began attending St George's in 1973. She was the leader of the Girl Guides before that and she used to bring them along to the church service once a month. In those days the Guide Pack was large with many girls in attendance. Ethel can remember it was the first time that many of the girls had ever been to a church service. Ethel was the Girl Guide Leader for over thirty years, Christine Crawley also led the Guides and the Brownies at St George's – sadly since the Covid pandemic the Brownie Pack has dispersed.

Ethel was able to recall many stories including the time that the late Roy Champion and Ethel took the large picture down from the Lady Chapel wall. They packed it in three sections on the roof of Roy's car and drove it to a huge house in London. Together they carried it up three flights of stairs and into the flat

belonging to an artist. She cleaned the picture and when Ethel and Roy returned to collect it they couldn't believe the difference in the colours – the flowers that Ethel had always thought were mauve were actually a very delicate shade of pink. You can see the picture in all its glory if you come to visit at any time.

Carol Milgate began attending in 1986. The first service she came to, the church was all locked up and Carol thought it had closed down – only to find out she had the time wrong and the services began an hour later! Carol came back the following week and was warmly welcomed by Maureen Sharp who was the churchwarden at the time. Carol's children attended the Sunday School and her son also served at services during the 1990s.

As the discussion grew, people were able to recall annual seaside trips to Southend, Hastings and Eastbourne to name but a few. The songs sung on the coach rides were hilarious.

Other memories included Roy and Andrew taking care of the fabric of the building over many, many years and Ethel being their 'labourer'. She told of the fun they had working together.

Sheila Campbell has been attending St George's since 1986. She shared a story about driving her car to church one day in the snow and then parking in the car park. When she got out of her car in her stiletto heels, the ice was so treacherous that she couldn't walk into church, so a line of gallant men from the congregation formed a human chain for Sheila to be able to walk along the line of them and make a safe arrival into the church building. Happy days – she said.

Lucy Graham has brought her children and grandchildren to church since 1984, all of her children and grandchildren attended Sunday School and served at the services throughout the 1980s and '90s.

Many more people have other memories – maybe we shall save those for the 100th Anniversary!!



## Confirmation

*On 20th November, five young people from our church were confirmed by Bishop Rob Gillion. Here they share their thoughts about what Confirmation means to them, and Fr Andrew and John S. Langridge reflect on their own experiences of Confirmation.*

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### **Michaela**

*On being Baptised* (Michaela was baptised during the Sunday morning Eucharist at the end of October)

It felt special and amazing. At first, I was very nervous because there were lots of people at the service. But then they prayed for me and I started to enjoy the service.

The best part of being baptised was when Father Andrew poured water on my head, and also being given a special candle. I can light my candle on special occasions like my birthday, Easter and Christmas or whenever I feel like praying and worshipping.

### *On being Confirmed*

I want to be confirmed because It would mean a lot to me and because I want to be blessed in the Lord. Also, when I get confirmed, I want everyone to appreciate the fact that I am being blessed in the Lord. The most exciting thing that I can't wait for is when the priest will anoint me with special oil that he would use to draw the cross on my head!

### **Adesuwa**

My name is Adesuwa. I was baptised by Father Owen in All Saints' Church, Church of England, in New Cross in Lewisham Borough. I moved to Croydon and since 2016 I have been attending the Minster Church. I started my Reception at the Minster Infant School and I think by doing my confirmation that will make me grow more in my faith.

### **Sariah**

My name is Sariah and I attend Coloma Convent Girls' School, I was baptised when I was 1 month old.

There are so many reasons as to why I want to be confirmed. My main reasons are:

- \* It confirms the vows my godparents took when I was baptised but with it being my choice to be confirmed now.
- \* I feel that it will bring me closer to God and it is important to me and within the church.
- \* I feel that it will give me a sense of belonging within the Christian faith.
- \* I am looking forward to being confirmed and continuing my journey within the church as I get older.

### **Grace**

My name is Grace; I am currently doing my first year of GCSEs. I would like to be confirmed so that I am closer to God spiritually, this will help to affirm my beliefs as a Christian. You would typically find me in the choir stalls as I sing in the

Minster which is a lot of fun especially when performing in concerts. My life is musically orientated since I play the violin and sing. If you're unable to find me practising some sort of musical element I would be found in the dance studio or outside on the courts. As you can tell my life is more on the creative and athletic aspect but that is what I enjoy the most.



### **Mayowa**

I love music and sports. I've been a chorister at Croydon Minster since the age of 8. I enjoy the singing and worship at the Minster and my family church. I'm so happy to finally get the chance to be confirmed as this is something I have been waiting to achieve in the last couple of years. Being confirmed will mean that I have finally had the chance to choose Christ and to affirm my belief in him, whilst also making me feel closer to him.

\* \* \*

**Fr Andrew writes:** I was confirmed at the age of 14 which, in 1984, was considered a little on the young side! I had been a server for a couple of years and sang in the choir of Holy Cross, Daventry, where we lived. The beauty and mystery of the liturgy had totally captured my heart and imagination and I knew I wanted to be confirmed (actually, I also was fairly clear in my mind that God was calling me to be a priest too – yes, at that age).

My parish priest, Fr Graham, had prepared a group of us. He knew the Bishop of Peterborough, our diocesan Bishop, would ask questions from the Catechism

during the service, and some other questions he had up his sleeve, so we were well drilled. Candidates from neighbouring parishes were there too. We all looked smart, and girls wore white head covers too, at the Bishop's request.

I remember the Bishop leaning on his crozier and pointing at a fellow candidate and booming "You, boy," (yes, Bishops spoke to people like that then), "where is your home?" The boy looked bewildered and answered "Everdon", which was the village he was from. "No!" bellowed the Bishop again. Then he said to all the candidates, "Where is your home?". I put up my hand. I answered "heaven". The Bishop looked a bit nonplussed, but that was the answer he wanted (Fr Graham had tipped us off about the question!).

## Parish Magazine Committee

Magazine Editor: Liz Watkins, 07973 172807

Commissioning: Fr Andrew and Liz Watkins

Liaison with advertisers: Deborah Miller

Proofreading: Alice Bishop

**Deadline for the February / March 2023 issue:**

**Thursday 19th January**

Please email contributions to [magazine@croydonminster.org](mailto:magazine@croydonminster.org)

**Please note:** The views in the articles of the magazine reflect the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the editorial board.

Aside from memories of the service my Confirmation marked a significant moment for me in my journey of faith. I now took hold of and embraced the faith I had been brought up in and that my parents and godparents had nurtured in me. What a gift they gave me. My final recollection – something I have never forgotten – is that my grandfather wrote to me and quoted words of St Paul, ‘God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power and love and self-control’ (2 Timothy 1.7). They are words I treasure to this day.

\* \* \*

**John S. Langridge writes:** My Confirmation took place in 1964 at the then St Matthew’s Church opposite what is now Waitrose. Sadly, it was pulled down many years ago in the early 1970s, to build a new one on Park Hill, East Croydon.

I was 14 at the time and can well remember going to the Confirmation classes, which I loved, prior to being confirmed by Bishop John Hughes, who sadly died many years ago now.

To me, Confirmation was, and is, so important as a stepping stone on one’s journey within the Christian faith. I could not wait to be confirmed!

After my Confirmation, I felt fully integrated into the depth of the Christian faith, and was so proud (and still am) to wear that badge of honour within my heart. For many years afterwards, I would walk to the then St Matthew’s in George Street for the 8.00am Sunday Communion Service. I always went alone to those lovely services, and felt a complete oneness with my Christian faith.

To those who come to Confirmation as adults, later on in life, this is truly a wonderful experience for them, and a blessing and most gracious gift that they will feel has been bestowed upon them.

As I was fortunate enough to be brought up and steeped in the Christian faith, I knew exactly what I was doing, and Confirmation was for me the jewel in the crown of my Christian faith.

I am firmly of the opinion that I would never have received Holy Communion unless I had been confirmed first. Thereby, I knew what I was entering into, with all its wonderful meaning.

After all, as an analogy, you may be able to drive a car, but you would not / should not drive one on your own unless you have had qualified instruction and have a licence to do so. In the same way, you may understand what the Christian faith means, but you would not / should not take part in Holy Communion unless you have had prior instruction into what this means, and been confirmed by a Bishop so to do.<sup>1</sup>

This rite of Confirmation within the framework of the Christian church is therefore very important indeed and not to be taken or entered into lightly!

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<sup>1</sup> Fr Andrew notes: Prayerful and diligent preparation for Holy Communion is always important, as John says. It's worth noting that the Church of England now permits those who are baptised to receive Holy Communion without being confirmed. For example, when ecumenical visitors are present who are in good standing with their own church, but may not be episcopally confirmed, and those who have been prepared and admitted to Holy Communion before Confirmation, which is increasingly a widespread practice in the Church of England and Anglican Communion.

## **The Church Times**

Price **£3.10** (of which £1.55 goes to the church)

Monthly/Annual subscriptions available

*Contact Denise for further details*

# Getting to know... Adam

Tiffany Willmer

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Given the fact that the last issue of this magazine was dedicated to the memory of composer and organist Martin How, it was a lovely coincidence to find out that our latest interviewee, Adam, was a former chorister of his.

Adam was born and bred in Croydon and started singing as a chorister at St Mildred's, Addiscombe at the suggestion of his mother. His parents got divorced when he was very young and without being in any way strict, Adam's mother was keen that he and his older brother should have a church upbringing. Both boys greatly enjoyed singing at St Mildred's and at the suggestion of a family friend, auditioned for Martin How's choir at the Royal School of Church Music, Addington Palace.



"Martin How was a wonderful choirmaster," said Adam. "He made things fun and I believe he triggered my life-long love of choral music."

One enduring memory of his is singing in Handel's *Messiah* with the RSCM at Addington Palace. With the RSCM, he had the opportunity to sing evensong at Croydon Parish Church many times.

Adam attended Ashburton School from eleven to sixteen years of age and then went to Archbishop Tenison's for sixth form. There he discovered another life-long passion for Shakespeare which Adam describes as still being his favourite reading matter – second only to the Bible.

After school, Adam went to Sheffield University to do a degree in modern history and politics. He did well at his academic studies and also tried to explore his

faith further at university, having only attended church in a rather half-hearted way at home since his voice broke. Unfortunately, he had some rather unhappy experiences in the process. The result of this was that when he left university, he felt himself to be an agnostic and remained so until he was 45.

After university Adam threw himself into amateur dramatics, which remains to this day “the thing I love best”. Over the years he has acted with various groups including the South London Theatre Centre, the wonderfully named Croydon Histrionics Society, the Miller Centre in Caterham and the Richmond Shakespeare Society in Twickenham.

For work, Adam embarked on a career teaching English as a Foreign Language, which took him to Thailand and Saudi Arabia for lengthy periods and to Taiwan and Australia for shorter periods. Characteristically the first thing he did on arrival in Thailand was to join the Bangkok Community Theatre (BCT), an English language drama society. “I joined the BCT before I’d even arranged my first teaching job out there,” recalled Adam.

By 2006 however Adam was back in the UK and feeling very despondent having experienced very bad depression. It was at this time that his best friend – also an agnostic – saw an advert for a local Alpha Course in Croydon and suggested that Adam give it a try. Adam found the teaching of Nicky Gumbel to be very persuasive and the group discussions to be helpful. “At the end of the course they gave you a chance to commit to Christ and I invited the Holy Spirit into my life. This happened at Holy Trinity Brompton Church on 1st July, 2006 and was a massive turning point,” he said.

He returned to Thailand, still teaching English, but now also starting to study the Bible in depth in his spare time. This private study led Adam to a belief in adult baptism and he ended up getting baptised in Goa, India, in 2007 by a friend who was also a minister.

Overall though, Adam was starting to have had enough of living abroad and returned to the UK, where he got back in touch with friends from his Alpha course and started to explore the charismatic side of Christianity, including speaking in tongues. For a while he attended New Life Pentecostal church, just around the corner from the Minster, and he has also spent time worshipping at Purley Baptist Church, the Salvation Army, the local Quakers, St Luke's Woodside and other churches. He has long felt comfortable worshipping in different denominational settings.

In terms of work, Adam found a new direction first volunteering and later having a funded job with MIND, the mental health charity. His role involved helping people with mental health issues to get back into work after a period of unemployment. He really enjoyed this, but was sadly made redundant when the funding for his post collapsed. Outside of work, Adam retains a strong interest in mental health and is a member of the Croydon Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health, a charity led by Father Andrew Wilson and based at St Mildred's.

Adam's current focus of interest is a project which he started working on before lockdown: a solo dramatic recital of St Mark's Gospel. In this he was inspired by an actor called Alec McCowen who had done just that both in London and on Broadway in the late 1970s. Adam has already performed it informally to friends in a variety of back gardens and hopes to find larger venues in due course.

Adam found his way back to Croydon Minster approximately four or five years ago via the Lectio Divina group which used to meet in person in the church hall and from there started to become an occasional worshipper on Sundays again. He is a big football fan and lifelong QPR supporter, which has taught him lots about loyalty. "I follow them no matter what happens – as I try to do with Jesus," he laughs.

# Packing and Eating: A new way of celebrating Harvest

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The issue of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK is never far from the news headlines. Amongst those people are children who are travelling without parents or guardians. Around half of the world's 26 million refugees are under the age of 18 and in 2021 the UK received 3,762 asylum applications from children travelling alone.

It is hard to avoid the issue of immigration in Croydon and this became a focus of prayer and response in the Parish of Croydon (Croydon Minster and St George's, Waddon). Croydon draws and retains many asylum seekers because the headquarters of UK Visas and Immigration is in the parish of St Michael, West Croydon – a church of welcome to migrants.

Rather than hold up our hands in despair, we rolled up our sleeves in October to work with The Separated Child Foundation ([www.separatedchild.org](http://www.separatedchild.org)), a charity that specifically provides for the needs of child refugees and asylum seekers in the UK who have been separated from their families because their parents have been killed or otherwise unable to leave.

Refugees have become politically contentious, but we were drawn back to the parable in which we are called to clothe the naked and welcome the stranger (Matthew 25). Our conviction is that what we did was an act of hospitality reflecting the hospitality of God.

## **Hannah Williams, Operations Manager for the SCF, writes:**

We were absolutely thrilled to be invited to hold a packing day for volunteers from Croydon Minster and St George's on 9th October this year. It was wonderful to see so many members of the local community coming together to support separated children.

Demand for our services has never been higher, with hundreds of separated children arriving into Dover every month since the beginning of this summer. The young people we support have usually had very difficult journeys in their search for safety. They arrive in Dover exhausted and traumatised, with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Thanks to the volunteers from Croydon Minster and St George's, every one of the separated children arriving into Dover since our packing day has been able to receive an 'essentials pack', a bag containing toiletries, a towel, and enough underwear, socks and T-shirts to get them through their first few days in the UK. These packs offer children much-needed comfort and dignity and we are so grateful to all the volunteers at the packing day for making it possible.

We'd like to thank the team at Croydon Minster and St George's – Fr Andrew, Fr David, Denise Mead, Angela Bond and Mark Mason – for the warmest of welcomes, and for all their help in organising the day. As well as creating 600 essentials packs, we collected over £850-worth of donations in the form of toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo and other items, which will be used in our packs over the next few weeks.

One of our distribution partners recently said, "Every pack you give is like giving a young person a hug and an investment in their future." Thank you to all of the volunteers at our packing day for giving hope to separated children this winter.



## One of our volunteers, Chris Shields, shares his experience of taking part in 'Packing and Eating'

Following coffee after the 10am service on October 9th, we gathered together for a briefing on our tasks for a celebration of the work of the Foundation and of the Harvest Festival. We were composed of staff and volunteers from the Foundation, members of St George's and the Minster and some pupils from Whitgift School.

The packing was of clothing and practical items for welcome packs for children and young people separated from their families who are in the UK as refugees. They are supported practically and emotionally by the Foundation. Clothing and socks were donated by companies known to the Foundation. Practical items such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo, toothbrushes, notebooks and pens and other items were brought by St George's and Minster members. The packing was divided into self-selected teams, who were guided by Foundation in packing

orders. I was in a team folding T-shirts and it took me some time to keep up with other members! There was a steady stream of packing and chatting until dinner was served.

The 'Eating' was provided by Fr David, in the form of delicious meals and puddings. The sharing of the food was much appreciated. I ate with a couple of Foundation volunteers who also helped at a North London synagogue project for the homeless. They were very appreciative of the meal.





*Children wrote and decorated beautiful cards to go in the packs*

After dinner we learned more of the work of the work of the Foundation. This was followed by further packing, which I did not stay for. The day ended with a Children's Liturgy.

My impression of the event was that it provided a practical way of supporting refugee children and young people. It was well administered and enjoyable. It also celebrated fellowship, the sharing of food and our appreciation of God's gifts at Harvest time.

I have booked the date for the next event, Sunday 12 March 2023.





## Music to our Ears

*David Morgan*

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The applause which resounded around the Minster after the *Lux Aeterna* concert on November 12th was music of a different sort to the ears of the singers of Croydon Minster and Whitgift School. The audience responded in a hugely enthusiastic way to the first concert organised by Justin Miller, our Director of Music. Indeed, it was a glorious return to church concerts which so many people had missed.

From the opening bars of Vaughan Williams' piece 'O taste and see' to the closing notes of Fauré's 'In Paradisum', the audience had much to celebrate and admire. "The sound that the choir produces is just wonderful," remarked a more than satisfied customer as the audience filed out of the church.

Passages in the Fauré *Requiem* always bring emotions to the surface, whether hearing it for the first or the twenty-first time. It was the same on Saturday. The girl choristers excelled in the 'Pie Jesu', and the intensity of the 'Libera Me' was something special.

What a wonderful moment it was too, to see the young probationer choristers coming onto the platform to perform the Fauré piece. This must have been an experience they will remember for many a year.

The boy choristers held centre stage during Malcolm Boyle's 'Thou, O God, art praised in Sion.' This was a new piece for many, but the boys certainly brought it to life. More than one audience member wished they could have their chorister days again!

Purcell is a composer whose abilities I appreciate more and more. The two Purcell pieces in the programme were my personal favourites. I hope the audience could appreciate the Purcell magic generated by his compositions and by the choirs' interpretation of them.

"It is amazing to see and hear young singers achieving such high standards in music," said another attendee at the close of the evening. What an opportunity our young people have today to be part of the music foundation of the Minster! It might not be everyone's taste in music, and they might have a lot of peer pressure to do other things, but the public acknowledgement they receive when performing this way is a great motivator.

To achieve such a standard is no mean feat. Watching Justin Miller conduct the concert, the audience realised what an influence he is. His sensitivity and passion for the music was evident to everyone, as he combined his conducting with an educating gesture or glance for all the singers but especially the young choristers. The soloists, all from the ranks of the choir, were on top form. George Inscoc, our Sub-Organist, accompanied the singing with just the right blend of sound from

our wonderful organ. It was good to hear him, too, in his own right, playing part of an Elgar Sonata.

The audience departed into the evening air, keen to tell others about the glorious music they had heard. The choristers went home tired but happy with the sound of the applause ringing in their ears. Mr Miller went home with a smile on his face, already planning and thinking of the next big musical event. It won't be long before the BBC are here again.

A poster for a Christmas concert. The background is a vibrant red. In the center, several Christmas ornaments are hanging: two gold and three white with gold stripes and dots. The text 'CHRISTMAS CHEER!' is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the middle. To the right, in a smaller white font, it says 'a concert of traditional and popular favourites for the entire family'. In the top right corner, there are logos for 'WHITFIELD' and 'Windsor'. At the bottom left, the text reads 'Whitfield Chamber Choir', 'The Choir of Croydon Minster', 'George Insole / Organ', and 'Julia Miller / Director'. At the bottom right, it says 'Saturday 30 December 2022', '8pm / Croydon Minster', 'Tickets: £30 adults / £5 under 10s', and 'www.croydonminster.org'.

# Jon Blanchard: Rest in Peace

*Rodney Vaughn*

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Some of us will remember Jon, a slightly quirky man who always wore a kilt, a wonderful man to know. He was from Devon, read English at Oxford University, studied Religious Studies at Birkbeck and had been a research assistant at City University. He was also a professional tour guide in London, and, something he did not say much about, wrote to men on death row in America. I think it is also important to mention Jon's partner of over forty years, Philip, who is known to many at the Minster too.

Jon had a battle with cancer. He struggled through sessions of chemo and radiotherapy, but in the end he decided enough was enough. The pain of chemotherapy wasn't worth the few months it might give him. I understand his death was peaceful and pain free.

For many years Jon was a regular worshipper at Croydon Minster. One of his many contributions was writing articles for our Parish Magazine. The topics he wrote on were wide and varied; he wrote on the Transfiguration, Muslim worship and the Parish Pilgrimage to Walsingham, to name but a few. He also trained a group of us to be tour guides in the church. He wrote a blog, 'View from the Pew', <https://anglicanchurchlife.wordpress.com> , which is well worth reading.

Even though we at the Minster were blessed with Jon's magazine articles, he joined his partner as a worshipper at St Michael's, Croydon. However, he continued to have his feet in both camps and I understand that even throughout his illness he continued to write articles for future publications. His memory will live with us for a long time to come.

# The importance of Black History Month

*Isabella Adjoa Hunt*

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By oral tradition, the women from my mother's clan, the Royal Oyoko clan of Ghana, once headed by Queen Nana Yaa Asantewaa, were armed with double barrel shotguns as part of their puberty rites. The shotguns served as a means of protection and symbol of status. Protection was required not only against the "white traders" in human flesh, but also against other African and Arab groups who participated in the slave trade. As Bob Marley sings in 'Buffalo Soldier' – *Stolen from Africa, brought to America*, Africans themselves were at least complicit in the process.

It was a puzzle to me why my paternal grandmother's family name, Savie-Olympio, is so widespread across a diaspora encompassing Brazil, Suriname, Guyana, the West Indies and Togo, Benin and Nigeria. According to Google, there are 83,000 people who share my family name. Some light was shed on the issue by the recent release of 'The Woman King', starring Viola Davis, with something of a bit-part appearance by John Boyega. This told the story of the African Kingdom of Dahomey, located in the region of the modern-day country of Benin and the Nigerian state of Benin. Dahomey had two armies – a male army and a female army who were trained to the same standards. The film tells the, essentially true, story of how the kingdom ceased participation in the slave trade, and ejected Portuguese slavers from the country. It seems that some members of my paternal grandmother's family were traded to Brazil, and elsewhere in the New World.

Since arriving in the UK in the 1980s I have been on a journey of discovery, meeting and working with black people from diverse backgrounds and dealing with issues of prejudice, discrimination, marginalisation etc. My own nation,

Ghana, punches above its weight in British society – though we might quickly pass over the short-lived reign of Kwasi Kwarteng as the first black (Ghanaian) Chancellor of the Exchequer, we did have Paul Boateng, now Lord Boateng of Akyem, as the first black Cabinet Member, and current and recent MPs of Ghanaian heritage include Adam Afriyie (Conservative), Sam Gyimah (C – now Lib Dem), Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) and Abena Opong-Asare (L). In the world of fashion and the arts, we have such luminaries as Edward Enninful (editor of Vogue) and Ekow Eshun (previously artistic director of the Institute of Contemporary Art – and whose mother was my home science teacher). In popular music, Thornton Heath boy Stormzy (Michael Omari – maths tutor to my nephew), Lethal Bizzle (Maxwell Ansah), Guvna B and Tinchy Stryder are all of Ghanaian heritage. In dramatic art and the theatre we have a Dr Who assistant in Frema Agyeman and Adjoa Andoh who reconciles her starring role in ‘Bridgerton’ with a role as Reader in the Church of England. Not to mention my own cousin Clara Amfo, June Sarpong, Lisa l’Anson and Melvin Odoom who are Radio DJs and TV presenters. We have moved on from the 1980s when seemingly the only black face on TV was Trevor MacDonald.

Why does a small nation (current estimated population 32m) have such a large impact on the cultural life of the UK? Most of these people are drawn from the elites of Ghana. “When you come to the UK, you’re just black”, is the experience of many black immigrants, even though they are well-respected “back home”. Barack Obama writes about this experience in *Dreams from my Father*, when he visited Kenya for the first time (over a decade before he entered the US Congress). From being a mixed-race son of a single mother in the US, he found he was recognised as the son of a Government Minister – the immigration official welcomed him as such. My paternal grandfather was a cocoa buyer for Cadbury-Fry. We have a photograph of my maternal great-grandfather (*shown overleaf*) attired in his finest kente outside his home in Gyakiti, Eastern Region. The original photograph was taken in the late 19th century – shortly after the very



invention of photography, which indicates his wealth and social status as a cocoa farmer. Many people (not just black people, watch out for people of Ukrainian heritage in 20 years) who come to this country are used to being leaders, to being successful, to working hard, and they don't stop when they find their lives disrupted.

# Festival of Christmas Cribs

You are invited to make a Christmas Crib that will be displayed in Croydon Minster.



We will gather the Cribs together and display them in the church over Christmas, and people from around the community will get a chance to see them when the Minster is open and at Christmas Services. This will be part of the celebration of Christmas and the scene portrayed in the Crib: the birth in the manger in Bethlehem of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary.

We believe this will show the creativity and breadth of our community and we will be inviting local press and media to cover the Festival.

## **What do you need to do?**

You, your family, a group of friends or work colleagues, need to design and make a Crib. Feel free to be creative and we would encourage you to make as much as you can yourselves. The Crib should feature the traditional Nativity figures (Jesus, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, the kings, oxen and donkey). You could include sheep with the shepherds.

The design is up to you! For example, it could be traditional or you might like to make the Crib like your house or featuring aspects of other buildings or even multi-coloured!

## **Practical points...**

The base of the Crib should be solid and no bigger than 40 x 60cm.

Please bring your Crib to the church between 12th and 15th December.

The Crib should have a label with the name of the people or group who created it (only display names of individuals with their permission).

Cribs will be on display in the Minster from 16th December – 7th January, and will be blessed at the Crib Service on Christmas Eve.



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# Minster Records

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Jacob Taylor, Clara Ryan, Marcus Brown, Michaela Majekodunmi,  
Lorenzo and Savannah-Marie O'Connor, Hudson Dye

## **Confirmation**

*From Croydon Minster*

Grace Paruma, Mayowa Olatidoye, Michaela Majekodunmi,  
Sariah Mitchell, Adesuwa Ozigbo

*From Whitgift School*

Adam Haque, Freddie Watson

*From Holy Saviour, Croydon*

Mathilde Langlois, Mercy Robinson Amaranye

*Affirmation of Baptismal Promises*

Sandra Craig

## **R.I.P.**

Philip Radley, Jon Blanchard, Pauline, Valerie Gower,  
Gordon Wilkinson, Fr Crispin CR, Dinal, Margaret Stubbs,  
Joe Gough, Sylvia Legg, Everton Grey, Grace Onions

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Information is also available from our website – **[www.eldonhousing.org](http://www.eldonhousing.org)**



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