

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF BADSHOT LEA AND HALE



Serving the communities of Badshot Lea, Folly Hill, Hale, Heath End, Sandy Hill and Weybourne



The churches of St George's, St John's and St Mark's

Issue no.
275

**April
2024**

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Magazine deadline

The deadline for the May issue of the magazine is **Monday, April 15**. Contact Stella Wiseman, 07842 761919, editor@badshotleaandhale.org



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Advertisers

Below is a list of our current advertisers by category and the page numbers you can find them on. Please use their services and don't forget to say that you saw their advert in this magazine.

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PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 11th
10am-12pm
St George's Church
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What's on

What's on in April

Tuesday, April 2, 10am - Free Craft Café

The next free Craft Café run by Farnham Maltings will be at St George's on 2 April 10am-12pm. Come along and learn a new craft or bring your own. It's every fortnight and absolutely free. **Stella**

Wednesday, April 3, 7.30pm - Bible Book Club

At 7:30pm Bible Book Club is meeting online to look at the book of 2 Maccabees 1-6 with an option to read chapter 7 if you are not squeamish! Contact Michelle Chapman for more information.

youth@badshotleaandhale.org

Thursday, April 4 - 10:30 - Coffee and Art at St Mark's

Join us for art and coffee (and cake) at St Mark's on the first and third Thursday of every month, 10.30am-12pm. No artistic skills needed! **Lesley Shatwell**

Sunday, April 7, 6pm - BCP Evensong

BCP Evensong will take place at St George's on 7 April 6:00pm - 6:30pm Come to this lovely, traditional service. **John Evans**

Tuesday, April 9, 10am - Connections

Connections is a group for the over-50s, meeting at St George's every fortnight, 10-11:30am. Just come along and enjoy a cup of coffee, some cake and various activities.

Bill & Annie

Wednesday, April 10, 7.30pm - Bible Book Club

At 7.30pm Bible Book Club is meeting

online. Contact Michelle Chapman for more information.

youth@badshotleaandhale.org

Thursday, April 11, 10am - St John's Thursday Café

The St John's Thursday café is a drop-in coffee morning taking place on the second and fourth Thursday of the month in the Sumner Room. There is tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits and a chance to meet and chat with other people. **Pamela Marsham**

Thursday, April 11, 2pm - Home Group

A home group is meeting weekly on a Thursday afternoon, reading *100 Stand-Alone Bible Studies* by Penelope Wilcock. The next one will be on 11 April, 2-3.30pm. Please contact Richard Myers for details: rjhmyers@yahoo.co.uk.

Friday, April 12, 7pm - Friday Night Games Club

Friday Night Games Club will take place at St Mark's on April 12th, 7-9pm. There will be board games, jigsaws, table tennis, table football, art and craft, a meal and a lot of chat. **Stella**

Tuesday, April 16, 10am - Free Craft Café

The free Craft Café run by Farnham Maltings will be at St George's on 16 April 10am-12pm. Come along and learn a new craft or bring your own. It's every fortnight and absolutely free. **Stella**

Wednesday, April 17, 7.30pm - Bible Book Club

At 7:30pm Bible Book Club is meeting

online. Contact Michelle Chapman for more information. youth@badshotleaandhale.org

Thursday, April 18, 10.30 - Coffee and Art at St Mark's

Join us for art and coffee (and cake) at St Mark's on the first and third Thursday of every month, 10.30am-12pm. No artistic skills needed! **Lesley Shatwell**

Thursday, April 18, 2pm - Home Group

A home group is meeting weekly on a Thursday afternoon, reading *100 Stand-Alone Bible Studies* by Penelope Wilcock. The next one will be on 18 April, 2-3.30pm. Please contact Richard Myers for details: rjh-myers@yahoo.co.uk.

Friday, April 19, 10am - Little Bees

Little Bees, the weekly toddler group, is back at St George's and is ideal for 0-3s and is just £2 a session. **Jacqui Searle**

Sunday, April 21, 10am - St George's Day Sunday service

Come and Celebrate St George's Day at St George's on 21 April 10-11am. St George is the patronal saint of St George's Church and Patron Saint of England. There will be dragons, flag-raising and cake! **Kris**

Sunday, April 21, 11am - St Mark's Day Sunday service

Come and celebrate the church's birthday at St Mark's on 21 April 11-11.45am. There will be cake! **Stella**

Tuesday, April 23, 10am – Connections

Connections is a group for the over-50s meeting at St George's every fortnight, 10-11.30am. Just come along and enjoy a cup of coffee, some cake and various activities. **Bill & Annie**

Wednesday, April 24, 7.30pm - Bible Book Club

At 7.30pm Bible Book Club is meeting online. Contact Michelle Chapman for more information. youth@badshotleaandhale.org

Thursday, April 25, 10am - St John's Thursday Café

The St John's Thursday café is a drop-in coffee morning taking place on the second and fourth Thursday of the month in the Sumner Room. There is tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits and a chance to meet and chat with other people. **Pamela Marsham**

Thursday, April 25, 2pm - Home Group

A home group is meeting weekly on a Thursday afternoon, reading *100 Stand-Alone Bible Studies* by Penelope Wilcock. The next one will be on 25 April, 2-3.30pm. Please contact Richard Myers for details: rjh-myers@yahoo.co.uk.

Friday, April 26, 10am - Little Bees

Little Bees, the weekly toddler group, is at St George's and is ideal for 0-3s and is just £2 a session. **Anne Boyman**

Friday, April 26, 7pm - Friday Night Games Club

Friday Night Games Club will take place at St Mark's on 26 April, 7-9pm. There will be board games, jigsaws, table tennis, table football, art and craft, a meal and a lot of chat. **Stella**

Tuesday, April 30, 10am - Free Craft Café

The free Craft Café run by Farnham Maltings will be at St George's on 30 April 10am - 12pm. Come along and learn a new craft or bring your own. It's every fortnight and absolutely free. **Stella**

Alongside

Dave Camp considers those who raise our spirits when we are flagging—do they give us a glimpse of Jesus?

Recently, I've found myself reflecting on the journey, or more precisely, 'Being with'.

I remember one occasion in my late teens when I took part in a sponsored jog around Bushy Park. As we lined up at the start, there was a buzz of anticipation—women, men, and children and the chatter of many excited voices, laughter, and good-natured jibes as partners and friends teased one another about who would come first and who would take a golfing buggy to finish. One voice called out: "It's not a road race, Jim; you can't take the bus this time". Hoots of laughter went up from all in earshot.

Perhaps that's what it was like for the disciples as they started their journey with Jesus. Good spirits and a heightened sense of anticipation as they followed the man from Nazareth. Meanwhile, back with the joggers, and I've gone off too fast, I'm treating it like a race, it's the halfway mark, and my energy and enthusiasm are spent,

along with some of the others; this isn't how I imagined it would be; this isn't what I signed up for. You see when I was younger, I represented the school at fifteen hundred meters. So, I assumed it would be a bit like that (It wasn't), and well, you see, it's disheartening to see the backs of the elderly getting smaller and smaller as they disappear into the distance.

Except that's not exactly what happened. You see, those elderly experienced joggers recognized my distress, slowed to my pace, and stayed with me, encouraging me for the remainder of the jog. The disciples were forced to rethink what they thought they knew about the nature of the promised Messiah; time and again, we see Jesus slowing to their pace. He's with them as they pass the apparent finishing line



Dave Camp

of the cross; instead of rising in glory to be with the Father, he slows once again, to gather, encourage and inspire his followers, preparing them for the rest of their personal journey. I wonder if we

can recognize the people who raise our spirits when we're flagging. If so, do you think perhaps we catch just a glimpse of Jesus?

Dave Camp

Parish fete



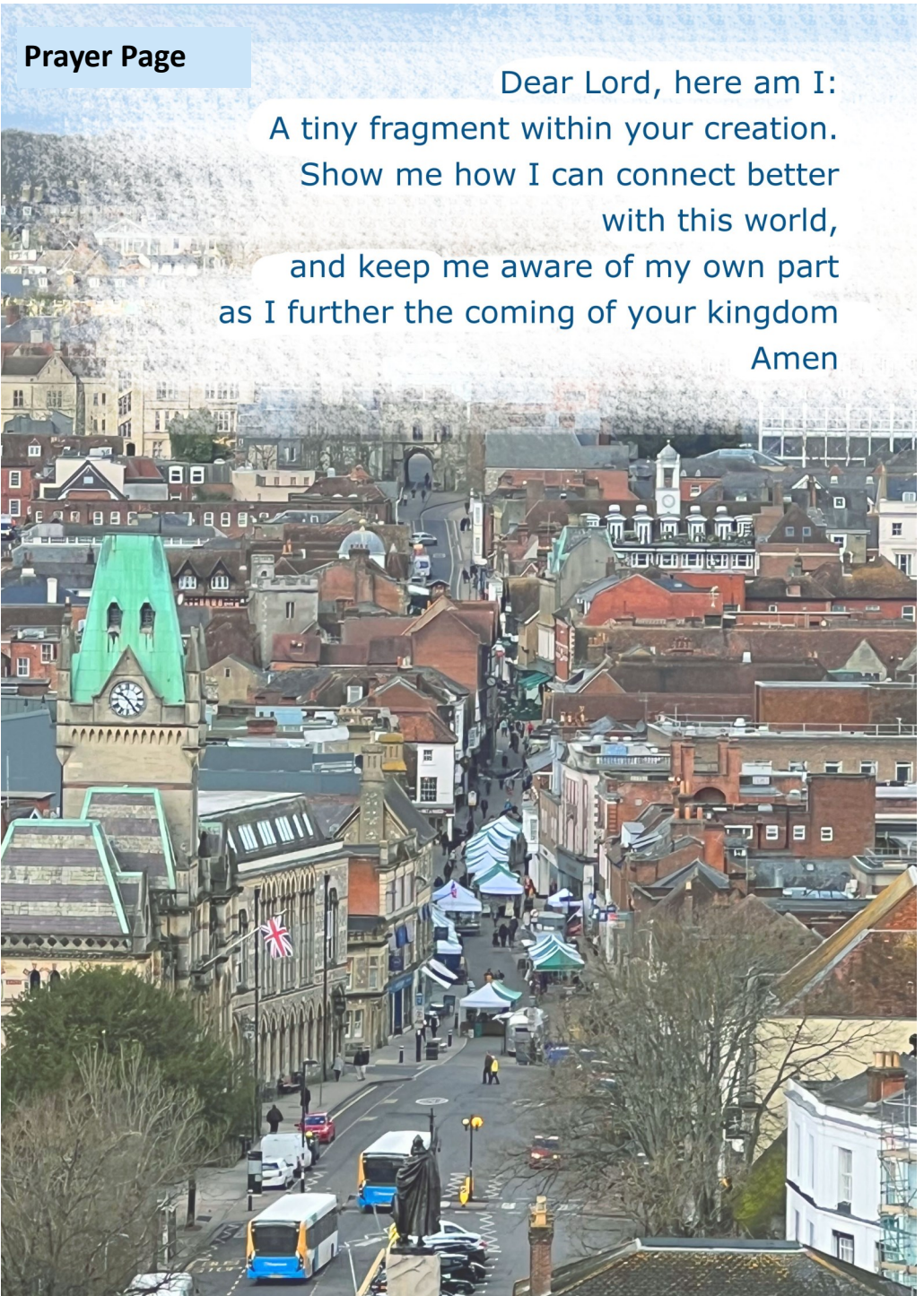
The Parish Summer Fete will take place on Saturday, June 8th, 12-3pm at St George's. We need lots of help from across the parish. Have you an idea for a stall? Would you help run a stall? Give us a hand setting up or taking down? Sell raffle tickets? Pray for its success?

Please let Kris Lawrence know how you could help

[Warden.stgeorges@
badshotleaandhale.org](mailto:Warden.stgeorges@badshotleaandhale.org)

Prayer Page

Dear Lord, here am I:
A tiny fragment within your creation.
Show me how I can connect better
with this world,
and keep me aware of my own part
as I further the coming of your kingdom
Amen





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In memory of Rev'd John Innes

Donald John Innes M A Oxon 1932 - 2024

'Pisky' is a small mischievous being and also a nickname for an adherent of the Scottish Episcopal Church. It was as the latter that John Innes grew up on the bleak coast of Fife, in the dour Presbyterian atmosphere of St Andrew's, but with the inquiring and inspiring mind of his science professor father to give him intellectual curiosity and deep awareness of the presence of the Creator in his world. Marlborough recognised an energetic schoolboy: I believe he played hockey for the school. In National Service he was found to be an astute tactician as an officer in a Scottish regiment.

His formal studies at St John's College, Oxford, were in history. His great interest was in the eastern or Orthodox side of Christianity, in fellowship and debate with minds such as Donald Allchin and Timothy (later Metropolitan Kallistos) Ware. At Westcott House, Cambridge, Greek, taught by David Edwards, a prolific church historian, helped consolidate

his eastern Orthodox studies, as he prepared for ordination in London diocese.

He had met Sue at Oxford where she was also a student. Their marriage was a life-long 'strong rock and fortress' for themselves and their four children. Moving to Walton-on-Thames in Guildford diocese in 1958, John was already becoming the bookish thinker many have thought him. At Walton an aptitude for teaching was brought out, but he found little indication of where his career would take him. At last Moor Park College, Farnham, called him to be Chaplain. In a 'stately home' where Jonathan Swift had once lived that 'College of Christian Education' specialised in theology, sociology and art for working-class students under a trust headed by R E Parsons. Eight years later, Surrey County withdrew support, thus closing the college. John was obviously and ideally the man to be Head of R E at Farnham sixth-form College. The Innes family were able to find

what eventually became their permanent home at Hale, but the sixth-form post was only half-time. By what miracle did it happen that Tilford parish fell vacant, with Guildford diocese and the Church Commissioners having decided they could no longer provide for a full-time parish priest there? So it was into the recently-built vicarage at Tilford that John and Sue moved, and there began 20 years of astonishing double ministry, to the Parish at Tilford and to Farnham College.

A feature of John's life was his many visits to the Soviet Union, other eastern European countries and the Middle East, for pilgrimage and study. His confidence that letters in his wallet from eastern bloc residents asking him to bring Bibles and other Christian literature to them would protect him from arrest was total – "No need for heroics".

Daughter Jill's affliction with multiple sclerosis, rendering her severely disabled, called out wholehearted loving devotion from John and Sue. Eventual retirement, to their house at Hale, enabled them to keep her life full of interests such as music, especially through Tilford Bach Fes-



John Innes just before he left Hale

tival, and activities as extreme as sailing on Frensham Great Pond.

After 25 years, old age made family re-grouping necessary and a move was made to Westbury, close to daughter Elizabeth and the Cheshire Home where a place was found for Jill, and travel was convenient for sons Michael and David to visit. In spite of an unwelcoming diocese, John quickly made an impact on church life in Wiltshire, thoughtful Christians seeking his leadership in devotion and study. There first Jill and then Sue died, and early this year John, too, came to the end of his earthly pilgrimage. God give him rest, that rest which is the ceaseless activity of the love and truth of God in his eternal glory.

Fr. John Evans

Who was St Mark?

On Sunday, April 21st St Mark's Church will celebrate St Mark's Day. Of course that is also the day when St John's and St George's will be celebrating St George's Day (see page 16). In fact, St Mark's Day is on April 25th and St George's is on April 23rd but as neither of these is a Sunday, we have decided to have a good, saintly celebration on 21st.

But who was St Mark? Here's a brief look at him.

St Mark is traditionally said to be John Mark, a companion of the apostle Peter who went with him on his travels as he spread the news about Jesus. According to Acts, he also travelled with Paul and Barnabas and was the cause of a split between the two men (Acts 15: 36-40). He is also believed to have been a young disciple of Jesus himself, maybe even the young man who, at the time of Jesus' arrest was wearing nothing but some linen cloth which was grabbed at and he ran away naked (Mark 14:51-52).

The Gospel of Mark has been attributed to this Mark and was written sometime around 70-75CE, making it perfectly feasible that it was written by a follower of Jesus. It is certainly the ear-



St Mark, as depicted on St Mark's Basilica, Venice

liest and shortest of the gospels and is a source for Matthew and Luke.

Mark is believed to have spread Christianity in Egypt, founding the Church of Alexandria. One story goes that he was martyred here in 68CE, though this would contradict the idea that he wrote the Gospel of Mark in around 70CE. However, many scholars believe that an unnamed author wrote the Gospel.

St Mark is often symbolised by a winged lion, representing courage, strength, and the resurrection of Christ (the lion's roar symbolising the resurrection).

We will celebrate his saint's day with a service and cake—after all, this is the church's birthday! Join us on April 21st at 11am.



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And who was St George?

St George is a later saint than St Mark (see page 14) but is more familiar to many English people, as he is the patron saint of England. The George Cross flag flies outside many buildings, including St John's and St George's, and when there is an international football game coming up it proliferates,

St George's Day is on April 23rd, but who was this English lad? And why did he have it in for dragons?

Not an English lad at all, it seems. He was probably born into a Christian family in Cappadocia (modern-day Turkey) in the late 3rd century to early 4th century CE, and became a soldier in the Roman army. He is thought to have been martyred by the Emperor Diocletian who persecuted Christians and the story arose that he had refused to recant his faith so was put to death. Certainly, Lod, in modern-day Israel, the place where his tomb was thought to be, became a place of Christian pilgrimage and there is a Church of St George in Lod to this day.

Another story which grew up around him and which is certainly a flight of fancy, is that he killed a dragon which was terrorizing the people of a town



St George and the dragon, as depicted by Bulgarian artist Zahari Zograf in 1838

(originally one in Cappadocia but by the late 13th century the scene had moved to Libya). The dragon was fed sheep, then humans, and the king had declared that children and young people should be chosen by lot to be sacrificed to the dragon. The king's own daughter was chosen and, just as she stood waiting for her death, George came riding along. He made the sign of

the cross on the dragon with his sword, subdued the beast and took it into town where he told the people if they believed in God and Jesus and were baptised, he would kill the dragon. And so it came to pass.

It's a story which postdates the actual St George by several centuries but was used to symbolise the strength of the name of Jesus Christ and the triumph of good over evil.

But how did he become the patron saint of England?

In the 16th century a story was written about him saying he married the princess, here called Sabra. She was portrayed as an Egyptian princess yet somehow when George married her, she had

English children, one of whom became another legendary figure—the hero Guy of Warwick.

This links him with England but doesn't explain why he became the patron saint. He has come to embody the values of honour and courage and his royal and military associations added to his appeal so he was happily adopted. He is also the patron saint of soldiers, knights, cavalry, and scouting movements and of Aragon, Catalonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Palestine, Portugal, Germany, Greece, Moscow, Istanbul, Genoa and Venice (second to St Mark).

You can celebrate him at St John's at 9.30am or St George's at 10am on April 21st.



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Another saint deserves her day

So, exactly what is going on? You are busy celebrating saints this month I see. St George and St Mark get a big ol' hoopla, on account of two of your churches being named after them. All well and good of course. I'm not one to deny anyone a good time, let alone the cake that will follow these celebrations (I like cake if it has butter and eggs in it). But... why did you not celebrate the feast of St Gertrude last month?

St Gertrude? She was a woman in the seventh century who, along with her mother, founded the Abbey of Nivelles in what is now Belgium.

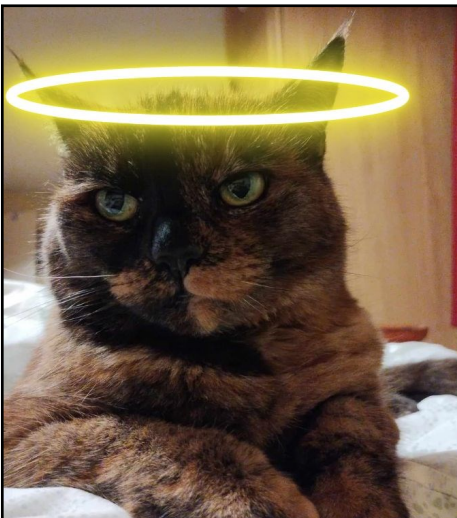
I'm not really terribly interested in all the goings on of humans and what

buildings they like to live in and with whom, as long as I am fed and have a warm sofa/bed/lap to sleep on, but Gertrude is an exception. She's the patron saint of cats! She is also protector against rats and mice which is a most excellent cause. Before I retired I, too, was a protector against rats and mice, though the curate (*f*) never quite saw it that way. I don't know what the fuss was about—the mice and rats were dead when I brought them in.

Her saints day is on March 17th which I know may be a problem for some of you as you will be busy wearing big green hats and drinking Guinness on account of it being St Patrick's Day too, but I have an idea. The more sober members of the parish can get together and have a party, involving haunches of venison, sides of salmon, and cake made with eggs and butter. They will obviously invite me. And during the evening, they will show their devotion to St Gertrude by giving me the first taste of any food they put on their plates.

And in return I will wave a paw in the direction of any mouse or rat I see.

Sounds like a saintly day to me.



Poetry and the parish

“Poetry opens people’s hearts, lets the pain out and the love in. It can lead people to feel the love of other people and the love of God .” So wrote one entrant to the Farnham Poetry Competition after the awards ceremony and poetry reading evening which was held at St Mark’s on March 9th.

The parish runs the competition as part of the Farnham Literary Festival. We started in Lockdown in 2021, before the Farnham Literary Festival actually began, asking people to write poems about how they felt about Lockdown. In came 56 poems from entrants aged between eight and 80 plus, pouring out their feelings. You can read about it here: badshotle-aandhale.org/2021/03/13/the-farnham-lockdown-poetry-festival-2/

When plans for the Farnham Literary Festival were announced later that year it seemed obvious that we should be involved and continue to run a poetry competition. The first one was in March 2021 when we asked people to write a ‘Poem for Farnham’. This time we received around 80 entries and held an awards evening and open mic

for anyone to read out their poems whether they had entered the competition or not.

The numbers rose again the next year when our theme was ‘hope’, and this year we asked people to write about ‘friendship’. Each year the entries flood in—this year more than 120—and the talent is breathtaking. You can read the winning poems for this year on the next few pages.

We fully expect to run the poetry competition next year, and many of our entrants have expressed an interest in a regular poetry evening so we hope to start running one soon. We also plan to hold an exhibition of children’s poetry and art at St John’s this summer. More details next time.

Chris Hunter, a keen supporter of the poetry competition (so keen that he kindly delivers leaflets about it and shares our social media posts) has written some thoughts about poetry which you can find on page 26. Do read them. And now for the winning poems...

The Farnham Poetry Competition

Under-16 winners

Judged by Coral Rumble.

Highly Commended:

Emily Teuten – *My big sister*

Peggy Wingham – *My love recipe*

Sienna Law and Tilly Wild – *Friendship is something no-one can take*

Bea Timewell – *You and I are sun and moon*

Zahra Rafiq – *A poem of friendship*

Hugo De Gruchy Webster – *Friends are big, friends are small*

Scarlett Harwick and Bella Lister – *Friendship is like nature*

Charlotte Keleher – *One thing can change the world*

Zoran Stimson – *True friends always disagree*

Dolcie Jennings – *I am Dolcie and I am 4*

Winners

Third prize: Emily Tarrant – *Peapods*

Second prize: Salimata Gassama – *Fractured Bonds*

Winner: Jet Pariera-Jenks – *Digital Friendships*

Peapods

'Like two peas in a pod' – what they say to inseparable friends, and young lovers.
But some pea pods, the peas are detached, and the friendship is broken.
Some peas, they quibble and quarrel in their pods.
Some peas, are happy and chuckle and grin.
Some peas, leave the pod before you take it in.
Some peas, go nasty, foul and rotten.
Some peas, yet difficult, are best left forgotten.
Such is the life of friendship and love,
Such is the life, of peas and pods.

Emily Tarrant

The Farnham Poetry Competition

Fractured bonds

I stand on the threshold of adulthood, A time of transition, a turbulent flood.
Friends once close now drift away, Leaving me with memories, stark and gray.
Adrift in a sea of changing tides, I cling to what once was, where my heart resides.
The laughter, the tears, the shared dreams we spun, Now shattered like glass in
the setting sun.

An allusion to youth, a fleeting sigh, As ambition drives us to reach for the sky. But
in this journey of growing apart, Anxiety grips as it clutches my heart.

Yet courage whispers amidst the fear, Friendship's essence ever clear. For in abandon-
ment's cruel sting, True bonds emerge with resilient wings.

Freedom found in letting go, Embracing what comes, letting new friendships
grow. So here I stand, on life's grand stage, Understanding now, through wisdom's
gage.

Salimata Gassama

Digital Friendships

I have **thousands** of friends and likers
And all of them follow **me**
As if I am the *coolest* girl in class
Instead of little nobody.

I have **thousands** of subscribers and followers
As if I am the latest trend
Even though I've never met *half* of them
I'm **proud** to have so many friends.
Or should I call them **strangers**?

They **could** be *anyone*
I don't know all their **names**
Or even where they're from.
My **friends** could be any age
Are they *older* than I guessed?
I think I should be more *cautious*
When I'm sent a friend request.
We exchange 'laters' and 'lols' through texter
Our messages are emojis and GIFs
I have **thousands** of *friends* and **strangers**
In my **digital** friendships.

Jet Pariera-Jenks

The Farnham Poetry Competition

Adult winners

Judged by Linda Daruvala.

Highly Commended:

Vinnie McGuire – *Locked In A Van*

Kate Kennington Steer – *Visitation*

Elly Jones – *Exactly What She Deserves*

Victoria D’Cruz – *Artistic Licence*

Ella Zubeidi – *Adrift*

Lisette Abrahams – *Marking The Miles*

Vicky Lowe – *A Solitary Word*

Winners

Third prize: Kay Wadham – *Farewell*

Second Prize: Liz Kendall – *She’s Never Seen The Mummy*

Winner: Nicole Coward – *These Are The Women*

Farewell

The seat where she used to sit on the lonely cliff
Stands empty now.
She would muse on the rolling waves
And a broken vow.
Still the waves roll in as they did before
But she is gone.

Now he stands alone on the windswept shore
As the seabirds cry.
And the desolate sob that
escapes his throat
Is a last goodbye.

Kay Wadham

The Farnham Poetry Competition

She's Never Seen *The Mummy*

Regressing, we watch the films of our adolescence together again.
This time in the home you own with your husband,
in which you raise your children, in which you cope with adult life.
I have not done this.

But at our age we both know death,
and have looked in its face and met its gaze more than once.
When we laugh now it is fuller and freer for the sudden lift of weight:
your anxiety for your children; my blurred vision over my staggering, carrier bag
career.

Something sharp is starting a rip, just there where I can't see it,
or perhaps something tender is squashed already,
and beginning to leak in drips.

What is happening today at school? The teachers are so stupid
and the friends are not the ones you'd choose.

We watch films and talk about them
and in between we talk about everything else
and it is the same language, we need no subtitles.

You told me of meeting someone our age who had never seen *The Mummy*,
and you followed this shocking revelation with the words:

"I've watched that film every six months since it was released",
and I laughed, and reached for another handful of whatever
children's party food we were scoffing at 10am on a Friday morning,
and thought "Yes. That is why I love you. That's why you're my friend."
Because in all the exhausting tangle of ageing parents
and illness and schools and work, real work *and* motherhood,
high-level motherhood of homemade cakes and justice and consistent patience,
you've never neglected Brendan Fraser.

And we both understand that this matters.

This, too, is devotion;

is what makes you such an exceptional woman, mother, wife and friend.

Every little lamb is followed and found, brought back to the fold:
a parable of care.

Continued on page 24

The Farnham Poetry Competition

Before the children, before you wed,
you took a week off work;
absented yourself from your proper, grown-up job;
because the box set of *The West Wing's* final season had been released
and you were going to watch it as it deserved:
immersed, in solitude, at home.
You goddess. You inspire me.

We were eleven when this began, talking and watching,
those years of first blood;
learning to cope with it, knowing it would be back,
like Arnie, at inconvenient times with pain like metal fists.
Your fainting fits at the iron's lowest ebb;
but that tide rose again, and with it your children.
You don't faint now. Your diplomacy looks like a flag of peace
and you wrap it so gracefully, concealing the sheath
of the sword you hold at your core.

Comfortably we regress; the green velvet cushions familiar,
old actors rewound to their prime, our delight still fresh.
The geeky thrills that sustain us in emergency
for emergency will come: has been and gone
and lurks now, waiting for its overture
on which neither of us has pressed play.
But it is not this day. May it not be today.

We know, we have bled and bled again and we know that these hours,
these sweet hard-soft popcorn moments, are how you keep
sunny and smiling; blond hair and blue jeans and a silver star
sparkling wide on your jumper as though you'd never lost anyone.
We both know that with only real life to live in we would each of us sink.
Give us films we've seen before, together,
and books we've read before and shared before, together,
before all this life and death came.

Liz Kendall

The Farnham Poetry Competition

These Are The Women

On the day of your Mother's funeral,
These are the women,
Who showed up in the brutal blue half-light of early morning,
Buttering bread and piecing together sandwiches,
Boiling water for tea,
The movement of their hands,
Cupping your tattered heart,
As the weight of grief tore at your edges.
These are the women who across the seasons,
Bear witness to snail trails of tears
Sliding into nests of unkempt hair,
Their deft hands folding washing,
Arriving unprompted with a casserole, a plated roast, flowers, cigarettes, a slab of
fruit cake,
These are the women who stand and wipe dishes, wring out dish cloths, The wom-
en who see what needs doing, and turn up, and do it.

These are the women who share joy,
As it threads it's way like water,
Spilling into life's crevices,
Shared meals, throaty laughter, baking with smears of jam,
The hilarity of toddlers, growing children,
The women who press twenty pence pieces into sweaty palms,
And send kids to the shops for sweets,
Pacing kitchens, holding each other's babies,
Moments like light refracting on the dew of a spider's web,
Knitting a lace of beauty across history.

These are the women who can read you,
By the angle of your head,
As you stand at the sink washing dishes,
The women who will know your thoughts, as your glance slides off their faces,
Who can smell the intimate details,
Of the battle beneath the sunlight falling on your skin.

Continued on page 26

The Farnham Poetry Competition

These are the women who show up for your hard moments,
And hold it as a privilege to walk beside you,
The women who carry each other across the decades,
Through their own faults and broken imperfections.
These are the women
Who love each other always and anyway,
These are the women who love you just as yourself.

Nicole Coward

Poetry lessons

The recent poetry competition, which climaxed with a fun night of awards and readings at St Mark's Church on March 9th, got me thinking about the process of writing poetry and a few of the lessons that it has taught me during my life.

I started writing poetry while attending Farnham Sixth Form back in the mid 80s. During my time there they had a writer-in-residence who came down to the college a couple of days a week. He was a professional poet called Matthew Sweeney. He was Irish and had just had a couple of volumes of his poetry published to widespread acclaim, and so was viewed with a sense of awe by the college's budding poets! His advice and guidance were very helpful, though he could be fairly

blunt. Luckily, he also liked to conduct his advice sessions in the local pub and was a generous host, so a few bits of harsh criticism were cushioned by a couple of pints of Guinness! He went on to be a long-term friend until dying, far too early, from motor-neurone disease in 2018.

Matthew was the first person to encourage me to enter work into com-



Poetry

petitions and also to attend readings when I could. I remember the first session I attended, where those present could read their own works. It was up at the Poetry Society. I rocked up, aged 18, with a handful of poems thinking I was that year's Shelley, to then sit through some stunning poems being read by confident adults of various ages. I didn't dare stand up, let alone read anything but it did provide a much-needed deflation of ego and taught me to take a much tougher line with my own output.

I have since attended many readings and entered a lot of competitions. The greatest lesson I have learnt from some minor successes and many abject failures, is that you need to remember that poetry is possibly one of the most subjective creative processes there is. You may have poured heart and soul and countless hours into a piece of poetry only for the person(s) assessing entries to merely go "Meh!" before passing on to another entry. It is very rare for a poet or poem to have universal acclaim and appeal. Don't beat yourself up if you are not mentioned in dispatches! Listen and read the other entries and think about what the defining features of each poem are. It's good to analyse poetry and learn from others.

The second lesson I have learned from

many years doodling around with words, is that I cannot produce decent poetry at the drop of a hat. The best poetry I have produced has come from when I have felt in the mood, or something has inspired me. It sounds obvious, but some writers can write themselves into the mood and are able to produce written output on a daily basis.

The final lesson is very important. Don't write poetry after indulging in a few drinks. You may feel your inhibitions falling away after a couple of glasses of Vino-Plonko and the muse may wash over you but when you look at your output in the cold light of the next day, you will see that you have produced something rather disappointing. Some of the most famous poets of all time may have produced reams of fantastic material whilst up to the gunnels in poppy extract or the demon drink, however, I turn out a load of old tat. I know many others report the same issue.

Anyway, these are just a few thoughts following the recent Farnham Literary Festival poetry competition. I would encourage anyone and everyone to have a go. Writing is a great self-analysis and therapy tool and most importantly, it's really good fun.

Chris Hunter

Bloomin' Kids at Hale Community Centre

There were just a few tickets left as we went to press for two free gardening workshops at **Hale Community Centre** on **Thursday, April 11th, 10am – 12pm** and at **1pm-3pm**. To book visit www.farnham.gov.uk/events/easter-bloomin-kids-activities-hale-community-centre



The workshops will offer young gardeners the chance to sow seeds, plant vegetables and do some Easter-themed arts and crafts while learning exciting facts and practical skills.

Please note that parents/carers are required to remain on site and supervise their children during the

workshops. There is parking at the venue.

These workshops are very popular and the places get booked up very quickly. Please cancel any spaces that are no longer needed so that they can be given to someone else.

The workshops are held with the support of volunteers from Farnham in Bloom.



All aboard for Exbury Gardens

There are a few seats left on the Hale Garden Club coach trip to Exbury Gardens on Thursday, May 16th. Cost is £37 per person which includes return coach travel, entry to the garden, ride on the garden train and gratuities.



*Rhododendron yakushimanum
(Purple Splendour) at the gardens*



Exbury's train

The coach leaves Hale War Memorial at 10.30am. Anyone interested should contact Geoff Wallis on [wal-
lis_geoff@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:wallis_geoff@hotmail.co.uk)

Characters searching for an audience

Hale WI will be meeting on Wednesday, April 10th. Visitors are very welcome for a charge of £4. The group meet in the Village Institute in Wings Road and the meeting will start at 1:45pm. The speaker will be Antony Wood and his talk is called 'Five Characters in Search of an Audience'.

The talk will be followed by tea and cake and, of course, a lot of chat. For more information call 01252 722817 or 01252 715802.

Restarting April 1st 2024
5.00pm - 6.30pm

Sandy Stars Football Group



Sandy Stars Football Group is a free community group that offers children the opportunity to come together, meet new friends, and enjoy a game of football.

WHEN - Monday & Wednesdays,
5.00-6.30pm

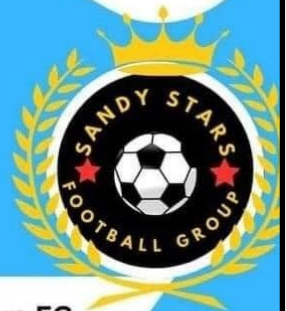
WHERE - Lyall Place Playing Field

WHO - Children and Young People aged
4-15 years.

Membership forms must be completed before any child can participate.

All key volunteers have an enhanced DBS certificate and basic 1st Aid & Safeguarding training.

For more information
please email Kerri -
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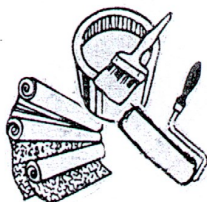
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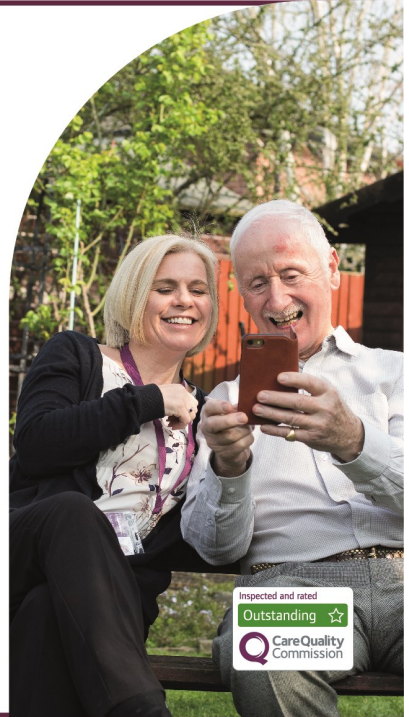
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There will be a barbecue for Ascension Day, Thursday, May 9th, at St John's from 6pm. Bring your own alcoholic drinks and meat. Buns, salad and soft drinks provided. This will be followed by a short service of Holy Communion at 7.30



Church services

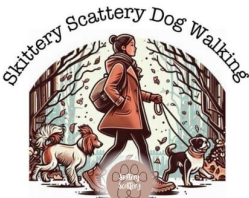
Our regular church services are:

Every Sunday: 9.30am St John's; 10am St George's; and 11am St Mark's.

1st Sunday 6pm St George's, BCP Evening Prayer.





Wednesday: 12pm St Mark's, Midweek Eucharist.

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Church Registers

From the Church Registers

Funerals

We commend to God those whose funerals have recently taken place:

6 March at St Mark's Church + Aldershot Crematorium
Diana Mary Wiseman



Who's Who

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07842 761919



Hale Community Centre



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halecommunitycentre.org.uk

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