



St. Pancras Chambers



St. Pancras Station reopened in November 2007 as the new International Terminus for Eurostar trains going to Paris, Lille and Brussels.

After an £800 million refit, the station was transformed into London's 'Destination Station' – a mixture of rail terminus and luxury shops to rival most shopping centres. The second stage of the rejuvenation of the Kings Cross area was an immediate success and along with the British Library gave a new breath of life to this run-down area.

But St. Pancras Station is actually recognised by the building which fronts it – St. Pancras Chambers – and this is going through

its own refurbishment program to reopen next year as a five-star hotel and apartments.

Why should this interest the readers of New Prospect? Well, it's because the train shed there has often been referred to as a 'Cathedral of the Railway' and the gothic revival buildings wrapped around it are designed by our own St. Mary's architect, George Gilbert Scott.

Work started on St. Pancras Chambers in 1868, some 10 years after our 'New' church was completed. It opened in May 1873 and was the most luxurious and modern railway hotel in Britain, with features such as hydraulic ascending rooms (water driven lifts), electric signalling bells, central heating to the common parts, hot running water and a telegraphy system to keep the guests in touch with the stock exchange.

Scott was the most prolific church architect of the Victorian era, but completed many other non-secular buildings too and was knighted in 1872 for his design of the Albert Memorial.

So now one of his finest buildings is having new life breathed into it with a circa £170 million refit and refurbishment which sees some of the finest restoration of interior features as well as some spectacular though understated engineering feats in order to bring the building firmly into the 21st century.

Back in 1996 when I first entered St. Pancras Chambers I was awestruck with the magnificence of the then derelict building. The fact that it was designed by 'our' architect George Gilbert Scott drew me closer to needing to know the history of this fine neglected place, and I have been involved with it ever since. Finding out about the history of the building also led me to discovering the history of the boy martyr, St. Pancras, and to becoming a regular visitor at St. Pancras New Church - another coincidence, as this parish also outgrew its early church and now, like us, shares two buildings. Eventually though, I was

drawn to continue my Christian journey here, at St. Mary's, close to where I was born and my father before me. A sense of belonging fills my heart whenever I am in Stoke Newington, familiar places as well as familiar faces make me feel 'at home'.

If you haven't visited St. Pancras International Station yet, you are missing a treat. You don't need to be getting a train, this is a place just to come and be inspired under the great roof of the train shed.

If you are travelling to Europe, this is a far nicer experience than an airport, but if you are just at a loose end and want to have a pleasant day out, then this is a great place to start it. Next door in the British Library, there are always free exhibitions, too. The Foundling Museum a short walk down Judd Street, and the Canal Museum off York Way are just two of the other great buildings to visit in the rejuvenated area.

In Spring 2011 the doors of the 'St. Pancras Renaissance Hotel' will open and the building will once again come alive.



Royden Stock.

A Date for Your Diary

October the 10th is Dog Whipping Day. According to tradition the custom originated when a dog swallowed a consecrated wafer during a service in York Minster.

The earliest written record known to us is in the Ludlow churchwardens' accounts for 1543, when Thomas Payver was paid 8d for the task. In 1552 Archbishop Holgate of York issued an injunction that the vergers should expel "beggars, other light persons, and dogs" during divine service. Payments to dog-whippers appear to have continued in some parts of the country until the early 19th century.

Mystery Plays, Miracle Plays and Passion Plays



We were fortunate enough this summer to be able to go to the Passion Play in Oberammergau. Oberammergau is a small town in an obscure valley in southern Bavaria, near the Austrian border. But every 10 years they put on, throughout the summer, a representation of the Passion which draws visitors from all round the world.

The plays were originally started in 1634. The previous year, the village had been stricken with plague and the villagers had taken a vow that if the plague would cease, they would in thanksgiving perform, every ten years, a representation of the last week of Christ's life. The plague ceased from that moment, and – except when prevented by war – the villagers have stayed true to their vow. As early as 1680, the date was shifted so that it fell in the decennial years – hence the fact that there were performances this summer.

From our perspective, this might be a curious vow to make. But it drew on a long tradition of religious drama – one that lasted in the Catholic parts of Germany for longer than in many other places.

The very early church had been suspicious of drama; Greek and Roman drama was closely linked with their own pagan religions and the church wanted nothing to do with it. But the liturgy is itself intrinsically dramatic; at its very heart is a re-enactment of the Last Supper. So it was not very long before the dramatic elements of the liturgy began to be developed further. The events of Holy Week and Easter were particularly dramatic and, in a time when few could read, visual representation was the best way of getting the

story across. Even with a text in Latin, the people would get a much better idea of what was happening than just listening to a reading. By the 10th century, such dramatic representation as part of the liturgy was becoming widely accepted. We still have a small echo of this in our own Palm Sunday procession and dramatic reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday.

It was not long before the tradition began to develop further. In particular, the performances ceased to be given by the clergy, they were taken outside the church and the language was changed from Latin to the common language of the people. The plays also began to be divided into two more distinct types. 'Mystery plays' were based strictly on biblical events. 'Miracle' plays, on the other hand, were more based around the lives of saints, and could include many more apocryphal stories. Miracle plays tended to have a much higher quota of humour. Balaam and his talking ass, for example, were popular characters, and the figure of Herod was often turned into a comic caricature. There was also a third type – the 'morality' play, which was often allegorical and which did not attempt to portray Biblical characters at all. The most famous of these was *Everyman*.

Both mystery and miracle plays were traditionally performed by guilds of craftsmen. It has, indeed, been suggested by some scholars that mystery plays were so called not because they dealt with the divine mystery but because they were performed by people who were the followers of a 'misterium', or a craft. The popular times for performance were at Whitsun or Corpus Christi (which follows about 10 days later). It is known that they took place all over England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Four surviving cycles of plays survive – those of York, Wakefield, Chester and Coventry. The cycles are made up of individual plays, each of which would be performed by a particular guild, and between them they covered the whole of biblical history from the creation to the Last Judgement. Each scene took the form of a 'pageant', and often they were performed on a moveable float, which would be parked at various important places in the town while the play was performed. Then they would all move round so that the spectators could see all the plays over

the course of a day – although some presumably in the wrong order. Costumes were often stylised so that the audience could recognise the characters immediately. The language, on the other hand, was often distinctly unbiblical.

In southern Germany and Austria, such dramatic representations remained under ecclesiastical control until well into the fourteenth century. The southwestern parts in particular remained receptive to the religious plays outside the liturgy. For example, there is a Corpus Christi play dating from 1391 which was performed in Innsbruck, which is less than 50 miles from Oberammergau. Non-scriptural content was rare, although the Last Judgement did appear as a scene more often than in some other place. This part of southern Germany was little touched by the Reformation and religious drama continued as a tradition well beyond the sixteenth century, when it died out in most other places.

It was against this background that the Passion Play in Oberammergau started. But it has three particular characteristics which makes it different from the English tradition at least. First, it deals only with the Passion. The modern play begins with the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and ends with the Resurrection. Secondly, they involved the whole village. They weren't limited to individual guilds, still less to the clergy. The plays require a cast of about 700, not to speak of assorted sheep, goats, doves, horses and even a camel. And they are all villagers – none of them is a professional, although the play is now professionally produced. Third, the play was originally written for them by a single monk, and is now regularly updated but again by a single author. It is not a 'folk' play.

The other characteristic which might strike us as surprising is the musical accompaniment. The music is superb. It takes the form of chorales which are meditations which accompany *tableaux vivants* – representations of events from the Old Testament, such the expulsion of Adam and Eve or the sacrifice of Isaac. The music was written in 1814, and what it reminded me of was Bach's Passions, where in turn the chorales are based on popular melodies of the time. There is the same tradition of stopping the action while someone outside it commentates on it. Bach,

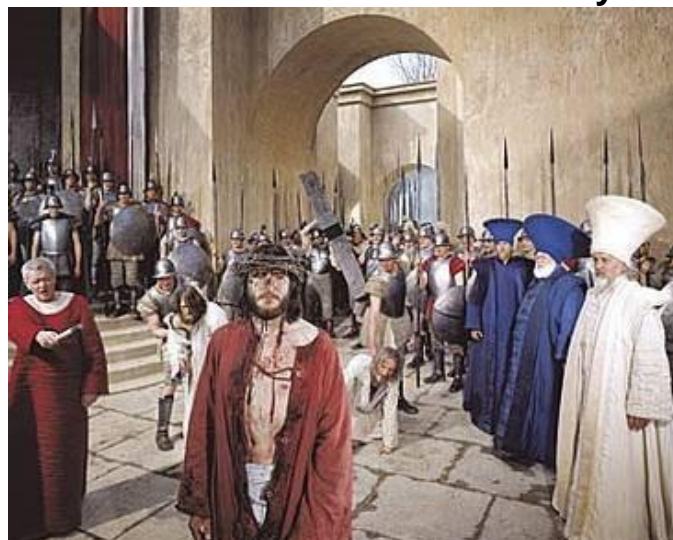
being a Lutheran, was obliged to work only with words and music, but it is interesting that attempts have been made in recent years to stage Bach's Passions – thus bringing them closer to the tradition from which they must have sprung.

The Play takes all day to perform. This year for the first time it is being done in the afternoon and the evening, with a long 'dinner break'. It used to be morning and evening. The stage is open to the sky, although the audience are covered – in a purpose built theatre put up for the 1910 performance. This has the advantage that, as the action darkens and you get closer to the betrayal and all the events which happen at night, so the real night also becomes dark. I suspect that part of the reason for the change of time, however, is the sheer logistical difficulty of getting the audience, who are staying in the villages all around, up to 20 miles away, there in time for a 9.00 or 10.00 am start, when there is only one narrow mountain road in or out!

Something so popular inevitably has an element of commercialisation about it. But it is still an immensely moving experience, especially the second half, which consists of the trial scenes and then the crucifixion itself. The first half, where changes have been made for this year's play, consists of quite a lot of theological discourse – put in deliberately because of concerns that increasingly the audience will not know what everyone in the past took for granted about the 'backstory'. As a result, it can be a bit static – especially as the actors are not professionals and most of the time they are declaiming their speeches rather than engaging in real dialogue. But once you get to the Last Supper, the Agony in the Garden and the trial scenes, you really get drawn into it. Each half lasts 2½ hours, and hardly anyone needed to go out – a measure of how absorbed they were in the action. I have wanted to see the Play for a long time, and it did not disappoint.

Judith Simpson

Oberammergau: The Secular Lessons from the Passion Play



Settling into my seat in the Passion Play Theatre in Oberammergau, I was intrigued as much as anything else. How were the actors going to sustain interest over 5 hours of theatre? It may be the Greatest Story Ever Told, but it is therefore well known, and a tradition going back to 1634 is not going to try silly gimmicks with the plot.

It quickly became clear that the sheer scale and ambition of the production would hold interest: the number of people on stage, the interplay of music and drama, and the professionalism of the staging were all impressive. But the dimension which came through in a new light, for me, was the power play over authority in Jerusalem. This aspect of the play offers food for thought for all of us, Christians or agnostics.

The play brings out, early on, vividly, how Jesus was a problem for the authorities. The first line, after the Prologue and a Chorus, is spoken by one of the priests, Nathaniel:

"What a swarming mass of people! The entire city is flowing towards him."

As things get more serious, as Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, Annas, another priest, says:

"We, the priests and teachers, are a plaything for a man who grows ever more brazen the longer he defies and mocks us."

Later on, Nicodemus, a supporter of Jesus, throws the accusation at his critics:

"He is inconvenient and gets in the way of your activities."

A lot of time in the play is given to the various processes and trials, which led to

Jesus's crucifixion. Five different perspectives are brought out, among the authorities.

The supporters or Jesus

Among the priests, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea have the courage to support Jesus, for slightly different reasons. Nicodemus holds out for what's right: proper process, and evidence. He challenges Caiaphas, the High Priest:

"Caiaphas, what are your charges? Violations of the law? Has he [Jesus] not said that not one iota of the law should be taken away?"

Joseph focuses more on signs and miracles:

"I profess, no one can work these signs if God is not with him. Are signs and miracles not happening?"

They stick to their guns, but are unable to carry very many others with them.

The hardliners

At the other end of the spectrum, among the priests, are Annas and Nathaniel (for whom there is no Biblical source). They certainly found Jesus "inconvenient", in Nicodemus's words – the earlier quotation from Annas shows that. More interesting, maybe, is whether this faction genuinely felt that God's law – as opposed to their own privileged position in society – was under serious challenge. Nathaniel responds to Nicodemus's challenge about violations of the law (above) by saying:

"He trampled on the law with his feet,"

though he went on to say:

"He is a heretic, a deceiver, who accomplishes his deeds only through Beelzebub."

The High Priest

The position of Caiaphas is pivotal. He is the High Priest: John's Gospel, though not the play, says that he is High Priest for the year. He defends the religious authority of the priests from the start, telling Nicodemus:

"Our priests alone have been given the task to proclaim God's will to you!"

But he is initially more cautious in handling the political issues around public opinion. Nathaniel challenges him:

"Caiaphas, for long enough has he led the people astray and sought to turn them away from the prescribed fathers."

Annas adds to the personal pressure, but Caiaphas responds:

"This man has too many followers. ... This could lead to a dangerous battle and provide the bloodthirsty Romans with an excuse to put an end to the uprising with their swords. Trust me! Let me take charge! If you do that, the blasphemer will surely receive the punishment he deserves."

Pilate

Caiaphas's chosen way forward is to go to see Pilate, and there is a telling scene in the play between the two. Pilate is worried about public order. He uses the same phrase as Nathaniel:

"The entire city flows towards him."

He dismisses Caiaphas's remark that Jesus is just "an insignificant itinerant preacher", and reminds Caiaphas that he, Caiaphas, was put in charge of peace and order. If he fails, the Roman army will step in.

In the next scene, Caiaphas goes back to the High Council of the priests. After a debate, he reveals that he has moved to an extreme position. Annas, for instance, says of Jesus:

"Once he is in prison, ... the gullible people will no longer be snared by the enchantment of his words... Then he will soon be forgotten."

But Caiaphas worries that Jesus will, for instance, "use his magic tricks to break his chains and open the prison gates." He concludes:

"He must die."

After Judas's betrayal, Caiaphas calls a High Council at night. It's a powerful scene, starting with Nicodemus protesting that he and others had not been invited. Caiaphas is now leading the charge, against not just Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, but also Gamaliel, who points to the law and to pragmatism. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea sustain their argument. Caiaphas continues to condemn Jesus, but won't carry through a death sentence on his own. He goes back to Pilate. Pilate is angry at being bothered:

"If this Jesus has violated your laws, take him and judge him according to your laws."

Caiaphas responds:

“According to our law he deserves the death penalty. But I would never, Procurator, never dare to do such a thing unauthorised.”

Herod

Pilate then interrogates Jesus, as is so well known. In the middle of this, Herod comes in. He just mocks Jesus, inviting him to perform miracles on the spot. Pilate tries to get him more involved:

“He is your subject. If you agree, pronounce judgement over him!”

Herod refuses:

“If he has done or said anything against the law, his childish simplicity is to blame. ... Let him go. He isn't worth your trouble.”

The end-game

As the end-game approaches, the play reinforces the tension between the people in authority. Pilate becomes increasingly exasperated:

“Now I won't deal with this Jesus any longer!”

Caiaphas tells the priests to whip up a crowd to put pressure on Pilate – using what worked for Jesus against him. And he reminds Pilate several times of his job:

“Pilate! If you let this one go, you are no friend of the emperor.”

Finally, Pilate is worn down. He releases the murderer and rebel, Barabbas. But then he says:

“But know, High Priest, henceforth you shall never again know peace. Too often, have you threatened me. ... I wash my hands in innocence. Later today, a message will be sent to Rome that you, Caiaphas, shield rebels against Rome from the death penalty.”

Conclusion

The passion play thus brings out the five different perspectives.

At the extremes, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea on the one side, and Annas and Nathaniel on the other, stick to their views consistently. They challenge us all. Do we stick up for what's right? How do we respond to people or views that are undeniably “inconvenient” but may be telling us something?

Herod features only briefly in this version of the story. He gives the right advice, but makes no effort to get that conclusion. How often do we all acquiesce in the outcome of situations like this? When could we and should we do more?

Pilate and Caiaphas are the most interesting. Pilate knew he was being unjust, and knew he was being out-manoeuvred. He caved in because of fear that his boss, the emperor, would blame him for public disorder. And he became exasperated and impatient. How often do we do the wrong thing because we're not confident we can explain the right one to someone in higher authority? Or just get fed up?

Caiaphas, on the face of it, achieved his objectives. He got rid of the nuisance and threat of Jesus, strengthened his own authority, and manoeuvred Pilate into taking the final responsibility. Perhaps that's why he gets a better press – or at least less ignominy – than Herod, Pilate, or Judas, all of whom are more sympathetic figures in this play. But the play leaves a lot of questions. Although he played his hand skilfully and with determination, once he'd set upon the course, did he really believe that course to be right? Or was he following it to keep his hardliners happy, and hence keep his job? And on any sort of longer view, he showed a lack of leadership. You don't have to be convinced that Jesus was the only son of God to see that his teachings had much more to offer than the ones Caiaphas was seeking to preserve intact.

So the story of Caiaphas in the play also offers food for thought. In forming our opinions, are we taking the long view? How far are we influenced by others? How far are we concerned by our own position, rather than by what's right?

The Oberammergau passion play thus works on a number of levels. The story can be seen as the interaction of heroes and villains. But this version went much deeper, and certainly challenged me to look at my behaviour in daily life. I'm grateful for that.

Andrew Hudson

Carol Service 2010



It is that time of year again! It is time to join the St Mary's Church Christmas Carols Choir for the annual Carol Service, which will be held on Sunday 19 December at 6.30pm.

There will be 6 rehearsals leading up to the service, and all enthusiastic singers are welcome. The rehearsals will be on Thursday nights, 7.30pm – 9.15pm in the new church rooms, starting on Thursday 11 November.

Sometimes people are not quite sure whether they 'qualify' to sing in the choir, so here are some FAQs

Will I need to audition?

No

Does it matter if I can't read music?

No

Can I bring other family members?

Yes, not as spectators, as singers.

What sort of music will we sing?

Trad well known carols plus one by me!

Do I need to commit to attend all rehearsals?

Please attend at least 4 of the 6 rehearsals

How can I join the Christmas Carols choir?

See me by the organ after the 11am service, or phone/text me on 07826378321

Let us all look forward to a fabulous carol service and a joyous Christmas season.

Nigel Williams
Organist

Baptisms

26 September 2010



Marnie Cassandra Flett
Imogen Grace and Annabel Garrett
Alfred and Constance Staples Bazalgette-
Tolson
Amari Small

**We welcome you into the fellowship of
faith;
we are children of the same heavenly
Father;
we welcome you.**

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

You may or may not be aware of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, a scheme introduced by Gordon Brown in 2001 which allows places of worship to reclaim 100% of VAT charged on repairs and restoration work. Well, this scheme finishes at the end of March 2011, meaning that this type of work will cost an extra 20% unless we can make such a loud protest that the government does something about it.

As a registered charity we can still claim some allowances on certain aspects of repairs and restorations after that date, but there will still be a significant rise in the costs to us unless we can persuade our MPs to do something about it, before it is too late.

Please write to your MP about this. For more information and for a draft letter, look on: www.churchcare.co.uk

Royden Stock.

Putting the Fun into Fundamentalism: *A thought experiment*

Anyone who lives in it or visits it knows that Stoke Newington is a pretty alternative place. Trendy bars jostle for position with trendy second hand clothes shops; the only thing wrong with the organic market is that it is a chain; people don't complain about graffiti, only about graffiti being covered up; and people turn their noses up at Nandos (but not so far that they can't smell the chicken). So let's imagine an alternative alternative Stoke Newington.

It is a truth more or less universally acknowledged that fundamentalist and extremist movements arise more commonly within liberal societies rather than in more conservative ones. This is to do with fundamentalism essentially acting as a reaction to society rather than as a product of it. So, Stoke Newington went lefty, but at any point it might just have well gone righty. Segue. Wavy lines.

In the 1960s Communist Party meetings were being held in the Town Hall and radicals, bohemians and artists abounded. In our alternative history instead of becoming more liberal, the then Rector of St Mary's takes a stand and in response dogma is tightened up. Too much choice of interpretation is making the gospel difficult to understand and so sermons advocate inerrancy of scripture. No mistakes means no confusion over meaning. This view of the Bible becomes more and more attractive and increasingly the church is less welcoming to people who don't agree.

In the 70s free love sweeps the streets, but not at St Mary's where only heterosexual married couples feel they have a place, as the church reacts to sexual ambiguity with unambiguous laws. Fundamentalist Rectors beget fundamentalist Rectors and the congregation are swept along with them.

The tolerant people of Church Street tolerate their intolerant church and expose the irony that often allows fundamentalist movements to prosper. A new Rector enforces 1 Corinthians 11 (women to cover their heads when at prayer) and half the congregation are provided with headscarves to wear the whole

time (when are we not at prayer?). The tolerant outsiders continue to tolerate it.

By the new millennium St Mary's has become utterly isolated, defining its very existence by being not part of the moral destitution which surrounds it. The tower itself seems to rise up out of the liberal squalor and the incumbent Rector severs connections with the Church of England after Rowan Williams allows people not to agree with the virgin birth. Segue. Wavy lines.

Not our world maybe, but in an infinity of worlds there is a St Mary's like that, and we're all in it, beating people with a stick if they don't agree.



Stephen Bovey

Harvest Lunch

The social committee and World Wide Church WP are jointly organising a Harvest/One World Week lunch on Sunday 17th October. Tickets are on sale for £5.00 adults and £2.50 children under 14 and will be obtainable after Sunday morning Services. This is basically a fund raising lunch and the money will go to the One World Week fund.

Come along and share a Sunday pie lunch plus desserts with us in the New Rooms.

Jean Guest
Social Committee

Diary of a Church Mouse

John Betjeman

Here among long-discarded cassocks,
Damp stools, and half-split open hassocks,
Here where the vicar never looks
I nibble through old service books.
Lean and alone I spend my days
Behind this Church of England baize.
I share my dark forgotten room
With two oil-lamps and half a broom.
The cleaner never bothers me,
So here I eat my frugal tea.
My bread is sawdust mixed with straw;
My jam is polish for the floor.
Christmas and Easter may be feasts
For congregations and for priests,
And so may Whitsun. All the same,
They do not fill my meagre frame.
For me the only feast at all
Is Autumn's Harvest Festival,
When I can satisfy my want
With ears of corn around the font.
I climb the eagle's brazen head
To burrow through a loaf of bread.
I scramble up the pulpit stair
And gnaw the marrows hanging there.
It is enjoyable to taste
These items ere they go to waste,
But how annoying when one finds
That other mice with pagan minds
Come into church my food to share
Who have no proper business there.
Two field mice who have no desire
To be baptized, invade the choir.
A large and most unfriendly rat
Comes in to see what we are at.
He says he thinks there is no God
And yet he comes ... it's rather odd.
This year he stole a sheaf of wheat
(It screened our special preacher's seat),
And prosperous mice from fields away
Come in to hear our organ play,
And under cover of its notes
Ate through the altar's sheaf of oats.
A Low Church mouse, who thinks that I
Am too papistical, and High,
Yet somehow doesn't think it wrong
To munch through Harvest Evensong,
While I, who starve the whole year through,
Must share my food with rodents who
Except at this time of the year

Not once inside the church appear.
Within the human world I know
Such goings-on could not be so,
For human beings only do
What their religion tells them to.
They read the Bible every day
And always, night and morning, pray,
And just like me, the good church mouse,
Worship each week in God's own house,
But all the same it's strange to me
How very full the church can be
With people I don't see at all
Except at Harvest Festival.

A Saint for the Month

October 22nd Donatus (d 876)

When you are out and about on the road far from home, ever feel tempted to pop in and explore a unfamiliar church? If so, think of Donatus as your patron saint – and beware. You don't know what you may be letting yourself in for....

In 829 Donatus, an Irish monk, had completed a prayerful pilgrimage to Rome, and thought his adventures were over. Now there only remained the long road home to Ireland. He had got as far as the beautiful little town of Fiesole, which sits high above Florence in Tuscany, when he saw a lot of people milling about the cathedral. Curious, he decided to look in.... as he entered the cathedral, the bells rang, the lamps were lit and wham! Without any diocesan paperwork at all, he was acclaimed to be the new bishop the people had been praying for.

Donatus was very surprised, but accepted that this turn of events must be God's will for his life. So he became bishop in a time when bishops did even more dangerous things than they do nowadays. Instead of verbal forays into the national press, Donatus was given the job of leading Pope Louis the Pious' troops against the Saracens. Safely back in Fiesole, Donatus settled down as a scholar and teacher of his new flock. But he never forgot his native Ireland and did the 9th century equivalent of 'twinning' his diocese, for he opened a little hospice where any Irish pilgrims passing through Tuscany could stay in safety. 12 centuries later, his relics lie in the present cathedral of Fiesole.

Win this Super Prize!



Personality Analysis Wallet

If this was a real wallet(which I hasten to add, it isn't!), would you:

- A. Keep it?
- B. Take it to the police
- C. Give some of the money to the poor?

You have been underpaid for years. There is a BIG mistake in your pay cheque to your advantage, would you:

- A. Tell the boss?
- B. Keep quiet?
- C. Give some to the church?

These are a couple of the posers accompanying this wood-pulped fake portefeuille for your temptation. Answer all the questions correctly and you shall pass GO, or go to prison! Sorry, wrong game! Are you a good person? Are you self-rychus? Can you spell? Do you even care? ...ah, there's the rub! Gotcha!

Prove to your heathen friends once and for all that they are secular individuals, steeped in moral relativism, as you watch them fall EVERY TIME for the old dropped wallet Bible tract trick. Who knows? One of them might even get saved!

Mark Perrett

Cecily suddenly realised how they had sliced so many eggs for the sandwiches.



“Even though Joe was churchwarden here for 30 years I still don't think they'll allow this headstone in the churchyard”.



Gordon hoped that this year's harvest offerings might actually be edible.

September Caption Competition



Here's the picture to remind you. Our adjudicator had a difficult task, but eventually chose no.1 as the overall winner. Thank you all for taking part.

While the big top was in town, the bearded ladies decided to get a tan without attracting unwanted attention

The Police were forced to abandon the identity parade. Sergeant Jones was embarrassed when he had to admit that the police had failed to "bag" the right culprit!

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all?

Ambre Solaire were forced to remove their new range from the market.

Wanna be women bishop's trying out inoffensive mitres, whilst trawling through the latest legislative proposals.

The new bishops' identities were a closely guarded secret.

Reading poetry while sunbathing was fine, but one had to take precautions against metaphorical bombs being dropped.

Auditions for the next Dr.Who "Cybermen in Clissold Park" episodes were coming along incredibly well!

The three girls were all too embarrassed to own up to reading the racy and naughty Jilly Cooper romp just out in hardback!

Stoke Newington residents of yesteryear – the Beverley Sisters relaxing incognito in Clissold Park.

The judges of the annual Stoke Newington Literature Prize took great care to ensure their anonymity

The cookery students enjoyed their "boil in the bag" lunch in the park.

The new stylist at "High Street Hair" had caused considerable distress!

If your church choir records a chart-topping "hit", it is advisable to take measures to avoid the attentions of the paparazzi

Another idea for re-cycling those carrier bags...

The Para-military wing of the bible group protects its identity even when relaxing in the park.

Once upon a time there were three sisters. Their names were Plastic-carrier Bag, Very-expensive-hand Bag, and Reusable-environmentally-friendly Bag. One day, deep deep in the forest

October Caption Competition



Your caption goes here. As summer segues into the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness we thought that we'd hang on to the floral prints and short sleeves for just another month.

You have until October 20th to get your entries in.

Our calling is to share the loving hospitality of God, seeing Christ in the face of the stranger

Ministry Team for St Mary's & St John's

Rector: The Revd Jonathan Clark, The Rectory, Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 9ES (020 7254 6072 rectorofstokey@btinternet.com)

Vicar: The Revd Martyn Hawkes, St John's Vicarage, 2a Gloucester Drive, London N4 2LW (020 8809 6111 mj_hawkes@yahoo.co.uk)

Curate: The Revd Lucyann Ashdown (0207 7254 6072 lucyann.ashdown@googlemail.com)

Honorary Assistant Priest: The Revd Graeme Watson (020 7249 8701 gchwatson@blueyonder.co.uk)

Pastoral Assistant: Melissa Martin (020 7254 6072)

Readers: Alan Murray, Jonathan Gebbie

Parish Information for St Mary's

Parish Administrator: Mark Perrett (020 7254 6072 stmarystokenewington@btinternet.com)

Church Wardens: Andrew Jackson and Sandra Roth

Organist and Director of Music: Nigel Williams

PCC Secretary: Jean Guest (020 8802 4921).

PCC Treasurer, Michael Johnson

Recorder of Stewardship: Rosaline Nwagboso

Sunday School: Lucy Barnes

Website: Graham Robson robsonq21@yahoo.co.uk

Parish Information for St John's

Church Wardens: Joyce George & Irene Fergus

Parish Office: 020 8809 6111

Services

Sunday

Holy Communion 8.00 am Matins 9.00 am (Old Church) Family Eucharist (St Mary's) 9.30 am

Sung Eucharist (St Mary's) 11.00 am Parish Eucharist (St John's) 11 am

Evening worship 6.30 pm (Old Church)

Weekdays (All at St Mary's except Thursdays)

	Morning Prayer	Mass	Evening Prayer
Monday	8:30 am,		5 pm
Tuesday	8:30 am	8:45 am	5 pm
Wednesday	8:30 am	7.30 pm	5 pm
Thursday	8:30 am		5 pm
Friday	8:30 am		5 pm

The Editorial Team (*"Nemo primus inter pares"*)

John Keniston (020 8809 1479, jgkeniston@lineone.net), Jane Pryce (020 7359 1224, janepryce729@btinternet.com), Mark Perrett (markperrett@btopenworld.com)

Brownies. Fridays 6.30 pm. Enquire at Church Office

Booking enquiries for the Community Centre: see Parish Administrator

Arrangements for baptisms, weddings etc: ring the Parish Administrator for an appointment.

St Mary's has a Church School: St Mary's School, Lordship Rd, London, N16. 020 8800 2645