






SPIRE

St. Stephen's Community Magazine
Autumn 2011
Issue 9

InSpire:

Remembering
A message from the Vicar's desk

They Also Served
Our Women Veterans

Spire Interviews
Maggie Tetlow on marriage

Helping Each Other
Dulwich Helpline



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WELCOME

Peter Benton
Editor



In this autumn's issue of Spire, the community magazine of St Stephen's, we have a wide variety of articles to interest you.

Bernhard, our vicar, examines the origins of the Remembrance Day Service that takes place every November in this church and churches across the country. His thoughtful article gives us a different perspective on this solemn occasion.

Continuing in the same vein, Linda and Michael's fascinating article focuses on the experiences of the women war veterans of St Stephen's and the many and varied parts that they played in the hostilities seventy years ago.

Elsewhere, Katie takes a look at the Dulwich Helpline and the vital part this organisation plays in reaching out to the older members of our community.

Lastly Nick, our curate, interviews parishioner Maggie Tetlow who is running a marriage preparation course for engaged couples at St Stephens this autumn, with sessions giving them advice on how to make a marriage work.

Full details of our autumn services and events can be found on our back cover.



Well done to our own Paul Acers who ran the London Marathon on Palm Sunday in 4hrs - 20mins. He raised in total **£16,253.14** for Leukaemia & Lymphoma research. To read about how Paul is living with Leukaemia, please visit his blog at:
www.livingwithleukaemia.co.uk
www.justgiving.com/paulacers1

For those interested in the article on Julie and David Hailey in the last edition, details can be found of their business at www.thewoodpigeon.com (Now correctly spelled, with apologies)

Inspire SPIRE

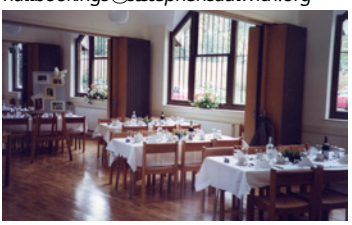
Have your say on what goes into Spire!

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Spire@ststephensdulwich.org

Looking for a venue for you party or group?

St Stephen's Millennium Hall: available to hire from £35/hr. To book contact Joan Greenwood on (020) 8693 8613 or hallbookings@ststephensdulwich.org





Above are pictures from our annual Funday in June. A great time was had by all - except maybe the vicar!

St Stephen's Church
College Road, Dulwich, London SE21 7HW
Tel: (020) 8766 7281
Office open on Saturday 10.30-11.30
Vicar - Revd Bernhard Schünemann
vicar@ststephensdulwich.org
Curate - Revd Nick Davies
curate@ststephensdulwich.org
Reader - Mrs Trot Lavelle
t.lavelle181@btinternet.com
Churchwardens
Joan Greenwood & Patrick Robathan
churchwarden1@ststephensdulwich.org
Vicar's secretary - Gill Burdett
ParishOffice@ststephensdulwich.org

The team: Peter Benton, Nick Davies, Sarah Bucknall, Jessica Davies, Linda Christian-Edwards, Maria Anguita & Michael Goodman.
Let us know what you think at **Spire@ststephensdulwich.org**

Remembering

Revd Bernhard Schünemann



When I was first ordained in the Church of England it became clear to me that once I was a vicar, Remembrance Sunday might be one of the more delicate, if not difficult days in the year for me. A day when not only I would feel most vulnerable, but also a day on which much would be asked of my parishioners.

Who would have thought, even only fifty years ago, that on such an occasion a German, ordained in the Church of England, would lead the church worship? On a day when people who died in the service of their country in the two world wars are honoured and remembered – wars in which both the aggressor and the vanquished had been Germany.

Some fifteen years ago I was a priest at the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields in London. It was at that church on an armistice anniversary that we can find the origin of what we normally do with such moving solemnity on Remembrance Sunday, the two minutes silence and the famous prayer that begins with the line 'they shall not grow old…'

Dick Sheppard, as the young vicar of St Martin's, was a powerful preacher and arguably one of the most remarkable priests of the 20th century. Soon after the end of the First World War the Government and the King ordered that a charity victory ball be held at the Albert Hall on the 11th of November, to celebrate the anniversary of the armistice.

Sheppard, whose church was right next to Charing Cross station, was enraged by this idea. He had witnessed thousands upon thousands of soldiers, distressed and disorientated by the war, arriving back at that railway station. Many of them were so traumatised and impoverished that they could not travel any further and camped out in Trafalgar Square, unable to take the next steps to take them home. Dick Sheppard recognised their need and opened his church 24/7 (as the modern phrase goes), clearing out his crypt to make a temporary home for these poor people. He wrote a letter to The Times stating that a victory ball was wholly inappropriate, suggesting instead that a Service of Remembrance should be held in the Albert Hall and that he himself would guarantee that at least the same amount of money would be collected as might be generated by a ball.

To quote his letter: "A fancy dress ball on a vast scale as a tribute to the Great Deliverance which followed on the unspeakable agony of 1914-1918 seems to me not so much irreligious as indecent".

His words touched a nerve in the British nation and within a week the plans were changed. Sheppard devised the order of service, collected money far beyond the expectations of a ball and the Remembrance Day service that is held every year in most of this country's churches was born. Incidentally, after the service was held in the Albert Hall, Sheppard scribbled on his own copy of the order of service "Of course pacifism must be written into this".

Sunday 13th *10.15am.*
Remembrance Day Service. This will include an act of remembrance at the war memorial.



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They also served –

by Linda Christian-Edwards and Michael Goodman

As we approach Remembrance Sunday, We're sure you will be as surprised and interested as we were to learn about the war experience of women in our congregation.

Joan Stewart and Joan Willsher both served in the Women's Land Army. Joan Stewart joined up in 1942 after she and her family were bombed out. She was posted to a farm in Sussex where she worked for four years on tomato production, harvesting and threshing corn. Strenuous work, but Joan and the girls enjoyed it and the beautiful countryside. Less pleasant was Old Harry, a farm labourer who would try to catch the girls with his pitchfork as they loaded corn stooks



Joan Wilsher

Joan Willsher joined the WLA because she was too young to join the forces as her four brothers had done. She was stationed in Buckinghamshire at an old manor house with thirty other girls and drove tractors and operated farm machinery. As a friend commented, "She could drive anything they put her on."

Serving in the WLA gave women from the town a completely different life, and both Joans spoke of a love of the countryside and a spirit of adventure. Their contribution may have been less



Joan Stewart

visible than female servicewomen but they both agree that they "...kept the country eating." WLA members joined the march at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday of their own volition and in July 2008 the British government distributed 30,000 medals to those who had served with the organisation.

Irene Smith and Sheila Denniss served as Motor Transport drivers and had to cope without signposts or streetlamps, driving at night relying on just slits in their headlamps.

Irene joined the WAAF in 1942 and was trained by a former racing driver before being posted to RAF Cranwell - on night duty and driving an ambulance on airfields. When asked her about the danger and how she managed, she said everyone got used to it as they had no choice and just had to stay calm. Many of the MT drivers were women and found they were accepted by the servicemen. Irene is still driving.

Sheila joined the WRNS in 1943 and served until 1945. She passed her driving test in a 4-ton lorry negotiating Piccadilly Circus. Training was rigorous, weeding out those not tough enough to manage the job. She was posted to Devonport Dockyard and drove a variety of vehicles, sometimes driving for the Admiral. Meeting a life long friend there, they became godmothers to each other's first child, an illustration of the deep friendships formed during extraordinary times.

Eileen Collins joined the Wool Control Department of the Ministry



Sheila Denniss



Irene Smith

of Supply in 1939. The importance of keeping a nation and its forces clothed and warm cannot be underestimated.

Eileen was posted to Germany in 1945 to the Allied Control Commission, where her department was inspected by General Montgomery. "I had a very interesting war and made a lot of friends with whom I am still in touch" she says.



Eileen Collins

Doris Garton's wartime experience began when, following her interview, she was given a railway warrant and told to report to Bletchley railway station. She worked in "Hut 6" from 1943-45 where intercepted German wireless messages were decoded and passed to "Hut 3" for translation and action. When a code was about to be cracked work would intensify and the excitement was huge.

Bletchley was staffed by a mix of civilians and service people, including eccentric and brilliant minds like Alan Turing, the pioneer of computing. So successful were they that subterfuge was necessary to maintain the Germans' belief in the security of their codes. Churchill described the Bletchley Park staff as "The goose that laid the golden egg, but never cackled."

Pamela Mann volunteered for the WRNS in 1943 and spent her induction at a remote castle on Loch Lomond. Often knee-deep in mud, accommodated in Nissen huts and clothed in clogs and rough denim dresses, some recruits were not as tough as Pamela and didn't make it. Although trained as a Naval radio mechanic she was sent to RAF Cranwell, as aircraft mechanics were urgently needed. Each mechanic was personally responsible for their radio equipment and Pamela would often cycle, late at night, in full uniform to the remote caravans where the equipment was housed. There was no question of sexism – women proved themselves by getting on with the job and stepping into men's' shoes without fuss. As Pamela says "It was the making of me."

Mary Welch joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service early in 1939 and served in the 2nd County of London, who had administrative responsibility for the South of England. Women like Mary replaced professional male soldiers in such roles. Again, there was nothing competitive or revolutionary in this, "you were just a soldier." Mary was promoted to corporal, but discipline was strict and she was demoted for staying out beyond 9pm without a late pass. Eventually she was commissioned and posted to London HQ. Although now married she was not allowed to live out and had a weekly 'sleeping out' pass. Mary left the army in 1943 to have her sons - there was no question of continuing in those days. Vera Cox was living in Paris when war broke out. Leaving



Mary Welch

France for England she joined the WAAF and was posted to Chatham Barracks, where she worked in a secret signals division sited deep underground. On joining Vera was required to sign 'The Oath', guaranteeing not only her secrecy but also that she wouldn't go to any public places – including pubs. Vera's service ended in 1940 when she was married.

Rita Miller was a child during the war and survived the London Blitz and the prejudice of locals when her father was posted to work on the docks in south Wales.



Vera Cox

With rememberance comes the question, who should remember? Not only the families and friends of these remarkable women – we, as a nation, share that responsibility too.

Maggie Tetlow on marriage

Revd Nick Davies



With 45% of marriages ending in divorce, you might have thought that the institution has had its day. But that's not the case according to Maggie Tetlow, who is running a marriage preparation course at St Stephen's.

"I think marriage can be more difficult for people today. We do have a throw away culture of try it, test it and if it doesn't work, chuck it. But what we need more of is commitment and good communication. My great passion is working with couples, helping them to communicate and ensure their relationship is more fulfilling."

The course is designed for engaged couples and will run over two Saturdays in the autumn. Sessions will explore how to make a marriage work, skills to develop and grow relationships, learning to listen, how to express feelings and how to deal with conflict. Maggie says, "Difficulties can bring a couple closer or separate them. Often men want to fix it but women want to talk about it."





Maggie lives locally, worships at St Stephen's and has worked as a counsellor in the NHS and privately for the past nineteen years, but despite this experience says that she doesn't have all the answers. Indeed, the course relies on couples discussing things between themselves, with topics including sexual relationships, children, finances, redundancy and cultural differences."

Maggie also works from her own experience of being married, divorced and remarried "When I went through my divorce, I actually went to a church-run divorce course, which I found very helpful. It dealt with a lot of issues around self-esteem, forgiveness and realising that whatever happened you have to accept some responsibility. Marriage can stifle and stop real development and I think that the biggest challenge is letting each other grow separately while still being together. I've been very blessed to have another chance."

Maggie was remarried in St Stephen's and says, "Making vows before God was very important, but even for those who are not religious standing up before a group of people and committing yourselves to one another does take your relationship onto another level."

Maggie and Jeff chose the famous reading from 1 Corinthians, "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Why this reading? "With love goes forgiveness and kindness and without that you have nothing. Kindness is a word that can easily be forgotten but love embraces everything."





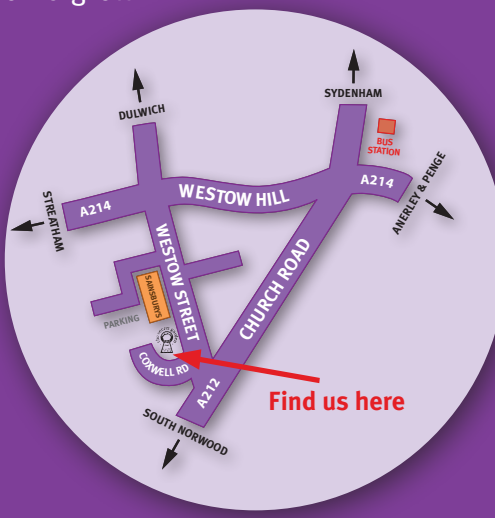



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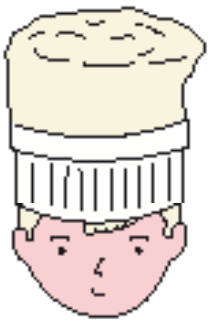
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Dulwich Helpline

Katie Preusser



The laughing faces and lively chatter around the table are a welcome contrast to tales of neglect of the elderly and cuts to care budgets. As a group of Dulwich pensioners gather for their weekly reminiscence session, cakes and crisps are piled on plates while 82 year-old Irene Cripps takes charge of the tea making.

It is one of 20 groups that the charity Dulwich Helpline runs throughout this area alongside befriending, odd jobs and driving services for older people.

For this particular group meeting at Kingswood House every Wednesday it is a chance to share the highs and lows of life now and in the past.

"We talk about old times, such as when you first went to school. It's all memories. How much did you earn in your first job?" says Kit Barker, 91, from the surrounding Kingswood Estate.

For Joan Stewart, now in her 87th year, it is something to look forward to: "It gets us out of our flats. We have a really good laugh and a singsong and it's on the doorstep."

Reminiscence sessions have broadened to include fish and chip lunches and theatre trips. Dulwich Helpline director Barbara Scott sees it as an example of helping older people without making them feel dependent. The same goes for the charity's befriending project where volunteers are trained and partnered with an older person to visit.

"We are trying to build a community experience where people help each other. We try not to see the service users as people who have things done to them. We are all in this together and the volunteers get as much out of it as the service users do," she explains.

The charity also works with schools. Pupils help older people with computer skills and they in turn help the students with history projects.

Scott heads a small team of staff co-ordinating around 270 volunteers and helping almost 400 isolated older people. Now based at Dulwich Hospital, the charity was started by members of St Barnabas and Dulwich United Reformed churches in 1993. The Community Care Act was pushing for more people to be cared for in their own homes and the founders were worried it could lead to social isolation.



Such worries are just as relevant today. And so Dulwich Helpline's mission remains the same. "We are trying to get people out of their homes," says Scott. "The more people have social contact, the more positive they are about their lives."

Her message to anyone interested in helping is: "Think as broadly as possible. One volunteer did the website, other people bake cakes. It may be you have a very big address book and can persuade a lot of your friends to come to a Dulwich Helpline event."

To discuss volunteering call Jean Hedden at Dulwich Helpline on (020) 8299 4594.
To find out more about getting help and joining activity groups call (020) 8299 2623.
www.dulwich-helpline.org.uk



Autumn at St Stephen's

September

Wednesday 7th
Parish Pilgrimage to Westminster Abbey.
5pm at the Abbey.
This includes Evening Prayer and a private tour of the Abbey, led by one of their Canons. Sign-up sheet at the back of Church.

Sunday11th
Music Sunday, 10am
To mark the arrival of our new Director of Music, Jonathan Turner, this special service will explore music and spirituality. All welcome

Saturday 17th
Visit to Whitechapel Bell Foundry
Visit the foundry that recently recast our own bell. Sign-up sheet at the back of Church.

Saturday 24th
Marriage preparation course
A course for those preparing to get married, run by Maggie Tetlow. See article inside for more information or email vicar@ststephensdulwich.org

Wednesday 28th
Memorial Service for Hugh Woodcock, 3pm
All wishing to attend should email Ann Revell:
archivist@dcpslondon.org

October

Sunday 2nd
Harvest Festival, 10am
This will be an all age service with traditional Harvest hymns. All welcome.

Saturday 15th
Autumn Fair -
Church Hall 12-3pm
Selling jams, pickles and Christmas cards with tombola, raffle and children's games.

November

Sunday 6th
All Soul's Memorial Service, 6pm
This choral service offers an opportunity to remember, give thanks and pray for the departed.

Sunday 13th
Remembrance Day Service, 10.15am
This will include an act of remembrance at the war memorial. All welcome.

Sunday 27th
Advent Sunday, 10am
This is the first of our services leading us towards Christmas. During the service we will light our Advent wreath.

Regular Services

Sunday:
8am Holy Communion (BCP)
10am Sung Parish Eucharist with Sunday School during term time

Monday to Friday:
8.30am Silent Prayer followed at 8.45am by Morning Prayer

Wednesday:
9.45am Holy Eucharist



October 23 *7.30pm*

Mallarmé Piano Trio concert
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