

# In Touch

## Saint Columba's Parish Magazine

Volume 18 Issue 2

Summer 2019



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# Dates for your diary

## September

- 14 10.00 am Churches Together 'Quiet morning'.  
St Mary's Farleigh.
- 27 10.00 am Macmillan Coffee Morning
- 28 9.45 am Building a Better Marriage. *See page 21*
- 29 10.00 am Uniformed groups' Mass

## October

- 2 7.30 pm Benediction followed by UCM meeting
- 5 Churches Together country walk

## November

- 6 7.30 pm Benediction followed by UCM meeting.
- 10 Remembrance Sunday
- 10.00 am Uniformed groups' Mass
- 3.00 pm Blessing of graves at Greenlawns cemetery

## December

- 1 3.00 pm South London Concert Band. *See page 16*
- 4 7.30 pm UCM Christmas Party.
- 7 3.00 pm Children's Christmas Party
- 8 10.00 am Uniformed groups' Mass
- 14 7.30 pm International Social Evening.

*Café St Columba is open every Wednesday from 9.30 am to 1.30 pm for tea/coffee, cakes, a light lunch, good company and conversation.. All are welcome.*

*The St Vincent de Paul group (SVP) meets in the parish hall immediately after 10.00 am Mass on the first and third Sundays of the month.*

## Guidelines for contributors

The editorial team have produced guidelines for contributors to **In Touch**. If you would like a copy, please contact the editor, or have a word with Deacon Philip. 020 8657 9394

*Please note that the views expressed in this magazine are those of the contributors*

## From the Editor

Welcome to the summer edition of In Touch, albeit towards the end of summer, and as I write this the temperature is soaring to 30 degrees and above. Father Roy reflects on the benefits of holiday and I hope you have all been able to enjoy a summer break of some sort and appreciate the benefits he mentions.

This edition includes the second part of Margarete Evans fascinating life story, from the end of the war up to the present time. Two other parishioners write of their personal lives; Fe Perfect writes of her years spent between England and the Philippines and Tony Ryan describes the establishment of the South London Concert Band (due to return to St Columba's for a concert in December).

Terry McCarthy keeps us up to date on the Parish Council and the new parish web site. The summer months have seen a number of important activities, both spiritual and social, and there are short reports and some pictures recording these occasions.

Thanks are due as always to the editorial team and all contributors, and it is very pleasing to see some new names among the authors. If you have never written an item for In Touch, why not give it a try?

*Chris Waring*  
*c.waring@virgin.net*

## Parish People

***We welcome into our parish family***

Ailbe Michael Patrick Boulton  
Ariana Giovanna Joyce Cassar  
Gabriel Domingo Spencer-Tucay  
Sienna Violet Smith  
Cloud Kingsman  
Riain Anthony Damilola  
Angelica Grace Primrose Jones

***recently baptised.***

***There have been no marriages since  
the last edition of In Touch***



## From The Desk of the Parish Priest

### *A reflection on the importance of holiday*

I can still vividly remember the first time I met the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Southwark, then Monsignor Richard Moth. He distinctly advised me to have a day off once a week, and for the same reason always to have a summer break to refresh myself in the ministry. Coming from the Philippines at that time from a relatively stress-free lifestyle, neither did I see the need for a day off nor for a summer holiday. In other words, I regret leaving the island where I was brought up for 33 years. I lived in an era that did not have television to entertain me. Television programs became available only in our town when I was in my early twenties. I grew up literally playing on the streets with my friends and neighbours. During day time we spent mostly running around the streets with the different exotic games passed to us by the previous generations. I can count the number of car owners in our town, approximately four or five private cars. It was a simple life, yet it is a very close-knit community because everybody knows everybody. I am aware in our town that many folks have lived and never left the island from the time they were born till they die. I never knew the four seasons of weather until I arrived in England. I knew only of two seasons in my life, dry and wet. Mind you living in our island is not all paradise because three or four times a year we get a visit from an unwanted guest that we call - typhoon. Once a year or if we are unlucky we get a couple of a very strong storms that implies experiencing a storm blowing with winds nearly 120 miles per hour. At times, things can get worse such as witnessing an entire roof of the next-door house completely blown away. It is very common under this circumstance to see houses made of light materials turn upside down. Our folks are called as resilient people because countless storms have visited the island yet none of them has ever dented the confidence and belief in God of the local folks. I think this situation has given us the character not just to be resilient against natural disasters but also to be resilient against the trials that life puts in front of us. This is the down side of living in tropical weather. It is paradise when the weather is alright but once Mother Nature has gone mad, I wish that I live in a different part of the world. I mean to say that it is not pure glory living in tropical country because you also have some disadvantages. I think this is true with any part of the world; there is no such thing as a perfect place to live without any downside.



For many, my birth place is a paradise. One thing I realized as I mature that I cannot forever sit and wait in my idyllic birth place. I have to leave the comfort of that island to fulfil the mission of my life which is to spread the word of God in this part of the world. I never dreamt as a young boy that one day I will settle here in England. It was pure coincidence that I am living in south London. I can safely assume that it is the providence of God that brought me to your community. From a care free and stress-free life in the island I find my life in the middle of a cosmopolitan city. In light of this, I never see the need for a break until I started to live here in London (2003). My initial impression was surprise, three months on wards I nearly gave up because I found the London autumn weather too odd and difficult to bear. I was determined to go home after three months until a priest friend persuaded me to persevere in my studies.

However, having lived in the United Kingdom for 16 years I realized recently the wisdom of taking a breather from the parish ministry. Perhaps the routine of a parish life becomes monotonous and once routine gets to this stage, productivity is compromised. I assume the effect of a rat race phase of life can easily affect the life of anyone including a priest. As I have said I never felt the need for this before. I find it strange because as a pastor I do not have to travel to the city everyday but I think society is imposing upon us the need to catch up with the pace of the world around us. It is a pity because we ought to influence the world around us and not us be influenced by them. Unfortunately, this is how secularism and modernism have penetrated our lives. It is really beyond the effort or initiative of one person to redirect this trend because it appears that the whole society is conspiring against our treasured values.



In this light, holiday is spiritually necessary in order to see one's life from a different perspective. Withdrawing from the present provides us the energy to face the cares of the future. Hopefully, the energy gathered during the break will give me enough strength to meet the pastoral demands of the parish. To be honest, I do not like much

travelling but the benefits outweigh much the discomfort of it. If it is helpful in the ministry, it is selfishness not to avail of it. The needs of the parish should always be valued as more important than the personal needs of the pastor. In a way, I am thankful that I got the chance to visit some of my relatives in Sacramento and friends in Las Vegas.

*Father Roy*

# Your Parish Council

The Spring edition of In Touch carried an article about the newly established Parish Council and I have been asked to give an update on the activities and progress that has been made since then.

As you will have seen from the Weekly Newsletter, the Parish Website was launched shortly after Easter. If you haven't yet visited the website, do so - it can be found at:-



[www.stcolumbaschurchselsdon.uk](http://www.stcolumbaschurchselsdon.uk)

It is a lively, interesting and up to date site which is well worth visiting. When we approached the Web Developer who happens to be related to a member of the Parish, he surveyed many of the church websites in our Diocese and elsewhere and found most of them to be a little dull, in some case difficult to navigate and often designed almost solely for desktop computers.

With a huge trend towards the use of mobile devices, he designed a website that uses a responsive design to provide a mobile-friendly user experience, providing support for all devices from desktop pcs to tablet and mobile devices. It is easy to navigate the site.

Further, a user-friendly CMS (content management system) enables the Parish Admin team to post news and event information and manage the website content easily and efficiently.

This is evident when you visit the site and see that Kyra Barone updates the Weekly Newsletter prior to the weekend Masses each week and all the recent events in the Parish are featured with photos displayed, shortly after they take place.

The website was developed by Giles West, at web developers Run Digital Ltd, based in Tunbridge Wells, at no cost to the Parish. We are very grateful to Giles for his generosity and talent, providing us with probably the best Parish website in the Diocese.

Giles also ran a training evening for all those concerned with operating the website, to enable the Parish to add content and keep it current and updated regularly.

Another great achievement since the Spring edition is the start of our Youth Group which meets every 2 weeks in the hall on a Sunday evening from 7.30 - 9.00pm. (See page 20). The last meeting prior to the Summer holidays was on July 14th but meetings are scheduled to start again in September and will be featured on the website and in the Weekly Newsletter nearer the time.

The St Columba's Feast Day party was a huge success with 125 joining in a great occasion. Again, photos and detail are featured on the website.

Other initiatives are under discussion and clearly if anyone has any ideas, suggestions or comments that will enable St Columba's Parish to develop further, please do not hesitate to contact Fr. Roy, Deacon Philip or myself.

*Terry McCarthy*

## Ahotokurom - 'Place of Serenity'

Ahotokurom was set up in 1983 near Cape Coast in Ghana as a centre of Christian hospitality for the disabled and disadvantaged. St Columba's adopted Ahotokurom as a Parish Charity some years ago and raises funds through the 100 Club and other events to the Friends of Ahotokurom to support their work in providing health care, social care and education.

From the 2019 Mid-Year newsletter we learn that the farm at Ahotokurom is very busy, providing produce for the Centre and for sale, and the area under cultivation is being expanded. The herd of pigs is shortly to be joined by goats and sheep. Purchase of a new bus is under consideration, which must be tough enough to cope with the bush roads, to provide much needed reliable transport. A project to install solar panels is now producing electricity saving running costs at the Centre.



Produce from the Farm

Further details about the various initiatives and projects that have been progressing can be found at [www.ahoto.org/stories](http://www.ahoto.org/stories) and from the Newsletters on the same web site. Take a look and I'm sure you'll agree that the support that we as a parish provide is being put to good use.

The "100 Club" is still going strong. A draw takes place four times each year, with half the funds raised from the £10 yearly subscription paid out in prizes and the remaining half going to Ahotokurom. Your continued support of the 100 Club is much appreciated.

In addition, we aim to raise money from social events throughout the year but we urgently need volunteers to join the committee and help out at these events. So if you feel like lending a hand, please call me!

Mobile 07841 145790

*Paul Natrass*

## Healing Mass & Strawberry Tea

Mass was concelebrated by Father Roy and Father Barry Hughes. It was great to see them both on the altar, together with Deacon Philip, as Father Barry was the instigator of this event 9 years ago. Our numbers had dwindled over the past years but it was encouraging to see that so many had attended this year – over 65 guests. Our very special guest, Margarete Evans, returned to do the readings and it was as if she had never left us.

After being blessed, anointed with holy oils and then receiving the Holy Eucharist we moved into the hall for a slap up afternoon tea supplied by our UCM. The hall was decorated to the highest standard with soft pastel colours, balloons (the small variety!) chintzy china and cake tins for the tables. Oli Tatler (pictured) set up his music to croon us through the tea with old favourites on his guitar and some music he had written; a very talented young man!

Our UCM Waitresses served a taster of sandwiches followed by a plethora of scones, clotted cream & jam and delicious cakes of all varieties, including some cleverly decorated Indian theme Rich Tea biscuits and some wonderful homemade chocolate balls. We have some very talented bakers in our midst! The final touch was the strawberries, donated by Simon Kelsall, with some cream – amazing! All left the hall replete and said they had all had a fantastic afternoon.

Thanks to Father Roy, Father Barry, Deacon Philip, Margaret Charman who played the organ, Oli Tatler, Margarete Evans, Marion and Andrea who carried the gifts at the offertory, plus all our UCM bakers and helpers.

Father mentioned at the following Masses that he hoped greater numbers would attend this wonderful day next year.

*Gill Tomei*

## St Columba's Feast Day BBQ

Celebrations started at 10am Mass, with the Filipino choir making it extra joyful. Some hymns were in Tagalog.

The feast was organised jointly by the parish social committee and Filipino community with the Catenians running the bar and barbeque. The celebration was also for a 16<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (the couple sponsoring most of the food), First Holy Communions and a 15<sup>th</sup>



birthday. Tables had been set out in the car park with colourful tablecloths and jars of white and blue lisianthus. Luckily the weather, though largely overcast, was pleasant – perfect. Fe, who was in charge of the kitchen, put it down to prayers to St Columba, and putting 3 eggs on top of the wardrobe (her mother’s superstition)! Father Roy was doing a splendid job circulating amongst the diners and was rarely in the same spot for more than a few minutes.

The Mexican game of piñata proved a most popular entertainment for one and all. For those unacquainted with the game, the hanging model of a highly coloured donkey (nowadays), made of papier-mache or cardboard, is filled with sweets. The objective for blindfolded participants, child or otherwise, is to beat the donkey with a stick so that eventually the sweets are released. There is a Catholic interpretation with the model depicting evil, the sweets temptation, and the person with the stick representing faith. Beating the piñata denotes the struggle against temptation and evil. When the piñata breaks, the treats inside represent the rewards of keeping the faith.

When his turn came, Father Roy, once more to the fore, produced his own walking stick before being positioned and blindfolded. Such was his success with the stick that a record quantity of sweets was released, to the universal acclaim of the children and other diners.

I brought my family to this celebration. My sister who lives in France was impressed with the bottle of Chateau Neuf Du Pape offered to her at the bar as well as the variety of food, especially the mango and chocolate cake. My son said that the food reminded him of his trip to Borneo. It seemed that the organisers were well aware that in the Chinese calendar this was the Year of the Pig. To celebrate the occasion it was of course most appropriate that we should all enjoy that most glorious of foods, a magnificent Hog Roast! (See picture). This was my husband’s highlight. A plate of food was taken to a parishioner who was not feeling well enough to come along.



The event was described as ‘excellent’, ‘a huge success’, ‘community coming together’. Personally, I spoke for the first time to a couple sitting on our table who I had seen from afar at Masses, a nurse from the Filipino community who had looked after my aunt and cousin at Villa Maria (and had daughters at Coloma with my daughter) and a parishioner who I found out had been in the year above my mum at Digby Stuart Teacher Training College, Roehampton.

A big Thank You to all involved from the 120 plus guests. For your diaries, the date for this celebration next year is Sunday 14 June 2020.

*Robert Hazell and his daughter, Fiona Stas*

## First Holy Communion

## Celebration

More than 640 people packed into St George's Cathedral, Southwark, on July 13 for a celebration of marriage. Among them were our very own John and Cora Litchfield, celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Archbishop Peter Smith presided at the concelebrated Mass (there were five priest in the sanctuary as well). In the congregation for this annual event, which has been running for 16 years, were couples celebrating all sorts of special wedding anniversaries, from one year to no less than 65.

The largest single contingent came from Wimbledon parish: no fewer than 10 couples. Not far behind were Beckenham, Sidcup, Merton and Purley with seven couples each. Taking the joint prize for biggest single group were the Furtado family from Kennington Park, celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the Attwell family from Hayes, celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup>, each

with 16 family members with them to enjoy the event. All in all, 136 couples from right across Southwark diocese were celebrating special wedding anniversaries. Congratulations one and all.

Cora Litchfield writes of their experience:

*John and I and four members of our family attended the Mass to celebrate*



*our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. It was a joyful and moving experience as we renewed our vows, facing each other, along with many other couples celebrating their anniversaries. We were proud to represent the parish and it was lovely to see Deacon Philip and his wife Mary, who both helped to celebrate Mass and played a major part in organising the event, which went without a hitch. The choir was a joy to listen to from the Gregorian chant to the final hymn. After Mass we went next*

*door to the Amigo Hall where cake and refreshments were served. Archbishop Peter joined the happy crowd in the hall, where we were lucky enough to have our photo taken with him.*

*A big thank you to Archbishop Peter, the Cathedral staff and others who made this day such a memorable occasion.*

## Missio

First of all, thank you for your contributions in your red mission boxes (and direct payments to Missio) in 2018. I hope you saw the “thank you” poster put up in the church porch earlier in the year which showed the total given by individuals last year, £1,263.77. This means we continue to help in the Church’s missionary work of spreading the Gospel: training priests, building churches, providing bicycles for catechists in remote areas, etc. While financial support for the missions is vital, perhaps praying for the missions is even more important.

You might like to know that you can also contribute by direct debit (there’s a form for this in the Missio magazine *Mission Today*) or on-line at [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk) or by credit card by ‘phoning 020 7821 9755.

### **Extraordinary Month of Mission – October 2019**

Pope Francis has called for October this year to be an Extraordinary Month of Mission (EMM). The theme for this is “Baptised and Sent”, reflecting the fact that by our Baptism we are all missionary disciples. “To be a Christian is to be a missionary.” EMM, a special month of prayer and action, is not an end in



itself, but a means to re-vitalise, renew and re-awaken ongoing commitment to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ with all people and nations. It is a call to the whole Church throughout the world: individuals, schools, parishes, dioceses.

Of course, we are not all called to go to foreign lands, leaving family and friends, but we *are* all called to be missionaries. I suppose one way of entering into EMM is to think *how* we can obey the call to spread the Gospel. For most of us it will be in little ways, but for some it will be more dramatic.

There are 4 themes for the 4 weeks of October and there is a social media campaign. There is such a lot of advice, guidance and food for thought on the internet about this that there wouldn't be enough room in several editions of *In Touch* to cover it, so I encourage you to go to the website [mission.org.uk/emm](http://mission.org.uk/emm) to learn more/get inspired.

*Edmund Tame*

## 50 years later....

*Earlier this year, Fe Perfect was invited back to the Philippines to be guest speaker at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Notre Dame High School, the college where she taught for five years after it first opened. This is an edited version of her speech.*



Back in the early 1970s I was living with my parents in Nueva Ecija in the Philippines. One day my uncle handed me a leaflet from a recruitment agency looking for people interested in taking up nursing in the United Kingdom. I decided to apply and the following day travelled to Manila to put in my application. I was accepted and offered a position studying nursing for the mentally handicapped at Manor Hospital in Epsom, Surrey, with accommodation provided at the adjoining nurses' home.

A few months later I left the Philippines – it was November 3, 1973 – and, arriving at Heathrow Airport, found my way to the hospital. It proved to be a very rewarding job, looking after children and adults with learning disabilities. I completed my three years' training and graduated as a State Enrolled Nurse in 1976. After working as a nurse for 10 years, I found the perfect man for me - Steve Perfect. We got married, settled down in West Croydon and had three boys. For a while I became a housewife. Eventually, a dream came true when my parents and sister come over from the Philippines for a holiday.

After several years I decided to go back to work. Initially I got a job as a part-time housekeeper which paid rather well. I then became a travel con-

sultant at one of the biggest travel agencies in the UK. From there, two friends and I moved on to set up Celestial Travel, specialising in trips to the Philippines and south east Asia. I stayed there for 13 years until forced to retire for medical reasons.

My life now revolves around my family which includes four grandchildren. In addition I am chairman of the Croydon Filipino Community based here at St. Columba's. Someone once said that life is like a journey on a train with its stations and changes of route defining where it will take us. As time goes by, other people will board the train and some will be significant, for instance siblings, friends, children of our own and the love of our life. Many will get off the train leaving a big gap. Others will leave unnoticed without our realizing that they have vacated their seats. This train ride will be full of joy, sorrow, fantasy, expectations, hello's and goodbye's. Success on the train consists of having a good relationship with the passengers. It requires that we give of our best. The mystery for everyone is that we do not know at which station we ourselves shall get off the train. So we must live the best we can: love, forgive and always offer our best efforts. It is important to do this because when the time comes for us to vacate our seat and disembark, we want to leave behind beautiful memories for those who will continue to travel on the train without us. I wish you all a joyful journey on the train of life. Reap success and give lots of love. Most importantly, thank God for the journey He has given you.

In conclusion, I believe that the secret of success is courage, determination, discipline, risk taking, perseverance, patience and consistency; not forgetting doing the right things for the right reasons.

Let me quote the words of the 19<sup>th</sup> century American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson. *'Cultivate the habit of being grateful for everything that comes to you and give thanks continuously because all things contributed to your advancement.'*

Last but not least, here are some words of wisdom from American evangelist Charles Swindoll: *'The person who succeeds is not the one who holds back, feeling failure, nor the one who never fails, but rather the one who moves on in spite of failure.'*

*Fe Perfect*

## **Margarete Evans: My Story (Part 2)**

**Editor's note:** *Part 1 of Margarete's life story appeared in the Spring edition of In Touch, finishing as WWII ended. She now writes of what happened next.*

It was around this time that Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin had met at the Yalta Conference to decide where the new borders would be. There were

to be four sections in Germany; the Russians in the east, the Americans, British and French in the west. Because the people where we were hated us so much, we had to get out. The only way to go was to travel north. All the borders had been closed and we had to leave within 24 hours. As a result of that I then landed in the very place we had been trying to get away from; this was now the Russian zone. They were really not civilised and it was not safe for a girl of my age to be travelling. I couldn't



go out because of the obvious dangers. My Godmother thought I should get away and she managed to find a deserting high ranking German officer with his wife who had been in hiding for some time. He and his wife had sort of escaped. He said 'I am trying to get across to the English sector'. There was a controlled crossing at Helmstadt, between the Russian and English zones. 'There is a coal train leaving at a certain time in the evening, which will go to the border'. He agreed he would take me with them. My Godmother gave me money and I was like a package being handed over. We got on the train at night in the dark and everything was alright. In due course we approached the border and the train stopped. It was like a cattle truck and the door was slid open. There was a Russian soldier with a machine gun. 'Out, out'. Immediately outside the ground went down into a ditch and beyond that was a forest. The German officer clearly knew more than we did. The two Russians who had ordered us out were not very clever. They were now making their way along the train. The officer said 'This is our opportunity, we have to go. NOW!'. He held his wife's hand and my hand and we dashed as fast as we could, down the slope and into the trees. "Run, run, run". We could hear the machine guns firing behind us, because they saw that we were making our escape. We went zig-zagging through the trees and managed to get well into the forest and all of a sudden we realised all was quiet. The officer said 'I think, if my sense of direction is right, we are safe and must be fairly near the British sector'. We walked on and then suddenly there in front of us stood a young Russian soldier. "Oh no, what now?". In those days one could bribe them. We handed over a gold watch and some jewellery and he then let us pass. There was an area of no-mans-land and beyond were the English. I thought "What is going to happen now?"

My Godmother thought my mother might have managed to get back to Wuppertal, so the only way for me to find her was to make my way there. Wuppertal, of course, was in the English sector, which I had at last reached. At the border the officials asked a whole lot of questions and as a 15 year old, I simply told them where I had been. They gave me something to eat and I told them where I wanted to go. They gave me a travel

pass and put me on a particular train that would take me all the way. Then I was on my own, really on my own. All I had was what I stood up in. After a long slow journey I reached my destination. I thought ‘Where do I go now?’ My father’s family were fairly widely spread in the Wuppertal area, though many had died in the bombing and of course there was destruction everywhere. I went to one of my Aunts, Paulina Knippschild, my father’s sister. Just think about it, there was this bedraggled thin child standing there. My Aunt of course welcomed me in and gave me something to eat.

She said ‘I think your mother is somewhere in the American sector’, because in that part of Germany to the south, we had land from my father’s family. ‘She might be there but any communication is very difficult’. After delays and much searching my mother and I were re-united. What a moment! Before this happened, she had been in touch with the Red Cross, when it must have been so chaotic. She was told I was missing, presumed dead.

I started work in an international hospital. I also did cleaning for American or English families. I just did anything I could. At this time the only way to make life any better would be to get to England, where they were always looking for refugees to work as nurses. Eventually I reached Milford Hospital, near Godalming, with the intention of training and then returning to Germany. That was not to be. While I was there I met my future husband, David Evans, and in due course we were married. As a state enrolled nurse, I started working at Mayday Hospital in 1954 and was there for the next 54 years. I worked in the thoracic department, which is concerned with chest physiology and later I was in the cardiac department. When I retired at the age of 79 I had been dealing with administration.



In 1992 I moved to St Columba’s Parish, where I thought I would not be as busy as in my previous parish, where I was involved not only with the cleaning and flower arranging but also as a Reader and helping in the Sacristy. The new young Parish Priest was Fr. Murtagh. He had only been at St Columba’s for a short time and one day he was talking with Fr. Wells, who happened to mention just what I had been involved with previously. He let the cat out of the bag! Fr. Murtagh immediately approached me and asked me to be a Reader. I firmly said ‘No’. He asked me a second time with the same result but when he came to me again I thought perhaps I was destined to be involved. That of course was just the start. Flower arranging and Bidding Prayers followed and eventually I became the Sacristan, having previously agreed to stand in for a short time! Now in 2018 it is time for me to move on again!

*Margarete Evans*

# The South London Concert Band

*Editor's note: The Band, conducted by Tony Ryan, gave an excellent concert last December at St Columba's and have been booked to return on December 1st 2019. Make sure to put the date in your diaries!*

The South London Concert Band developed from The St. Gerard's School Band. The conductor was Mr Brian Uttley, a very strict woodwork teacher who had an army training as a Tuba player. Most teachers are heard quite clearly but when Mr Uttley spoke he was capable of making the ground shake!

I joined the school in 1964. When Sandy Shaw won the Eurovision song contest in 1967, Don Tallon, a third year student sang that particular song in Battersea Town Hall at the school's prize-giving and I was amazed. This was the first time I heard such a large Ensemble and it really scared me. How could a third year boy find the confidence to do that? Another piece was "Legend of the Glass Mountain," composed by Nino Rota. The power of music was brought home in this piece with its imposing theme and fast solo clarinet arpeggio runs. Three fifth year lead clarinet players were playing that and that moment stuck with me and has driven me to be really interested in music and its performance.

I was a naughty boy who was occasionally caned. Paul, my younger brother started the clarinet in his second year and was really good. I was really interested to begin and somehow plucked courage out of thin air to ask Mr Uttley for a Saxophone. He said sarcastically, "You don't get in to trouble much. Do you?" I had no answer and he continued "The only Saxophone I have to loan is a very expensive one." So I was loaned the Saxophone completely on the strength of my brother's progress. I took this saxophone home and played it, practically to death.

The next development was the evening music class and Mr Uttley started an evening class band with many musicians. He knew I was very interested in music. He persuaded me to start a young band within the school which I did and this band developed in a way which gave younger musicians a chance to progress to the main school Band. This so called young band was called the "second Band" and I used my fifth year persuasiveness to get the players into lunch early so that they could spend the rest of the lunchtime practising under my direction. I just gave them some really easy music - told them to play it and they did.

My teacher Charlie Paine realised how interested in music I was and loaned me his clarinet - a Boosey & Hawkes superb instrument and I played it for a good few years in the St Gerard's Band. I was persuaded to





attempt an orchestration and I chose “Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep,” as it was current at the time. The Band actually performed it as part of the next annual Prizegiving.

The next development was the Band moving the location of its evening class as everybody was becoming so interested. Charlie Payne and his colleague, Frank Walsh who was the school’s Brass Teacher shared the direction but Mr Uttley was the main conductor. Frank and Charlie were great colleagues and friends. They brought many more players and these players were girls and they were good.

So the band now, all of a sudden has girls as players! Then without warning, Mr Uttley surprised me by handing me the baton. I was a bit embarrassed. So I took it, but when I actually waved my arms around the band stopped playing and nearly all the musicians burst into laughter! I had made a complete idiot out of myself! I went home that night and just wanted to give up. Mr Uttley just took it all with a pinch of salt.

At this time the Band was renamed - The South London Concert Band.

When I started my teaching career I had to break off contact with the band but it continued to grow and develop, attracting many players in just the right way. In 1994 Frank Walsh phoned me unexpectedly, explained that he was moving away and offered me the position as conductor as he felt I was really interested.

Many players have been in the band for years and we have been playing at Bandstands and doing tours. Helena Goldberg, our Chairman, organises concerts for us. John Cook, our French Horn player and Ashley Needham our Euphonium player give interesting facts about each piece in the programme to keep the concerts informative. Tim Mason, our lead French Horn player has been in the band for 40 years. Sue Redsull is the librarian with over 700 pieces of tremendously varying styles and genres including Classical, Jazz, Popular and Musicals. We rehearse weekly. We have played at quite a few churches at Christmas and we are usually asked back. We are committed to the challenge of performing at the standard of the best army or military bands and will play the same music they play. Watch out Coldstream Guards - we may upstage you!

*Tony Ryan*

## Confirmations



An occasion to celebrate. Please keep Caoilainn, Wicktoria, William, Lara and Michael in your prayers. They received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Paul Hendricks here at St Columba's on Friday June 21

## Flame 2019

*Almost 10,000 Catholics from all the dioceses of England and Wales travelled to London's Wembley Arena for Flame 2019. This church youth festival was organised by the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation and supported by the Catenians. Parishioner Rachael McFarlane was there representing St Columba's. Here is her account of the day.*

Held in March at Wembley Arena, Flame 2019 was an event organised for Catholic teenagers by a Catholic organisation called CYMFed. It's an event held once a year - this was my first visit. I went with my cousin and a few of her friends from Lewisham parish and then we met up with a few more teenagers from St Joseph's and St Swithin churches in Bromley and travelled up to Wembley by coach.

I was surprised to see so many young people at the Arena when we arrived, including a few of my old school friends from Coloma. Each year the event has a theme and for 2019 it was 'Significance'. How are we as teenagers made to feel significant in today's world? Where and how do

we fit into a world measured by how many Facebook contacts one has or how many posts on Instagram one can count? Does that really tell our peer group how significant we are and how or what our self-worth is?

For me, significance means that I should be able to feel confident about myself as a person and about my faith. And strive to find out what my purpose is in life. Is it to help and guide others with God's help? It also means that I shouldn't compare myself to others but embrace who God wants me to be. Why live your life according to the peer pressures that so many of us teenagers face and cannot live up to and get nowhere? As Flame speaker Robert Madu said, "stay in your lane".

The day consisted of many different guest speakers and singers. They were all powerful in their own unique way. As well as Robert Madu, they included Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop Eamon Martin, London-based Christian rapper Guvna B, Emma Borquaye (founder of the multi-award-winning platform, Girl Got Faith); and Tim Hughes, singer, songwriter and priest.

My personal favourite speaker was Robert Madu. He is an American Christian who has travelled the globe preaching the Gospel and telling people about the love of Jesus Christ. Robert has his own unique way of projecting powerful messages about the word of God.

There was a message from Pope Francis. He prayed that we be strengthened in faith to see Jesus Christ. There was also a video presentation contributed by Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche communities. (Sadly, he died in May.)

We heard music from Guvna B, which we all joined in. Guvna B and Emma Borquaye spoke about themselves, how they found Christ and what God has done in their lives that has impacted other people through their significance.

At the end of the event we had praise and worship. A choir sang Stormzy's 'Blinded by your Grace' and 'Amazing Grace'. A line of priests processed through the Arena up on to the stage for the liturgy. Then we all were silent as the Blessed Sacrament was brought up. It was a spiritual and uplifting way to end and depart from such a great event. Fr Dermott Donnelly, who chairs CYMFed, thanked us all for coming.

Overall, I felt I gained a fresh depth of perspective on the young people of today. We need to make ourselves significant in the image and likeness of



God. I was glad that I went to the event and get to share my experience. I would love to go again next year and possibly take teenagers from our parish.

*Rachael McFarlane*

## St Columba's Youth Group

Our youth group was launched on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019. 17 teenagers attended the first evening. We began with an ice breaker which was great fun. Some went on to play pool, table tennis and some played card games. This was followed by pizza, drinks and sweets. I went around each group and talked to them and collected their suggestions of what they wanted to do in future youth group sessions. The ideas were cinema, bowling, a movie night, talks from professionals (nurses and police). We also discussed how and in what ways the youth group can be involved in their community e.g. a healing Mass, the fairs and coffee mornings.

For our last meeting of the term, 15 of us went bowling in Croydon. It was a success as we received great comments from the group: 'It was really good!' 'I had a lovely evening with my friends.' 'I had a great time'.



The youth group meetings are a chance to be with friends and to make new friendships with other young people and feel part of the parish community. It has been great. We hope to maintain numbers and the enthusiasm, so come along to the next meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> September where we will begin our new term with pizza, drinks and more sweets. (Other dates appear in St Columba's newsletter and on the parish website.)

*Rachael McFarlane*

## Union of Catholic Mothers



In May, before the talk on the Pilgrimage to the Holy Land led by Deacon Phillip and Gill Tomei, there was a Presentation of UCM Long Service Certificates. These were given out by the UCM Diocesan President Mary Burt to Catherine Huzzey (40 years), Margit Symonds and Marion de Souza (both 30 years).

In June Marion de Souza gave a talk with photos about Kashmir, India which everyone enjoyed. Eileen Bowden organised our outing in July to the Horseshoe Restaurant which 16 members attended along with Fr. Roy and Philip Tomei. It was great fun and the food enjoyable

If any ladies would like to know more about the UCM or wish to join us then do get in touch with me at [mariondesouza86@gmail.com](mailto:mariondesouza86@gmail.com)

*Marion de Souza, UCM President*

## UCM May Charity Fayre - 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019

The hall was set up on the Saturday with all the stallholders coming out with their goods to present them to our Parishioners and friends for the next day. After the 10am Mass on the Sunday, we had various stalls and refreshments for sale plus a raffle.



Although not that well attended, we actually made the most money we have ever made at this event. Over £1000 was grossed and after expenses were taken we decided to donate £900 to various charities.

As the Selsdon Centre for the Retired and CONTACT were requesting more help, following the re-evaluation by the Council of their grants to various charities, we felt charity had to begin at home. Therefore, we donated £200 to each of these charities and included Ahotokorum as a worthy cause for £200 too. Our usual UCM charities that we give to: The Priest's Retirement Fund, CINI and UCM Rest Homes were each given £100. All other smaller charities that we usually give to will be 'mopped up' by the Community Cafe this year.

It was a great Fayre with a great selection of wares that everyone seemed to want. Everyone worked so hard helping, donating and purchasing!

Our next Fayre will be on 17<sup>th</sup> November after the 10am Mass to raise for all the charities involved in our church: SVP, UCM, Ahotokorum, Uniformed Groups and the Youth Group. So put the date in your diaries and start saving now.

Many thanks to all involved.

*Gill Tomei*

## Building A Better Marriage

They say that marriages are made in heaven. That may be true. But for a marriage to last it needs effort on earth by both partners. Husband and wife each need to be committed to the relationship. And each needs to be prepared to go that extra mile in order to make a success of their relationship. One important way of doing that is by being willing to set aside time to focus on one's marriage.

Hence Building A Better Marriage, a day in which couples can privately explore their relationship more deeply. A day in which both husband and wife can gain valuable insights in their communication and the call of the Church to the married. Building A Better Marriage is for couples, whether married a few years or several decades, with average-to-good marriages and who want to try and make them a bit better. Those who have tried it are unanimous in their praise so it comes highly recommended. You don't need to look very far

for a Building a Better Marriage day. One is taking place here in St Columba's church hall on September 28. It starts at 9.45am and finishes at 4.30pm. There is no group sharing - just a number of audio-visual presentations after each of which husband and wife share in private, one to one. And it's led by married couples who know what they are talking about. There is no charge although a £10-per-couple donation is suggested. Booking is essential. For more details just email [mflkent@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:mflkent@rcaos.org.uk) or telephone 07983 524727.

*Deacon Philip*

## **Guides at St Columba's**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Selsdon Guides have recently returned from our annual summer camp, this time at Heyswood Campsite in Cobham. This year, our theme was metal as the campsite is well known for metallic discoveries underground. The girls searched the campsite for treasure using our metal detectors, as well as exploring the beach at Milford-on-Sea. Our greatest find was a 50p piece! Over the week, the girls took part in many exciting activities, including: buggy building, high ropes, caving, bushcraft, crabbing and aeroball. Combined with patrol cooking on open fires, these activities made for a very busy week! The guides built their own shelters and slept in survival bags under the stars on the last night, which was a new experience for most of them. Once they had recovered from the shock of the spiders who wanted to share their shelter with them, a good night was had by all! As ever, it was a delight to see the girls thrive in a traditional outdoor and social media free environment – they really rose to the challenge! We can't wait for next year! *Vicky Keohane*

## **9th Selsdon Brownies**

We meet at St Columba's on Monday from 5.45pm – 7.15pm (During term time). Brownies is for girls aged 7-10 years old, is part of Girlguiding and offers a varied programme of activities which we encourage the girls to choose and lead.

Our new programme includes activities based on Skills for Life, Health and Wellbeing, Community Action, Change, Knowing Yourself, Expressing Yourself, Having Adventures, Exploring, Communicating and Reflecting. We encourage girls to join in with all activities and offer activities and holidays and camps away from the unit. We are part of a wider Guiding family with which we hold activities; for example, Campfires, outings and events with our local units in Selsdon, in our County of Croydon or in London and South East Region. (LaSER). Girlguiding gives girls an abundance of opportunities.

Contact: Meg Passey: [meg.passey@gmail.com](mailto:meg.passey@gmail.com)

# Church of St Columba

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## **A Prayer for the Kidnapped.**

Lord God, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever removed  
from your loving care.

In your kindness, watch over refugees and victims of war, those  
separated from their loved ones, anyone who is lost, and those  
who have no home or have been forced to flee.

Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be and help  
us always to show your kindness to strangers and to all in need.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*From Aid to the Church in Need.*

Look out for the Winter 2019 edition of In Touch.  
All contributions welcome  
Please send them to Chris Waring  
at [c.waring@virgin.net](mailto:c.waring@virgin.net) or the Parish Office