

St. John the Evangelist Merrow

Annual Review 2015-2016



*Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering
and come before him! Worship the Lord in the splendour of
holiness*

1Chronicles 16:29

The Church of St. John the Evangelist, Merrow.

Our Vision:

To be a Vibrant, Witnessing and Worshipping Church at the heart of the Community

St. John's Church is the Parish Church of Merrow. It is part of the Diocese of Guildford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Parish Office, 222 Epsom Road, Guildford GU4 7AA. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St John's was registered with Charity Commission in January 2008. Officially called The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Merrow, its registration number is 1127555.

INTRODUCTION

Inevitably the Parish Report is rather a dry document as it presents facts and figures for the diocese and Charity Commissioners as well as for our APCM – it represents the skeleton of what goes on in the parish. This review, on the other hand, puts some flesh on those bones by describing something of what actually goes on. As with any community, there are lots of different roles and functions – some quite minor, but nevertheless important. Not everything is therefore covered in these pages and I would like to thank all those hidden volunteers who help to make St John's function as a friendly and welcoming church community.

Huge thanks must be given to Michelle Haywood in the Parish Office. Although her name appears under the Parish Centre Report, her warm efficiency in the day to day running of the centre and other admin tasks is largely behind the scenes but are major contributors to the success of the Centre and the prompt production of newsletters, service sheets etc. – thank you.

This report and review could not have been done without the efforts of Nick Bond as Secretary of the PCC– another unseen but vital piece of work for which many thanks – he also is our photographer for a variety of purposes, again something not mentioned in a report but nevertheless vital!

Chris Luckraft

Contents:-

Page no:

• Junior Church	4/5
• Mission and Outreach Committee	5/6
• Deanery Synod	7
• Servers Report	7
• Bible Reading Fellowship	8
• Readings and Intercessions	8
• Sidespersons	9
• Together in Christ.	9
• Choir Report	10
• Bell Ringing	11
• Church Flowers	12
• Brass Cleaning	12
• Church Cleaning	12
• Christian Aid	13
• Children's Society	13
• Parish Centre	14/15
• Parish Magazine Report	15
• Wednesday Morning Coffee Club	16
• Fairtrade	17
• Churchyard Report	18

Junior Church

Junior Church has continued to flourish and has been supported and guided well by a small Children's Advisory Committee chaired by Michael Stoughton and his wife Rosemary, and a small but dedicated group of leaders and helpers. We began this reporting year with eight children receiving Holy Communion for the first time last Pentecost, having completed a six week Holy Communion-before-Confirmation course. The juniors continue to grow in community and fellowship and have been meeting together in the centre during the first half of the 10am service where they think and reflect on the lectionary readings through activities, craft and discussion.

We now have three main leaders who plan the sessions and three helpers to assist – plus others who come along with their children. We are really grateful for the faithful help and support, without which we couldn't run Junior Church – which now has a core community of between 10-15 – usually having up to around eight attending each week. We have also begun to be blessed with some 'home-grown' junior church members – this year we celebrated the birth of William, Zac and Eleanor and we look forward to them taking a more active part in Junior Church in due course!

The issues facing Junior Church today - while good ones – are nevertheless challenges and concern not so much growing numbers, but nurturing the juniors we already have coming to St John's. Our older juniors need more spiritual nourishment and we need to be thinking about nurturing their growth into church-life and their faith. This has begun – we now have junior acolytes, many will remember the wonderful Christmas nativity put on by Junior Church, and most recently, the wonderful sermon, readings and prayers for the Mothering Sunday family service. But we need to find ways to help them further. We also have a small group of youth members – 14+ who also need to be helped and nurtured in their faith journey and we would love to provide a space in which we could offer that – perhaps by way of a Sunday evening youth group.

The issue is that while we have people who are happy to help lead the Juniors, we need to be able to offer a dedicated and consistent – and sustainable - leadership through a leader who, with the continued help of others, is able to commit consistently each week and to give that extra, focussed time and thought about planning and providing a programme that will not only nurture the younger ones but will offer more mature teaching and nurturing for the older juniors – including opportunity for meeting outside church sessions through a cell group, youth group and/or separate Bible study group.

We have some ideas of what this might look like and we are grateful to all who are supporting Junior Church through prayer and practical action. We are having the conversation about how we can keep and nurture our young folk and to be honest, as their church family, we owe it to them to do nothing less. The leaders we have – including the curate – were always going to be the 'John-the-Baptist' people – paving the way while we wait for the main leader to come along! The time has come when we could do with that

leader to come forth, and I believe we seriously need to be considering practical ways in which we can help that to happen if we want to build on the great work that has happened thus far. We are ready, we believe, for 'phase two' of our vision.

So the main wish and prayer for Junior Church this year – before we reach out to the community through messy-church, holiday clubs or youth club type sessions – all of which would be exciting and worthy to do – is to secure a compelling and rich spiritual space for the children we already have, where the needs of all are met to enable each junior member to grow and flourish in their faith and in their relationship with God, themselves and with others....

So thank you again for all your support, prayers and love for Junior Church.

Dear Lord of love and life,
We give thanks for our young people.
Give them a sense of belonging and reassurance
that they are held safely in your hands.
Bless them with health, inspiration and joy;
help them to discover your purpose for their lives,
flourish in their faith and
become disciples of your good news...
Through Jesus Christ our Saviour, Amen

Jacqueline.

Mission and Outreach Committee

Despite all its financial difficulties the parish has again managed to reach its target level for outward giving – 10 per cent of our church income. We have held eleven committee meetings during 2015. Although we have scaled back a little on routine fund-raising activities we achieved three 'firsts' this last year. We held a chicken foot night in September, which was great fun. We put on a Music Hall evening - the inspiration of Ron Bailey, to whom we owe great thanks. The third first was Carols on the Green at the Bushy Hill Community Centre on the last Saturday before Christmas. Two hundred adults and children, plus dogs, attended, and everyone wants to do it again this year: a real community initiative – the 'O' part of M&O! We have continued our support, tangible when needed, for the Bushy Hill branch of the North Guildford Food Bank.

I set out below our 'charities of the month', together with a description of events and amounts raised.

I should again like to thank members of our committee (Helen Chambers, Bunty Coates, Jacqueline Drake-Smith, Barbara Lawrence and Dermot Verschoyle) for all their hard work and commitment during 2015.

David Welbourn (Chairman)

2015 Outward Giving
Mission & Outreach Charities of the Month Fund-raising

Month	Charity	Event	Amount raised (incl. PCC £50 & Gift Aid)
January	Practical Action	Pancake coffee morning, & sales table	£431.36
February	Halow Project	Coffee morning, raffle & sales table	£379.48
March	Bp of Guildford's Foundation	Only congregational gifts	£87.50
April	Emily Ash Trust	Enhanced coffee after church	£175.46
May	Christian Aid	Envelope collection & cake sale	£2,837.00
June	Equally shared betw. St John's & Age UK Surrey	Summer Fayre	£2,476.68
July	US	Raffle at Music Hall & cake sale	£221.50
August	Family Line	Cream tea	£314.12
September	Happy Child	Chicken Foot supper	£342.50
October	BESOM	Harvest gifts & raffle	£80.00
November	CUF & CMS	Christmas Bazaar	£1,934.33
December	Send Family Link	Christmas cards & voucher money	£365.23
Total			£9,645.16
Other Charitable Giving			
Ongoing	Notional giving, e.g. rental discounts for use of Centre		
Occasional	Syrian refugees	Retiring collections for emergencies	£700+
Tins		Poppy collection	£144.58
Church Service		Christingle collection devices	£310.60
Carols on the Green (a TiC event)	Equally shared betw. EMBRACE & QEF		£66.50

Deanery Synod report.

The Guildford Deanery Synod members from St John's attended three Synod meetings in 2015. The members are, Barbara Lawrence, Helen Chambers and Peter Tappin.

Each meeting commences with prayer and a brief business agenda including a roundup of news from the parishes, followed by a particular subject which forms the main part of the meetings. In March 2015, the meeting addressed the ticking demographic time bomb which is resulting in dwindling and ageing congregations throughout the Anglican Church. The need to attract younger people and to identify, recruit and encourage volunteers was examined. The discussion was led by Rev. Alan Hulme, who heads up the Parish Development & Evangelism Team including the Roadshow, "From Evidence to Action", touring parishes in April. Alan has been involved with our own Parish Development programme. A very useful booklet by Dr Anne Lee entitled "Seven steps to engaging volunteers" was distributed. The meeting in June at St Peters Shared church included a brief talk by Stephen Hofmeyr about the work done by the General Synod ahead of elections to the Diocesan Synod and our own Rector outlined the decision making powers. The second part tackled "Poverty and Need in the Guildford Deanery" with key local speakers including Jane Seals, Manager of the Christians against Poverty debt advice centre; Joanne Tester, CEO of Guildford Action and Simon Chedghey who helps run the Besom Project in Guildford. Our link with Besom at St. Johns is harvest gifts, Christmas hampers and individual donations. October saw the meeting held at our own church centre and the main subject was the ongoing and worsening Refugee Crisis, with speaker Andy Wheeler outlining the problems in tackling the increasing flow of refugees into Europe. Most people have been left feeling both compassion and confusion alongside bewilderment and fear when seeking to address the issues and the scale of the problem. Government and EU responses were discussed and it was agreed that a united response from churches was needed to have any meaningful input. Diane Peters is coordinating church responses at Diocesan level.

Peter Tappin.

Servers' Report

The team of servers and acolytes, together with those who administer the chalice, has continued to assist at services principally at 8.00 am and 10.00 am Sunday Communion and on Wednesday mornings throughout the year. The duties include setting out the necessary vessels and books, attending the celebrant, and putting everything away at the conclusion of the service. There is a loyal team of servers and acolytes who appreciate the opportunity they have to contribute to the worship of our Church. We have been pleased to welcome Joshua, Jack, Henry and Freddie to our team of junior acolytes during the year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both the team and the clergy for their support as I stand down from the role of Head Server.

Helen Chambers

Bible Reading Fellowship

I am sad to report that a former organiser of the St John's BRF group, Dorothy Day, recently passed away. She was a regular user of BRF notes to the end.

To encourage you into regular Bible reading yourself, we can supply the following notes:

New Daylight – devotional readings

Guidelines – in-depth study notes

Day By Day With God – notes by women for women

Upper Room – a world-wide vision

Quiet Spaces – a creative prayer- and spiritual guide.

Sample notes are available. These notes are also available as an App for iPhone, iPad or Android.

If you would like to join the St. John's group and receive any of these notes, please let me know. Visit www.biblereadingnotes.org.uk for further information.

You can also follow the work of BRF on Twitter and Facebook. Jenny Welbourn (825541)

Readings and Intercessions.

Each Sunday morning two people stand before the congregation at the lectern and read firstly from the Old Testament and then from Acts or from one of the Epistles and ask us to affirm that 'This is the Word of the Lord'. A little later, one of them reappears and leads us in prayer, asking God to help us sort out the mess we are making of His World or to bring comfort to the billions who always seem to be needing it.

Each brings their own style to the readings; some like a long reading so they can get into their stride; others like short ones. All hope to miss those strewn with the tongue-twisting names of Hebrew tribes and cities or Paul's longer, unpunctuated sentences. But all helpfully bring a clearer understanding of the words and a heartfelt focus on the needs of the world in their intercessions. It is not surprising that the big world issues have been Syria, Refugees and the depredations of ISIS across the Middle East; and in the Parish for the work with our young children, for the parish development programme and our connection with the local community.

Our thanks go to our regular team and particularly to those who have newly joined us in the past twelve months for their lead in this essential part of our regular worship. Robert Avis

Sidespersons

Our church has a team of 20 or so sidespersons who are on duty at the 8am and 10am services on Sunday mornings and at special services throughout the year. Our main duties are to welcome everyone as they arrive for the service, hand out the appropriate service books and sheets, take the collection and invite members of the congregation to come forward for communion. Behind the scenes, we tidy up afterwards, count the collection and record various statistics concerning the service. We see our role as creating a friendly and orderly environment for the congregation and as supporting the clergy by allowing them to concentrate on the spiritual aspects of the service.

My thanks go to all the members of the team, not only for their time and work throughout the year but also for quietly and efficiently swapping with each other when holidays or other commitments interrupt their normal rota.

Ian Farr.

Together in Christ

The TiC committee meets every few weeks generally at St Pius's. It endeavours to become acquainted with those of different denominations in this area thereby presenting a united witness to members of the general community.

Combined services are held in the member churches, in turn, usually on the fifth Sunday of the month. Our Rector has been Chairman in 2015.

Lent Study Groups follow an agreed course. These are held in the homes of various members.

Carols on the Green took place in December 2015 outside Bushy Hill Community Centre. It was very well attended by local residents as well as church members. Watch this space for a repeat event!

Care for Guildford provides a much needed transport, shopping and odd jobs service right across Guildford. It was set up 40 years ago by members of Merrow Methodist church with the support of volunteers from the other local churches and the community in general. It continues to offer an invaluable service to those with limited mobility.

Tuesday Luncheon Club is run by helpers from the churches in Merrow and provides a delicious home cooked meal for guests who have been referred by a variety of agencies. Volunteers prepare and serve the meal whilst others provide transport. Guests pay a small charge.

The Food Bank was not set up by TiC but is run by various members of the local churches. Merrow branch is open on Thursday afternoons at Bushy Hill Community Centre. By combining efforts to serve the community we avoid duplicating arrangements and so hopefully serve the Lord better in the use of the gifts he has given us.

I feel very honoured to have represented St John's on the TiC committee and I am delighted that Isla Stables is willing to take over from me.

Pam Ash

Choir report.

St. John's Choir continues to contribute to the worship of the Church. They are a committed group of people who meet regularly on a Friday evening to practice from 6.30 to 7.30 and sing every Sunday morning at the 10.00 a.m. service, and also when requested for Festival services, weddings and funerals.

The choir is a very close group who not only enjoy singing together but share each others family concerns and regularly pray for families and friends.

During the year we have been saddened to hear of the deaths of Dorothy Day and Hugh Walker. Dorothy joined the choir in the late Seventies (an original lady!) and was a valued member of the Alto section. She was also a talented seamstress and made several of the gowns which we enjoy wearing. For several years the annual choir party was in Bill and Dorothy's home – and their hospitality was outstanding. The choir sang at her funeral on January 29th. Hugh sang with the Tenor section for a while and his contribution was much appreciated. We were shocked to hear of his sudden death and several of us attended his funeral at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Burpham.

The Carol service was, as ever, a great success with challenging music. Two carols – new to the choir – 'O Holy Night' and Rutter's 'What sweeter music' were sung particularly beautifully. A small choir excelled themselves at the Midnight service and the All Souls and Remembrance services.

We are very grateful to everyone who contributes to the practical running of the choir, Barbara and Hilary for organizing members and extra singers, Maura for help with the folders and David for his musical input and support to the men singers.

It is a pleasure to be involved with such an enthusiastic, musical and caring group of people and we do hope you might be inspired to come and join us! Mavis and Micky

Bell Ringing 2016

Bell ringing at St John's is well supported and enjoyed by our ringers, both for service ringing on Sundays and on Tuesday practice nights. We also ring for weddings and on occasions such as St. George's day and ringing the old year out and the New Year in! This year we will be ringing on the Queen's actual birthday, as part of the celebration.

Most of us have been ringing for about 8 years and steady progress has been made. The striking of our method ringing, and call changes continues to improve. We are still very critical of our ringing!

Our ringers have the opportunity to visit other towers for regular practice during the week. Leatherhead District holds practice sessions once a month in various towers, in the area, to which our ringers regularly go. The district also arranges a day's outing which includes 5 or 6 towers and a pub!! Our tower is also used occasionally by visiting bands from towers in other parts of the country.

At Clandon the bells are now ringing again. A new band has been formed and our ringers have tried to offer help and support at their practice on Friday nights and for Sunday ringing.

We have some new ropes about to be delivered as the existing ones have dried out and are falling apart. These have been kindly sponsored by one of our ringers.

The camera installed in the belfry so the bells can be viewed as they are rung continues to be invaluable, enabling learners and visitors to have a better understanding of how the bells work. We now have a demonstration bell (a miniature version) to help people understand just how we are able to ring a 13cwt bell with a piece of rope!!

Gordon and John are keeping the bells in good order, tightening bolts, adjusting ropes and cleaning the bell chamber as necessary. We are hoping to be able to reduce the noise level in the ringing chamber in the near future, as the bells are loud and hearing commands can be difficult whilst ringing. This has been delayed from last year but will hopefully be done this year.

Chris Luckraft has been invaluable with his help, support and patience as we all try to get the hang of methods. He will be sorely missed for that and his humour! We have also been very fortunate that Bob Crighton, who rings at the cathedral, has also joined us for practices. We have really benefitted from the wealth of experience of both Bob and Chris.

Mike and Margaret Bale from Epsom, who taught us to ring, also join us once a month for practice to enable us to move forward.

There is a good camaraderie within the band which makes the bell ringing great fun, as well as challenging. We also have social events each year. Anyone wishing to come and find out what it is all about, or just see the bells being rung, with camera viewing also, is more than welcome to the practices at 7.30 on Tuesday nights, or at 9.30 am on a Sunday. Ringers have to be over 10 years of age, come and see why!

Jane Farquharson Tower captain

Church Flowers

I remain delighted with the continual support of the Flower team. They can always be relied upon to give their time, talents and money, providing flowers for the four festivals (Easter , Whitson, Harvest and Christmas) as well as flower arrangements on the 'old altar' in memory of parishioners.

There is a regular number of Parishioners who donate for loved ones and who permit me to include names in the weekly sheets. These draw attention to other parishioners. I, of course, respect any requests for anonymity.

I continue to liaise with brides, giving advice if needed and also offer the use of Church pedestals for weddings and anniversaries.

People are more than welcome to join the team, even if they lack experience. Feedback, concerning Church flowers is welcome at any time.

Caroline Heron

Brass Cleaning

The team continue to polish on a monthly basis and keep the brass sparkling. It is not too onerous and any new recruits shall be made most welcome!

Judy Farr

Church Cleaning

The annual spring clean took place in March 2015. As usual there was a dedicated band of volunteers who swept, mopped, polished and dusted all the nooks and crannies which a weekly cleaner does not have time to attend to. Refreshments were provided including homemade cakes!

During the year the church is cleaned at least once a week. This takes around two hours to complete, usually on a Monday. Thanks are due to the five people who have volunteered to keep our church looking clean and tidy on a regular basis.

The church is also checked before and after occasional services e.g. weddings and funerals, after school visits and before Sunday services. Whilst cleaning there are opportunities to greet visitors to the church but it is also a time for quiet reflection.

Rosanne Bond

Christian Aid

Thank you to everyone who gave so generously to the house to house collection last year and to all who helped to raise the money. Despite being 13 collectors short, we had a very good result. The total for the St John's half of Merrow was £2,837.05 (of which almost £1,700 was gift-aided) and the grand total for Merrow including the Methodist Church's collection was £5,025.41. This total includes £110 raised by the Junior Church cake sale – a big thank you to Jacqueline, the children and all the helpers.

Thank you too to those who helped with the Town Centre collection in December.

Please contact Sara England on 504205 if you could help with this year's collection – we do need some more volunteers. The collection week will be 15th to 21st May. As nobody has come forward to take over from Rosemary Mills at the Methodist Church, I'm also co-ordinating their collection too.

Do come along to our coffee morning which is at St John's Centre on Saturday 21st May from 10 till 12.

Sara England

The Children's Society

We continue to have a core of supporters who willingly have Children's Society house boxes for the charity. This year we had nineteen who between them raised a magnificent amount of £360.72. This, I think, is no mean feat when there are so many demands on our finite resources. I am heartened though in that I also have three new box holders to add to my list for the current year giving me 22 in total. Thank you, in advance, to my newbies. I know that The Children's Society appreciate the continued support that we give via the house boxes. Collecting all the house boxes isn't a too arduous task and the majority bring their boxes to the Parish Office once I have put a request in the weekly service sheet or the Parish Magazine. However, I am always happy to arrange to collect the boxes from people's homes if that is more convenient for them.

As a church we also support The Children's Society with proceeds from the Christingle Service in December. This is a lovely way for children to be involved as they can each have a candle tube to fill with change for the charity.

If you wish to find out more information about the Children's Society and the work that they do their website is www.childrenssociety.org.uk If anyone reading this would be interested in having a house box then please contact me on 01483 571847 or email me on Judithsampson@aol.com My details are also in the Parish Directory. Judith Sampson

Parish Administrator and Centre Manager

2015 was another very busy year at the Centre and we are delighted that so many local clubs, societies and charities continue to use the Centre. We have continued our policy of offering a few regular charitable users free use of the facilities (AA etc), and many local groups benefit from favourable rates, which we know is much appreciated and very much in line with our mandate "to serve the community". Clients not only value the Centre and its facilities, but feel very much 'at home' here too.

Unfortunately, age is taking its toll, and I'm not talking about the Centre Manager here! Now 13 years old, furniture and other items are getting worn and need replacing. As mentioned in last year's report, the boiler may have to be replaced before long and the flat roof will need resurfacing. A number of chairs have been re-covered, but many more are now in a poor state and will need to be re-covered this year - the chairs are re-covered by Oakleaf, an amazing charity who help people with mental health issues get back into work by training them in upholstery, gardening etc. As usual this summer the interior paintwork was refreshed and all the carpets were cleaned. We have remained in the Parish Buying Energy Scheme to help keep our energy costs stable. And we continue to try to maximize Centre usage and manage our costs as efficiently as possible. This year our Income has been good and our Expenditure steady.

Our Clients remain loyal to the Centre, and only 'move on' when they outgrow the room they use, or if they are struggling with numbers. We are delighted with the eclectic mix - U3A classes, Weight Watchers, Zebedees, Godalming School of Dance and Pilates Classes. Floral and Horticultural Clubs. Our three Bridge Clubs. Merrow Afternoon WI, Merrow Dramatic Society, Merrow Residents Association, NCT classes, a Travel and Music Club. Brownies, St John's Toddler Group and St John's Pre-School. The Hungarian Cultural Association, singing lessons in Russian, Art Classes, Baby Massage. Our twice monthly Footcare Clinic run by Age UK Surrey. The Diocese also uses us regularly for training courses, Rural Dean Meetings and Bishop Council Meetings. Virgin Care are now here twice a week for child developmental checks. We are used by private companies running courses/meetings. Charities holding fundraising events. We have the occasional Wedding Reception as well as Funeral Wakes. Lots of children's parties with the occasional adult birthday/anniversary celebration. We also have our wonderful Wednesday Coffee Club run by Paulene Lambert and her team, who serve the elderly and disabled in our community, and our popular Wednesday morning Eucharist in Merrow Hall. Finally, all the church events, meetings and fundraisers. Phew, it is a very busy place!

With regard to Weddings, six couples were married at St John's this year. Thank you to Hilary Ellwood our Wedding Registrar who organizes the wedding banns and sends the quarterly returns. We also had 19 Baptisms with another adult baptism at the Cathedral. Thank you to our long serving Baptism Team of Pat Baldock and Jane Farquharson, and

welcome to Helen Chambers who has just joined the team. Many of the children baptized at St John's are not from the congregation, so this is a wonderful way of welcoming new families to St John's, and many come back for the Anniversary Baptism Celebration Service in September.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who contributes to the running of the Centre. Lucy Phipps our cleaner, Tony Badham our caretaker, Lyndsay Ross our DIY man. Dick Pyper our wonderful Treasurer and Mike Newell our Churchyard Administrator. To all the ladies who helped serve refreshments at the Thursday Toddler Group and Mary Allison who comes in without fail to act as Coffee Potter for the U3A IT Course. To Alison Scudamore who launders our towels every week and who looks after our plants, and those who help when she is away. And to those who encourage me and offer words of advice. What a team we are. Thank you all so much.

Michelle Haywood

Parish Magazine Report for the year 2015

The magazine is an involved operation, even if small scale. We have contributors, an editor, proof reader, an advertising manager, printer, subscription and distribution management and the people who make sure the magazine gets 'out there'. No point in producing it if they weren't there. So, thanks to everyone. Plus special thanks to Michelle for her unfailing helpfulness in so many ways.

The format hasn't changed this year, but during the first half of the year there were serious articles on prayer and later in the year there has been more information about our young people – even some word searches. Quite a few articles have been included to make us think but not that many comments have been received.

Editor Barbara had a moan in September about the response to the questionnaire about the magazine put out at the beginning of the year – very few people responded and most thought it 'all right as it is'. She has tried to take on board the few comments that were made.

We are still losing subscribers as we all get older, so, if you don't take the magazine regularly please try to do so, and it would be really helpful if people who do enjoy the magazine could encourage some new subscribers.

Barbara Lawrence, editor.

The Magazine Team (Barbara Lawrence, Angela Rye, Linda Elliott, Tom Brooks, Barbara White)

Wednesday Morning Coffee Club

After my first full year in the unenviable position of 'organiser' I am pleased to report that the coffee morning has continued and appears to be as successful as before.

We are there to provide a venue for members to enjoy meeting each other and making new friends. Newcomers are warmly welcomed and easily join in, seeing neighbours, old friends or perhaps even someone they have not seen out and about for some time.

The year's activities followed the same successful pattern that Doreen Yaxley perfected over the years.

The February Fish and Chip Lunch provided a very sociable and enjoyable time together. Being after the celebrations of winter, we were able to decorate the tables with spring flowers and enjoy a meal from 'the chippy' that it is quite rare for many of us today.

Our coach trip to Worthing in June gave us a chance to share some extra and different time together. The sea air on the pier and promenade is also a rare treat, but it is the afternoon tea at the Denton Café that is the highlight of the day.

In July there was an extra event as we had a Party to celebrate '50 Golden Years' of the existence of the club, with visits from Anne Milton MP, Jenny Jordan one of our councillors, Adrian and friend with their trainee guide dogs Luke and Dennis and a photographer from the Surrey Advertiser. I hope everyone saw us in the paper!

Finally, in December, the final coffee morning of the year was a very enjoyable visit from members of the choir who joined us for the morning and led the carol singing. Christmas treats were offered to members and helpers as a supplement to the usual coffee and biscuits.

Through the year there were three Bring & Buy Sales, one each term, which allow us to heavily subsidise our main events.

We are grateful to Alison Skinner, our Treasurer; Barbara Booth the deputy organiser and of course Rosanne Bond who somehow manages to get those less able members to the foyer each week. But also a special mention to Teresa Pepui who is in the kitchen every week, to the teams of coffee makers and hostesses who attend regularly and Rosanne's teams of drivers who often have to encourage and cajole as well as offer a helping hand to some members.

Paulene Lambert

Fairtrade.

Another busy year for Fairtrade. The Fairtrade Foundation accepted Surrey County Council's application last November to be awarded FAIRTRADE COUNTY STATUS. This was celebrated with a Surrey tour around the Fairtrade Towns, including at Guildford on Saturday 12th March at Emmanuel Church. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor attended and a fair-trade cake was presented to celebrate the new fair-trade status.

Sales of fairtrade food continue every first Sunday of the month at St. John's. On average, parishioners purchase about £80 of fairtrade items. Please continue to support this worthy cause AND buy fairtrade goods from the supermarkets. I feel it is important to continue supporting fairtrade wherever we can, as people's livelihoods depend on us. Our purchases help provide schooling for the children of the fairtrade producers, healthcare and advice on how to run their businesses.

Thank you to everyone who has supported fairtrade over the past year.

Cathy Thompson

Churchyard Report

The churchyard is almost full. However, by using most of the original paths and various odd corners there is still space for approximately twenty-five new plots. With approval from the diocese it may be possible to obtain a small increase in the consecrated area to accommodate a further twenty plots.

It may be possible to bury a second coffin into an existing family grave; adding ashes is always possible. The burial of ashes is less of a problem, although the area for caskets of ashes has been full for some time. Ashes may be interred into any existing family plot.

The general maintenance of the area is supervised by Lyndsay Ross, who clears away dead flowers and any unsuitable items. The grass is cut fortnightly, by a contracted firm, during the grass growing season.

The maintenance of the individual plots is the responsibility of the deceased's relatives. At approximately yearly intervals, the headstones on the graves are checked for stability. Any headstones that are deemed to be a potential risk of falling and harming anyone are noted and any relatives are requested to correct the problem. If it is not possible to contact a relative, the loose headstone is removed and laid on the grave, in the approved manner.

M J Newell