

Events Committee Report (APCM2018)

A new Events Committee was convened in May 2017 and we subsequently met to plan events for the year.

May was a quiet month regarding events planned and held but June relatively buzzed with activity. The first event to be held was the Quiz on the 9th June. Ronnie and Paul Todd tested our knowledge thoroughly, a bring and share spread was consumed and the evening proved to be a very enjoyable one. The next event in June was a Summer Walk in the countryside on the 16th, organised by Velma Keys. The committee can claim no credit for the success of this as it was entirely planned and executed by Velma, and we are very grateful to her. We hope she will undertake a similar exercise this coming year. That event was swiftly followed by a Fun Day on the 17th, which was organised by the North West Kent Countryside Project. You may remember that they undertook work on the churchyard and environs with the monies received by our grant under the Bags of Help initiative by Tesco. The Fun Day included lots of interesting wildlife activities, and our Committee undertook the preparation and serving of refreshments in the Hall. A good time was had by all!

After that flurry of activity, July was a quiet month on the event front but was enlivened by the, by now, traditional annual Vicarage Bring and Share Lunch on the 23rd. The weather again stayed fair for us and we are very grateful to Martin and Maggie for their hospitality for this very well attended occasion.

August of course is always a quiet month at St. Mary's as the holiday season sets in, but September kicked off again with St. Mary's acting as one of the stage posts for the Ride and Stride event. This has been very ably organised in past years by Tom and Chloe Witchell, who have now handed it over into the very capable hands of Tessa Fox. The participating cyclists and walkers were greeted in turn at St. Mary's by a rota of helpers, and sent on their way to the next church on the list. We resumed our participation in the Riverhead Carnival on the 17th and although this was a low key effort by us this year it was nice to be back after a short break; our Home Grown and Made stall did well. The next event on the 24th was the Partner Diocese Celebration. We had no less than two Bishops and an Archbishop participating in the service, and with the combined choirs of the London Estonian Mixed Choir, St. Mary's choir and the colourful dancers who performed traditional Estonian dances, it was an event to remember. A goodly spread was enjoyed in the Hall afterwards.

Our next event was our Harvest Festival and Bring and Share Lunch on October 1st, which was very enjoyable. The harvest gifts were subsequently taken to the Loaves 'n Fishes food bank and were gratefully received. On the 29th October our service for the commemoration of All Souls took place and a bountiful tea was provided in the Hall afterwards.

The Christmas Tree Festival on 9th/10th December was again a great success. This event boasts a committee of its own and the team, led by Christine Smith, began the preparations in August. All the hard work put in paid dividends again and it was a truly memorable occasion, with the church buzzing with activity all the weekend.

After Christmas things usually go a bit flat, but the St. Mary's New Year Party on January 13th livened us all up, and with entertainment and a delicious bring and share supper enjoyed by all. The weather having been wet and mild for all the Christmas and New Year events, the Beast from the East put paid to our participation in the North West Fellowship Lent Lunches. Our Lunch, which was scheduled for February 27th, had to be cancelled because of the ice and snow. Those of us contributing the gallons of soup needed, made good use of it ourselves, although we would really much rather it had been consumed at the Frugal Lunch, as was intended! The Traidcraft Big Brew, hosted by Anne Straight and the girls, was more kindly treated by the weather, taking place on 10th March. It was well attended as always and on 24th March the Hall

was filled with children and adults participating in the Preparations for Easter Event. Easter gardens, flower displays and Easter cards were lovingly created under the expert guidance of Charlotte, Christine, Margaret and others, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part. Of course, refreshments were served!

And so to Easter, when hot buns are consumed aplenty, weary Easter morning walkers are served with a welcome breakfast, and children eagerly search for chocolate eggs, so ends another year of eventful occasions at St. Mary's. Another year soon begins!

Diane Williams
March 2018