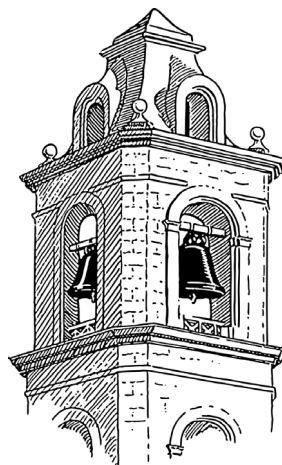


Penge Congregational Church



December 2024

The article that should be the Minister's letter is on
pages 17 and 18:

Brief Thoughts on Togetherness

The Editor writes:

Dear Ones,

It would be lovely if someone would write to me on one of the the following!

- **Something unusual you experienced**
- **Something you are passionate about**
- **Something you think important for our readers to know about**
- **Something you enjoyed**
- **Something encouraging**
- **Something you want to comment on, when you have read this issue**



This newsletter has been depending on the same four or five writers for years now. It doesn't matter if you can't spell - or any other excuse you may be thinking of at this moment! I have never been able to spell but we have a brilliant professional proofreader, **Jenny Froude**, who does an amazing job with whatever I send her.



Letter from Living Well:

Hello,

It feels like we have only just finished Harvest and already we are turning our attention to Christmas.

As you know, Living Well Bromley does a Christmas collection where we ask for donations so we can give our guests something that is a bit more special for Christmas.

I have attached our Christmas poster for 2024 which lists the items to be included in our Christmas bags. We would be really grateful for any donations your church might be able to give for our Christmas Collection.

Donations can be brought to us at Living Well on 10th, 12th, 13th or 14th December and we will be giving these bags out to our guests the following week.

We hope you will be able to support us in our Christmas campaign this year.

Thanks for all your ongoing support.

Kind regards,

Lesley

(Lesley Nunes, Operations Manager)





CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The foodbank needs your help!

**To help feed someone in need this Christmas:
fill a bag with one of each of the following
and drop it to us 10/12/13/14 December.
(Drop off times on our website)**

Tinned Ham/Corned Beef
Tinned Salmon
Tinned Veg
Tinned Fruit
Tinned Soup
Long Life Milk
Coffee
Tea bags
Hot Chocolate

Jam/Marmalade
Rice Pudding/Custard
Festive Biscuits
Festive Chocolates
Cereal
Pasta
Toilet Roll
Shampoo
Shower Gel

Nothing containing alcohol please



Or donate what you can and we'll do the shopping for you!

£40 covers the cost of a full food parcel.

**www.livingwell.life
charity number: 1157385**

A KELSEY BLOG – 5 November, 2025

By Peter Longley: Author of ‘When The Cows Come Home’ and ‘The Cedars of Beckenham’

This article by Peter arrived after the November issue of Penge CC News had gone to print, but I make no apologies for using it in December (you will see why when you read it!)

‘Remember, remember, the fifth of November,’ was a well-known ditty in my childhood referring to the day in 1605 when the Roman Catholic plotter, **Guy Fawkes**, was arrested in the cellars of the Houses of Parliament just before lighting the fuse to blow up Westminster Palace in the **Gunpowder Plot**. In the early 1950s the date far outweighed ‘Halloween’ and all the witches, ghouls and ghosts that have brought ‘trick or treating’ across from America as October turns into November. The 5 November was bonfire night, and instead of ‘trick or treaters’, children came around knocking on doors in the days up to 5 November with an effigy of Guy Fawkes looking more like a scarecrow sitting in a wheelbarrow. The cry was not ‘trick or treat’ but ‘a penny for the Guy’ before, on 5 November, he would be ceremoniously burned on a big bonfire along with a fireworks display. Today in our urban areas we are not allowed bonfires for safety reasons, but 5 November is still celebrated with fireworks.

When I was at boarding school in the 1950s we celebrated both with a bonfire and fireworks, and after the celebration we were served a treat—a mug

of steaming hot chocolate. As I can't stand the taste of cocoa it was no treat for me. I am one of those few people who simply don't like chocolate. I also disliked bonfires with their orange glow and fierce flames reaching up to the Guy, something that I still attribute to having been born during the war years where burned-out buildings and bombsites were a common sight, leaving me forever with a fear of fire. In America, about fifteen years ago, a house in our street caught on fire. It was extinguished quite quickly, but it took me about six months to walk past that burned-out building. I still have a fear of fire. So, early November with its bonfires and fireworks was never a very happy time for me.

November also brings that orange fuzzy glow of the lowering afternoon sun trying to break through the misty low clouds of late autumn. It has a certain beauty, but for me will forever be associated with compulsory games of football or rugby at school, which I disliked intensely, making sure that I was as far away from the ball as possible at all times.

Having said the negatives, however, that for me herald this first week of my least favourite month of the year, conditioned by those childhood memories, the intensity of the autumn foliage is a 'joy forever' as the poet **John Keats** said in his immortal poem '**To Autumn**'.

My walk through Kelsey Park yesterday where the orange sun was not able to break through the leaden skies, was a '*joy forever*.' The beauty of the falling leaves, the vibrancy of their colours both on bough and ground; the rusts of the bracken; the glory of the orange

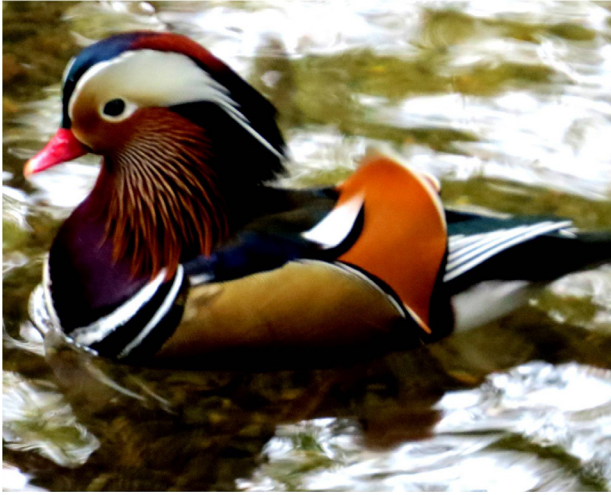


and golden foliage of the beech trees and the reds of the maples; the matching plumage of our Mandarin ducks, now coming into the open from their summer hiding places, is a 'joy forever', and

I hope I have been able to capture these moments to share it all with you in this November's photographs.



Kelsey Park is about to go into a long dark winter as over the next six months heavy machinery will be moving in to dredge our lakes of years of building silt. This is just something that has to be done for the sake of our wildlife and ourselves. There are a few of us who



will remember the floods in Beckenham's past before the last dredgings took place. Be prepared for some disturbance in the park this winter, but all will be done to

ensure the safety of our wildlife and the restoration of our fish in the process.

I am glad that I was able to record this record of the park in early November, before this work has started. Hold the moment, for '*a thing of beauty is a joy forever*'.

.



Services for December

It's Advent!

Advent Sunday 1st December Luke 1: 5-25 The birth of John the Baptist - to bring people back to God.

Sunday 8th December Matthew 1:18-25 Joseph gives Jesus a family.

And at 6:30pm **Carols by candlelight - including Penge Chamber Choir and Alan Langridge (organ)**

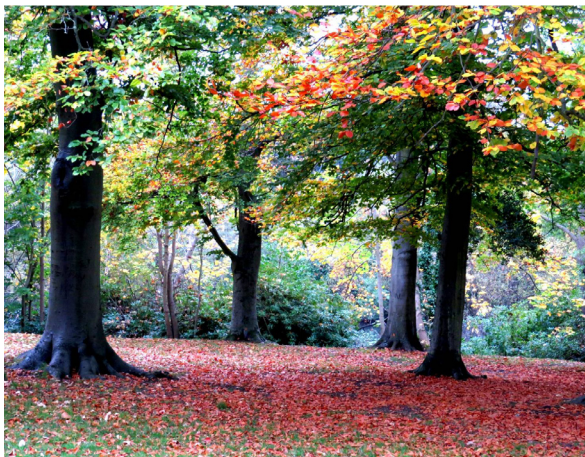
Sunday 15th Luke 1:39-56 Mary has a vision of the new kingdom.

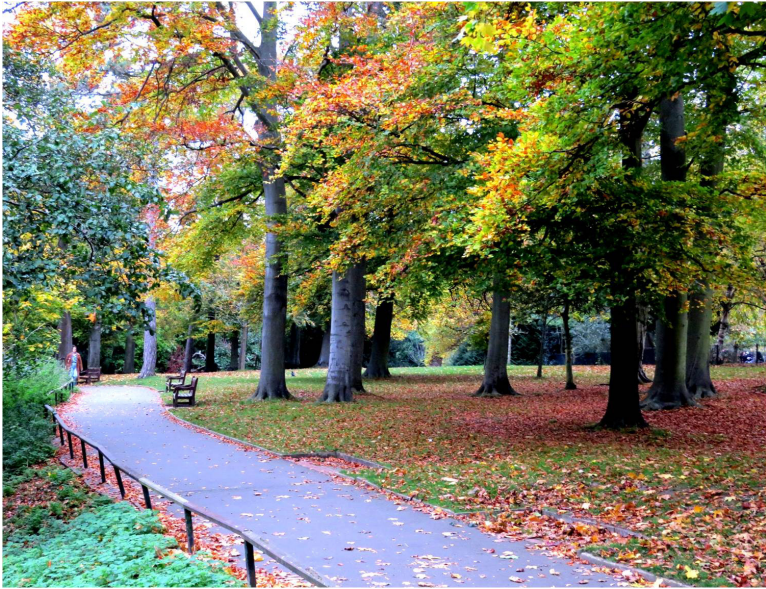
Sunday 22nd December Luke 2:1-21 The shepherds get very excited.

**Tuesday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 11:30pm
Midnight Communion by candlelight**

Wednesday 25th December Family Service at 10am

Sunday 29th December Cafe Church





All the photos taken in Kelsey Park are the work of Peter Longley - thank you, Peter.

Beavers Section Report, October 2024

We now have 15 Beavers in the colony and will invite two more to join after half term. We maintain a healthy waiting list.

We have three leaders along with a young leader and two with admin support.

In May six Beavers joined us at **group camp** and had a wonderful time trying activities and joining in the campfire with the other sections. We enjoyed some outdoor meetings at **Cator Park and Alexander Road Recreation Ground**.

At the end of last term, we were pleased that **four Beavers achieved their Chief Scout's Bronze Award**, before swimming up to **Cubs** at the start of this term.

In the new term, we have welcomed **four new Beavers, three of whom have now been invested**.

So far this term, the Beavers have been working on their Cyclist and Animal Friend Badges. They have also taken turns to prepare healthy snack plates of fruit and vegetables for the other Beavers to enjoy.

Looking ahead, we will be going on a Bat Walk and are hoping to arrange a visit to the recycling centre. We are also looking forward to the Beaver and Cub sleepover that we are planning for March, at **Heartsease in West Wickham**.



1st Penge Cubs Section Report

October 2024

In the summer term we completed the home help, physical recreation and personal challenge badges.

There was a great range of personal challenges from the Cubs, from charity endeavours to learning chess or a new language.

We were pleased to welcome **Leo, a former Scout** who is now in the **Explorers**, to present to the **Cubs on his experience of the Jamboree**. He brought in lots of **badges and scarves from around the world to show the Cubs**.

We discussed the **upcoming General Election**, and the **Cubs developed election manifestos** in their sixes and presented them to the rest of the Pack. It resulted in some **excellent and enthusiastic debates**.

We continued to have the help of **Tilly, our young leader - a Scout from another London section** - which was much appreciated.

We were proud also to award **four Chief Scout Silver awards this term**.



1st Penge Scouts Trustee Board Report

- May 2024

Since the last report, we had 1 Scout leave and 3 move up from Cubs. This brings our troop number to 25.

During the summer term, our Scout troop worked towards and completed several activity and challenge badges.

We started the term with the digital skills badge, looking at internet safety, how to respond to bullying online, and learning skills such as knots, from online tutorials. With the lighter evenings and better weather, we focused on trying to have more of our meetings outside:

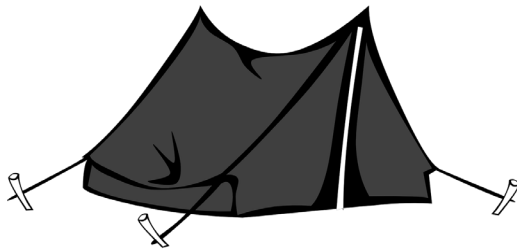
This term they included focusing on the nature around us; playing rounders; having a cycle evening; practising pitching tents before camp, and completing the photography badge.

For the photography badge, the Scouts spent an evening in Cator Park taking as many interesting photos as they could, from landscape, action shots, portraits, and still life. We had a guest photographer with us, **Laurence**, who provided lots of tips and advice to the scouts so they could get the most out of the cameras that their phones have. They went on to edit some of their shots and the following week each scout presented their top 12 photos to the troop - and the presentations were full of great photos! We also had a much requested Tenniquoits competition following the AGM.

We finished off the term with a night of laser quest in Bromley (as requested by them at the troop forum at the start of the term),

it was thoroughly enjoyed by all Scouts and Leaders.

Scouts attended a number of events this term. We had our **annual Group Camp at Broadstone Warren** with the Cubs and Beavers, which 20 Scouts attended.



Everyone got stuck into all the activities throughout the weekend including axe throwing, crate stacking, rock climbing, abseiling, tenniquoits and more!

We then had a stall at the **Penge Festival Fete** in June; the Scouts made games out of recycled materials in their meeting the week before and then many of them ran the games throughout the Fete to raise money towards their laser quest evening.

This was followed by our first Cycle Camp for a number of years. The 10 scouts and 1 Cub who attended cycled for a number of hours on the first day, camped overnight and then cycled for many more hours the following day. It was enjoyed by all and will become a regular event in coming years. Our final camp of the term was our yearly Summer Camp. 12 Scouts and 4 Leaders spent

5 nights at **Bushy Wood campsite in East Sussex.**

They cooked all their meals, and setup and maintained their camp through the week. It was a week full of on site activities as well as a day trip to Eastbourne that included 3 hours of paddle boarding on the sea followed by visiting the pier and playing on the beach for the rest of the afternoon.

We had great weather throughout and received lots of positive feedback from all the Scouts who attended.

Appologies to those Leaders who wrote these **three excellent reports** for not acknowledging them - I only know that they were kindly sent in by **Peter Lawrence-Smith.** Ed.)



In Memory of Rosemary Ann Porecha.

4th Penge Guide Unit



It is with great sadness that I write to report that **Rosemary Porecha** died on the 28th October 2024.

Rosemary had for many years helped as a parent at the **4th Penge Guide Unit** when her daughter, **Catherine (Gus) Parodi**, was an Assistant Guide Leader. She then moved to help at the **2nd Penge Guide Unit** when her daughter, Catherine, opened the Unit at Penge Congregational Church with Julie

Taylor many years ago and then became an Assistant Guide Leader. Later the 2nd Penge and the 4th Penge Guide Units merged together with her daughter as **Unit Guide Leader at Penge Congregational Church.**

Rosemary was a very caring person and was loved by the Guides and Leaders. She had excellent skills in sewing, knitting, crocheting, cooking and art and was always willing to share her skills with the girls and Leaders. Although camping was not her first love she could be relied upon to be at camp as the Cook and helped the girls with their camp cooking and craft skills or at indoor Guide holidays.

The Girlguiding Leaders who have run units at Penge Congregational Church and in Penge and Anerley District offer their sincere sympathy to Rosemary's husband **Bob**, daughters **Liz** and **Catherine** and all of her grandchildren on their loss. We will miss you Rosemary; may you now Rest In Peace, free from pain and suffering. You were a very much loved friend Rosemary; we will miss you.

Diane, Caroline, Julie, Marita, Rosanna, Sharon, Sue, Chris and Sue W.

Brief Thoughts on Togetherness

by Lynn McShane

I bought some raffle tickets today from the Age UK Christmas raffle - I'm hoping to win big! But mostly I was interested in their theme for the raffle this year which is "***Together we're not alone.***" This is a fantastic thought and it's so important in a big city where it's easy to feel alienated from everybody when you're surrounded by people you don't know. How hard it is to get the feeling of community when we live in a big city - rather than a small village where you know everybody's name. Even at work where the staff are constantly changing it's easy to feel lonely. I see everybody working and rushing and talking but I can't seem to find anyone to sit next to who might be interested in how my day is going.

I understand some people in the congregation put a mark on a bingo card every time **Chris** talks about South Africa and they seem to think that they regularly score a line. Today, it's me bringing up something from South Africa. There's a really great word which is **Ubuntu. Ubuntu means togetherness.**

The idea is that I can only be human in relationship to other humans. **I am who I am because of who you are, and who we are.** If we look at the world only through our own eyes and never try to see it through

the eyes of someone else, our worldview becomes one dimensional and static. When we are stuck, we have to look with "new" eyes at our situation. We often need to think about how things look from someone else's perspective and this gives us a different worldview. Talking to someone else helps us find a new perspective if we are willing to hear them too.

Christmas is the time when we see **the world through God's eyes**. If we know who we are by being with other people, then we know ourselves even more by seeing how God sees! **St John** said that **God loved the world so much that he gave himself to be one of us and live among us**. If we only say that Jesus died for us then we haven't understood the whole story. **He lived among us. He was one of us and interacted with us**. He showed us that God loves us for who we are. If we see each other from his point of view then we become truly humans. We accept each other as we are, each one made differently, each one very special.

Ubuntu is not being alone. God called us to reach out to one another, especially the marginalized, the refugees, the misunderstood and the poor. We don't need criteria for people to be accepted.

Jesus accepts us as we are. We need to accept each other as we are.

Lynn

PENGE MUSIC PRESENTS

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

Croydon Guitar Club

a festive programme of popular
Christmas melodies

(all proceeds go to Fairfield Division Guides)

14TH DECEMBER 2024

1PM

£5 entry on the door
cash and card taken
under 16s go free

tea, coffee and biscuits served on arrival

Penge Congregational Church
172 High Street Penge, SE20 7QS
Tramlink: Beckenham Road tram stop
Nearby train stations: Kent House,
Penge East, Penge West, Clock House
Bus routes: 75, 176, 197, 356, 354,

358, 227, 194, N3

FREE PARKING at a
nearby multistorey carpark

Oh my! Oh my! Oh my! It's that time of year again!

Yes, January is only three months' away and we have the perfect Family Pantomime to lift those post-Christmas blues:

'PINOCCHIO & THE BLUE FAIRY'

Get ready to cheer and jeer as little wooden Pinocchio - on his quest to become a real boy - is fooled by cunning Foxy and daft Gatto.

Will he be sold to the circus by the evil Child Catcher!? Or will the Black Queen turn him into firewood? Can **Jiminy Cricket** and the **Blue Fairy** save him? or will **Pinocchio's nose grow longer?! And will our pantomime Dame finish baking those pizzas before the end of the show? There's only one way to find out - Book Now and *Boo! Cheer! Laugh!* and enjoy our great **Live Band** as the characters sing and dance their way through this adventure full of fun and laughter.**

******REFRESHMENTS *** WINE & BEER ***
CONFECTIONERY *** GLOW STICKS******

Hope to see you there!

Christine Foulds

St. Mark's Players

www.sm-players.co.uk



St. Mark's Players' 2025 Family Pantomime

PINOCCHIO

AND THE BLUE FAIRY

FEATURING
THE GLENLYN ACADEMY DANCERS

LIVE BAND



St George's Hall

Albemarle Rd, Beckenham BR3 5HZ

Saturdays

18th, 25th Jan & 1st Feb

at 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Sundays

19th, 26th Jan 2025

at 2.30pm

Adults £12. Children £9

BOOK NOW!

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This year
we are supporting

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
FIND A CURE.

and
StChristopher's



Website:

www.pccweb.co.uk



To arrange a marriage service, funeral, baptism or similar event, please contact the Deacons:

Lynn 07817 862 158

To book any other events (concerts etc.), please contact **Bernie Hall:**

pcclettings@outlook.com

Tel: 07999 296 686 (new number)

For enquiries related to this website please contact **Iona McShane** on:

iona.mcshane@gmail.com

To submit articles for the monthly newsletter:

margaret@ecoharmony.org

Deacons at the moment are

Jannett Ashley

Douglas Rathbone

Chris Parker

Lynn McShane (treasurer)

lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com