



COVER STORY:
FROM GRAVESEND
TO THE WEST END...
AND BACK
GARY CORDICE (47)
SHARES HIS STORY

Issue 01 February/March 2014

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ALSO INSIDE:

NEW CHILDREN'S
GOSPEL CHOIR

NEWS &
UPCOMING
EVENTS

ASK THE VICAR
on God & Suffering

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editorial	p 2
Cover story: "From West End to Gravesend... and back"	p 3-4
News from the Parish	p 5-6
Upcoming Events	p 7
Life Events	p 8
Ask the Vicar	p 9
Advertisements	p 10



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Would you like to contribute to the magazine? You could either feature in one of the articles or help with writing, design, photography and proof reading. Please get in touch with Mirjam.

Please be aware, the deadline for contributions to the next issue of the magazine is Sun 9th March!

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EDITORIAL



Picture of one of the flower displays of the flower festival held at St Aidan's Church last year

YOUR NEW PILOT HAS LANDED!



It was only a few weeks ago, that I witnessed an Air Ambulance land on the green field in front of our house and church. It made me quite curious to find out what was happening, so close to my house in my community. Of course it was a shock to hear that someone had been stabbed and taken to hospital in an emergency.

That Air Ambulance landing in front of our church was a reminder to me of some of the difficult things that happen behind the doors of our homes. It is exactly in this community that we want to be a presence, care for each other or as our Mission Statement says: Share God's love .

My hope is that this new Pilot, landing on your doormat, will be a reminder to you too, to be involved in your community. May it give us many opportunities to share, show our care for each other and get involved.

Mirjam Ngoy - Editor

CONTRIBUTORS

We have been able to put together and distribute this magazine thanks to the help of the following people:

- Mr Ernie Lane
- Mrs Mavis Prater
- Mrs Mirjam Ngoy
- Rev. Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy

FROM GRAVESEND TO THE WEST END... AND BACK

GARY CORDICE (47) SHARES HIS STORY



When you see him working quietly in the garden, you wouldn't think you were standing in the presence of a West End performer. He would describe his life as that of a gypsy: always on the move and never really settled. Last year, Gary came back to Gravesend and has since been part of St Aidan's Church Community. In this first issue of The Pilot he shares his story.

"I was born in Gravesend and grew up here, together with my three brothers and three sisters. I was a very mischievous but resourceful young person. My greatest hobby was watching movies and going to the cinema or theatre. Even as a child, I knew I would never want an office job. It had to be something creative."

Growing up in Gravesend

"It wasn't always easy to grow up in Gravesend. I experienced quite a bit of racism. Our windows were put through a few times living in Hampton Crescent. People called us names. But me and my brothers, we stayed strong. And my parents always supported me to pursue my dreams."

"One of the people who really inspired me was my English teacher. He knew I wanted to go into theatre. He made sure I could come on a trip with him to a show in London. When I was watching this show, I knew this is where I wanted to be, this would be my future."

Great success in the West End

"When I finished secondary school, I joined Gravesend School of Performing Arts. Soon I decided that I did not want to spend three years in school learning to be a performer. I would rather go and take my chances and audition. That is how I ended up performing in the West End show "Starlight Express". A few more shows followed, including "Five Guys Named Moe."

"IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY TO GROW UP IN GRAVESEND."

Never satisfied

"After a few years in the theatre world, I started having questions. I had great success for somebody who came from nowhere. But there was no real fulfillment; there was a void in me. I started to wander and ended up training and working as a gardener. Then I went back to perform for a few years in the Lion King. Looking back, I would describe my life as that of a gypsy. I was never settled, always on the move..."

"Even in my faith I wasn't satisfied. I always went to church and said my prayers, but didn't know my sins were forgiven. It was only after a big crisis in my life, that I learnt to confess Jesus Christ as my Saviour. It finally became a reality."

Scream out to God

"Then I got married and had children. But even the marriage didn't last. This has been one of the hardest things for me to cope with. It was no longer just about myself, being able to walk away and start again. This time there were children involved."

"Yes, I have struggled big time in my faith, especially after my marriage broke down. The greatest comfort in all of this, is the fact that God has proved himself to be a greater reality than ever before. There are times that no one can help you, no one will get it, and the only one you can scream out to is God."

Back to basics

"In August 2013, I came back to Gravesend, which I never expected to happen. I feel being back here is not without significance. God is on the move... I am not sure how I ended up coming to St Aidan's Church. Normally, I am not really into rituals and tradition. But I do feel called to be part of this church and community"

“THERE WAS NO REAL FULFILLMENT; THERE WAS A VOID IN ME.”



Glorify God through performing

"I have chosen to see God in everything, all of the tragedies, all of the failures, all of the successes, temptations and trials. God is my lifeline through all of those things. When everything else fails in life, the one thing that doesn't fail is God, He is underneath everything."

"My dream for the future is to promote the Arts in Gravesend. I feel called to tell stories from the black community. Race is still a big issue, in and outside the Church. I want to show that there is more to us than the angry black man or the nurse in Casualty. Above all, I want to glorify God. I now know that God runs through everything I do as a performer. That is my dream, that people see God when they see me perform."

By Mirjam Ngoy

NEWS FROM THE PARISH

NEW CHILDREN'S GOSPEL CHOIR



Diana Jude performed for the first time with the new Gospel Choir

If you know of any children interested in joining us, please contact Lusa (01474 352500) or just turn up for choir practice every Wednesday in the Community Hall from 5.00-5.30pm. Before Choir Practice, children are welcome for the After School Club from 3.30-5.00pm.

If you were in church for our Crib service on Christmas Eve, you will certainly remember the maiden performance of St Aidan's brand new Children's Gospel Choir.

They gave us a promising rendition of the well-known Gospel song 'This little light of mine'. The group is hoping to grow both in number, confidence and quality.

Jennifer Jude, mother to three of the singers was pleasantly surprised to see her children standing in front of a packed church and sing with such confidence. Diana Jude (11), one of the singers said: "the best thing was to sing all by myself."

When the choir met for its first rehearsal, there was a mix of nerves, embarrassment and excitement. Since then, it seems that those thirty minutes on a Wednesday afternoon are never long enough. John, 15, has spoken of the confidence boost he gets from singing. He has now undertaken to write his own song with the help of Charlie, his little sister.

ELECTORAL ROLL 2014

The Electoral Roll of the Parish of St. Aidan is due to be revised before the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 6th April 2014.

If there are any changes since last year, e.g. marriage or moving house, or you would like to be included on the Electoral Roll, please contact either Rev. Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy (01474 352500) or Mrs Doreen McIntosh (01474 822473), who is the Electoral Roll Officer.

Enrolment forms can be found on the table at the rear of the Church.

The Electoral Roll is the Parish's register of electors, enabling them to vote at the Annual General Meeting where elections take place for the Parochial Church Council and the parish's representatives on the Deanery Synod. All forms of application for membership or notification of changes must be handed in by Sunday 9th March 2014.

COMMUNITY HALL MURAL



Passing alongside our Community Hall, you may have noticed that some local artists have put brush to wall and have produced a masterpiece that now adorns our hall. Who are they?

Well, they are a collection of young people, members of our Community Youth Club with the support of KCC. Every Tuesday for most of the Summer, they met in the hall to work on this exciting project.

It is impressive to think that they came up with the concept and managed to raise the funds for this task. When asked about the experience, they all agree that it was great

to be part of it. Levi (15), one of the young artists, spoke of her desire to go on painting and explore the possibility of studying art at college. Bill Stotesbury, a local artist who advised the young people, was impressed by both their commitment and skills.

This mural is part of a wider project aiming at creating a space of peace and beauty in and for the community. Watch the space as our Community Garden slowly takes shape. Any green-fingered readers interested in lending a helping hand would be more than welcome. For more details, speak to Penny Stotesbury (penny.stotesbury@kent.gov.uk).

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY COLLECTION

Every year in the lead up to Christmas, St Aidan's church is filled with voices of children and their parents gathered to celebrate our Christingle Service. This year (2013), the oranges were donated by Mr N. Wilde, the manager of The Manor Hotel. With your help, we managed to raise £365.76

in support of the Children's Society.

Plans for this year's Christingle service are already being set. If you or your organisation would like to join our fundraising efforts, please get in touch with Jenny Rawlinson (01474 352253).

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENTS AT ST AIDAN'S

12/02/2014 & 12/03/2014, 2.00PM

AIDAN LADIES

Wed 12/02 we are having a guest speaker, Bronwyn, a former mayoress of Gravesham. Wed 12/03 we are holding a film afternoon. Join us in the Powerhouse.

19/02/2014 & 19/03/2014, 2.00PM

CRAFT CLUB

Join us in the Powerhouse to do craft activities together.

22/02/2014, 7.00PM

ONLY MEN "ALoud"

Come along and enjoy a hearty meal and share a time of fellowship and encouragement with other men from our community on Sat 22/02 in the Powerhouse. Any enquiries, please contact Gary Cordice (07981457667).

04/03/2014, 7.00PM

PANCAKE PARTY

Join us in the Powerhouse as we celebrate Shrove Tuesday with delicious pancakes setting us all off on the journey of Lent.

07/03/2014, 10.00AM

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

St Aidan's will again be hosting the service on Fri 7/03. Christian ladies of Egypt have been responsible for its planning under the title "Streams in the Desert". Our speaker will be Mrs. Gill Martin of the Church Army. Ladies from many different churches in the town will be taking part - all are welcome to join us - including gentlemen. There will be light refreshments afterwards.

15/03/2014, 10.00AM-1.00PM

SPRING BOOT FAIR

This will be held on Sat 15/03 in the

Community Hall between 10.00-1.00pm. You can donate good quality items for sale in support of church fundraising. All items may be brought to the hall on Fri 15/03, 6.00-7.00pm or Sat 16/03, 9.00- 10am. For further information and to book a table, please contact Jenny (01474 352253).

EVENTS IN GRAVESEND

05/03/2014, 12.15-1.45PM

CHRISTIAN AID BREAD & CHEESE LUNCH

Our annual Ash Wednesday Bread and Cheese Lunch will be held on Wed 5/03 at St George's Church Hall, Church Street, 12.15-1.45pm. Admission £2.50 at the door. As well as the lunch, there will be a bring & buy stall and homemade cakes and preserves for sale. Do please come along and enjoy fellowship with members of other churches.

FROM 12/03/2014, 2.00 & 7.30PM

EGG LENT COURSE

'Christ and the Chocolaterie' is the original, innovative and lively Lent course based on the story and characters of the Oscar nominated film 'Chocolat' from the bestselling novel by Joanne Harris. This Lent, the East Gravesend Group (EGG) will follow this five group-session course and explore the life changing opportunities that Lent presents to get a better understanding and application of the Bible.

12/03 - Holy Family Church, 2.00 & 7.30pm

19/03 - St Mary's Church, 2.00 & 7.30pm

26/03 - St Paul's URC, 2.00 & 7.30pm

02/04 - Christ Church, 2.00 & 7.30pm

09/04 - St Aidan's Church, 2.00 & 7.30pm

LIFE EVENTS

WEDDINGS & FUNERALS

Weddings:

14/12/13

James Holliday & Rachel Pay

Funerals:

Jean Clarke (86)

Ernest (Ernie) Eves (87)

Elizabeth Whitnell (84)

Florence Ludford (87)

Anthony Harrison (79)

Alan John Burgess (81)

IN MEMORIAM: THE LATE ELIZABETH (BETTY) WHITNELL

Betty was born in Birmingham, where she spent her childhood and early adult years. She met Ron at a New Year's Eve Dance - their friendship blossomed and were married in September 1953. After their marriage they lived in London before moving to Leander Drive, and latterly to Central Avenue. Their son Keith was a member of the Boys Brigade and Betty became involved in leading the younger group. It was through this involvement that she found her spiritual home at St Aidan's.

Betty became a much loved and highly respected member - she could always be relied upon to give of her best whatever she undertook. She helped with the floral

arrangements, was a member of both the Aidan Ladies and the Craft Group. But above all, it was the spiritual and prayer life of the church which meant most to Betty.

Sadly, attendance at meetings and services of worship had become increasingly difficult for her as the onset of Parkinson's Disease and Dementia had taken their toll. However, with great determination and courage, and with the patience and loving care of Ron, up until early December she managed it.

Betty died peacefully at the EllenorLions Hospice on 7th January. Her funeral service was held at St Aidan's and Medway Crematorium on 24th January.

Mrs Mavis Prater

A NOTE OF THANKS

Thanks to all the church members who helped with my late wife, Elizabeth's, funeral - those who prepared all the food and drinks - thank you so very much. A special thank you must go to Mavis and Lusa who did so much for me before the funeral and during the service - I could not have managed without them. £500 was collected from friends and family. This will be shared between the Hospice and the Church.

Now I come to a sheet of paper I found in Bett's Bible on which she had printed this

poem, when she was able to print. Some of you may know it - I didn't:

God has not promised skies ever blue,
Flower strewn pathways all our lives through.
God has not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.
But he has promised strength for each day,
Rest after labour - light for our way.
Grace for all trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

Mr R.J. Whitnell

ASK THE VICAR



Dear Luisa,

My name is Lucy, I'm 16. I'd like to believe in God but find it difficult, especially when I see all the pain and suffering in the world. Could you help?

Email your question to
info@staidangravesend.org

Dear Lucy,

This is a very good question and one that would be difficult to answer in a short letter. Many of us want to believe in God and love him, but we're often blinded by suffering and sometimes can't see beyond the pain.

Like you, I have often struggled with the idea of a loving and caring God who would allow his creation to suffer. I then realised that part of the problem was down to the way we look at life. We have decided that our lives are only valuable when we have health and wealth, looks and brains. The Bible teaches us that God loves us regardless of who we are and what others think of us.

I'm not suggesting for a moment that we should think of suffering as something good, but if we try to look at our own lives with new eyes, we might just be able to see pain, not just as something negative, but something out of which beauty and goodness can come.

I believe in a God who loves a broken and hurting world. The story of Jesus is all

about that; God choosing not just to zap away suffering, but sharing that journey of pain and help us defeat it.

There's a story of a man who found a butterfly cocoon. One day he sat and watched the butterfly struggle to come out of the cocoon through a tiny hole. It looked as if it was stuck. So the man decided to help the butterfly by cutting off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then came out easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shrivelled wings. It spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shrivelled wings, never able to fly. What the man, in his kindness, did not understand was that the struggle was necessary for the butterfly so that it would be ready to fly once it was free from the cocoon.

One thing the Bible is quite clear about is that suffering is not good. But it also speaks of a God who will work all things for our good.

Lucy, I hope you can believe in such a God.

With best wishes,

Luisa

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St Gregory's Crescent

Every Thursday at 6pm

For details:
Ring Christine 01474 357342

Would you like to advertise or help fund the magazine?
Please call 1474 352500 or email info@staidangravesend.org



**st Aidan's Church**
Gravesend

OUR MISSION

To share God's love in the community.



St Aidan's Way
Gravesend
Kent, DA12 4AG

OUR VISION

As a church we want to develop relationships that demonstrate the love of God.

We aim to be a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, mission-shaped church that loves God completely, ourselves correctly and the neighbour compassionately.

www.staidangravesend.org
info@staidangravesend.org

Registered Charity No 1130169

OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

1st	10.30am	All Age Service
2nd	9.30am	Holy Communion with Sunday School
3rd	9.30am	Holy Communion with Sunday School
	6.30pm	Joint Service with Riverview Baptists at the Christopher Centre
4th	9.30am	Holy Communion
5th	9.30am	Healing Eucharist with Sunday School

God's Love Ignites - God's Love Unites