

Penge Congregational Church



June and July 2025

Cover photo by Khadija

Penge Congregational Church has Got Talent by Chris (P)

As a slightly different way of raising money this year for Christian Aid we set ourselves a task to encourage our congregation to bring a talent with them and share it with the rest of us.

Initially it looked as though we were going to be short of items and then they flooded in.

We are a small congregation but don't let that fool you when it comes to talent. After a piece of music was played chosen by **Khadija**, the first live act up was **Linda**, from whom the event was sparked.

She sang "Make me an island" by Jo Dolan.

Chris McShane on piano played a self-composed piece relating to Van Gogh.

Another self-composed piano item came from Misty, which was resurrected from when she wrote it some seven years ago.

Ann read a couple of poems, one about her thoughts on our Church.

Jean had found an article written by an elderly member, who has since passed away, of her work with the wealthy in London as a dress maker. This involved a visit to a posh hotel and the scattering of all her dress pins by two excited dogs across the bed and stuck in their fur.

More karaoke singing with an Elvis number by Chris Parker and an Elvis number followed with Jonny and guitar. A young girl studying in the area, from Thailand and visiting us for the first time stepped up to do a big number from Whitney Houston.

Jannett sang a solo and Ewan played an item on the violin.

I apologise if I've left anyone out, however I do recall James being heckled to sing something, which he managed to bypass somehow. He did sing with some gusto along to Linda's final item,

'The streets of London'.

We look forward to James and any other new acts taking part in our next talent show before we lose these talented artists to the agents like Simon Cowell.

Thankyou for making the effort and I'm sure Lynn will let the Church ACM know how much was raised.

"Break a leg".

Chris Parker.

Lynn didn't manage to 'break a leg', Chris, only a foot!

Services during June

- 1st June Christ our **Head** 1 Corinthians 12:12 - 20
Ephesians 4:15 -16
- 8th June Pentecost Christ our **Mind** Acts 1:12 - 26
- 15th June Christ Our **Hearts** Acts 16:16 - 34
- 22nd June Christ our **Hands** St John 15:1-17
- 29th June Cafe Church

Update from the Cafe Church

Cafe church is a chance for a different kind of service.

In May, **Ewan** led us in thinking about the **purpose of church** and doing a straw poll using pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to vote!



The pictures (opposite, and on pages 18 and 19) hopefully are big enough for you to get an idea of the discussion.

We discovered that **Chris Parker has a talent for drawing owls**. It should have been an eagle but no one is complaining.

This service was an exercise in finding our vision together. Everyone has their own perspective so it requires listening for God's voice to know which way we are being led as a church. It is very exciting to have different ideas, different skills and yet have us brought together as one body. Not to forget all the different nations that we represent and different ages too.

Very important ... **Church annual meeting from 12 to 1pm on 8th June** after church. {Email **Lynn** if you want an email copy of the finance report.}

The meeting will be followed by the **street party** in Kenilworth Road for anyone who can stay.

Funeral for **Rosemarie Baker will be held on Friday, 6th June at 1.30 in the Church.**

As Now

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH

Give Comfort
Moral guidance

DO?

Live in harmony
unity

Focal point for
community

Voice to
those who
can't speak up

Lead in love

Be brave, bold
strong

Welcoming

Feeling chuffed!

I was walking down my local high street this morning when a gentleman approached me and asked me, “Are you the author?”

Somewhat surprised I smiled and said, “Yes, I am an author.”

He then smiled and asked, “The author of ‘The Cedars of Beckenham’?”

“Yes,” I said, rather taken aback.

“I am just loving that book,” he said. “I’ve almost finished it, and I have enjoyed every page. It is a wonderful book. I thought it was you... I’ve seen your photo in your bio.”

‘The Cedars of Beckenham’, a family saga from 1930 to 2018 was published by Austin Macauley in 2023 and is available along with my other books on Amazon. Feel free to check them out at: www.peterlongley.com

Peter Longley

THE CEDARS OF BECKENHAM

(Published by Austin Macauley, London, UK in 2023)



Jenny Froude writes about the poet Michael Rosen

MICHAEL ROSEN - GETTING THROUGH IT

A double bill on love, loss and mortality

This was a far cry from the poet's first visit to the The Arts at St. George's in 2023 when the church was packed with excited schoolchildren and equally delighted adults, and the aisles rang with laughter. The way Michael leapt around the stage like a teenager was described in my article about the event in an issue of this magazine (September 2023).

On 3rd May this year he was seated at a circular table, accompanied by a glass and carafe of water, holding a sheaf of papers from which he read. As he started to talk to a packed church one could hear a pin drop...

For those of us who had read his book **Getting Better** there were no surprises but sheer awe at the way he read the account of the death from meningitis of his 18 year old son Eddie which was profoundly moving. Unable to take my eyes off him, I was aware, from a slight intake of breath and small murmurs of empathy from my unknown neighbour to my right, that she related to his tragedy. When she stood up to leave in the interval she explained, with misted eyes and a stiff

upper lip, that her son had died at 20 years of age, from a car crash. “Been there, done that, got the tee shirt” she admitted as we took a gentle leave of each other. I wonder how many others in the audience might have been similarly affected by Michael’s very honest retelling of a family trauma. (His **Sad Book** is a classic of its genre and I got my old, precious copy signed later that evening.)

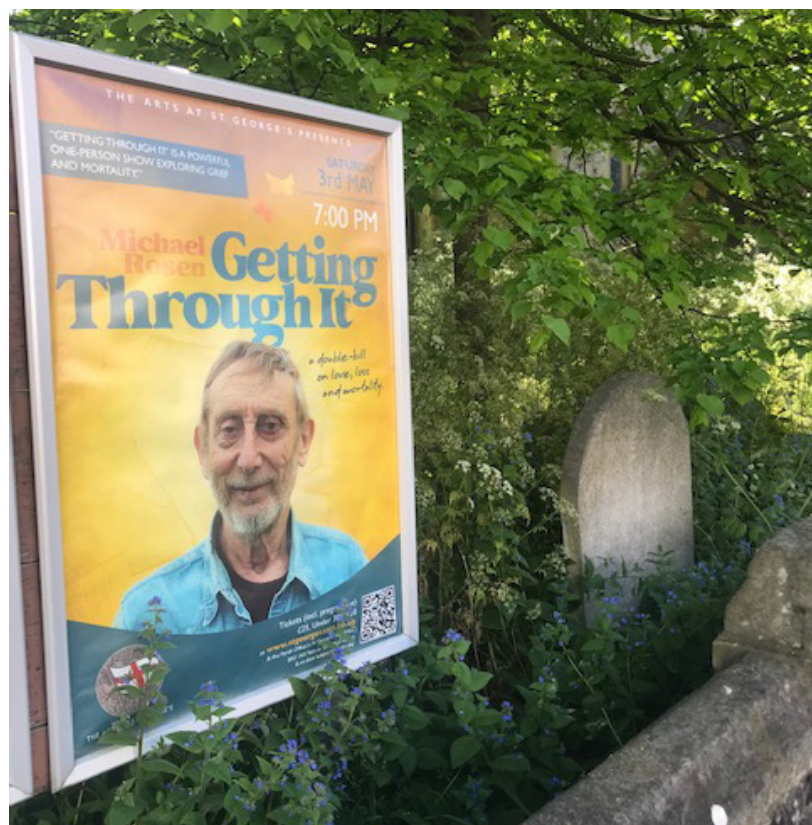
The second half of the talk, chronicling his encounter with near fatal Covid in 2020, had us feeling, via his detailed description of being given a 50/50 chance of surviving an induced coma and his gratitude for the NHS teams who took care of him, that we were sharing his experience. Via his body language and a few amusing stories of his survival and its aftermath, one felt one was there with him in the ICU, the ward and rehabilitation as he described encounters with consultants, nurses, physios, speech therapists, patients etc, his still damaged eyes sparkling above lowered specs at memories he shared with us. In his poetry tweets book **Pebbles** he writes “I missed April and May 2020. It seems a bit careless!” His dry humour dismisses sentiment and his honesty is ever present.

Going under, getting over it and getting through it are words dearly familiar to the many devotees of all ages of his **We’re All Going on a Bear Hunt**.

Getting Better is a beautiful biography in which the author refers to loved ones as the “air we breathe”. Convinced, after his hospitalisation when much of the language had been reduced to medical jargon, he may never write again or enjoy the laughter of children as he performed, Michael feels he is “**less bothered about things if he writes about them**” and encourages readers to do the same. “**Doodling, but with words**” is how he describes it. “Writing to feel better, writing to get better” is a good notion from a very talented writer who is an inspiration in himself.

His poignantly honest book, which also covers his childhood, career, major health issues way before Covid added to them, and much more is one I can recommend. It’s written as if he were chatting to the individual reader and, once you have seen and heard him in person, I find his voice remains in your head as you read and reflect on his words. Love, loss and mortality are huge subjects; they could be in no better hands.

Jenny Froude



A KELSEY BLOG - 15 May 2025

By Peter Longley

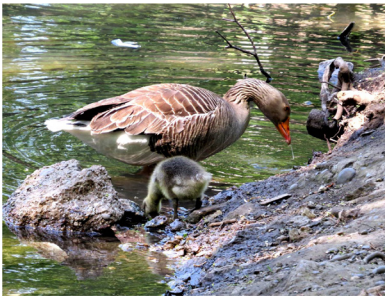
Author of 'The Cedars of Beckenham' and 'When the Cows Come Home' www.peterlongley.com

This is the month of rhododendrons and cow parsley or Queen Anne's lace in Kelsey Park. Large swathes of cow parsley cover semi-wild areas: areas that two months ago were big drifts of daffodils. For three weeks or so the cow parsley dominates with knitted lace caps catching the early summer sun. Yes, here in England we do claim the beginning of May as the first days of summer, and this year it has felt like it with endless blue skies and bright sunlight along with some record high temperatures. I don't think we have seen a serious drop of rain here now for a month, but even so, nothing can quell the beauty of those vivid greens that accompany early summer and at times contrast so beautifully with the fresh ruby browns of our copper beeches and Japanese maples.

Many of our rhododendrons around the lakes of the park probably date back to the Victorian gardens fostered by the **Hoare family** in the nineteenth century, bearing in mind that the family's principal seat — **Stourhead in Wiltshire — was and is noted for its lakeside rhododendrons. It was popular to collect different varieties of these magnificent bloomers from northern India and the Himalayas at that time.**

The great blooms reflect in the waters of the lakes both at Stourhead and Kelsey.

Following the principles of **'No Mow May'**, many of our semi-wild lawn areas are festooned with buttercups and daisies. The buttercups are especially prevalent where drifts of daffodils and crocuses stood over the past two months. They hide the dying daffodil foliage that is slowly returning its energies back into the bulbs for next year's display under our spring flowering trees.



Goslings and ducklings can now be found exploring the rebuilt banks of our lakes — bundles of fluff with almost translucent bodies beneath.

Heron Island is also full of young families chattering away. It is a happy time of the year.



Early May also saw the opening of our **new community garden project beside the Information Centre**. The first plantings have begun, and it is hoped

that this can be a place of discovery and learning within our community.

When visiting, you might want to also take a look at our **new bug hotel near the main gate**. I think it is the biggest that I have ever seen — a Kelsey Hilton.

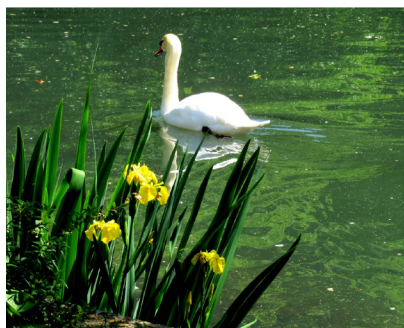
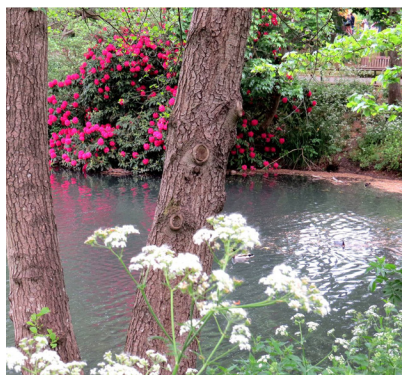
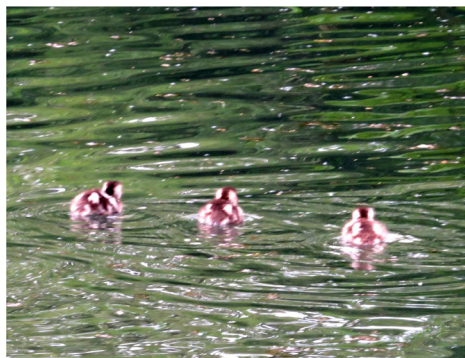
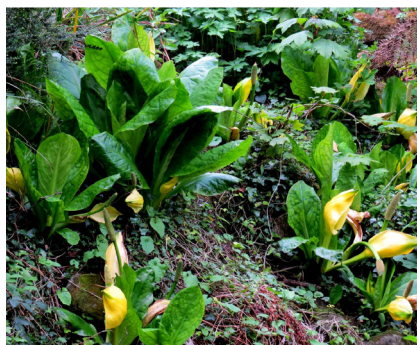
The herbacious border is already looking good with new foliage and some beautiful clumps of blue camassia. I noted at the **RHS Malvern Spring Show in Worcestershire that was featured on TV** as a forerunner of Chelsea this year, camassia was much being talked about. The blooms are spectacular, and I feature our Kelsey blue blooms in the border photos for this month.



Note too, the yellow water iris, blooming against the giant Chilean rhubarb foliage and almost dwarfing our swans. Giant Cuckoo-pints are also featured naturally growing beneath the fern trees in what I call our little New Zealand Garden.

Chestnut trees are full of their beautiful white candle flowers that will give us our autumn conkers, and in my final photograph for this month of May, I feature a pink/white weigela shrub blooming away near the Wickham Road entrance into Kelsey Park.

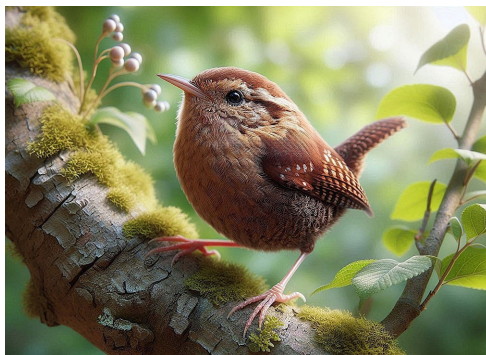
Kelsey Park features quite prominently in my 2023 published novel, **‘The Cedars of Beckenham’** — a



saga of four fictitious
Beckenham families
from 1930 to 2019.
The families adapt to
their changing lifestyles
witnessing a rich
tapestry of 20th century

history taking the reader all over the world with its
beauty, passion and prejudices.

www.peterlongley.com



There's less than a month to go until the St Mark's Players summer show 'Andrew' has its first performance.

This Andrew Lloyd Webber inspired musical will get you humming along to many of his famous musical numbers including 'Starlight Express', 'Memory', 'Any Dream Will Do' and many more.

Any dream will do for some, but not for Andrew.

His dreams are greater than just being a small village shop worker.

Follow him as he meets others on his journey to become the greatest musical theatre composer in this

Andrew Lloyd Webber inspired musical story, including songs from the musicals

'Evita', 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' and 'Sunset Boulevard'

Book tickets via: www.ticketsource.co.uk/stmarksplayers

We hope to see you there.

Kind regards, St Mark's Players Box Office

St. Mark's Players present

ANDREW

A musical story inspired by the songs
of Andrew Lloyd Webber

£20 with Fish & Chips*
£12 Show Only
*Other options available

LIVE BAND

Sat 14th June 2025 at 2.30pm & 7.30pm
Fri 20th June 2025 at 8pm
Sat 21st June 2025 at 2.30pm & 7.30pm

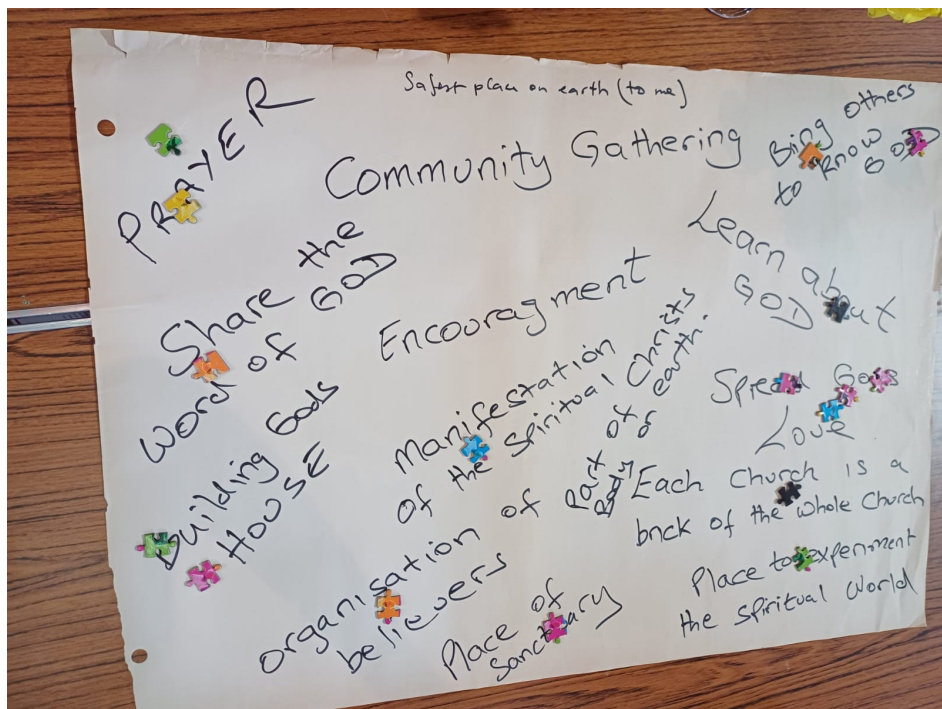
St Georges Hall Beckenham
25-27 Albemarle Rd
Beckenham BR3 5HZ

BOOK NOW
www.sm-players.co.uk
07422 516436 / 07973 408807







And something on which to dwell?

A very rich lady died and no will was found...

She had a mansion, beautiful paintings and valuables.

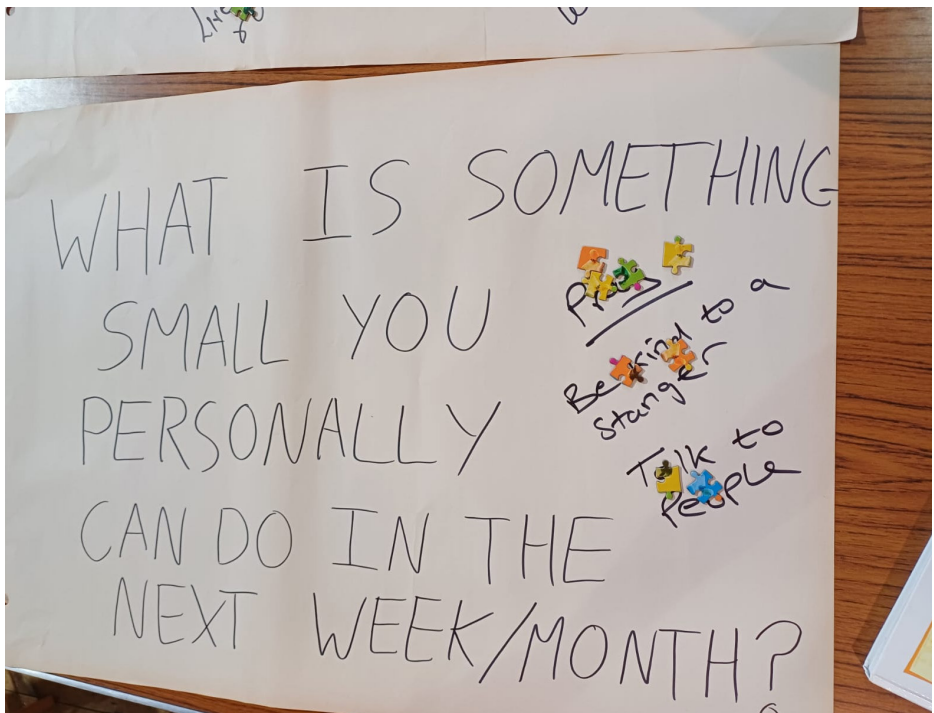
The day of the auction arrived and started with a large painting of her son.

No one wanted it - they wanted the valuables.

Eventually, the housekeeper offered £20 as she had helped to bring him up.

It was taken down and on the back was a hand-written note, Whoever chooses the Son, gets everything!

Auction over!



Congratulations

to **Georgia Kelledy** and **Alan Stevenson**
who were married in the church on
24th May 2025.





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