

**BROMLEY & SHEPPARD'S COLLEGES**



# *Herald*

December 2025 January 2026



# Welcome

Dear Collegians and Friends,

Bromley is now decorated for Christmas. Our front cover is the way into Narnia from the Glades. (I have not tried to get there myself, but we can always hope!) and here are two of the Christmas trees. All these beautiful photos were taken by Clare Preston.

Jenny the bee keeper has dropped off some honey to the office. Thank you Jenny (and the bees!)



The Herald this month includes parties and outings, and an invitation to the Agape meals that take place here.

The next Herald will be for February 2026 and the deadline is Saturday January 24<sup>th</sup> 2026. Please send contributions to me, preferably by email to:  
[therevvedbee@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:therevvedbee@hotmail.co.uk)

Thank you to Jo for printing and distributing them, to Rob for his support, and to all our contributors!  
Merry Christmas!

*Brandy Pearson*

## From the Chaplain's Window

As I sit and write these next words we have begun our Advent journey.

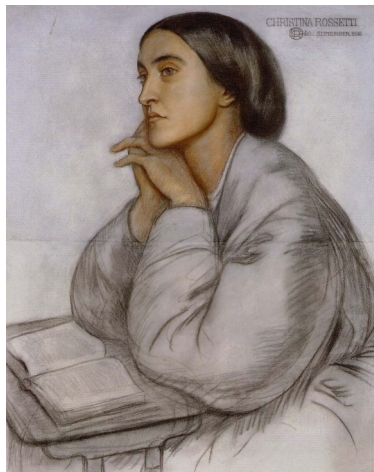
We have lit our first candle together in the chapel, and we have started saying (and singing) familiar words.

We have a renewed hope as our church year turns and starts a new circuit of familiar themes and well worn-in rhythms. In the familiar we find again new hope for the Now. We can look back and also (as the liturgy encourages us to do) look forward. And all this happens in the present moment – this moment – that is both familiar and known, but also fresh and unknown. Familiar and utterly strange.

What a combination of trust and movement – a stirring of the internal work of God in us – in me – and in the world around us.

The reminders are out there – through this window (as we thought before) of this particular part of the Colleges. You will see out through your windows on to the world, and you can see the rhythms of grace at work, the hidden work of replenishment and of interior growth.

God is with us. God has been with us. God will come to us. Now – then – soon.



I was delighted to re-read Christina Rossetti's poem  
Advent Sunday – here it is:

*BEHOLD, the Bridegroom cometh: go ye out  
With lighted lamps and garlands round about  
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.*

*It may be at the midnight, black as pitch,  
Earth shall cast up her poor, cast up her rich.*

*It may be at the crowing of the cock  
Earth shall upheave her depth, uproot her rock.*

*For lo, the Bridegroom fetcheth home the Bride:  
His Hands are Hands she knows, she knows His Side.*

*Like pure Rebekah at the appointed place,  
Veiled, she unveils her face to meet His Face.*

*Like great Queen Esther in her triumphing,  
She triumphs in the Presence of her King.*

*His Eyes are as a Dove's, and she's Dove-eyed;  
He knows His lovely mirror, sister, Bride.*

*He speaks with Dove-voice of exceeding love,  
And she with love-voice of an answering Dove.*

*Behold, the Bridegroom cometh: go we out  
With lamps ablaze and garlands round about  
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.*

How familiar this poem is – but also how fresh. The poet's skill is to show us something of our interior life – something we had half-felt and we can now know, and perhaps in time begin to trust.

Hope – Love – Faith. Perhaps in that order. Moving from our hope for the world, for ourselves and families, towards extending a Love which we do not possess, but possesses us, to a faith that God is working in ways that we can begin to feel – and know.

May you know the rhythms of Grace in your home and heart this Advent. And we look forward to celebrating a new arrival and re-birth of God-with-us.

With warm wishes and prayers,

*Nick*

*Picture: Christina Rossetti painted by her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti*

## **Some Dates for 2026 - a message from the Friends**

The recent Open day saw over 100 visitors coming to the colleges. We raised £471.57 and gained one new Friend!

Please put the following dates in your diary for 2026

**February 21st 2026** Concert by Clarisma and afternoon tea starting at 2.30

**March 7th 2026** Our famous and well loved Beetle Drive and tea at 3pm

**April 11th 2026** Friends AGM at 11am

**April 24th 2026** Fish and Chip Supper plus quiz in common room at 7pm

We hope to see as many of you as possible at these events

*David Darling*

Friends Membership Secretary

## **Malcolm's Birthday Card**

Malcolm did not want a fuss for his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, but could not escape being presented with a card by Rob on behalf of us all on Sunday morning before he had the chance to escape!



## Yvonne's Party

from Yvonne:

'Many thanks to everyone who took part in celebrations with us and especially to those who prepared the wonderful spread of food.'

Yvonne being presented with her birthday card!



## Beautiful Paris

If you are lucky enough to take a short trip to Paris, I recommend that you visit the magnificent Notre Dame Cathedral, fully and wonderfully restored after its disastrous fire in 2019 which destroyed much of its roof and caused the collapse of its spire. Armed with the information that the Cathedral welcomes approximately 35,000 visitors a day, it might



take a couple of tries before you brave the queues, but if you are determined, as I was, being patient could



reward you by an entry in time for the 12 noon Mass, which miraculously I achieved.

The Archbishop of Paris, Laurent Ulrich, writes in his foreword of *Welcome in a Visitor Guide*, "*Notre Dame de Paris is a shared heritage. For hundreds of years, people from all over the world have been moved and have come together to admire and feel a*

*connection with these stones. Notre-Dame de Paris is above and a living heritage, and we, human beings, are its living stones!"*

On my previous visits I remember a dark foreboding building with a stone floor shadowed with the dark blue reflections of the famous medieval stained-glass windows, but now its amazing 'unique light' as the Archbishop calls it, takes your breath away. He continues, *"See the light that penetrates these thick walls, just as God's love illuminates our humanity. The mystery of Our Lady "Notre Dame", will be revealed to you through this light."*

I shall always remember with gratitude being for a short time part of these wondrous and serene living stones.

*Barbara Driver*

## **Agape Meal**

In Greek there are (at least!) four words for love:

**Philia** – the love experienced in a strong friendship, where there is genuine affection, mutual support and a sense of equality.

**Eros** – passion and intimacy, romantic love.

**Storge** – the love found between members of a family – familial love.

**Agape** – the highest form of love, selfless and unconditional. This is the love we ascribe to Christ, and

that we strive to attain. The Agape meals that are held here in the colleges are what we try to practice when we meet together.

It begins with a welcome, where the leader sets out the intention to be a way of hospitality, simplicity, prayer and peacemaking. A candle is lit, and Jesus and the Holy Spirit are invoked. There is a pause for reflection followed by a confession and then the sharing of the Peace.

After the first part of a simple meal together, there is a time of prayer, then the sharing of bread and wine. Then the meal continues. The meal ends by linking hands and saying the grace together.

As it is said in the Peace: *"This is a table of welcome. All are free to come and eat."*

If you wish to attend, please sign up on the lists that appears outside the chapel.

*John Townsend*



*Feast from Early Christian Catacombs in Rome*

## Visits to Polesden Lacey and Bodiam Castle

Neil, Paulos,  
myself and a  
mutual friend  
visited two  
National Trust  
properties  
recently.

Here we are at  
Polesden Lacey enjoying a splendid picnic, thanks to  
Paulos.



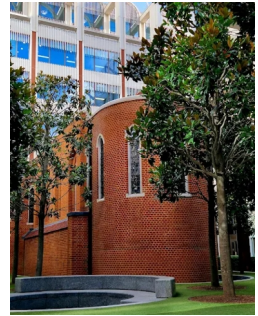
Polesden Lacey is a  
1600 acre estate with  
elegant gardens and an  
Edwardian House in  
Surrey. Well worth a  
visit.

In addition, two from  
our visit to Bodiam  
Castle. One of which is  
on the back page!

*Yvonne Fairlamb*

## Ben Edge at the Fitzrovia Chapel

This November, Rob and I went to the Fitzrovia Chapel to see an exhibition of work by Ben Edge. We had never visited the Chapel before. The outside is quite plain red brick, which does not prepare you for the interior.



It was originally the chapel built for the Middlesex Hospital, designed by the eminent architect John Loughborough Pearson. His other designs include St Augustine's Church in Kilburn, Truro Cathedral, Westminster Hall, Bristol Cathedral, and additions to St Margaret's Church in the grounds of Westminster Abbey.



The first service in the chapel was held on Christmas Day 1891, with an official opening ceremony by the Bishop of London taking place in June 1892.

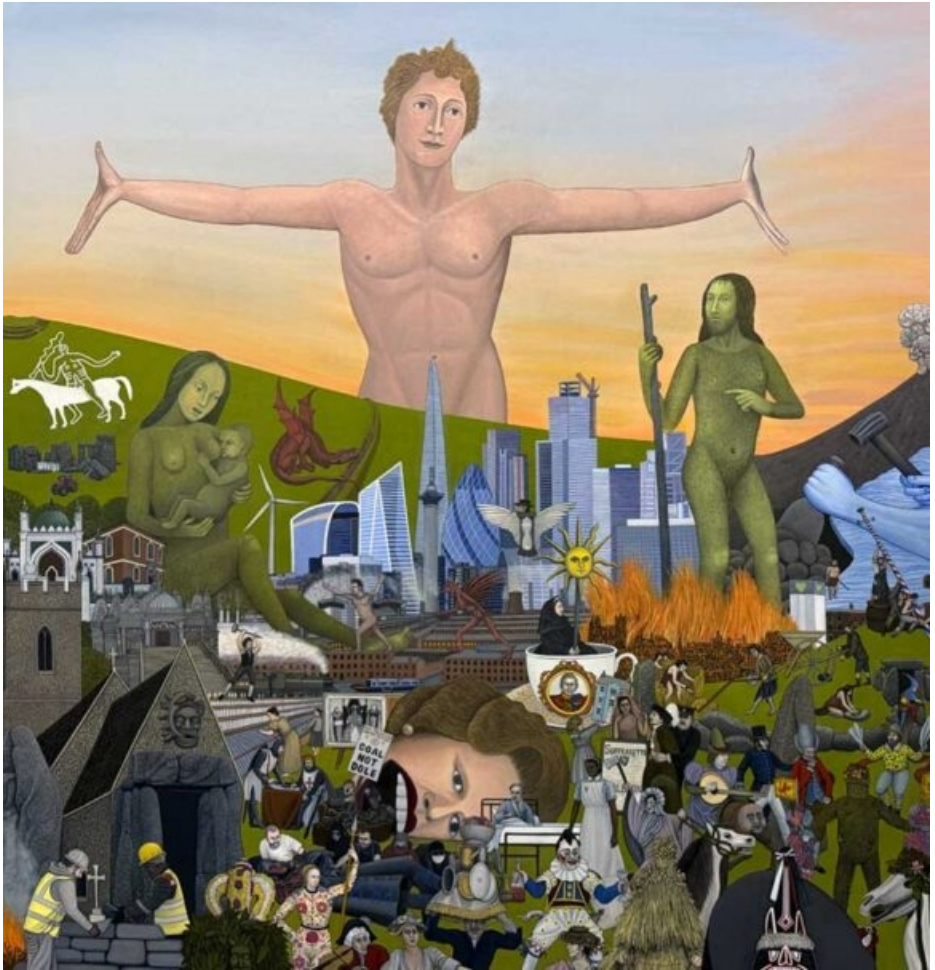
The chapel took more than 25 years to complete. It includes more than 40 types of marble used in its finished design. In its early life, it housed candlesticks, effigies, pews and altar cloths — all purchases which were made possible through fundraising by the medical community. There was a £2 million restoration of the chapel was carried out 2013 and 2015. It is no longer consecrated, but used for many different events, including art exhibitions such as Ben Edge's.

This is a powerful new exhibition by London-based British artist Ben Edge (b.1985). In this showcase of painting, sculpture, and film, Edge continues his deep dive into British folklore and mythology – mining the ancient stories and rituals rooted in the land to uncover their enduring resonance in a modern world marked by disconnection.

Edge captures what he calls a "Folk Renaissance," reflecting a rising desire to reclaim ancestral roots and reconnect with nature. But *Children of Albion* is no exercise in nostalgia. Instead, it's a forward-looking vision, an invitation to re-enchant our relationship with the land and reimagine a shared cultural identity that bridges past, present, and future.

Edge's works conjure ancient sites and the mythologies that surround them, where demons, superstitions, and timeless tales take shape within today's fragmented

world. Through these works, Edge blends tradition with the tensions of modern life – grappling with environmental collapse, identity crises, and a collective yearning for meaning.



Look him up online if you would like to find out more about him

*Brandy Pearson*

# A London Skyline



This is a photo taken on Tuesday 25th November at about 4pm, walking along with a friend.

*Valerie Pearce*

## **Recommended Reading**

### **Hallowed Ground**

The Folklore of Churches and Churchyards  
by Mark Norman (Crossed Crow Books 2025)

which examines the surprising traditions, superstitions and secular imagery found in churches and churchyards, by a noted folklorist and author.



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