

# St Olave's Church, Gatcombe

April 2025



## It's Your Funeral!!

*Spoiler Alert - this might be upsetting...again.*

After my friend, Wendy Varley, had written the beautiful piece on sitting vigil that sparked my own thoughts on the subject last month, she wrote a more light-hearted piece following through on the subject of funerals.

What music is usually chosen and what hymns? What are the current trends? Did you know that the three most popular hymns are 'Abide With Me' and then 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' ...followed by 'The Lord is My Shepherd'. So, no surprises there. Secular music that is most requested includes, 'You'll Never Walk Alone' for football fans. That was to be expected too, or The Match of The Day Theme. The top music in general is, 'Time to Say Goodbye' by Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli, 'My Way' by Frank Sinatra, and 'Supermarket Flowers' by Ed Sheeran. Morecombe and Wise singing, 'Give me Sunshine' is also popular.

The Dowager Duchess of Devonshire was an Elvis fan so she had Elvis singing 'How Great Thou Art'. I adore Elvis too, but have thought that 'Return to Sender' might be more appropriate! (The Duchess also had a wicker coffin as she said they reminded her of picnic baskets. Not sure about that!!) and as for my hymn choices? 'Onward Christian Soldiers' was sung at my grandfather's, my uncle's and my mother's funeral so I think I might have that too. I was born on All Saints' Day so would like, 'For All The Saints' as I've always thought of it as my birthday hymn. There has to be an exception that proves the rule!!! I've been to funerals over the years where they had a piper playing the bagpipes for a Scotsman, and many favourite classical pieces, or family playing guitars and singing too. An enormous variety. Poems often feature too; Christina Rossetti is popular and 'Do not stand at my grave and weep.' There are so many more readings and poems, you just have to Google 'funeral readings' and page after page appears.

I've seen coffin flowers with bees and pots of honey included, or the deceased's favourite plants. My mother, who died in January, adored primroses so we managed to find some (although it was a bit early in the year), for her coffin flowers. My husband always laughed with the grandsons when he was playing a Spot the Car Colour game with them when they were little, that he always chose the yellow car. One day he joked that he would have to have yellow cars on his coffin, so, in amongst the flowers I arranged for his coffin spray were three little yellow cars for the now grown-up grandchildren.

My mother-in-law was a keen gardener so we put a decorated trug by the altar end everyone brought posies from their gardens, some from gardens she had known over the years and one from the garden she spent her childhood in. The trug was taken to the wake and all the posies put into vases to decorate the tables.

Coffins have arrived on motor bikes and tractors or pushed in wheelbarrows for keen gardeners. Recently there have been reports in the press of funeral directors who have been asked that they all dress up as cowboys or zombies for a 'themed' funeral. Whatever next.

If you have any strong ideas of what you would like or what you would NOT like at your funeral I think it's probably best to write things down, although of course it won't be up to you when the time comes. I have done this already and put a note in that says if you don't want to do any of this, that's ok by me but here it all is, hymns, music, readings and prayers if you would like to know what I would like. It might help.

Planning a funeral is always rather daunting and not one most people have to do too often, thankfully. Sometimes, in the case of children or sudden accidents, it is a very, very hard task indeed. If people have lived a full life, maybe 'three score years and ten' as used to be said, it is wonderful if the choices reflect the personality of the deceased and bring a sense of happy closure for the family.

As is so often said, a funeral should be, if possible a celebration of a 'Life Well Lived' and as a Christian, I feel my Elvis song choice is very appropriate, 'Return to Sender.' Harriet Robinson

## In Your Prayers...

Dear Lord-

As the evenings get lighter and the gardens are ablaze with beautiful spring flowers we must be thankful.

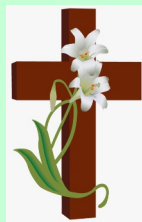
Our days start with thoughts of hope and enjoying simple pleasures.

We must remember there are so many that awake with dread of what the day will bring.  
*Amen*

*Maggie Puckett*



**The Funeral of  
Brenda Gillian Ward  
was held on  
Wednesday 26th March  
at Gatcombe Church**



### **\* Palm Sunday Services**

**St Nicholas's Chapel at Carisbrooke Castle**  
Short Service at 10am followed by procession,  
with donkeys, to

**St Mary's Church, Carisbrooke**  
Service at 10.30am

### **\* Good Friday Services**

**St Mary's Church, Carisbrooke**  
Morning Reflections at 10am

**St John's Church, Newport**  
Olivet to Calvary  
7am to 8.30am

**Newport Minster**

Town Walk of Witness starts at 12.30pm  
Hour at the Cross 2pm to 3pm

## Mothering Sunday

What a glorious sunny day for Mothering Sunday. The Service was well attended, the hymns were joyful. Rev. Steve was on good form and preached about all those who care and nurture.

Ladies were given colourful posies to take home and there were lots of happy smiling faces.

*Hilary Jones*



## Services at St Olave's in April

Sunday 6 April	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 13 April		Palm Sunday * <i>No service at Gatcombe</i>
Thursday 17 April	7pm	Maundy Thursday Lenten Supper and Service
Friday 18 April		Good Friday * <i>No service at Gatcombe</i>
Sunday 20 April	6am	Dawn Service
	11am	Easter Day Holy Communion Service
Sunday 27 April	11am	Holy Communion

## Easter Services at St Olave's

There will be a Lenten Supper and Service on Maundy Thursday (April 17th) at St Olave's at 7pm.

All are very welcome but please could you let us know if you are coming as we don't want to run out of soup.

Please phone Harriet on 01983 721766 or Hilary on 01983 721682.



On Easter Day there will be two services at St Olave's.

At 6am there is a Dawn Service in the churchyard to greet Easter Morning and light The Pascal Candle, to the accompaniment of the Dawn Chorus.

Later, at 11am there will be a Holy Communion Service in the church.

Do please join us at this most important time in the church's year.

## Brenda Gillian Ward

Mum was born in 1929 in Milford Haven, South Wales. How can I describe her life? Maybe one very lucky life. She was born on Friday 13th December and christened Brenda Gillian Nash. My grandfather wanted her to be called Hanna, after his mother, but my grandmother shouted 'Brenda' just in time! But she was always known as Jill...with a J. Mum was an only child and would admit that she enjoyed a happy childhood, being doted on by her parents and grandmother.

Mum was ten when WW2 broke out and she shared some good stories with us about that time; one was when an enemy aircraft flew very low over the house and dropped a bomb on the Pembroke Docks fuel tanks which was only four miles away. He flew back over the house, so low that the pilot waved to her.

Milford escaped any serious damage and mum luckily had a trouble-free time. Her grandmother owned and ran a hotel in Milford which gave accommodation to service personnel and, as a consequence, mum enjoyed a roast dinner most nights while all her friends were on rations. She was 15 on D-Day when the war in Europe ended. In her words, ' That was a party!'

After finishing Grammar School mum went to work for the Post Office, busy sending and receiving telegrams for the fish docks in Milford. When she was 17 she was invited to the Pembrokeshire Hunt Ball and that is where she met my father. They married in 1950 and farmed some of the most beautiful coastal countryside in Pembrokeshire. Later, my father spent a short spell working for Birds Eye Foods and the company move meant they spent the remainder of their working lives in Grimsby.

Mum was very active in all sorts of organizations, usually ending up on committees of such groups and usually Chaired them. She really enjoyed her time in the Island's WI and made many friends - always seeming to win the raffle!

Mum was very passionate about her fund raising for the RNLI and received her Gold Badge from the Duke of Kent only a few years ago. Being on the water always featured in the family - dad being a keen sailor and my brother and I sailing at the local club.

One of the best decisions mum and dad made was to move to the Island where Lizzie and I could help them as they became older. Lizzie and mum became great friends and between them must have discovered most of the coffee places on the Island. I expect Marks & Spencers are revising their sales turnover for the Island now!

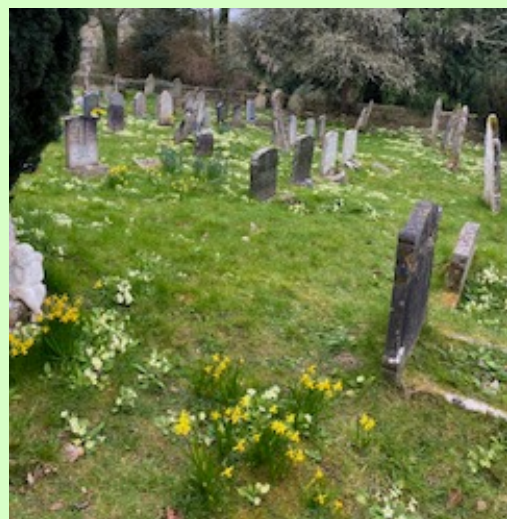
We will miss her; a mother, grandmother, great grandmother and friend who had a good and happy life.

*Nick Ward*

## Thank You!

Thank you to everybody who comes along, as part of the Community Gardening initiative, to help to keep the church's grounds and graveyard looking so beautiful.

Your hard work is  
hugely appreciated!



If you would like to receive YOUR PARISH MATTERS!! emails, please email me on [jill.webster@oulook.com](mailto:jill.webster@oulook.com) and I will add you to the emailing list.

## World's Longest Classic Car Rally

As a medical officer on the legendary Peking to Paris classic car rally, I'm both excited and humbled by the opportunity to be part of this extraordinary adventure. The rally, which stretches over 13,000 kilometres from Beijing to Paris, will take us through a wide variety of terrains—ranging from the vast deserts of Western China to the rugged mountains of Kazakhstan and finally into the heart of Europe. For our medical support team, it's not just about the thrill of the rally; it's about ensuring the safety and well-being of the participants as they navigate such a challenging route.

Along the way, I anticipate some unique experiences. The rally participants, driving vintage cars, will face extreme weather, mechanical failures, and the physical demands of long hours on the road. My job will be to stay alert, ready to respond to any medical emergencies, whether it's a heatstroke in the Gobi Desert or a sprained ankle in the French countryside. The route will take us through remote regions, and while the scenery will be breathtaking, it will also mean limited access to medical facilities. I'll need to rely on my training and experience to provide on-the-spot care and, when necessary, coordinate evacuations.

Despite the challenges, there's an undeniable sense of camaraderie among the rally participants, and I'm eager to be part of that spirit. Whether it's an emergency or just sharing a quiet moment under the stars in the vastness of Central Asia this journey will undoubtedly be one to remember.

*Michael Terry*



## Contact Us

**Team Rector:-**  
**Revd Chris Bradish:**  
[chris.bradish@cofeheartofwight.org](mailto:chris.bradish@cofeheartofwight.org)

**Team Vicar, with Special  
Responsibility for Gatcombe:-**  
**Revd Steve Sutcliffe:**  
01983 520884  
[steve.sutcliffe@cofeheartofwight.org](mailto:steve.sutcliffe@cofeheartofwight.org)

**Team Vicar:-**  
**Revd Emma Cooksey:**  
01983 653166  
[emma.cooksey@cofeheartofwight.org](mailto:emma.cooksey@cofeheartofwight.org)



**St Olave's Website**  
<https://stolaves.church/>

**Newsletter Editor:-**  
Jill Webster  
(01983 721483 or [jill.webster@outlook.com](mailto:jill.webster@outlook.com))

Please send your news to:-  
Harriet Robinson  
(01983 721766 or [spottydogs@hotmail.com](mailto:spottydogs@hotmail.com))