THE LISTENINGPOST

ST MARY'S CUDDINGTON

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Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God Matt 5v9

Introducing David, Our "New" Churchwarden



I'm the eldest son of Pat and Margaret Lelliott, whom many of you will know. I was born in London but grew up (though opinions differ on that) in Worcester Park, with my brother Joff and sisters Jo and Sarah. I went to school locally – Cuddington, Auriol and Ewell High. I then studied at Bristol University, graduating with a BSc in Mathematics and an MA in Philosophy. After completing my studies, I took a few years out to go travelling (Australia, New Zealand, Asia, South America and the US).

In 2009 (yes, I know that there are a few years missing, but I'll come to that) I married Lizeth, who is Mexican by birth. We have two daughters, Ana and Isa.

St Mary's Cuddington

In some ways I'm simultaneously both a relatively recent arrival at St Mary's and one of its longest standing parishioners. I started coming to the church when I was a child. I remember going to Sunday School in what was then known as the Large Church Hall (since demolished). Some of you (mentioning no names) might remember me from then too! You might also remember me going on barge trips with your kids as part of the "After Eights" Youth Group. I was confirmed at St Mary's in 1979. I also used to attend Church Parade here as a cub and then scout at 2nd Cuddington.

The Missing Years

So how come you haven't seen me round that much until recently?

In 1993 I joined the Diplomatic Service (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, now Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office). After eighteen months in London working on the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions, I spent 6 months in Baghdad, seconded to the UN Weapons Inspectors. Postings to the British Embassies in Qatar and Mexico followed (with spells in London prior to each, studying Arabic and Spanish respectively), after which I spent 2+ years working in the American Embassy in Liberia in the immediate aftermath of the civil war there.

After that it was time to return to London, for a 2-year stint running the Conflict Prevention Team at the Foreign Office. Lizeth (whom I had met while I was working in Mexico, but who had been unable to accompany me to Liberia due to the security situation there) joined me in London and we lived on Kingston Hill.

In 2008 Lizeth and I headed to Juba, in what is now South Sudan but was then still part of Sudan, where I ran the nascent Embassy Office. After our marriage in London in 2009 we moved to Gibraltar, where I worked in the Governor's Office and, more importantly, where Ana and Isa were born.

We left Gibraltar in 2012, and spent most of the next 12 years living in India, where I set up and ran a new office in Chandigarh (Deputy High Commission), then Sudan (as Deputy Ambassador) and finally El Salvador (as Ambassador). In August 2024 we returned to the UK and have now been living locally for just over two years.

My Faith Journey

Religion has always been part of our lives while overseas (though I confess I wasn't a regular churchgoer in **Liberia** – the services were over 3 hours long!) and it has given us many memorable moments. In **Qatar** services were in the local British school, as no churches were permitted – the Anglican chaplain was accredited to the British Embassy. In **Mexico** I was fortunate enough to attend a mass given by Pope John Paul II to celebrate the canonisation of San Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin. On our first day in **Juba**, Lizeth and I attended the enthronement of the new Anglican Archbishop of Southern Sudan, and our closest friends included several Comboni missionaries (nuns and priests).

In **Gibraltar** we attended the British Forces' Church ("The King's Chapel"), which adjoined the Governor's Office, in which I worked. In **Khartoum** we generally attended mass at the Nunciatura ("Vatican Embassy") on the banks of the Blue Nile; I also hosted a dinner for the Anglican Bishop of Leeds when he visited. I worked closely with the Anglican Church in **San Salvador**, including on LGBT+ issues – the Anglican Church was the only church in Central America with an LGBT+ ministry. I also attended the Bishop of San Salvador's enthronement as Primate of Central America, organised with him a memorial service following the death of HM The Late Queen and hosted a dinner for the then Archbishop of Canterbury when he visited (see picture below).



I've also worked to promote relations between different faiths. In India and El Salvador I hosted annual Iftars (meals to break the daily fast) during Ramadan, which we used as an opportunity to bring together members of different religions. At one of these I met the rabbi in San Salvador, and at his request I subsequently hosted a Hanukkah celebration. To this day I wear a Sikh kara (steel wristband), a token of the strong respect I developed for the Sikh faith while I was living in Punjab (India).

But now … we're very pleased to be back home and joining you as part of St Mary's Cuddington.

November Services & Events

Sunday 1	08.00	Holy Communion (Common Prayer)
All Saints	09.30	Sung Communion & Children's Groups
All Souls	16.00	Annual Commemoration Service
Monday 2	19.30	*Knit & Natter* in the Leverton Room
Wednesday 4	10.30	*Knit & Natter* in the Leverton Room
Saturday 7	09.00	Men's Breakfast at Horton Golf Park
Sunday 8	08.00	Holy Communion (Common Prayer)
	10.30	Remembrance Sunday Sung Communion
Sunday 15	09.30	Sung Communion & Children's Groups
	16.00	Martin Gerrard in Youth Conversation
Wednesday 18	20.00	PCC Meeting in the Cuddington Hall
Thursday 19	14.30	Afternoon Club at Squire's Garden Centre
Saturday 21	10.30	Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall
	19.00	St Mary's Quiz Night
Sunday 22	09.30	Sung Communion
Gift Day	18.00	Healing Service
Sunday 29	09.30	Sung Communion
	10.45	Homemade Sunday in the Cuddington Hall
Monday 30	19.10	Men's Christmas Meal at Ewell Carvery

Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at **9.15am**

All are very welcome