

St Matthew's
MAIL

Suggested
Donation

£1.00

News from the Parish of Kingsley, Northampton

FEBRUARY 2025



www.stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

Services at the Parish Church of St Matthew

Sundays

10.15am	The Parish Mass (sung)
5.30pm	Evensong — according to The Book of Common Prayer

First Sunday in the month

10.15am	All Age Mass for the Parish Family
5.30pm	Choral Evensong

*When the choir is on holiday (coinciding with school holidays and half terms)
Choral Evensong is replaced with Congregational Evensong*

Second Sunday in the month

10.15am	Laying on of hands and Sacrament of Anointing is offered in the Lady Chapel
5.30pm	Congregational Evensong

Third Sunday in the month

5.30pm	Choral Evensong and Benediction
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Fourth and Fifth Sundays in the month

5.30pm	Congregational Evensong
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Weekdays *(During the winter months of November to March, held in the Parish Centre)*

Morning and Evening Prayer are said publicly at 9.00am and 5.30pm daily

Monday 7.00pm Mass (on Bank Holidays at 9.30am)
(Healing Mass and Devotions on the first Monday in the month)

Tuesday Currently suspended

Wednesday 9.30am Mass

Thursday 9.30am Mass

Friday 12 noon Mass

Saturday 9.30am Mass

(Mass of Our Lady of Walsingham followed by a Cell Meeting on the second Saturday of the month)

Major Feast-Days Procession and Sung Mass at 7.30pm

(Always held in church. The morning Mass may be cancelled — refer to literature in church and on website)

Sacrament of Reconciliation, commonly known as Confession, is celebrated in the Lady Chapel by appointment with the clergy. They are also available for advice and guidance on any matter of concern.

All aspects of the sacrament are in confidence.

Worship Calendar for February

<i>Date</i>	<i>Observance</i>	<i>Intention</i>
1	Of the BVM	
2	CANDLEMAS	
3	Feria	The Ministry of Healing
4	Feria	
5	S Agatha, V and M	
6	S Paul Miki and Companions, Ms	
7	Feria	
8	Of OLW	The Shrine and Society
9	THE FOURTH SUNDAY BEFORE LENT (Proper 1)	
10	S Scholastica, V	
11	Feria	
12	Feria	
13	Feria	
14	Ss Cyril and Methodius	
15	Of the BVM	
16	THE THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT	
17	Feria	
18	Feria	
19	Monthly Requiem	The Faithful Departed
20	Feria	
21	Feria	
22	Of the BVM	
23	THE SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT	
24	Feria	
25	Feria	
26	Feria	
27	Feria	
28	Feria	

*The Church prays for the community daily.
Please include these topics in your daily prayers.*

February Pastoral Letter from the Vicar

Being a Christian Community

Today in medicine there is so much specialisation that the body tends to be broken up into parts. Some doctors specialise in the heart, others in the brain, others in the eye, others in the ear, and so on. Specialisation is good but it can have a downside. Specialists may be concerned only with organs, not with human beings. They may know scarcely anything about the person whose eye or heart or hip they are treating.

The human body forms a unity even though it is composed of many very different members. Those members are very different from one another and have very different functions. Some undoubtedly are more important than others. Yet to be complete the body needs all of them, and the members need each other.

So it is with the Church. We though many form one body in Christ. By means of our baptism we have become members of the Body of Christ, the Church. Some might wish to go it alone, independent of the community. But there can be no such thing as an isolated Christian. Those who deliberately cut themselves off wound the community. We are part of one another and must not try to go it alone.

Community makes demands of us. For this reason, the temptation to go it alone, to seek salvation independent of others, is strong. But this cannot be. We need each other, just as the parts of the body need each other. And the Church needs all of us. We need to have a sense of belonging to one another and to Christ. We have to get involved even when we would rather just look after ourselves.

Belonging to a community like that at St Matthew's has obvious benefits. Take reefs for an example. Individually they are weak and easily broken. But tie a bundle of them together, and they are virtually unbreakable. So it is with people. Great strength results from togetherness. People take courage from knowing each other, encouraging each other, and from standing together. Great things can be done when people work together.

The emphasis on community comes from Jesus himself, only he used a different image to describe it. He used the image of a vine and its branches: 'I am the vine, you are the branches.' It is a simple but profound illustration of unity and interdependence. It's obvious that the branches need the vine. But the vine also needs the branches, because it is the branches that produce the fruit.

This is how Jesus wanted it to be between him and his disciples. This is the way he wants it to be between him and us. He is the vine, we are the branches. Without a sense of belonging together, of caring for one another and being responsible for one another, one is not really a Christian.

The fruit which Jesus desires from us is primarily that of unity among ourselves. By this all will know that we belong to him – by the bond that exists between us and the care we show for one another.

Your sincere friend and parish priest,

Fr. Nicholas

St Matthew's Ladies Group

Meetings are on Monday afternoons from 2.00pm till 4.00pm in the Parish Centre, on the second and fourth Mondays of the month.

Meetings in February

10 February Red Wrapped Gifts (£1.00 per gift) with Afternoon Tea and Musical Entertainment with Terry Smith

24 February Speaker: Derek Blunt – *That's Unusual*
Unusual buildings throughout Northampton

The full Spring/Summer 2025 programme is on our website:

Click on the 3-bar menu, go to Information & Visiting and then St Matthew's Ladies Group

Cathedral in Crisis

Dear Friends

Safeguarding concerns have presented a big challenge for the Church of England nationally, but, nearer to home, the now well-publicised financial issues facing our Cathedral have helped to bring home the challenge we are all facing, whether as individuals or as parishes, to make ends meet or to fund properly the ministry and mission of our church. Jesus said, *“the poor you have with you always”* – and it can sometimes seem



as if we are always poor! From a Cathedral perspective it's disappointing to be facing yet another financial pinch point when we've done so much to improve our financial management, and been so creative in the delivery of a fantastic array of exhibitions, events and activities. But like every other business, we've all of us been facing the same issues; Covid, the cost of living crisis, the rising costs of fuel and employment – they've all continued to pile pressure on our balance sheets.

We have launched an emergency appeal here, and we pray that that may be fruitful. *But “we are afflicted but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair”* writes St Paul in 2 Corinthians, and Jesus again and again called us not to be afraid or anxious because *“your heavenly Father knows you need all these things”*. The real challenge for us all is not one of systems, or process, or finance or funding – but faith.

Whatever we face as individuals or as communities – and we need to be responsible in our stewardship and disciplined in our actions – but above all we need to renew our trust in the living God: *“strive first for the kingdom of God... and all these things shall be given to you as well”*. (Matthew 6.33)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Dalliston". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

The Very Revd Chris Dalliston
Dean of Peterborough

Produced by the Diocesan Office,
The Palace, Peterborough PE1 1YB
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Email: communications@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Caption Competition Result

Four people – Barbara, Sally, Adam and Jonathan – entered the competition this time, each with multiple suggestions, so many thanks for all your entries!

These were the entries received, in no particular order:

1. “Whose been a naughty boy then”
2. “He’s putting what on my back?!”
3. Both priests queue to wind up the Director of Music.
4. The Vicar demonstrates his chiropractor skills to his Assistant Priest.
5. Fr Nicholas wonders whether any of Tom’s clothes are **surplice** to requirements.
6. In preparation for an upcoming music competition, it was suggested Tom should robe up to 'get a-hood' of the competition.
7. Following a suspected problem with the organ, a second opinion was needed where it was deduced the cause was the Director of Music's robes getting caught between the keys. The decision was reached by two newly appointed apprentices from the organ builders 'Nicholasons'.
8. “He’s behind you!”
9. “You’re nicked!”
10. *From Luke 15:22* – But the father said to his servants “Bring quickly the best robe and put it on him”.

Entries were judged anonymously by Nick Bailey, who picked no.5 as the Winner.

Nick said “Nice play on words.”

And who is the Winner? The Maestro again – Jonathan Starmer! Congratulations to him.



Northampton Bach Choir 90th Anniversary Concert

This year marks a momentous milestone for the Northampton Bach Choir as it celebrates its 90th anniversary. It was founded in 1935 by Denys Pouncey in 1935, the then St Matthew's Director of Music, and gave its first concert in the church on Palm Sunday that year. The choir has grown to become the largest and one of the most prestigious choral groups in the county, known for its dynamic range and emotive performances. In honour of this significant anniversary, the choir is set to present a special concert at St Matthew's that promises to be a highlight of the musical calendar.

The centrepiece of the celebration will be a performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, sung in English. This monumental work, renowned for its depth and expressiveness, will showcase the choir's versatility and commitment to bringing classical masterpieces to life. Accompanying the choir will be professional soloists and a period-instrument orchestra, ensuring an authentic and powerful rendition of Bach's composition.

Over the years, the Northampton Bach Choir has not only entertained and inspired audiences but has also contributed significantly to the cultural fabric of the region. From its first concert in 1935 to today, the choir has nurtured talented musical directors and collaborated with leading orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The choir's repertoire spans from sacred music to contemporary pieces, reflecting its adaptability and broad musical interest.

The anniversary concert offers an opportunity for both long-standing supporters and new audiences to join in celebration of the choir's 90-year legacy. It's a testament to the choir's enduring passion for choral music and its role in enriching the community's cultural life. As the choir continues to welcome new members and explore new musical territories, this concert will undoubtedly mark the beginning of another exciting chapter in its history.

Make a note in your diaries: Saturday 25 March 2025, 7.00pm, at St Matthew's Church.

Booking details yet to be confirmed; see March's magazine for further details or visit www.northamptonbachchoir.org.uk



Bach's statue outside St Thomas' Church in Leipzig by Mark Gibson



Annual advertising costs

for *St Matthew's Mail*



A5	Full page	£100.00 per annum
A6	Half page	£60.00 per annum
A7	Quarter page	£40.00 per annum
A8	Eighth of a page	£25.00 per annum

Spaces are available – please contact

Anita, Parish Administrator, at the Parish Office



A New Role for Hugh

Evensong on Saturday 18 January saw Hugh Setterfield admitted as a Vergers at Worcester Cathedral, supported by proud family members and friends. Congratulations to him!

After leaving school, Hugh studied Stonemasonry at Moulton College before starting work at Worcester Cathedral. In 2019 a group of us went on a mini parish trip for a tour and to see Hugh at work, then as a trainee stonemason. Hugh is now 25 and a highly valued member of the community at the Cathedral.

Hugh is pictured to the right with the Dean and below with his fellow vergers.



The Parish Church of St Matthew

Sunday 2 February Candlemas

The Presentation of Christ
in the Temple

10.15am

All Age Mass
for the Parish Family



The Parish Church of St Matthew

5 March

ASH WEDNESDAY

9.30am

Mass
with Imposition of Ashes

7.30pm

The Parish Mass
with Imposition of Ashes

Next month's magazine

Contributions to our magazine are always appreciated so let us know what you / your group are up to! If you don't have the confidence to write something yourself, just let us have the details and we'll write it for you.

Please leave paper contributions in the 'P' (for 'Parker') pigeon hole in church or email files to: magazine@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

When attaching photographs to the email address please send no more than 7mb -worth per email, otherwise it jams the system! Thank you.

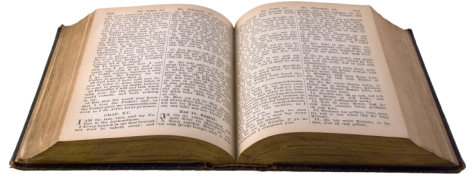
Deadline for the March magazine is SUNDAY 9 FEBRUARY

Editor: Dorrie Parker

Layout and production: Gary Drinkwater

Weekday Scripture Readings for February

Our weekday scripture readings, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, taken from the 'Additional Lectionary' which was constructed by the Church of England principally for use in Cathedrals at weekday Evensong.



Saturday	1	1 Samuel 1.19b-end	Hebrews 4.11-end
Monday	3	Isaiah 42.10-21	Luke 1.5-25
Tuesday	4	1 Samuel 4.12-end	Luke 1.57-80
Wednesday	5	Haggai 1.1-11	Mark 1.1-11
Thursday	6	Isaiah 35	Matthew 11.2-19
Friday	7	2 Samuel 11.1-17	Matthew 14.1-12
Saturday	8	Isaiah 43.15-21	Acts 19.1-10
Monday	10	Genesis 1.26-end	Mark 10.1-16
Tuesday	11	Ruth 1.1-18 1	John 3.14-end
Wednesday	12	1 Samuel 1.19b-end	Luke 2.41-end
Thursday	13	Genesis 47.1-12	Ephesians 3.14-end
Friday	14	2 Samuel 1.17-end	Romans 8.28-end
Saturday	15	Song of Solomon 2.8-end	1 Corinthians 13
Monday	17	Exodus 23.1-13	James 2.1-13
Tuesday	18	Deuteronomy 10.12-end	Hebrews 13.1-16
Wednesday	19	Isaiah 58.6-end	Matthew 25.31-end
Thursday	20	Isaiah 42.1-9	Luke 4.14-21
Friday	21	Amos 5.6-15	Ephesians 4.25-end
Saturday	22	Amos 5.18-24	John 2.13-22
Monday	24	Isaiah 61.1-9	Mark 6.1-13
Tuesday	25	Isaiah 52.1-10	Romans 10.5-21
Wednesday	26	Isaiah 52.13–53.6	Romans 15.14-21
Thursday	27	Isaiah 53.4-12	2 Corinthians 4.1-10
Friday	28	Zechariah 8.16-end	Matthew 10.1-15

32nd St Matthew's Multi-Aged Girlguiding

Mandy Ludlow

Christmas is now well and truly behind us; it seems such a long time ago, but it is only a matter of a few weeks. The new term started with the weather turning bitterly cold and there had also been a 'sprinkling' of snow. We decided as this is a very short half term we would return on 6 January, although the schools had not returned from the Christmas holidays.

Unsure as to how many girls would arrive, we needed a programme for our first evening which was flexible and work with whatever numbers we had. Therefore, we decided we would look at revisiting the New Year Challenge Badge. This had not been done since we were in lockdown and meeting via zoom. Lots of different challenges, all to do with the New Year. The Rainbows made lanterns into which we put battery operated tea lights; for these we used the same format as I used as a child. Despite some of the girls being only four, they did a really nice job. This they followed by ringing the bell – what has this to do with New Year? In Japan they ring bells 108 times as a Buddhist tradition. The girls didn't quite manage 108 times, but nonetheless had fun trying. Although we had toast with jam/marmite for our snack, the Rainbows also had round cookies – why? Because it is tradition in the USA to eat round food (ie bagels, cookies, donuts) at New Year. To complete the badge they played New Year bingo and jumping – jumping off chairs is common at New Year in Denmark and is thought to symbolise leaping into the New Year.

Brownies similarly started the same badge; however the main part of their evening was spent making wish sticks – this is a nice way of getting the girls to think about their hopes and dreams for the coming year. Football is played in the USA on New Year's Day so a game of football is being played, Brownies also eating round food and playing bingo.

The Guides and Rangers had to think about the past year and what they had enjoyed, what their favourite thing was, things that didn't go so well. Once this was done they started to create memory boxes, the boxes being made from scratch. Each girl was given a 12" x 12" square of cardboard which they then had to measure, score and fold into a box. Once the box was made, they could start deciding on what memories they would put in. This they did not get finished in one evening so continued on following evenings.

The leaders have met and made plans for the forthcoming terms. It is scary to think that although it is only January when writing this, we only have 21 Mondays before the end of the academic year – good job we have already booked the Christmas party and pantomime for December.

Finally, apologies there were no photographs accompanying January's article. Unfortunately, I got these too late to the magazine to be included... time ran away with me, like so many of us in December, and are included here.



Café Guides Recipe for February

Lent is approaching, although later this year than some. More simple recipes are being looked for. This recipe is something quick that can be served on toast for a lunch or supper. On the other hand it is versatile enough to be a side dish for a dinner party or Sunday lunch, at the same time being part of the new trend of a sharing platter. Alternatively, the mushrooms can be swapped for chicken, or a mixture of both.

Garlic Mushrooms

Serves 2-3

Ingredients

- 500 gms chestnut button mushrooms, or whatever your favourites are, could even be a mixture.
- 25 gms salted butter
- 3 cloves of garlic, roughly chopped
- Pinch of pepper
- 1 handful of flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped

Method

- 1) Pre-heat the oven to 200°C /180°F /gas mark 6
- 2) Add the mushrooms, butter, garlic and pepper to a dish. You can chop or slice the mushrooms if large, or you prefer them this way.
- 3) Bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes until the mushrooms are the texture you prefer
- 4) Stir through the flat leafed parsley and serve





*Cold
Hands,
Warm
Food*



*Cafe Guides Winter Warmer — Jacket potato with a hot
topping. January choices — slice of cake and a hot drink
£5.00*



*Stay for 10 minutes, stay for an hour, come and meet
someone new, say hello to a neighbour, or chat with
someone you have not seen for ages*

Sunday 2nd February 2025

*In the Parish Centre — 11.15pm
(after the All Age Mass)*



Kingsley's Fallen Heroes – The Battle for Aubers Ridge

Martin and Lindsey Stone

This article and the following story are written to remember the men of the town and specifically those of the parish who fell on 9 May 1915 at the Battle for Aubers Ridge, this year being the 110th anniversary of their loss. As well as the men who fell that fateful day, we could perhaps also remember the families, and consider the dreadful effect on the parish as the news came in.

This battle of the Western Front was fought in support of the French Army at the personal request of Field Marshall Joffre (commander French Army) direct to the British commander in France who was Sir John French; the battle was a subset of the 2nd Battle of Artois. Overall, it went very badly for the British and Indian regiments involved, there was little to show for huge losses in manpower. At the forefront of the fighting, and the losses, were the two 'regular' Northamptonshire regiments of the 1st and 2nd Battalions.

At this time, a number of WW1 words and phrases were becoming familiar to many and became apparent in the newspapers of the time, such as: Home by Christmas, Trench Warfare, Gas and Gas Masks, Mud, Whizz Bangs, Jack Johnsons, Coal Boxes, Wipers, Plug Street, Napoo, Gallipoli, and of course, Shell Shock. More WW1-styled awful words and phrases would become familiar in the home press as a direct result of Aubers Ridge, including: snipers, shell and gun shortages, worn guns and barrels, the fight for munitions, enemy machine guns, and sadly, annihilated.

And so it began. At 0500 on Sunday 9 May, on an otherwise pleasant if chilly day, while under observation by the enemy, the attacking British and Indian regiments had moved into place. A British gun barrage of several hundred guns had opened up, but were wildly insufficient and ineffective to the extent that many of the enemy, in the heavily reinforced German blockhouses and trenches, were able to stay in their lines; although the noise, dust clouds and debris were notable, German bayonets very visible, their machine guns and artillery mostly undisturbed. By 0542, due to the shortages and inaccurate firing (of the British guns), the firing dissipated but the infantry commenced their attack as planned. The Northamptonshire Regiment 1st Battalion with the southern pincer brigades, and the 2nd Northamptonshire Battalion to the north. The battalions of these brave boys represented the last of the regular battalion construct, already severely depleted as in the case of the Nptons, by the Western Front Battles for Mons, the Battle of the Aisne, the 1st Battle of Ypres, Neuve Chapelle and Hill 60. Our losses now backfilled with men

recalled to the colours and the many new volunteers. Such was the level of loss that those regulars still standing on that fateful day would likely see only 30% of their mates standing with them from the original battalions that sailed for France in 1914. Of the two Northampton battalions bravely standing-to that morning, with broadly 750 men left in each battalion, regulars and volunteers alike, we know that of the 1st Nptons, 560 became casualties including 17 officers (the highest losses by battalion in that sector), and of the 2nd Nptons, 426 casualties including 12 officers. War diaries noted that wounded survivors were still making their way back to the advanced dressing stations even three days later. Overall, 11,000 of Lt. General Haig's 1st Army would fall in the battle.

David Lloyd George wrote in his memoirs, *losses were heavy, gains were none*. Also recording the words in his memoirs, the words of Sir John French: *As I watched the Aubers Bridge (sic), I clearly saw the great inequality of the artillery duels, and, as attack after attack failed, I could see that the absence of sufficient artillery support was doubling and trebling our losses in men.*

The outcome, arguably alongside other factors, about a battle rarely talked about in any depth then or now, would see the fall of the government the following year. On 14 April 1915 Lord Kitchener had misguidedly confirmed to the Prime Minister (Mr Asquith), that: *with the present supply of ammunition he (Sir John French) will have as much as his troops will be able to use.*

Subsequently, the Prime Minister made a statement, known today as the Newcastle Speech, to the effect that there was no shortage of armaments and ammunition, while continuing to ignore the deplorable quality of the ammunition recently provided, and the high rate of shell failures to explode (known then as duds).

Regardless of the arguments, the brave men of the parish of St Matthew's, Northampton, who fell that day are honoured and remembered here; they are listed on the screens amongst their 168 comrades from the two world wars: Private Percy Howlett, (1st Bn), Pte Alfred Payne, (2nd Bn), Pte Walter Tate, (1st Bn), Pte 'Ernest' Ward, (2nd Bn), A/Sgt George Wright, (2nd Bn).

Also remembered today but not shown here, are the other St Matthew's parish men listed in the chapel who fell during that same month of May 1915 in other actions and incidents 110 years ago. They were John William King (Royal Marine, 3 May, Pink Farm, Gallipoli), Arthur Billingham (1st Suffolk's, 8 May, Menin Gate), Arthur Yorke (Npton Yeomanry, 10 May, Billing Cemetery), William Robinson (RN, HMS Triumph, 25 May, Plymouth Naval Memorial).

The effect on the families and the community as local publications caught up with the lists of dead and wounded must have been horrific. We do remember them, and endeavour to honour their families past and present. Thank you.

Kingsley's Fallen Heroes

Martin and Lindsey Stone

Acting Sergeant George Wright, No.7185, 2nd Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment who fell on 9 May 1915

The following is an account of the background and military service of Acting Sergeant George Wright, Service Number 7185, who died in action on the Western Front at Aubers Ridge in 1915. He is remembered as one of the hundred and sixty-eight brave men of the parish listed on the screens within the impressive memorial chapel at St Matthew's Church, Kingsley, Northampton. He is also remembered on the town centre memorial at Abington Square, and on the battlefield memorial for those who have no known grave at Ploegsteert. George was 32 years of age.

George Wright did so well as a young man to progress through the non-commissioned ranks of the British Army, as well as to be a husband to his wife and a parent to three young daughters.

While still a relatively young man, George Wright, by now a regular soldier of seven years' service with the rank of Corporal, had returned to civilian life initially employed as a *Public Servant Postman*. However, a local newspaper report referring to his loss in 1915, suggests that he had made a change, and the paper suggests that just before the outbreak of war in 1914, that was now in the employ of what was the Northampton Gas Company.

When war broke out on 4 August 1914, George was immediately recalled to the colours from the army reserve, and returned to his old regiment, otherwise known to us as the Northampton.

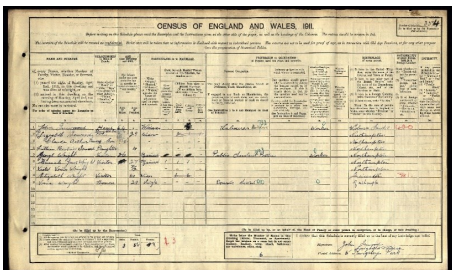
While we could see that on recall he was posted to the regiment's depot barracks in Semilong following the regiment's early losses at Neuve Chappelle, George was quickly promoted from Corporal to Acting Sergeant and deployed to France. He would almost certainly have been confirmed in the rank, and likely been commissioned the following year had he survived. In-

stead, after this initial posting to the depot in Northampton (likely Gibraltar Barracks), he was called forward and arrived on the Western Front. If he was not already fully aware of the extent of the losses, he would no doubt find that many of his friends and colleagues were missing from the roll call. As we shall hear, within a month George would also fall, in the battle for Aubers Ridge alongside several other men from Kingsley.

Overall, over 11,000 allied soldiers would become casualties during the two days of the battle, many of them within hours of each other and while in sight of their own trenches. At best 'No-Mans' Land' between the British and German lines was 100-200 yards wide, and in some areas only 80 yards. The failure of the operation at Aubers began a national scandal that ricocheted through the most senior ranks of the army and government. This was driven by the shortage of artillery guns and shells as well as the leadership of the government and General French, which led to these disastrous losses across the core of experienced regular soldiers. However, the scandal and resultant changes were too late to save our boys and the other regular officers and men of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Northamptonshire Regiment.

George Wright had been born in the fourth quarter of 1881 to George (snr) and Elizabeth Wright, and initially lived in the St Peter's area of the town. By 1891 we could see that the family had moved to Chapel Place in St Giles (Northampton), together with his three siblings, Thomas, William and Elizabeth. Later, but just prior to the war, his mother was living at Lower Harding Street in the town and he had lost his father to seemingly natural causes. Before joining up for the first time, George (jnr) was employed as a shoe worker in the *rough stuff* department. (*Authors note: this work would involve the operation of a cutting press and roller, noted as a task for young men whose hands, arms and legs are sound.*)

On Christmas Day in 1909, George (jnr) and his new wife Hannah had married in the church of St Matthew's, by which time we can see from the census that he was a regular soldier with the rank of Corporal.



Copy 1911 Wright Family Census

Below is a copy of an original photograph of a very smart young Private George Wright, courtesy of Lisa Catton, wearing his issue red jacket with white dress belt, and likely taken when he completed his military training in approximately 1904. He and his wife, Hannah Jane, nee Inwood, who before her marriage lived with her parents at Lingfield Terrace, very close to the church, went on to have three children, all daughters. The twins Lilian Beatrice and Violet Venia were born in 1910, and then Ivy Evelyn was born 25 Oct 1914. Perhaps it was due to his expanding young family and his pregnant wife that his deployment, to France and Belgium, which had already been invaded by the German Army, was delayed.

Hannah and George's baby daughters had all been baptised at St Matthew's Church. All the indications are that George and Hannah would have first met when George went to live next door to the Inwoods at Lingfield Terrace, just before he joined up as a regular soldier for the first time. It was not unusual for a soldier to leave and rejoin, indeed my own grandfather did this on three occasions.

From his service number (7185), I would calculate that George first joined up (also known as enlisted or attested) between January 1903 and August 1904, quite probably mid-year. From our research, we could see that 209 G. Wright's were killed or died during WW1 while serving in the military, 11 of these had served with the Northamptons, adding a significant challenge to identifying the correct George Wright. But, as you have heard, the supporting civilian documentary evidence that this is the correct George Wright as listed on the memorial screens in the North-west corner of the church of St Matthew's (Northampton), is compelling and very strong.



Pte. George Wright, courtesy Ancestry and Lisa Catton

At the beginning of the war, George Wright's battalion was in Egypt and was redeployed to France in November 1914. Reasons unconfirmed, but as noted

perhaps because of his family responsibilities or pre-war employment, George did not deploy into the war fighting operational zone until 1 April 1915. Whatever the reasons for this delay, George arrived into the thick of the fighting, and was to die the following month at the battle for Aubers Ridge. Most of the British activity in this sector of the front focused on attempting to dislodge the German forces from their advantageous position on the Ridge; and also to capture the city of Lille, a major industrial and transport centre which the Germans had occupied early in the war. There was an important military operational priority here too, as the ridge is a slight incline in an otherwise extremely flat landscape, from which the occupying force, in this case the German Army, were able to observe and bombard the British to their disadvantage throughout the preparations for the attack.

Following the British capture of the village of Neuve Chapelle in March, albeit with significant losses of irreplaceable experienced soldiers, the Germans greatly strengthened their defences along the ridge, reinforcing the positions with thick barbed wire entanglements, concrete blockhouses and machine gun emplacements. The change in the strategies required went unrecognised by army command, and the strong and effective defences frustrated British attempts to break through enemy lines. This led to very heavy casualties at the battles of Aubers Ridge and Festubert in May 1915; 426 men out of 900 fell in George's battalion alone, March through May, the battalion losses overall exceeded the entirety of the unit strength as originally deployed (nominally 1007 men including officers).



Corporal Acting Sergeant George Wright, 2nd Bn. Nptons.

An article pertaining to George, located in local library-held period newspaper, sadly confirms to us and to his family past and present, the following news in respect of his loss:

SERGT. G. WRIGHT One of the many employees of the Northampton Gas Co. serving with the forces, *Sergt. George Wright*, is reported killed in action May 10th. *Sergt. Wright*, whose wife and three children live at #, *Lingfield Terrace, Kingsley Park*, had served 7 years with the colours and was recalled from the reserves on the outbreak of war (authors note: 4 August 1914). He was stationed at the Northampton depot until five weeks ago, when he was sent to France, where he was promoted to his present rank. He was a good footballer, and was a holder of the Military League Medal. *Sergt. F. Barratt*, in a letter to Mrs. Wright informing her of his death, added that he was killed instantly. He was well liked and respected by the members of his Company. (Authors note: likely this refers to Colour Quartermaster Sgt. F. Barrett who died of wounds after the Battle of Messines in July 1917).

However, we can confirm that a book, printed circa 1920, titled *Northamptonshire and the Great War*, by WH Holloway, Editor of the Independent of which the author has a copy, noted in respect of the Northampton's 1st Battalion: *All ranks seemed keen and eager for the fight, and everyone was up at daybreak fortifying themselves with much impedimenta such as scaling ladders, bridges, bombs, and wire cutters. Of the latter, however there was a lamentably inadequate supply, despite the lessons of Neuve Chapelle. At five o'clock our bombardment opened with eighteen-pounders and 9.2 Howitzers. For forty minutes our boys waited amongst the terrific din and then rushed to assault across 300 yards of open ground.* It goes on to describe how within half an hour of the attack *not a man of the Northampton's was left standing.* This short story spares us the details, but he also writes that from the 1st Battalion roll call that night: *Out of a splendid highly-trained battalion of 26 officers and 750 men, only 4 officers and 60 men returned to the regiment.* Holloway goes on to indicate that throughout May and beyond, that the regiment from this point necessarily took recruits from outside of the regular soldiers structure and preparation. He also mentions the forthcoming equally terrible battle of Loos (September 1915), which would take many of the replacements that arrived after Neuve Chapelle and Aubers from volunteers and the territorial battalions.

We mentioned earlier, that more brave men of the parish died in the same action and on the same day, 9 May 1915. Also, two more parish servicemen died on the 8th and 10th of that month. We can only imagine the awfulness of the day when the telegrams were delivered to the streets within the parish as the battle subsided. There would have been others delivered too, to parents and wives throughout the town and county. The other men who sadly fell in

France and Belgium in this same period, who are listed on the wooden screens in the St Matthews Church Memorial Chapel, are but a few of the 168 brave men of the parish who fell, they are:

Sjt. Arthur Billingham (7616, 1st Suffolks, 8 May 1915), Pte. Percy Howlett (13291, 1st Nptons, 9 May 1915), Pte Alfred Payne (16618, 2nd Nptons, 9 May 1915), Pte. Walter Tate, (7695, 1st Nptons, 9 May 1915), Pte. Ernest Walter Ward [baptised Walter Ernest Ward] (12953, 2nd Nptons, 9 May 1915), Sgt. George Wright (7185, 2nd Nptons, 9 May 1915). Also, in the same period, Pte. Arthur Yorke (1693, Npton Yeomanry, 10 May 1915) who died of illness at The Cambridge 1st Military Hospital (*Authors note: The Cambridge 1st Military Hospital belies its name and was located at the Aldershot Garrison*).

A/Sgt. George Wright, sadly like too many of the men, has no known grave. However, he is remembered on the Ploegsteert Memorial, on the Flanders/French border near Armentieres. George is also remembered on the Northampton town memorial at Abington Square, and in the memorial chapel of our church. George's great-grandson, a parishioner, server and worshipper at St Matthew's Church, Northampton himself, has kindly been able to tell us that the family visited the battlefield and the memorial at Ploegsteert on the anniversary of George's loss on 9 May 2015, and to share other valuable information. The visit to Ploegsteert was no doubt an immensely emotional experience for the family.



Ploegsteert Memorial, courtesy Mr

John Stokes

This shortened but updated story is dated 15 January 2025. Unless otherwise stated, all references and attributes for the above are recorded in the main covering paper (copy in the church). Authors and Copyright at www.stonesmilitaryhistories.co.uk .

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Olde England Public House

199 Kettering Road
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Parish Giving Scheme

The Parish Giving Scheme exists to allow members of the St Matthew's community to support the life and work of the Parish, and the upkeep of our church, through regular giving. It provides our principal source of income and helps us meet our main financial commitments, including our contribution towards the Diocesan Common Fund (the 'Parish Share') and the costs of our employees.

The Scheme is the most tax efficient way of contributing to the church because contributions may be eligible for Gift Aid (raising your donation by 25% at no cost to either you or St Matthew's).

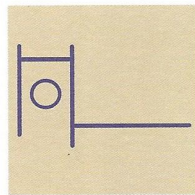
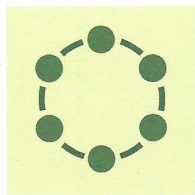
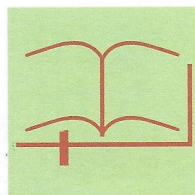
There are two methods of payment available: by a banker's direct debit or by weekly-numbered envelopes via the collection plate. The amount that you give is entirely confidential and is known only to the lay people who administer the Scheme.

If you are interested in learning more or in joining the Scheme, please speak to our Stewardship Recorder Polly Matthews. She can be contacted via the Parish Office or as below.

Polly Matthews

<office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk>

Tel. 01604 846074



PARISHGIVINGScheme

Parish Office

27A The Drive, Kingsley, Northampton NN1 4RY (*within the Parish Centre*)

Telephone: 01604 791251 Email: office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

Parish Administrator: Anita Speake Office opening hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays 9.30am till 12.30pm, 1.00pm till 4.00pm; Wednesdays CLOSED

Ministry Team

Parish Priest	The Revd Canon Nicholas Setterfield vicar@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
Assistant Priest	The Revd Canon Nicholas Gandy OGS OGS@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
Honorary Assistant Priest	The Revd Canon Peter Garlick

Parish Officers

Churchwardens	Gary Drinkwater churchwarden@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk Dave Wilson churchwarden@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
PCC Secretary	Sarah Oughton pcc-secretary@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
PCC Treasurer	Donald Cran treasurer@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
Stewardship Recorder	Polly Matthews

St Matthew's Trust

Ben Drouet
chairman@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

Particular Responsibility

Safeguarding Officer	Sarah Oughton (Assistant: Ben Drouet) safeguarding@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
Verger	Gary Drinkwater
Head Server	Nick Everitt head-server@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
Sacristan	Seymour Franklin sacristan@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
Electoral Roll Officer	Seymour Franklin
Archives	Patrick Rawlinson
Website & Magazine Editor	Dorrie Parker magazine@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

Music Department

Director of Music	Tom Moore music@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
Parish Organist	Jonathan Stamer
Friends of St Matthew's Music	Steve Stringfellow friends@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

Walsingham Cell

Cell Secretary	Dave Wilson walsingham@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
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