

Hi there, we just wanted to let local residents know about a new initiative – a season of live music events in St Mary's Pixham, which we're calling, imaginatively, St Mary's Sessions.

We especially want to get the word out to residents who perhaps don't use Facebook much – which is where we will be, until we have a website up and running, which might be a while. So, what is St Mary's Sessions? For a few years, a friend and fellow Dorkinian (David Scoffield) and I have been talking about how it would be great to bring top-quality live music acts to Dorking – the kind of acts that would otherwise mean you'd need a trip to London or maybe Brighton – with all the inconvenience and expense that entails. These ideas were obviously put on hold during The Great Plague, but we think it's now time to try to do a few 'normal' things and to bring some joy back into our lives. With that in mind, we've lined up a short season of eclectic live music events, the first of which took place on 18th September and was a roaring success.

What we would like to do, if the church agree to it, is put on a monthly music session from September until around April or May – so about 8 or 9 sessions a year, with a break over the summer, much like the Shiny Side Down Film Club did. We will try to get hold of a varied selection of top-quality acts from a variety of musical genres, including jazz, folk, blues, world music, cabaret, and much else besides. Much like with the film club, we want to build a reputation for being a great night out and putting on acts that you might not have heard of beforehand, but will trust us to give a go. We don't want to be pigeonholed, so we're not going to be a jazz club, or a folk club – we want to mix things up a bit and bring the best artist we can get to Dorking.

Our next session is going to be a cracker – 2016 jazz guitarist of the year Nigel Price, playing with virtuoso sax player Vasilis Xenopoulos playing their 'Wes Montgomery Re-imagined' material, with an all-star band from across Europe. See here: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/jan/28/vasilis-xenopoulos-nigel-price-quartet-sidekicks-review> So, for one night only, good evening laydeez'n'gennelmen, and welcome to...Jazz Club – Nice! If only we had John Thomas to compere... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsQYzpOHpik> The next night after playing Pixham, this band is playing the Buxton International Festival with tickets priced at £25 – you get to see them in this beautiful, intimate venue, for a mere £15 – an absolute steal.

We'll mix things up after that with a session from hugely popular local group Choro Bandido, who specialise in the style of south-American folk music from which they take their name, and we're rounding out the year with Barb Jungr, a multi-award winning vocalist, interpreter of song,

chansonniere – call her what you will. A read of her Wikipedia biog gives a good overview of the astonishing number of things she's been involved in: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barb_Jungr - there's just too much to try to list it all – more on her website here: <http://www.barbjungr.co.uk/about-barb-jungr.html> - with over twenty albums to her name, it's hard to categorise Barb.

We're in talks with no less than three BBC Radio 2 Folk Singer of The Year awards nominees – two of them winners of that prestigious category, and are looking into a host of other acts. In order to do this of course, we need regular support – our fixed costs per event are usually from £800 - £1000, and higher for the top-level acts, so these events are no small undertaking, and we hope they will earn the respect and trust of Pixham residents – and of course, visitors from Dorking and beyond.

We were really touched that two people separately commented that the first St Mary's Session was 'like a little Union Chapel in the hills', which we'll take as high praise indeed, and certainly gives us something to live up to. So, please come along and give us a go, and make a night out of it (even if you perhaps aren't familiar with the artist) – we're not ushering you out the door at the end, so hang around and chat to friends and neighbours, and enjoy the wonderful surroundings and atmosphere of our beautiful Lutyens-designed local church, with its surprising barrel-vaulted interior.

Events are publicised firstly on the Facebook page, but tickets are available on Eventbrite – you just have to Google the band name for each of the above – tickets for the first gig are on sale here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/xpq-the-xenopoulos-price-quartet-tickets-179136089867?aff=ebdsoporgprofile> and tickets for the next two sessions will be on sale by the end of this week.

Any queries, please feel free to email me (ivantuckeruk@gmail.com) directly, or PM me on Facebook.

If you would like to sign up to the St Mary's Sessions mailing list, please email me (ivantuckeruk@gmail.com)