

St Mary's Parish Church
Whitegate



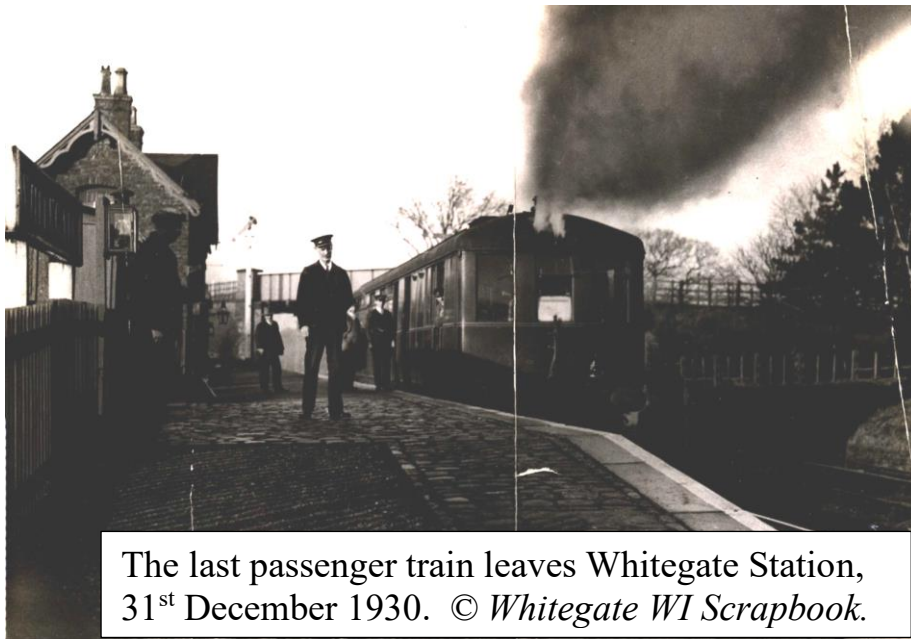
NEWS FOR JANUARY 2023



Our cover photo

After Christmas excesses, the arrival of the New Year brings many to make determined resolutions of starting a new exercise regime, so we're featuring this wintry photo of the Whitegate Way, our local walking, cycling, running and nature trail. We are so lucky to have it on our doorstep, together with all the country paths criss-crossing our parish.

Once the Winsford and Over Branch Line and running for six miles from Cuddington to Winsford, the railway line served Whitegate & Marton and the Meadowbank Salt Works, together with the townspeople of Winsford and Over, for the other Winsford Station was, as now, up at Wharton.



The last passenger train leaves Whitegate Station, 31st December 1930. © *Whitegate WI Scrapbook*.

Passenger services ceased in 1930 and there followed a slow decline but goods trains and the odd excursion continued until 1963, when the station closed. The only services remaining were to the Salt Works and mines, but the line closed definitively in June 1967.

Cheshire County Council purchased the trackbed in 1969 and converted it into The Whitegate Way we know today.

If you're out for a walk in January, be sure to call in for coffee & cake or lunch at Whitegate Station Café. Our not-for-profit community café opened in 2015 and despite the Covid times, has gone from

strength to strength, now offering all manner of events: dog training, cycle repair workshops, craft exhibitions and demonstrations, as well as bereavement support sessions and a simple place to chat. They are often looking for volunteers, so if in 2023 you're resolving to get out more and meet people, then pop in and let them know.



And volunteers still needed for The Mews.

- A Bookings Officer, to handle enquiries and deal with the letting of the Mews. A straightforward diary system is in place and training can be offered! Sadly, if no one comes forward to do this job, we shall not be able to take on new bookings.
- Window cleaners. The team looking after the building is seeking to recruit volunteers to clean the windows outside three or four times a year. If we can build a team, then your turn would just come round once a year.

Could you help with either of these jobs? For more information, just contact deryck.petty@gmail.com



The Parish Council website, <https://www.whitegatemarton-parishcouncil.org.uk> has a wealth of information about local issues and concerns. The minutes of past monthly meetings are available on there, together with annual reports and accounts.

They too have openings for volunteers. For example, Church Wood Conservation Group holds a working party on the second Saturday of each month to manage the wood for the benefit of us all. Take a look at the website for more details. You will also find there is currently a vacancy for a Homewatch coordinator.

WHITEGATE WI

Meets usually on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in Whitegate Recreation Room. These evenings offer the chance to meet up, try new activities, listen to speakers and campaign on issues that matter. Visitors are always welcome. January's meeting has been put back, to Wednesday 11th, when it will take the form of a New Year meal out at Hartford Hall. Numbers and menu choices must be in by 4th January. For details, email whitegatewi@outlook.com

January thoughts from the Vicar

It is a new year with new beginnings. Technically the church's new year began at the beginning of Advent and we had a new beginning then as well. On Advent Sunday we held our Advent workshop welcoming children and families to something we hope will become a feature in the life of our benefice.



We were expecting around 20 children and their families. In the end a few didn't arrive but others we weren't expecting did. We had a few more than expected. Fortunately, those preparing the buffet had obviously catered for 5,000 because there was an abundance of food available. I couldn't eat my tea when I went home.

We began with looking forward to Christmas when God changed our world not with signs of power and might but in weakness and fragility. With excellent planning we had provided a baby for the event (thank you Evelyn) who spent most of the afternoon being cuddled by everyone who got the chance.

There were four craft tables surrounded by eager small children. They were able to make a stained-glass window (not real glass of course but just as wonderful), a card of the Wise Men, an angel (though perhaps not quite as scary as the originals) and a hat with a star. Glue and felt tips were wielded with delight and glitter scattered far and wide. The thing with glitter is that it gets everywhere and you never manage to clear it all up. Sometime in mid-summer we will still be finding glitter which is perhaps a reminder that the Christ child brings the gift of enduring love. Christ is for life, not just for Christmas.

We hope to hold the next workshop towards Easter as those who attended left wanting more.

Which brings me back to January's new beginnings. On 15th January we start our Storytelling Service in the Mews which will be held every 2nd and 4th Sunday at 9.30am, in parallel with the usual service in church. For those with small children 9.30am on a Sunday is a good time because the children have already been up for hours, Grandma is fast asleep and the zoo is closed. It will be a very simple service, a welcome and gathering, a song, sharing news, a bible story and maybe a craft activity, another song and then some juice and biscuits.

That might sound very simple and indeed it is, but it takes quite a bit of

putting together. When I worked as a press officer, and we were doing items for television I used to work on the basis of one hour's filming for one minute of broadcast. My experience preparing and planning services, especially services for children who are the most demanding 'audience', is that the same rule of thumb applies.

It is a beginning. it is not the whole journey nor the final destination. But every journey begins with one step and this is a significant one.

Also starting in January is a series of three training sessions related to our responsibilities in Safeguarding. All PCC members are required to undertake three courses, Basic Awareness, Foundations and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. This is because as trustees with oversight of work with vulnerable people we need to be aware of what can go wrong and how we can work to prevent that happening. The courses are available online but not everyone learns the same way, so we are hosting three evening events and inviting PCC members from other churches to join us.

Another new beginning in January is that our PCCs will begin work on a handbook, How Village Churches Thrive. This will be a long-term process running over at least two or three years when we will give careful consideration to some important aspects of how our churches live and work within our local communities. The first topic is Extending the warmth of your welcome. Perhaps we think we are already good at this? But an intentional look at how we welcome people, or at our assumptions and habits, may help us to see different ways to extend the warmth of our welcome. We might look afresh at our communications, the role of sidespeople, our orders of service, how visitors are welcomed and looked after, how accessible our churches are. We will devote part of each PCC meeting to working through How Village Churches Thrive and let you know what we discover.

A reminder that the clergy are pleased to be invited to visit people who wish to have a chat or receive Holy Communion at home. But we do not make random house calls due to the expense and environmental impact of journeys which are often unnecessary when people are not at home, or it is a bad time. Our congregations are spread over a very wide area which means that some significant mileages can be incurred so we need to ensure such costs and the use of fuel are managed carefully.

Yours

Paul



Advent Workshop

A wonderful afternoon of craft and an introduction to Advent was held in The Mews with 21 children, 1 baby and 20 adults taking part.

There was a marvellous buzz about the room and all the children went home with an angel, a 3 wise men card, a star headband and a stained-glass nativity scene plus a full tummy

from the wonderful array of sandwiches, sausage rolls and delicious cakes, which were also enjoyed by most of the adults too.

There was lots of very positive feedback from everyone. A most enjoyable afternoon.

Anne Blayney & Teresa Finney

A Verse for January

The apostle Paul told Timothy: *All scripture is inspired by God, and is useful for teaching, for reproof and for correction – and for training in righteousness.*

2 Timothy: Ch.3 v 16

The words, written 2000 years ago, seem out of tune with our 21st century culture, when almost anyone can post anything on social media and be taken seriously. The real problems start when the information is actually wrong. It doesn't matter whether this arises accidentally or is passed on for some malicious purpose. Either way, we must ask ourselves: Do we trust the sender? If we don't, then we shouldn't believe the message.

One sender we can trust above all others is God – but he doesn't use Facebook – or an iPhone. We don't need a Kindle – although you can use one to read the Bible. When Piers Morgan was hosting a show on CNN he asked Oprah Winfrey, "How many people do you absolutely 100% trust? Her answer was, "probably five".

God is **the** one we can all trust – but we have to stay switched on to hear his message.

JRC

January Diary:

Please note that the Vicar's usual day off is Friday, with a monthly 48 hours off duty on Thursday and Friday.

JAN 1st	9.30 am	Christmas 1 Morning Prayer	St Mary's
4th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee (<i>see p.12</i>) Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
5th	10.30 am	First Thursday Café of 2023 (<i>see p. 12</i>)	The Mews
8th	9.30 am	Epiphany Holy Communion	St Mary's
9th	2.00 pm	Parish Team Meeting	
10th	7.30 pm	St Mary's PCC Meeting	The Mews
11th	9.00 am 10.00 am 12.00 noon 6.00 pm	Men's Breakfast (<i>see p.12</i>) Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Fabric & Churchyard Committee	Tarporley G'dn Centre The Mews St Mary's The Mews
15th	9.30 am 9.30 am	Plough Sunday Plough Service Storytelling Service (<i>see p.8</i>)	St Mary's The Mews
17th	12.30 pm 2.00 pm	St Mary's Mothers' Union Lunch Pastoral & Fellowship Committee	The Plough Dairy Cottage
18th	10.00 am 12.00 noon 1.30 pm 7.30 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Oaklands School Visit Home Group (<i>see p.9</i>)	The Mews St Mary's St Mary's 59 Carnoustie Close
22nd	9.30 am 9.30 am	Epiphany 3 Holy Communion Storytelling Service	St Mary's The Mews
23rd	7.00 pm	Safeguarding training	The Mews
25th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
29th	10.30 am	Epiphany 4 Benefice Holy Communion	St Peter's
30th	7.00 pm	Safeguarding training	The Mews
31st	12.30 pm	College of Canons	Chester Cathedral
FEB 1st	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.30 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Home Group	The Mews St Mary's 59 Carnoustie Close
2nd	10.30 am	First Thursday Café (<i>see p.12</i>)	The Mews
5th	9.30 am	3rd Sunday Before Lent Family Service	St Mary's

JANUARY NEWS FROM ST MARY'S

□ Christmas décor

St Mary's looked magnificent throughout the Christmas season, from the Advent Prayer Tree in the porch, the beautiful candlelit displays in the windows and on the choir screens, through to the twinkling tree alongside the altar and the crib scene. We would all like to thank Pam Davies and her team for their work in preparing it and everyone who contributed towards making it possible.



□ NEW! Storytelling Service

Starting on Sunday 15th January at 9.30 am in The Mews, we'll hold our first, twice-monthly Storytelling Service for families with young children.

9.30 am on a Sunday is a great time because the children have already been up for hours. It will be very informal and lots of fun sharing news, a Bible story, songs, juice & biscuits and a craft to make and take home.

It will usually run on the 2nd & 4th Sunday in the month, but January is a little different and we'll look forward to seeing you on 15th & 22nd .

□ Save your stamps for the RNIB

Once again, we have a box at the back of church all set to receive your used postage stamps, which the RNIB can convert to cash for their much-valued work. Please save them and bring them to church by the end of January.



Pam Venables & Eddie Stamper are handling the collection. Please make their life easy by remembering the RNIB's three golden rules:

1. Sort your stamps into 2 envelopes, British and Overseas
2. Trim stamps leaving approx. 1cm of paper all round
3. Don't include large gold Post Office printed labels or pre-printed postage marks

□ **HOME GROUP starts again on 18th January**

Home Group is an opportunity for members of the congregation to meet and talk about topics in the Bible or current issues and to pray for local concerns. It is very informal and led by lay people. The group will meet fortnightly on Wednesdays at 7.30 pm at the home of Peter and Pauline Hayward, 59 Carnoustie Close, Winsford. Three sessions are planned before Lent. If you would like to know more, contact John Duthie.

□ **New Union Flags for St Mary's and Church Green**

We are delighted to report that in preparation for the Coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023, we have taken delivery of two new Union Jack flags: one to be flown above the church porch, and the other from the flagpole on Church Green. St Mary's PCC would like to thank Whitegate & Marton Parish Council for the generous donation received towards the cost of the two flags, from the Community Fund.



Stories from the Churchyard

Those who know Martin Allen, a former Churchwarden at St Mary's, will know of his passion for researching the lives of those who are remembered in our graveyard, in particular those who were members of the Armed Services. Martin has kindly agreed to share with us, from time to time, one of the fascinating stories he has uncovered. So, to start 2023, we bring you

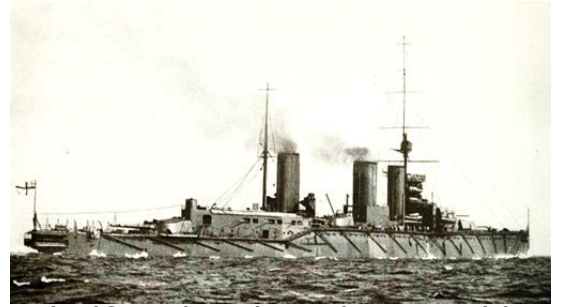
The Parker Brothers of Meadowbank

George and Elizabeth Parker married in 1885 and raised their family of 13 children, (3 dying in infancy), at 2 Grange Row, Meadowbank, one of a number of houses within the parish of Whitegate provided by the salt mine for their workforce. The houses were constructed from *basse*, a clinker residue extracted from the furnaces, and living conditions on the estate were deplorable. It is hard to imagine how they coped in a 2 up 2 down *basse* house with such a large family.

The couple's eldest sons, George (b. 1886) and Arthur (b. 1895) both followed their father into the mine during the years leading up to WW1. In 1905, George moved next door into 3 Grange Row where he and his new bride Catherine began to raise their own family. In response to the call for volunteers at the outset of the war, the brothers joined up, George electing to accompany his pals into the Cheshire Regiment, whilst his younger brother Arthur was trained as a gunner with the Royal Marines Artillery.

Arthur was assigned to the HMS Queen Mary, a recently launched battlecruiser with 8 powerful guns, one of which was manned by Arthur. The Queen Mary saw considerable action during the early years of the war, but on 31st May 1916, during the Battle of Jutland, she was attacked by the German battlecruiser SMS Derfflinger.

2 shells from this vessel struck the Queen Mary, detonating 2 of its magazines, breaking the ship in half and sinking her quickly. Of the 1286 crew, only 20 were rescued. Sadly, Arthur was not one of those and he was declared 'drowned'. He was only 21 years of age. The Queen Mary, along with other Jutland wrecks, is now a 'protected place', designated to preserve the resting place of those who perished. Arthur is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial and at Whitegate, but strangely not on the War Memorial at the Salt Mine – he certainly should be!



Having been despatched to Belgium in early 1916 with 1/6 Battalion Cheshire Regiment, older brother George was involved in a number of battles. Crucially, on 31 July 1917, his battalion combined with other British and French units to engage in the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, the opening attack of the 3rd Battle of Ypres, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele. Heavy casualties were sustained that day and George was one of them. He was 31 years old. George is listed on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, erected to commemorate soldiers whose graves are not known. George is also listed on the Whitegate and Salt Mine War Memorials. It must have been a struggle for his widow Catherine to bring up their 6 children alone and a shattering double blow for his widowed father and siblings.

In the 1939 census, George Senior is to be found still living at 2 Grange Row with his widowed daughter-in-law Catherine still living next door. George's wife Elizabeth had died in 1907 whilst George passed away in 1941 aged 76 years. Both are buried in Whitegate churchyard. Catherine died in 1970 aged 84 years and I suspect she is also buried at St Mary's but I haven't yet been able to confirm this. She would have relocated in the mid-1940s when the basse houses were cleared for redevelopment so she may have moved to a neighbouring parish.

Martin Allen

FEBRUARY NEWS

Comments and items for inclusion in the next edition of our newsletter would be welcome. Please send them to: chrisball2022@outlook.com by 15th January.

Contacts

Please note that from now on, only e-mail addresses for the Vicar and the News coordinator will be shown in the online version of the monthly News. If you need the e-mail address of one of the other Contacts, please phone them to ask for it.

Vicar Rev Canon Paul Dawson 01606 889995 The Vicarage, Cinder Hill, Whitegate CW8 2BH vicaragecinderhill@outlook.com	Churchwardens John Duthie 01606 889836 Anne Blayney 01606 74020
Rev Dr John Stopford 01606 558802	Treasurer John Duthie 01606 889836
Rev Jane Millinchip 07981 981293	PCC Secretary Linda Dutton 01606 862733
Children's Worker Teresa Finney 01606 889311	Mothers' Union Eileen Lees 01606 786895
Musical Director Andrew Millinchip 01606 516225	Mews Lettings
Safeguarding Officer Sue Whitehead 01606 852302	"News" Coordinator Christine Ball 01606 593260 chrisball2022@outlook.com
Church Flowers Pam Davies 01606 557833	Pastoral & Fellowship Committee Alan Newton 01829 760239

Would you like to receive the NEWS by e-mail? If so, then simply send a request to chrisball2022@outlook.com



Men's Breakfast

Once a month, at
Tarpoley Garden Centre

Join us for a great value
breakfast in friendly
company.

9.00 am
on

**Wednesday
11th January**

Sign up at St Mary's Whitegate
or St Peter's Little Budworth,

or contact Alan Newton on
01829 769239
acenewton513@gmail.com

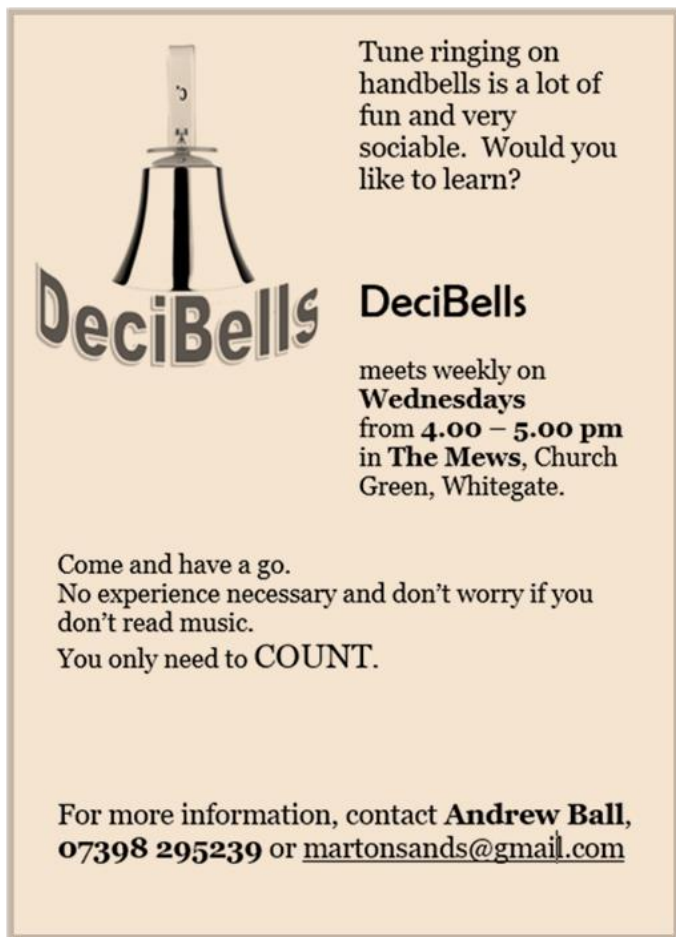


**St Mary's Church
Crafty Coffee Group**

meets in
The Mews, Church Green
on Wednesdays
from 10.00 am-12.00 noon

We do various crafts and would like
to welcome new members, whether
you come for crafting or for coffee!

It's a good time for fellowship along
with a cuppa and biscuits.



Tune ringing on
handbells is a lot of
fun and very
sociable. Would you
like to learn?

DeciBells

meets weekly on
Wednesdays
from **4.00 – 5.00 pm**
in **The Mews, Church
Green, Whitegate.**

Come and have a go.
No experience necessary and don't worry if you
don't read music.
You only need to **COUNT.**

For more information, contact **Andrew Ball,**
07398 295239 or martonsands@gmail.com

**First Thursday
Café**



**At The
Mews on
Church
Green
Whitegate**

**Thursdays, 5th January
& 2nd February**

**Come down to meet
friends and chat over
tea / coffee
and delicious
cake.**



Open 10.30 am to 12.00 noon.