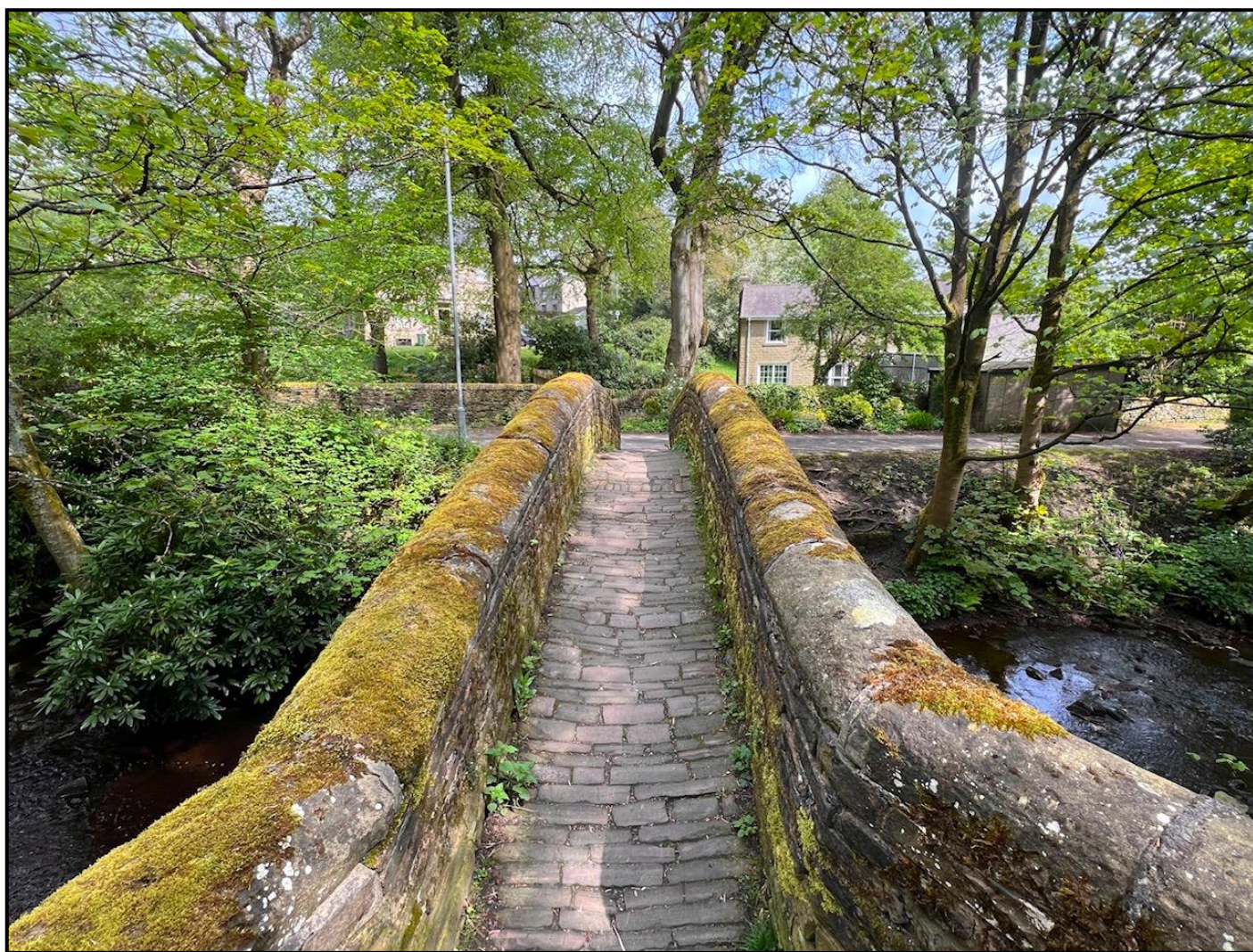


St Mary's Parish Church Whitegate



NEWS FOR JANUARY 2025



Our cover photo

Our January image is another from The Mews gallery wall, this one taken by Julie Webb on a walk last year. It's not local but in another village, Marsden, (home of the Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage) between Oldham and Huddersfield.

The bridge in the photo is Mellor bridge, one of two packhorse bridges in Marsden, a village criss-crossed by several medieval packhorse trails. The history and geography of the area are fascinating and Armitage felt drawn back to this place where he grew up. He has published a collection of poems, entitled *Magnetic Field*, in which each poem relates to a specific building or place in the village that evokes in him a strong memory.

You will remember that our current exhibition of photographs is on the theme of journeys, "*Are we nearly there yet?*" The tired drovers and their over-laden animals crossing the bridge in cold, wintry weather would certainly have had that thought.

Today, people crossing the river there are more likely to be walking for pleasure and as we start the new year, wondering once again what is in store for the world around us, perhaps this beautiful view begs a different question – "*Where will our life's journey take us in 2025?*"

*With every good wish for health, happiness and fulfilment
in 2025*

from the Monthly NEWS team

A verse for JANUARY

Micah Ch 4: verses 3-4

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid.

This was our first reading on Remembrance Sunday last November. It made me think especially of the suffering in Gaza, because that part of the Middle East is very much the land of vines and fig trees, but, in every conflict, right across the world, people who suffer most are the civilians, when all they want to do is to live peaceful lives, working hard, building a home and bringing up their families.

At the beginning of this new year, we pray for the coming of a world where no one will *learn war anymore* and where people will no longer be *afraid*.

SJM

JANUARY Diary

JAN 1st	Please note there is no midday service at St Mary's today		
2nd	First Thursday Café will take place on Thursday 9 th January.		
5th	9.30 am	Epiphany Morning Prayer	St Mary's
6th	10.00 am	The Vicar is on chaplaincy duty at Chester Cathedral for the day.	
7th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides	L.B. Methodist Chapel
8th	9.30 am 10.00 am 12.00 noon	Parish Team meeting Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
9th	10.30 am 7.00 pm	First Thursday Café of the New Year Choir Dinner	The Mews The Plough, Beauty Bank
12th	9.30 am	Baptism of Christ Holy Communion	St Mary's
14th	2.00 pm 7.30 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides St Mary's PCC meeting	L.B. Methodist Chapel The Mews
15th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
16th	2.00 pm	Fabric & Churchyard Committee meeting	Marton Sands House
19th	9.30 am	Plough Sunday Plough Sunday Service	St Mary's
21st	12.30 pm 2.00 pm	St Mary's Mothers' Union Lunch & AGM Bible Study at Commonsides	The Bluebell Café, Barrowmore L.B. Methodist Chapel
22nd	9.00 am 10.00 am 12.00 noon	Men's Breakfast Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	Tarporley G'dn Centre The Mews St Mary's
26th	9.30 am	Epiphany 3 Holy Communion The Vicar is at Holy Trinity Castle, assisting during their vacancy.	St Mary's
28th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides	L.B. Methodist Chapel
29th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
FEB 2nd	9.30 am	Candlemas Family Service	St Mary's
4th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides	L.B. Methodist Chapel
5th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
6th	10.30 am	First Thursday Café	The Mews
9th	9.30 am	4th Sunday before Lent Holy Communion	St Mary's

January – New Year's Resolutions

Fleas – Geese – and Owls

In a sermon recently preached in a church elsewhere I mentioned a bishop who had fleas. Not that he was unhygienic, he trained fleas. You can try this at home. You take your fleas and put them in a jar, then put the lid on and leave them for three days. Then you take the lid off. The fleas will never jump out of the jar. They have learned that they can't jump higher than the top of the jar. They will have baby fleas who will inherit this limitation. Every new generation of fleas will live inside the jar never jumping higher than the open top.



The bishop told us this story because he was struggling with two parishes who shared a vicar. (It was diocese far, far away I might add.) They fought like cat and dog which made life pretty grim for the vicar. Eventually the bishop discovered the reason for the hatred. The two villages had been on opposite sides during the civil war. They were still fighting the old battle, like fleas stuck in a jar.

I remembered this story on a morning when the Old Testament reading was about the wickedness of the inhabitants of Samaria because they built shrines on hills and worshipped foreign gods. Three thousand years later their descendants are still bombing the hell out of each other. Sometimes humanity stays stuck in a jar.

And then I am reminded of geese. I am always inspired when I see geese in flight. In Celtic Christianity the sign of the Holy Spirit is a goose. Not a dove. Geese always fly in formation, they fly together, and their togetherness make life better for all of them. Each goose benefits from the goose in front, and in turn they help the goose behind.

If a goose tires, or is weak, or is old, and cannot keep in formation, it never drops out alone. As one bird falls out of formation its neighbours will go with it. They will make a smaller, slower formation. No goose is left to fly alone.

They take turns in leadership. No goose stays at the front for ever. They take their turn, one leads for a while, and then another comes to the front. They all take their turn at the front.

So, as we begin a new year I want to suggest we look to the skies and watch the geese. We need to look at geese more often. There is great wisdom in how they fly.



I nearly forgot the Owls. In the records of St Helen's, Witton, where I used to be Vicar, there are payments made to the vergers whose job it was to prod parishioners with a stick when they fell asleep during sermons. (Sermons in those days were timed with an hourglass. Crafty hourglass makers would measure the sand so it lasted only 45 minutes. But clergy were wise to this trick. When the sand ran out a good preacher would simply turn the hourglass over and keep going.) The vergers were also paid to shoot owls and if you look very carefully with binoculars you can still see the arrowheads embedded in the ceiling.

Thankfully we are kinder to owls these days. But the owls I am referring to are not the feathered variety. OWLs stands for Occasional Worship Leaders. People in parishes who are trained to lead services of Morning Prayer (without a sermon) so that leading worship is shared between laity and clergy. In 2025 the diocese will be running 3 courses for those interested in becoming an OWL. Thinking back to what we have just heard, the first people called to witness Our Saviour's birth were shepherds. Not priests. God acts and reveals new things in unlikely people. If you would like to know more please have a chat with Margaret or myself.

Two more things to share with you. Firstly, our Lent series this year will be held on Wednesday evenings at 7.00pm, hopefully in the Red Lion in Little Budworth. They begin on 12th March and will run for five weeks. The theme this year will be hymns, some well-known, a few not. We often sing the words of hymns without thinking of the words. This is an opportunity to reflect upon the meaning behind those words.

Secondly, many of us are members of the church electoral roll. In ye olden days once you were a member of the electoral roll you stayed on for life (and in many cases several years beyond). More recently electoral rolls are renewed every 6 years. So in 2025 our electoral rolls are closed and everyone needs to apply to be a member of the new electoral roll. Quite a few of our members aren't on the current roll because they probably forgot to apply in 2019 when the roll was last renewed. So please take an application form and let us have it back in good time for the revision of the roll. Copies will be available in church. Our electoral roll officers are Eileen Lees at St Mary's and Jenny Marshall at St Peter's. The new roll will be published once it is completed.

Yours

Paul.

Electoral Roll



Belong



Participate



Contribute

NEWS FROM ST MARY'S

□ Events in November/December

Heartfelt thanks go to everyone who organised and participated in the extra events in the parish up to and including Christmas. We were truly spoilt. The Ladies' Afternoon Tea and the Gentlemen's Dinner kicked off our seasonal programme; next came the Festive First Thursday Café, the Whitegate lights switch on, the Choir Concert at Vale Royal Abbey and carol singing in the Plough. And then naturally, all our Christmas services. Every occasion bore its own special atmosphere and a spirit of friendship and common purpose and drew in people from across the locality.

The fellowship, music, worship and teaching were all of the highest quality and we are fortunate to have people prepared to use their time and talents to create such gatherings for us. Thank you one and all.

□ R N I B

Bring your stamps to church in January and put them in the box on the table at the back. Pam and Mike Venables will send them off for us. Trim the stamps with about 1cm around them. Separate the British & Overseas ones and save them in two envelopes. Thanks for supporting this appeal.

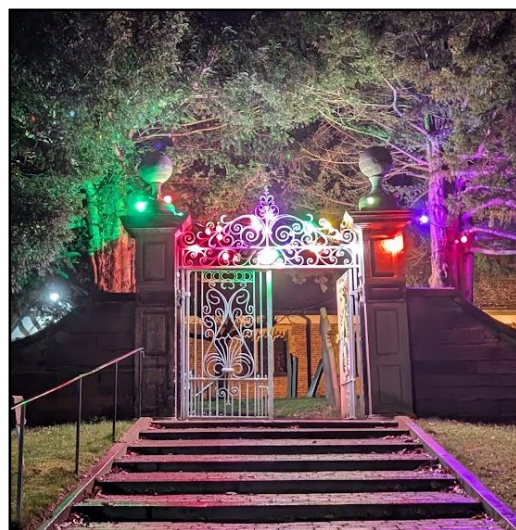
R N I B

See differently

□ Mothers' Union at St Mary's

Alongside our regular meetings, in the last few months we have been pleased to be able to build up and deliver donations for two very worthwhile causes. Gifts of pens, pencils & sharpeners, notebooks, rulers, rubbers, pencil cases and water bottles have been collected and sent to the Door of Hope appeal, Bags of Education. This appeal is supported by Mothers' Union in our diocese and the gifts enable Door of Hope to help children of poor and marginalised families in Eastern Europe to continue their education, when without such supplies they would be forced to drop out. Bags are filled, sent and received with joy.

Closer to home, we have collected toiletries, pants and sanitary products for Motherwell Cheshire, a charity supporting young girls and women living in difficult circumstances and sometimes escaping abusive relationships. The organisation, whose vision is that women and girls should be able to meet the challenges in their lives and access support, education and advocacy whenever they need it, is expanding fast and has hubs in Winsford, Crewe and Ellesmere Port.



Contacts

Please note that only e-mail addresses for the Vicar, the Treasurer, the Safeguarding officer, the News coordinator & the Mews Lettings officer are 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 Anne Blayney 07815 713012 Sandra Paskin 01606 882031 PCC Secretary Roger Wilkes 01606 75738
Curates Rev Dr John Stopford 01606 558802 Rev Jane Millinchip 07981 981293 Rev Margaret Byrne 07368 375970	Church Flowers Pam Davies 01606 557833 Children's Worker Teresa Finney 01606 889311
Safeguarding Officer Anne Blayney 07815 713012 safeguardingwhitegate@outlook.com	Mothers' Union Eileen Lees 01606 786895
Mews Lettings Andrew Millinchip amillinchip@gmail.com	"News" coordinator Christine Ball 01606 593260 chrisball2022@outlook.com
Musical Director Andrew Millinchip 07821 810772	Pastoral & Fellowship Committee Alan Newton 01829 760239
Treasurer John Duthie treasurerwhitegatepcc@outlook.com	Social & Fundraising Group John Blayney 07964 844642

❑ **February NEWS:** Comments and contributions for the next edition of the Monthly NEWS are always welcome. Please send copy to chrisball2022@outlook.com by 15th January.

FIRST THURSDAY CAFÉ

The Mews
Church Green
Whitegate
CW8 2AY

Thursday 9th January

Come to The Mews, catch up with friends old and new & chat over tea, coffee and delicious homemade cakes



10.30 am to 12.00 noon



Men's Breakfast

Once a month, at
Tarpoley Garden Centre

Join us for a great value
breakfast and chat in
friendly company

9.00 am

**Wednesday
22nd January**

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

or contact Alan Newton on
01829 760239
acenewton513@gmail.com

Movies in The Mews

Church Green, Whitegate

Sunday 2nd February 2025

Refreshments from 2.00 p.m.

film starts at 2.30 p.m. prompt.



KEEPING MUM (2006)

"BRITISH COMEDY AT ITS
VERY BEST"

"SOME FAMILY SECRETS ARE
BEST KEPT..... BURIED"

Directed by Niall Johnson and
starring Maggie Smith, Rowan
Atkinson, Kristin Scott Thomas &
Patrick Swayze.

In the country parish of Little Wallop, family life changes at
the vicarage when Grace Hawkins, the new housekeeper,
takes the reins.

Sub-titled for the hard of hearing.
Suggested donation £5.00 per person

Book by signing up on the board in church, or contact Chris Ball:
01606 593260 mob: 07786 132938 chrisball2015@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.