

St Mary's Parish Church  
Whitegate



# NEWS FOR MARCH 2023



## Our cover photo

It's the season of Lent, and thoughts turn towards the cross on which Jesus Christ died on that first Good Friday. Our photo shows the processional cross at St Mary's, often seen being carried by a member of the choir when choir and clergy are led in procession at the beginning and end of our services.

The symbols etched on the front reflect the church's dedication to St Mary. For example, the crowned M in the centre represents Mary as the Queen of Heaven and below that, the heart, pierced with seven daggers, represents "Our Lady of Sorrows", referring to the sufferings endured by the Virgin Mary as Mother of Jesus.

The inscription on the reverse side of the cross tells us that it was presented to St Mary's in memory of Joseph Goulding (1900 – 1943) and his wife, Florence Alice Goulding (1898 – 1970). The census shows Joseph growing up in Meadowbank. He and Florence, from Nantwich, married in 1922. In the 1939 England and Wales Register, they are shown living in School Road, Meadowbank, where Joseph worked at the Salt Mine. They both now lie at rest in our churchyard.

*With thanks to Helen Minshall & Jo Jordan for the information about the cross.*

## ✠ LENT TALKS AT THE RED LION, LITTLE BUDWORTH

**THE DIFFICULT WORDS OF JESUS**

“Sell what you own”  
1<sup>st</sup> March

“Hate your father and mother”  
8<sup>th</sup> March

“Be the slave of all”  
15<sup>th</sup> March

“Go nowhere among the Gentiles”  
22<sup>nd</sup> March

“Throw him into the outer darkness”  
29<sup>th</sup> March

**LENT TALKS, FOLLOWED BY COMPLINE**  
(a short service of evening prayers)

Wednesdays at 7.00 pm from 1<sup>st</sup> March  
in the Red Lion, Little Budworth.  
Each session will last just over half an hour.

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

<b>MAR 1st</b>	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee ( <i>see p.12</i> ) Holy Communion (BCP) Lent Reflection 1 – "Sell what you own & give the money to the poor"	The Mews St Mary's Red Lion, Little Budworth
<b>2nd</b>	10.30 am	First Thursday Café ( <i>see p.12</i> )	The Mews
<b>5th</b>	9.30 am	<b>Lent 2</b> Family Service	St Mary's
<b>8th</b>	9.00 am 10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Men's Breakfast ( <i>see p.12</i> ) Crafty Coffee ( <i>see p.12</i> ) Holy Communion (BCP) Lent Reflection 2 – "Hate your father & mother"	Tarporley G'dn Centre The Mews St Mary's Red Lion, Little Budworth
<b>12th</b>	9.30 am	<b>Lent 3</b> Holy Communion	St Mary's
<b>13th</b>	10.30 am	Meeting for Parish Safeguarding Officers	
<b>14th</b>	7.30 pm	St Mary's PCC Meeting	The Mews
<b>15th</b>	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Lent Reflection 3 – "Be the slave of all"	The Mews St Mary's Red Lion, Little Budworth
<b>16th</b>	12.00 noon 1.00 pm	Deanery Chapter Meeting Collective Worship Leaders' Meeting	
<b>19th</b>	9.30 am 7.00 pm	<b>Mothering Sunday</b> Family Service for Mothering Sunday Vale Royal Strings Concert ( <i>see p.12</i> )	St Mary's St Peter's
<b>21st</b>	9.15 am 2.00 pm	Whitegate School Worship Mothers' Union Deanery Service	St Mary's St John's Sandiway
<b>22nd</b>	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Lent Reflection 4 – "Go nowhere among the Gentiles"	The Mews St Mary's Red Lion, Little Budworth
<b>26th</b>	9.30 am 3.00 pm	<b>Passion Sunday</b> Holy Communion Easter Crafts Workshop	St Mary's The Mews
<b>29th</b>	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Lent Reflection 5 – "Throw him into the outer darkness"	The Mews St Mary's Red Lion, Little Budworth
<b>APR 2nd</b>	9.30 am 9.30 am	<b>Palm Sunday</b> Holy Communion Storytelling Service	St Mary's The Mews

## March thoughts from the Vicar ....

We come to March and a time of many preparations. As a beekeeper it is a busy month, and often a fraught one. If the weather is mild the bees will be busy and if there is rapeseed planted nearby they will find it. Rapeseed honey sets as hard as iron in the comb so if you don't spot it then you're in trouble. The trick is to get it out before it sets hard. It forms a solid white honey with a delicate flavour. I like to gently warm and stir it as it then stays soft enough to spread without breaking the knife.



On the other hand if March is cold the bees will starve. They will have long since worked through their winter stores so cold weather now is deadly for them. You can lose more bees in the spring than all through the winter.

March also bring us to Lent, a time of preparation and reflection. We journey with Christ into the wilderness. Maybe we won't actually spend 40 days in the desert, but we can make some wilderness space in our daily lives. Set aside some time to be still. Practice doing nothing. Hear the inrush of thoughts, pressures, things undone, distractions, needs, interruptions, and recognise these temptations. Time in stillness before God isn't easy. We need practice.

Our Lent series on Wednesday evenings is on the difficult words of Jesus. Perhaps we need to be reminded that the name 'Israel' means one who wrestles with God.

March is also a time for preparing for our Annual Parochial Meetings. *(At St Mary's, our APCM is on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.)* Ed. These aren't everyone's most exciting event but without them, and the people who offer themselves to serve on our behalf, we couldn't have our churches. Thank God for those who bring their time and talents into the work set before us. We need Churchwardens, Treasurers, PCC Secretaries (at St Mary's Linda is stepping down after many years of service), PCC members, Deanery Synod Representatives, Sidespeople, Standing Committee Members. These are the people who make the local church possible. We are thankful for those who have served us over the past year.

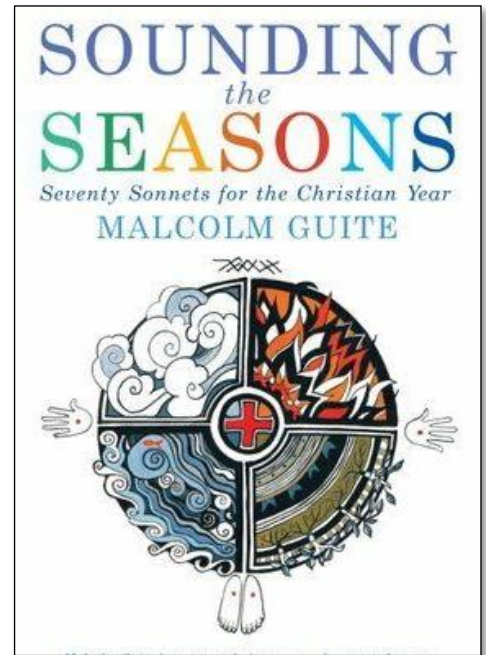
Please give careful and prayerful consideration to how you can be part of making our local church happen. It is often said that the church is the



people rather than the building. This is true, and just as our church buildings are built of different shapes and sizes of stone, all resting one upon another, linking to form a strength that endures the years, so also we need people who can bring different skills into God's work in these parishes.

I recently took part in an event at Chester Cathedral for the College of Canons. During it, we were given a little book *Sounding the Seasons – seventy sonnets for the Christian Year* by Malcolm Guite. One caught my eye for this time of year:

*And blessed are the ones we overlook;  
The faithful servers on the coffee rota,  
They who hold no candle, bell or book  
But keep the books and tally up the quota,  
The gentle souls who come 'to do the flowers',  
The quiet ones who organise the fête,  
Church sitters who give up their weekday hours,  
Doorkeepers who open heaven's gate.  
God knows the depths that often go unspoken  
Amongst the shy, the quiet, the kind,  
Or the slow healing of a heart long broken,  
Placing each flower so for a year's mind.  
Invisible on earth, without a voice,  
In heaven their angels glory and rejoice.*



**Paul**



## **MARCH NEWS FROM ST MARY'S**

### **□ PCC seeks new Secretary**

As indicated in the Vicar's letter, Linda Dutton is standing down in April from her role as Secretary of St Mary's Parochial Church Council, after many loyal and highly efficient years at the hub of parish affairs.

We are grateful to her for all that she has done to ensure the smooth working of the PCC and for her great contribution to many other aspects of life at St Mary's. This does mean that we are seeking to appoint a new PCC Secretary; someone to take on the administrative duties in a business-like way – and learn to keep the Vicar and PCC members on the rails at meetings! Tools of the job will be provided and there is training available. If you feel you could be interested, then please speak to the Vicar or to the Churchwardens.

## □ Vale Royal Strings at St Peter's

Our organist, Andrew Millinchip is one of the soloists in a Concert at St Peter's Little Budworth on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00 pm. Vale Royal String Orchestra, with their conductor, Robert Chasey, have put together a fascinating programme of music crossing four centuries. For details & tickets, see page 12.

## □ Make a Mother's Day!

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March is Mothering Sunday and Mothers' Union members from St Mary's and St Peter's invite you to answer the call to "Make a Mother's Day". This Mothers' Union annual campaign raises funds to help mothers in need, both here and around the world, support their families and their communities. By making a donation, perhaps in memory of a loved one, you know that you will be helping another family to flourish. For details, look at the website, <https://www.makeamothersday.org>

## □ Vision Café

St Peter's Little Budworth is hosting a Vision Café event on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March, from 10.30 – 12.30.

These drop-in events are part of an initiative to engage with everyone in the Diocese, churchgoers or not, and invite them to share their thoughts and ideas about the Church. Over coffee and cake, those who call in are invited to use message boards, coloured pens & post-its, to express their views on a range of questions. It will be a great opportunity to contribute to the ongoing debate.



## □ Whitehead Fields Burial Ground

This, newest section of St Mary's graveyard is maintained by volunteers who mow it regularly in the summer months. Others arrive on Working Party days to clear paths, trim edges and pull up the ragwort that flourishes in the surrounding area. Countryside Ranger, Chris Moseley and his group laid the hedge along one side just before Christmas and Peter Baldini keeps the other, older hedges in trim for us.

Now, some funds have been made available by a kind donor, enabling us to plan a planting programme to embellish the burial ground and the surrounding area, and to make it fruitful. People from the Churchyard & Fabric Committee, the Church Wood Conservation Group, keen gardeners and landscapers and Year 6 and their teacher, Mr Thomas, from Whitegate School, are all sharing their skills and time in making the project a reality.

The project is very much in its research phase as the children and gardeners look into varieties of shrubs, trees and bulbs to enhance the space and encourage the bees, but keep it manageable. Research and preparation done

now will ensure they are ready to source the plants and get them in the ground in the autumn.

## **DATES FOR THE FUTURE ...**

Keep watch for more details of the following events in April & May editions of the News



### ➤ **Movies in The Mews**

Kenneth Branagh's film, *Belfast*, was much enjoyed last month. There is a plan in place for a film every two months and the next one, *The Boy with the Topknot*, will be screened on Wednesday evening, 26<sup>th</sup> April.

### ➤ **Spring clean at The Mews – Advance Notice**

Always wishing to keep The Mews in tip-top order, the group that manages its upkeep is organising a Spring Clean on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> April at 2.00 pm. They would love a few extra willing hands, so save the date now and come along on that afternoon with your Marigolds – and your feather dusters.

Window cleaners are still needed too, to clean the windows outside (not the high ones). If two or three more people came forward, it would just be a once-a-year commitment. Please call Deryck Petty: 07974 447776.

### ➤ **HOME GROUP stops for Lent**

Home Group is making way for the Lent Talks for the next few weeks at the Red Lion, in Little Budworth. The group will recommence on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, meeting on alternate Wednesday evenings at 7.30 pm as before, at 59 Carnoustie Close, Winsford, the home of Peter and Pauline Hayward.

### ➤ **WHITEGATE FESTIVAL WEEKEND**

The Social Committee have settled on the weekend of 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> June for a midsummer music festival for all the community, which will bring us an early evening Barbecue & Blues event on Church Green on the Saturday and a Vale Royal Strings concert, Strings at the Abbey, in the Great Hall of Vale Royal Abbey on the Sunday evening.

With the dates settled (and the School Hall booked in case of bad weather on the Saturday) volunteers are needed to help with all aspects of the festival. In addition, it is hoped to start a Whitegate Walking Group.

Could you help with the festival or lead a walk? Please contact John Blayney (07964 844642) or Elaine Campbell (07896 779962).



Media reports showing us the devastating impact of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria have made us all want to do what we can to help. Christian Aid have support workers and many partners in that part of the world who can use our donations effectively. The Mission and Giving group from St Mary's met recently and chose to send our available funds from the last quarter, £691.55 to Christian Aid for their Turkey & Syria Appeal. There are also envelopes in church for use by those who would like to make a personal donation to the appeal.

## A Verse for March

*The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?*

**Psalm 27 v1**

Fear is something we all experience - we live in a troubled and violent world and there's not much sign of things improving any time soon. Our troubles in mid-Cheshire are pretty minimal in contrast with those of the people in Ukraine facing the Russian onslaught, or those suffering in Turkey and Syria following the recent massive earthquake.

But, like them, we are unsure what the future holds, and so easily find ourselves afraid. We need to ask if our belief is stronger than our fear. God reaches out to us - but we must be brave enough to respond. Life without fear is not possible, but our faith calls us to follow God's will for our life instead of reducing our lives because of our fears and insecurities. Lent is a time to ask the deep questions of our faith. Will we repeat the fears of the past, or trust a new ending to God?

JRC

## Receiving the monthly NEWS by e-mail

If you would prefer each month's NEWS to arrive in your Inbox, then just send a request to [chrisball2022@outlook.com](mailto:chrisball2022@outlook.com) Please note Chris's different address for the newsletter.

### APRIL NEWS

Comments and items for inclusion in the next edition of our newsletter would be welcome. Please send them to: [chrisball2022@outlook.com](mailto:chrisball2022@outlook.com) by 15<sup>th</sup> March.





## Stories from the Churchyard

*This month, Martin Allen brings us some personal memories of a very good friend....*

### **George Billington (1929-2018)**

George Billington was a longstanding, friendly and popular member of St Mary's Church, Whitegate, who involved himself in virtually all church activities.

Having been a church warden in both Tarporley and Nantwich, he was extremely knowledgeable in the administration of the church and also had a passionate interest in the workings of the salt mine. Indeed, on a church visit to the salt mine, it was evident that he knew more about the subject than our tour guide. In the past, George had taught carpentry and he frequently put his skills to good use repairing and refurbishing items within the church and Mews. An example of his work is the wooden cross in the latter building. In 2011, realising I was new to the church, he became my mentor as I took on various tasks, including church warden and school governor, always providing me with good advice and constructive criticism when required.



As George had carried out such a variety of church duties, I was glad to draw on his knowledge and experience. What's more, since we had both served in the army, my friendship with George had an extra dimension. (Once a soldier, always a soldier; on one occasion he told me off for slouching in the communion queue). I was particularly in awe of his bible reading ability in church. Always articulate and expressive he had the enviable ability to engage fully with the congregation. On one occasion some years ago, I had a particularly difficult passage to read with many lengthy biblical names and tongue twisters. Having rehearsed it many times, I managed to complete it without perceiving any problems. On receiving a few approving nods whilst I returned to my seat just in front of George and Evelyn, I was feeling relieved and pretty pleased with myself. But then there was a tap on my shoulder and George whispered in my ear, "You made a right mess of that lad". Now George had many talents, but whispering was not one of them! As his voice reverberated around the church, I was suddenly conscious of numerous eyes glaring at me. As I shrank into the seat in embarrassment, even my wife seemed to distance herself from me along the pew. On leaving the church, those who had hitherto nodded approvingly, were now rolling their eyes or offering me sympathetic smiles. Over coffee in the Mews, I asked George what

I had done wrong. "Nothing at all lad", he replied with a wicked grin, "Why do you ask?"

Some months later, in preparation for the May Fair, I joined a cleaning party in the churchyard. Not wishing to get my hands dirty, I decided to take on a supervisory role and thus set off to provide Alan Newton and Tony Buckley with some unwanted advice on how to spray weeds. At this time, despite his advancing years, George Billington was on his hands and knees scraping decades of moss from an almost completely concealed ledger memorial, which is a large rectangular stone slab lying flat on the surface of the soil. As I passed him, he shouted "Look at this, the inscription looks like new under all this moss". Looking over his shoulder, I saw that he had revealed the word GEORGE. I watched with interest as he worked on the surname. Firstly, he uncovered a B, then an I, by which time his face was becoming ashen. By the time he had uncovered the name BILLINGTON, he was visibly shaken. Discussing his namesake, we both recalled an old black and white horror film when a man foresaw the future date of his demise on a gravestone. Thankfully, George saw the funny side when he found that his namesake had died during the 1800s.

In addition to George's namesake, whose grave now appears to have been reclaimed by nature, there are a number of visible Billington ledger graves in the churchyard. On his behalf, I researched George's family history and found that they are all distant ancestors of his. Much to his delight, I discovered that during Victorian times, his family ran the Fox and Barrel public house near Cotebrook, and that George Billington was a blacksmith who I believe was buried at Whitegate in 1875. The building in which his smithy was located, now dilapidated, and probably being used as a barn, can still be seen from the A54 at Cornhill Farm at the far end of Clay Lane.

Such was George's popularity, the church was packed to the rafters at his funeral in 2018. Evelyn subsequently donated a bench seat in his memory, located near the church porch. George, a character and a gentleman, will always be missed.

**Martin Allen**

## **WHITEGATE WI**

Meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in Whitegate Recreation Room. The next meeting is on 1<sup>st</sup> March, when Judy Popley will be with us to talk about "Gardens Well Worth a Visit". Visitors are always welcome. Contact Alison: [whitegatewi@outlook.com](mailto:whitegatewi@outlook.com)



[www.whitegatemarton-parishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.whitegatemarton-parishcouncil.org.uk)

The Parish Council has been informed that the application by United Utilities to install a Wastewater Treatment Plant on land just off Whitegate Road has been withdrawn. Residents of Whitegate and Marton had joined W&MPC in submitting objections to the site proposed, raising concerns about the inappropriate use of open countryside, the backup plan to allow overflow into Bogart Brook in case of pump failure, and certain shortcomings in the technical specification. It is believed that United Utilities will appoint a new contractor to reassess the proposals.

## 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.*

<p><b>Vicar</b> Rev Canon Paul Dawson 01606 889995 The Vicarage, Cinder Hill, Whitegate CW8 2BH <a href="mailto:vicaragecinderhill@outlook.com">vicaragecinderhill@outlook.com</a></p>	<p><b>Churchwardens</b> John Duthie 01606 889836  Anne Blayney 01606 74020</p>
<p>Rev Dr John Stopford 01606 558802</p>	<p><b>Treasurer</b> John Duthie 01606 88986</p>
<p>Rev Jane Millinchip 07981 981293</p>	<p><b>PCC Secretary</b> Linda Dutton 01606 862733</p>
<p><b>Children's Worker</b> Teresa Finney 01606 889311</p>	<p><b>Mothers' Union</b> Eileen Lees 01606 786895</p>
<p><b>Musical Director</b> Andrew Millinchip 01606 516225</p>	<p><b>Mews Lettings</b> Role vacant. Could you undertake this job? Call Deryck Petty for details: 07974 447776.</p>
<p><b>Safeguarding Officer</b> Sue Whitehead 01606 852302</p>	<p><b>"News" Coordinator</b> Christine Ball 01606 593260 <a href="mailto:chrisball2022@outlook.com">chrisball2022@outlook.com</a></p>
<p><b>Church Flowers</b> Pam Davies 01606 557833</p>	<p><b>Pastoral &amp; Fellowship Committee</b> Alan Newton 01829 760239</p>





## VALE ROYAL STRING ORCHESTRA

### Strings at St Peter's

Little Budworth,  
CW6 9BY

Sunday 19th March 2023, 7.00 pm

For St Peter's Little Budworth

CHACONY IN G MINOR FOR STRINGS; HENRY PURCELL

ECLOGUE; FINZI

(ANDREW MILLINCHIP; PIANO)

NOCTURNE IN D MAJOR; AKIMENTO

ANDANTE FESTIVO; SIBELIUS

ADAGIO AND FUGUE; MOZART

BRANDENBURG CONCERTO NO5; BACH

(ANDREW MILLINCHIP; HARPSICHORD,

CHARLOTTE CROSBIE: FLUTE,

ROBERT ANDERSON; VIOLIN)

Tickets: Adults £15.00 School Age Children £6.00

Andrew Ball, 07398 295239 and on the door

[martonsands@gmail.com](mailto:martonsands@gmail.com)



[www.valeroyalstringorchestra.co.uk](http://www.valeroyalstringorchestra.co.uk)

## First Thursday Café

At The  
Mews on  
Church  
Green  
Whitegate



Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March

Come down to meet friends and chat

over tea / coffee and  
delicious cake.

Open 10.30 am  
to 12.00 noon.



**Men's Breakfast**

Once a month, at  
Tarpорley Garden Centre

Join us for a great value  
breakfast in friendly  
company.

9.00 am  
on

**Wednesday  
8<sup>th</sup> March**

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

or contact Alan Newton on  
01829 769239  
[acenewton513@gmail.com](mailto: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.