

St Mary's Parish Church Whitegate



NEWS FOR APRIL 2023



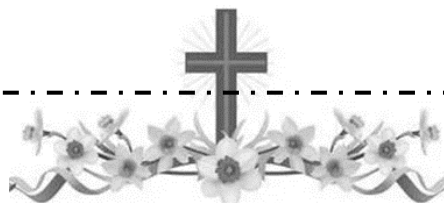
THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester



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www.stmaryswhitegate.org

Our cover photo

This month, we focus on Holy Week and Easter, with our picture of the Easter Garden, which for the last few years has graced the porch at St Mary's, from Maundy Thursday, through till Whitsunday. It was created in 2019 by members of the Mothers' Union and has been kept going since then, with a little TLC to refresh it each year.



A verse for April

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'.

1 Timothy Ch.1 v15.

These words were written by Paul, a blasphemer and violent man, who was one of the leading persecutors of the early church - until he met God and was forgiven. If God could forgive Paul he could forgive anyone.

A lot had happened in the week before Easter. On Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem to the acclaim of the crowds - later in the same week they were shouting for him to be crucified and he died a cruel death, was buried and yet on Easter Sunday God brought him back to life - the Lord had Risen!

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, but if we are to be saved, we have to come to the Lord and ask for the forgiveness of our sins. We can do that at any time - so why not this Easter?

JRC

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

On Sunday 23rd April, we shall be holding our **APCM** at 10.30 am in The Mews, straight after the Sunday morning service of Holy Communion.

It is an enormously important event in our church life, bringing with it the opportunity to see and comment on reports of what has happened in the past year, from the Vicar and from each group or committee operating for and on behalf of St Mary's. It's also a chance to look together to the future of the church at the heart of our community.

Churchwardens and representatives on the PCC and Deanery Synod are elected at this meeting. All are invited and everyone on the Electoral Roll of St Mary's Whitegate is entitled to vote at this meeting. We urge you to come and take part in the democratic process.

APRIL Diary:

APR 2nd	9.30 am 9.30 am 6.30 pm	Palm Sunday Holy Communion Storytelling Service A Service of Readings & Music for Passiontide	St Mary's The Mews St Mary's
5th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee (<i>see p.12</i>) Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
6th	10.30 am 7.30 pm	Maundy Thursday First Thursday Café Holy Communion	The Mews St Mary's
7th	2.00 pm	Good Friday Tenebrae Service	St Mary's
9th	9.30 am	Easter Sunday Holy Communion	St Mary's
12th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
16th	9.30 am 9.30 am	Easter 2 Morning Prayer Storytelling Service	St Mary's The Mews
18th	7.30 pm	Mothers' Union: visit from Blood Bikes	The Mews
19th	9.00 am 10.00 am 12.00 noon	Mens' Breakfast (<i>see p.12</i>) Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	Tarporley G'dn Centre The Mews St Mary's
23rd	9.30 am 10.30 am	Easter 3 / St George Holy Communion Annual Parochial Church Meeting	St Mary's St Mary's
24th	2.00 pm	Spring Clean at The Mews	The Mews
26th	10.00 am 12.00 noon 6.30 for 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Movies in The Mews: The Boy with the Topknot (<i>see p.12</i>)	The Mews St Mary's The Mews
30th	10.30 am	Easter 4 Benefice Confirmation Service, with the Rt Revd Julie Conalty, Bishop of Birkenhead	St Mary's
MAY 3rd	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.30 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Home Group	The Mews St Mary's 59 Carnoustie Close
4th	10.30 am	First Thursday Café	The Mews
7th	9.30 am 2.30 pm	Easter 5 Holy Communion Bring & Share: Afternoon Tea & Photo Exhibition – celebrating the Coronation (<i>see p.7 & notice boards</i>)	St Mary's Church Green & The Mews



April thoughts from the Vicar

April contains many things. Holy Week. Easter. St George's Day. Our Confirmation service. It is also the time when the evenings become light enough for evening sailing to begin at Winsford Flash Sailing Club. Hurrah!

I remember a bishop coming to visit us one April. He (for it was a 'he' in those days,) met one of our very elderly parishioners whilst walking through town. She never came to church but I knew her to be a devout person.

Her bible was battered and falling to bits. She read it every day and the years had taken their toll on both book and reader.

She was trundling along in her mobility scooter when she spotted the bishop. For once she had remembered to charge her vehicle. She usually forgot so I ended up pushing her back up the hill to get her home. She made a beeline for the bishop. "That's a wonderful vicar you've got there," she called out. I wished she'd stayed on the other side of the street and shouted it louder. But you take small mercies when they come.

The bishop asked why. Maybe she would comment on how often I rescued her with a flat battery. Or perhaps how regularly she received Holy Communion at home. Possibly she remembered the funeral of a neighbour from a few months back?

But no. The thing she valued most was that I always flew the flag for her birthday.

As we strolled on the bishop asked, "And when is her birthday?"

"23rd April!" We always flew the flag for St George's Day.

Easter is full of encounters. Many of them seem fleeting and insignificant. But are they?

On Palm Sunday the disciples were sent to fetch a colt. The owners naturally objected to strangers pinching their animal but having been told that "The Lord has need of it," they were apparently satisfied.

A few days later when it was time to prepare for the Passover they met a man carrying a jar of water and following him home, asked him for a room furnished for a significant gathering.

In Mark's account of Jesus' arrest we are told of a man who followed him with nothing but a linen cloth, and they seized him but he slipped out of his cloth and ran away naked.

Who were these people? What was their connection with Jesus? What happened to them afterwards? We just don't know. But they were there and they played a part in what happened and their part is remembered.

Other encounters are better recorded. John tells us of Mary Magdalene standing at the tomb weeping. The men had come and gone. They didn't understand and went back home. But Mary stayed, weeping. Her encounter with the risen Lord is incomplete. She doesn't recognise him, and when he speaks her name she is not allowed to hold him.

Everything points to a bigger story, to things in God's will yet to be made known. The encounters are pointers, they are not complete in themselves, we are steered beyond ourselves towards a hope beyond imagination.

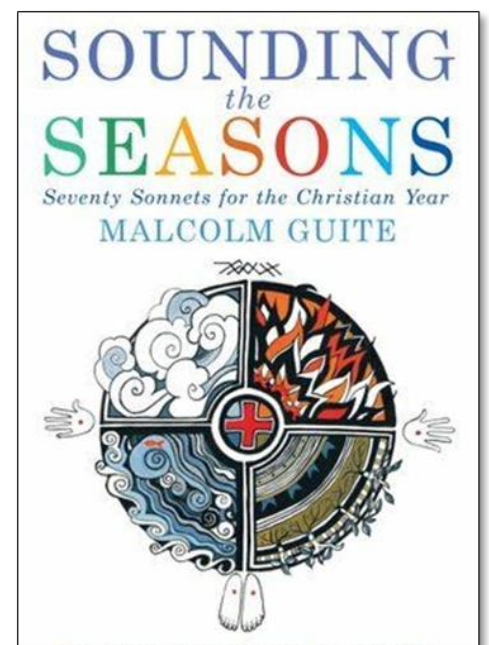
The brief encounters remind us that God has need of us, though we may not know what grace flows through us. We may raise a flag for one reason not knowing the significance and joy it brings to others. We may offer hospitality never appreciating the meaning it has for someone at a particular moment. We may do a small act of kindness that seems to go unnoticed and never be aware of what it does for someone.

April is time when the world unfolds. In hard times we tend to close in on ourselves. We need a time of unfolding, when we become open to greater possibilities than we can ever imagine.

Easter Dawn – Malcolm Guite

*He blesses every love that weeps and grieves
And now he blesses hers who stood and wept
And would not be consoled, or leave her love's
Last touching place, but watched as low light crept
Up from the east. A sound behind her stirs
A scatter of bright birdsong through the air.
She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,
Or recognize the Gardener standing there.
She hardly hears his gentle question, 'Why,
Why are you weeping?', or sees the play of light
That brightens as she chokes out her reply,
'They took my love away, my day is night.'
And then she hears her name, she hears Love say
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day.*

Paul.



APRIL NEWS FROM ST MARY'S

☐ Easter Card

If you haven't yet received a copy of our pretty card, please pick one up from church, from the porch or The Mews, for this black & white image doesn't do it justice. On the reverse you'll find details of all the Easter Services and activities.



☐ Mothers' Union at St Mary's



On Tuesday 18th April at 7.30 pm in The Mews, we'll be welcoming Ted Mellor, from the Shropshire, Staffordshire & Cheshire Blood Bikes service. This volunteer service carries, blood, emergency equipment, breast milk and other vital supplies, door to door to where they're needed, quickly and efficiently, thus saving the NHS a huge amount of money.

We know there are others in church and village who will be interested to find out more about this life-saving service, so we are happy to invite you to attend the meeting. For catering purposes, please let us know you'll be coming, by signing up on the noticeboard in St Mary's or by contacting Chris: chrisball2022@outlook.com or 01606 593260.



☐ **Thanks for the Mothering Sunday posies**

Thank you from everyone at St Mary's to Gail Jackson of Foxwist Green for the fabulous daffodils that we were able to present to all the ladies in church on 19th March. Thanks also to Pam Davies and the other members of the team who picked them and made up the posies.



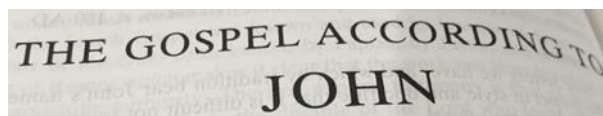
☐ **Spring clean at The Mews**

A reminder that the Mews management group is inviting willing helpers to join the Spring Clean at The Mews on Monday 24th April at 2.00 pm. Many hands make light work – and tea and biscuits will be provided.

☐ **Movies in The Mews – Wednesday 26th April**

This month we're showing **The Boy with the Topknot**. (See page 12). Doors open 6.30 for a 7.00 pm start. There's a plan in place for the rest of the year. Film fans, make a note in your diary: 14th June, **Downton Abbey, the New Era**; 16th August, **Thunderball**; 15th October, **Darkest Hour**; 3rd December, **Nativity 2**. During the summer months, screenings are on Wednesday evenings, 6.30 for 7.00 and from October to March, on Sunday afternoons, 2.00 for 2.30.

☐ **Home Group**



Home Group will start meeting again on Wednesday 3rd May, with a series of 7 fortnightly meetings planned. We meet at 7:30pm at the home of Peter and Pauline Hayward, 59 Carnoustie Close, Winsford. All are welcome, and it is not expected that everyone will make all the sessions. No advance preparation is required, just come along.

Our theme this session is 'Introducing Jesus: Life-changing encounters from the Gospel of John'. If you have any questions, please contact John Duthie on 01606 889836 or ask anyone who you know who already goes. The individual sessions in May will be: 3rd May - A confused minister; 17th May - A desperate woman; 31st May - A needy crowd.

☐ **Coronation weekend: Sunday 7th May, 2.30 pm**

In celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III, all are invited to Church Green and The Mews to join a Bring and Share Afternoon Tea – with an exhibition of Whitegate photographs by Jane Millinchip. Look out for more information & publicity in the coming weeks.





Stories from the Churchyard

This month, Suzi Miller remembers her Mum, who played a huge part in Whitegate church and village life for many, many years...

Blanche Fowles (1929 – 2016)

Blanche was born and brought up in Barnton, but moved to Whitegate with her husband, John, in 1959 and worshipped at St Mary's until she passed away in 2016.

Blanche soon became an active member of the community, becoming a Sunday School teacher along with Anne Hodgkinson. In those days, Sunday School was held at 2.00pm on a Sunday afternoon in the church, as the Mews was a ramshackle storage building at that time. There were 2 Sunday School groups (junior and senior), one gathering in the front pews of the church and the other group at the back. Sunday School was later moved to be run during the morning service, but as this was still prior to the conversion of the Mews the juniors went into the Vicar's vestry where they could close the door to keep out (most of) the noise, but the seniors were in the choir vestry where everything was conducted in a whisper, due to the open top where every sound drifted straight out into the congregation trying to concentrate on the Vicar's sermon.



Blanche became PCC Secretary for a while, taking over from Colonel Bishop and as such may well have been the first female to take on this role in our parish.

Her next volunteering role was to train the maypole dancers back in the day when any child from the village was allowed to take part, and practices were held on a Saturday morning. Sessions began in late February and were mainly held on the Village Green, so it could be a very cold experience. She continued in this role for around 15 years.

In 1970 Blanche bemoaned the lack of a local Brownie pack to a few other school Mums, and was soon working with Joan Towers and Jean Cooper to set up a group in our village. They also stirred other parents to set up a Girl Guide unit and Cub pack. She organised a number of pack holidays for the young girls, which she found tiring, but rewarding. Blanche's husband, John, remembers an evening, in the middle of one of these weeks away, when the husbands of the 3 Guiders decided to surprise them by turning up later in the evening, once all the Brownies were in bed (if not necessarily asleep!), armed

with a bottle of wine and a few cans of beer. Unfortunately, it wasn't the only surprise visit that evening... the Brownie District Commissioner also appeared at the door to find out how things were going. Fortunately she saw the funny side and even shared in a glass of wine."

As time marched on, she gave way to younger blood in these activities, but still gave her time to the church and village in other capacities, being a school governor; auditor for the school fund and a church cleaner.

WHITEGATE WI

Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in Whitegate Recreation Room. The next meeting is on 5th April, when Gill Adlington will join us, with "Painting for Everyone". Visitors are always welcome. Contact Alison: whitegatewi@outlook.com



www.whitegatemarton-parishcouncil.org.uk

The annual **Parish Council Assembly** meeting will take place on Wednesday 19th April, from 7.30 to 8.30 pm in Whitegate School Hall.

It will feature a presentation from the Council about the varied issues and events which have been the focus of their discussions and hard work over the last twelve months and representatives from the wide range of village groups here in Whitegate and Marton have been invited to come along and give a short account of their activities too – and to look to the future. All residents are invited. Come along to the Assembly and hear what's been happening.



NEWS FROM THE CATHEDRAL AND THE DIOCESE

❖ Being Bishop of Chester “changes me every single day”



Bishop Mark was recently interviewed by BBC Radio Merseyside. He talked to presenter, Paul Beesley, about his new book, “Clinging to the Cross” and reflected on his time in the diocese since being appointed three years ago. Paul asked him the question, “Has it changed you in any way?” To hear the recording, simply go to <https://tinyurl.com/u7utvx3s> Or use

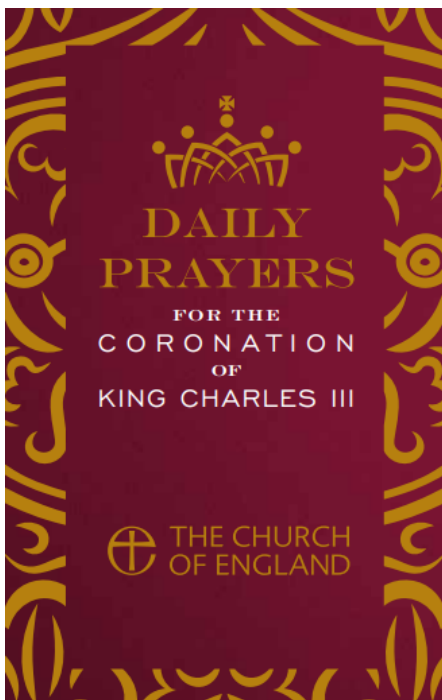
BBC Sounds and search for “Daybreak with Paul Beesley” 19 March 2023.

❖ Solar panels at Chester Cathedral

Chester has joined the cathedrals of Gloucester and Salisbury in installing solar panels, to reduce their carbon footprint – and their energy bills.

The panels are set on the roof of the south transept and the nave and the cathedral has been able to start generating up to 25% of the electricity it needs and contribute to the Church of England’s aim to be Net Zero by 2030.

❖ Book of prayer for the Coronation of King Charles III



The Church of England is calling for a period of prayer leading up to the Coronation and has released a book of Daily Prayers for the Coronation of King Charles III.

Running from Easter Day (April 9) for 28 days, up to the day of the Coronation on May 6, the book provides daily themes, reflections and prayers for use by individuals, churches or groups.

It’s hoped to have copies of the book available in church by Easter, but if you’d like to look at examples of the material right now, go to <https://tinyurl.com/mr3pv2ds>

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 Please note Chris's different address for newsletter requests and new contacts.

MAY 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 April.

Contacts

Please note that from now on, only e-mail addresses for the Vicar, the News coordinator & the Mews Lettings officer 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 88986
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	"News" coordinator Christine Ball 01606 593260 chrisball2022@outlook.com
Safeguarding Officer Sue Whitehead 01606 852302	Mews Lettings Andrew Millinchip amillinchip@gmail.com
Church Flowers Pam Davies 01606 557833	Pastoral & Fellowship Committee Alan Newton 01829 760239

First Thursday Café

At The
Mews on
Church
Green
Whitegate



Thursday 6th April

Come down to meet friends and chat
over tea / coffee and
delicious cake.
Open 10.30 am
to 12.00 noon.



Movies in The Mews

Wednesday 26th April 2023

Refreshments from 6.30 p.m.

film starts at 7.00 p.m. prompt.



The Boy with the Topknot (2017)

"Soul-searching & impeccably acted"
(The Telegraph)

Based on the critically acclaimed memoirs of journalist, Sathnam Sanghera. Directed by Lynsey Miller, starring Sacha Dhawan, Anupam Kher, Deepti Naval & Joanna Vanderham.

Born in Wolverhampton to Punjabi parents, Sathnam moves to London after graduating from Cambridge. This is a touching, humorous and emotional story of a second generation Indian growing up in Britain.

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: 01606 593260 or chrisball2015@gmail.com

Men's Breakfast

Once a month, at
Tarporeley Garden Centre

Join us for a great value
breakfast in friendly
company.

9.00 am
on

**Wednesday
19th April**

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

or contact Alan Newton on
01829 769239
acnewton513@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.