

St Mary's Parish Church Whitegate



NEWS FOR MARCH 2025



Our cover photo

One of the beautiful floral displays with which Pam Davies and Jo Jordan decorated the church for the Feast of Candlemas last month. The photo was taken by Dick Clague.

As Paul reminded us in his February letter, Candlemas is a staging post on our journey from Christmas to Easter, the point at which we put away the crib and look to the cross. After our pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, we'll be marking Lent with a series of events and services, all of which are detailed in this edition of the newsletter.

Easter Flowers

Looking beyond Lent, to Easter, Pam would like to invite us to make donations, perhaps in memory of a loved one, towards the cost of the Easter lilies. Donations can be placed in the bowl marked for that use, which will sit on the table at the back of the church.



A verse for MARCH

Psalm 24: verse 1

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it"

The earth is the Lord's because he created it - but can you imagine what it would be like if he wanted to create it now? Just think of the process he'd have to go through - environmental impact statements, risk assessments and planning applications, public enquiries, appeals and hearings.

He'd be asked to submit a cost/benefit analysis. How would it be heated and lit - the idea of using a fireball in the sky sounds dodgy - but you could turn it off at night. What creatures would be allowed to inhabit the earth, the skies and the seas - how would they be chosen - and who'd be in charge of them? Where would they live? How long will it take - to which God replied, "six days".

The world God made then, and the world we live in now, seem very different places. Wildlife has evolved, human beings have migrated in huge numbers and for different reasons - a process well established in Old Testament times but still in our news headlines today. Many things are no longer as God wants them to be. The human race has to accept responsibility for much of this - and environmental and human rights matters are being challenged, so we need to be ever vigilant.

JRC

MARCH Diary

MAR 2nd	9.30 am	Sunday before Lent Family Service	St Mary's
4th	2.00 pm 4.00 – 7.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party (<i>see p.12</i>)	L.B. Methodist Chapel The Mews
5th	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.30 pm	Ash Wednesday Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Holy Communion with imposition of Ashes	The Mews St Mary's St Mary's
6th	10.30 am	First Thursday Café	The Mews
9th	9.30 am	First Sunday in Lent Holy Communion The Vicar is at Holy Trinity, Castle today	St Mary's
10th	The Vicar is on duty at Chester Cathedral today		
11th	2.00 pm 7.30 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides St Mary's PCC meeting	L.B. Methodist Chapel The Mews
12th	9.00 am 10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Men's Breakfast Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) First of the Lent Reflections 2025	Tarporley Grd'n Centre The Mews St Mary's Red Lion Little Budworth
13th	5.00 pm	School Governing Body meeting	Whitegate School
16th	9.30 am 9.30 am 7.00 pm	Second Sunday in Lent Morning Prayer – with speaker, Nadia McKane, from Petty Pool Storytelling Service Vale Royal Strings Concert: Music of the British Isles (<i>see p.12</i>)	St Mary's The Mews St Peter's Little Budworth
18th	2.00 pm 2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides St Mary's Mothers' Union meeting with Diana Bancroft	L.B. Methodist Chapel The Mews
19th	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Second of the Lent Reflections	The Mews St Mary's Red Lion Little Budworth
23rd	9.30 am	Third Sunday in Lent Holy Communion	St Mary's
25th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides	L.B. Methodist Chapel
26th	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Third of the Lent Reflections	The Mews St Mary's Red Lion Little Budworth
27th	10.30am–1.00pm	Ladies' Spring Brunch (<i>see p.12</i>)	The Badger, Ch. Minshull
30th	9.30 am	Mothering Sunday Family Service	St Mary's
APR 1st	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsides	L.B. Methodist Chapel
2nd	10.00 am 12.00 noon 7.00 pm	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP) Fourth of the Lent Reflections	The Mews St Mary's Red Lion Little Budworth
3rd	10.30 am	First Thursday Café	The Mews

March thoughts from the Vicar...

Consider the hymn "Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways...." It is well known and much loved. But do we know the meaning behind it?

To begin with there is something odd about its author, John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892). Whittier was a member of the Society of Friends, otherwise known as Quakers. Quakers do not sing hymns during their services, they use very little by way of words preferring to wait in silence for that 'still small voice'. (Even that is a misunderstanding. The original text doesn't refer to a still, small voice, it points us towards the 'piercing silence'. But that's another story.)



So why would a Quaker write a hymn?

Well, the short answer is that he didn't. Whittier had been reading a book about religious practices in the East, particularly the use of a plant that grew in northwest India. Vedic priests would take the *soma* plant and from it brew an intoxicating drug which they used during religious festivals. Having taken the drug they fell into an intoxicated frenzy which they believed had spiritual revelation.

At the time there were various Christian groups who favoured spiritual experiences as a sign of revival. Whittier mistrusted such goings on and wrote a poem saying that faith sprang from a much deeper encounter with God.

In its original form the verse before *Dear Lord and Father of mankind* read:

*And yet the past comes round again,
And new doth old fulfil;
In sensual transports wild as vain
We brew in many a Christian fane
The heathen Soma still!*

Faith is rooted not in *transports wild* but rather finds true expression in *deeper reverence*. The cut down version of the poem became the hymn we know today, within which we can see hints of Quaker worship. Phrases such as *simple trust, gracious calling*, and the disciples response to rise and follow Jesus *without a word*. And again, we hear echoes of a faith lived in the silence of worship, *Sabbath rest, calm of hills above, the silence of eternity interpreted by love*. Finally we come to the heart of the matter:

*Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind and fire;
O still small voice of calm! O still small voice of calm!*

When you have sung these words many times over the years, were you ever aware that they began not as a hymn but as a poem? Have you pondered the puzzle that they were written by a Quaker, yet they who don't sing hymns? Have you known that they refer to Vedic priests getting high on drugs?

Well, maybe you have. Or maybe you haven't. Hymns can be surprising. So, during Lent, I invite you to join us for a series of short reflections looking at some well-known, and maybe the odd not so well-known, hymns, and their authors.



Lent Reflections 2025

We meet in the Red Lion, in Little Budworth, Wednesday evenings from 7.00pm, on:

- 12 March: Father, hear the prayer we offer
- 19 March: O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness
- 26 March: Inspired by love and anger
- 2 April: Lo, he comes with clouds descending
- 9 April: My song is love unknown

Paul.



An Invitation from Whitegate Primary School

To book a place, call 01606 212203 or email admin@whitegate.cheshire.sch.uk

The children of Whitegate CofE Primary School invite all senior citizens to have a delicious FREE ROAST DINNER on Wednesday 12th March at 12.30pm.



**Come and have A
JOLLY GOOD TIME**



NEWS FROM ST MARY'S

□ Renewal of our Electoral Roll

A reminder that every six years electoral rolls are closed and everyone needs to apply to be a member of the new roll. Forms are available in church. To be a member of the electoral roll you need to be baptised and either live within the parish or, if you live outside of the parish, be attending on a regular basis.

The current understanding of 'regular attendance' means approximately once a month for at least six consecutive months. Full details are on the forms and the deadline is 12th April. Speak to a member of the clergy, a churchwarden or Eileen Lees, our Electoral Roll officer.



Electoral Roll



Belong



Participate



Contribute

□ Mid Cheshire Foodbank

5

These five items are currently in short supply. When you're doing your shopping, please think of the foodbank and bring your donations to church. Pam and Mike will be happy to deliver them.

Tinned Ham Cordial

UHT Milk

UHT Fruit Juice

Toilet Rolls

□ Mission & Giving at St Mary's

Readers will know that at St Mary's, we have a commitment to gifting 5% of income from free-will donations and fundraising to other organisations doing valuable work for those in greater need. The Treasurer, having drawn the line under the accounts for 2024, had calculated that there was £1,050 available from Quarter 4 of the year.

The Mission & Giving group met recently and decided to split that sum equally between two charities, one national and one international, The Children's Society and WaterAid UK. To see something of their work, take a look at childrenssociety.org.uk/ and wateraid.org/uk/

On Sunday 16th March at the 9.30 service, we shall welcome to St Mary's a representative from a local charity, Petty Pool Trust, which we supported with a donation last summer. On that day, Nadia McKane will tell us about the Vocational College, the Outdoor Education programme and all the opportunities they can offer to young people with learning difficulties.

We shall be offering pancakes again in The Mews this year, on Shrove Tuesday 4th March. No charge made, but donations will be welcome please, for Christian Aid. See page 12 for details.

□ **Church Clock - update**

Since last month's item about the clock, a report has been received from the Cumbria Clock Company about the faulty striking action, outlining some options, notably 1. repair, 2. repair, clean and service. The options – and associated costs – will be discussed at the PCC meeting on 11th March.

We have as yet no idea how soon the work could be done, even once a decision is made, but at least in the meantime, the clock itself continues to keep very good time and is wound twice a week by our two winders, Deryck Petty and Keith Miller.



□ **Seeking new PCC members – a message from Anne Blayney**

At the beginning of May we will have our Annual Parochial Church Meeting when we shall elect individuals to help lead the church through the coming year. This year there will be several positions coming available on the PCC. Please consider whether you could join us as part of this essential team. Usually these positions are for 3 years.

We shall also elect churchwardens at the APCM. They are elected for a year at a time and for a maximum of 6 years. I have now been churchwarden for 4 years. I have learnt a lot, enjoyed my role and am very grateful for the support given to me by the whole church. I am happy to stand for one more year as churchwarden. However I am also very aware that I shall be away for a significant part of next year and therefore cannot carry out my role as fully as I would like.

If there is anyone who can be more available than me this coming year and would like to take on my position of churchwarden, I would fully support them. I will also do everything I can to support whoever takes over from me when I stand down in May 2026. If you have any questions please talk to me or any other member of the PCC for more information

□ **Whitegate Amblers**

The Amblers' 2025 season kicks off after Easter with a walk from Gresty's Waste. Key details are all in the advert on page 12. This walking group was a great initiative, started in April 2024 by Elaine Campbell and John Blayney. The six outings last year were varied, not too strenuous and hugely enjoyable.

Some of the walks start directly, on foot from the middle of Whitegate but others from departure points in surrounding villages. Lifts can always be arranged for those who need them. The group boasts 20 members and last year, each walk attracted from 8 – 18 walkers, plus a dog or two. If you'd like to join them but want to know more, call Elaine, on 07896 779962.

□ **The Bluebell Café, at Barrowmore**

I wonder how many people know of this gem of a lunch spot, just beyond Tarvin, at Great Barrow? A Mothers' Union member from St Mary's suggested it as a venue for our annual, post-Christmas lunch out, so we booked and 13 of us headed off there in late January. We were not disappointed.

It is a licensed café, established in 2013 as part of the Barrowmore Limited charity, which supports vulnerable adults. Those who manage the café believe in homemade food, cooked fresh from quality ingredients, locally sourced where possible and often picked from their own vegetable garden. The staff are friendly and delivered a lovely experience in a delightful setting.

The café is open 9.30am – 3.00pm, Tuesday to Saturday. All special dietary requirements are catered for. To read more and to get directions, check their website, barrowmore.co.uk and click on Café. To book, call 01829 742633.

□ **Strings at St Peter's**

Vale Royal String Orchestra brings "Music of the British Isles" to St Peter's, Little Budworth on Sunday 16th March at 7.00 pm.

Conductor, Mark Lansom, will direct the orchestra through music from the 18th to the 21st century, from G F Handel (yes, he became a British citizen in 1727), through Frank Bridge (born in Brighton), Frederick Delius (from Bradford), and Joan Trimble (from Enniskillen) to Lansom's own Welsh Folk Song Suite.

Mark is the conductor of both the St John's Festival Orchestra in Chester and the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra. A busy man, he is also head of strings at The King's School Chester. The VRSO brings together experienced musicians from around the north-west. It promises to be a fascinating evening. For more details of the programme and admission, see the advert on page 12.

Whitegate WI



We meet at Whitegate Recreation Room (CW8 2BL) on the first Wednesday of each month, at 7.15 pm for a 7.30 start. Visitors and new members are always welcome. There is a small charge for visitors, to include refreshments.

On Wednesday 5th March, David Payne will be with us to tell us "They don't write them like this anymore."

Our monthly meetings are complemented by a whole range of other activities. To see more of what we do, look at our website: whitegatewi.weebly.com

☐ Church Wood Conservation Group: Tim-ber-r-r

Under the watchful eye of their trained tree surgeons, the Church Wood team recently felled a large, 20+ metre turkey oak in the wood, near the top of Vale Royal Drive. The tree had been identified as "at risk" some months ago by a local specialist and so it was necessary to assess the situation, bring the team together, calculate the best direction of fall and make the right cuts to bring it down safely.

On the big day in January, all went to plan. The photos below show before and after. You can see how close the tree was to the path and to houses. Congratulations on some great teamwork.

The Church Wood group always welcomes new volunteers to join the working party on the second Saturday of each month, usually for less dramatic, more routine maintenance & upkeep. Contact Rob at robwoodall@icloud.com



Movies in The Mews in 2025

There was a great turn out for the February comedy, Keeping Mum, with Maggie Smith & Rowan Atkinson. Here is the list of other films we'll be showing later this year. All will be on Sunday afternoons, 2.00pm doors open for a 2.30pm start. Keep an eye on the Monthly NEWS for reminders about each showing.



Sunday 27th April

When Eight Bells Toll, (1971) thriller from novel by Alistair Maclean, directed by Etienne Périer & starring Antony Hopkins & Jack Hawkins.

Sunday 8th June

The Best of Men, (2012) true story of the first paralympic games, directed by Tim Whitby & starring Rob Brydon, Eddie Marsan & George Mackay.

Sunday 3rd August

Oranges & Sunshine, (2010) true story of the organised deportation to Australia of children in care, directed by Jim Loach & starring Emily Watson.

Sunday 5th October

A Walk in the Woods, (2015) from the book by Bill Bryson, directed by Ken Kwapis & starring Robert Redford, Nick Nolte & Emma Thompson.

Sunday 1st December

The 100 Foot Journey (2014), drama of rivalry between restaurant owners, directed by Lasse Hallström & starring Helen Mirren, Om Puri, Manish Dayal & Charlotte Le Bon.



www.whitegatemarton-parishcouncil.org.uk

The latest W&MPC newsletter can be found on the website. Here is a round-up of the key points this month:

- At the February meeting, Paul Cronin was welcomed to the council as a new, co-opted member. Paul has lived in the parish for 26 years.
- Three planning applications were discussed.
- Our council has been liaising with the CWAC Digital Sector Specialist regarding broadband and mobile connectivity issues in the parish, and hope to invite the officer to a future meeting.
- Road safety continues to be an issue. There have been a number of nasty accidents on and around the parish boundaries in recent weeks.
- The next ordinary meeting is Monday 10th March at 7.30pm at Whitegate Primary School Hall, all welcome.
- The annual litter pick will take place on Sunday 9th March, meeting at 9.30am at the recreation room, all welcome and equipment is provided.
- The Annual Village Meeting will be held on Thursday 24th April 7.30pm – 8.30pm at Whitegate Primary School Hall. Find out what's happening in your parish, with updates from local community groups & PC/PCSO.

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.

<p>Vicar Rev Canon Paul Dawson 01606 889995 The Vicarage, Cinder Hill, Whitegate CW8 2BH vicaragecinderhill@outlook.com</p>	<p>Churchwardens Anne Blayney 07815 713012 Sandra Paskin 01606 882031</p> <p>PCC Secretary Roger Wilkes 01606 75738</p>
<p>Curates Rev Dr John Stopford 01606 558802 Rev Jane Millinchip 07981 981293 Rev Margaret Byrne 07368 375970</p>	<p>Church Flowers Pam Davies 01606 557833</p> <p>Children's Worker Teresa Finney 01606 889311</p>
<p>Safeguarding Officer Anne Blayney 07815 713012 safeguardingwhitegate@outlook.com</p>	<p>Mothers' Union Eileen Lees 01606 786895</p>
<p>Mews Lettings Andrew Millinchip amillinchip@gmail.com</p>	<p>"News" coordinator Christine Ball 01606 593260 chrisball2022@outlook.com</p>
<p>Musical Director Andrew Millinchip 07821 810772</p>	<p>Pastoral & Fellowship Committee Alan Newton 01829 760239</p>
<p>Treasurer John Duthie treasurerwhitegatepcc@outlook.com</p>	<p>Social & Fundraising Group John Blayney 07964 844642</p>

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



St Mary's Church
Whitegate

SHROVE TUESDAY 4th March

Pancake Party



Join us in The Mews,
Church Green, Whitegate, anytime
from 4.00 – 7.00pm & choose your
favourite topping

Donations please,
for Christian
Aid



VALE ROYAL STRING ORCHESTRA

Strings at St Peter's Music of the British Isles

HANDEL CONCERTO GROSSO
BRIDGE SUITE FOR STRINGS
DELIUS TWO AQUARELLES
TRIMBLE SUITE FOR STRINGS
LANSOM WELSH FOLK SONG SUITE
MARK LANSOM CONDUCTOR

St Peter's Church, Little Budworth,
CW6 9BY
Sunday 16 March 2025, 7.00 pm

For St Peter's Little Budworth



Tickets: Adults £18.00 School Age
Children £8.00
Pay at the door, Contactless or Cash
Andrew Ball, 07398 295239
martonsands@gmail.com



www.valeroyalstringorchestra.co.uk

LADIES' SPRING BRUNCH

At "The Badger"
CHURCH MINSHULL



Thursday 27th March

10.30am – 1.00pm

£17 per person, to be paid in advance

To Chris Newton or Pam Davies

01829 760239 or 01606 557833



Whitegate Amblers

Please join us as we restart our monthly walks
discovering the beautiful countryside around the
Village of Whitegate. All welcome, please text or
phone me or just turn up on the day.

Date: Thursday 24th April

Time: Meet 09:45 -walk starts 10:00 (approx 2hrs)

Start: Gresty's Waste Car Park, on the left side of
A54 going towards Kelsall (CW6 0SP).

Description: Walk over A54 towards Delamere.
Good tracks - no stiles - gradual inclines - option to
climb The Pale with views across Cheshire. Rest
stop at Delamere Visitor Centre for coffee/snack-
slight ascent and down back to car park.

Notes: We welcome well behaved dogs who can be
kept under control all the times. Toilet at visitor
centre. Option to walk half to end at visitor centre
but you need to arrange in advance. If you want a
lift from Whitegate please phone me.

Information call John Blayney (07964844642)

