

ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES PARISH CHURCH WHITTINGTON PARISH NEWS



APRIL 2024

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50p

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In the Worcester South East Team

St Philip & St James Whittington and St Mark in the Cherry Orchard

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St. Martin with St. Peter

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Assistant Curate: Rev'd Mike Bunclark

Holy Trinity & St Matthew Ronkswood

Vicar

Rev'd Rob Farmer

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London Road, Worcester WR5 2ED

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*For enquiries about Baptisms, Thanksgivings, Marriages and Blessings,
please contact the Team Administrator as above.*

***The Team Office at St Martin's is open on Mon, Tues, Thurs & Friday,
10am - 1 pm, visits ideally should continue to be by appointment.***

Rebecca can always be reached by phone and email.

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What headstones are for...

In the 1950s, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, visited the church of Scotland in Dumfries. As she was walking though the graveyard after the service, she asked the Lord Provost who was with her, why the headstones were so large? He replied "To hold them doon, Ma'am."



Letter from the Vicarage

March 24

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Hi Everyone,

How are we all doing? I hope and pray that you are all keeping well and enjoying the Easter season.



Those of you who know me, or who attend church at all during the Easter season will know, how much I enjoy proclaiming those words: “Alleluia! Christ is risen”. It is one of the privileges afforded me at the Sunrise service each year to be the first person that season to proclaim, the Christian faith and joy, that Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

Of course, at the time of writing, we haven’t got there yet. We are still journeying through Lent, and (possibly) still observing those disciplines we felt called to follow through that season of preparation for the proclamation of those words.

I wonder how has your Lent been? Did you manage to avoid the temptation to give in on the disciplines you set yourselves at the beginning of the season? Or did your resolve crumble and turn to dust, almost as soon as the Ashen cross had been cleaned from your forehead?

And what now?

Will you try to continue any Lenten disciplines into the Easter season; make them a regular feature of everyday life, or are you more than happy to let them go for another year, as you truly embrace the joys and indulgences of the Easter season?

Personally, I have tried, to watch what I have allowed myself to eat, and particularly the stuff I regularly snack upon; and I have tried to read couple of books that at the beginning of the season seemed worth reading for my own development, and possibly too, as a betterment for my personal journey with God. *Continued...*

I confess that I got further with the one book than the other, and so will need to continue through the Easter season to try and carve out space to finish reading that one, and make some progress with the second.

The book I have made some progress with is called *The Seventh Story* by Brian McClaren and Gareth Higgins, and is subtitled *Us, Them and the End of Violence*. In it they posit that there are six default oppositional stories, synthesised as a means of keeping “our” stuff for ourselves, while preventing “them” from gaining more.

The stories are characterised as the *Domination*, the *Revolution*, the *Purification*, the *Victimisation*, the *Isolation* and *Accumulation* stories. In some respects these stories are responses to the stories that precede them: Domination and Oppression lead to Revolution; Purification blames and scapegoats and possibly eradicates a minority community; Victimisation demands vengeance; and so-on and so forth.

In each of the stories there is an element of “us” and “them”.

In the seventh story, they state, that **“human beings are not the protagonists. Love is.”** If we were to truly love our neighbours, rather than see them, as “them” in competition with “us”, then we would be able to live without the violence that so mars our world at the moment.

This seventh story, of course, is encapsulated in the Easter story, which we celebrate during Holy Week and the Easter season. It is encapsulated in the stories of the early church in the book of Acts and in the definitions of Love that the apostle John writes of; both of which we hear in our bible readings, Sunday by Sunday though this season.

How might we live resurrection lives of love and community; forsaking the violence in our own hearts and minds? Setting aside our own needs to dominate and accumulate, in order to live in community and communion with our neighbours?

May God bless us all as we live Easter lives. Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Every blessing, Andy.

LIVE ON-LINE VIDEO SERVICES

For all churches in the South East Team

Churches in the Team are open for public worship but we are continuing to meet for worship during the week using the zoom app downloadable from the zoom.us website. To join one of the services please email the host who will send you a link:

Morning Prayer: Monday to Friday at 8.30 a.m. *hosted by Mike Bunclark (mbunclark@tiscali.co.uk)*

Compline: Monday to Friday at 8.30 p.m. *hosted by Mike Bunclark*

Monday Prayer Meeting: 4.00 p.m. *hosted by Joan Hazzard (joanhazz@gmail.com)*

Virtual 'Yew Brew' Coffee Morning: Saturday at 11.00 a.m. *hosted by Andy Stand*

Prayers for Peace and Justice: Saturday at 12 noon *hosted by Joan Hazzard*

For enquiries about Whittington please email the Vicar
andy.stand@sky.com

Sunday Services at 11.00 am will be streamed from
Whittington on Zoom.



The Elizabethan Room for Meetings

The Elizabethan Room is now fully operational and is available for meetings of up to 12/15 people. Details and conditions of use are given on the church website, or at the Church, along with an application form. This can be sent to the bookings coordinator, Mrs Caroline Mayfield, email below:

caroline.mayfield40@gmail.com
or telephone 01905 764822

Sponsored by the National Lottery Community Fund

There is a defibrillator on the wall of the Elizabethan Room (shown above) and another on the front face of the Community Hall, by the main door

What's on at Whittington April & May 2024

Saturday 6th April
10.30-12noon Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room

Sunday 7th April
11.00am Parish Communion
3.30pm Forest Church

Sunday 14th April
11.00am Family Service

Tuesday 16th April
6.30pm PCC meeting Elizabethan Room

Saturday 20th April
10.30 -12 noon Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room

Sunday 21st April
11.00am Parish Communion

Sunday 28th April
11.00am Family Communion

Saturday 4th May
10.30-12noon Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room

Sunday 5th May
11.00am Parish Communion
1.00pm Baptism
3.30pm Forest Church

Thursday 9th May
10.00am Ascension Day
Holy Communion

Sunday 12th May
11.00am Family Service

Whittington Church Electoral Roll 2024

The Church Electoral Roll will be updated ahead of the Annual Meeting on Sunday 19 May. This means that anyone who wishes may join at this stage and show your support for our church. Names already on the list will be included again and you do not need to do anything unless there are any alterations, e.g. you have changed your address in the last year. The current roll is displayed in church. Briefly, you need to be over 16 years of age (or nearly so), baptised, and living in the parish or a regular member of the congregation. Please contact me if you are not already on the Roll but would like to join by Sunday 21 April at the latest.

Janet Pearson

Moses and climate change?

When Moses went up the mountain one day to meet with God, the Lord said he had both good news and bad news for him.

Moses asked, "What's the good news?" God replies, "Moses, I shall visit plagues upon the Egyptians. I shall cause their rivers to run red with blood. I shall cause frogs to infest their houses, and lice to infest their bodies. I shall cause flies to swarm upon them. Their cattle shall die; boils will infect both man and beast. I shall cause hail to destroy their crops; and locusts shall devour anything green that is left in their land. Darkness will cover their land for three days and nights. I shall then lead you through the wilderness as a pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night. I shall split the waters of the sea. I shall feed you with Manna that forms upon the ground until the children of Israel reach the Land flowing with milk and honey."

Moses replied, "That's GREAT, Lord! What could possibly be the bad news?"
"You, Moses, shall write the Environmental Impact Statement."

Good Morning Gardeners - once more!

The snowdrops and crocus are over; daffodils are showing their frilly skirts and with the recent warm spell the tulips are showing their heads; Spring is here, but it is also time to think what we might put in the garden to produce some summer colour. I am growing bedding plants again this year and my “regulars” will receive a copy of this year’s plant list shortly. If anyone else is interested please contact me and you can see the range of plants I grow. I have been growing plants for nearly 30 years, formerly with my husband before he passed, and folks come back year after year so I must be doing something right! I ensure my prices are competitive with the local garden centres so if you are keen to use bedding plants please give me a try before you go elsewhere. When orders are sorted I will be having a coffee morning and plant sale on 1st June at the Church with what is left; refreshments will be in our Elizabethan Room. I look forward to hearing from you and if you have friends who do not receive our magazine but could be interested in plants please pass on my details.



Brenda Giles 01905 25709 brenda.giles@tiscali.co.uk



**From the Parish Register at
Whittington**

Baptisms

3rd March 2024

Rory Peter Murdoch

Son of Stewart Murdoch and Jennifer Appleton

Wedding 30th March 2024

Scott Bishop and Chelsea Taylor

Forest Church at Whittington.

Forest Church met in February and March this year in the churchyard at Whittington. In February we looked at Creation and new beginnings. We created pictures with leaves and twigs found in the churchyard and looked for signs of Spring.



In March we were thinking about God's abundant provision and how to share it. We also had a stick theme - looking for sticks, using sticks to make rhythms to praise God, using charcoal sticks to draw pictures and tying prayers to branches.



Our next meeting is **Sunday 7th April at 3:30PM** in Whittington Churchyard. Please contact us on whittingtonforestchurch@gmail.com if you would like to come.



Bishop Martin asks, Can you help us improve safeguarding in the Diocese? Our work in safeguarding is being audited and the auditors would like to hear from you!



The safety of all those who wish to worship in our churches should always be at the forefront of our minds. That is true for those who work or volunteer in our parishes and also for all of us who work in a diocesan context. We are keen to ensure that we are doing all that we can to create environments where everyone feels safe, valued and respected.

The Church of England has commissioned INEQE Safeguarding Group to conduct a series of audits of dioceses to look at our work in safeguarding and suggest areas where we could make improvements. As part of this audit process, INEQE would like to hear from as many different people as possible from across our diocese and have put together an online survey through which individuals can comment in confidence about their impressions and experiences of safeguarding in the Diocese.

The surveys are both anonymous (the audit team are not seeking to identify individuals) and confidential (individuals will not be identified in their report). No one from the Church of England or any other body will be provided with or have access to survey responses.

Please consider filling in this survey openly and honestly and letting the audit team know your opinions. Our audit will take place from 1 July, but the surveys are open now and will **close at 11.30 pm on Wednesday 1 May 2024** to enable the audit team to go through them. To access the surveys please visit:

<https://ineqe.com/churchofengland/worcester/>. and do encourage others to do this too.

Thank you for your help – listening to and learning from those in our parishes is an important part of the audit. Only by working together can we strive to make our churches a safe place for everyone.

Bishop Martin

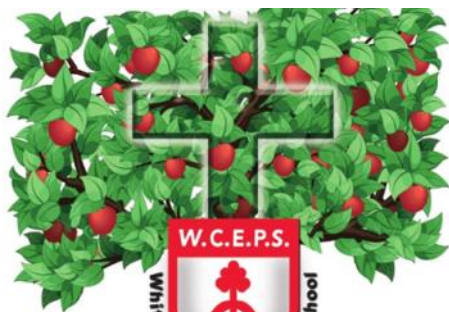
Whittington CE Primary School

From the Head Teacher, Gary Richards

The Easter holiday is almost here and the children and staff are gearing up for the break. However, the spring term that is nearly over has always been my favourite, because the children have settled into routines and moved on with their learning. Add to that, the lighter mornings and the promise of warmer weather and the picture is rosy.

Alongside the taught curriculum, Whittington CE Primary school works hard to develop our pupils, by encouraging participation in a range of exciting and challenging activities. This term alone the children have: taken part in competitive sport; sung at a national event; interacted with adults visiting the school and visited a range of venues; they have spoken publicly to an audience of school mates and family; and two classes have learned to swim. In a society dominated by technology, these sorts of activities are vital in developing

self-confidence, which is why they remain a central part of the offer the school provides.



School Vision

Jesus said, 'I chose you and appointed you to bear much fruit, fruit that will last.'

John 15:16

We are inspired by Jesus to learn with joy and flourish in love, faith and wisdom. Together, we live and grow well, valuing and respecting our differences and sharing our God given gifts. We aspire to be courageous and responsible, caring for our world and one another today
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Jesus said, 'I chose you and appointed you to bear much fruit, fruit that will last.'

John 15:16

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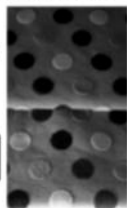
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Community Hall Update

Forthcoming Community Events

Summer Quiz Night - Saturday 11th May

Summer Event (Fayre) 11am-5pm

Saturday 13th July at Pond Farm.

The website **whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk** has full information on the facilities and booking, for the hall, which can be done online.

Regular Bookings in the hall, are set out below:

These are all open Classes

Monday 10.30 to 11.30am.

Zumba with Aimee.

Wednesday 16.30 to 17.30pm

Yoga with Natalie

Thursday 10.00 to 12.00noon.

Zumba and Yoga with Denise

Thursday 19.30 to 21.00pm

Tai'Chi with Marc

Friday 9.30 to 10.30am

Yoga with Rachel

And 10.45am to 11.45am

Zumba with Aimee

Friday 18.00 to 19.00pm

Yoga with Fiona

Community Hall Management Committee

info@whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk



Responsible for managing, maintaining, developing
and running the Community hall.

Whittington Parish Council

The Parish Council met on Tuesday the 19th of March. The Chairman welcomed Tony Fradgley as a Councillor to the Parish Council. Details of the meeting and matters discussed can be viewed in the minutes now on the Parish Council website; whittingtonparishcouncil.co.uk.

However, discussions included highways matters including road safety, the 'rat run' through Walkers Lane and Church Lane particularly during morning and evening rush hour, speeding on the B4084 Pershore Road, the state of the Whittington Traffic Island at the entrance to the village and following complaints from residents, driver behaviour in Berkeley Close. These concerns continue to be raised with the Highways Authorities, Police and supported by our District and County Councillors.

The Parish Council resolved to support District Councillor Rob Adams in his capacity as Armed Forces Community Covenant Champion and agreed to support Whittington School and The Community Hall Management Committee in commemorating D Day on Thursday 6th June at the community Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend. Details and times will be published in due course.

For further information regarding the work of the Parish Council please go to the Website or contact the clerk at clerk@whittingtonparishcouncil.co.uk or facebook.com/whittingtonpc.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held at the Community Hall on the 19th of March. The annual Parish meeting will be held on Tuesday the 23rd of April. Parishioners are encouraged to attend. This is *your* Parish!

Information and further detail regarding the work of the Parish Council, details of the next meeting or minutes of previous meetings, can be found through the following; Clerk to the Council David Hunter-Miller, 35 Benbow Close, Malvern Wells, WR14 4JJ, email clerk@whittingtonparishcouncil.co.uk Tel 07513 122918

Website: whittingtonparishcouncil.co.uk
and facebook.com/whittingtonpc

A time capsule in Malvern Priory

A time capsule has been placed underneath the new nave flooring in Malvern Priory.

It contains 77 different items including a letter to the future from the vicar of Malvern, the Revd Rod Corke, the master plan for the development of the Priory, the musical traditions involving the choir, the handbell ringers and the music groups, a copy of the church magazine and many photographs and details of the day-to-day workings of the church.



The nave floor is currently undergoing major building works to make it level. For the last 150 years the aisle to the altar has been flanked by wooden platforms, creating a safety hazard for users and limiting use of the space for community activities. The entire floor has now been excavated and under floor heating installed. The new flooring has been put in place this week effectively burying the time capsule.

The capsule, which is made of stainless steel and is the size of a large vacuum flask, was laid by two of the Priory's youngest members of the congregation, Iolo and Martha who are both three years old. Together with 92-year-old fellow worshipper, Edwina Hawker, they placed the stainless steel capsule between the joists of the new floor ably assisted by our vicar Rod. The capsule was masterminded by Philippa Lowe, communications co-ordinator, who was given just two weeks to pull it together. "The idea came from our vicar, but we didn't have much time because the team working on the floor have been brilliant and have got on so quickly with the work. We've highlighted many of our activities and explained how the congregation raised a substantial part of the £350,000 needed. We've had lots of social events. Our vicar's wife Rita raised over £7,000 with a wing walk, members of the congregation took part in a variety show and we held an auction of promises. Everyone pulled together."

The capsule has a silicone seal which will last for around 100 years. Details of its placement will be recorded in the archives and also in the vestry so that on 10 February in 2124 it will be opened. "Who knows," said Rod "with people living so much longer it may well be Iolo or Martha who open it."

The plan to level the nave floor has been in the pipeline for many years. If all goes according to plan the Priory will re-open for all its services and events by Easter. Currently the Sunday morning service, which attracts around 250 people, is being held at Malvern College. Other, smaller services still take place in the church.

Car enthusiasts 'REVS' up for another year.



Are you interested in cars or motoring? Do you have an interesting and well loved car that does not get driven enough?

REVS is a Christian based group that has various meeting places in the West Midlands and which now includes the Parish Rooms at Knighton on Teme, WR15 8LY. They meet every third Saturday in the month, beginning in April, at about 10am and finishing around noon. Tea, coffee and sausage sandwiches are provided for a donation.

The aim is to meet, talk cars and to look at what others have brought along. There is also the chance to talk informally about some of the bigger life issues such as faith, if you so wish.

If you would like to find out more, please contact:

Jonathan Spilsbury: jonathanspilsbury01@gmail.com or

Mark Wild: mwild521@gmail.com for more information.



Regular worshippers were upgraded to first class

Rolled

From a church magazine:
“The restoration of the churchyard was finally completed by the resurfacing of our driveway.

The following Sunday, the church wardens praised everyone who had helped, and gave special thanks to the vicar and his wife who had rolled in the gravel.

Archbishops welcome publication of Future of Church Safeguarding Report

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have welcomed the recent publication of the *Future of Church Safeguarding report* from Professor Alexis Jay, with an outline of next steps for how the Church responds.

Professor Jay, the former Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, IICSA, agreed in July 2023 to develop proposals around independence in safeguarding in the Church. The work was commissioned following the termination of the contracts of the original Independent Safeguarding Board, ISB.

In a statement the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby and the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell said:

“We thank Professor Jay and her team for this fully independent report, and the wisdom, expertise and meticulous proposals contained within it. We recognise her criticism of our safeguarding structures and processes, and we welcome this scrutiny and challenge.

“For the sake of all those who come into contact with the Church, particularly victims and survivors, we welcome the plans that are in place to take forward this work as swiftly as possible to give everyone confidence and trust in our structures and processes.

“Professor Jay rightly acknowledges the excellent work that is done up and down the country by experienced and committed Safeguarding Officers and others, but her challenge to us all is how our safeguarding structures and processes reach that same standard. This is a constructive challenge that we must all take very seriously.

The Church of England’s lead safeguarding bishop, Joanne Grenfell, who is chairing the Response Group for the Wilkinon and Jay reviews said: “The report from Professor Jay contains important recommendations for the structure of safeguarding in the Church with a clear emphasis on independent scrutiny and the importance of independent professional advice in all our safeguarding work.”

Choir....

Seen in a parish magazine: ‘Next Sunday the choir will give a recital, after which the church will be closed for repairs.’

Richard of Chichester - more clearly, dearly and nearly

Ever wonder where the prayer ... *'May I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly, day by day'* comes from? Richard of Chichester, a bishop in the 13th century, wrote it.

He began life as Richard de Wych of Droitwich, the son of a yeoman farmer. But Richard was a studious boy, and after helping his father on the farm for several years, refused an advantageous offer of marriage, and instead made his way to Oxford, and later to Paris and Bologna to study canon law.

In 1235 he returned to Oxford, and was soon appointed Chancellor, where he supported Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his struggles against King Henry III's misuse of Church funds. After further study to become a priest, Richard was in due course made a bishop himself. He was greatly loved. He was charitable and accessible, both stern and merciful to sinners, extraordinarily generous to those stricken by famine, and a brilliant legislator of his diocese. He decreed that the sacraments were to be administered without payment, Mass celebrated in dignified conditions, the clergy to be chaste, to practise residence, and to wear clerical dress. The laity was obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days, and to know by heart the Hail Mary as well as the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

Richard was also prominent in preaching the Crusade, which he saw as a call to reopen the Holy Land to pilgrims, not as a political expedition. He died at Dover on 3 April 1253. In art, Richard of Chichester is represented with a chalice at his feet, in memory of his having once dropped the chalice at Mass! One ancient English church is dedicated to him.

And, of course, he is author of that famous prayer, now set to popular music, which runs in full: *"Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ for all the benefits thou hast given me, for all the pains and insults which thou hast borne for me. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and follow thee more nearly, day by day."*

Heaven.....

Seen in a parish magazine: "We shall be meeting on Wednesday, when the subject will be 'Heaven - how do we get there?' Transport by bus is available at 6.45pm opposite the King's Arms.



St Mark in the Cherry Orchard Diocese of Worcester



News & Views from St Mark in the Cherry Orchard

I thought that I would begin with a lesson in what can happen when words are abbreviated, such as on the following occasion:

There was a little old schoolteacher from England who was looking for a room in Switzerland and she asked a Swiss travel agent to help her. A place that suited her was found but she noticed that there was no mention of a bathroom or, as she called it, a water closet so she wrote to her travel agent to ask whether or not a WC was in or near to the house. The agent, who didn't know the expression, was puzzled by the abbreviation 'WC', never thinking that she was talking about a bathroom so he sought the parish priest's advice; they concluded that 'WC' must mean **Wayside Chapel** and responded by sending a letter to the lady (see the end of this article for the response that was sent)

Where is He Now?

Many of you who read this magazine will remember one of St Mark's former incumbents, the Revd Duncan Ballard, who moved to Tamworth in Arden and then on to Carsington Water in Derbyshire, seemingly getting nearer to Scotland where I am aware that he has a home. However, I was surprised to receive a copy of an article from the Glamorgan Star highlighting an art exhibition in the Holy Cross Church in Cowbridge, a small town between Cardiff and Bridgend that included a lovely photograph of Duncan who is the Cowbridge Ministry Area Leader. He is quoted as saying 'churches have always been places of beauty, tranquillity and creativity, and so it is fitting that we have offered space within Holy Cross Church for the inspiring artwork of the Cowbridge Arts Society'. Those of you who have lived in this area for as long as I have may remember a similar event that Duncan organised in St Marks many years' ago. He borrowed huge pieces of white plywood from the Cathedral to exhibit the artwork and it turned out to be very successful. However, it proved rather difficult to return the plywood from whence it came mainly because of the size and weight and the PCC had to be reminded on several occasions that the Cathedral wanted it all back; I don't recall how we got it down there!! If anyone is interested in reading the whole article, please get in touch with me. There is a picture of Duncan and it is agreed that he looks great so we are sending our Welsh

reporter to pay Holy Cross Church a visit and see if she can get an interview!

I have been invited to meet a friend in St Peter's Parish Hall to learn of the logistics involved, and find out how the money was raised, when a defibrillator was fitted in their community venue; this is with a view to having one installed in St Marks Church Hall. It is not going to happen overnight because there are all sorts of hurdles to get over before we can have one of our own, not least the faculty application. In preparation, we are launching the **St Mark in the Cherry Orchard Church Defibrillator Fund** and I have approached the hire centre and local co-op store who have both agreed to support the venture by having collection boxes on the counters. The Heart Support Group who use the hall once a month have expressed an interest in supporting the project and a recent generous donation to the church has been earmarked to add to the funds needed; I will endeavour to keep you up to date with the progress each month.

With the help of another donation, it is hoped to source a new roadside notice board because the clip boards on the current one are disintegrating. The silver backing is cracked and the plastic sheets that cover the posters constantly need replacing because weather conditions cause them to turn yellow and render them brittle. Several years' ago vandals 'popped' some of the rivets that hold the board to the upright posts, that are also showing signs of rust; effort was made to secure the board but it has failed and is loose again. First impressions are that a new one is going to be very expensive so if you are aware of a carpenter who could make one for us, please let me know; however, I do have a crazy plan B!!

Finally, cooking on gas again hopefully, by the time you read this edition, the new gas cooker, paid for with the **generous donation from Worcester Vigornia Rotary Club**, will have been installed by a registered gas fitter. Thankfully there will be no more burnt offerings from the old cooker which will not be going on the scrap heap.

Remember the piece at the beginning of this article – this is the response sent to the schoolteacher

Dear Madam

The WC is located 9 miles from the house in the heart of a beautiful grove of trees. It will seat 350 people at any one time and is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays of each week. Some people like to take their lunch and make a day of it, especially on Thursdays when there is an organ concert. *Continued....*

The acoustics are very good and the slightest sound can be heard by everyone.

It may interest you to know that my daughter met her husband at the WC. We are in the process of taking donations to purchase new plush seats, we feel that it is necessary as the present ones have holes in them. My wife is rather delicate therefore she hasn't been able to attend regularly; it has been six months since she went and naturally it pains her very much not to be able to go more often.

I will close now with the desire to accommodate you in every way possible and will be happy to save you a seat either down in the front or near the door, whichever you prefer.

Yours sincerely, etc.

I'm sure that you'll be delighted to know that I have more like this!!

Chat & Cuppa Club will be in the church hall from 2 – 3pmish on Tuesday, 2 April; thereafter on the **first Tues of every month**. Everyone, including gentlemen are very welcome to join us for a **free** cuppa. In February, we were delighted that some of the former members of Cherry Orchard Ladies Club joined us and it would be lovely to grow the number; if you know previous member(s), please pass this information on to them.

Advanced Dates for your Diary

The next **Quiz Night** in the church hall is on **Saturday, 20 April**. Arrive at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. Suggested donation £3pp (come as a team or join one when you arrive) accompanied under 16s free. BYO snacks and drinks. This is a friendly, fun event that generally has lots of laughter. Please advertise to family and friends, the more, the merrier, literally!

St Mark's Annual Parochial Church Meeting will begin at approximately 10.45am on Sunday, 12 May, after the Sunday service.

So Spring has sprung, the grass has ris' (a lot) and I know where the birdies is – they are singing in my garden and it's lovely to hear!!

Jan

janvale810@gmail.com



Revision of St Mark's Electoral Roll 2024

By law a church's Electoral Roll must be revised every year to keep it up to date. This year's revision will be carried out by the PCC from 15 March to 19 April, a notice to this effect has been posted near the church main entrance door. If you are already on the Roll **you need do nothing.**

The Roll is open to all churchgoing members of the parish, no matter how often they attend, or those who live outside the parish but attend St Mark's services. Anybody who meets these basic criteria but is not currently on the Roll is invited to contact me (01905-350123) for an application form, which includes further information about the Roll and instructions for completion. Completed application forms should be returned to me by 12 April to allow time for me and the PCC to process it by 19 April

Roger (Electoral Roll Officer)

World Autism Acceptance Week, 2nd – 8th April 2024

Autism is on the rise. Or at least, the recognition of it is. According to the website psychcentral.com, there was a 787% exponential increase in the number of people who were diagnosed with autism between 1998 and 2018 in the UK.

The National Autistic Society says that in the UK, more than one in every 100 people are now on the autism spectrum. It reckons that around 700,000 adults and children in the UK suffer with the condition to some degree.

All of which means that you probably know of someone who has autism, to some degree. And you may know that, as it says on the NHS website:

Autistic people may act in a different way to other people, ... and find it hard to understand how other people think or feel... To help people with autism, you may wish to support this 'acceptance week', by going to the National Autistic Society's website, <https://www.autism.org.uk> and taking part in some way in their fundraising campaign.

Appreciating Johann Sebastian Bach

Three hundred years ago, on 7th April 1724, the German composer Johann Sebastian Bach's *St John Passion* was performed for the first time, at a church in Leipzig.

It was put on as part of Good Friday Vespers at St Nicholas Church, having been transferred from St Thomas at the last moment by the music council. Bach, who had just turned 39, agreed to the move, while pointing out that the booklet had already been printed, there was no room immediately available for the musicians, and the harpsichord needed some repair. These problems were overcome.

Bach was already highly regarded, but primarily as a harpsichordist and organ expert. Later seen as one of the best composers of all time – renowned for such works as the *Brandenburg Concertos* and his *Mass in B Minor* – he was one of a large family of north German musicians. He is widely praised as a great synthesiser of styles and traditions.

The *St John Passion*, written during his first year as director of church music in Leipzig, was designed to be used as part of a church service. It follows John 18 and 19 in the Luther Bible, but the writer of the libretto is not known. A possible earlier Passion, written in Weimar, is lost.

Nowadays the *St John Passion* is heard mainly in the 1739–1749 version, which was never performed in Bach's lifetime, though he made many revisions to the original before his death.



Wages....

Seen on a church notice board:
'Despite inflation, the wages of sin remain the same.'

"Police? This is St Mary's Ladies' Knitting & Vigilante Circle. We've detained two gents trying to nick the church silver."

50 years of ABBA!

Fifty years ago, on 6th April 1974, the Swedish pop group ABBA won the Eurovision Song Contest with their song *Waterloo*. It was the first time that Sweden won the contest. ABBA went on to be one of the most successful groups in music history.

The victory, in Brighton, was just the first step on the road to conquering the world, as far as pop music was concerned. The songs, written mainly by Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson, were matched by the passion, exuberance and good looks of singers Agnetha Fältskog and Anni-Frid 'Frida' Lyngstad, who later married them – and even later, divorced them.

The name of the group came from the initials of the four Christian names. Some have suggested a link to the biblical Abba and looked for Jewish themes in their songs, but this is wishful thinking. While Anni-Frid (who was born Norwegian) may be Christian, Björn is definitely an outspoken atheist. In fact, ABBA is the name of a Swedish canned fish company that had to give permission for the singers to use it – a decision they are unlikely to have regretted.

Both *Waterloo* and ABBA achieved worldwide superstar status quickly – no small feat for a group performing in a language that is not their own. The film *ABBA – the Movie* and the musical *Mamma Mia* and its sequel, featuring their compelling songs, were huge successes. It is estimated that the musical has been seen by more than 60 million people worldwide.

ABBA hit the jackpot again when their revolutionary new project, *ABBA Voyage*, launched in 2022. In it, Agnetha, Björn, Benny and Anni-Frid perform their love-songs digitally with a live 10-piece band, in a purpose-built ABBA arena at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London. Not bad for four divorcees in their 70s.



Whittington Parish Magazine

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