

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



APRIL 26

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75p

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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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*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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The invasion of Ukraine

The 13th instalment of Denys Bielov's account of his escape from Mariupol will be found on pages 14/15, again this month. Denys spends time waiting for a visa in Berlin, and getting dental work done in Wroclaw. See page 26/27 for ways that we can help Ukrainians fighting on the front line and what we have achieved.

Letter from the Vicarage

March 26



Hi everyone,

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

In previous years, for the April magazine and in anticipation of Easter, I have written,

“I don’t know about you, but over these last few weeks, as spring has begun to exert its hold upon our weather; as the daylight hours have grown longer and the mornings brighter, and the daytime temperatures have risen, I have felt a growing sense of anticipation within me, a sense of excitement and joy and delight.”

I don’t know that those words really fit with the weather patterns we have been experiencing in the last week or so, and indeed at the time of writing there remains speculation that we could yet have snow (probably only in Scotland) for Easter! Nonetheless, the daylight hours are extending and the mornings are getting brighter, even if the temperatures aren’t quite keeping pace. I wonder would these changes be enough for you to feel that growing sense of delight and joy?

For me, a lot of this feeling will have to do with my anticipation of the coming Easter season, when once again the church can shout it aloud. “Christ is Risen! Alleluia!” We can celebrate again all that it means for us that Christ has risen from the dead; that despite the bloody torture of his execution on the cross, despite his shout of anguish and utter dereliction, “God, why have you abandoned me!”, despite the fact that he died and was buried; despite all of this, he fulfilled his promise to come back to life, and to offer us all the hope and joys of eternal life.

Continued...

I wonder, how will you celebrate Christ's victory over the grave? Will it make any difference to you? Will it put a spring in your step?

Or will it leave you unaffected? Untouched? Will you leave the events of Easter, well and truly consigned to the past? After all, what possible relevance is there in the events that took place 2000 years ago in a land far, far away from Worcester?

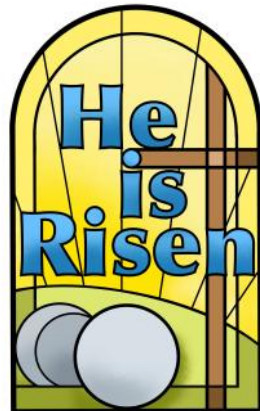
Or will you believe that when Jesus promised to bring life and life in all its abundance, he was making that offer not just to his disciples, but also to everyone who would believe in him – and that can include you and me?

I know though, from personal experience how lonely a church can be on Easter Sunday morning, if for whatever reason you are not emotionally in a place for rejoicing, for singing and shouting. If you through personal circumstance find yourself unable to wholeheartedly rejoice, please do remember that Christ's victory over the grave is for you as well. For it means that the God who created the world, is the God who loved the world enough to become human, is the God who asked God why he had abandoned him and is the God who loved Him enough to raise Him from the dead. He is the God that promises always to journey with us; and He is the God who promises always to love us, no matter what.

Whether you will shout or whisper it this year, do remember, "Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed! Alleluia."

Wishing you all a very Happy and joyous Easter.

Andy



What's on at Whittington April & May 2026

Thursday 1st April 7.30pm	Maundy Thursday Holy Communion at St Martin's
Friday 2nd April 2.00pm	Good Friday 'An Hour at the Cross'
Saturday 4 th April 10.30-12noon	Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room
Sunday 5th April 11.00am 3.30pm	Easter Day Easter Family Communion Forest Church
Sunday 12th April 11.00am	Easter 2 Family Service
Saturday 18 th April 10.30 – 12noon	Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room
Sunday 19th April 11.00am	Easter 3 Parish Communion
Sunday 26th April 11.00am	Easter 4 Family Communion
Saturday 2 nd May 10.30-12.00noon	Yew Brew in the Elizabethan Room
Sunday 3rd May 11.00am 1.00pm	St Philip & St James Parish Communion Baptism
Tuesday 5 th May 6.30pm	PCC Meeting in the Elizabethan Room
Sunday 10th May 11.00am	Easter 6 Rogation Sunday Family Service

You are invited to the
Good Friday Project
on Good Friday



at St Mark in the Cherry Orchard

Friday 3rd April

10:00 – 12:00

Craft, food and fun

All Welcome



Leading the way in sustainability

From the Bishop of Dudley, Martin Gorick:

I'm very proud to be part of the Diocese of Worcester. We may not be the biggest diocese, or the richest either, but time and again we punch above our weight, with churches and schools growing as Kingdom People, and seeing parishes and serving communities transformed through the love of God.

In February I was at the Church of England's General Synod in London. Hundreds of delegates, elected from every diocese, who come together twice or three times a year to have discussions and make decisions on behalf of the whole church. Sarah Mullally was presiding for the first time as Archbishop of Canterbury, bringing a calm and determined presence to proceedings, keeping us focused on being a Christ-like church for the sake of God's world.

I had the privilege of introducing a motion from our own diocese. It was a grassroots motion that had begun around a kitchen table in Harpley village, where a group of friends wondered how they could celebrate God's creation through flowers and greenery that were local and seasonal, and arranged without using harmful floral foam. So began the movement for Sustainable Church Flowers, that is now national and ecumenical in scope.

Their proposal was passed by their rural PCC and was then discussed and passed at Kidderminster and Stourport Deanery Synod. It was wholeheartedly endorsed by Worcester Diocesan Synod, and eventually found itself on the floor of General Synod in London. Some people thought it too trivial even to discuss, but the wonderful Diocesan video soon won people round and after a vigorous debate the motion was passed with flying colours.

You can read more about it [on the diocesan website](#), where we also have pages with information about [becoming an Eco Church](#). Help is on hand if you don't know where to start, as we look to enjoy God's creation in church, without damaging creation in the process. HRH the King said we need to "be a part of creation, not apart from creation". And through the movement for Sustainable Church Flowers, the Diocese of Worcester is leading the way. May God bless you in all you do. *Bishop Martin*



Whittington Church Electoral Roll 2026

The Church Electoral Roll will be updated ahead of the Annual Meeting on **Sunday 10 May**. This means that anyone who wishes may join at this stage. 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 **Tuesday 14 April** at the latest.

Janet Pearson
Electoral Roll Officer

What's orange, sticky and worth preserving?

This month sees National Marmalade Week (18th – 25th April). If you really want to celebrate, go to Dalemain Mansion and Gardens in Cumbria, where they hold the World Marmalade Awards & Festival. It celebrates, preserves and promotes artisanal marmalades, with thousands of entries. (Even Paddington Bear will be in attendance!)

If you like marmalade, ever wonder where it comes from? One tradition traces it to a storm-damaged Spanish ship which took refuge in Dundee Harbour in 1700. It was full of Seville oranges that the captain was desperate to sell before they went mouldy. A local down-on-luck merchant, one James Keiller, bought the lot. He didn't know what to do with the oranges either, but fortunately he had a resourceful wife. She set about turning a shipload of Seville oranges into a preserve, and so the first marmalade factory was born.

Marmalade has been at the heart of British breakfasts for centuries. Winston Churchill fought the Second World War on it (washed down with a flute of Pol Roger each morning). DH Lawrence wrote novels on it. Paddington Bear's sandwiches were all marmalade. If you also want to get your fingers sticky, visit: www.marmaladeawards.com.

World War One Soldiers Commemorated in Worcester Cathedral Cloister



Malcolm MacLeod gave a most interesting illustrated talk when the 'in person' Yew Brew reopened on 7 March. He said he had been set the task of researching the topic by his wife Susan, and as a former guide at the Cathedral he was happy to deepen his knowledge. He began with the famous **Lord Kitchener** recruitment poster which helped sign up 750,000 volunteers nationally in the first month of the war and over a million by December. **The George Chapel** in the Cathedral holds the Roll of Honour of the 100,000 volunteers from Worcestershire, many of whom have no known grave, of whom 9460 were killed and many more injured. 450 former students of the **King's School** fought in the war and 82 died including 5 sets of brothers, along with 4 teachers. 31 were awarded the MC.

Our particular link at Whittington is the plaque to remember **Lieutenant Herbert James Graham Gilmour**, who is also commemorated in a window in the cloister, both given by his mother, Mrs Price-Hughes. The family lived in Whittington Lodge before moving to Redhill. He was a keen horseman and cricketer and a career soldier who served in India before being commissioned and sent to France. He was killed at Vailly on September 19th 1914 at the age of 31, so very early in the war. His mother was later awarded the OBE for setting up a Prisoner of War Comfort Fund in his memory.

There are several especially poignant memorials to families who lost more than one member. **Captain James Robert Blake MC**, known as Robin, was the son of an honorary Canon of the Cathedral, the vicar of Bretforton and his wife. James was missing in action at Courcelette in March 1918. His brother **Edward (Ned)** was killed in training and both young men are commemorated in inscriptions on the new bells hung in the Cathedral in 1928, along with other **bell ringers** lost in the war.

Other clergy families include the sons of **Canon J M Wilson**. **Edward** was a career soldier who suffered from shell shock as a result of his experiences and fell at Steenwerk in May 1916. His younger brother **Hugh Stanley** was a friend of **Rupert Brook** and died in 1915 at Hebuterne. **Arnold** died in World War 2 near Dunkirk. A fourth brother survived them all and had a career in opera and with the BBC.

Ernest Grant Ede RN was killed in action in the North Sea in 1917. He was the nephew of **W Moore Ede DD** Dean of the Cathedral. By a tragic coincidence his son was lost in the same area of sea in World War 2.



These are just a few examples of the tragic loss of life, each commemorated in the Cloister windows. Malcolm read **Wilfred Owen's** poem *Dulce et Decorum Est* to illustrate the cruel irony of the reality of the war, and ended with the **Revd Geoffrey Studdart Kennedy's** (Woodbine Willy's) poem *Waste*, written from personal experience in the trenches. It seems that all these years later we have still not learned the lessons and it was good to be reminded. The audience really appreciated Malcolm's presentation and many were keen to share connections afterwards over refreshments.

Janet Pearson



Sunday 5 April
3.30pm - 4.30pm
Whittington Churchyard

Celebrate the hope of Easter and new beginnings as we listen to birdsong and spot signs of God's love all around us. Join us for outdoor worship, activities and refreshments, including chocolate eggs!
Contact: revrichwood@gmail.com





Whittington CE Primary School Year 5 – Commandery Visit



On Tuesday 3rd March, Year 5 visited the The Commandery to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the English Civil War.

The children represented our school brilliantly and behaved sensibly throughout the entire trip. They were respectful and courteous to



other visitors at the museum, demonstrating excellent manners and responsibility



During the visit, the children took part in a variety of workshops designed to deepen their understanding of the period. They were able to step into the life of a Stuart by trying on different clothing, exploring the types of food people ate, and learning about the roles of men and women at the time.

The children also enjoyed dressing up as Roundheads and Cavaliers, and even had the opportunity to handle replica weapons (safely and under supervision, of course). A particular highlight of the trip was when the children re-enacted a battle involving pikemen, bringing their learning about the Civil War vividly to life.

Continued...



Take a look at some of the children's comments:

It was really interesting because we learnt a lot of new things, like how the cannon worked in battle.
Elijas

We had lots of fun when we were trying the hats on. Lots of us were able to dress up in battle uniform! Poppy

I really enjoyed seeing what the clothes were like during the Civil War. The cutlery was interesting as well.
Arthur



It was cool seeing the different rooms in the museum. We even got to see Oliver Cromwell's death mask! Natalia



Escape from Mariupol

by Denys Bielov - 13

To Wroclaw and the dentist

Early on the 11th. April 2024, Ruslan took me to the bus station in Berlin, and I travelled to Wroclaw, Poland. I was no longer afraid because my documents were in order. At 1pm, our bus pulled into the bus station at the Wroclavia Mall in the centre of Wroclaw. Tanya had located and paid for a week's stay in a hostel as I was having problems with money.



After a short rest, I rushed to the dentist in a five-storey building. I was met by a young woman named Maria. She was from Bakhmut in Ukraine, a charming city in the Donetsk region, 160 km north of Mariupol. Only ruins remain after Russian destruction. Maria is a dentist sent from God! She put out my 'tooth fire'. On my next visit, she restored my tooth and began treating the next two, which also had problems.

I returned to the hostel in the evening and enjoyed the walk feeling the weight taken off my shoulders. Spring was already in full swing. The city was very green and rich with different types of architecture from modest neighbourhoods with narrow streets to multi-storey residential areas and wide spaces between houses. I went for morning runs and looked for street gyms to work out.

My neighbours at the hostel were a young man from western Ukraine and an older man from Donbass who told incredible stories of his escape and constantly offered vodka which I refused. On the 18th. April, I had to leave the hostel and needed another place to stay. I was running low on cash, having spent a lot on dental treatment. I felt awkward asking Tanya for more money. I discovered another friend, Olga, who had settled with her child in Wroclaw having come from Dnipro in Ukraine. The only accommodation she could recommend was to look for a cheap hostel.

The Rubikus programme came to my aid again. It provided accommodation where Ukrainian refugees could live for free for a while. That was exactly what I needed. All I had to do was leave a deposit of 200 zlotys for the keys, and I could move in.

I had a room, previously a kitchen, in a very old and run-down building in the city centre. The kitchen furniture and two small refrigerators were in the corridor, and the residents took turns using this improvised kitchen. The conditions were very basic. But I was in no position to be choosy. I cleaned my own room and worked with my neighbours to clean the kitchen of the dirt left by previous guests. My cracked windows overlooked a very noisy street, so it was impossible to fall asleep before one in the morning. I arrived safely in Berlin, took my passport to the visa centre, and headed to Spandau. It was quite difficult not to get lost, but Ruslan again helped me find the right tram and train. I arrived at Oleg's flat at about five in the evening. I was greeted by a very pleasant woman named Lyudmila, who was also from Mariupol. We had a chat and reminisced. The next morning, I went for a run through the park area and near the beautiful lakes.



That same evening, I received a message that my passport and visa were ready. "Hurray! Now I definitely can see the finish line!" On the morning of the 25th, I picked up my documents. Worcester, here I come!!



“Smelly house”

“Smelly room”



All photos by courtesy of Denys Bielov



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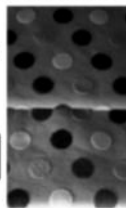
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The forgotten war in South Sudan

There is so much going on in South Sudan. The health sector is on its deathbed. Support to more than 100 health facilities has been withdrawn due to lack of funding. County Hospitals have been reduced to primary healthcare centres to reduce costs. In addition, hospitals have been merged.



The cost of living has gone through the roof. Many families are going hungry. It is estimated that approximately 9 million South Sudanese are on the verge of starvation. That is close to 80% of the population.

This is just a tip of the iceberg and a lived experience of many South Sudanese.”

Above is a picture we published in the South Sudan Medical Journal in 2022 of the medical staff in the only children’s hospital in South Sudan (El-Sabbah Children’s Hospital). Wish I was twenty years younger ... I’d go tomorrow!

David Tibbutt

Community Hall Update

WHAT'S ON - REGULAR CLASSES YOU CAN JOIN
Please contact the class organiser for more information,
costs and to pre-book

MONDAY.

10.30am - 11.30am. Zumba with Aimee Ford.

Contact: aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk

5.30pm. The Star Project Children's Theatre (Term time only)
with Jo Payne.

Contact: director@thestarproject.info

TUESDAY.

4.00pm to 6.30pm. Dance (for 3 year olds and above) with Elizabeth Gibbs

Contact: lizdance@icloud.com

6.30pm - 9.30pm Gong Bath + Sound Meditation with Angela Latham.

Contact: evenstartbabe@msm.com

(varying monthly dates available)

WEDNESDAY.

4.30pm to 5.30pm Yoga with Natalie Houlding.

Contact: natalie@zafyoga.com

6.30pm to 7.30pm. Pilates with Rebecca Hadlington.

Contact: fitness-worcester.com

THURSDAY.

10.00am (for 10.15am start) to 11.00am Zumba with Denise Wrafter

11.00am to 12.00noon Yoga with Denise Wrafter.

Contact: denisewrafter@outlook.com

7.15pm - 9.15pm T'ai Chi with Dr Marc.

Contact: marc@obelison.com

FRIDAY.

9.45am to 10.45am Zumba with Aimee Ford.

Contact: aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk

6.00pm to 7.00pm. Duke Yoga with Fiona

Contact: fib42@hotmail.com



Community Hall Management Committee
info@whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk

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Remembering Francis Bacon

Four hundred years ago, on 9th April 1626, Francis Bacon, philosopher and politician, died of pneumonia. He served as Attorney General of England and Wales (1613-17) and then Lord High Chancellor of England (1617-21). He was known as the “Father of Empiricism”, as his works influenced the scientific revolution in Europe.

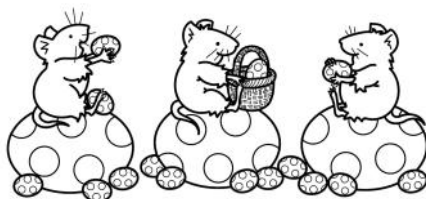
Although involved in high-end politics, Bacon’s primary interest was in promoting a sceptical and methodical approach to scientific experimentation, which he saw as a way of glorifying God. A devout Anglican, he wrote that superficiality in science promoted atheism, but deep research “bringeth men’s minds about to religion”.

Bacon was born in central London in 1561 and was educated at home to start with because of poor health. His father was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal and his mother the daughter of a prominent Renaissance humanist. She was also sister-in-law of the powerful William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley.

Multi-talented and with a keen intellect, Bacon had a long career as a parliamentarian, being first elected as MP for a Cornwall seat in 1581, but also as a respected author and as a judge, where he was pro-Puritan but also had a reputation as a liberal-minded reformer who opposed religious persecution.

Bacon thrived when James I came to the throne in 1603, and he was knighted and adopted as an ally to the monarch. He also married the 13-year-old Alice Barnham, daughter of a Sheriff of London, but the marriage was probably not a happy one.

Although he was regarded by most as fair and compassionate, Bacon had strong and long-term enemies, including Sir Edward Coke, who charged him with 23 counts of corruption when as Lord Chancellor he accepted as gifts what seemed to some to be bribes. He was fined and imprisoned briefly but later pardoned by the King.



Step Up for Maggs – Community Walk

Supporting People Experiencing Homelessness



Local charity **Maggs Day Centre** is inviting people across Worcestershire to lace up their walking boots and take part in a special sponsored walk this May.

To celebrate **40 years of supporting people experiencing homelessness**, Maggs is hosting **Step Up for Maggs**, a **10-mile guided walk from Malvern Link to Worcester** on **Wednesday 20 May 2026** as part of the Malvern Walking Festival.

The route follows countryside paths and Rail Trails between Malvern and Worcester and will be led by experienced volunteer walk leaders from Worcester Ramblers, making it a friendly and well-supported day out.

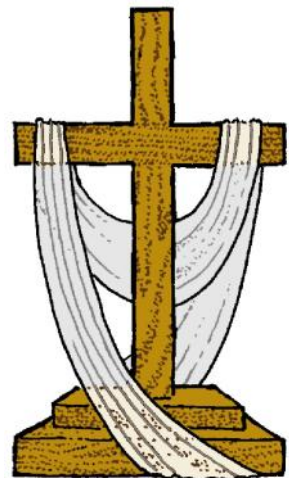
Participants are encouraged to raise sponsorship to help fund Maggs' vital frontline services, which provide practical support including hot meals, clothing, showers, housing advice and support for people facing homelessness across the county.

Whether you join with friends, family, colleagues or your church community, every step helps ensure that people facing some of the most difficult circumstances in our community have somewhere safe to turn.

Find out more or register:

www.maggsdaycentre.co.uk

<https://stepupformaggs.eventbrite.co.uk>



Helping the people of Ukraine on the front line



UKRAINE APPEAL

UKRAINE APPEAL

UKRAINE FREEDOM COMPANY (WEST MIDLANDS)

Ukrainefreedomcompany.org

Patron: Maj Gen Arthur Denaro CBE, DL

COMFORT BOXES

Contributions are required to provide individual 'comfort' boxes for the men and women fighting at the front. These may contain some or all of the following items:

First Aid kit items: Bandages: Antiseptic cream: Lip sol: Wet wipes: Soap: Tissues

Female sanitary products: Toilet rolls: Toothpaste/brush: Small towels

Candles (including tea lights) Sewing kits Tea: Coffee: Sweets/chocolate

Thermal underwear: socks:

Tinned food (ideally with ring-pull top) - e.g. sardines: baked beans: soups: fruit:
or packets of dried foods – e.g. pasta; noodles; soups; 'instant' oats

Cooking utensils - army mess tins: enamel plates/mugs: cutlery: small pots/pans:

DO NOT INCLUDE ALCOHOL, DRUGS OR CIGARETTES AS THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE CONFISCATED BY CUSTOMS.

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

**** There is a desperate ongoing need for medical supplies and first aid kits – priority items required being tourniquets, wound dressings, bandages of all types, etc.

While many medical items in the UK are required to have a 'use-by' date, and often consequently get destroyed, UFC can often divert these for use in the Ukraine – please consider approaching contacts at local hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies, doctors' surgeries, paramedics, etc. requesting that they give consideration to donating such supplies. In addition, there are many mobility aids retained by ex-patients who find it difficult to return them - we are happy to accept such items including wheelchairs, walking frames, crutches, walking sticks, limb splints etc.

****We are now able to accept financial donations via our dedicated bank account – please consider a 'one off' donation, or a monthly standing order, details as follows:

Metro Bank Account: Ukraine Freedom Co (West Midlands)

Account No: 56781099 – Sort Code: 23 - 05 - 80

If able to assist, please contact your local UFC representative, who can also arrange collection throughout the area: Brian Watkins email: lovelacewatkins@uwclub.net mobile: 07771684000

Donations for the Ukraine Appeal

Dear Everyone,

These are the donations that have been collected over a very short time. A convoy of trucks go to Ukraine every few weeks and many of these items have been taken already to those on, or near, the front line in this dreadful war. Thank you all so much.

Denys Bielov, Olena and Volodymyr Musiaka and David Tibbutt

Items	Quantity
Cash	£20.00
Blankets	25
Towels	3
Sheets	2
Candles (incl. small ones)	238
Toothpaste	3
Toothbrush	5
Dental brushes	2 packets
Woolly knitted hats: for adult	7
Woolly knitted hats: for children	7
Woolly balaclavas	17
Woolly jumper	1
Vests	2
Underpants	15 pairs
Socks	18 pairs
Slipper socks	1 pair
Handkerchiefs	3
Cleansing wipes / tissues	11 packets
Soap	13 bars
Tea bags	1 box of 80
Baked beans	5 tins
Soup (tins/packets)	8
Corned beef	4 tins
Biscuits	8 packets
Rice	1 packet
Pasta	1 packet
Bars of chocolate	5
Tins of tuna	4
Bandages	8
First aid kits	2
Sewing kits	8
Paracetamol	2 packets of 16
Ibuprofen	2 packets of 16

It's National Pet Month

April is National Pet Month (NPM), an annual initiative dedicated to promoting responsible pet ownership, and supporting UK pet charities.

National Pet Month celebrates the companionship of our pets, educates owners on responsible care, and raises funds for pet charities.

Pet owners are encouraged to share their pet stories/photos, host fundraisers, and to visit [the National Pet Month website](#) for resources.

Remembering the musical genius of Richard D'Oyly Carte

It was 125 years ago, on 3rd April 1901, that Richard D'Oyly Carte, theatrical impresario, died. He built the Savoy Theatre and the Palace Theatre in London, managed some of the most important theatrical stars of the era, and founded a touring opera company.

Best known now for his association with Gilbert and Sullivan, Carte operated during the late Victorian age as a talent spotter/agent and theatrical impresario, as well as building a hotel empire. Among his many clients were Jacques Offenbach, Clara Schumann, James McNeill Whistler, Matthew Arnold and Oscar Wilde.

Carte was born in 1844 in Soho, but when he was a boy the family moved to Dartmouth Park in Islington, North London, where he was brought up in a large, detached house by an artistic family who spoke French at home two days a week. The name D'Oyly is French/Norman, and the family also had Welsh ancestry. Musically gifted, Carte studied violin and flute from an early age, then took up composing.

While risqué French musicals were popular on the London musical stage in the 1870s, Carte felt that wholesome, skilful English comic opera could take over. So, he recruited dramatist W S Gilbert and composer Arthur Sullivan, whose first joint venture was the short, experimental *Trial by Jury*. This became a huge success and led to the 13 'Savoy' operas, whose clever wordplay and magical tunes exhibited such staying power that they are still in constant demand today.

To exploit his 'find', Carte founded the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, which was run after his death by his second wife, Helen. He also built the state-of-the-art Savoy Theatre, and next to it the Savoy Hotel. Other hotels followed.

Biographer Hesketh Pearson said: "He took what other people thought were risks, but he felt were certainties."



International Jazz Day – 30th April

Jazz is a bit like marmite – you either love it or loathe it. For those who love it, look out for International Jazz Day at the end of this month.

International Jazz Day brings together communities, schools, artists, historians, academics, and jazz enthusiasts worldwide to learn about jazz and its roots, future and impact.

At the All-Star Global Concert 2025 in Abu Dhabi, UNESCO officials announced that Herbie Hancock’s hometown of Chicago, USA will host the 15th anniversary International Jazz Day celebration in 2026.

For over a century, Chicago has been a jazz mecca. In the 1920s, jazz musicians sailed up the Mississippi from New Orleans and found Chicago to be a creative hub. Jazz legends such as Louis Armstrong, King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton made their names in the city, developing the ‘Chicago style’ of jazz. This style valued solos, improvisation, big band arrangements and a faster, more rhythmic sound.

For International Jazz Day 2026, Chicago will host a series of jazz concerts, educational initiatives, discussions and events for audiences of all ages, in partnership with the Chicago Jazz Alliance, the Ravinia Festival, the City of Chicago, the Illinois Arts Council, the State of Illinois and others.

Dawn chorus

If you sleep with your bedroom window open, you will know all about the dawn chorus around now. The birds are busy establishing their territorial rights, and the ‘early birds’ have probably already selected a nest site and started building.

The blackbird builds a solid cup of twigs, plant stems and leaves, lined with a thick skin of mud covered with finer grasses and leaves. The long-tailed tit forms a soft hollow ball of mosses, hair and wool, with a tiny hole as entrance. The wrens do it differently, with the male wren sometimes building several nests before his finicky mate will accept one. He gets his revenge, though, because he sometimes installs a second wife in one of the rejected sites.



St Mark in the Cherry Orchard Diocese of Worcester



News & Views from St Mark in the Cherry Orchard

Yes, once again, we are off on a tangent to explore some of the opportunities that are out there for young people to grasp. I am not and never have been a sporty person, my exercise comes from walking very fast and I am for ever being told to 'slow down'! It has long intrigued me when watching sporting events live or on the television, why so many of those taking part have been coached in the USA and I am shortly to find out.

This Athlete has been running university showcase tours throughout the U.S. for over fifteen years, supporting thousands of male and female footballers to secure US scholarships and have now expanded into other sports. There are more players so fewer opportunities and therefore getting recruited for highly sought after sports scholarships has never been tougher. This Athlete takes players directly to US and UK coaches and universities to give guidance, support and exposure thus giving students what they need to stand out; our eldest grandson is shortly to experience firsthand what is on offer when he travels to New York.

The traditional approach no longer works because agencies take on hundreds of players without getting to know the individual, their goals or capabilities so coaches prefer to now watch players live and fly in from all over the US to ensure that they are making the right choice. Tom is studying Sport and psychology A levels at Farnborough Sixth Form College but really doesn't know what professional path to take. He has been a junior referee since age 14 and is passionate about football, as well as enjoying running. With encouragement, he will embark on the journey with twenty-two other young people to play football against college teams, watched by coaches from different universities who will decide if he is suitable to be invited to pursue a two or four year scholarship, alongside either he will be studying for either an associate degree or full degree. It will be an opportunity for him to experience college life, make new friends and hopefully, if he is offered a place, boost his morale and help him decide if it is the career path that he wants to take; one has to grab experiences with both hands because there was very little choice sixty years' ago when we left school.

The website is www.thisathlete.com if you would like to read more about the fantastic opportunities that are on offer to the younger generation. We look forward to hearing all about Tom's trip when we next pay the family a visit at the end of April.

The List of Dates for your Diary, Mobile and/or Calendar:

Chat & Cuppa Club Everyone is really friendly so please consider adding this **FREE** event to your calendar **First Tuesday of EVERY month from 2 – 3pmish** and the next one is on **7 April** however, we will be meeting in the church for a few months. You will receive a warm welcome, a free cuppa and we rarely leave before 3.30pm! No transport, no problem, because you can reach us on the No 32 bus and there are stops both ways very nearby; just ask for St Marks Church.

Mothering Sunday Despite unfortunate health problems, I managed to pot up lots of lovely Aldi polyanthus that were then taken by car down the road and left in the church for those who attended the Sunday and Wednesday services to take home to celebrate the day and perhaps plant out in the garden to, hopefully, reappear next year. The photograph is my effort at creating a heart shape. If you are reading this as a paper edition, it will be in black and white but, if you are receiving the magazine online, it will be in glorious colour.

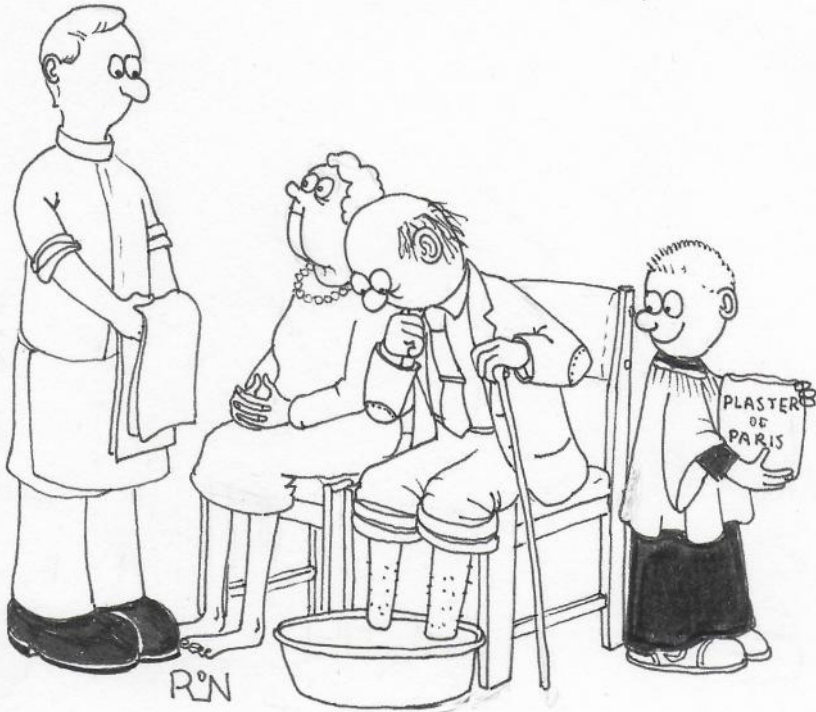
Don't forget that Easter comes early this year. Maundy Thursday is on 2 April, Good Friday, 3 April and Easter Day will be celebrated on Sunday, 5 April.

The next **Quiz Night** will be on **Saturday, 11 April, 7pm for 7.30 start. Please save the date and spread the word** because it is lots of fun with banter to and from the teams. I don't think that I have ever known a quiz night without someone raising a point but, as always, the question master's decision is final; U16s free, £3 pp donations, please, plus BYO drink and nibbles, raffle prizes gratefully accepted.



If you look at the list of hall hirers on the back page of this magazine and see a group that you might like to attend, **please contact the organiser** for further details.

Jan 07565585726 / janvale810@gmail.com



Maundy Thursday on April 1st - the last
temptation of Eric

National Parks Fortnight - 4th to 18th April

This month would be a good time to visit at least one of our 15 National Parks, and to appreciate once again the role they play in conserving our environment and encouraging people to enjoy outdoor activities.

Just some highlights:

Oldest: The Peak District was designated as the first UK National Park in 1951.

Largest Park: Cairngorms National Park in Scotland, covering 1,748 square miles.

Smallest: New Forest National Park, at only 150 square miles.

Most populated: South Downs National Park, with about 12,000 people living within it.

Most visited: Lake District National Park, with about 18 million visitors a year.

Longest coastline: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, with a coastline of 186 miles long.

Altogether, there are ten National Parks in England, three in Wales and two in Scotland:

England - Dartmoor, Exmoor, the New Forest, the South Downs, the Broads, the Peak District, the Yorkshire Dales, the Lake District, the North Yorkshire Moors and Northumberland.

Wales - Snowdonia, the Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast.

Scotland - Loch Lomond & the Trossachs and Cairngorms.

Altogether, the National Parks make up roughly 10% of the total landmass in the UK.

More details at: <http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/>



A history of our Easter chocolate

Chocolate. Just a mention of the word can trigger off all kinds of emotions: craving, greed, passion. Few foods have the ability to get such a hold on people. As you buy your Easter eggs and bunnies and whatever else this month, here are some of the facts of chocolate:

Where does chocolate come from? Chocolate is made from the seeds of the tropical cacao tree, *theobroma cacao*. The Greek word 'theobroma' means literally 'food of the gods'; the Cacao Tree is found in Latin America.

Who first discovered it? The Aztecs. The cacao beans were used to prepare a hot, frothy beverage with stimulant and restorative properties, something like hot chocolate.

Who was (probably) the first chocoholic? The Emperor Montezuma. He drank 50 goblets a day of the frothy drink.

Who used chocolate as currency? The Aztecs. 100 cacao beans would buy a slave; 12 cacao beans bought the services of a courtesan, etc.

When did chocolate as we know it today begin? Surprisingly, not until 1879. That year Rodolphe Lindt had the inspired idea of triglyceride cocoa butter. The cocoa butter in chocolate contains saturated fat, but a normal level of consumption doesn't have any bad effects.

At what point does a chocolate lover become a chocoholic? It is generally considered to be when a person feels impelled to consume 12 or more 60 gram bars of chocolate per week. Chocolate contains its own cannabinoid (a chemical that prolongs pleasurable sensations) and when you eat chocolate, there is an increased blood flow in areas of the brain which are also activated by addictive drugs such as cocaine. But scientists agree that occasional over-indulging will cause no long-term problems... except perhaps around your waistline!

How to get the best from your chocolate: Keep your chocolate cool (16 – 18 degrees Centigrade) and in a dry, airtight place.

Never put your chocolate in the fridge (if you already have, let it warm to room temperature for a couple of hours before you eat it).

Bring out the full flavour of chocolate by drinking water with it.

If you are drinking tea or coffee, don't bother with expensive chocolates – you won't be able to appreciate them properly!

What home gadgets do you regret buying?

You know what they are: those things you never knew you needed until you saw one in an advert. Then suddenly you felt that life would never be complete without one.

And so, you brought home the spiraliser that makes vegetables look like spaghetti. And the pasta maker that you can't quite figure out how to use. And the ice-cream maker that makes everything sticky and helped you put on another three pounds. And the robot vacuum which terrorises the cat. As for the bread maker, well at least it makes a good shelf on the kitchen counter.

If this is you, you are not alone. A recent survey by Saga has found that 65% of us have experienced 'gadget regret'. It occurs when we buy something and then wonder why we ever bothered, because who needs it anyway?

Top of the list of regrets is the spiralizer – 62% of us woke up one morning to realise that no one needs vegetables to look like spaghetti. Second place belongs to digital picture frames, which 52% of us regret buying. After that comes the pasta maker (45%), the ice-cream maker (42%), VR headsets (35%), the bread maker (31%), the internet-connected exercise equipment (31%) and finally, the robot vacuum (29%).

What do we do with all this stuff? 46% of us keep it, even when we don't want it. 15% of us try and sell the things, while a desperate 14% of us simply throw them away. And 19% of us grimly hang on to them for a year or so, before passing them on to an unsuspecting friend.

National Gardening Week - 28th April to 4th May

Led by the Royal Horticultural Society, this annual premier UK celebration encourages everyone to experience the joy of gardening.

Aimed especially at beginners, events and activities are run up and down the country, offering tips, events, and resources to promote the health, wellbeing, and environmental benefits of cultivating plants. The RHS provides expert tips, how-to guides, and fun, easy gardening challenges to build confidence in new gardeners

Whittington Parish Magazine

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