

The St. James' Church
PARISH
MAGAZINE
MARCH 2021



Serving the communities of: Christleton,
 Cotton Abbots, Cotton Edmunds,
 Littleton and Rowton.

Free on-line



DEATH:

Over 100,000 in the UK. Over 2.6 million worldwide. Deaths related to Covid 19.

I am reminded of St Benedict's Rule, chapter 4: "Keep the reality of death always before your eyes". Why we might ask? St. Benedict's answer might be 'in order that you might live'.

I know this truth for myself. It was in contemplating my death many years ago that I realised I was to live set aside for God, his people, and world. My death transformed my life.

I am convinced if we hold, as hard and painful as it is, the tragic loss of life before us now it will help us discern how to live in the future. This, of course, chimes well with the underlying encouragement of our Lenten observance, where we contemplate and seek the death of our self in order to live more fully with God and others.

I recently offered the community Elijah's death, recorded in 2 Kings 2, as a framework for living well.

One element of which is compassion. As Elijah moves to his death, followed by his pupil Elisha, three times he asks Elisha to stay behind, perhaps to spare Elisha of the sorrow and pain he feels at his master's impending departure. But finally, he asks Elisha "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you?" This strikes me as a good question for us to ask as we begin our journey out of this pandemic.

"Tell me what I may do for you?" In asking the question, listening - really listening - we will discover how to help set free those, ourselves included, for whom the pandemic has exposed have and are being left behind by the land we had created for ourselves in the run up to the pandemic. The future affords new possibilities, new hope, a new heaven and a new earth, where God dwells among his people once again; wiping away every tear from their eyes, banishing death, mourning, and pain.

"Keep the reality of death always before your eyes".

With love and prayers,
Stefan

CHURCH RE-OPENS FOR WORSHIP IN MARCH - See page 10



Two young swans on the Pit



Spring is blooming!



Spring is blooming!

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During this Covid-19 crisis this magazine will be free via the church website and will not be printed or delivered to homes.

Please tell others how to find the on-line magazine. Do print it out yourself if that is helpful.

Thank you for reading our magazine. We hope you enjoy it. Feedback is always welcome so please let the editor know what you think about the magazine. Contributions are welcome and more details about this are available from the editor.

The church website not only carries the current issue but also back copies of this magazine and much more information and news about what is happening at St James' Church in these strange and uncertain times.

ST JAMES' CHURCH WEBSITE:

<https://www.stjameschristleton.org.uk>
Website maintained by Jonathan Gilliatt
jonathan.gilliatt@btinternet.com

ST JAMES ON TWITTER:



@StJChristleton

CHRISTLETON VILLAGE WEBSITE:

www.christleton.org.uk

Make an Online Donation

Support St James' Church with a donation via the website:
<https://www.stjameschristleton.org.uk>. Thank you.

ENTRENCHMENT:

Laying the Cable.

When I sought election as Churchwarden, I naturally looked up what my duties would be. Essentially they are as follows (taken from the Churchwarden's yearbook.)

I was to be an officer of the Bishop, an ex-officio member of the PCC, responsible the contents of the church, responsible for keeping order in the church and churchyard, and during an Interregnum responsible for running the parish. A truly daunting job description!

Then it got very interesting! Stefan had been talking for a while about installing a telephone line into the church, the PCC approved it, he did the research and BT quoted us a figure. "Mike, we could save a lot of money if we laid the cabling ourselves" he said. Alarm bells starting ringing. Digging, ducting, draw rope, cabling? What was he on about? Then the penny dropped, when he said 'we' he meant 'me' and others.

He went away then said the Arden Family would dig the trench in the carpark and the Gresty family would take care of the trench in the churchyard! Prior to this Bettie, Paul and myself tried to find out where the utilities were underground, we employed two straightened out coat hangers to water divine!

We were pretty certain we located the main all the way through the carpark to Little Heath Road. Bettie duly marked it out with spray paint.

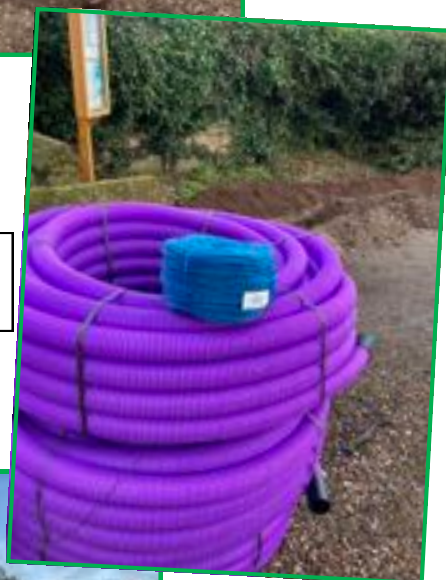
Mark from Ardens pitched up with a digger and meticulously dug a trench. Stefan, Tina and I dropped in the ducting and pulled through a draw rope before Mark back filled, so far, so good. Paul and Rob Gresty came early the following week, took up slabs and excavated a trench on the right hand side of the path down to the north side of the church. They agreed to lay the ducting and pull through the entire length of the BT cable with another draw rope in case we want to have fibre optic installed in the future. So it's all ready for BT to put in a pole and connect us.

St James' Church will come into the 21st century! We sincerely apologise if you have been inconvenienced in any way during the excavations.

Mike Lightfoot.



Paul & Bettie 'divining'



Ducting and draw rope



The trench in the car park



Cable pulled in and now waiting for BT

FLIPPIN' GOOD!

Have you heard the one about the angry pancake – he just flipped!

Last Tuesday (16th Feb) was Shrove Tuesday and pancakes were, therefore, the theme of our Zoom Coffee Morning. Our Gallant Captain, Liz McClure, arranged a pancake competition with various classes to be judged by Janet Brown who was resplendent in an elegant straw hat with pretty flowers round the brim (think Mrs. Bouquet).



Entries were many and varied and anonymous until after judging. There were pancakes representing Covid 19, the NHS, Valentines, pancakes with teacups, a funny ghostly shaped pancake, triangles, an orchid pancake, a savoury pancake with blue cheese dressing and green salad – all looked completely knockout.

There was 'Best in Class' aka 'the yummiest' judged by all present, which was won by a rather wonderful 'Kiwi' display of pancakes done by David Cummings - always a winner in our book.

Mike Lightfoot was quietly trying to influence the judging by dropping hints pertaining to his crêpe suzette. There was some evidence of skulduggery and chicanery attached to Mike's crepe suzette entry and to Brian Inall's wonderful stack of pancakes (not us Your Honour - must have been two other people).

Jan Bowden's lovely simple unadorned pancake (perfect in every way) was the winner of the 'Original Class'.

Lesley and Huw Morgan entered a very clever pancake with a funny face made of sweets which looked so more-ish and this one took the prize for the 'Funniest Class'.

The 'Junior Class' was won by Neha and Nathan George's fantastic Japanese soufflé pancake with vanilla cream and strawberries.

Of course some of us misunderstood the theme and thought that the idea was to eat pancakes during the

Coffee Morning so we spent an enjoyable hour scoffing.

Sadly some entries arrived too late to be included in the competition but it was great to see them.

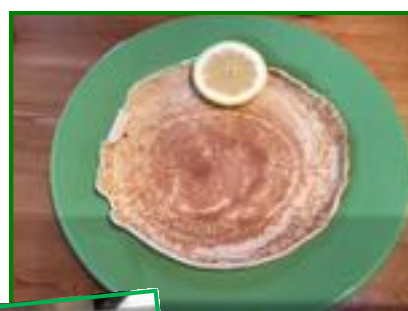
Thank you so much to all who entered – without you there is no competition.

Good comes from everything and it was decided that we would either donate money to the Foodbank or to a charity of our choice as a tribute to this Pancake Morning.

Online donations to the Foodbank may be made via westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk.

Alex and Ida (Liz's highly paid assistants)

Original



Covid-19
If this was put on the web, would it go viral?



Crêpe Suzette



Funny Face



Japanese Soufflé





Kiwi

The NHS



Savoury



**With lemon and sugar
and set for tea**



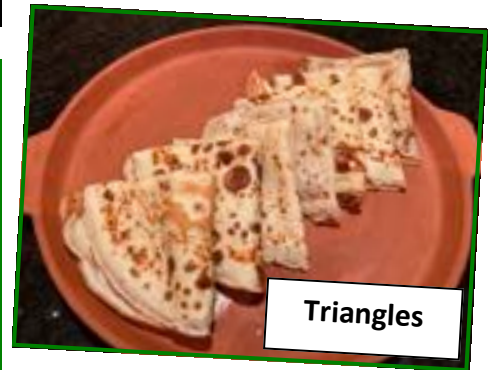
Funny Shape



**With an
Orchid**



Triangles



COFFEE MORNING VIA ZOOM

The Zoom Coffee Mornings continue on a Tuesday starting at 10.30 am each week and typically between 10 and 15 people join in for a chat.

The main topic of conversation recently is about our vaccinations - who has had it, which one, and where, and of course how we are coping. We also talked a lot about the flooding not only in the village but in Chester itself - the river Dee particularly flooding on to the Meadows and completely covering the Weir in the Groves.

Liz told us about a Burns Night she held some years ago and how she discovered that the police sergeant in charge of the cells at the police station was also an accomplished Scotsman who played the bagpipes in full regimental regalia. The same Scotsman, Joe, has played at our Burns Day Luncheon clubs several times.

Coffee & Chat for Shrove Tuesday was planned with a Pancake Day competition and everyone seemed happy to make pancakes, take a picture of them and send that to Liz who would do clever things on her computer so that we could all see them. See Ida's preceding article in this magazine.

So, if you are at a loose end on a Tuesday morning – why not make yourself a cup, or a pot of coffee or tea, whatever takes your fancy, and join 'Coffee & Chat'. Just go to the St James' Church website for details.

Janet Milton

PARISH MAGAZINE ON WEB:

Of course you know that this magazine can be found on the St James' Church website. The Christleton Village website run by Richard Nicholson has carried an archive of past Parish Magazines right up to the end of 2016, so I thought it about time that this archive was extended to include more recent and even the current editions.

Therefore in conjunction with Richard all copies from January 2017 have been uploaded to make the archive more complete. However, editions covering 2017 and some in 2018 only have a scan of the front cover as we don't have the full electronic file. If any of these files come to light then we'll put them up. We do have the actual magazines as paper copies if anyone has the time and means to scan all pages and put together a PDF file for each edition - that would be really good.

Happy reading!

Brian Inall (Editor)

SEEKING HOPE

Standing at the window for my morning Vigil the amber light of dawn was turning every outlined roof and tree to a glassing out line of snow, like something from a painting, transcendent, mythic.



For a moment it all felt brimming with promise. You've maybe felt that promise too as you stood in some favourite spot watching the beauty of the waves, or sitting in your garden with a cup of coffee. Something keeps whispering to you through the beauty you love.

Savour those moments they speak such promise to us, yes life can be beautiful but we need more than a silver-lining outlook on life, we need hope, unquenchable hope.

As Chaplain at the Hospice I often have requests from patients for a phone call visit while we avoid visits unless urgent. As our chat draws to a close I offer prayer, and light a candle holding them before the Lord, and suggest they look out to the garden. Using a prayer booklet called "Like a watered garden".

There is such satisfaction in seeing a garden thrive and flourish, well watered and nourished, each flower a wondrous design.

Lord, refresh my drooping spirit. When I am weighed down by the worries and cares of this life, heavy like a dropping tree help me to revive and to find new strength, give me peace of mind which helps me to cope with life's anxieties, renew me within, refresh my dropping spirit, so that we may grow and blossom in your love, **Amen**

Prayers for hope:

After the darkness of Winter,
comes the brightness of spring.

Lord, thank you for springtime.

After the darkness of the crucifixion,
came the light of the resurrection.

Lord, be with me in my darkness,
may I soon experience your light.

After the agony of the cross,
came restoration and new life,

Lord, I am in pain, and long for restoration and wholeness.

After the despair of watching Jesus die,
came the joy of seeing him live again.

Lord, when I feel desperate,
help me believe that joy will come.

After separation from God,
came the chance to enter his presence,
Lord, even when I feel far from you,
please stay close to me.

After Jesus died, he rose to life again.
Lord help me to trust you for a new beginning.
Amen.

Gill Hibbert

CYNTHIA SIDDALL: 1924-2021

Cynthia a well known member of the Christleton community died on 3rd Feb 2021 age 96yrs. The family had lived for many years at Nestwood on Littleheath Rd, and both Cynthia and her late husband Jim had been active participants in so many of our village activities, from St James' Church, the Village Show, the Local History Group, the W.I. et al.



Cynthia was born and lived in Parkgate Road, attended The Queen's School in Chester and later Howell's School in Denbigh. She was always enthusiastic about taking part in sporting activities, and was later to train at Bedford P E College one of the elite Training Colleges for sport in the country. She had an interesting life in school and college in other ways, working in the school kitchens at Denbigh for a reduced fee due to the war, working as a physiotherapist at Manchester Infirmary, and for two summers as a Land Army Girl on a farm in Devon and Cornwall which she thoroughly enjoyed.

After the war she obtained employment at Russell Hill Girls School in Croydon, and in 1947 married Jim Siddall also from Chester, and they set up home in Lache Lane. They were soon both heavily involved in the commercial and social life of the city, from working at Siddall's Opticians on Bridge Street, to helping run the Chester Society of Natural Science, Literature



and Art at the Grosvenor Museum. Cynthia later became an active member of Inner Wheel, serving on committees and later becoming President.

After moving to Guilden Sutton in 1957 she joined the W.I, became President and served on the local committee for many years as well as at County and National level. During this time she also served as a Governor at the new Upton County High School, and became District Treasurer of the Chester Guides. She also worked with the WVS on their Meals on Wheels Service, and was Chester Branch Secretary of Old Howellians for over 50years.

All this time she was bringing up four children Anne, Jenny, Penn and Jonn. In 1954 the family made the decision to purchase a house in Abersoch for family holidays, which has been used for family holidays ever since, and been a place for all the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to learn water sports and other activities led by grandma Cynthia. The family also bought a Dormobile in 1961 for trips to Europe, and Cynthia would always talk enthusiastically about their experiences during talks in the village.

Cynthia was involved in supporting fund raising for the Leonard Cheshire Home in the Village, (now Birch Heath Lodge Nursing Home), also becoming a member of the Scottish Dancing Society in Chester with her friend Olga Clayton. Cynthia also became a loyal member of the W.I in Christleton serving as Committee member and President until recent times. She was an active member of the community in Christleton until her illness gradually prevented her from doing so. Her last years were spent at the Upton Dene Care Home in Upton by Chester. She participated fully in village life, enthusiastically taking part in walking, swimming, gardening, flower arranging, produce making etc, and being an active member of St James' Church, Luncheon Club, W I and Local History Groups. Cynthia was a fount of knowledge and had an excellent memory. One of her stories was that whilst a pupil at the Queen's School she saw a Zeppelin flying over Chester. This story was corroborated by Anthony Barrington Brown, who, when staying at his grandparents house "Stoneydale" in Pepper Street saw the same Zeppelin over Christleton.

Although quite an independent lady, she was cared for and supported by her family, and was always a very popular member of the community. She will be so missed by her family and friends.

David Cummings

TILL DEATH US DO PART

Do people still get married? Stupid question! Yet judged by those of my immediate acquaintance I could have answered "no". Even civil partnerships don't seem to be that popular and the demand for single occupancy accommodation confirms that living alone is more common than it used to be.



Sociologists offer many explanations for this. Chief among these is the welcome evolution of equality between men and women. Men are no longer defined as the bread winner and women the keeper of the house and carer of the children in a relationship. Indeed many women expect or need to have employment of their own, contributing financially to any marriage or partnership. With certain notable exceptions, the involvement of men in the care of children and the keeping of the house is perhaps less obvious! Long term relationships are now formed much later in life and the availability of the contraceptive pill has largely removed the association between sexual intimacy and the birth of children. Divorce is as common as chips and hangs like a dark cloud over the institution of marriage.

Given that I have no expert knowledge of the changing pattern of human behaviour, why am I daring to write about it? It is prompted by the loss of my signet ring. The ring has been on the third finger of my left hand since it was placed there by my future wife many years ago during our marriage ceremony. It has been there during all the significant (and insignificant) events of my life. The irony is that I lost it just a few days before my sixtieth wedding anniversary.

When it first disappeared, I tried to be nonchalant about it. It was only a plain gold ring of modest value. If I felt it important, I could easily buy another. Over the years, I have developed the habit of fiddling with it when thinking. It has been fiddled with during the happy and sad times, successes and failures. It has been to many places, most of which I have forgotten. It has been up in the air and under the ground. It was present during a life-threatening operation when it was held in place with surgical tape.

But above all it was a symbol of my marriage. Even back in the dark ages when I was wed, it was common for the bridegroom not to wear a ring. For the bride the opposite was true. In popular culture, the presence of a ring on a woman's hand was understood to indicate that she was unavailable for approaches by men. I find this

view of a woman's wedding ring tawdry and demeaning. For me the ring is a reminder of the promises made before God but I cannot deny that noting a woman's ring might avoid inappropriate, embarrassing situations. The saddest situation is when a woman feels the need to remove her ring for a night out with her mates.

The rings that my wife and I wear have further significance for me. My dad was a pawnbroker and jeweller and he chose the rings for us. Thus my ring reminds me not only of my dad but also of his endorsement of the marriage. So a complex mixture of emotions. I kept feeling the finger of the left hand and could convince myself that the ring was still there. But the pale skin where the ring had been confirmed its absence.

The day after the loss, my wife embarked on a voyage of discovery, trying to find out what was actually in the drawers of the freezer. Incredibly at the bottom of one of the drawers was my ring. Our weekly shop had been delivered the previous day and I was charged with trying to find spaces for it. I assume that during the pushing and shoving necessary to get the food into the drawer as quickly as possible, the ring slipped off. Amazed at my good fortune, the ring was replaced where it belonged. But the face of good fortune was only to smile for a few days. With the arrival of the next weekly shop, I was once again in charge of putting some of the items into the freezer. Shortly after, I realised that the ring was missing again but this time it was found lying on the floor.

There is so much that I take from these experiences, the most immediate being not to wear the ring when loading the freezer! But I have decided to take this further and will not wear the ring again until I can have it reduced to give a tighter fit. Thus after these many years, I am not wearing the symbol of my married state. I am reminded of the biblical parables of the lost coin and the pearl of great price but most of all I have been prompted to re-evaluate the significance of my marriage that has been lost in the familiar and mundane after so many years.

Marriage? I can recommend it but I recall the old joke about "married for breakfast but not for lunch" and that still has some resonance.

Jim Hawkes

SMALL THINGS TO CHEER:



Over a month ago, on one of those bright, blue, sunny and very cold mornings in January (now it is mid-February) I was suddenly aware of a robin singing in his pure sweet and flutey tones from the top of our tall holly tree - just as he had done for months at the beginning of last year- in the same spot. (Can he be the same one?)

Then came the extreme cold and the canal was partly frozen. Delightedly I watched two pairs of mallards all sitting together in a floating layer of ice, stock-still, chests puffed up and out, the fabulous glossy green heads of the males, the striated breasts of the females, the spoon-shaped bills and firmly planted orange legs. Not a movement. I could have watched them for hours.

I feel we have had rather a dearth of birds in our garden of late; so I was so pleased to see the flitting groups of beautiful long-tailed tits back again on the feeders, and then overjoyed from last week to witness the almost daily visit of 'our' greater spotted woodpecker - what a fantastically colourful bird it is, black and white stripes and a strikingly bright red patch under the tail.

This morning I drew back the curtain to spot, hopping about very gently through the nascent perennials in the large flower bed - the wren again! I love that tiny bird. It is now later in the month, there is warmth in the sun and clouds of small bees are buzzing quietly through our sweet-smelling daphne .. and suddenly many of the birds are back.

Such small things but lately I have been constantly reminded of the poem written at the very end of a frosty bleak December in 1900 when Thomas Hardy, in 'The Darkling Thrush' writes of 'an aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,' who sings 'in full-hearted evensong of joy illimited'...

Hardy muses in amazement that perhaps 'there trembled through his happy good-night air some blessed Hope, whereof he knew and I was unaware'.

Jan Bowden

Christmas items on graves:

The Church of England Churchyard Regulations are quite clear and strict (take a look at the back page in the Feb 2020 magazine) so, as is needed every year at about this time, the Churchwardens and their helpers remove all the remaining Christmas wreaths and decorations from the graves. There is generally so much that a small skip is required to take it away, so thank you to all who helped.

LOCKDOWN FLYING:

Hello Everyone,

It's Richard here with just a little update for you. As I've recently wandered and walked our little pooch around the village I've occasionally bumped into a few fellow parishioners from St James and chatted, always from a "social distance" which, usually, seems to be across the breadth of Village Road! Maybe I should have said that I've "shouted" to a few fellow parishioners! Anyway, whatever the correct description of our communications may be, I've usually been asked whether I'm able to keep flying right now and, with that regular question in mind, I thought that a little update wouldn't go amiss.

The fact of the matter is that, at the moment in lockdown, all leisure flying is prohibited and, other than training for professional pilots' licences and for purposes of "work", most other general aviation flying is not permitted. The only other exceptions are flying for "safety critical engine health" reasons and "safety critical maintenance flights" and these rules have been issued from the Department for Transport (DfT) so I guess that they are the current law of the land. No doubt you'll now be wondering what all this means so I shall try to explain.

So, for example, if my little old vintage aerial steed has been undergoing her annual scheduled maintenance which involves, amongst other things, being taken to bits then thoroughly inspected, maintained and then put back together again by professional engineers, before making any routine flights, I always fly a thorough flight check to make sure that all is well; this will certainly be a "safety critical maintenance flight." As for "engine health flights," according to one of the leading manufacturers of these small piston engines, in moist climates especially these engines can suffer from internal corrosion if not flown regularly and to mitigate against this they recommend that the aircraft should be flown at least every 30 days such that "the oil achieves its operating temperature for at least one continuous hour."

And flying-wise, that's where I'm at during the lockdown; once per month a flight lasting about one hour fifteen minutes which takes-off and lands at base (Sleep aerodrome). So now you know and I'll sign off now. But just before I go, did you hear of this little flying story.....?

It was a British airliner nearing the end of its long transatlantic flight from London to Orlando in Florida.

Before the pilots set up the aircraft for its long descent to destination the captain, as is the norm, spoke to the passengers using the aircraft's public address system to pass on the updated time of landing, the weather at Orlando and to thank them for flying with the airline and then, finally, wishing them a safe onward journey. To address the passengers in this way it's a simple matter for the pilot to select "PA" on the comms control panel and then just speak using the headset/microphone which is always worn and, for the most part, used to speak to the relevant air traffic control unit. The headsets' microphone is activated by pressing a little spring-loaded switch on the control column.

On this occasion, at the end of his address, the captain, in an attempt at humour, removed his finger from the switch and, without taking a breath, turned to his colleague and said, "And what I need now is a long cold beer and good hot woman!" However, little did he know that on this occasion his transmit switch had stuck in the "on" position and his rider to the first officer was also broadcast to the passengers! Well, back in the cabin the passengers thought this mighty funny, a sentiment not particularly shared by the senior stewardess who, at this time, was halfway back down the cabin being busy making preparations for landing. From the sound of the captain's breathing over the cabin speakers she realised what must have happened and so rushed towards the cockpit door in order to warn him of the fault before he said something else embarrassing. She was halfway there when the hand of an elderly male passenger shot out and held her arm, so halting her rapid progress forwards. She looked down into his twinkling eyes - he looked up at her and said:

"Now dear, don't forget his cold beer."!!!

Richard Keech



Recent photo: Richard Keech

St James' Church Calendar - MARCH 2021:

THE ST JAMES' CHURCH BUILDING IS RE-OPENING FOR WORSHIP.

From Wednesday 10th March for private prayer (Wed 2 - 5pm and Sun 9am - 2pm).

From Monday 15th March open for 9.00am Morning Prayer. All welcome.

From Sunday 28th March (Palm Sunday) for 10.00am Sunday Worship.

All Covid-19 precautions remain in place - hand cleaning, social distancing, etc.

SUNDAYS until 21st MARCH:

10.00 am: Morning Worship. An online (Zoom) act of worship for everyone. This is normally followed by a few minutes of chat and fellowship.

Sun 7th Mar: 3rd of Lent.
10.00am Morning Worship online

Sun 14th Mar: 4th of Lent **Mothering Sunday**.
10.00am Morning Worship online

Sun 21st Mar: 5th of Lent **Start of Passiontide**.
10.00am Morning Worship online

FROM SUNDAY 28th MARCH

the Sunday pattern will be:

10.00am: Holy Communion in church
11.30am: Sunday Worship online. (Zoom)

Sun 28th Mar: **Palm Sunday, Start of Holy Week.**

Thu 1st Apr: **Maundy Thursday**

Fri 2nd Apr: **Good Friday**

Sun 4th Apr: **Easter Day**

Sun 11th Apr: 2nd of Easter

Sun 18th Apr: 3rd of Easter

Sun 25th Apr: 4th of Easter

(Further details of Easter services to be announced.)

Monday - Friday: 9.00am: Morning Prayer - Online using Zoom.

FROM MONDAY 15th MARCH THIS WILL AGAIN BE IN CHURCH.

Everyone is welcome to this short time of devotion to start the day.

Tuesdays: 10.30am: Online Coffee Morning. Join this Zoom meeting, and chat and drink coffee or whatever. More details from Liz McClure.

8.00pm: Online Night Prayers or Compline using Zoom. A short time of prayer to end the day. More details from Tina Lightfoot.

Wednesdays: 8.00pm: Beer, Wine & Banter. An online social Zoom meeting accompanied with a drink of your choice. More details from Mike Lightfoot.

For online services and online meetings a Zoom invitation will be needed. They can be found on the St James' Website. For Sunday Worship click on the red Sunday Worship button on the home page - this will take you to a Sunday Worship Resource page which includes an Order of Service, the Zoom invitation and hymns. For other online events go to the What's On calendar and you'll find the invitation in the event description. You may find it in other places as well. If you need help then please ask.

CHRISTLETON PARISH HALL

The Parish Hall remains closed, but we await news for when it can re-open. If you wish to enquire about using the hall please contact Maria Norbury (below) for details:

Maria Norbury: Tel: 01244 335499.

maria_norbury@btinternet.com (See also the church website.)



WHAT'S A QR CODE?

One of these.....

It works like a familiar barcode in that it needs to be scanned so that the particular pattern can be decoded into something useful. Normal barcodes decode into a string of numbers, typically a product code, that translates into a price at the shop checkout or a consignment reference on a package.

A QR code usually decodes into a URL address (ie: a web address) and then uses your browser to bring up that website. (Remember the Carol Trail?)

We are using QR codes on posters promoting this magazine so that scanning the code brings up the page on the Church website where you can select and view a magazine.

H&S warning: If walking along the street engrossed in reading the magazine please watch out for trip hazards and moving buses!



THE WAY FORWARD:

Plough Lane looking towards Cheshire View



IS IT THE CANAL?

No - it's Little Heath Road!

LETTERS TO MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTORS & SUBSCRIBERS:

It is a year since the last printed magazine edition was delivered around the parish (and wider) by our team of distributors.

Some of our readers have not been able to read the magazine online for whatever reason, so these printed paper letters being hand delivered are an attempt to keep them informed. We are also trying to resolve some subscription money paid a year ago which has been held by some distributors pending restoration of subscriptions and deliveries.

If you are a subscriber then you should get a letter soon, if you haven't already. We don't yet know the future of the magazine so for the moment it continues as now: Free, in full Colour and Online - but if there's any new information then we'll let you know.

Carry on

Thank you.

Brian Inall / Joce Platel

CLASSROOM HOWLERS:

Taken from a book called 'Howlers' published in 1928 they are said to be genuine - but who knows? From the Biblical section of the book:

- * Christians are allowed only one wife. This is called monotony.
- * Acrimony (sometimes called holy) is another name for marriage.
- * An epistle is the wife of an apostle.
- * Zacharias was burning insects when he saw an angel.
- * Chaplets are small places of worship.
- * Solomon had 300 wives and 700 cucumbers.
- * The Primate is the wife of the Prime Minister.
- * The Israelites made a golden calf because they hadn't enough gold to make a cow.
- * Explain the meaning of bishop, priest and deacon. I never saw a bishop, so I don't know. A priest is a man in the Old Testament. A deacon is a thing you put on the top of a hill and set fire to it.

Thanks to Ken Holding

CHESTER SHOT TOWER

About 1986 I was asked to automate a lead extruder, so requiring some information I phoned the Chief Engineer of the lead works. We started chatting and I said we had two pre-war ram presses that were unused, I was working on a modern screw extruder made in Sweden, he said they also had pre-war ram presses, some pre world war one. He invited me to visit and he would show me round. I very much regret not taking up the offer . These machines were used to make extrusions such as lead flashings and lead for stained glass windows, we used them to extrude lead pipe.

Some 5 or 6 years later the Lead Works had an open day and I went. We went inside the Shot Tower, a circular chamber 30 foot in diameter, it had a somewhat derelict iron staircase and a very modern sieving machine with bags of shot along side it.

The way a shot tower works is that molten lead is poured on to a steel plate, various plates are used with different size holes a droplet is formed which falls down the tower, surface tension forms a perfect sphere ,the lead cools and solidifies and falls into a tank of water to prevent damage

In 1951 I visited the Festival of Britain, it was on the site of the old London Lead Works, only the shot tower remained with the top and inside removed, it was just a brick tube. Sadly it was demolished after the festival in 1951 to make way for the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Chester Lead Works



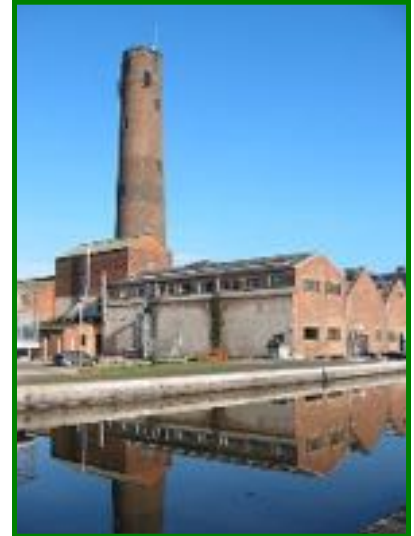
Does anyone remember the Lead Works chimney built 1960/61 By Danks of Netherton. It wasn't a smoke stack but used to disperse lead fumes. It was higher than the shot tower and must have been about 200ft tall. It stretched into the upper air stream which spread the fumes far and wide, no wonder we are polluting the planet. I can't remember its removal but it must have been about the time we stopped putting lead in petrol.

The Tower is 168ft tall and was built in 1799. I believe it

was the first to be built and the only surviving in its original condition. I did think at one time it would make a fine viewing tower, but now surrounded by tall buildings i don't know what is to become of it. I finished my extruder conversion and moved on to something else , after about three years lead fell out of favour and it was mothballed.

Ben Williams

Derelict



Redevelopment



The Shot Tower on London's South Bank, incorporated into the Festival of Britain 1951 but demolished afterwards



DAISY'S ADVENTURES – PART V

Hello to all you lovely humans out there who take the trouble to read about my adventures each month and I hope you will enjoy this one.

Things have been a bit quiet since all the excitement at the beginning of the year but we go out each morning walking for miles and miles which never seems to tire me. Humans think that because I've only got little legs that I'll get tired quickly but that's just not so – I could quite happily walk for England and it doesn't bother me at all. And, of course, it keeps me in great shape which we girls understand only too well!

We went to the churchyard recently so that we could remove all the Christmas debris from the grave stone. It wasn't easy for my Mummy to do this on her own and hold on to me on the lead at the same time so we made several journeys to and from the rubbish bin which was pretty full so she finished up putting most of it in her rucksack to take home. She managed to clear a very big area but it all got rather complicated when I followed a scent under a tombstone and my lead got caught in a crack on the edge of the stone. I was pulling on the lead which didn't help because all I could think of was this really strong scent I wanted to follow up but I was being pulled away and told to 'come here' by she who must be obeyed, so I really didn't have much choice but to leave it. We were going to walk over the fields to Pearl Lane but as it was so very muddy it was decided that because I have such short legs, that I might get stuck in the mud and after the fiasco in the churchyard I thought I had probably used up all my luck for the day.

Now I don't want you to worry too much when you read this next bit but I've been quite poorly. It all started on a Saturday evening/Sunday morning when I got nasty tummy pains and I had to wake my Mummy at 3 am – yes I know it was a very unsociable hour, but I had no choice because I needed to go outside. The next morning I had more tummy ache and didn't want my breakfast – very unusual for me I must say so things were not looking good. I was upset all day on Sunday and spent most of the time sleeping and yes I have to admit, feeling very sorry for myself. I was wrapped up in a blanket in my bed to keep me warm and I won't even try to describe what was coming out of my mouth but it wasn't at all nice. First thing Monday morning my Mummy phoned the vet and explained how poorly I was and later took me to the surgery where we had to wait outside in the car park until the vet came to take me inside. She's a nice lady really but I was not happy about going inside with her and pulled back on the lead so she

had to pick me up and carry me in and I looked over her shoulder at my Mummy waiting outside and she didn't look at all happy to see me go.

Inside, I was weighed and put on a table and the lady vet gave me a thorough examination and then put 2 needles in me which didn't really hurt and all the time I was being held by a lovely veterinary nurse who kept me calm. When I was brought outside to be handed back to my Mummy the vet said I had gastroenteritis, that she had given me 2 antibiotics already and then handed over a bag with another course of antibiotics which I have to take for another 5 days, plus a syringe full of pro-biotic which is good for my tummy and this is squirted into my mouth twice a day. When the lady came out with the card machine and presented the bill I saw the look on my Mummy's face – I think a grimace followed by a smile covers it – but she picked me up and gave me big cuddle and said I was worth it no matter how much it cost.

I'm feeling much better now that the medication is doing its work and I know I'm being spoilt but I have to have a bland diet for the next week, on the instructions of the vet, so I have chicken with boiled rice twice a day which is very tasty although I leave most of the rice which is boring.

We went out for a 30 minute walk today for the first time in 4 days so think I had best have a rest now before my tea time chicken. It really is quite exhausting being poorly.

See you next time I hope

Daisy - (Published by kind permission of Janet Milton)

NATURE NOTES MARCH 2021

There has been great excitement in the village with the arrival of three mute swans, a pen and two of her last years cygnets.



They have been here for a week as I write, although as they can't breed, I guess they will be flying off fairly soon. They are however very happy to be fed by enthusiastic villagers including many children during this lockdown period.

Two large white mature Whooper swans, a long way from their breeding grounds in Iceland, were seen at Hockenhull Platts in January. A delightful little egret, a small white "heron" has also arrived in the area and can



be regularly seen feeding on the wetlands, which is excellent news. Several oystercatchers, normally a wading bird seen on the seashore have been present all winter, and can be regularly seen flying over farmland. We think that several pairs of these strikingly black & white birds with orange red bill

and long pink legs have actually bred here for the last three years, as have a similar number of lapwings. Lapwings or pee-wits were once one of the most common birds in rural Cheshire, and I'm convinced that they are now making a comeback in our Parish. These small waders appear black and white at a distance, and have a distinctive black breast band and wispy crest. They always flap their wings in flight, often calling to each other with their *pee-wit, pee-wit* calls, and sometimes appear in large groups. I had a count of 500+ a week or so ago during the floods, and this was confirmed by Joe, one of my friends who saw similar numbers over Hockenhull from the Stamford Bridge direction.

He has also witnessed regular sightings of both barn and tawny owls in fields near the Platts, and visitors to the bridges are getting regular sightings of buzzard, kestrel and sparrowhawks. These same three species are also very common along the canal at Rowton, and appear to be on the look out for rodents on the newly cleared land between the A41 and the canal.

Stonechats seem to be wintering well, with several pairs on the wet meadow, together with cettis warblers and meadow pipits, with regular sightings of all three.

Back at the Pit in Christleton, there are daily sightings of fish-eating cormorants and grey herons. Cormorants are large black" heron" sized birds with yellow faces and long bills, ideal for catching fish, can be seen on the canal and at the pit, often catching quite large fish and eating them whole. A kingfisher or probably a pair of kingfishers are seen almost everyday on the canal between Christleton Lock and Salmon's Bridge beyond Waverton.

Smaller red beaked moorhens and white headed coots are actively looking for nest sites at the Pit, usually searching for secret places in the reed beds or rushes. There have also been up to twenty shoveler duck on the Pit, but they tend to stay for the winter and fly off elsewhere to breed each spring. The males are very attractive ducks, mallard size, but highly coloured and with a distinctive green shovel like bill, are followed around in circles by the much plainer brown feathered females. They can be seen most days circling each other in the middle of the Pit, a strange but distinctive habit.



Although reports say that house sparrows and starlings are now very scarce in the area, we seem to have good numbers coming into the gardens for food, or breeding in the eves of houses nearby. The starlings in particular can be very colourful as shown above, and often gather in very large groups, or murmurations, as seen on the recent Winterwatch programme on BBC1 where we saw them gathering in huge numbers under Aberystwyth pier, but I understand from friends that they can also be seen this year at dusk gathering around the canal basin and adjacent Sealand Road in Chester. Two years ago a huge murmuration could be seen each day in Boughton and Vicars Cross causing great excitement to birdwatchers, but not so much to residents who suffered huge quantities of their guano on their roofs and gardens.

David Cummings



STORIES FROM VILLAGE HISTORY.

Lt Colonel John Dolphin CBE



Whilst carrying out research for a new local history project, stories from Christleton Parish during WWII, I came across an obituary for Lt. Col. John Dolphin CBE who lived at "Stoneydale" in Christleton at some stage of his early life. Although there are reports of him being born in Christleton, I

think it would almost certainly have been at Curzon Park where his parents Harold Evelyn and Dorothy Rachel Dolphin were living in 1905. They didn't move to Christleton until 1923.

He had a brother, Harold Maximillian Burton Dolphin (Max), who served as a Lieutenant in the 2/56 Punjabi Rifles in the Indian Army and who died aged 21 on active service in Persia. He is commemorated on the Delhi Memorial Gate in India, and by a plaque at St Mary's Church in Handbridge.

I first learned about John through a story by his nephew Anthony Barrington Brown, who described him in an article in the Parish Magazine in 2011.

"My mother's brother John was a frequent visitor, very dashing always with the latest sports car. After a three wheel Morgan he advanced to an SS Jaguar, then in the war he had successively two armour plated Railtons, in which among other things, he distributed Tommy-guns to the commanders elect of the underground resistance to the expected German Invaders."

So who was John Dolphin, and what did he do to become Lt Colonel John Dolphin CBE?

After growing up in Chester he attended Marlborough College in Wiltshire, and went on to Loughborough Engineering College as a student apprentice. When he graduated in 1926, he joined the Hydraulic Engineering Company in Chester where he worked for a short time. He was then appointed as an Inspector for Selection Trust Ltd, and shortly afterwards as a manager at Austin Hoy & Co and then Engineer at Sheepbridge Coal & Iron Co, before setting up his own business, John Dolphin Ltd Consultants.

During this time he was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. 4/5th Battalion The Cheshire Regt, (TA) before transferring to the TA Reserve of Officers in 1931. He was mobilised on 24th August 1939, and had a meteoric rise as Captain, Major and temporary Lieutenant Colonel by 1942. His military rank however was a cover for his membership of the Secret Intelligence Services (SOE) where he was part of the "sabotage service". At this time he was involved in plans to create a resistance organisation in the UK, to thwart the German enemy if they broke through our defences and landed in the UK. He was also one of a small team developing specialist military inventions. In 1943 he became Commanding Officer of the Inter-services Research Station at Welwyn in Hertfordshire. Shortly afterwards he transferred to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, where he served before retiring, with the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel in November 1960.

Amongst the specialist equipment that was developed whilst he was at the SOE, were the Welman midget submarine and the Welman Parachutists motorcycle.

On leaving the Army he founded a number of companies including the Corgi Motorcycle Company, and set up Dolphin Industrial Developments which he ran until 1950. He was then appointed Chief Engineer at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, and later Engineer in Chief at the UK Atomic Research Group. In 1959 he became Joint Managing Director of Lansing Bagnall Ltd, J E Shay Ltd, and Director of TI Group Services, where he successfully secured patents for a number of inventions, including sheet piling revetments, improvements to fork lift trucks, and the forerunner of the modern mobility scooter.

He was appointed Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the 1956 Queen's Birthday Honours. He died 2 May 1973 aged 67 in Oxfordshire. What an amazing man who once lived in our village, one of many from a secret generation whose story can now be told.

David Cummings

Ref.

Wikipedia Lt Col. John Dolphin
Christleton Parish Magazine. A.A.Barrington Brown
Nigel Meyrick

THINKING ABOUT NOTHING IN PARTICULAR:

In my working days, a distant memory now, and probably way back in the 70's, I came across a thick technical manual about an IBM product. Interspersed were a number of pages that read: 'This page intentionally left blank.' I've seen this since, but this was the first for me.

This triggered all sorts of thoughts:

Why? If the page was planned to be blank why not just leave it out? To save paper and the planet (not a concept then) but also to save costs and reduce the thickness of the manual.

What was going to be on those pages, but was being withheld? Was I not sufficiently privileged or capable enough to have or use that information?

After this feeling of inadequacy I was overwhelmed by the realisation that the page had not been 'intentionally left blank'. It had that message printed.

So, it's a lie then - and from a reputable company like IBM. Perhaps they should have said: 'intentionally left blank apart from this message'.

Have you ever in your word processor changed the text you've typed to white so that it disappears against the white page. Nothing visible and if you printed it then just a blank page - but a lot of important information could be on that page nevertheless. Certainly not a blank page. Could those 'blank' pages in the manual have white text secretly stored?

I've occasionally pondered using white text in a document as a form of security against prying eyes, for example recording passwords used, but it's easy to reveal that something is there by just highlighting the space to show what's hidden, and a word count would indicate a non-blank page. Not a great security tool!

Emptiness is a curious thing. Is it real or a concept. Think about 'half full' and 'half empty'. Is something only empty when you look at it, but when you look away it is full again?

So you take a glass container and you extract all the air to form a perfect vacuum - is it empty? No - lots of small sub-atomic particles pass through all the time, and then there's light and the whole electro-magnetic spectrum to consider. That container may not have air

in it, but it is still far from empty.

Then there is the other 'nothing'. Zero.

Our whole world uses mathematics. For everyday life and for scientific progress. Where would we be if we used ancient Roman or Greek mathematics? They somehow managed their counting without a zero. I suppose the lack of a number represented nothing and that was good enough. (In fact the existence of 'nothing' was a philosophical debate.) Well, it wasn't good enough and it is fortuitous* that we adopted a decimal number system (Hindu-Arabic based) that used a written zero. That zero is a number, an integer, and a placeholder when writing numbers. It's not the same as a 'null' value.

(* More fortuitous perhaps if we'd adopted a duodecimal system (based on 12 rather than 10) but we only have 10 fingers and thumbs.)

Our computers work on zeros and ones - they couldn't operate on just ones!!!

Anyway, what do you think about this? Nothing much perhaps!

Brian Inall

ZOOM BACKGROUNDS:

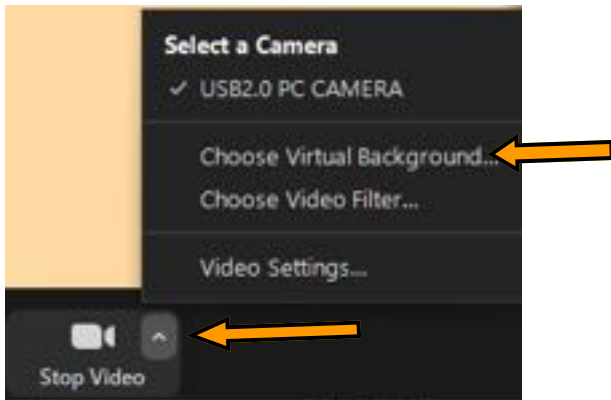
Some of us use a picture as a background during Zoom meetings to avoid the need to maintain tidiness. It is also a bit of fun and can reflect the 'theme' of the meeting. For some reason I get variable results when joining a Zoom meeting and I haven't yet worked out what's going on - but let's continue:

If your computer is a bit old and slow you may struggle with backgrounds, but still worth a try.

A proper green screen (just a large fabric sheet of a particular shade of green) is helpful to get good results, but you can get away without it to some extent. The software recognises the green (or other plain) area behind you and substitutes a picture. If you or your clothing match the background then parts of you may also be removed in favour of the picture. A green sweater can result in a detached floating head!

So hang up a plain coloured background sheet or use a plain wall behind you. Try to get it smooth without shadows. Shining a light on it may help even up the colour tone.

When in the meeting look for the 'Stop Video' icon that turns your video (camera) on and off. Right next to it there's a small up arrow - click on that and select 'Choose Virtual Background'.



You then get another dialogue box something like:



Select one of the small pictures shown to make it your background, or 'NONE' to get rid of it. You can add your own picture by clicking the X in the box half way up the right hand side (circled in red).

When done click X top right to exit the dialogue box.

If not using a proper green screen, the box centre bottom just above 'Mirror my video' lets you try to find a better colour match to your real background. It can improve the result.

Different computers/devices can show things in different ways, so just experiment and have fun! Try the filters.

Brian Inall

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CHRISTLETON



For many years we folk in Christleton, together with friends from further afield, have come together in Lent to enjoy fellowship over a simple meal for which we've made donations to Christian Aid. Last year we managed to hold the event just days before being plunged into our first 'lockdown'.

However this year we'll have to do something different. May we warmly invite you to an online :-

'Zoom Lent Lunch' on Thurs 25th March,
12 noon – 1pm

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83587162414?pwd=dHdvZGluTjMxVW5YNzNGTmlrRmU1Zz09>

Meeting ID: 835 8716 2414 Passcode: 043051

You can click on the above link, or start your Zoom app and enter the ID & Passcode above, or even join by phone (sound only, no pictures). The invite will also be on the St James' Church website on the Calendar. You can join a few minutes early if you wish to get sorted and say 'hello' by the start time.

Had we met as normal the menu might have included:

Cream of Mushroom or Spicy Tomato soup (homemade of course!) followed by bread, cheese & pickle and then an apple, banana or clementine with the usual cup of tea or coffee.

This year you're free to make your own choice but you're invited to make a donation, suggested minimum of £5.

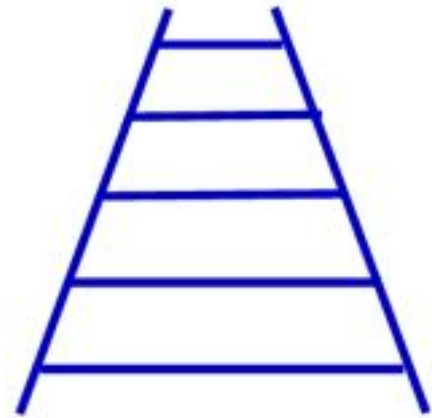
For those unable to join us on Zoom please join in by having a simple meal at the same time.

Cash or cheques to Christian Aid may be sent to Chris Platel by Thursday 1st April please (Sandheys, Plough Lane), or pay online at: www.christianaid.org.uk

Thank you. *Sheila & Dave Roberts*

PUZZLE SECTION: (Answers from last month):

A
BB
RRR
AAAA
CCCCC
AAAAAA
DDDDDD
AAAAAAA
BBBBBBBB
RRRRRRRR
AAAAAAAAA



Whatever way down we follow there is always a choice of two options. So 2 ways to the first B, 4 ways to the first R, etc. 10 decisions in total.

Total number of ways is: $2^{10} = \underline{1,024}$

Length of middle rung:

$$\frac{10 \text{ units} + 60 \text{ units}}{2} = 35 \text{ units}$$

CHRISTLETON VILLAGE STORES:

Lockdown has affected us all in different ways, seeming to threaten many of the things we value in life. Something which is certainly in jeopardy is our village shop. There has been a business on this site since before the beginning of the 20th century, run successively by the Millward, Butler, Leece, Bladwick, Hall and Jackson families, and is now in the capable hands of Dani and his wife.

Business has been particularly hard hit by the closure of schools during this pandemic and there followed the huge reduction in trade from the pupils of both the High School and the Primary School.

Long-standing residents will no doubt remember when Christleton had its own Post Office and Butcher's shop as well as other general stores. Now we have only the one remaining convenience store, but if that cannot weather the storm, even that will be gone.

The message has to be, "USE IT OR LOSE IT". A small village shop will never be able to compete on price with nearby supermarkets, but it continues to play a vital role in the life of our community. As well as a wide range of goods, the shop provides a newspaper delivery service and will always deliver goods in the area. So, please try to make a few purchases there as often as you can. I know you will be met with a friendly welcome and you'll be doing your bit to maintain this important part of our village life.

*Sue Massie
(via Jean Cresswell)*



Churchyard Maintenance



During this lockdown it is not possible to arrange any Churchyard Working Parties although work by the Community Payback Team may restart during March.

Hopefully we can resume some churchyard gardening together before too long, and so we look forward to your continuing help when we are allowed. In the meantime the wildlife will enjoy it! You can still walk through and enjoy the churchyard as part of your exercise.

More details and an update on the situation from Mike Lightfoot - Tel: 07787 421357

WEST CHESHIRE FOODBANK:

West Cheshire Foodbank is a project founded by local churches and community groups, working together to combat hunger in our local area. It is part of a nationwide network of over 2,000 food banks in the UK, of which 1,200 are run by the Trussell Trust and over 900 are independent.



St James' Church became involved in the scheme through the initiative of Mike Lightfoot in 2013 and has continued ever since.

Sadly, the need for Foodbanks has steadily increased year by year. This is especially so during this year due to the impact of the Covid pandemic, as more and more people find themselves in desperate financial crisis, through absolutely no fault of their own. There has been an increase in the number of local distribution sessions from 15 to 17 covering urban and rural Chester, Ellesmere Port and Neston.

To share a couple of statistics from our local Foodbank which will no doubt break your heart - in the year 2019-2020 there was an increase in need by 20% for adults and 40% for children and in January of this year that increase now stands at 41% for adults and a horrific 64% for children.

Fortunately there has also been a heart warming generosity from the public resulting in an increase in both food and monetary contributions. The amount of food last year donated from St James' was almost a ton of food and there has been an increase in regular cash donations.

As the church has been closed during lockdown, it hasn't been possible to leave food contributions there as usual but the supermarkets offer contribution collection points.

Food is now distributed in pre-packed boxes sufficient to provide meals for 3 days either from one of the centres or directly to peoples' homes. Thus monetary donations are very useful as can be used to buy what is needed and at a discounted rate for bulk purchase.

So I want to say a big thank you for your ongoing generosity on behalf of those who are so much less fortunate and privileged than ourselves, in these very difficult times of hardship for so many of our fellow human beings.

Chris Alderton

FROM THE REGISTERS:



FUNERAL:

Cynthia Siddall

Died 3rd Feb 2021, aged 96

Funeral took place at

Chester Crematorium 19th Feb 2021

(See page 6)

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