

Parish Magazine for
Wem, Lee Brockhurst and Weston-under-Redcastle

March 2021



As this month begins (almost) with the celebration of St Chad this photograph seems apt. Powerfully reflecting our season of Lent it also resonates with St Chad

The icon measures 3 metres by 2.55 metres and takes its inspiration from the St Chad cross. 'Christ Crucified, Risen, Lord of All' it hangs significantly over the Nave altar in our Cathedral dedicated to St Chad.

St Peter & St Paul's, Wem
St Peter's, Lee Brockhurst
St Luke's, Weston-under-Redcastle



Rector

The Revd Nick Heron
The Rectory
Ellesmere Road, Wem SY4 5TU

01939 232550

nphm16@aol.com

Retired Clergy:

The Revd Mike Cotterell, Preb Rob Haarhoff,
Canon Dr William Price, The Revd John Tye

Readers Emeriti:

Celia Camplin, Cathy Dibben

ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH, WEM

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Churchwardens: | Elaine Shaw | 236575 |
| | Chris Mellings | 809521 |
| PCC Lay Chair: | Sybil Farmer | 232568 |
| PCC Treasurer: | Caroline Sinclair | 232626 |
| Planned Giving Officer: | Bob Dibben | 236178 |
| Organist & Choir Master: | Rodney Bellamy | 01630 652564 |
| Deputy Captain of Bells: | Karen Compton | 236561 |
| Sacristans: | June Powell | 234412 |
| | & Kath Ridgway | 290162 |
| Church Flowers: | Olive Kenward | 234774 |
| | & Sybil Farmer | 232568 |
| Church Hall Bookings: | Elaine Shaw | 07969 511590 |
| Baby and Toddler Group: | Alison Hope | 07526 757492 |

Further details are available on our website:

www.wemcofe.co.uk

Find us on 

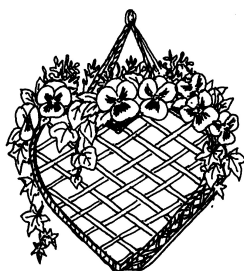
@Wemparishchurch

**From the Registers of
St Peter and St Paul's Wem**

At Rest

4 February Patricia Trow
11 February Muriel Jean Hall
22 February Neville William Jones
1 March Frances Patricia Scott

**“Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord and may
light perpetual shine upon them.”**



Book of Remembrance for March

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 st | Blanche Mary Oswell | 12 th | Lucia Shepherd |
| 2 nd | Agnes Bebbington | 13 th | Rosemary Maund |
| 2 nd | Anthony Leslie Jones | 14 th | Charles Henry Dennis German |
| 4 th | Hazel Mary Tudor | 14 th | Keith Burton |
| 4 th | Phoebe May Bailey | 15 th | Elsie Quelch |
| 4 th | Peter Edward Smith | 18 th | Hilda Violet Edwards |
| 5 th | Jessey Kathleen Dean | 18 th | Florence 'Kay' Scoltock |
| 5 th | Lilian Mary Gemmell | 20 th | Ernest Walter Fewtrell |
| 8 th | Peter Roy Hanbury | 20 th | Theodore Laurence Vincent |
| 9 th | Rose Helen Wallington | 21 st | Edward Albert Elson Dean |
| 10 th | Olwen Minnie Pye | 21 st | Michael Charles Pugh |
| 11 th | Joan Edith German | 23 rd | Stewart David Smith |
| 11 th | Frances Joan Phillips | 28 th | Arthur James 'Jim' Sands |
| 12 th | Annie Elizabeth Formstone | 30 th | Arthur Stephen May |

ST PETER'S, LEE BROCKHURST

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Church Warden: | Val Lusby | 235610 |
| Church Warden and Treasurer: | Roger Ashton | 232425 |
| Secretary: | Phoebe Ashton | 232425 |
| Vice Chairman: | Tim Wilton-Morgan | 07802 735769 |
| Warden Emeritus: | Robert Marsh | 200641 |

ST LUKE'S, WESTON-UNDER-REDCASTLE

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Church Warden: | Arthur Fox | 01630 685180 |
| Church Warden: | Helen O'Neill | 01939 200663 |
| Church Warden (Deputy): | Sylvia Griffiths | 01630 685204 |
| Treasurer: | Colin Holloway | 01939 200682 |

OUR CHURCH CALENDER FOR MARCH

Whilst we are very clearly in the midst of Lent we still have some Feast Days and Commemorations which may indeed add to our Lenten observance and devotion. Amongst these are three saints of these Isles, they are:

Monday 1 March: St David, Bishop of Menevia, Patron of Wales c 601

1 Thessalonians 2. 2-12
Matthew 16. 24-27

God our Father,
you gave David to the people of Wales
to uphold their faith:
encouraged by his example,
may we joyfully hold fast to the things
which lead to eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be all honour and glory,
now and forever. Amen

Tuesday 2 March: St Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, Missionary, 672

Ecclesiasticus 3. 17-24

Luke 14. 7-11

Almighty God,
from the first fruits of the English nation who turned to Christ,
you called your servant Chad to be an evangelist and bishop of this
people:
give us grace so to follow his peaceable nature,
humble spirit and prayerful life,
that we may truly commend to others
the faith which we ourselves profess;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Wednesday 17 March: St Patrick, Bishop, Missionary, Patron of Ireland, c 460

2 Corinthians 4. 1-12

Matthew 10. 16-23

Almighty God,
who in your providence chose your servant Patrick
to be the apostle of the Irish people,
keep alive in us the fire of the faith he kindled
and strengthen us in our pilgrimage
towards the light of everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Also there is one very significant Principal Feast:

Thursday 25 March: The Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Hebrews 10. 4-10
Luke 1. 26-38

We beseech you, o Lord,
pour your grace into our hearts,
that as we have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ
by the message of an angel,
so by his cross and passion
we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Understandably at present there can be no certainty about our services for:

Palm Sunday 28 March or Holy Week which begins on **29 March** - still less **Mothering Sunday** which is celebrated on **14 March**.

However for now what I can say is that irrespective as to where we are with Public Worship devotional material will be available for all of these and emailed to all (as always a plea, if you have an email address which I haven't got do kindly forward this so that I can include you in any distribution - all bulk emails are BCC). These will also be available on the Wem Parish Church website.

Also **Palm Crosses** have arrived and *will* be blessed and distributed to all (one way or another!).

As at Christmas an **on-line Reflection** is being produced for **Mothering Sunday** alongside an **on-line Devotion for Good Friday**

UPDATE

Dear Friends,

As I write we have still voluntarily suspended Public Worship in all three churches in the benefice. This is something that from one perspective has been very difficult to do. Certainly for myself as Rector this has been a very hard decision indeed, going against the grain of the centrality of the Eucharist and primacy of worship in our lives of faith. Likewise I understand and fully respect the perspective of some of you that the benefits of worship to psychological well-being and emotional health should be accounted for - not least when we have taken such care (usually) to keep to all the Covid-safe guidelines. However this move was precipitated by a *very* sharp spike in the local R rate to such a level that there were grave concerns, since then the local R number has fluctuated considerably and remained high in some of our abutting areas. I recall the wise words of a former RAF station commander I once worked for, referring to flight safety, he said "if there is any doubt there is no doubt". So from this perspective and with that maxim in mind I have little doubt that our tough call was the correct one and remaining closed for the interim sensible. Equally even if at cost to ourselves I believe that this example of care the churches have set to our communities has been appropriate and mirrored a healthy core of common resolve. It is no coincidence that the large majority of C of E churches across the diocese have taken the same steps as ourselves.

Whilst at present it would be inappropriate to predict a definite date when our worship will resume I consider it quite foreseeable that this will not be long off now - and certainly hope not. Of course our hopes are not at all that *we* simply *want* to get back to *our* worship (how shallow, insular and unlike Christ that would be). Our hope is so much more that our community's R rate and all those attendant tragedies dissipate and that we can reopen in that context. On the basis that things proceed as they are I am cautiously optimistic that we can be open for the greatest day of our year, Easter - subject absolutely and of course to keeping to all our Covid-safe protocols. After all where my esteemed station commander's maxim doesn't quite apply is that there will be no absolute certainty for at the very least several months yet. So open we may 'ere too long and when we do it will *have* to and *therefore be* as safe as we can possibly make it - of that there is no doubt.

The following will, I am sure, be overtaken before this edition is past its 'shelf date' nonetheless I am sure those who have not read Bishop Michael's guidance will value doing so. It is of course extant at the time of going to 'print'.

My every good wish as always, please do take the best care you can - stay safe,

Nick

Bishop of Lichfield's guidance on the current situation 8 February 2021

Although most churches in our diocese are closed for public worship, there are a small number who continue to hold services or are open for private prayer. There is no obligation to hold services in buildings or to open churches for private prayer in this period; Bishop Michael's general dispensation from canonical requirements for worship in any benefice currently runs until at least 31 March. This will be reviewed in late February.

The guidance remains the same as the vaccination programme rolls out, so vaccination should not be counted as a factor in deciding whether to remain open or to re-open.

Those that do remain open either for public worship or private prayer are asked to:

- Complete a weekly risk assessment, paying particular consideration to your local context (see p5 of risk assessment) including the latest infection rates or any local variations of the virus, and taking into account local Public Health advice (see the diocesan website and your local authority website). We recommend that you share your weekly risk assessments with your Rural Dean.
- Carefully follow all national guidance on conducting public worship which includes guidance on singing, receiving Holy Communion and test and trace.
- Not ask priests or other ministers to travel from outside the local area to take services.

- Ensure that people disperse immediately at the end of services.
- Follow Public Health England advice if there is a suspected Covid infection or outbreak linked to your church and immediately inform your Rural Dean and Archdeacon.

For those who are currently closed for public worship or private prayer, in the unlikely event that you are considering the possibility of reopening in the coming weeks, please take into account all of the above and consult with your Rural Dean and Archdeacon before reopening, submitting a new risk assessment which should include a brief summary of changes in local circumstances.

As always please consult the diocesan website for the latest guidance and information.

World Day of Prayer - Friday 5th March 2021

If anyone would like to pledge a donation, please phone or email me. I will be submitting one cheque to WDP on behalf of St Peter & St Paul's, donations will be collected after lockdown! The deadline is 6th April 2021.

suziplum98@gmail.com - 01939 233683

Helen Hornsby

Any queries about searches in the Whitchurch Road
Cemetery or elsewhere

Please contact Mr Tom Edwards of 1 Eckford Park,
Wem, SY4 5HL or on 01939 233932

WAR MEMORIAL CENTENARY

19 December 2020 marked the centenary of the unveiling of Wem's Town War Memorial.

To commemorate this anniversary prayers were said during the Parish Eucharist - for those remembered on the memorial, for peace and in thanksgiving for all who through the generations have found the memorial a source of comfort, remembrance and respect.

As a lasting mark of this occasion Simon Bloor kindly and thoughtfully presented to the church a framed and enlarged reproduction photograph of the actual unveiling. When you are able do please take time to look at this beautifully framed and laid out memento, it is a fascinating vignette of the occasion and time - it is also intriguing to see the old Union Buildings in relation to the north side of the church and church lawn.

Many thanks indeed to Simon



Above: Simon presenting the framed photograph to Elaine Shaw as Church Warden

WHITCHURCH FOODBANK

HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS

*"The Lord says to them.....'The kind of **fasting** I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. **Share your food with the hungry**'"* Isaiah 58. 6-7

Whilst we are not meeting in our churches at present the needs of the Food Bank continue to be very pressing indeed.

Amongst the items they are particularly short of at present are:

Tins of corned beef Cereals Tins of spaghetti hoops Tinned pies
Packets of mashed potato Tins of rice pudding Tins of meat
Tins of custard Tins of fruit Tins of peas Bottles of cordial/squash
Tins of carrots Jars of jam Tins of sweetcorn
Chocolate snack biscuits Tins of tuna Sponge puddings

Non-perishable food of any description plus essential toiletries will always be gratefully received – an up to date list of specific shortages is always available on their website (underneath).

You can still support in the following three ways. -

The Food Bank is still open to accept donations at their base, Bargates Hall Whitchurch, in the usual way between 09.30-11.30 on Tuesdays and Fridays. Social Distancing will be maintained.

There are two other alternatives:

The Wem Co-op will take donations, please ask staff for the exact location of the 'bin'.

Or via online giving, please go to their website - whitchurch.foodbank.org.uk where donations can be made on line.

'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink' Matthew 25.35a

The Bishop of Norwich

Many of you will have heard of the appointment of The Bishop of Norwich as the Archbishops' Lead Bishop for Environmental Affairs. This is an issue dear to many and significantly impacting on all of us, the following, from the C of E, was released on 25 February:

Nobody can deny that climate change awareness has grown significantly over the past years. It is now no longer a niche interest, but everybody's issue, writes The Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, following his appointment as Lead Bishop for Environmental Affairs.

“Many individuals have made changes, large and small. Plastic usage is decreasing, electric cars are on the up, and organisations see reducing environmental impacts as a core strand of their corporate social responsibility.

But it never quite feels as though we are going fast enough.

Faced with worrying headlines and worst-case scenarios, a natural response can be guilt and despondency. Perhaps this is why some would rather simply deny there is a problem at all. It can feel like too much for us to deal with. And, acting alone, it probably is.

The strength of the life of the Church is in its communities both local and global. We recently received a wake-up call when a survey by Tearfund showed only one in 10 young adult Christians said they felt their church was doing enough to engage with the issue of climate change.



Having accepted the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury to lead the Church of England's Environment Programme, I want to amplify the prophetic voice of the young, and empower the leadership

they show in this area, but they cannot do it alone and we can all do more.

To be part of this kind of sustained change, as individuals and as communities, we need to feel that what we are doing is part of a global movement that can really succeed. So, what can the Church of England do about climate change? And why should Christians see this as a part of their witness?

The great hymn of praise to God in Colossians 1.15-20 uses prepositions - 'in', 'through', 'for', 'before', 'together', 'to' - to give emphasis to everything being connected in Christ and through Christ to all dimensions of creation. Everything is in view, as far as the eye can see and beyond; flora, fauna, geology, wind and ocean currents, distant stars and furthest galaxies are wrapped in Christ. God's purpose in Christ is to bring to wholeness not only humanity but the entire created order.

The Gospels are full of stories of the growth of seeds, the choking of thistles, the beauty of lilies and the fruitfulness of trees. Jesus noticed and so must we. We have the privilege and responsibility to care for the earth and to tread gently on it. At the heart of our response must be actions to prevent the opposite from happening. This will take courageous decisions.

Those decisions could be local - for example a church switching to a green electricity provider, or national, such as bold Government policy to increase sustainable power generation and subsidise green heating technology. We cannot expect these decisions to be taken on a wide scale if all of the cost must be borne locally. National and local policy must align.

The Church of England can use its connections to drive this agenda, ensuring that thousands of local decisions needed to shrink our own carbon footprint and ensure our buildings remain places of welcome and hospitality.

I will be encouraging everyone to prayerfully engage with this part of our Christian discipleship and to ask questions of their church and community leaders, as well as members of parliament, as to what is being done to help remove barriers to green adaptations.

In many cases there are already win-win - for example green electricity tariffs are now often the cheapest available and if all churches switched to them, we could cut our footprint by nearly a quarter.

As Anglicans, the care of creation is a key part of the Five Marks of Mission which describe the role of our worldwide Church in the fostering of Christian discipleship. We are part of a global network, and hear first-hand from our sisters and brothers in Christ from regions where climate change is not an abstract phenomenon, but something which is displacing communities, causing crop failure and increasing loss of life through extreme weather events.

Alongside global warming, we must not forget the risks posed to biodiversity. Anybody watching Sir David Attenborough's recent series *A Perfect Planet* cannot have escaped a burning feeling of injustice evoked, not least by the warning that half of the species on earth could become extinct by 2050.

Combined together, our churchyards are the size of a small national park. With biodiversity threatened on a global scale, we can show the way by encouraging portions of churchyards to be managed as meadow to help create a diverse habitat for local species of plants and animals, and to offset emissions by investing in reforestation further afield. All these steps can make a difference.

The coming year gives an opportunity to increase momentum and for the UK to use its hosting of the G7 and COP 26 to make a global statement that we intend to lead by example. Christians, alongside people of other faiths, intend to play their part by encouraging practical changes at local and national levels, but also as local and global advocates for far better care and justice for God's gift of creation.

Following a year of the Coronavirus pandemic, we have now all experienced a major global event which has dramatically altered our way of life. We have learnt of the emotional, financial and human cost that has gone with that, and it has been very difficult. Yet many commentators suggest that this will be miniscule in comparison to the effects of climate change and biodiversity collapse.

As individuals we have learnt that practices such as travelling long distances for business and frequent flights, previously unavoidable, can now be reduced as virtual meeting technology has advanced.

And globally, the expedition of the development and roll-out of safe vaccines is a huge testament to human endeavour when we are aligned behind a common goal. It is important that the benefits now being measured in the UK can swiftly be widened to the global community through schemes such as Covax.

We can change with speed when we have to.

And now we need this kind of global response to the climate crisis if we are to protect our island planet home; no less urgent - no less committed. We have a narrow window where it is not too late to act.

In the coming weeks, as buds on the trees I planted last year burst with fresh leaves and my bees start to build up their colonies, I will be renewed in awe and wonder at the beauty and intricacy of God's creation. Being in nature always brings me hope.

As Christ's people, following in his ways of loving God and our neighbours, we all have a role to play - as individuals, churches, communities and as nations. Our actions matter to God because they enable our neighbours either to diminish or to flourish. With sustained meaningful steps forward we can all be part of a global movement to turn the situation around, and to be the generation which, when faced with our biggest test, chose the path of hope for all creation."

* * * * *

This poem was written by R. S. Thomas, priest and poet, whose service in the Church in Wales ended in the parish of Aberdaron, from where, for over a thousand years, the pilgrims embarked for the holy island of Bardsey. The church stands above the beach on the edge of a low sandy cliff against which the sea roars in a constant effort at destruction. The poem is written on a tablet of slate, displayed inside the church. Sent to us by June Powell.

THE OTHER

There are nights that are so still
that I can hear the small owl calling
far off and a fox barking
miles away. It is then that I lie
in the lean hours awake listening
to the swell born somewhere in the Atlantic
rising and falling, rising and falling
wave on wave on the long shore
by the village, that is without light
and companionless. And the thought comes
of that other being who is awake, too,
letting our prayers break on him,
not like this for a few hours,
but for days, years, for eternity.

Lee Brockhurst WI

Well! What can I say?? Lee Brockhurst WI's February speaker, on the topic of '**Sex, Secrets and Salacious Gossip of the Royal Court 1160 – 1830**' was **spell binding**! Who would have thought that such a potentially disconcerting subject (all the naughty bits you didn't learn at school) could be **so interesting**? (One member's husband was listening in an adjoining room and has asked if he can join our WI!!) Dressed in authentic costume, **Hampton Court Palace** Guide Lecturer **Sarah Slater** certainly knew her subject well, packing heaps of information into a very revealing (in more than one sense!) 60 minutes. It was astounding to learn that there was the equivalent of the 'yellow pages' for prostitutes! Sarah was such a captivating speaker that members have requested a coach trip to the palace in 2022 so watch this space....

Zooming up shortly is our Book Club on **1st March** when members will be discussing 'Lonely Londoners' by Samuel Selvon, and receive the next book - 'Dubliners' by James Joyce.... We like a challenge!

We are delighted that our friends in Loppington WI will be joining our meeting on **16th March** when Eric Jackson will be telling us about '**After you are dead – a history of grave robbing and dissection**'! Not as grisly as it sounds, you can expect that **experienced author and popular historian** Eric will present the subject in an informative and light-hearted style.

I'm very proud of the way our members have responded to the pandemic. They continue to attend WI each month creating an oasis of fun amidst uncertain times. They are supporting '**The Shropshire Way Challenge**', knitting scarves for the homeless, and '**Little Bags of Kindness**' making twiddlemuffs and lap blankets for dementia patients. John F Kennedy once said '**When written in Chinese, the word 'crisis' is composed of two characters – one represents danger and the other represents opportunity**'. Lee Brockhurst WI has grabbed the **opportunity** with both hands and we are very pleased that this is attracting more members.

If you would like to grab the opportunity to find out more, please contact our secretary Julie Woolfenden on 01939 200237 or jjwoolfenden@gmail.com. Remember '**If you believe it'll work out, you'll see opportunities. If you don't believe it'll work out, you'll see obstacles**'!

Sue Wilton-Morgan

How many?

There was a time when schoolboys and girls had no iPods, iPads, iPhones or computers of any sort to keep them amused. But round the corner on the main road there was this little shop that stocked all manner of electronic bits and pieces. In the window were dusty transformers, switches and old headphones. Boxes of little parts like resistors and transistors and dials of various designs hinted at the multitude of other parts that might be available inside.

Local newsagents displayed ranges of magazines and amongst these were technical journals describing the latest advances in electronics – all pre-computers, of course as this was in 1960.

One journal that was sought after by a budding Einstein or Marconi described how to make a very simple transistor radio. There was even a list of the components needed for this elementary radio receiver so, armed with that list and sufficient cash the shop was entered and the list presented to the proprietor. The items would be available for collection in two days.

The anticipation was almost unbearable. Two days later the components were collected in an old, small, box of stiff cardboard and soon the bits were being checked against the list from the magazine. All present and correct, including a large reel of wire to act as the aerial.

How handy that the tough little cardboard box would act as the container for this marvel of electronics! In addition to the parts one needed solder – a box of matches was obtained and one match was sufficient to melt the solder for one connection. Care had to be taken to ensure that correct polarity was observed, especially where the transistor was concerned for it had three little wires whereas the resistors and most other parts had just two. Eventually everything had been connected correctly and the headphones plugged in. Silence. Fiddle and twiddle. A still, eerie silence reigned in the headphones.

Then the realisation dawned that the aerial had not been deployed. Where to put it for the best reception? This simple little receiver needed maximum aerial length and height. The only answer was up to the roof – better still, up and over the roof. After a few tries this was achieved, the end attached to the terminal in the little cardboard box, the battery connected again, the headphones in position and after more twiddling there was the sound of a radio programme! What an achievement.

Now, what prompted the title of this piece? Do you recall from earlier that this little electronic marvel contained various bits including one transistor? Well, Apple, the famed computer people, have introduced a hand-sized device that is a true computer to which would be attached a screen and perhaps a keyboard and a mouse. This amazing device contains not one but “an astonishing 16 billion transistors” (to quote their advertising). Accepted, it’s the latest in their line of excellent computers but nevertheless to pack that many transistors in their little device hints at the miniaturisation that has been achieved over the years since the earliest transistors came into commercial use.

These days the average computer user relies on their devices to work without fail – usually. Just occasionally a component fails or the thousands of lines of complex computer code might become jumbled and the device has to be restarted or an “update” is applied to the device to bring it on track again.

A computer is simply(!) a device to carry out calculations and deliver the results in a readable format or as electronic signals to be further processed. With so many electronic components contained in each computer it is wonderful that, generally, they last for ages and process millions of transactions in their lifetimes. That simple one-transistor radio receiver that I made now feels like a stone age tool when compared with my modern computer!

Bob Dibben

The next issue is scheduled to be prepared on **Thursday 18 March** and will be available on **Friday 26 March** after 4.15 pm if we are able to produce a physical magazine. Otherwise it will go out in an electronic version.

Items for the magazine can be left in the drawer at the back of the church in Wem (by 9 am Thursday) or sent to:

pamedgmond@hotmail.com

Bats in Churches

As everyone who attends St Peter's Church, Lee Brockhurst will have realised we have a bat problem. To gain some insight into what could be done to ameliorate this problem without evicting the bats I went onto the Lichfield Diocese website and found some useful information. As a result I have become a subscriber to the Bats in Churches Newsletter which also gave me the opportunity to attend Zoom sessions with experts in this field and from the Bat Conservation Society. The first three sessions I joined were all about Norfolk churches. As you probably know East Anglia, and Norfolk in particular, has some very large churches erected on the back of the wool trade in the 14th and 15th centuries. They have also had intensive agricultural practises for many years and a loss of habitat for the bats which has led to them relocating to the churches whose roofs are generally very suitable for roosting, hence the focus on Norfolk.

On the past two Wednesdays I attended Zoom presentations, the first was largely to do with bats and disease and much of it focused on Covid 19 with an excellent presentation by Dr Tom August, his PhD, which he undertook some 10 – 12 years ago, focused on Corona virus in bats – so nothing new apparently. The second presentation was more down to earth and had 3 speakers who discussed various aspects of dealing with bats in churches. I should add that the churches (some 100 I believe) which feature in these talks have joined a Bat Survey which has been funded from, amongst other organisations, the Lottery Fund and Natural England and the C of E and I understand that the work being done is grant aided at least and maybe completely funded. This aside, I have learnt much and I would like to become a volunteer to study the bats at our church and find ways in which we can prevent the continued damage to the church's fabric and at the same time continue to give the bats a home (these sessions are still available I believe on the internet).

From what I have learnt we must be housing a maternity unit in St Peter's since the bats are more prevalent in the summer months. Apart from supplying roosting places for the female bats to give birth and raise their young we are also providing a safe area for the young bats to learn to fly! Obviously bats are a protected species and so anything we do must not endanger the bats but we can perhaps provide them with alternative roosting sites within the perimeter of the church yard or provide roosting sites in the roof of the church which do not allow access to the main space. The former would not be very expensive the latter could well cost quite a large sum of money.

If you want to see what a volunteer would be asked to do when undertaking a survey of the bats in our church the information is on the Bats in Churches website as two separate videos (Part 1 and Part 2). As you will see if you view the video the volunteer must have the permission of the church officials in order to undertake these surveys. So I am hoping that the St Peter's PCC will give me permission to undertake this work.

Phoebe Ashton

The Shropshire Historic Churches Trust

The Shropshire Historic Churches Trust was formed in 1991, 30 years ago, to help churches and chapels of all Christian denominations in Shropshire to maintain and repair their buildings, and in recent years grants towards the provision of toilets and kitchens in churches and chapels have also been made available. A secondary function of the Trust is to encourage public appreciation of Shropshire's churches and chapels by means of talks and visits.

Well over £1 million has been awarded to churches and chapels by the Trust so far. Its income comes from individual subscriptions (£20 a year), donations, legacies, and fund-raising events, especially the programme of Gardens Open each year, which regularly includes the beautiful gardens at The Citadel in Weston, and the annual September Ride and Stride.

All three churches in this benefice have been awarded grants, and just last month the Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery in Wem were awarded a grant for the conservation of rare wall hangings in the chapel.

Many of our events had to be cancelled in 2020, although we managed to visit three gardens and a modified Ride and Stride also took place. I fear that at least those planned for the early months of 2021 might also have to be cancelled or postponed, so our income has decreased at a time when many churches and chapels may need financial assistance to restore buildings after months of being closed for worship, especially through the winter.

Gaining new members would enable us to continue to help even more of our county's churches and chapels. I would be delighted to tell you more and give you a membership application form. I can be contacted on 01939-234777 or williamprice@talktalk.net, and I look forward to hearing from you!

William Price

(Chairman of the Shropshire Historic Churches Trust)

The Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery wish to express their huge gratitude to the Shropshire Historic Churches Trust for the donation which Father William refers to. This has made a very sizeable difference to their project to conserve the rare rush panels in Wem's Cemetery Chapel. Their project is now hopefully, Diocesan Advisory Council advice pending, able to proceed apace due to the work and support of the SHCT.

As Father William also notes all the churches in this benefice and many others have all benefited from the superb work of SHCT - yet their income has seriously stalled of late. Do consider supporting the Trust and most certainly remember them when Ride and Stride season is upon us.

CHOIRBOY

It all started at my primary school in Wem, the second Grove school that was based at Tilley House (near the Roden Grove entrance) where the O'Dea family ran a school until their retirement. The original Grove School was based where the Grove Estate is now in a large timbered house that was approached along an avenue of lime trees.

My music teacher, a German spinster lady whose name was Miss Boronoff, decided that I had a very good treble voice and that I was a suitable candidate for attending a Cathedral school. My parents responded and despite some reservations about the cost of private school fees I found myself accepted to start with their autumn term on Thursday September 17th 1953 at Hereford Cathedral School.

I was placed in one of the school houses named the Old Deanery, a long narrow building facing the east end of the cathedral close. The House Master I recall was a Rev. Preston My parents drove the 72 miles to take me there, it seemed like a million miles to me! After they had seen me settled in they left to return home, leaving a very lonely ten year old. But as I can see from the letter I sent home just three days later I had soon bonded with some of the other boys.

In my letter I mention David who was with me in Form 1 and who was David Anwyl, the farmer's son from Home Farm, Edstaston who generously acted as my minder if there was any bullying blowing up; he was built like a typical rugby player, a good friend to have by my side. David had a superb singing voice and

was permanently in the Cathedral choir whereas I was a reserve but sang regularly in the school choir who were on duty every morning in the Lady Chapel for school assembly, barring Sundays, wearing our blue cassocks and white frilly ruff.

It was a typical Public School with emphasis not only on academic achievement but also on its sporting activities. The school motto was "Manners Maketh Man". There was a choice of cricket or rowing in the summer, I chose cricket as I was brought up with a father who lived cricket! In the winter it was rugby, a game that David Anwyl and I relished.

There was also athletics, boxing and fives. PT lessons were run by an ex-Sergeant Major, Judo and self defence moves were taught and a super game played on dry grass where we all piggy backed and pulled each other over, the winner being the last couple standing. Belonging to the school CCF brought further out of classroom excitement, I remember firing live Lee Enfield 303 bullets at a nearby army range.

But the day to day life boarding in pretty austere conditions and attending school lessons with compulsory prep work after supper you accepted as your lot. One relief I found was joining the public library which was only 300 yards away at the other end of the cathedral close. I could lose myself for hours entering another world reading the adventure stories of the PJ Westerman books and Biggles.

Another adventure of a sort was secretly breaking school bounds under the cover of darkness to go and watch big screen Technicolor films at the Odeon Cinema in the High Street. School prefects were the main problem in avoiding detection, they had almost as much disciplinary power as the teachers and some enjoyed abusing those privileges but then there was also the snag of entering the cinema, you had to be 14 or over; standing on tiptoe helped!

Scary too was my route on dark winter evenings to piano lessons. They were always held in the main choir practice room which to reach was along dimly lit cloisters on the south side of the cathedral before entering this large dimly lit room through a creaking door and there at the far end was the piano with the teacher sitting behind. Dracula came to mind!

By the autumn of 1956 my treble voice was changing and this brought the opportunity to leave the choir as younger boys came in. David and I planned a united approach to parents as we both wanted to be back home on the farm on a daily basis. It worked! We both left Hereford Cathedral School at the end of that term and after the Christmas and New Year break I began the new spring term at Wem Grammar School, joining Maddocks House and Form 4 under teacher Antony Evans who was a good friend of my father and a governor of the school at that time. Who you know! Antony was a strict disciplinarian and being a family friend made no difference!

David went to the Tech at Shrewsbury and both of us missed the school rugby. He said to me “Let’s join Whitchurch Rugby Club”. “What about our weekend duty to milk cows?” I replied. “Oh I will see to the cows after the game” he confidently retorted. Phew! A step too far for me Dave, but he persevered for many years; strong as an ox!

So did Cathedral School influence my Christian values? Well I arrived there as the son of a devout Christian who was a Churchwarden for 30 years at Weston and Wem so my primary years were influenced by the C of E. When I came home Rector Percy Turner approached Father to ask if I would consider joining the church choir at Wem. Apparently his reply was something like “you will have to give him some time Rector, he has had an overdose of church in the past 3 years”. As a young teenager, now gaining some independence from parents, I had definitely formed the view that Christian values were vital for a happy and peaceful life, but I was naively confused by some clergy behaving like hypocrites, so I distanced myself from the church at that time.

Roger Ashton

With Mothering Sunday in mind:

Life doesn't come with a manual. It comes with a mother. – Anon

A mother understands what a child does not say. – *Jewish Proverb*

From these Isles:

Be joyful and keep your faith and your creed. Do the little things that you have seen me do and heard about; I will walk the path that our fathers have trod before us. – *St David*

May the strength of God pilot us, may the wisdom of God instruct us, may the hand of God protect us, may the word of God direct us. Be always ours this day and for evermore. – *St Patrick*

Snowdrops

Tricia Bamford sent us the following. Although we celebrate Candlemas in February so many gardens and wilder places are still carpeted by these beautiful harbingers of spring.

Snowdrops, which usually appear towards the end of January, have long been associated with Candlemas. Their lantern flowers are a symbol of the light of Christ shining in the darkness of the world.

When the days drag on and the nights hang heavy
When the weight of the world is already a burden we struggle to bear
When we're painfully aware of the barriers between us,
When six feet feels like light years
And we wish that our loved ones were right here
In the darkness the flame flickers on
When the tears fall so freely at nothing at all
And a day can be made by a call from a friend
When we spend our time locked in, locked down, locked apart
And our hearts ache with loss for the world that once was
Or because of what might have been
In the darkness the flame flickers on
When the ground, like our grief, is frozen and bare
When the floods swirl around and the air fills with mist
So we can't see what lies in the distance
And our very existence requires a persistence
That's taking its toll, when it's hard to feel whole
In the darkness the flame flickers on
Because buried beneath the bare surface of earth
Is a seedbank of hope
As the Candlemas snowdrops defiantly show
What their Christ-light lanterns can do
As they break through and make the soil sing
And they bring the first glimmers of spring
A reminder that this too shall pass.
Just as winter is defeated by a flower in the grass
So at long last will our long frost melt
And the darkness we've felt for so long will be gone
And the Christ-light flame flickers on.

Rich Clarkson, January 2021

Many will know of Rich when he was curate at Whitchurch. He is Diocesan Environmental Officer (DEO) for Lichfield Diocese. Working with Deputy DEO Rev'd Emma Cooksey, they support deaneries and parishes in engaging with environmental issues in worship and mission. They also offer support for parishes who are working towards the EcoChurch awards (ecochurch.org.uk). You can find more information and contact details at lichfield.anglican.org/environment