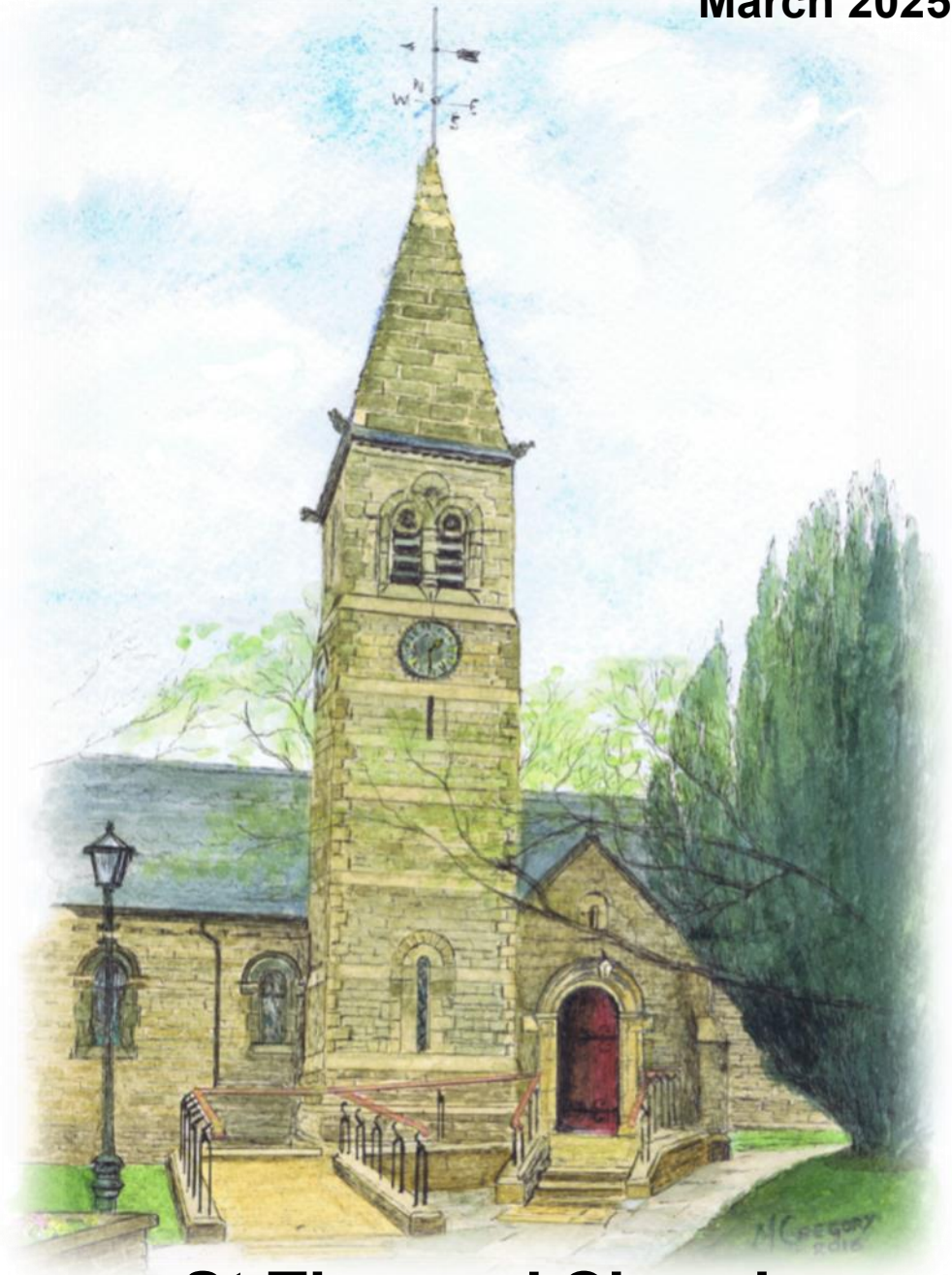


March 2025



# St Thomas' Church

High Lane  
Parish Magazine

50p

St Thomas is a living church in the community of High Lane where everyone is welcome and our mission is to share the love of Christ with all.

## Worship with us

Join us for worship in the Anglican tradition.

We are worshipping together in church but you can still be a part of our services by phone. Please see the calendar in the centre pages for details.

## Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals

Whilst we are without a Vicar, any enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals can be answered by Robert Taylor on 01663 763478

## Pastoral Care Team

Life can be challenging and we all need support. If you would like to talk or receive a visit, please contact Robert Taylor above who can put you in touch with someone from the Pastoral Care Team.

## We are Silver Award Eco Church



## Digital Donations

To make a donation to support our ongoing ministry and mission here please scan this QR code and you will be directed to the 'Give A Little' donation page. In these tough financial times, we are especially grateful for your support.



# Curate's LETTER



As I sit down to write this, it is my 34th birthday. It feels quite fitting to be reflecting on transitions and new beginnings on a day that marks another year of life.

Birthdays have a way of making us pause, to look back with gratitude and forward with expectation. In that sense, they are not so different from the season of Lent, which you are now journeying through.

I know I already said thank you in my last magazine article, but this will be the last time I write to you as your curate.

By the time you read this, I will have moved to Wales, preparing to be Priest in Charge in the Aled Mission Area. Even as I begin this next chapter, I do so with deep gratitude for all that I have shared with you at St Thomas'.

Lent is often seen as a time of giving things up, of sacrifice and discipline, but it is also a time of preparation. Jesus' forty days in the wilderness were not simply about denial; they were a time of drawing close to God, of seeking clarity and purpose. That is my hope for you as a church during this season – that you will use this time to listen afresh to God's call, to deepen your faith, and to prepare for all that lies ahead.

Change is never easy, and I know that as you navigate this time of transition, there may be uncertainty. But just as Jesus stepped forward in trust after his time in the wilderness, I pray that you will move forward in confidence, knowing that God is with you. St Thomas' is a place of warmth, welcome, and deep faith. I have seen first-hand how you care for one another and for your community, and I have no doubt that you will continue to be a beacon of Christ's love.

So, as you journey through Lent and beyond, know that I am holding you all in my prayers. Thank you, once again, for everything – for your kindness, your laughter, your patience, and your willingness to share this part of the road with me. May you continue to grow in faith, hope, and love, and may the light of Easter fill your hearts when the time comes.

With love and every blessing,  
Ashleigh

*Rev'd Ashleigh and Malcolm at her  
leaving gathering*



# Parish ACTIVITIES

Come join us at St Thomas Church Tree Tots Group  
Mondays during term time, 9.30-11.30am

A group of bumps, babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their parents or carers. Tea, coffee, play, a chance to chat and make new friends  
Suggested donation £2 per family



## Knit and Stitch Group



We meet on Saturday (excluding the second Saturday in the month) in the Church Hall at St Thomas' Church

**2.00 - 4.00 pm**

We are starting Easter Knitting projects - all easy patterns!  
Come for a chat and tea and cake!

Alison 07897489792



## Messy Church

**Saturday 8th March at  
3.30pm  
in the Church Hall**

Lots of crafts, a story, and a lovely meal together at the end.

If you are planning to come along, please confirm your attendance by contacting  
Carole Clulow 0798 436 2662

## Lent Group

Throughout the season of Lent there will be an opportunity to gather and reflect together about matters of faith as we hold a Lent Book/Discussion Group.

It will be centered around the Church of England Lent theme of Together in Christ, Sharing Hope

The group will start on **Ash Wednesday, 5th March**, at a time to be decided.

If you might like to join in with the group please contact Tony Berry or keep an eye on the church notice boards for more information.



Come and have a flipping good time at the Wives'

## **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Coffee Morning**

**In the Church Hall  
4th March 10.30am—12.00 noon**

**Bring & Buy • Raffle**

**Proceeds to St Anne's Hospice**



## **Repair Shop Coffee Morning**

**Saturday 8th March 10am - 12 noon  
In the Church Hall**

Another of our popular Coffee Mornings and the opportunity to bring along your broken or damaged items for repair. If your item is too large to bring to the session, still come along and tell us what is wrong, with a photo if possible and we will see if we can help. We can arrange to pick up the item if necessary.

**There will be lots of cake and tea/coffee, so come along even if you have nothing to repair!**

## **Sewathon!**

After the success of the sewathon last year when we turned the extra knitted leaves from the Christmas tree into blankets, we would like to do the same again!

**Day : Thursday 13th March  
Time: 10.30 am  
Place : St Thomas' Church Hall**

Please bring a bodkin if you have one (if not don't worry we have extra) and a packed lunch!  
Tea/ coffee and cake will be provided.  
The finished blankets will be donated to a care home in Buxton.



# Parish NEWS

## Baptism

2nd February      Oscar Cubbon

## Funerals

24th January      June Cartledge  
21st February      Judith (Judy)  
                                 Hunns

## Anniversary of Baptisms

**1st**                  Phoebe Shore  
**2nd**                  Ria Walsh  
**3rd**                  Nancy Jones  
                                 Margot Newton

## Ashes Burial

13th February      Thomas  
                                 Marsden

## Eco Church Dates for your diary

We are pleased to inform you that we will be running three Repair Shop Coffee Mornings this year.

Not only a chance to come along and enjoy tea/coffee, cake and a natter but also — if you have them — to bring along broken or damaged items for repair.

Mary will again be doing simple garment repairs and adjustments on well laundered cloth and woollen items, while Dave and Jeff put their engineering skills into fixing broken items, sharpening kitchen and garden tools, children's toy repairs and even bringing solid-state electrical items back to life. Last year they brilliantly managed to get Mother Goose talking again!

**Saturday 8th March 10am—12 noon**

**Saturday 21st June 10am—12 noon**

**Saturday 11th October 10am—12 noon**

Put the dates in your diary now!

## 2025 – time for a new Church Electoral Roll

This is the year when EVERYONE gets taken off the Electoral Roll – and needs to make a definite decision to come back on again. It happens in the Church of England every six years. Whereas for five years, the Electoral Roll is revised annually by our Electoral Roll Officer, in this sixth year, the roll is dissolved, and we must all re-apply and re-commit ourselves.

Blank Electoral Roll forms are in church, along with a box for your completed form before and after services.

For more details talk to Robert Taylor, who is our Electoral Roll Officer.

# Pastoral LETTER

Dance teachers encourage us to dance, to feel the music and the rhythm and join the flow. From our earliest days to the ripest, we have danced. Your memories may begin with ballet classes or a stumbling progress of learning to glide, jive and bounce with a partner. Mine can still bring back the embarrassment of an awful evening when my lovely partner retired, wounded! A stiletto shod dancer had stepped backwards and pierced her foot, blood everywhere. She was treated promptly but went home. Learn to share the lead and avoid collisions was the takeaway.

Choices of music for dancing may also be a driving disco beat, maybe the calmer stuff of strictly or maybe as the mood takes you. And sometimes it's the songs; "Let's face the music and dance", "I can't dance don't ask me", "Dancing Queen", "It's raining men", "Don't stop me now": artists include Queen, ABBA, Robbie Williams, Beyonce, Taylor Swift. A long list of wonderful gifts of words, music and movement that were once alive, then dated and now nostalgic.

Maybe you always dance with a partner, or maybe alone or alone in a crowd. A full dance floor is lovely flow of human emotions, from happy to the quite reflective and even melancholic. Music, it seems, always brings back some special memories of encounters, enchantments and love. Here other people are not the hell of some cynical imagining, they are the stuff of which we are made. They echo the everyday, "dancing" our way through.

Our dance skills can get stiff from underuse, advancing illnesses or ageing. Our life skills can do this too. You may have been hurt by one of the many "stilettos". We need to keep going and sometimes need to assess how well we are doing, to remember to forgive and be forgiven.

March 5th sees the start of Lent, the Christian reminder to reflect and assess the dance of our lives. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, to remind us that we are not immortal, and carries us to the joy of Easter, to remind ourselves that the ongoing presence of Jesus Christ means we can be renewed and dance on.

You might think about how you use this time, choose what your rhythm might be. It could be a set time each day to be still, reflect and pray: a series of visits to places of rich and challenging memories; joining in more communal services at St Thomas' or other churches, especially around Mothering Sunday on March 30th.

*Tony Berry. Emeritus Reader.*

## Prayer for Lent — Cara Heafey

Wild and restless spirit of God  
Accompany our Lenten journeys.  
Give us courage to spend time in the wilderness  
The place where you bring us face to face with ourselves.  
Help us to pray with honesty, Help us to live with simplicity  
Make us hungry and thirsty for your life-giving presence.  
When we return to the comforts of our lives and the company of others,  
May we do so as those who have been transformed  
By the sharp truths of the desert.

## Parish Share and St Thomas' Church

In our February Parish Magazine, we explained how the Parish Share is calculated and what it helps us as a church and a Diocese to achieve in our ministry. Some of you have asked how much is our specific contribution and I felt, as Church Warden and with the approval of the Parochial Church Council, to provide additional information.

In 2024 our Parish Share was £76,000 and in fact with our current funding issues, we were only able to pay £53,000. Every month we send £4,000 to Chester Diocese and in November 2024, the Parochial Church Council agreed a further payment of £5,000.

As a church, we have just received our Parish Share for 2025. This is £77,604.75, which is £6,467.06 a month.

Historically, up to 2019, we were able to pay our Parish Share in full but since the pandemic we have struggled to achieve this. In 2020, a period when churches were closed, we lost around £23,000 in income. That prevented us from paying the full Parish Share which was then £65,975. Our payment for 2020 was £40,406. Since then, we have steadily been able to increase our Parish Share payment to £46,000 in 2021 and 2022 and increasing it to £51,000 in 2023.

Our church is currently without a vicar and on 9th February 2025, the Bishop of Stockport took our service at 10.00am then spoke to the Parochial Church Council regarding the progression of recruiting a new vicar. Our discussions highlighted the balance of contributing our Parish Share while paying our regular bills, such as heating costs, along with growing demands to find funding for major repairs. Our West Wall is suffering water ingress damaging the fabric of the building and we are aware our heating system of both the church and church hall are in need of replacement and could fail soon. In addition, in the last two years, we have had considerable expenditure maintaining and removing trees as appropriate, following a recent detailed tree report. More work will be required as we monitor Ash Dieback in the Copse.

I hope this information is helpful to you all in understanding how, as a church, we aim to balance paying our Parish Share, which is really desirable, while finding the funds to maintain the fabric of the building. Your Parochial Church Council is working hard on these issues, along with Chester Diocese. I hope in future months to write further in our Parish Magazine to keep you informed. *Malcolm Bennett, Church Warden*

### To ponder...

If you your lips would keep from slips, five things observe with care: to whom you speak, of whom you speak, and how, and when, and where! – *William E Norris*

Give me, good Lord, a humble, lowly, quiet, peaceable, patient, charitable, kind, tender and pitiful mind; with all my works and all my words and all my thoughts to have a taste of the holy blessed spirit. – *Sir Thomas More*



## Praying the Prayer of Forgiveness

*We continue our series on prayer by the Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle, former Senior Lecturer in Historical Theology & Church History, Nazarene Theological College, Manchester.*

*Numbers 12:13, 'O God, heal her, I pray.'*

These six words are Moses' prayer for his sister Miriam. They tell us a lot about Moses and a lot about prayer. For some time Miriam and her brother Aaron had been simmering with anger against Moses. They protested that he had married a Cushite woman (v.1), but the real cause of their animosity was jealousy. 'Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?' (v.2). Don't we have a ministry as well? Hasn't God also spoken through us? Why does everyone look to Moses? Why are we overlooked?

Jealousy is a powerful and deadly emotion. God had given ministries and honour to Miriam (Exod. 15:20,21) and Aaron had become the chief priest (Num. 3:1-3), but neither of them were satisfied with that. It looks as if Miriam fomented and took the lead in criticising Moses. Suddenly the Lord intervened (v.4). He called Moses, Aaron and Miriam together and defended His servant Moses. Moses is faithful in all my house! (v.7)

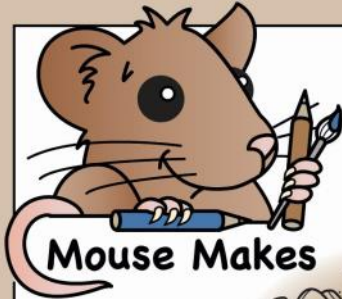
Whereas the Lord had often spoken to other prophets in dreams and visions, He speaks to Moses 'mouth to mouth' (v.8). How dare Aaron and Miriam question Moses whom the Lord called 'my servant' (v.8). Having so strongly defended Moses and rebuked his critics, the Lord departed and then the divine judgement fell. Suddenly Miriam, the leader of the conspiracy, was struck down with the dreaded leprosy.

Aaron immediately cried out to Moses, confessing his own and his sister's sin and foolishness (vv. 11,12). Then Moses demonstrated why the Lord honoured him so highly. He expressed no anger, no vindictiveness, no spirit of 'settling scores' against his brother and sister. In spite of their antagonism and jealousy, Moses loved them both and 'cried to the Lord' on behalf of Miriam. He prayed one of the shortest prayers found in the Bible. 'O God, heal her, I pray' (v.13). He was grieved and full of compassion to see his sister so terribly afflicted. The prayer was prompted by the love that forgives, the love that overlooks what others have done to us, the love that wants God's best for them. And only God's grace can make us like that. The prayer is so short, so simple, so direct, so personal. 'O God, heal her, I pray.' And God heard and answered. As a warning to others who might challenge Moses' authority, Miriam was quarantined for seven days, then fully healed and restored (vv.14, 15).

How does this incident help us in our prayer life?

First, true prayer is born in compassion. The lips express the deep feelings of the heart.

Second, God will not hear our prayers if our hearts are not right with him and with one another. While we cherish resentments and grudges, our praying is powerless. Third, while there are many times when prayer needs to be persistent, there are also times when it is a simple, deep cry from the heart.



## Mouse Makes

### THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

After Jesus was baptised who led him into the wilderness?

-----  
 Luke 4:1



**For how many days was Jesus tempted by the devil?**

-----  
 Luke 4:2

Who did Jesus say you should ONLY worship and serve?



-----  
 What did the devil tempt Jesus to turn a stone into?

-----  
 Luke 4:8



**READ**  
 the story in  
**Luke 4:1-13**

**Jesus said not to put the Lord your God to the...**

-----  
 Luke 4:12



-----  
 Luke 4:3

-----  
 What happened after the temptation of Jesus?  
 see Luke 4:14-15

JESUS • LED  
 WILDERNESS  
 DESERT  
 TEMPTATIONS  
 DAYS • DEVIL  
 HUNGRY • SON  
 STONE • ROCK  
 KINGDOMS  
 WORLD • GLORY  
 WRITTEN  
 SCRIPTURE  
 WORSHIP • ONLY  
 SERVE • LORD  
 JERUSALEM  
 HIGH • TEMPLE  
 THROW • DOWN  
 JUMP • ANGELS  
 HANDS • HOLD  
 LIFT • FOOT

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# Eco NEWS

## The Woodland Trust needs your help

The climate crisis is having a profound impact on nature. It's urgent that we all understand how wildlife is coping with shifting seasons, warmer temperatures and unpredictable weather patterns.

Climate change has already accelerated spring's arrival by an average of 8.4 days compared to the early 1900s. Now, The Woodland Trust needs you to help them find out whether the signs of spring are changing too.

Please complete a very simple on line form to tell the trust whether you've spotted any of spring's three vital signs – frogspawn, a singing song thrush or flowering blackthorn. Your records are crucial in helping them understand current threats and how climate change is affecting the health of nature.

### How to take part:

- 1) Choose one or more of spring's vital signs to record from the list below.
  - 2) Pick a location of where you'd like to record (eg. your garden).
- Submit your record using the online form when you have seen or heard your chosen sign of spring. If you prefer, you can download their form to make notes before submitting.

We only have until **31 March 2025** to collect as many records as possible. Please submit any recording of spring's vital signs **before the deadline** to ensure your data is included.

### Frogspawn - first seen

When to spot: January to April

Look for frog mating activity in ponds, ditches or slow-moving streams. The small black eggs are encased in a clear jelly and laid in clusters.

### Song thrush - first heard

When to listen: from early January

Slightly smaller than a blackbird with a dark-spotted underside and pale brown wings and back. The song thrush was once a common sight in UK woodland but is sadly in decline. Its song is varied, so listen out for short, repeated phrases.

Record the first time you hear a song thrush.

### Blackthorn - first flowering

When to spot: mid-January to mid-April

Early to flower in spring, blackthorn trees have clouds of snow-white, almond-scented blossom which grows more fragrant on sunny days.

Record blackthorn's first flowering when the petals of the first flower are open sufficiently for you to see inside the flower.

Find the form and more details (including a recording of a Song Thrush singing) at [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/things-to-do/natures-calendar/springs-vital-signs/](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/things-to-do/natures-calendar/springs-vital-signs/)

# What's the Big Idea?

## An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Psalms

This month we continue our examination of a selection of books from the Old Testament.

*'The Psalms have a unique place in the Bible, because most of the Scripture speaks to us, while the Psalms speak for us'* (Athanasius of Alexandria).

The Book of Psalms contains 150 prayers or songs of praise, the majority (73) attributed to David, although some were composed later. They were mostly composed for liturgical worship. There are songs of praise, in which people joyfully express praise for God's work of creation and sustaining (eg 135 & 136). In others, the psalmist recounts a desperate situation and gives thanks for God's answer to his prayers (eg 30 & 116).

There are a significant number of psalms of lament, both individual (eg 3-7; 22) and communal (eg 44), which begin with a cry for help. Some express deliverance from sin (51 & 130), or point to the certainty that the Lord has heard their prayer (7, but contrast 88). The theme of trust is central in many psalms (23, 62 & 91).

The 'royal psalms' (eg 20, 21 & 72) point to the promised Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus. There are also psalms teaching wisdom (eg 37, 49); 'torah' psalms, focussing on the law of the Lord (eg 1, 19 & 119), and psalms which celebrate the history of Israel and God's faithfulness (eg 78, 105 & 106).

The psalms can help us in our own prayers, by providing us with models to follow, as they express our own deepest feelings as we approach God: *'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul'* (Psalm 23:1-3).

## Wives Group .....

It's nice to feel the lightness in the air and see the lovely spring flowers popping up. We have a busy month to look forward to.

- 3rd Mar Service & Fellowship & prepare for Pancake Coffee Morning.
- 4th Mar Pancake Coffee Morning
- 10th Mar Armchair Exercises with Jill Kenna
- 17th Mar Home Brew - Quiz
- 24th Mar Earthquakes & Volcanoes with Peter Webb
- 31st Mar Home Brew - Family Fortunes

Our meetings start at 2pm in the Church Hall and we are a friendly group.

With best wishes  
Karen & Lesley

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▪ TALKS ▪ QUIZES ▪ MEALS OUT ▪ ANNUAL DAY OUT ▪



## **Saint of the Month**

### **5th March – Eusebius**

#### *Friend of St Jerome*

Eusebius is the saint for you if you believe in the Bible, and also in providing hospitality. He was born of a good family in Cremona, Italy, in the fourth century, and felt called to become a monk. As Eusebius was ascetic by nature, he sought out St Jerome in Rome, who advocated an austere lifestyle for monks. They became life-long friends. At that time, Jerome was secretary to Pope Damasus, who commissioned him to produce for the Western church a translation of the Bible in Latin.

It was a time when Christian theologians were defending the faith from various heresies which had arisen concerning the nature of God. Eusebius was a loyal friend of Jerome, and so became involved in Jerome's theological disputes against various heresies.

When the Pope died in 384, Jerome decided to leave for the Holy Land. Eusebius begged to accompany him. At Antioch, they were joined by two female friends of Jerome's and together they made a pilgrimage to all the places connected with the earthly life of Jesus. Later, they decided to make their home in Bethlehem, where Jerome continued with writing, studying, and overseeing a monastery.

Jerome noticed that the vast number of pilgrims to Bethlehem were extremely poor, so he decided to build a hostel for them. Eusebius was sent to Croatia and Italy to raise money for the building project. He even sold his own property at Cremona to help with finances. Meanwhile, the theological disputes continued, and it seems that Jerome next sent Eusebius to Rome, to support Pope Anastasius I.

In 400AD, Eusebius may have returned to his native Cremona, or else to Bethlehem to become the abbot of the church there. One (unproven) tradition credits him with founding the abbey of Guadalupe in Spain. Another late tradition credits him with raising three men from the dead – an event painted twice by Italian Renaissance painter Raphael Sanzio. Wherever Eusebius spent his last years, he continued to support Jerome's interests, and they regularly corresponded on theology. Eusebius died in 423 and it is thought he is buried alongside Jerome in Bethlehem.

### **Judy Hunns, RIP**

The wives group are saddened to learn of the death of Judy Hunns. We send our sincere condolences to Keith and the family.

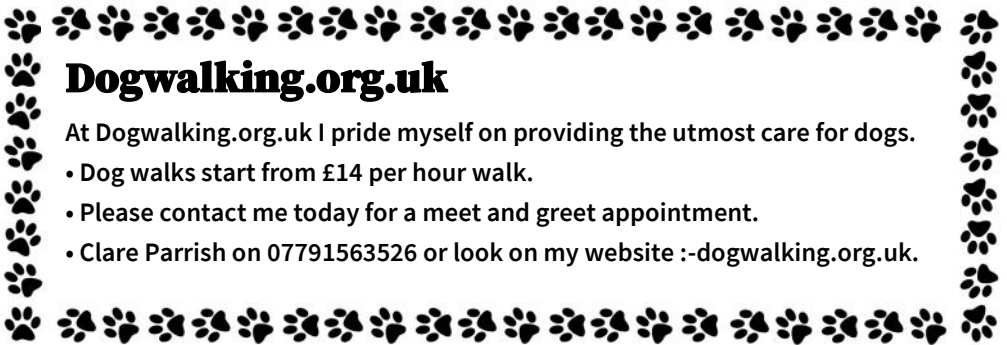
Judy was a long serving member and always supported meetings and fundraising activities. We shall miss her friendship and company

# Sudoku Puzzle Medium

Answer towards back  
of magazine

	5				2	8		
			6	1	5	9		
	4		8					3
3								7
1					7		5	2
		9	3	7	1			
		6	5				4	

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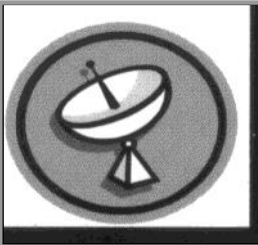
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References available on request



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# Calendar for March 2025

Services will be held in St Thomas' Church unless otherwise indicated.  
Please do not attend if you have any Covid-19 symptoms.

St Thomas' Church is trying hard to reach all our parishioners using a variety of methods. Do join in our worship in person or by telephone  
Church is open each day for Private Prayer.



## Sunday 2nd March

### Sunday before Lent

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.00am Parish Communion  
10.00am Shrove Tuesday Pancake Coffee Morning

Tuesday 4th

Wednesday 5th

### Ash Wednesday

9.30am Holy Communion  
7.00pm Ash Wednesday Holy Communion  
9.00pm Telephone Compline  
10.00am Repair Shop Coffee Morning  
3.30pm Messy Church

Thursday 6th

Saturday 8th



## Sunday 9th

### First Sunday of Lent

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.00am Parish Communion  
9.30am Holy Communion  
10.30am Sewathon!  
9.00pm Telephone Compline

Wednesday 12th

Thursday 13th

## Sunday 16th

### Second Sunday of Lent

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.00am Parish Communion  
9.30am Holy Communion  
9.00pm Telephone Compline

Wednesday 19th

Thursday 20th

## Sunday 23rd

### Third Sunday of Lent

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.00am Parish Communion  
9.30am Holy Communion  
9.00pm Telephone Compline

Wednesday 26th

Thursday 27th

## Sunday 30th

### Mothering Sunday

8.30am Holy Communion  
10.00am Parish Communion  
6.00pm Choral Evensong



## **30th March – Mothering Sunday and Mother Church**

The Fourth Sunday in Lent was called 'Mid-Lent' or 'Refreshment Sunday', when the rigors of Lent were relaxed more than was normal for a feast day. It is called Mothering Sunday as a reference to the Epistle reading for the Day (Galatians 4:21-31). The Lenten Epistles follow from each other with teaching about our life as Christians and how we are to follow Christ.

On Mid-Lent Sunday the Epistle talks of bondage and freedom; the bondage of the Law and the Old Covenant as compared to the freedom in Christ, "the promised one", and the New Covenant. Verse 26 reads "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." We gain our freedom from Christ and, as it was seen before the Reformation, the Church.

Thus, Mothering Sunday is about the freedom that we gain through the promise of Jesus Christ delivered through our Mother the Church. People were encouraged to go to their 'Mother Church' (their home church or their home Cathedral) to worship and give thanks. Hence apprentices, and others, went home for the weekend and often brought gifts (or accumulated pay) home to their family. On the other hand, Mother's Day is a secular festival invented in 1904 and is celebrated on the 2nd Sunday in May in most countries in the world. The UK seems to be the exception. In recent years Mothering Sunday has been hijacked to take the place of a special, secular day to give thanks for our mothers.

### **A Prayer for our Mother Church during the Interregnum, our PCC and all our congregation**

God our Father,  
you have welcomed each one of us in Jesus  
and called us to be his body in this place.  
Send us your Holy Spirit,  
at this time of uncertainty and change,  
to fill us with vision and energy;  
make us faithful in prayer and worship,  
that we may be true to our calling  
to bring new life to our community.  
Guide with your heavenly wisdom  
those who are to choose a new Incumbent for this parish,  
that the one whom we receive  
may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people:  
ready to serve us with joy, to build us up in faith,  
and to lead us by example in loving obedience to your son,  
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

# Community NEWS

## High Lane Residents Association



### Norbury Hollow Level Crossing.

#### Further to my visit to the crossing officer ten years ago

I recently spent a very pleasant 90 mins re-visiting the signal man's cabin at the crossing. Dave Evans, whom I had met before, made me very welcome, cleared a chair and served me tea. His shift had started at 4pm on this particular Sunday, and he was on until midnight. No trains were due for a while so we could chat.

In our last meeting, he had informed me that the crossing may close in 2025, hence my visit today. I am sure you'll be glad to know that now, there is no such plan in the pipeline, or in the foreseeable future. Mr Evans has been a railway man for 53 years. He has, just about, had every imaginable job on offer within the industry, from the age of steam to the present day.

The Cabin itself has two areas, the well equipped kitchen / diner and the Signals Office. The men who share it look after it well and keep it homely. There's a rack of interesting books and I was struck by a lovely picture on the wall, of a great Britannia Class steam loco (No. 70045, Lord Rowallan) powering past Llandudno Junction with Conway Castle in the background.

The main source of information is the Computer screen, then there are lights, bells, buzzers, switches, phones and dials to keep a close eye on. There is so much more to do than see to the gates. Signals are operated by a rack of 4 huge levers in the cabin; the two largest ones require real strength to operate as they are mechanical. The other two connect to signals electrically. The gates have to be closed and locked in position 3 to 4 minutes before a train comes. In fact, the semaphore signal will not give the train permission to pass if the gates have not clicked into place.

A few other points I learned: it used to take 8 men to lift a new section of rail into place, the actual line is referred to as 'The Permanent Way', points are oiled regularly manually, the twisted steel clip things that hold the rail in place are Pandrols and, for maintenance men, there are yellow plates along the track showing the distance from the last station. By the cabin, you can see one showing three and three-quarters for the mileage from Hazel Grove Station. Come Spring, Mr Evans will be bringing the gnomes back from his home in Crewe, all repainted and spruced up. The garden will be getting his attention and the birds will be fed.

All this did make me think a little about how the men keep alert for trains, but I need not have worried. I defy anyone to sleep through the loud rasping noise of the annunciator buzzing, to give notice of a Down train passing Disley, or the equally loud series of bells signalling an Up train leaving Hazel Grove.

After the 5.32 UP train passed, I watched Dave open the gates for the few cars waiting and was pleased to see a car full of a family waving gratefully to him. I am much more aware now of what an incredibly serious and responsible job such men as Dave have, keeping alert, working alone, every shift.



## HIGH LANE VILLAGE WI

Our Women's Institute group meets at High Lane Village Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm.

- Wednesday 5th March:** Amanda Howlett, Kinder Mountain Rescue Team  
**Wednesday 2nd April:** A talk about soap making by Matthew Lepp, from Tiger Muffin soaps

We are a friendly and informal WI and are always happy to welcome any ladies who may wish to join us, so come along and give us a try without any obligation. Your first visit is free. We have a special speaker at most of our meetings or some in-house entertainment, followed by tea/coffee and cake.

You can follow us on our Facebook page: **High Lane Village WI**, where you will find a month by month list of our future activities!

If you should require any further details please contact Jean Pye on: (01663) 635595 or contact us at [hlvwi1@gmail.com](mailto:hlvwi1@gmail.com)

## Disley & Lyme Horticultural Society

Disley & Lyme Horticultural Society are hosting a coffee morning on Saturday April 26th, 10am - 12pm, at Disley Community Centre. The April coffee morning will include the Tomato Extravaganza - our highly regarded tomato plant sale, as well as the regular plant sale and raffle. All are welcome.



We're also delighted to share details of the 118th DLHS Show on Saturday 16th August at Disley Amalgamated Sports Club. We are making this year's event bigger and better, with more stalls and more food vendors. Keep your eyes peeled in the coming weeks for details on competition entry, exhibiting stalls and entertainment. If you are a local business or group interested in holding a stall, please contact [disleylhs@gmail.com](mailto:disleylhs@gmail.com).

Put the dates in your diary now!

It's a great time to join the society as we have access to great discounts on plants and seeds, including:

- Trade prices on all products at David G Ross Ltd. in Kettleshulme.
- 50% off seeds and 20% off live plants from [www.dobies.co.uk](http://www.dobies.co.uk), the plant and seed retailer.
- Reduced entry to our summer show.
- Reduced admission to talks and events through the year.
- Priority on trips out to gardens.

We look forward to seeing you at the coffee morning, or other events throughout the year.

## John Donne The metaphysical poet

John Donne (1572 – 1631) was an English poet, scholar, soldier, secretary and finally Dean of St Pauls Cathedral in London. But he is most remembered for his poetry, for he is seen as the greatest of the 17th century 'metaphysical' poets.

Donne was born in 1572 into a Roman Catholic family in London at a time when the Church of England was the dominant faith, and those who remained Roman Catholic were considered second class citizens. Although Donne studied at both Oxford and Cambridge, because of his Roman Catholicism, he was denied a degree. So, in 1592 Donne went to London to study law at Lincoln's Inn.

In 1594 Donne decided to convert to the Church of England, and this opened up a whole new life for him. In 1596 he joined the naval expedition led by the Earl of Essex against Cadiz in Spain. When he returned in 1598, he was appointed private secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Seal. All was going well, but then he fell in love with Egerton's 16-year-old niece, Anne More, and in 1601 he secretly married her. Egerton was furious, and Donne lost his job, and even ended up in prison for a short time.

For several years after that Donne worked as a lawyer. Then in 1610 he wrote a book encouraging Roman Catholics to take the Oath of Allegiance to the king. The book caught the eye of James 1, who may have suggested that Donne go into the Church. Certainly, Donne was appointed as a royal chaplain only a few months after his ordination in 1615. In 1617 Donne's beloved wife, Anne, died. In 1621 he was appointed the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, and proved to be a much loved and inspiring preacher.

Throughout his working life, Donne continued to write poetry, though most of it was unpublished until 1633. It was mostly forgotten after his death on 31st March 1631, until early last century. Then, in the 1920s, both Ezra Pound and TS Eliot openly acknowledged their literary debt to him. Donne's place as one of the greatest of the 17th-century 'metaphysical' poets is now assured. He wrote both sacred and secular poetry, with his main theme being that of human love and divine love.

### Have Your Say: NHS Adult Hearing Services in Stockport!

At Healthwatch Stockport, we're currently reviewing the NHS Adult Hearing Services in Stockport. Have you or your loved ones used this service in the past 12 months? If so, please share your experiences with us in our short survey. Your feedback makes a huge difference!

We're always listening to what people have to say about health and care services in Stockport and our focus on hearing services is no different. The more feedback we receive from those who use the services, the better our understanding will be and the more comprehensive we can make our review.

Our **survey** also offers you the opportunity to share your experiences around other NHS services ear care, not directly linked to NHS Adult Hearing Services. [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Q3ENT7/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Q3ENT7/)



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## Ever wondered why blue eyes are the colour they are?

Every blue eyed person is descended from a single European who lived around 6,000 to 10,000 years ago, according to scientists.

How did they work it out? "Originally, we all had brown eyes," said Professor Hans Eiberg from the Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine at The University of Copenhagen "But a genetic mutation affecting the OCA2 gene in our chromosomes resulted in the creation of a "switch," which literally "turned off" the ability to produce brown eyes." The OCA2 gene codes for the so-called P protein, which is involved in the production of melanin, the pigment that gives colour to our hair, eyes and skin.

The "switch," which is located in the gene adjacent to OCA2 does not, however, turn off the gene entirely, but rather limits its action to reducing the production of melanin in the iris -- effectively "diluting" brown eyes to blue. The switch's effect on OCA2 is very specific therefore. If the OCA2 gene had been completely destroyed or turned off, human beings would be without melanin in their hair, eyes or skin colour -- a condition known as albinism. As for being descended from the same person, the evidence for this is because every blue eyed person alive today has this same mutation.

Scientists reckon only 8 to 10 per cent of the population have blue eyes and eyes don't fully develop in childhood meaning the brown pigment can kick in later, causing blue eyed children to end up with brown eyes in adulthood.

## Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme announcement

The Bishop of Bristol, Viv Faull, and the Bishop of Ramsbury, Andrew Rumsey, who are the Church of England's joint lead bishops on church buildings, have welcomed the recent announcement of the 12-month extension to the Listed Places of Worship Grant scheme.

They said: "We are pleased that this will bring temporary relief to many small-scale projects already underway or anticipated, though the capping of the scheme will pose challenges to larger projects.

"We look forward to continuing close work with the faith and charity buildings sector and the Government. We want to move towards more secure funding in the long term for these buildings that are so crucial to their communities."

The Bishops said: "We are pleased that the Heritage Minister has made such a generous tribute to the role of our churches and cathedrals in the life of the nation and we are grateful for all the work that has been done by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

"We are also deeply grateful to all those MPs who have campaigned so hard for the renewal of the scheme. We will continue to press for it to be made permanent beyond March 2026."

### International Women's Day 8th March

International Women's Day celebrates the achievements of women but also raises awareness about gender inequality and discrimination. Begun in 1911, today it is marked all around the world in different ways by different people, groups and organisations. The day, the actions and the positive attitudes that surround it helped to empower women and people of all genders to accelerate action for women equality and empowerment.

This year the Church Army (one of St Thomas' Church's supported charities) is focusing on the incredible work that goes on at the Ruby Project. This empowers and supports women who have been affected by the sex industry. The team run a welcoming drop-in three days a week, providing emotional support, meals, food parcels, clothes and washing facilities. It is the only female-only wash space in the area. They also do outreach in red light areas. They meet women and provide practical support and offer prayer. They also provide support for women to attend appointments at other agencies, relating to accommodation, healthcare and family.

Once women are placed in safe and secure accommodation and no longer require the support from the drop-in, the team offers support in the community, helping them settle and navigate these different needs and situations. To find out more about the Ruby Project visit [Churcharmy.org/ruby](http://Churcharmy.org/ruby).

### Bad Punctuation

I'm giving up eating chocolate for a month. Oh, wait, sorry, bad punctuation. I meant, I'm giving up. Eating chocolate for a month.



## How do we find the next Archbishop of Canterbury?

It is not a simple process. And now Stephen Knott, The Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments, has written to members of General Synod to confirm expected timings for the process of nominating the next Archbishop of Canterbury. He writes: "The Canterbury Diocese 'Vacancy in See' process commenced in December and, late last year, it was announced from Downing Street that the Prime Minister had appointed Lord (Jonathan) Evans of Weardale to chair the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC). My colleagues and I are supporting Lord Evans, working with him on the detailed planning."

"During February and March, Jonathan Hellewell (the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary) and I will undertake an extensive consultation exercise and, as part of this consultation, it will be possible for you to contribute. "The themes that emerge through this consultation will then sit alongside the 'Statement of Needs' produced by the Diocese of Canterbury, as well as other information provided by the National Church and Anglican Communion, in informing the CNC of the needs of the mission of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion."

"It is expected that the full membership of the Commission will be known by mid-March, by which time the names of the three individuals elected from the Diocese of Canterbury's Vacancy in See Committee, the outcome of the election of the episcopal member(s), the Central Members and the Anglican Communion representatives will be announced."

The election process for the episcopal membership will be overseen by the Central Secretariat and further information on this will be circulated in the next weeks. "Once the Diocese of Canterbury's Vacancy in See process has concluded, the extensive consultation exercise has been completed, and the full membership of the CNC is known, the Commission will convene for its first meeting in May, followed by two further meetings – one in July and one in September. "Through these meetings, the Commission will agree the 'Role Profile' and 'Person Specification' for the next Archbishop, as well as longlist, shortlist and interview potential candidates.

"While the discernment of the Crown Nominations Commission is necessarily confidential, we are committed to sharing relevant updates and information whenever available. To provide clarity on the timeline and sequence of events concerning the appointment and CNC process, there is a dedicated page on the C of E website for your reference." [www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/archbishops/appointing-new-archbishop-canterbury](http://www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/archbishops/appointing-new-archbishop-canterbury)

### Lost in translation

*Delightful translations into English that didn't quite make it...*

*Danish airline:* We take your bags and send them in all directions.

*Japanese taxi:* Safety first: please put on your seatbelt. Prepare for accident.

*Kenyan maternity ward:* No children allowed.

*Beijing shop:* Haircuts half price today. Only one per customer.

*Swedish furrier:* Fur coats made for ladies from their own skin.

## Merseyway Workshop

As part of the regeneration of Stockport town centre, there has been an increase in small businesses and creatives, often young people, opening spaces in Underbank, the Market area and the precinct itself. These are giving Stockport a real 'buzz' and providing opportunity for local people to explore new hobbies, hone existing skills, or buy a workshop experience for a loved one, Hen Do, etc.

One such place is Merseyway Workshop, which offers art, design and craft to the 'High Street'. Working between wood, clay, plastic and fabric, they run workshops for those aged 16+ starting from as little as £10 plus materials.

Examples of upcoming sessions include

Paint a Pot 8th March

Ticket Price: £10 per person (does not include pottery for painting).

Choose Your Piece: A variety of hand-thrown bisqueware - mugs, plates, bowls and vases are available for purchase on the day, with prices starting at £10 per pot. Your ticket price includes access to a range of colourful glazes and the final firing process.

Ceramic Gardenware with Bruno Schooling

Saturday, 8th March 1 - 3pm

With opportunity to make slip-decorated terracotta plant-pots, slipcast seedling trays and ceramic soil dibbers, you'll be all set for springtime in your garden. No experience needed, just come along and experiment with clay!

Your creations will be fired and ready to collect 3-4 weeks after the workshop. £15

Make a Frame! with Gus Workshop

Saturday, March 29, 1 - 3pm

Join Angus for an afternoon of frame-making. In this workshop you will be presented with a mismatch of gorgeous timber off cuts and odd ends to peruse, curate and assemble into a one-of-a-kind picture frame to take home. Your finished frame will be A5 in size, and complete with glazing and metal fittings for hanging. No woodworking experience needed, you will be supported as you explore basic woodworking techniques and experiment with composition. Recommended for age 16+

Why not venture back into Stockport and explore these new places around Underbank, the Market area and Merseyway? It is becoming a very fashionable place to be!

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\*  
**Thank you**  
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\* Mayor of Stockport Cllr Suzanne Wyatt would like to thank all helpers,  
\* attendees and contributors to February's Coffee Morning in aid of the Food  
\* Banks. £651.00 was raised. Thank you.  
\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

## **‘He gave us eyes to see them’: ‘Menorah’ by Roger Wagner**

In the midst of the dreaming spires and Gothic splendour of Oxford stands the Ashmolean Museum. Its classic proportions are a contrast to the buildings around. Within, the addition of thirty new galleries has doubled the exhibition space, and the visitor to the museum will discover a wealth of beautiful and impressive works – Renaissance drawings, Eastern art and British paintings. The last category includes this month’s work: ‘Menorah’ by Roger Wagner. It was painted in 1993 and at that time it was the largest contemporary painting acquired by the Ashmolean. It is now on loan to St Giles’ Church at the northern end of the city.

Roger Wagner was born in 1957. He graduated from Oxford and now worships at the Romanesque church of Iffley. He works on a small scale with book illustrations, but also creates large canvases that juxtapose traditional religious images with contemporary symbols in a startling and arresting way. The background of ‘Menorah’ is Didcot Power Station, which can be seen from the windows of the Oxford-London train. The central chimney and the cooling towers around form the shape of the seven-branched candlestick of Judaism. In front of them are the three crosses of Calvary. Around the scene of crucifixion we can see a couple consoling each other in the foreground and isolated individuals wandering in the mud in grief and perplexity. They are dressed in Hasidic robes.

An earlier work of Roger Wagner’s is ‘The Burning Furnace’ where angels are painted in the setting of a Victorian iron works. It is the same contrast of ancient and modern in this painting: the Good Friday of 2000 years ago and an industrial, bleak landscape of today. The artist is also contrasting the menorah of Judaism and the cross of Christianity – the suffering of the Holocaust and the suffering of the Saviour.

The menorah would burn in front of the Holy of Holies as a sign of God’s invisible presence. In the book of Revelation, St John describes his vision of Jesus the Lamb in the midst of the same seven flaming torches, moving with grace and glory. Here in ‘Menorah’ the figure of Jesus is insignificant against the immense scale of industrial buildings spewing out pollution into the bright sky.

But it is that figure of Jesus on the Cross who draws us this month in Holy Week and draws us in this painting. The mourners around look like figures in a concentration camp: victims of man’s inhumanity to man. The cooling towers are a vivid reminder of our violation and destruction of mother earth. And in the centre we see our crucified Lord. We hear Isaiah’s song of the suffering servant that there is no sorrow like this sorrow. We also hear Jesus crying ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ And we can ponder this painting as we ask, Is it a sign of the absence of God, or, like the Menorah lit in the temple, a sign of the presence of God? There is human chemistry creating the destruction of life and earth as depicted by Roger Wagner. Can we proclaim a divine chemistry at work which will transform suffering and death into the new life of Easter in the power of the Resurrection?



## The latest in flower fashion? Go chocolate

How do you choose the colour of flowers for your garden? This year, it seems that many of us will pick up on Pantone's 'colour of 2025' for our homes, and plant variations of its 'mocha mousse' into our gardens. That means flowers in various soft chocolate hues of burnt browns, complemented by deep maroons and purplish taupes.

According to Guy Barter, chief horticulturist at the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), this year is all about "quite a boost for chocolatey plants". He adds, however, that "I do suspect a chocolatey garden with nothing but chocolatey plants would seem poor."

Some garden designers believe that the more neutrally coloured flowers will be around for some years to come. As one consultant Jake Croft explained: "I think people are looking for a slower pace of life and more balance and I think soft browns and neutral colours give off that cosy, warm, comforting feeling, as opposed to bright, in your face, clashing colours." But some experts have doubts. Karl Harrison, a professional landscaping consultant, says that brown is "not a happy colour. It's a bit depressing. You are going to have to do wonders in a garden to make someone happy with brown flowers." And Mike Palmer, a columnist for Amateur Gardening magazine, finds dark brown plants and flowers are "reminiscent of dying plants".

The Pantone colour of the year is selected annually by the paint brand's colour institute. 'Mocha mousse,' PANTONE 17-1230, is supposed to evoke "thoughtful indulgence," and be "sophisticated and lush, yet at the same time an unpretentious classic."



"No, not the steeple, the roof or the organ – it's for the vicar's post-Christmas-pre-Easter recuperation holiday-break."

## Answer to the Sudoku Puzzle

6	1	4	9	8	3	7	2	5
9	5	3	7	4	2	8	1	6
8	7	2	6	1	5	9	3	4
2	4	7	8	5	6	1	9	3
3	6	5	1	2	9	4	8	7
1	9	8	4	3	7	6	5	2
4	2	9	3	7	1	5	6	8
7	3	6	5	9	8	2	4	1
5	8	1	2	6	4	3	7	9

## All in the month of March

It was

**175 years ago**, on 5th March 1850 that the Britannia Bridge linking Anglesey and mainland Wales across the Menai Strait was officially opened. Designed and built by railway engineer Robert Stephenson, it was replaced after a disastrous fire in 1970.

**150 years ago**, on 7th March 1875 that the French composer Maurice Ravel was born. Best known for *Bolero*.

**125 years ago**, on 28th March 1900 that the British archaeologist Arthur Evans began excavating the ancient city of Knossos, capital of the Minoan civilisation, in Heraklion, Crete. Knossos is regarded as the oldest city in Europe. It was abandoned (unknown reasons) more than 3,000 years ago.

**100 years ago**, on 21st March 1925 that Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh was officially opened.

**90 years ago**, on 16th March 1935 that driving tests were first introduced in Britain. Three days later, on 19th March, a speed limit of 30 mph in built-up areas was also introduced, under the Road Traffic Act of 1934.

**80 years ago**, on 24th March 1945 that Operation Varsity took place in Wesel, Germany. The USA, Britain and Canada carried out the largest single-day airborne landing operation in history, involving more than 16,000 paratroopers and thousands of aircraft. Allied victory.

**70 years ago**, on 11th March 1955 that Sir Alexander Fleming, Scottish bacteriologist died. Joint winner of the 1945 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discovering penicillin.

**60 years ago**, on 8th March 1965 that the first US troops arrived in Vietnam. This marked the beginning of the USA's main involvement in the war.

**Also 60 years ago**, on 18th March 1965 that Soviet cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov became the first person ever to make a spacewalk.

**50 years ago**, on 26th March 1975 that the Biological Weapons Convention came into effect. This multilateral disarmament treaty banned the development, production and stockpiling of all biological and toxin weapons.

**40 years ago**, on 3rd March 1985 that British miners voted to return to work after a year-long strike over pit closures and job losses.

**30 years ago**, on 26th March 1995 that the Schengen Treaty came into effect in the European Union. Seven nations (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain) eliminated their internal border controls and tightened their external borders.

**20 years ago**, on 10th March 2005 that Dave Allen, Irish comedian, died.

**10 years ago**, on 12th March 2015 that Terry Pratchett, British fantasy novelist best known for his Discworld series, died of Alzheimer's, aged 66.

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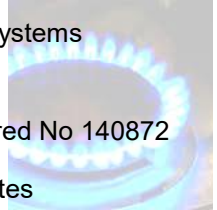
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Reader Emeritus	Tony Berry	01663 762393
Churchwarden	Malcolm Bennett	07818112731
Hon Secretary	Les Coop	01663 830077
Hon Treasurer	Geoff Gaskell	01663 763796
Finance Manager	Alvin West	07709 034470
Gift Aid	Alvin West	07709 034470
Verger	Robert Taylor	01663 763478
Sacristan	Ann Lambert	01663 764521
Caretaker	Steve Billinge	0785 5053404
Safeguarding	Janet Bailey stthomassafeguard@gmail.com	07767 228135
Wives Group	Karen Ganly 01663 762698 & Lesley Longworth	01663 810288
Eco Group	Shan Alexander	07766 664611
Luncheon Club	Helen Richardson	01663 764723
<b>Website:</b>	<b><a href="http://www.st-thomas-high-lane.org.uk">www.st-thomas-high-lane.org.uk</a></b>	
Website Contact	Peter Jonas	peterrjonas@yahoo.co.uk
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Distribution	Jean and Robert Taylor	01663 763478
Press dates	material to the editor by <b>12th March</b>	