

The Messenger



**The bi-monthly magazine from
St Michael's, West Hill**



**August - September 2024
delivered FREE
to every home in the village**

St Michael the Archangel

part of the Otter Vale Mission Community

Bringing Jesus Christ to our Community

We are here to help in any way we can – so please contact us.

Getting Married? ... Considering Baptism?

Please contact our Team Vicar, Revd. Mark Ward 01404 814282
revmarkward@btinternet.com

Could someone else from the Church help you?

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Pastoral Care Coordinator vacant - contact Team Vicar or
Churchwardens

Church Wardens Pam Johns (also Sacristan) 814096
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PCC Secretary vacant - contact Churchwardens

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Magazine website **www.whmessenger.info**

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PLEASE NOTE The last date for copy for the October/November edition is
Mon 2nd September 2024.

An online version of this magazine is available to download from our website.

The opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions of St Michael's Church. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, we can accept no liability for errors. The Editors' decisions are final.

A Letter from our Team Vicar



Do you ever stop and ask yourself the really big questions?

Why was I born?

What is the meaning of life?

Does my life have a purpose?

And perhaps the biggest of all: What will happen to me—if anything—when I die?

When I became a Christian, I found answers to these questions in the words of the Bible and especially in the person of Jesus. But what do you think? Have you

found answers to these questions? Where do you look?

This autumn at St Michael's Church we want to explore the big questions of life and whether Christianity has anything to offer. And we would love to hear what you think. We are holding a series of Monday mornings in the Narthex (the hall attached to the church) in which there will be the opportunity to discuss these things. On each occasion there will be a short video presentation on some aspect of Christianity—the videos are written and presented by a clergyman in the Church of England who is based in London. But having watched the video, we then have time to discuss what we have heard and seen. You may agree with it; you may disagree. You may want to know more; you may wish you had not come! Either way, we would like to know what you think and to hear what you have to say. And the idea is to do this face to face in a friendly atmosphere.

So we would love it if you would come along. These Monday mornings go under the title 'Christianity Explored'. Details will be posted on the Otter Vale Churches website <https://ottervalechurches.org/>, on posters around the village and on <https://www.whmessenger.info>.

I know that when life is weighing heavily on us, it can feel like: you're born, you grow, you work, you retire, you get old and you die. The work bit might be employment, being your own boss, bringing up a family or just coping with difficult life-circumstances. And then you're done.

But maybe there is more to it. Maybe there is more to explore...

Mark

Children's Page

Holidays



The word 'holiday' originally comes from the Old English 'halig' (holy) and 'daeg' (day). It was a day when people did not have to work and could have a rest.

In the school holidays, it's a time for you to have a rest too! You may be going away with your family on an aeroplane; driving to stay with family or going out for day trips. They are all chances to relax and have fun. Enjoy!

Here are some things that will be happening when you return in September...

Dates for Your Diary

Saturday 7th September (6 - 8pm)

Bat Evening – all welcome. See details below

Friday 13th September (3.45 – 5.30pm)

Messy Church meeting – 'Looking Up'

Sunday 29th September (11.00am)

Harvest Festival & Lunch

Friday 18th October (3.45 – 5.30pm)

Messy Church meeting – 'Water'



On **Saturday 7th September** from **6 – 8pm**, there will be a 'Bat Evening' at St Michael's Church. A Forest School leader will be providing activities and bringing along bat detectors. We also have the loan of a bat detector from Devon Wildlife Trust for the whole weekend as part of the county's Bat Survey. There will be crafts, snacks & hot chocolate. £4 per person.

All welcome – tell your friends!

To book please email Rosemary at HUDSONROSEMARY@HOTMAIL.COM.



A Batty Joke

Q. What's the first thing bats learn when they go to school?

A. The alpha'bat'!

Children's Crafts

Shell & Pebble Creatures



Over the holidays, when you're out for a walk, pick up some shells and small pebbles. Have a look at their shapes and decide whether you could make a model animal or bird out of them. You can stick them together and, using various materials, add ears, tails, faces and beaks.



Here are some examples, which used felt, wool, cotton wool and felt pens.



Have fun!

St Michael's Goes Green

St Michael's Church plans to install LED lighting, improve insulation and replace the church hall windows as part of the NACRE project (see p7). In September and October, funds raised to do this will be matched by the Church of England. We will be holding some exciting fundraising events for all the family. The first ones are:

Friday 20th September (6-8pm) – Family Barn Dance with professional caller (at RBL)

Friday 27th – Sunday 29th September – Flower Festival

Saturday 28th September (7-9pm) – 'Music in a Quiet Place' a concert by international violinist Joel Munday accompanied by pianist Alex Wilson

If you are unable to attend these events, donations would be welcome. More events in the next issue of The Messenger and at <https://whmessenger.info/news-and-events/>. We hope you are able to support this project. Thank you!

Have you heard of Nacre?



Nacre, also known as ‘mother of pearl’, is a compound produced by some molluscs as an inner shell. It is also the material of which pearls are made. It has the qualities of strength, resilience and iridescence (like a rainbow). In the Bible, the rainbow symbolises God’s promise of grace, mercy, protection for humanity and hope for renewal. Whether or not you’ve heard of nacre,

you may have heard that ‘renewal’ is afoot at St Michael’s!

N.A.C.R.E. is the acronym chosen by St Michael’s to identify its project for the **N**arthex **A**nd **C**hurch **RE**-visioning. A plan for renewal. The work will transform the Narthex (church hall) and rear of the church into a more welcoming space, which can be used by the whole community. Some of you will remember, a couple of years ago, an exhibition was held to ask village residents what changes they would wish to see. Reflecting those comments, a plan was drawn up, which includes the careful removal of certain pews to open up the space, new lighting, windows, flooring and seating. The good news is that the church authorities have now approved our plans and work can now begin.

These changes obviously come at a cost, some of which can be raised through grants, especially for the energy-saving aspects of the project such as the LED lights and double-glazed windows. In the

**GIVE TO
GO GREEN**

autumn, St Michael’s hopes to be part of the Church of England’s **Give to Go Green** initiative, during which time any monies raised, up to a maximum of £10,000, will be matched by the Church of England.

Fundraising events will be held, but donations from members of the community would also be gratefully received. This initial funding will enable work to start in the first quarter of 2025.

The good news is that fundraising can be fun! The even better news is that we can provide a wonderful opportunity for outreach within our village and wider community. We have already got our thinking caps on and come up with lots of exciting ideas to provide a variety of events, hopefully with something for everyone. To help make this happen, we are planning to draw together a small team to catch the vision and pass it on. Would you like to help? There are lots of opportunities for people of all ages to be involved, to be part of the vision, and to help make sure that ‘St Michael’s Goes Green’ in our generation and for generations to come.

If you would like to help with fundraising, please contact Sue Doggett sue@themediasuite.co.uk or Rosemary Hudson hudsonrosemary@hotmail.com

West Hill Primary School

It is quite surreal to think that another school year is nearly over-I'm sure time goes quicker the older we get!

The summer term is always a busy one in school and this year was no exception!

Assembly values

Our values this term were Responsibility and Cooperation and each Monday we focus on a different assembly of the value. For responsibility, we have been thinking about responsibility for our school, our environment, our families and sports day. After half term, we thought about cooperating with our family members, working towards a common goal, cooperating with our friends and cooperating by listening to other people's viewpoints.

Sports Day

On Thursday 23rd May, we held two Sports Days (Key Stage 2 in the morning and Reception/Key Stage 1 in the afternoon). We were very lucky with the weather and thankfully it wasn't too hot. The children started off with a carousel of sporting activities followed by competitive races on the track. Highlights of the day included some very competitive water races and much hilarity as the children attempted the infamous sack race – I think some children spent more time on the floor than in the sacks! Pupils earned points throughout the event and Elsdon House won both key stages.

PTFA Summer fete

On Saturday 29th June we held the PTFA summer fete on the school field. A big thank you must go to Cathy Armstrong (Chair) who organised and directed a team of volunteers in order to produce such an amazing day for us all. Thank you to everyone who supported the event either by helping on the day or spending their pennies!



Governor vacancies

We are currently looking for people in the local community (who are not parents) to become a school governor. The role is voluntary but is very fulfilling and training is provided. Meetings are held monthly for 9 months of the school year. If you are interested in finding out anymore, please contact the school office.

Year 5/6 show

On Wednesday 3rd July and Friday 5th July our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils

performed their end of year show Wizard of Oz with acting, dancing and singing. The school enjoyed the dress rehearsal on Wednesday afternoon and both performances were well attended by parents, friends and family members.

End of term goodbyes

We are very sorry to say a fond farewell to Mr Joseph (Class 2 teacher) and Mrs McDonald (EYFS maternity cover) who are both leaving at the end of term. We wish them well in their new schools.

On Wednesday 24th July, we will be saying goodbye to our Year 6 pupils as they head off to their secondary schools. We wish them all success and happiness as they begin a new chapter of their education.

I wish you all a restful and enjoyable summer and here's hoping we have some sunshine during the school holidays. Hoping you all stay safe and well. Until next time, take care.

Cheryl Boulton, Headteacher

West Hill Arboretum Group

The two British native oaks are Common Oak: *Quercus Robur* and Sessile Oak: *Quercus Petraea*. These two oaks are quite distinctive, though both are deciduous (they lose their leaves in winter). Sessile means 'sitting' and refers to the way the cups of the acorn sit directly on the twig, while those of the Common Oak have a stalk of their own.

Since the 16th century when European botanists began to travel the world, over 450 different species of oak have been discovered. Astonishing. There are evergreen varieties of oak as well as deciduous – for example the Holm Oak: *Quercus Ilex* and the Cork Oak: *Quercus Suber*. There are a few examples in the village. They all have seeds in the form of acorns, but these vary in size, shape and form of the cups. The male flowers develop in the form of drooping catkins, with fewer females, on short stalks, erect above the males in the springtime.

The Common Oak grows up to 37 m (121 ft) and they often live to 500 years old. They produce an excellent timber which are used for many purposes.

Oaks are of great ecological significance. The deciduous species of oak are unusually rich in variety of species, not only of plants, but of mammals, birds, insects and fungi. They are nature reserves!

We are proposing a further walk in the autumn on 12th October, details nearer the time. When you are reading this it will be time to think about trimming hedges, pruning woody shrubs and any work necessary to our trees.

Contact: Alan Cook alan.b.cook@btinternet.com.

Hospiscare News

Why we need your help more than ever!

At Hospiscare, we firmly believe that every individual deserves to experience love, comfort, and dignity in their final days. We strive to provide the best possible care and support to those facing life-limiting illnesses, and we couldn't achieve this without the support of our local community.

Thank you.

West Hill Fashion Show

Well what fantastic support and what a fantastic night!!

Thank you to everyone who came to the Fashion Show - such a memorable and fun night was had, a special mention to the fabulous models from Chapter Boutique and our very own Hospiscare models Martin Alexander, Steve Percy, Sarah Smith you did an amazing job!! Special thanks to Eileen at Chapter Clothing (Church St Sidmouth) and Sharif and Clare at Sharif Tailoring & Alterations (Princesshay, Exeter) for providing all the wonderful attire and outfits.

Thank you to all the businesses that donated the amazing raffle prizes, special thanks to Hall & Scott Lettings for sponsoring the event, all the volunteers who helped on the evening, the raffle ladies, the bar volunteers who all looked so dapper and Linda Wyatt and her team for providing such delicious canapés. Thank you to Beth and her front of house team for giving such a warm welcome to everyone and all the Village Hall volunteers who built the runway.

Lastly, special mention to Tricia Heard and her husband Ian who worked so hard behind the scenes, planning and organising the event. We are so lucky to have their support.

What a team and what a result!! You helped raise a whopping £2,181.00 (and still counting).

Cadhay Summer Fete

Saturday 24th August from noon to 4pm. Beautiful Gardens and House Tours available. Live music, entertainment, BBQ, refreshments in the tea-room, bouncy castle, balloon modelling, stalls, raffle and so much more, a guaranteed fun day out for all the family, please do come and support the Otter Vale friends. Contactless card machines will be available but please do bring cash. Well behaved dogs on short leads welcome.

Entry: donation to Hospiscare. Kind permission of Mr R Thistlethwayte of Cadhay.

Hospiscare Coffee Morning Campaign this coming September

Whether you're a rising star in the kitchen or simply love indulging in sweet

or savoury treats, why not host a Coffee Morning for Hospiscare this September?

We understand the power of a great cuppa. Each year, thousands of cups of tea and coffee bring comfort to our patients and their loved ones.

Here's how you can join Hospiscare Coffee Morning this September:

- Plan Your Event: Gather friends and family, whip up some homemade goodies, and make a donation to Hospiscare.
- Get Creative: From setting up a donation stall, a pamper and fizz night or coffee-themed quizzes and games, there are endless ways to make your event memorable.

Signing up for the Hospiscare Coffee Morning is as easy as brewing a pot of coffee. Simply register your details, and we'll send you a fundraising pack filled with ideas, recipes, and everything else you need for a successful event. Join us in making a difference this September, one cup at a time! Call 01392 688020 for more information.

Recycle your unwanted gifts

Do you have any new & unwanted gifts Hospiscare could recycle and retail, items such as Perfume, Gift Sets, Candles, Games and wine? If so, please contact Area Fundraiser Toni Hiscocks 01392 688067/07921 845 615 or email t.hiscocks@hospiscare.co.uk

Your generosity truly makes a difference to local people.

Every day our specialist Drs, Nurses and healthcare professionals are caring for over 700 patients across Exeter, Mid and East Devon.

Celebrating Harvest

In June, a few of us had a fun evening celebrating Shavu'ot: the Biblical Feast of Weeks commanded by God to take place 50 days after Passover.

In September, we will hold a Harvest Thanksgiving service and lunch - a tradition which has its root in the third Feast that God commanded – Sukkot: The Feast of the Ingathering of the Harvest.

Like the other Feasts it was held to help the people remember, and pass on to the next generation, the story of how God had brought the descendants of Jacob out of Egypt and cared for them for 40 years in the wilderness around the Dead Sea until they entered the Land He had promised to them.

In the book of Nehemiah there is such a beautiful story. Once again, the people had been in captivity - this time for 70 years in Babylon (modern day Iran). After an unexpected release, and a journey of over 700 miles, they returned to Jerusalem and set about rebuilding the walls and gates of the city. The project was completed in a record 52 days (despite much opposition) and, before they built houses for themselves, the people gave

money to fund the ongoing works. Finally, they can live in their own houses in their own cities. Then the day comes to gather together to hear the Scriptures read to them. They re-discover that there is a week-long Feast only days away requiring them to live in shelters built with tree branches. They set to and have a Feast as prescribed: gathering branches, building booths and rejoicing for seven days as the Word of God is read to them.

Wow! wouldn't it be great if we had such a thirst to know God's word in our Churches and in our Land!!

In New Testament times a few traditions had been added:

- A water pouring ceremony recalled a vision of the prophet Ezekiel with water flowing from the Temple out into the Kidron Valley down to the Dead Sea. This water would "heal" the waters of the Dead Sea, which would become fresh (or living) and filled with as many fish as the Mediterranean.
- Also, the Temple and all Jerusalem was filled with burning lamps as part of the celebrations with singing and dancing: as there is still to this day.
- On the last Great Day of the Feast the celebrations reached a climax. On *that* all-important day Jesus stands up and tells people to come to Him to receive "living water", which would flow out from their hearts. The next day He's back in the Temple where He follows up the wonderful sound and light show at the Temple by saying "I am the Light of the World."

What a Festival! So rich in meaning. Enjoy!

Ann Pangbourne

Opera Nights



Opera Nights, on the big screen at the Royal British Legion, are informal and free of charge. The bar will be open at 7.00pm and there is a short introduction to the work at 7.20pm. The Opera commences at 7.30pm with an interval, when the bar will again be open. If the operas are given in the original language there are subtitles.

Our first evening of the Autumn will be on Thursday 26th September and will be Johann Strauss' "Die Fledermaus". We start the season with this bubbling production from Covent Garden conducted by Placido Domingo with Kiri Te Kanawa, Hermann Prey and Benjamin Luxon, and some big surprises in the cabaret scene!

Make a date in your diary for Thursday 24th October - Mozart's "Don Giovanni".

Further information from opconpeterclarke@gmail.com.

Tea & Toast & Toys on Fridays

We continue to meet every Friday at 8.45 am at the Village Hall during school term time (next meeting Friday 6th September). We are really looking forward to welcoming some new faces: Toddlers and Pre-Schoolers, Mums, Dads, Grandparents and Nannies, who can enjoy a cup of tea, coffee or fresh milk, and some toast and marmalade (or jam); and you don't have to have a small person in tow!

If you have enjoyed coming along, do bring your friends and neighbours, old and young alike.

Give us a ring if you want to know more: **Ann** (813886) **Pam** (814096).

Ottery St. Mary Floral Art Club

Did any readers find a "Lonely Bouquet" on 14th June? I know some members left posies around the West Hill area and so hope that if anyone reading this found one, it brightened your day.

A bit like the schools, the Club takes a break in August so there is no Club night! It is a good opportunity to relax, spend time in our own gardens and get out and about to enjoy this beautiful part of the world where we live.

Our Club nights re-start on Tuesday 17th September when award winning florist, Hannah Burnett joins us from Plymouth. Hannah's love of flowers started at a young age admiring the dahlias on her Grandad's allotment before joining a flower evening class in her early teens then leaving school at 16 to study floristry. She has won a South West Wedding Award and was crowned "Best Devon Florist" in 2018. Hannah's demonstration is entitled "Autumn Begins" and, with her massive experience in the business, it goes without saying that we are promised a great evening!

It has been lovely to see visitors coming along to our recent Club nights and several have now joined us as members. We are a very relaxed and friendly group with very different levels of experience with flowers so if you would like to come along and see for yourself what we are all about, why not join us for Hannah's demonstration?

For Club members reading this, the competition title for September is "Rustic Gatherings" - please take part if you can.

We hope all readers enjoy the summer (if it ever arrives!) and look forward to seeing our members and visitors at Hannah's demonstration at **West Hill Village Hall, Beech Park, West Hill, EX11 1UQ – 7.30 pm on Tuesday 17th September.**

All enquiries: Karen Taverner, Club Secretary – 01404 811807

Editor's note: Elizabeth Thurgood wishes to thank the OSM Floral Art Club for the beautiful 'Lonely Bouquet', which was given to her by a friend. It brightened her day.

Councillor's Column



Potters Country Market

Since my article in the last edition of the Messenger the applicant has withdrawn their planning application for the highly controversial scheme for the redevelopment of this key site in West Hill. No doubt this won't be the end of it. We will wait to see what any future proposal looks like and whether it addresses the many concerns of the community particularly around the threat to the post office and the shop.

Tipton School

The public consultation organised by the school governing board on a proposal to relocate the school to Thorne Farm, Ottery St Mary concluded on 19th June. I continue to be strongly opposed to Tipton losing its school and submitted a detailed objection to the relocation in my consultation response. My objection can be found on my blog and councillor Facebook page.

The governors have now reported that the consultation responses were overwhelmingly opposed to the proposal with nearly 1000 people signing an online/written petition. There were also 48 written responses and a petition from the children.

The governors met on 8th July to discuss further.

Local Plan update

The 'green wedge' planning designation of the fields between West Hill and Ottery St Mary helps preserve the setting and identities of both West Hill and Ottery St Mary. This area is under pressure from housing development and EDDC have recently carried out a public consultation on green wedges as part of the lengthy local plan process.

In addition, EDDC is holding a series of working group meetings to enable councillors and town and parish councils to input into discussions about the many hundreds of potential site allocations across the district (I insisted that parish and town councils should be represented at these meetings). The meeting relevant to West Hill took place on 9th July and notes of the meetings will be published. The working group sessions are not a forum for formal discussion/decision making, that will take place in a formal public committee setting at a date yet to be determined.

At the time of writing, the general election has not taken place but the Labour party in their manifesto have made a commitment to restore mandatory housing targets and take tough action to ensure that planning authorities have up to date local plans and reform and strengthen the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Devon County Council – Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee

At June's health and adult care scrutiny committee we considered DCC's arrangements for supporting young people moving from children's services to adult services. DCC has a statutory duty to ensure effective transitional arrangements for young people with special education needs, disabilities and children in care.

What struck me as a committee member as somewhat surprising is that whilst the committee report contained a narrative about the workstreams being undertaken it did not contain any clear metrics for measuring whether DCC was achieving effective transitional arrangements or not. So rather than simply accepting the recommendation that the committee 'note' the report I asked that a further report be brought back containing further detail and data. This is due in November.

Please do get in touch with me if you have any questions or would like to discuss these or any other matters.

Cllr Jess Bailey Tel: 01404 814056
 Email: Jessica.Bailey@devon.gov.uk

Devon County Councillor (Otter Valley) and East Devon District Councillor (West Hill and Aylesbeare)

Ottery St Mary Heritage Society and Museum

Our Museum remains open for the summer season to the end of September on Thursdays and Fridays from 10.30am to 4pm and on Saturdays from 11am to 3pm. Please come and visit but check on our website before doing so just in case there are any last minute changes to opening times. The website address is www.otteryheritage.org.uk There's plenty to see and an exhibition by our youngest member all about the history of Pixie Day which took place this year on Saturday 22nd June.

Our monthly members' talks take place at The Institute, Yonder St., Ottery St Mary EX11 1HD on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Guests are welcome at £3 payable at the door. Please check our website for any changes, but the schedule is as follows:

August – no meeting

Tuesday 17th September (8pm at The Institute after the AGM for members at 7.30pm):The Golden Age of Piracy presented by Mike Rendell

All enquiries, including membership (£20 single, £27.50 joint), stewarding and participation in archiving to Lynda Murlewski, Hon. Secretary: otteryheritage@gmail.com

A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers

It is about nine months since I last penned an article for the Messenger. As I have not been involved for about 18 months, I feel that the heading of '**A Letter from the Editor**' is somewhat misleading as the Messenger has really been in the very safe hands of a number of people particularly Rosemary and Tricia. They have done a wonderful job including revamping the magazine to include colour and more photographs. I am hoping to help out again with the next issue and gradually get more involved with each following issue.

Since I last wrote to you in October last year, I have completed my course of chemotherapy and am now beginning to feel a lot more like my old self. I still get tired but am now getting out and about a bit more. When you are stuck at home, you do get the opportunity to watch and listen to what is going on in our own country and around the world. And sadly, in many ways the outlook is not great. So many people are struggling, so many are caught up in horrible conflicts and for many it must be so hard to remain optimistic. And then there is the election!!

But there is always hope! As I write this, England somehow managed to get into the quarter finals of Euro 24. I was just about to switch the TV off when we scored so let's hope Switzerland are as kind to us as Slovakia was. I have a slight family loyalty problem in that my son is a Swiss citizen. And hope for the Brits always comes around with Wimbledon. Who will be the UK's hope bearer after Andy Murray?

Moving away from sport, I do wonder where the world is heading. It has been through similar times before and come through and so my prayer is that all of us will seek out the common good and share it with our neighbours, our families, our friends and our work colleagues. We are so fortunate to live in this beautiful village with all that it offers. We can all make a positive difference if we really try.

It was great to see so many of you at the School Fete and I hope as I get out more to meet up with many more of you. In the meantime, I wish you a great summer. Enjoy your holidays and return for the autumn refreshed and revitalised.

With every good wish

Mac

The Royal British Legion West Hill

Movie Nights

Doors open at 7pm, Film starts at 7.30pm, Admission free. All welcome!

5 th Aug	Knowing (2009)
12 th Aug	Miranda's Victim (2023)
19 th Aug	Me before you (2016)
26 th Aug	Saving Mr Banks (2013)
2 nd Sep	The Colour Purple (2023)
9 th Sep	Phantom Thread (2017)
16 th Sep	Brooklyn (2015)
23 rd Sep	Horrible Bosses (2011)
30 th Sep	Meet the Fockers (2004)

Bingo Nights

Sundays 4th, 18th August and 1st, 15th & 29th September

Jazz (with City Steam Jazz Band)

Sundays 11th August & 8th September (7pm for 7.30pm)

Crafters Evenings

Tuesdays 6th August & 3rd September

Dads' Nights

Fridays 9th August & 13th
September

Mums' Nights

Fridays 30th August & 27th
September

Opera Nights

(7pm for 7.30pm)

Thursday 26th September "Die Fledermaus"

Codfather – Fish & Chips

Every Thursday from 1600-1900

A Stepping Stone

It's very satisfying when someone explains something that you've never understood, and at last you "get it". At school, maths was my least-favourite subject and I was grateful for the teacher who explained things to me that I found difficult, in a way that I could understand.

Rico Tice is a good teacher. Presenting "Christianity Explored" he explains who Jesus was, what he did, and why he came. He then focuses on four Bible characters to distinguish between the lives of those who believed that Jesus spoke the truth, and those who did not. Someone who has done a previous course at St Michael's says, "When I first came across 'Christianity Explored' I was looking for answers to my developing faith questions, and it became a huge stepping stone in my faith journey".

In 1970, my local church in Bath held a similar series of meetings. It didn't appeal to me because I didn't have any faith questions! I was too busy enjoying my career, home, family and social life, but my husband was interested in the meetings, so I went along too. How glad I am that I did! After the final meeting, we realised that what we had heard was either the truth, and life-changing, or it was fiction. There were no half-measures. We chose to try the former.

As a new believer, I read books about other people's faith and what God had done in their lives, and gradually I came to realise that he was doing things in mine. My study of the Scriptures over the years has become both an essential for ministry, and a joy. Through it, I came to recognise "the connectedness" of the Bible: 66 books written over thousands of years by more than 40 writers, yet with one theme, pointing to the coming of Jesus Christ. It went a long way to assure me that my faith is founded on a considerable amount of fact.

I hope, when you see details of "Christianity Explored" or are invited along, that you will come, so that it will be a stepping stone that enables you to understand something that you have never fathomed or affirm the understanding and faith that you have. I hope too that you will allow my co-leaders (Ann Yates, Pam Johns, Fiona Rimmer) and me to encourage you, as you develop and enjoy your faith journey.

Ann Turner

West Hill Greeting Cards

Full colour greeting cards of landscapes and images of West Hill.

£7 for 10 cards & envelopes with free delivery in the village. Only 15 packs remaining – buy now!

Ring Sue on 01404 812 370

West Hill Parish Council

At our Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May Alison Carr stepped down as Chairman of the Council. Alison has been a hard working member of the Council for some years and took over the role of Chairman at a particularly difficult time. The Council and the Village of West Hill have much to thank Alison for and we wish her well. It is now my privilege to Chair the Parish Council and, although still a newcomer to West Hill, I already have a real fondness for the area, and I look forward to working with the rest of the team to retain the very special nature of our village and maintain the sustainability of the village into the future. To help with this task we have recently welcomed two new councillors, Cllr Shirley May Saunders and Cllr Ann Cooper who both bring experience and enthusiasm to the team.

On the 6th June together with the West Hill Branch of the British Legion we celebrated the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings and remembered the huge number of men and women who planned, prepared and executed this truly remarkable event. There was a moving ceremony at the War Memorial where a floral tribute had been prepared to represent the five Normandy beaches where thousands of courageous servicemen stormed ashore to start the liberation of the European mainland.

As a key part of our Council programme for this year we launched a series of meetings of the Emergency Planning Working Group. This working group comprising some Councillors and some village residents is tasked to produce and implement a 'self help' plan for the village to build the resilience needed to cope if we are faced with an incident such as a major storm causing widespread damage. In such circumstances the emergency services are themselves likely to be very stretched and may not be able to provide their normal level of support. We aim to complement their service by having our own planned and co-ordinated response until the emergency services are able to respond fully. In particular, we want to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our village, who may rely daily on external support, are protected and helped until their regular support can be resumed. I would like to thank the village residents who have volunteered to help by joining our working group.

The Council organised a Drop In session for village residents to see proposals being considered by East Devon District Council as part of its Emerging Local Plan. A number of residents attended to see the proposals and learned how to give their response to the consultation.

We are a very small Parish Council and even so we are not up to our established number of 7 councillors. We currently have 2 vacancies and would welcome new members who may be interested in joining the team. What we offer is hard work and no pay - but you will have an opportunity to do something positive for the village and help to guarantee its sustainable

future. We do also have a bit of fun!

Francis Pullman, Chairman, West Hill Parish Council

Contact: Clerk: Anne Oliver 01404 232 100 or 07450 388198

Email: clerk@westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

The Birds of West Hill

One of the most intriguing aspects of birds is their ability to fly. A few birds cannot fly – like the ratites (ostrich, emu etc..) and the penguins, who have adapted superbly to life under water.

In the extreme some birds, like the Swift, fly nearly all their lives, rarely landing. Flying also means birds can move huge distances with little impediment, with the Arctic Tern flying pole to



pole and back each year. The design criteria for flying are exacting, lightness being the most important. Birds do not have heavy teeth; their bones are hollow and their body cavity contains lots of air sacs. Specially adapted wing feathers act in a similar way to an aeroplane wing; providing lift and thrust, with the tail feathers acting as a rudder.

Flying consumes large amounts of energy and consequently birds have a high metabolic rate. Their heart rate increases hugely when flying. A Mallard duck has a rest heart rate of 155 rising to 440 in flight. The weight limit to flying is calculated to be about 18kg. The Mute Swan is our largest flying bird, weighing in at 12 kg. Larger birds, like birds of prey, have learned to use warm air thermals to lift them up and keep them aloft. Buzzards can be seen locally gliding around, using the minimum of energy. Some birds have adapted to the extremes of flying at high altitude, with some geese overflying the Himalayas, somehow surviving extreme cold and low air pressure.

During difficult times have you ever envied a bird flying around, escaping troubles? In Psalm 55 David writes about some difficult times – “my heart is in anguish within me ... fear and trembling have beset me”. He then goes on to say “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, I would fly away and be at rest”. Famously Mendelssohn set these words to music – “O’ for the wings, for the wings of a dove, Far away, far away I would rove.” Isaiah exhorts “those who hope in the Lord, will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like an eagle”.

Extracted from "British birds – their fascinating stories " published by Geoff Green, available from him (813127), on Amazon (search for the title) or The Curious Otter bookshop.

West Hill Village Hall

By the time this edition of the Messenger is published we will be well into midsummer when we hope the weather will be a little kinder to all of us.

This time of year sees a slowdown in the amount of user activity at the Village Hall, due to the summer break of the Preschool and the Primary School. Nevertheless, we will remain busy planning future activities.

One off future events this year include:

- 9th Nov 24 - South West Quilters AGM
- 19th Nov 24 - OSM Flower Art Club Christmas Display with staging
- 23rd Nov 24 - PTFA Ball with marquee
- 30th Nov 24 - Hospiscare Christmas Fayre
- 7th Dec 24 - OSM Flower Art Club Christmas Wreath Workshop
- 8th Dec 24 - Preschool Christmas Bazaar
- 24th Dec 24 - NHS Blood and Transport Blood Donation Session

Due to poor attendance at our December 2023 Pantomime, we will not be hosting a performance this year.

All the West Hill Village Hall content previously on our website www.westhilldevon.org.uk/villagehall.html has now been moved to www.whmessenger.info/west-hill-village-hall

This change was prompted by the pending closure of the old site, which had evolved from the previous West Hill Resident's Association site. Our grateful thanks go to Tricia Lynch for her work in setting up our information on the whmessenger site and to Jim Cocks for the many years he has supported the village hall in running our website for us.

On June 21st we had another incident at the Village Hall when 5 youths came into the empty building, made their way up to Beech room and proceeded to smash ceiling tiles, dislodge others and damage a hanging painting. This is mindless criminal damage which costs us money and causes disruption to users of the room. Fortunately, our CCTV system has recorded very clear images of the perpetrators; these images have been handed to the police.

We are still interested in hearing from local residents who wish to become a Trustee of the Village Hall. If this is you, please contact Colin Veale on 01404 813830 or e-mail colinveale@btinternet.com

Please visit our new website www.whmessenger.info/west-hill-village-hall for details of the full range of clubs and activities on offer at the hall, or call Sarah Woolfries on 01404 814216 between the hours of 9.00 and 17.30.

You may also contact Sarah by e-mail on bookings@westhillvillagehall.co.uk

Colin Veale, Chairman, Village Hall Trustees

West Hill's Duck Pond

About twenty-five years ago, after a very wet Christmas, the drain on West Hill Road, just above the supermarket, became blocked. This resulted in about 40 feet of the road being flooded. I took a picture of it and, using the photo editor on my computer, added some ducks swimming on the water and a mother goose and her chicks waddling along the road towards the "pond". It all looked very pretty and bucolic. I printed it with the title, "West Hill's duck pond". Ken and Mike Potter, who owned the supermarket, displayed the photograph inside the shop. Some years later, walking down the road, I came across an engineer who was working on this same drain. He told me that the road was subject to constant flooding. It was being repaired at the request of the West Hill Residents' Association and he showed me a letter from them which stated that there had even been ducks swimming on the water. I didn't disillusion him.

On another occasion I photographed Mike and Ken standing in the shop with a gap between them for the insertion of a third person. In due time a photograph was produced purporting to be copyright of the Western Morning News and showing Prince Charles on a visit to the supermarket. On a shelf in the background was an anagram of April Fool. This was displayed in Potters with several people expressing disappointment that they had not seen him.

The two incidents that I have described were not important. People believed their veracity on flimsy and false evidence. But what about the important things in life? Sometimes we come to erroneous conclusions based on our feelings. Other times we will do some research but, even then, we are all susceptible to false information. What can we believe and whom can we trust?

I suggest that the most important decisions we have to make concern why we are here and what happens to us when we die. Is death the end of everything or do we continue to exist and, if so, where and how? Most of us put off making these decisions, usually based on the feeling that, if we continue to exist, compared to others we have lived a good life and should be OK. But do we know that for certain? Have we actually looked at the evidence?

So where do we start? First, we need to decide if everything came about by chance or if we and the universe were created by a higher power. With a little research and applied common sense I think that there are several reasons why the former option can be dismissed. We have only to consider the lifecycle of a butterfly; the laws of physics; the myriad of complex proteins necessary for life; and, supposedly, everything coming from nothing. All of these, plus innumerable other examples, all happening by chance? The SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) institute was founded in 1984

to look for signs of intelligence in the cosmos; some sort of non-random code or signal coming from outer space. This was in spite of Watson and Crick who, in 1953, had already demonstrated the structure of DNA, a most incredible example of intelligent coding. SETI is still searching, so it would appear that some people will ignore evidence that doesn't fit in with their preconceived ideas!

If, having looked at reliable evidence, we conclude that everything came about by the will of a higher power, a god or gods, how do we discover that higher power? What clues have we been given? Information about the main contenders: Islam; Buddhism; Hinduism; Mormonism etc is flimsy and/or based on one person supposedly being given a revelation from god with very little evidence to back it up.

There are only two contenders which can show reliable evidence for their truthfulness, Judaism and Christianity. There is not the space here to rehearse the evidence, but Judaism falls short by ignoring Jesus Christ. This leaves only Christianity to supply the answers as to who God is. Many people from diverse backgrounds, such as investigative journalists, university professors, detectives and high-court judges, have set out to disprove Christianity but have ended up becoming believers.

So where can we go to gather evidence that is not fake news? The Bible. Before you dismiss it, consider that its 66 books were written by 40 authors from different backgrounds over a period of 1,500 years. The Bible claims to be the inspired word of God. This claim is attested to by the fact that it fits together perfectly; its historical facts have never been disproved; numerous archaeological finds confirm many of its statements; and, of its 1817 prophecies, 80% have already occurred as predicted and the remaining 20% are concerning the end of the world. One of its latest fulfilled prophecies is from Isaiah 59 v14, "Truth has fallen in the street and honesty cannot enter."

It is seriously worth one's while to look at the evidence for Christianity for oneself. Don't take other people's opinions or rely on your feelings. After all, if Christianity is true and you dismiss it, you could be affecting your happiness and contentment not only in this life but also for your eternity.

Mike Simms

A Harvest Story

A minister was taking a Harvest service at a local Primary School. Surrounded by fruit and vegetables that the children had brought, he waved his arms expansively over them and asked: "What one word would cover all this?"

A small boy timidly raised his hand.

"Yes?" said the minister

"Gravy, sir?" asked the boy.

West Hill Women's Group



A stranger is only a friend you haven't yet met!

This was certainly true of our June speaker. While enjoying a coffee in a Honiton Cafe, one of the West Hill Women's Group speaker secretaries got talking to a solo lady sitting nearby. After a few minutes lively conversation, the

WHWG member - always desperate to find new speakers - boldly asked, 'Do you give talks?'. Surprisingly, it was an affirmative reply - three different talks about her life in show business as a Singer/Dancer. The result, a sparkling, fun-filled first talk about her career with the Tiller Girls, the Vernon Girls and the ground-breaking Six Five Special.

Our July speaker was Claire Harmsworth, representing The Ottery Help Scheme - our Charity of the Year. This is a non-profit organisation providing a variety of support services to all adults living in Ottery St Mary and surrounding areas.

Wednesday 7th August is our annual Coffee Morning. A speaker-free meeting, where members enjoy chatting to others with light-hearted entertainment; or even talking about the Dartmouth coach/ boat trip enjoyed in July.

Thursday 5th September will be a fascinating talk by Mark Fox, Historian for Andrew Lloyd Webber's LW Theatres, about the history of the London Palladium.

Held at the RBL in School Lane, membership is open to West Hill women for an annual fee of £15, which includes refreshments on arrival. Meetings start at 10.00 for a 10.30 talk.

So, come along and meet those strangers, *friends you haven't yet met!*

For further details please contact Jane Overthrow, Chair, WHWG on 07867975631 or toverthrow@aol.com.

New to West Hill?

With generous support from West Hill Parish Council, St Michael's Church has produced a Welcome Pack for new residents. It contains information about many of the organisations within the village plus the very useful village map - and a free 'website' pen!

So, if you've moved into the village within the last couple of months and haven't yet received a Welcome Pack, please contact:

Rosemary Hudson

Email: hudsonrosemary@hotmail.com

West Hill Art Group



Tipton Bridge by Graham Evans

I am often asked how you take a sheet of paper and achieve a 3D painting. I always suggest a trip to Daisymount and onto the A30 towards Exeter as a passenger.

Look out towards Dartmoor and you will see a blue purple hue and no details at all. Distance is paler, smaller and a weaker colour. In front of the moors, the fields and trees also have a blueish tinge before becoming larger, stronger

and the 'normal greens' the nearer they are to you.

The detail is much more obvious becoming larger and more detailed. This is aerial perspective. Colours drop out of range nearer the horizon. Reds, oranges and yellows disappear first with blues as the last one left.

We have done a series of pictures locally from Tipton Church to the river and the Golden Lion and are pleased with our results. Here are a couple of examples.



Tipton Church by Mac Dick

We try to capture the beauty of this magnificent area in which we live.

Rosemary Seymour Tel: 01404 234122

West Hill Men's Supper Club

In May our speaker gave a talk on the work undertaken by the Force Charity based in Exeter helping those affected by cancer whilst in June the club learnt about the activities of an environment group making fundamental changes in the village of Tipton St John.

The club meets in the church hall attached to St Michael's Church in Bendarroch Road EX11 1UW. The evening starts around 6.45 p.m. and ends around 9.30 p.m.

We have wonderful caterers providing a superb 2 course meal with wine or non-alcoholic drinks for a cost of £25 per head. If you wish to attend please call Peter Keith on 07840 835788 otherwise send an e-mail to peterkeith29@btinternet.com as early as possible prior to the date of the supper.

The West Hill Men's Supper Club looks forward to welcoming you to the next supper.

There are no suppers in July nor August, however, please note in your diary the speakers for September and October are:

9th September Exeter Chiefs chaplain - Rev. Simon Atkinson

14th October Harbour Master Exeter Port Authority – Grahame Forshaw

Otter Vale Rotary

Otter Valley Rotary were kept busy at the Devon County Show for all three days issuing wrist bands to children to prevent them becoming lost. We were assisted by Exmouth Rotary Club too and some other kind volunteers.

We were pleased to support the annual visit to Crealy by children and staff from Millwater School by sponsoring the trip and providing ice creams. Our Secretary, David Incoll, helped out on the day and said the children had a most enjoyable time. The coach was once again generously provided free by Parnell's Coaches.

Members recently enjoyed a talk by our newest member, Harry, who impressed us all with everything he has packed in and achieved in his career so far. Certainly a very inspirational young man.

Our annual Pétanque evening took place at the Ottery Pétanque Club, including a fish and chip supper. For once it didn't

pour with rain!

Otter Valley Rotary meet every Tuesday evening at 7pm, for a meal and fellowship, often with a speaker, at the Tumbling Weir Hotel. If you are interested in joining us, please contact our Secretary, David Incoll at d.incoll@live.co.uk



Chris and Emma at the Devon show

Village Fête



The Messenger's roving photographer recorded the village enjoying the Primary School PTFA Summer Fête on 29th June.

The sun shone, there were so many delicious looking cakes that it was hard to decide what to choose and there was even Candy Floss.



Lutra Vallis Ladies Probus Club

What a superb programme of Talks and Events we have held this year. All due to the hard work of Pauline our Programme Secretary and the other Committee Members, namely Hilary, Peggy, Moni, Julia and Alayne. A few of these Events were –

In January - "The Wonderful world of Glass"- (A history of same.) To hold a glass object thousands of years old was incredible but terrifying, luckily it all remained intact!

In March, we had a talk on RNLI, and the work undertaken by these brave people.

The April speaker gave us a "Devon Photoquiz" from which we learnt how much/little we knew of our County!

June saw us partake of an Afternoon Tea in the garden of one of our Members. Delicious Cakes and Savouries and many cups of tea were much enjoyed. The garden looked lovely, decked out with Gazebos, parasols and comfortable seating. The skies were overcast, but that did not prevent us enjoying ourselves with laughter and much chatter ensuing!



Our Event in June was eagerly anticipated, and the highlight of the year so far. "Sharandys Birds of Prey" was the topic. Sharon & Matt brought four Owls from their Raptor Rescue Centre and gave us an insight and live display of these fascinating creatures. We were given an amazing (Snowy) Owl Flying Display. He skimmed just over our heads, so quietly and with such grace. But doubtless their prey are not so impressed with their stealth! A few Men's Probus Members joined us and were delighted with the invitation and the event.

Our Summer Lunch in July, held at the Harbour Hotel in Sidmouth, offered a delicious two course meal. The Hotel has beautiful views of the seafront.

After our break in August, in September we have a talk titled "My Great Escape" – about leaving a religious cult.

In October we have a Talk on "Medical Detection Dogs": how they are being used to detect illness in humans.

If you would like to join our friendly group of interested and interesting women, contact - Trisha Fryer, Chairman. By phone 01404 813408 or email trisha.fryer@hotmail.co.uk

West Hill Garden Club

Thank you to everyone who supported the Garden Club stall at the fête - it's always a very social occasion and the chance to buy some lovely plants for the garden at good prices and also to ask any garden related questions.

Plans are taking shape for our annual picnic held in a member's garden each August. The date and all details will be given to members at the July meeting, leaving just the weather to fix!



West Hill Garden Club fête stall

Our **September** meeting will be on **Thursday 12th at 2.00pm** when we shall have our last garden visit for the year, We are going to Russet House, Talaton by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Alan & Liz Franklin to enjoy the orchards all bursting with fruit and nearly ready for harvesting. Tea will follow. Names and travel arrangements will be organised at our July meeting.

The planter outside Morrisons has looked very colourful – well done to all those members who water and maintain it on a weekly basis - even though we had to wait a long time for the geraniums to flower and to catch up with the lobelias and petunias this year.

We welcome visitors to our meetings just contact our Chairman Sheila Gillam (01414 814074) or Secretary Pauline Wade (01404 813191) with any enquiry.

Monica Highnam

D-Day Commemoration



A commemoration ceremony was held on Thursday 6th June, the 80th anniversary of the start of the D-Day landings.

The War Memorial was enhanced by floral tributes representing the five Normandy beaches where the landings took place.

Devon Historic Churches Trust (DHCT) Cycle Ride

This will be the final reminder before the DHCT Cycle Ride on Saturday 14th September. We have publicised the event in the recent editions of the Messenger and are still looking forward to hearing from anyone who is interested in joining Team West Hill.

The Cycle Ride really is a great way of enjoying the beautiful East Devon countryside, while visiting some of the county's lovely local churches. By taking part in the ride, you have the opportunity of supporting the Trust in looking after these special churches, including our own parish church, St Michael's. We ride around a quiet loop of the Otter Valley and visit half a dozen local churches – and stop for a convivial lunch!



Please contact me for further information about the day. We have sponsorship forms available for anyone wishing to ride.

If you are unable to cycle but would like to support the team of riders for West Hill, we would be most grateful for your sponsorship. The money raised from the team's sponsorship will be shared equally between the Trust and St Michael's.

This year, as you know from other articles in this magazine, St Michael's is planning various improvements to the church and the hall. It would be wonderful if this year, we could raise as much as possible to help towards the building project.

Thank you in advance for any help you can give Team West Hill, we have always been grateful for the generous support we have received in previous years. We particularly enjoy the company on the ride.

Sue Bonnie (812370)

A Prayer for Students & Teachers

As schools break up for the Summer Holidays, we pray for rest for students and teachers. May time spent with family, friends, and with you God, bring restoration. We give thanks for churches running summer groups, camps and activities, and pray that you would help them to share the love of Christ with young people. Amen

(Extract from Exeter Diocesan Prayer Diary)

Welcome Café



*The last
Friday of
every month*

**Friday 30th August
Friday 27th September**

Open at 10.30am

Take a break!

www.whmessenger.info

Teaching Assistant/M Meal Time Assistant Vacancy West Hill Primary School

4.5 hrs on Fridays (8.45am-1.15pm)
from September 2024

To provide general support under
the direction of the class teacher
from 8.45-12.15pm and lunch time
cover from 12.15-1.15pm.

Full details can be found at
[whmessenger.info/news-and-
events/](http://whmessenger.info/news-and-events/). If you are interested,
please phone the School Office on
01404 812599.

Do you want to be a
**RECORD
BREAKER?**

If so then come and join us this summer at



Monday 5th to Friday 9th August
10.00 am - 12.00 pm
at the
United Reformed Church, Jesu Street, OSM

the 06
SUPPORTING AND
EMPOWERING YOUNG LIVES

W H Men's Supper Club

We meet, once a month on a Monday
evening for an excellent meal and an
interesting after-dinner speaker.

July & August – No meetings

Monday 9th September
Exeter Chief's Chaplain

Monday 14th October
Exeter Port & Waterways

New members warmly welcomed

Contact peterkeith29@btinternet.com

www.whmessenger.info

West Hill Garden Club



*August
Members' Summer Picnic*

Thursday 12th September
Cutting to Russet House, Talaton

www.whgardenclub.weebly.com

We are happy to take up to 3 text-only
small ads per issue.

Please contact Rosemary Hudson
the Advertising Manager see p3.

Services at St Michael's



St Michael's Stall at the Village Fête

Continuation of Zoom Services

On the first and third Sunday of each month at 10am for the whole Mission Community.

See <https://ottervalechurches.org/ministry/ovmc-services/> and search for **online** to find service details, including the Zoom link.

Services in Church

Aug 4	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Aug 11	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Aug 18	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Aug 25	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Sep 1	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Sep 8	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Sep 13	15.45	Messy Church
Sep 15	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Sep 22	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Sep 29	11.00	Harvest Festival and lunch (All ages welcome)