

The Messenger



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



**April – May 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?

Other West Hill Clergy Revd. Mac Dick 371064

macdick1@aol.com

Revd. Ann Turner 813476

jandaturner@btinternet.com

Reader (also Asst. Warden) Ann Yates 813886

annyates12@btinternet.com

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Churchwardens

Church Wardens Pam Johns (also Sacristan) 814096

pam-johns1@hotmail.co.uk

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fionahrimmer@me.com

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joannambromley@hotmail.com

PCC Treasurer Richard Bonnie 812370

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Suepaul.ritchie@btinternet.com

Verger vacant - contact Churchwardens

Website **ottervalechurches.org**

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Magazine website **whmessenger.info**

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PLEASE NOTE The last date for copy for the June/July edition is
Mon 6th May 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



“Every cloud has a silver lining,” is one of those statements which may hit the right tone but might come across as trite or even insensitive. If you are going through tough times, you may be tempted to poke the eye or biff the nose of anyone telling you that every cloud has a silver lining.

I am not going to say that, but at risk of facial injury, I do want to offer you the picture of a rainbow. Silver-lined clouds and rainbows both

need clouds and sunshine, but the silver-lined clouds still hide the sun whereas the rainbow appears when the sun and the clouds are both in view.

The other important difference from my point of view is that the rainbow is a biblical image (I cannot think of anywhere in the Bible that mentions clouds with silver linings, but if you know different, please let me know). The rainbow is borrowed by many people and organisations, but in the first book of the Bible God puts a rainbow in the sky for Noah and his family when they come out of the ark after the flood.

I always think it is such an appropriate sign for those who have just been through the flood. The flood in Genesis is a picture of creation itself being put into reverse. It stands as a symbol for everything we know being destroyed or taken away or turned upside down. And if you have been through a flood, the thing most likely to raise your fears is the appearance of dark clouds. God tells Noah that the rainbow will serve as a sign that the total destruction will not be repeated.

We all know from primary school science that the recipe for a rainbow is rain and sunlight. The rainbow appears when the sunlight shines into the very thing that threatens us and makes us afraid.

At Easter Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. On the cross Jesus was destroyed—he was killed. The gospel writers tell us that darkness covered the sky on that “Good” Friday. But having been buried, he rose again, full of new life, like a shaft of sunlight bursting out of that empty tomb.

Jesus’ resurrection has not instantly taken away all the dark clouds in the world; but if there are dark clouds in your life, I hope that you will let the light of the resurrection shine into those clouds and see a beautiful sign of hope and new life appear.

Mark

Children's Page

Spring at St Michael's

The churchyard at St Michael's is showing signs of springtime. The daffodils and crocuses have been flowering and the trees are in blossom. Our 'No-Mow May' policy also encourages the wildflowers to flourish and attract lots of minibeasts.



The Messy Church 'Bug Hotel' is now well-established.



We are creating a Log Pile, which should provide a 'restaurant' for birds, frogs, hedgehogs and other small mammals.

Why don't you pop into the churchyard to see if you can spot any minibeasts or animals?!

Dates for Your Diary

Friday 19th April (3.45- 5.30pm)

Messy Church (theme – Being Kind/The Good Samaritan)

Friday 17th May (3.45 – 5.30pm)

Messy Church (theme – Pentecost)



Messy Church is generally for the 3 – 11 years age group but everyone is welcome. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

For more information email Rosemary HUDSONROSEMARY@HOTMAIL.COM

Q: *What is green and can jump a mile a minute?*

A: *A grasshopper with hiccups!*

Q: *What do you call a bee who is having a bad hair day?* **A:** *A frisbee!*

Q: *Why are frogs so happy?* **A:** *They eat whatever bugs them!*

Q: *Why wasn't the butterfly invited to the dance?*

A: *Because it was a moth ball!*

Children's Crafts

Minibeast Stationery Set

Butterfly/Bee Pencil Pots



You will need:

Cardboard tube
Card
White paper
Pipe Cleaners
Scissors
Glue
Felt pens

Instructions:

Cut the tube into smaller lengths.
Cut a circle of card and attach to the base of the tube.
Decorate a band of white paper and stick around the tube.

Stick on some paper wings and pipe cleaner feelers.

You now have holders for your pens and pencils!

Ladybird/Dragonfly/Bee Paper Clips

You will need:

Wooden clothes pegs
White paper
Scissors
Glue
Felt pens

Instructions:

Draw a ladybird/dragonfly/bee onto the white paper.
Cut out your drawing.
Stick your 'insect' onto a peg.
It's now ready to hold papers in place!



Have fun!!

Forty days - more of Peter's story



My brother Andrew found him - right down by the Dead Sea. He came home to Bethsaida so excited, "The Messiah has come, I've seen him. Come and see". And then he disappeared - this Messiah - into the mountains near Jericho. Gone, just like that. Just like Moses of old. We wondered if we'd ever see him again.

We did, of course, 40 days later - and we had a roller-coaster of three years! Highs and lows; seeing amazing things happen but sometimes not understanding what he was talking about.

When he was arrested, we ran; scared out of our wits! When he was killed, we thought it was all over: the dream, that he would save us from the Roman occupation. But death is death, we knew we'd never see him again.

And now? Well, three days on, he came back to life! I know it's hard to believe but he did. We weren't the only ones who saw him. On one occasion he appeared to 500 or more people.

He was with us for 40 precious days. We learnt so much from him in that time. And now he's gone. Just like that!

We were with him at Bethany on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives. He was talking to us, giving us God's blessing and then he just ... went. We saw him go - upwards towards the heavens.

Will we ever see him again? We have no doubt about that.

These were his words:

"In My Father's house are many mansions; if not, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, you may be also."

We **know** we shall be with him there, for eternity.

Ann Pangbourne

West Hill Garden Club



Now that Spring has arrived, the gardens and surrounding countryside are bursting with growth and colour. No doubt everyone is looking forward to spending time outside as the days get longer and the weather warmer.

The Planter outside Morrisons continues to be maintained by the Garden Club members ensuring, most recently, that the spring flowers can be appreciated by all the passers-by. Needless to say, no one, so far, on this quarter's rota has needed to water the plants!

Thursday 11th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall (upstairs)

Caryn Vanstone will be telling us about her garden at Woodbury. The garden covers about an acre and is beautifully landscaped. It also includes a large vegetable growing area. Karen spends many hours each week keeping everything looking perfect and productive. She is keen to share her knowledge and experience gained over 12 years of gardening there.

Note for members – remember to bring your competition daffodil for judging to this meeting.

Thursday May 9th (2.00pm) – Visit to Haldon Grange EX6 7YE

This is our first outing of the year. The garden has a large collection of rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias and camellias. Other rare and mature trees surround a lake. All details will be given at the April meeting when names will be taken and car-sharing arranged. The afternoon also includes tea & cake.

Stop Press: The club has just received confirmation that Gold-winning Chelsea Medallist (2023) Hugo Bugg will be one of our 2025 Speakers. Details to follow later.

We have welcomed several new members this year. If you are also thinking of coming along to a meeting you will be made very welcome. Visitors are charged £2.00 per visit and the annual membership is £10.00. We are a friendly and sociable group and always end our meetings with tea /coffee & biscuits. We look forward to seeing you. For any enquiry, please contact:

Chairman: Sheila Gillam 01404 814074

Secretary: Pauline Wade 01404 813191

Monica Highnam

Ottery St Mary Heritage Society and Museum

Registered charity CIO no. 1179598

Our monthly members' talks take place at The Institute, Yonder St., Ottery St Mary on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Guests are welcome for £3 payable at the door. An up-to-date list of speakers for the year ahead is listed on the Society's website at: www.otterheritage.org.uk.

Tuesday 16th April (7.30pm at The Institute) - 'Saving Castle Drogo and update'

Paula Clarke describes the castle, its story, rescue and update since she spoke 5 years ago.

Tuesday 21st May (7.30pm at The Institute) - 'Magnificent Women and their Flying Machines'

Sally Smith talks about the compelling stories of women pioneers whose soaring ambitions achieved firsts in the field of aviation.

The Museum

Located in the Old Town Hall opposite St Mary's Church in Ottery St Mary, the museum opens on Good Friday 29th March until the end of September this year. New displays will be on view, so please remember to pay us a visit this Spring and Summer. Please check up-to-date opening hours on our website before visiting, but at present we are planning to open 4 days per week – Wednesday (10.30am – 4pm) through Saturday (11am – 4pm).

If you can spare a little time and would like to volunteer to Steward for a few hours this year or participate in archiving our artefacts on museum accredited software, we would love to hear from you. All enquiries, including membership, to Lynda Murlowski, Hon. Secretary: otterheritage@gmail.com.

St Michael's Mission Partners: The Mothers' Union

Like TheO6, described in the last issue of The Messenger, The Mothers' Union is one of St Michael's Church's Mission Partners.

The Mothers' Union, a worldwide Anglican women's organisation, was founded by Mary Sumner (born December 1828). In 1876, when her eldest daughter Margaret gave birth, Mary was reminded how difficult she had found the burden of motherhood. The wife of a vicar, she decided to start a support group in her home. Unusually for the time, this was inclusive of all women regardless of their background or social status. Mary was so nervous at the first meeting that her husband had to host the meeting for her. By the second meeting she had gained enough confidence to host the group. From there the Mothers' Union movement gained momentum.

When Mary died on 11 August 1921, at the age of 92, over 4000 women

attended her funeral.

The Mothers' Union is an international Christian charity that seeks to support families worldwide. Its members are not all mothers or even all women, as there are many men, widows, singles and grandparents involved in its work.

Present in 84 countries with over 4 million members, Mothers' Union provides a network through which members can serve Christ in their own community. This is done through prayer, financial support and actively working at the grassroots level in programmes that meet local needs. Membership in the UK is approximately 93,000, which has slipped from 220,000 in 1993, a small percentage of the worldwide membership. However, most of those members worldwide rely on the financial contributions of the UK members.

Sadly, branches in our area of the diocese have closed and remaining members have joined Ottery, which is still a thriving branch with a good membership. Membership at £34 for the year is less than the price of a cup of coffee every month - a small sacrifice.

As a Christian membership charity, we demonstrate our faith in action. This happens as we work towards stopping poverty, stopping inequality and stopping injustice. Our members work at grassroots level around the world by delivering money, goods and skills rather than sending money through a hierarchy. They bring hope and practical support to millions of people every year through parenting, literacy and community development programmes to empower and serve those living in difficult conditions.

For more information visit www.mothersunion.org.

Fiona Rimmer, Mothers' Union Member.

Good News and Bad News

The good news is that we have a replacement Treasurer. Many thanks to Joanna Bromley, who will be stepping across from her Secretary role at the Annual Parochial Church Council meeting on Sunday 21st April.

The bad news is that we now require a PCC Secretary! Could that person be you?

The role consists mainly of preparing meeting paperwork and taking minutes, for 6-7 meetings a year. The Parochial Church Council is made up from around a dozen friendly volunteers that are on hand for any help and support if required.

If you are interested, please contact Joanna and she will be glad to discuss it with you.

Joanna Bromley

Tel: 07879 220011 or Email: joannambromley@hotmail.com

Tea & Toast & Toys on Fridays

We continue to meet every Friday at 8.45 am at the Village Hall during school term time. 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).

West Hill Primary School

Assembly Values

As usual, we have been working hard on our assembly values. Since February half term, our value has been 'Happiness' and we have been looking at what is happiness, what makes us happy, happiness in our home, how do we make others happy and the International Day of Happiness, which is celebrated annually on 20th March.

Y6 PGL

Pupils in Class 6 spent a week at PGL Beam House from 4-8th March. They all coped amazingly well having to sleep away from home for 4 nights in a dormitory with their friends (some of whom snored), eating different food and undertaking a variety of physical activities such as orienteering, climbing, abseiling, trapeze, zip wire, archery and rifles. This year they were very lucky to be the only school at the venue and were thankfully very blessed with the weather apart from their arrival day when they visited RHS Rosemoor Gardens en-route and were thoroughly drenched! The week away is hugely beneficial for the Y6 pupils as they build relationships, confidence, resilience, cooperation and responsibility in a safe and supportive environment. We would like to thank the parents and staff who accompanied them: Mrs Bennett, Mr Pantling, Mrs Townsend, Mrs Hall, Mrs Sparkes, Mrs Bamford and Mr Ryan-Stansbie.

World Book Day

On Thursday 7th March we celebrated World Book Day. The children and staff enjoyed dressing up and our PTFA kindly funded a fantastic author visit from Andy Seed who started the day with a whole school assembly before working with each class across the school. Andy shared his passion for writing and inspired the children with his enthusiasm and sense of humour. If you're interested his website is: <https://www.andyseed.com/>. Every child went home with a £1.00 World Book Day voucher.

Swimming

In the spring term Class 3 have swimming lessons one afternoon per week for ten weeks. Over this time their water confidence grows and we hope the majority learn to swim.

Staffing Update

Since the last Messenger we have said a fond farewell to Mrs Broad (Teaching Assistant and Forest School Leader), Mrs Spier (Mealtime Assistant) and Mrs Muldoon (Teaching Assistant). We wish them all lots of happiness in whatever they move onto next.

The spring term ends on 27th March for pupils and 28th March for staff.

Until next time, take care.

Cheryl Boulton, Headteacher

Ottery St. Mary Floral Art Club

It was lovely to get our Club “New Year” underway in March when we enjoyed the company and talents of florist Rosy Elesmore from Tavistock. Rosy’s demonstration was based around the title “Spring Days” and included several designs, all of which were raffled to be enjoyed at home by the lucky winners.

We have a busy Club year ahead in 2024. On Tuesday April 16th, we welcome back “Pot Luck”, a firm favourite with members and an evening that is always great fun. It is very “hands on” in that you come along with some flowers and foliage, oasis/pin holder/chicken wire (or similar) along with your favourite container. These are given at random to another Club member, who takes your floral “ingredients” and turns them into an arrangement, which is returned to you at the end of the evening! It’s “Pot Luck” who gets your items and “Pot Luck” how it turns out!

In May we will be joined by Allison Finch and her demonstration entitled “Toy Stories”. ANAFAS Area Demonstrator and Teacher, Allison studied floristry at Poole and Bournemouth College and loves a wide variety of crafts including beadwork, wirework and textiles. She often includes these in her designs. Amongst other things, she is inspired by the beautiful Jurassic Coast and can’t resist collecting beachcombed items! NB: For members reading this article, the May competition is ‘Symmetrical’.

Why not come along on **Tuesday 16th April** or **Tuesday 21st May** – both meetings are at **West Hill Village Hall, Beech Park, West Hill, EX11 1UQ (7.30 pm)**. We are a friendly bunch (no pun intended!) and visitors can be assured of a warm welcome.

Any enquiries: **Karen Taverner, Club Secretary** – 01404 811807

Devon Historic Churches “Ride & Stride”



Ride & Stride will be on Saturday 14th September this year, so plenty of time to oil your chain and get some miles in on your bicycle. Join Team West Hill for a relaxing ride around the Otter Valley to raise money towards the preservation of the 600 beautiful church buildings that make up such a valuable aspect of our Devon landscape. Make a note of the date in your diary.

Councillor's Column



Potters/Morrisons planning application

I have submitted a detailed objection to this highly controversial planning application. My objection can be viewed both on EDDC's planning portal (ref 24/0044) and on my Councillor Facebook page. I'm monitoring the application to see how it progresses. Rest assured that I will do everything possible as the ward member to try to prevent this harmful planning application being approved.

The green wedge between West Hill and Ottery St Mary

The area between West Hill and Ottery St Mary is currently designated as a 'green wedge' in the joint West Hill and Ottery St Mary neighbourhood plan. This designation helps protect it as open countryside. At the Strategic Planning Committee in February, EDDC officers suggested that the vast majority of the green wedges across the district should lose their designations (including the one between West Hill and Ottery St Mary).

I strongly opposed the scrapping of the green wedges as did many other councillors and we voted the proposal down.

West Hill boundary

In February, I organised a meeting between myself, Parish Council representatives, the Head of Planning at EDDC and the Leader of EDDC to discuss the West Hill settlement boundary. Both myself and the Parish Council had objected to the revised boundaries in the draft local plan, which are much wider than is currently the case. The implications of this boundary widening would allow more housebuilding on the edge of West Hill. The purpose of the meeting was to highlight our continuing concerns. We need to see how EDDC planners respond.

South West Water – discharges into the River Otter

I continue to press South West Water to disclose real time data of their sewage discharges into the River Otter. Unlike other companies who disclose this information in real time on their websites, South West Water choose not to do so because it is not currently a statutory requirement. At a recent debate, I called for EDDC to urgently request the introduction of this information. I also called for Susan Davy, the CEO of South West Water, to waive all her future bonuses until there has been a substantial improvement in South West Water's environmental performance. Whilst EDDC agreed with my proposals, the difficulty is the flawed nature of the commercial water industry. This means that EDDC as an authority cannot compel South West Water to do anything at all.

Cllr Jess Bailey

Tel: 01404 814056

Email: Jessica.Bailey@devon.gov.uk

Hospiscare News

Hospiscare is your local independent hospice charity looking after adults across Exeter, Mid and East Devon. Our community services are free and our 12-bed ward at Searle House offers 24-hour specialist care for people needing symptom control and end of life care 365 days of the year.

Local People deserve fair hospice funding

For over 40 years, Hospiscare has provided specialist end-of-life care. But now – **we are facing a £2.5 million funding gap**. The hospice costs almost £10 million a year to run. We have to raise 82% of that amount through charitable fundraising, with the Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB), the local organisation that allocates government healthcare funding, providing just 18%. **This is below the national average of 37% that other hospices receive.**

Andrew Randall, Chief Executive of Hospiscare, explains:

“Residents in our area deserve the very best care at the end of their lives and it's not right that existing services should be cut. We've had frank discussions over the last 12 months with the Devon ICB about increasing our funding fairly in line with other hospices but, so far, they have refused to increase our funding in line with the national average. Unless the local funding body increases our funding in line with other hospice providers, we'll sadly be forced into reducing our services.”

Please we urge you to write to Dr Sarah Wollaston and Bill Shields, Chair and CEO of the ICB, to ask them to fund Hospiscare fairly so we can continue to provide outstanding-rated care. You can find a template letter at <https://www.hospiscare.co.uk/support-our-work/fundraise/fair/> or telephone 01392 688000 for more information.

Otter Vale Friends of Hospiscare Events

Easter Fun Day - Monday 1st April (10.30am – 3pm)

Ottery St Mary Football Club, Washbrook Meadows, Butts Rd, EX11 1EL
Side stalls, Climbing Wall, Tombola, Easter competition, Cream Teas, Bouncy Castle

Fun for all the family - Limited free parking - Well-behaved dogs welcome

For more information telephone Steve Percy 01404 811335

Car Boot Sale - also on Monday 1st April (Sellers from 9am – Buyers from 10.30am)

Ottery St Mary Football Club, Washbrook Meadows, Butts Road, EX11 1EL
£5 per car - Small Vans (including VW & Campervans) - £10

Closing time is subject to weather conditions as this is an outdoor event

Booking essential telephone Steve Percy 01404 811335.

Coffee Morning - Saturday 20th April (10 -12 noon)

The Royal British Legion, School Lane, West Hill

Cake stall, Raffle, Bargain Tables, Books

Hospiscare Bumper Plant Sale - Sunday 19th May (11am – 2pm)

The Institute, Ottery St Mary, EX11 1HH

Telephone Pam Joy on 01404 813820 for more information.

Charity Fashion Show - Thursday 23rd May (7pm for 7.30pm)

West Hill Village Hall

Featuring the 'Spring into Summer' collection from 'Chapter' of Sidmouth

Tickets (non refundable) £15 pp (to include glass of fizz and canapés) available from:

Hospiscare Shop - 12 Broad St, Ottery St Mary – 01404 815050

Tricia Heard - West Hill - 01404 814191

'Chapter' - Drake House, Church St, Sidmouth - Tel 01395 579181

Your generosity truly makes a difference to local people.

If you are interested in the work of Hospiscare, please contact:

Toni Hiscocks – Area Fundraiser Tel: 01392 688067;

Mobile: 07921 845615 Email: t.hiscocks@hospiscare.co.uk

West Hill Arboretum Group

Imagine a landscape without trees....

What would shelter you from the chilling wind in winter? What would keep you from burning in the summer sunshine? Where would our birds live?! We really can't imagine it can we? The changing seasons wouldn't give us a change of scenery at all!

Trees give us many other benefits:

We use the timber for burning and warmth, 'house building', making furniture, tools, boats and more.

They lock up carbon and give us oxygen to breathe, fight flooding and make our environment more resilient.

In our gardens, trees give us structure, shade, shelter and privacy.

And the valuable gift of free compost material every year which improves the soil.

Hopefully, you will have trimmed your hedges adjacent to roads and lanes by the time you read this. It is an offence to cut trees and hedges during the bird nesting season – March 1st to August 31st.

Enquires are welcome from residents regarding work to trees and hedgerows and advice on species for new plantings.

If you have an interest and concern for our West Hill trees and would like to join the Arboretum Group, please get in touch. You would be most welcome.

Our next walk will be this Easter Bank Holiday **Monday 1st April**. Toby Taylor of the RSPB will be leading a 3-miles walk on the common. **Meet at the British Legion at 10.30am**. Wear your boots as it will be muddy in places!

Contacts: Eileen Perkins eileen555@hotmail.co.uk (Village Tree Warden); Alan Cook alan.b.cook@internet.com.

TheO6 Needs Help

TheO6 provides valuable support for the youth of Ottery and surrounding villages. Activities include Schools Work, Weekly Drop ins, Mentoring, Holiday Clubs and Youth Clubs. We are running an Easter Holiday Club on Thursday 4th April. See the poster on page 28. To register for the event, go to www.theo6.org.uk and click on the poster.

To enable the work to be extended for a further three years, we are seeking finances. Sadly, despite applications to a variety of charitable trusts, very little funding has been obtained. With finances getting lower each month, I have made the difficult decision to reduce my working hours, which will hopefully give the Trustees more time to secure the future of TheO6. However, this will obviously impact some of the work that TheO6 is able to provide.

If you, or your business, would like to contribute towards our youth work, please contact me or go to the website www.theo6.org.uk where under 'Fundraising' you will see how you can make a donation.

Help us make the world a better place for youth!

Graham Harry

The Royal British Legion West Hill

Movie Nights

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

1st April	Official Secrets
8th April	Once More
15th April	Oppenheimer
22nd April	The Novice
29th April	The Great Escaper
6th May	A Walk in the Woods
13th May	Summer in February
20th May	Ghost Town
27th May	Empire of Light

Bingo Nights

Sundays 7th, 21st April and 5th, 19th May

Jazz (with City Steam Jazz Band)

Sundays 14th April & 12th May (7pm for 7.30pm)

Dads' Nights

Fridays 12th April & 10th May

Mums' Nights

Fridays 26th April & 31st May

Opera Nights (7pm for 7.30pm)

Thursday 25th April – Verdi's The Force of Destiny

Thursday 30th May – Bizet's Carmen

Pop-Up Restaurants

Sunday 21st April Syrian Buffet Lunch 1200-1430

Wednesday 1st May Curry Night 1900-2100

Quiz Night + Supper

Saturday 6th April (from 1930)

Codfather – Fish & Chips

Every Thursday from 1600-1900

Classic Vehicle Rally

Sunday 19th May (1100-1600)

West Hill Men's Supper Club

In January, our speaker provided us with a fascinating insight into the way that birds live their lives. At our February supper, we discovered the role that RAF Exeter played in the Battle of Britain.

Our speakers in the near future are :

Monday 15th April - Aylwyn Bowen - Life as a commercial artist in Exeter

Monday 13th May - Meriel Fishwick – The History of the Force Charity

Monday 10th June - Steve Graham - Our shared love of chocolate through history

NB There are no suppers in July and August, so please note in your diary that the September supper will take place on Monday 9th.

The club meets in the church hall attached to St Michael's Church, Bendarroch Road EX11 1UW. The evening starts at 6.45 pm and ends around 9.30 pm. We have wonderful caterers providing a superb 2-course meal with wine or non-alcoholic drinks for a cost of £20 per head. If you wish to attend, please call Peter Keith on 01404 812201 or email 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.

St Michael's Church APCM: Sunday 21st April

The Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting for St Michael's Church will be held immediately after the 10:00 am service on Sunday 21st April. All are invited.

Sidmouth National Trust Supporters Group

With Spring approaching, the Sidmouth National Trust Supporters Group is looking forward to some interesting coach outings. The first is on April 9th to the National Trust's Lanhydrock property. This outing is already fully booked. After that, on May 16th, we will visit Caerhays Castle in Cornwall, a privately owned Grade I listed building with an extensive garden and *Poldark* connections. We will have further outings throughout the summer.

2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the Sidmouth National Trust Supporters Group and we will be staging a celebratory lunch at the Kingswood Hotel on May 8th, tickets priced at £25 per head.

For further information on our events or membership of the Group please email ntsidmouth@gmail.com.

The Birds of West Hill

By April the breeding season will be well under way for many birds. Hormones linked to the increasing length of day trigger off changes in behaviour and anatomy for males and females. Courtship behaviour, especially in species that don't sing, includes mutual preening, feeding, flight displays and even dancing and aerobatic displays! By now singing males will be in full voice and both sexes have restored functioning reproductive organs (having been inactive since the previous summer). Females are attracted to males by the strength and complexity of their song (or other courtship behaviour) along with a striking plumage. The latter indicates a good diet and an ability to provision food for a family. At this stage the female needs convincing that the male she selects can defend its territory, that he can source sufficient food in his patch to feed a very hungry and fast-growing family, plus feed a female that might be left to look after the young. The territory also needs to include suitable sites for nesting, as most birds have specific requirements for a nesting site. In some species (like the Wren) courtship includes the male building several nests and the female choosing the nest.



Blackcap

After selecting a mate, the male and female often form a strong pair bond, enabling them to work cooperatively in rearing a family (it's hard work raising children!!). In some birds, like the Mute Swan and Bullfinch, this social monogamy lasts for a lifetime but for many species it lasts just for the breeding season. However, this bonding does not extend to sexual monogamy. The eggs in most clutches will have been fertilised by more than one male, ensuring any defective genes do not dominate and weaken the species. We can't impose our moral values of fidelity onto animals. Whilst we promise in the marriage ceremony to "... love him / her ... forsaking all others be faithful ... as long as you both shall live." That's not how it works with animals.

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.

Monday Afternoon Bible Study (MABS)



We are currently part way through a course on Prayer. Called “Real Prayer”, it has led us to consider *why* we pray, the *privilege* of prayer, how *not* to pray, and more. It has directed us to think in detail about the pattern of prayer that Jesus gave his first disciples when they asked “Lord, teach us to pray”. We know his answer as The Lord’s Prayer. It begins with acknowledging *God’s glory* before we present our needs, (“give us.....forgive us.....protect us “) and it ends by returning to God, his kingdom, power and glory.

When we began the course, many of us admitted that our prayer focus was largely on petition (asking for) and thanksgiving. With three sessions to complete, some have already re-evaluated the time that they spend in prayer. One has spoken of the value of “talking together about how we approach God”; another admits to previously “never thinking of thanking God for his mercy, or praising his glory”; and another, of the course opening up aspects of prayer and “how to live daily closer to God.”

This last comment reminded me of words of George Carey, one-time Archbishop of Canterbury, who wrote: “Most of us are mere novices when it comes to prayer. We paddle in the shallows of a relationship with God, when he longs for us to enter into the depths of a vibrant and rich prayer fellowship with him. For that to happen, we need to spend time in his presence ... just resting, contemplating, questioning, seeking – and finding” as we “join him in the spiritual battle against all that opposes his will”.

Ann Turner



SEPTEMBER 2024 SESSIONS NOW AVAILABLE TO BOOK!

West Hill Pre-School have funded spaces available from age 2 from September 2024.

Book your tour and reserve your space with us TODAY.

- Government funding accepted for 2, 3 & 4 year olds
- Working towards Curiosity Approach® accreditation
- JW Dance movement classes
- After School Club for children age 3+ running until 5.30pm

For more information visit **www.westhillpreschool.com**

Email: **Natalie.Taylor@westhillpreschool.com**

West Hill Village Hall

Registered Charity No. 1160370

By the time this edition of the Messenger is distributed we hope the weather will be showing the first signs of spring following a very dreary, wet winter.

We have a busy schedule of major events and marquee bookings throughout the year. These currently include:

2nd May - Police and Crime Commissioner Election.

29th June - West Hill Village Fete.

19th Nov - OSM Flower Arranging Christmas Display with staging.

23rd Nov - PTFA Ball with marquee.

30th Nov - Hospiscare Christmas Fayre.

At our recent Planning Group meeting we considered potential improvements to the Village Hall this year, within our spending constraints. We will look at improving our lighting system with the introduction of more LEDs throughout. The floor covering in Acorn room needs to be replaced and an upgrade to the sink unit is required. We will undertake some redecoration in various areas of the hall. All boundary hedges will be cut but this will not take place until the end of the bird nesting season.

We are pleased we finally have had our new defibrillator fitted. This was ordered from South West Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust on 12th April 2023. We anticipated installation by the end of the summer. Unfortunately, there was a worldwide shortage of defibrillators and the delay was extended when the manufacturer of the external casings ceased production. This meant SWASFT had to find a new provider. Fortunately, we received our unit, which was installed in February. The defibrillator has been registered on 'The Circuit', so it will be identified for anyone searching for the nearest defibrillator online. We will now organise training with SWASFT and are in touch with WHPC to see if we can co-ordinate this training with the Parish Council's free annual training session. West Hill is fortunate to have 3 identical units sited in Eastfield, at the RBL and now at WHVH.

We post the Minutes of our Management Group meetings and our Policy documents on the notice board at the village hall for the public to read. In recent months, some of these documents have been removed from the hall. This is an offence and discourteous to those members of public who wish to be informed about what is going on at the hall. We respectfully request that in future whoever is responsible reads the documents at the hall.

Please visit our website for details of the full range of clubs and activities: <http://www.westhilldevon.org.uk/villagehall.html> 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 Village Hall – New Trustees Required

The role of West Hill Village Hall management committee is to provide benefits for local people by working with inhabitants, local authorities and other organisations to advance education and provide facilities in the interest of social welfare, recreation and other leisure time occupations. The overall objective is to improve the conditions of life of inhabitants by managing and maintaining the village hall facility.

In order to strengthen the management committee, we wish to co-opt new trustees who would become elected at our AGM in July 2024. The committee currently consists of four elected trustees, five user organisation representative trustees and two part time employees.

This is a voluntary role but is extremely rewarding. No previous experience is necessary, although a business or legal background could be helpful. We hold five committee meetings a year plus our AGM.

If you are looking for a new challenge, why not think about a role as a Trustee of West Hill Village Hall? Contact me or any of the other trustees.

Colin Veale (Chairman, West Hill Village Hall Trustees)

Email: colinveale@btinternet.com; Telephone: 01404 813830

(A full version of this advertisement can be seen on whmessenger.info)

West Hill Greeting Cards

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

£7 for 10 cards & envelopes with free delivery in the village. Only 20 packs remaining – buy now!

Ring Sue on 01404 812 370

West Hill Parish Council (WHPC)

It has been a busy time for the Parish Council. A newsletter was delivered to residents in early February detailing all the major planning applications in or near West Hill.

One major planning application was not on the list because it arrived too late to be included: 24/0044/FUL at Potters Country Market. This is the site of the village shop and car park, currently being run as a Morrisons Daily convenience store and Post Office. The application was submitted by the owner of the site – a property company based in Manchester – not by Morrisons.

The Parish Council held an Extraordinary Meeting on Thursday 22nd February to allow residents an opportunity to share their views with Councillors before they voted on their response. At the meeting, large-scale drawings of the site plan and elevations were displayed, and leaflets were

provided to ensure residents knew how to submit their comments online, by email or by post to East Devon District Council. Some residents had also organised a petition. Over 150 residents came along. Two representatives from Avalon Planning & Heritage attended, as well as two representatives from Morrisons regional management team, and Ward Member Cllr Jess Bailey. In the audience was East Devon MP Simon Jupp.

The public session, extended by the Chairman to accommodate the many speakers, lasted an hour and was a lively and spirited session throughout. It was very clear that the public were unanimous in their strong opposition to the proposed scheme.

WHPC Councillors voted unanimously to strongly object to the proposal at Potters. Thank you to everyone who took the time to send comments to EDDC, representing views from neighbouring Aylesbeare and Ottery as well as West Hill.

Residents may be interested to know that the planning application for Roadside Services at Daisymount (21/1688/MFUL Land south of Lily Cottage) was approved. The Parish Council had objected, so this decision is very disappointing. It is hard to understand why anyone thinks there is a need for services at this location, given the proximity of the Moto services at J30 of the M5 and at Honiton, as well as all the facilities at Whimble and Ottery.

Housing land supply in East Devon – new guidelines

We have previously reported that West Hill has been the subject of a number of speculative planning applications by developers seeking to take advantage of East Devon District Council's inability to demonstrate a minimum 5-year housing land supply. In planning terms, this “tilts the balance” in favour of approval.

However, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) released in December 2023 states that where a local authority is developing an emerging Local Plan, if that emerging draft Local Plan is sufficiently progressed, it need only demonstrate a minimum 4-year housing land supply. The emerging East Devon draft Local Plan has reached the stage where it benefits from this provision and East Devon District Council can demonstrate a 4.5 year housing land supply. Therefore the “tilted balance” need not be applied.

This is certainly something that WHPC now refers to in its consultee responses.

Councillor vacancies – consider joining us!

At the time of writing, there are still two Councillor vacancies to be filled by co-option. We know there are many residents who could make a valuable contribution to our work. For more information, check the WHPC website or contact our Parish Clerk Anne Oliver for further details.

Sad news

Councillors were sad to hear that West Hill's retired Postmistress Jane Down passed away suddenly in January. Our thoughts are with Jane's family and friends at this sad time.

West Hill Parish Council:

Clerk: Anne Oliver 01404 232 100 or 07413 932406

Email: clerk@westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

West Hill Women's Group



In February we said farewell to Esther Coles, who moved from West Hill. Esther served for several years on our committee, most recently as Chair, leading WHWG to ever-growing popularity and success. We wish her and Peter all that is good in their new home.

The speaker at our meeting in February gave an informative talk about the work of The Samaritans. Many are aware of the organisation but few realise the wide scope of their service for those desperate for help. In addition to support staff, in a year some 20,000 trained listening volunteers, available day and night, respond to calls for help. The WHWG designated Samaritans our Charity of the Year for 2023/24 and are pleased we can offer some support.

On Tuesday April 23rd, representatives from The Devon Wildlife Trust will tell us the story of Devon's wild beaver project, which began on the River Otter, and the effect these busy animals have on our landscape. Sadly, we are told the beavers cannot be with us because of prior commitments!

On May 8th, we will hold our Annual General Meeting.

If you would like to know more about the WHWG, please contact:

Jill Ingle (Vice-Chair) on 01404 814166 or email jillingle@btinternet.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 'church 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

Recently, at our Monday afternoon Watercolour Group, we have been experimenting with different painting techniques.

The most popular results were pictures made using clingfilm - ordinary kitchen plastic wrap stretched, pulled out or screwed up over strong wet colours and left to dry before removing it.

This produces great textures and patterns, which we then incorporated into paintings with some very interesting results.



'Clingfilm' painting by Vince Dowse



*Elephant painted without pencil drawing
by Rosemary Hudson*

We have also painted without any drawing, which takes lots of observation.

While drawing is a good place to start, you don't have to be worried if you aren't the best at it. Some people use a grid system over both their reference and watercolour paper. Others draw a very detailed drawing but most produce a sketch with enough information to paint a good representation of their chosen reference.

Whatever we do we certainly have a fun afternoon and produce artwork that we are proud of.

If you want to see if we have any availability to join us, just give me a call.

Rosemary Seymour Tel: 01404 234122

Men's Shed Ottery

Men's Shed origins are to be found, back in the late nineties, in Australian towns and cities, where it was recognised that men, especially when subject to some sort of life-changing circumstances, often cannot find the right kind of social support.



Some men live alone because their partner has died; others might be the full-time Carer for their partner but may themselves need medical, physical and emotional support. For many men, when retirement comes, it can feel that their personal identity and sense of purpose is lost. The possible resulting loneliness and

isolation can create a negative downward spiral. Bringing men together over a common interest and task, the Men's Shed concept is now one of the fastest growing community organisations in the UK.

The origins of our Men's Shed Ottery are firmly based through the interaction of Ottery Help Scheme and Age UK. In 2016, with a grant from the Norman Family Trust and the offer of a large portacabin from Ottery Town Council, the Shed began with an initial membership of about ten. A year later, with a growing membership, Men's Shed Ottery became a registered charity.

It became apparent that the portacabin wasn't big enough and a purpose-designed, self-built wooden 'shed' was envisioned but grants were difficult to find. Quite unexpectedly, local businessman Stuart Phillips generously offered what was originally the spacious rear of the old bakery in Hind Street. With enthusiasm and much work from the Shedders, they adapted their new home to its fresh purpose. Hard-won funding bought pieces of machinery and essential dust extraction - and what space! Room for a general-purpose woodworking shop and a machine shop, plus a quiet social room for those necessary refreshments.

The social side of the Shed is emphasised. It's often remarked that the main activity, under the arch of that place opposite Sainsbury's car park, is drinking tea and eating biscuits, amidst much banter. Membership has rocketed and the doors are now open four days a week, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, with Saturday - a recently instigated 'Community Shed' where membership includes women. Visitors are welcomed at Hind Street on those days between 10am and 4pm ... and a cuppa is always offered!

Email: mensshedottery@gmail.com Website: mensshedottery.co.uk
Landline: 01404 371678 **Rob Petrie** (Manager)

Opera Nights at the Legion, West Hill



April and May 2024

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.

Thursday 25th April: Verdi's "The Force of Destiny" Another Met Opera production, starring Leontyne Price, Giuseppe Giacomini, Leo Nucci and Bonaldo Giaiotti and conducted by James Levine

Thursday 30th May: Bizet's "Carmen" The renowned Francesco Rossi production filmed in Ronda and Seville with the young Plácido Domingo and the alluring Julia Megennes-Johnson.

Further information from opconpeterclarke@gmail.com

Simply Worship at St Michael's



The next Simply Worship will be on **Thursday 16th May from 7.30pm to 8.30pm**

This will be our sixth evening of guitar-led contemporary worship. We will be tuned up and ready to teach some of the songs from 7pm, before starting officially at 7.30pm for an hour of worship on the theme of Pentecost. All welcome.

If you'd like more details, do email **Jane** at janefoll@aol.com

Kintsugi Jeans

Dear God

I have a pair of what I call kintsugi jeans.

They were starting to fall apart at the knee, so I took some brown string and stitched them very obviously back together, not hiding the repair, but making a feature of it. A little like the Japanese art of Kintsugi, where gold is used to repair broken pottery. Making a feature of the fractures and cracks.



I did it to remind me that you are always with us and in us, no matter how cracked and torn we may feel, shining out through the ragged places of our lives. Places that may not appear tidy or organised or sorted. But you are never afraid or unable to use these things.

For this precious treasure that you have given to us, entrusted to us, this light and power that now shine relentlessly within us, is held in perishable containers, that is, in our weak and chaotic bodies.

So, everyone can see that our glorious power is from God and is not of our own.

2 Corinthians 4 v 7

Thank you so much for this.

Dave Hopwood davehopwood.com

Used with permission

Do you want to be a
RECORD BREAKER AGAIN

If so then come and join the
Record Breaker Holiday Club this Easter

Thursday 4th April 2024
10.00 am - 12.30 pm

United Reformed Church, Jesu Street, OSM

the 06
SUPPORTING AND
EMPOWERING YOUNG LIVES

St. Michael's Churchyard - Sponsor a Tree?



A churchyard should be a welcoming and peaceful place, where we can sit and remember our loved ones. Or maybe to pray and take time to think about our own lives? At St. Michael's, we have created environmentally friendly areas in the churchyard, which encourage insects and wildlife. You may have noticed the Bug Hotel, Log Pile and 'no-mow areas'. If the grass isn't cut, it's amazing how many wildflowers spring up!

You will know that we have an avenue of trees lining the footpath through the centre of the burial ground. This is incomplete with several gaps. We plan to add more trees to complete the avenue. We will be planting blossom and seed bearing varieties to encourage the insects and birds and to complement the seasonal colour of the other trees. Thanks are due to Eileen Perkins and Alan Cook of the West Hill Arboretum Group for their advice on suitable trees.

We would like to offer individuals and families in West Hill the opportunity to sponsor a tree in memory of a loved one, providing you with a natural link to your memories. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Rosemary on HUDSONROSEMARY@HOTMAIL.COM

East Devon Daytime Band

EDDB is an independent, informal group of enthusiastic, friendly and supportive brass players who play and perform popular and traditional brass band arrangements. Do you play a brass instrument? Are you a lapsed player and would like to play again? We would



love to hear from you. All abilities welcome. **EDDB** meets every Wednesday from 10.15am to 12.15pm in Sidford.

Please contact **Trevor Heynes** Chairman, Tel: 01395 708766 or visit the **EDDB** website for further information at: <http://eastdevondaytimeband.weebly.com>

The Unusual Use of an Apple Cake Recipe

In our world today it is safe to assume that people can be divided into three groups: those who believe in a god; those who are undecided; and those who, in spite of good evidence, do not.

The understanding of the majority of those who do believe in a supernatural power is that, to achieve their god's approval, it is necessary for them to live out their lives as though they are signed-up to a university course. They will have to attend lectures, obey certain rules, pass various tests and, at the end of their lives, hope that they have done enough – been good enough – to pass their finals into a happy eternity. It is up to the individual to achieve the pass mark or hope that their god would drop his/her/its standards or turn a blind-eye.

There is only one “religion” which doesn't work this way and, surprisingly, there are even some of its adherents who mistakenly believe that they have to achieve a “degree”.

John Lennox is Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at Oxford and he tells this story to illustrate how Christianity, being a loving, trusting relationship with God, differs from other religions.

When John was younger, he was very attracted to a wonderful girl called Sally. So strong were his feelings, which seemed to be reciprocated, that he wanted to marry her. So, he went out and bought her a present: a



Cookery Book. He gave this to Sally and told her to look at page 153 where there was a recipe for an Apple Cake. *'Thou shalt take 4oz of butter; 8oz of flour; 3 eggs..'* “This is my favourite,” he said, “Bake this and make all the other recipes in the book for the next forty years and, if you achieve a high-enough standard, I will marry you.”

Actually, his story wasn't true. If it had been, I don't think that 56 years later he would be married to Sally and have three children and ten grandchildren. But he tells this story to illustrate the difference between God's love for us in Christianity and how other religions portray their gods.

In Christianity, God's acceptance of us is at the start - when Jesus sacrificed his life for us on the cross - not at the end, with judgement.

We are accepted when we first turn to him because of our awareness of our own imperfections and our realisation that Jesus restored us when he hung on the cross.

Another piece of cake?

Mike Simms

Welcome Café



**West Hill's
Village Cafe**

Friday 26th April
Friday 31st May

**Open from 10.30
in the Church Hall**

Take a break!

www.whmessenger.info



**Contact your local
fundraiser TODAY**
Toni - 07921 845615

**Do you have any
unwanted items
Hospiscare could raffle?**

Arrange a collection, and we
will reuse your items!

Perfume * Chocolates * Gift sets * Candles
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Because every day matters
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Your local hospice

West Hill Garden Club

Thursday 11th April
My Garden at Woodbury
Karen Vanstone

Thursday 9th May
Cutting to Haldon Grange



Meetings start at 7.30 in the Village Hall
Visitors very welcome

www.whgardenclub.weebly.com



BABY & TODDLER GROUP

West Hill Village Hall

Monday from 9.00 to 11.00

Toys - Craft - Snack

Story & Songs

£3 entry (£2 per sibling)

For more information about Pre-School visit:

www.westhillpreschool.com

West Hill Summer Fete



The 2024 West Hill Summer Fete is due to be held on Saturday 29th June.
Plans are underway for another exciting afternoon.

Please save the date and contact ptfa@west-hill-primary.devon.sch.uk if
you are interested in having a stall.

Services at St Michael's



Posies made by Flower Team and Messy Church for Mothering Sunday

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

Apr 7	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Apr 14	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Apr 19	15.45	Messy Church
Apr 21	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
		Followed by the APCM
Apr 28	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
May 5	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
May 12 (Rogation Sunday)	10.00	Morning Worship
May 16	19.30	Simply Worship
May 17	15.45	Messy Church
May 19 (Pentecost)	10.00	No service at West Hill
		Joint OVMC Family Holy
		Communion at Ottery St Mary
May 26	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)