

The Messenger



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



**February - March 2025
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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Delivery Volunteers Wanted

Could you help with delivery of The Messenger? We are desperate for more volunteers. The rounds normally can be done in 30mins to an hour, and all are in West Hill. If you can help, please email Keith and Linda: **kelimalinda65@gmail.com**

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PLEASE NOTE The last date for copy for the April/May edition is
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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



This month brings Valentine's Day, a day for expressing love, maybe a day for a proposal of marriage. I am reminded of the old song, "Love and marriage, love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage."

That in turn reminds me of an old saying, which at first appears to have nothing to do with love: 'Putting the cart before the horse.' I believe, though, that this

saying has everything to do with love when we apply it to God's love. Because, when it comes to God's love for us, many of us put the cart before the horse.

Most of us find it difficult to love another person unconditionally. There are some, perhaps our closest relations - parents, children, grandchildren - who are given a lot of leeway. But I suspect that, much as we would like to think that we love unconditionally, it is hard to do that absolutely.

And for that reason, we do not really believe that another person could love us unconditionally - and maybe we are right to think that. When two people are first attracted to one-another - and maybe thinking of Valentine's gifts and cards - they want to show the best version of themselves to the other.

What do we do when we hear someone talk about God as 'the God of love'? Perhaps we have been told, "God loves you." There are many Christian T-shirts, mugs and fridge-magnets with the slogan, "Smile, Jesus loves you." But what do we imagine it means?

If we are aware of even a few of God's commandments, it is easy to imagine that God would love me only if I obeyed all his commands. Or if we have an inkling that Jesus lived a perfect life and that God is holy, we might imagine that God would love me only if I lived a perfect life too.

Knowing that I do not obey all of God's commands all the time, and knowing that I am far, far from perfect, I might imagine that I need to change first and then come to God hoping that he will love me. This is putting the cart before the horse.

The cart before the horse is to try to change myself first and then to come to God to be loved by him. The old saying works because we know that it is ridiculous to conceive of a cart pulling a horse. It is equally ridiculous to imagine that we can change ourselves in order to earn God's love.

The correct way is to come to God now, just as I am, and know that he loves unconditionally. Being loved by God will certainly lead to change in our lives, but his love takes the lead and change follows, just like the horse and cart.

Mark



Children's Page



Love is ...

On 14th February, we celebrate St Valentine's Day. Often we send cards and gifts to those we love – our family and friends. It's also a perfect time to learn about God's love for everyone.

The time of Lent starts on 5th March. Originally, spring was known as Lent (or the lenten season), which came from the Old English meaning 'to make greater in length', when the days are getting longer. In church, we still use the word Lent to describe the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. It's a time to think about Jesus and try to be more like him by praying and helping others. Sometimes, we give up things we enjoy – like chocolate! However, instead we can show our love to others by helping our families and being generous by donating to charities such as the Ottery Food Bank. What are you going to do? **'Love your neighbour as yourself'**.

Mothering Sunday is on 30th March, which is when we show our love for our mothers. February and March are certainly two months full of love!

Dates for Your Diary

Friday 14th February – Messy Church
(3.45 – 5.30pm)

Friday 21st March – Messy Church
(3.45 – 5.30pm)

Sunday 30th March – Mothering
Sunday Service (10am)



Messy Church is generally for the 3 – 11 year age group but everyone is welcome. At each meeting, we provide tea for the children. We then have lots of fun with storytelling, crafts, games and songs. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

For more information email Rosemary hudsonrosemary@hotmail.com

Romantic Funnies

Q. What do you call two birds in love?

A. Tweethearts!

Q. What did the Prince say to Ariel?

A. "We were mermaid for each other!"

Children's Craft

'Love is ...' Window Mobile



You will need:

Coloured card
Greaseproof paper
Coloured tissue paper
String/ribbon
Scissors
Hole punch
Felt pen
Glue

Instructions:

1. Cut out one large heart and 5 small hearts from the cardboard.
2. Cut out the middle of the large heart to leave a 2cm frame.
3. On a piece of greaseproof paper (same shape and size as the large heart) glue pieces of tissue paper.
4. Stick the 'stained glass' heart onto the back of the large heart frame.
5. On the large heart, write the words '**Love is ...**'
6. On the 5 small hearts, write words that you think describe 'love', such as kind, patient, generous etc.
7. Punch a hole into the top of each heart plus 3 holes around the base of the large heart.
8. Connect the hearts with string/ribbon to make a mobile.
9. Hang the mobile up at the window to see the 'stained glass' effect.

The Children's Society

In 2024, a total of £571.53 was raised for The Children's Society. This amount was achieved through home collection boxes and the Christingle Service, which is held annually with West Hill Primary School. Thank you to everyone for their generosity and support for this well-deserved charity.

NACRE Update

Firstly, we'd like to express our gratitude to you all for your support with the St Michael's Goes Green fundraising. Within a 6 week window we had to raise £10,000 to get a matching grant of £10,000 from the Diocese. Thanks to the hard work of a small committee and the wonderful support of the community we were able to achieve our target, enabling us to start the task of the Narthex and Church Refurbishment (NACRE).

Our first priority was to repair the Narthex roof. This is now complete and we have been fortunate to obtain a Quick-Wins grant from the Diocese funds to cover most of the cost. Now the holiday period is over and everyone is getting back to work, we look forward to starting work on the new lighting, insulation and double glazing in the Narthex.

Pam Johns (Churchwarden)

New Bus Service for West Hill (on Mondays!)

From **Monday 6th January 2025** the service 381 will operate on **Mondays** (excluding bank holidays) between West Hill and Ottery St Mary. This is being funded for a possible two year period using S106 developer contributions. Journeys will operate via West Hill Road, Eastfield and Oak Tree Gardens. This service is operated by Mid Devon Coaches.



Passengers will be able to board and alight at Oak Tree Gardens, Eastfield and throughout West Hill Road to/from Ottery St Mary.

Monday only (Except Public Holidays)

WEST HILL Oak Tree Gardens	0930	-	1110	1210
THORNE FARM WAY Ferguson Close	0940	-	1120	1220
HOSPITAL	0941	-	1121	1221
SAINSBURY'S	0943	-	1123	1223
SQUARE, Stop A	0945	-	1125	1225
LONGDOGS LANE School	0951	-	1131	1231
RIDGEWAY	0959	-	1139	1239
BUTTS ROAD Washbrook View	1003	-	1143	1243
BROAD STREET, Stop B	1010	1050	1150	1250
SAINSBURY'S	-	1052	1152	1252
HOSPITAL	-	1055	1155	1255
THORNE FARM WAY Ferguson Close	-	1056	1156	1256
WEST HILL Oak Tree Gardens	-	1106	1206	RQ

Opera Nights



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

Thursday 27th February: Giuseppe Verdi's "Aida"

A spectacular production from San Francisco Opera starring Luciano Pavarotti as Radames and Margaret Price as Aida.

Thursday 27th March: Donizetti's "The Daughter of the Regiment"

By popular request, a repeat of this hilarious production starring Natalie Dessay and Juan Diego Florez

Thursday 24th April: Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana" and Leoncavallo's "Pagliacci"

Directed by Franco Zeffirelli, this great film, set in Sicily; has all the passion of the Verismo movement with its stories of love, betrayal, justice and violence.

Thursday 29th May: Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance"

A return to this ever popular G & S, originally written to combat problems of copyright in the USA, last shown here in 2016.

Further information from opconpeterclarke@gmail.com

Finding the Way on the Roundabout of Life

The most stressful thing about driving today is the modern mega roundabout. Drivers new and old can stress at the prospect of weaving their way through the congested race of traffic that seems determined to drive you into the wrong lane. The key issue, of course, is that in this manic metallic chariot race you have to find the right road off. That is not always easy with signs of ever greater number and complexity. I think many of us would admit to having gone round such roundabouts several times before, perhaps with a pleading prayer, we veer off onto what we hope was the right road.

This image of a busy and bewildering roundabout strikes me as a powerful picture of life today. Ours is an age of perplexing confusion and troubling uncertainty where it's not easy to give answers to those big decisions about what we should believe and how we should live. On this roundabout of life there's a lot of fast-moving traffic and it's not easy to pick the right road

amongst perplexing and ever-changing signs. One claims it will lead to wealth, another to a fulfilled life and still others to happiness, joy and other appealing destinations. Above each is a claim ‘*This is the way*’.

The phrase ‘the way’ echoes throughout the Bible. Although modern translations prefer to translate it as ‘the road’ or ‘the highway’ we find over 170 references to ‘the way’. In both Testaments it is a word often referring to how we live; indeed, it is not far from the similar English expression ‘the way of life’. It is widespread through the Old Testament and is used in the Psalms, for example Psalm 1:1,6; 27:11; 139:24.

Jesus uses the phrase *the way* about the existence that he calls his followers to. Of the many verses, perhaps the most memorable are in his words to his anxious disciples on the eve of his arrest. There Jesus says, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know *the way* to where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know *the way*?” Jesus said to him, “I am *the way*, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:3-7 ESV). Remarkably, ‘the way’ here is not Jesus’ teaching but *him* personally. These powerful words of the Lord seem to lie behind how, in the very first years of the Christian church, Jesus’ followers referred to themselves as ‘the People of the Way’. This phrase appears in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 9:2; 24:14). As the church spread across the Mediterranean, ‘the Way’ seems to have been replaced by the word ‘*Christiano*’ or ‘Christian’ (Acts 11:26; 26:28). I am inclined to think that the loss of the phrase ‘the People of the Way’ is a pity. It speaks of a whole community confidently belonging to Jesus and committed to following and obeying him, not just on Sunday but throughout the week.

On the roundabout of life one of the less obvious turnings is that of the ‘Way of Life’. It is a narrow road (Matthew 7:13-14) marked by a clear, if small, notice that is easily overlooked by the careless or hasty amidst the larger more illuminated signs.

Why do so few people come off the roundabout of life to take the Way that is Jesus? Let me suggest three possible reasons.

First, there is a recklessness in deciding. Some people have an almost mystical belief that it doesn’t really matter what you do in life, it’s all going to work out. Whatever road you choose, they say, you’ll get to your destination somehow. Well, that’s a very naïve strategy on a real roundabout and an even deadlier one on the roundabout of life. Not all roads lead you home and some lead you to where you really don’t want to go.

Second, there is a reluctance in committing. Some people continually postpone making any decision about which road in life to take. ‘I don’t want to take the wrong direction’, or ‘I need more clarity’ they say and continue circling the roundabout of life. They overlook the fact that to make no decision is, in fact, to

make a decision. Endlessly wavering, they continue in circles until, finally, the fuel of life runs out on them.

Third, there is a refusal in submitting. Some people seem to wilfully and deliberately choose the wrong way. They recognise in some way that to take the 'Way of Life' would be to bow the knee to Christ and that demands too much. One of Britain's top funeral songs is Sinatra's 'My Way', with its defiant words, 'And more, much more than this, I did it my way.' Here it's not hard to think of that grim Bible verse, 'There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death' (Proverbs 14:12 NIV).

Nevertheless, some on the busy roundabout of life do choose the Way of Life, commit themselves to Jesus and take the road of choosing to follow and obey him. They take to heart too that the phrase 'the People of the Way' suggests they do not travel the road alone: they – and we – travel together as part of God's people. Here, there is indeed safety and strength in numbers.

Are you stuck circling the roundabout of life? Look beyond the big glittering signs to that narrow road marked 'Jesus: the Way of Life'. When you have chosen it, stay on it. You have joined the People of the Way and be encouraged: however long the road before you, you are assured of a joyful destination!

Reverend Canon J.John.

www.canonjohn.com *used with permission*

West Hill Pre-School

In December our Pre-School Committee arranged a wonderful Christmas Bazaar with the help of volunteers (staff, relatives and members of the community). It was a fantastic day full of Christmas cheer and even a visit from Father Christmas! Overall the event raised an amazing £2,072 for the Pre-School, which will be used to improve the outdoor equipment, reading corner and purchasing new storage for outdoor gear. A special thank you to everyone who donated, bought tickets, had a stall, and who performed beautifully - we couldn't have done it without you all!

Within Pre-School the children had a busy half term, learning about Harvest, Bonfire night, then the Christmas period began, with practices towards a well-performed Nativity show, and a fun Christmas Party was held in the final week of term.

Pre-School run a successful After School Club Monday - Friday, and also a Breakfast Club which runs on a Monday, Thursday and Friday, opening at 8.00 am, providing breakfast and a drop-off to the Primary School. Please contact natalie.taylor@westhillpreschool.com for further details and availability.

Joanna Bromley

Amazing Grace

Amazing Grace is one of our best-known hymns, giving a powerful message of redemption and forgiveness which reflects the life of its author, John Newton.

Newton was born in London in 1725. His father was a shipping merchant and John became a ship's apprentice aged 11. Sadly, his mother died when he was only six. After a spell in the Navy he became part of the slave trade, transporting slaves from Sierra Leone to the West Indies. Newton gained notoriety as one of the most profane men his captain had ever met. In 1748 the ship he was on hit a fierce storm. Newton, fearing for his life, cried to God for help, promising that if he survived he would devote his life to God's service. Newton survived. In 1750 he married but continued to go to sea. After three more slave trade shipping voyages Newton, at the age of thirty, collapsed and never sailed again. He worked as a customs agent from 1756 and began to teach himself Latin, Greek and theology. With his wife he engaged in the life of the local church. In 1764 he was offered a curacy at Olney, Bucks. The lyrics (but not the familiar tune) to Amazing Grace were written in 1772, probably for use in a prayer meeting, where the words would be chanted. After he left Olney in the 1780's Newton became an ardent abolitionist, joining forces with William Wilberforce.

The words for Amazing Grace are based on 1 Chronicles 17:16-17 "Who am I Lord God and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?" The phrase "I once was lost but now am found" comes from the story of the prodigal son. The words "Was blind, but now I see" are from the story of Jesus healing a blind man. In the 19th century the hymn became popular in the USA, often sung at evangelical rallies. Today's familiar tune emerged in the mid-1840's in America. What we now have as the final verse "When we've been there ten thousand years...." was not written by Newton but first appeared in the anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Amazing Grace has been sung and recorded by many artists, including Mahalia Jackson, Judy Collins, Joan Baez, Arlo Guthrie, Aretha Franklin, Rod Stewart and Johnny Cash. Not many hymns have attracted such a star-studded celebrity list.

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound; That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found, Was blind but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear, The hour I first believed.*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.*

*When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise, Than when we first began.*

Hospiscare News

The role of Hospiscare's clinical team has changed over the years, but especially in the last year due to the financial challenges we now face.

It's been heartbreaking to see measures like the reduction of beds from 12 to 8 on our specialist ward and changes to the care we can give in our community – access to our hospice's vital care is being reduced because of rising costs and lack of fair government funding.

Despite these real challenges, we're working hard to ensure we're still there for people facing terminal illness when they need us, providing outstanding care. We can't lengthen someone's life but by truly listening to the patients and their families we can give expert, compassionate care tailored to them, and make sure the days they have left together are the very best days possible.

Any further reduction in our services would leave people unable to access the care they deserve, and so desperately need.

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, so thank you for your continued support and being by our side for the last 40 years caring for those in your community.

Fundraising News!!

It's been a very busy few months, lots of activities planned and lots happening in the coming months.

Thank you to all who braved the weather at the Festive Cheer event in Ottery. It was a slow start but soon picked up with lots of folk choosing Christmas bargains at our Bazaar in Hind Street. An incredible £1,200 was raised.

Thank you to all who attended the Grand Christmas Fair at the Village Hall on Saturday 30th November – it was a wonderful event with everyone getting into the Festive Spirit. Bacon rolls and homemade soup were on offer as well as handmade Christmas cakes, homemade chutneys, Christmas gifts and craft items. Just over £3,000 was raised. This year's Christmas Fair at West Hill will be held on Saturday November 29th – if you are interested in booking a table please contact Kim on thirza58@hotmail.com. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped on the day, with a special mention to Tricia and Ian Heard for their amazing support and help over the last few years.

We have a number of fundraising events coming up this year including the West Hill Quiz on Saturday 15th February - for more information call Steve Percy on 01404 811335.

We have a new event being organised by local supporter Melvin Trayburn

– a Cèilidh night, on March 1st, to be held at the Institute, Ottery St Mary. For more details please contact Melvin – 01404 814990.

Steve's monthly Bingo is on the 2nd Sunday of each month, at Ottery St Mary Football Club, doors open at 6.30 pm – eyes down at 7.45 pm.

Bumper Plant Sale Saturday May 17th. The Institute, Ottery – please call Pam Joy for more information on 01404 813820. If you are able to grow/donate plants, that would be helpful.

If you would like to know more about Hospiscare please telephone Toni (Area Fundraiser) 01392 688067/07921 845615

Toni Hiscocks

Ottery St. Mary Floral Art Club

Although the Club doesn't meet during the colder months, some members still meet informally for a coffee catch up on the third Tuesday of the month at 11.00 am at Otter Nurseries – for any members reading this, that will be Tuesday 18th February this year and hopefully several of you will be able to make it.

Our 2025 Club nights begin on Tuesday 18th March when we will be joined by Denise Jones from Dorset, with her demonstration entitled "Supermarket Sweep". With over 30 years of experience in the floral industry and her own floristry business, Denise is also a NAFAS Area Demonstrator and has an uncanny knack for creating captivating, out-of-the-box designs. She says, "it's more than just arranging flowers; it's about weaving a tapestry of colour, texture, and emotion". We can't wait to see the designs she creates for us – all of which will be raffled at the end of the evening to be taken home and enjoyed by the lucky winners!

Once again, Angie, our Programme Secretary has worked hard on the 2025 schedule and, as well as some great demonstrators we also have lined up a workshop entitled "Pot Luck" in April, garden visit in June and our "Lonely Bouquet" initiative, also in June.

We are a friendly group who share an interest in, and love of, working with flowers, foliage, and other elements to create something to be enjoyed at home or to give as gifts to others. Our Club nights are very relaxed and visitors and new members are always welcome to come along and enjoy the evening with us. Why not join us for Denise's demonstration at **West Hill Village Hall, Beech Park, West Hill, EX11 1UQ – 7.30 pm on Tuesday 18th March** to see for yourself?

A reminder to members that the title for the competition in March is "Easter Ring" plus subs (and Flower Arranger monies if relevant to you) will be due at the meeting please.

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

West Hill Parish Council

As we enter another new year the Parish Council is looking forward to another busy year. Our work programme will include our normal routine activities and some projects that we wish to undertake.

We believe that in the coming year a major part of our routine work will be to respond on behalf of the community to planning applications affecting the village and the surrounding area. The Government has made the construction of new housing a major part of its programme and this will put pressure on the local planning authorities to facilitate this development. Whilst we all understand that there is a need for new housing it is important to ensure that this is accomplished without loss to the scenic beauty or the productive farmland of our area. It is also important that additional housing is accompanied by the necessary supporting infrastructure of schools, shops, medical and dental facilities, recreational facilities and all the other things that make the difference between a dormitory housing estate and a community. It is also important that any new development does not have a detrimental impact on existing properties through increased road traffic, surface water flooding or putting additional strains on the already stretched water and sewage systems.

To help us in this we have set up a working group to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for West Hill. This was one of the objectives when West Hill Parish Council was established and we separated from Ottery St Mary Town Council. An approved Neighbourhood Plan for West Hill will give us greater influence over planning decisions that affect our village and is probably the most important project that we will start this year. We are fortunate that we have some very talented residents who have volunteered to join this working group and I thank them for offering to devote the time and energy that this important work demands. It is a large task and will not be completed this year, but we all understand both the time pressure for the plan and also the importance of getting the great amount of detail right.

A project that we really want to complete this year is the Village Hall Footpath. This has been going on for some time, but physical work has now actually begun and the contractors were on site on 13th December to start the preparatory works and dig the first trenches. We now have to wait to get authority from the Highways Department to paint safety markings on the road by the entry and exit of the footpath and move some road signs. Once we have this approval we can break through the hedge and complete the construction.

Another important project for us this year is to develop a long term strategy for the playpark. The playpark is a popular and well used facility but it needs care and attention to keep it in good condition and safe for children to use.

The strategy will include a plan for regular maintenance together with a programme of replacement and development of the play equipment so parents of small children can look forward to future years of a safe and exciting facility for youngsters.

I am sure there are many other things that the residents would like the Parish Council to address. If there is something that you consider to be important that we should be doing then please let us know. You can e-mail the Council or come along to a meeting and talk about it. Parish Council Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month in the Village Hall and there is an opportunity for residents to be invited to address the Council with your thoughts or questions. We look forward to seeing you.

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

Email: clerk@westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Francis Pullman, Chairman, West Hill Parish Council

West Hill Garden Club

As 2025 settles in we are already enjoying our new programme of speakers, demonstrations and outings.

On **Thursday 13th February at 7.30pm in the Main Hall at the Village Hall** we have booked **Hugo Bugg, a Chelsea Gold Winning Medallist to give a Presentation on Garden Design**. Hugo is a highly acclaimed designer with a wealth of experience and the evening promises to have ideas for all types of gardens as well as all shapes and sizes of gardens. We hope to be joined by a wider public with tickets priced at £5 each, with no charge for West Hill Garden Club members. You will be most welcome to join us and get some inspiration. To reserve your seat please contact Pauline Wade (01404 813191)

The following month our meeting will be on **Thursday 13th March at 7.30pm (upstairs) in the Village Hall** when the subject will be **Growing Vegetables by Saul Walker**. With seeds ready to be purchased, the days getting longer, and the soil starting to get warmer, it should be the perfect time for both experienced and new vegetable growers to pick up some tips in order to enjoy the Grow your Own experience.

Note for members growing Daffodil Bulbs for our annual competition – please bring your entry to the March meeting for judging when hopefully the bulbs will all be in flower.

We always welcome new members and visitors to our meetings – if you have any enquiry please contact our Chairman (Sheila Gillam 01404 814074) or Secretary (Pauline Wade 01404 813191) who will be happy to help you.

Monica Highnam

Myth Buster Part 2

Myth	Reference	Reality
If you sin or fail God after becoming a Christian you will never be accepted by God again.	1 John 3, 9	Not true. We all fail as Christians most days. Humbly repent and ask God to help you. God's forgiveness never ends.
We must read the Bible every day.	Joshua 8, 34-35; Psalm 105,4; Matthew 6,33; Hebrews 11,6	Not true. We should read the Bible to learn about God. If we don't it is difficult to know God and find understanding and peace.
There is no place for me in the church.	1 Corinthians 12, 1-26; Rom 11,22-23; Rom 12,3-8	Not true. We are all equal and unique before God. All differing gifts are valuable and wonderful.
Salvation or becoming a Christian depends on us doing good works.	Romans 5,1-5	Not true. Salvation is the gift of God through believing in his son Jesus. However, you will grow to love others.
The Bible is an old book no longer relevant to today	Psalm 119, 105; John 8,31-32; Hebrews 4, 11-12	Not true. The Bible is totally relevant today for all aspects of life.
God does not want us to enjoy or celebrate life	John 10, 9-11	Not true. God wants us to have life in abundance.
God does not speak to us	John 10,27-30	Not true. God speaks to us through each other, through prayer and through the bible and through our surroundings.
We all have plenty of time to decide about God	Matthew 7,7; 2 Peter 3,10	Not true. None of us know what is about to happen or how long we will live.

The Royal British Legion West Hill

Movie Nights

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

3 rd Feb	Thelma, 2024
10 th Feb	Shirley Valentine, 1989
17 th Feb	The Last King of Scotland, 2006
24 th Feb	The Miracle Club, 2023
3 rd Mar	Is Anybody There?, 2009
10 th Mar	The Theory of Everything, 2014
17 th Mar	The Way, 2010
24 th Mar	Rabbit Proof Fence, 2002
31 st Mar	Muriel's Wedding, 1994

Bingo Nights (Doors open 6.30 pm)

Sundays 2nd & 16th February and 2nd, 16th & 30th March

Jazz (with City Steam Jazz Band)

Sundays 9th February & 9th March (3.00 to 5.30 pm)

Crafters' Evenings: Tuesdays 4th February & 4th March (from 7.00 pm)

Dads' Nights (from 8.00 pm)

Friday 14th February
Friday 14th March

Mums' Nights (from 7.00 pm)

Friday 28th February
Friday 28th March

Opera Nights (7.00 pm for 7.30 pm): see Page 8 for details

Other Events

22nd February **Band Night - Lonesome Saddles** from 7.00 pm

6th March **Rotary Quiz** from 7.30 pm

Coldharbour Field Kitchen Supper Club

Friday 14th Feb Valentine's Dinner from 7.00 pm; **Friday 21st Feb** TBA

6 Nations Rugby

1st Feb 4.45 pm - Ireland v England

15th Mar 2.15 pm Italy v Ireland

8th Feb 4.45 pm - England v France

15th Mar 4.45 pm Wales v England

22nd Feb 4.45 pm - England v
Scotland

15th Mar 8.00 pm France v Scotland

A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

I wonder what 2025 holds in store for us. We live in such uncertain times with a struggling economy and although West Hill and East Devon are far from the spheres of influence in our country, we will not be exempt from any effects. You will see from Jess Bailey's Councillor's Column that significant changes are on the horizon for our local government structures. All of us in our village look with real interest and often some concern at the number of additional houses planned for West Hill. What will happen to our NHS which is already struggling and can the sewage system cope!! Thank goodness we live on a hill.

Can our primary and secondary schools cope with a major increase in demand? They are all under huge funding and other pressures and I believe there is real need for us all to do what we can to help and support our schools. Their pupils are our future.

I also wonder about how our own vulnerable elderly folk are coping in these challenging times. Some will feel lonely and often isolated albeit in a wealthy area. Are there any of our neighbours we could look out for? Perhaps we can be watchful and if concerned alert local organisations who could help, including the Ottery Help Scheme, our local Parish Council or St Michael's Church.

In my last letter I mentioned the needs of several local organisations which need additional trustees or helpers. As far as I know the response has not been great. There is still time to respond.

Further afield we see huge changes on the horizon. By the time you read this Donald Trump will have been installed as US President. Germany is probably heading towards new leadership and many other parts of the world are unstable. Just think of Ukraine, Gaza and parts of Africa plus the world-wide impact of climate change. Add in AI and you have a recipe for great good sadly accompanied by the prospect of great bad.

Just to lift your spirits, Nostradamus predicted that in 2025 a large asteroid would approach Earth very closely.

So hence my beginning this article writing about uncertain times laying ahead. I close by asserting my belief that we can all make a positive difference in our community by caring for and helping each other through what lies ahead. We are so blessed to be living in this beautiful village and it is incumbent upon us to do all we can to make it even better for all its residents.

With every good wish for 2025.

Mac Dick

Fake News - Who Can We Trust?

On Saturday November 9th fifteen of the seventeen people who had done a recent Bible Study course at St Michael's met for a Day Away at St Luke's Church Hall in Newton Poppleford. It was a time to socialize, enjoy a meal together and gather our thoughts about what we had studied. The course had been based on Mark's Gospel, the second book of the New Testament. Its opening sentence claims that Jesus is the Son of God.

Through the course, both in the Bible text and in the study notes, there were many indications that Mark's account is reliable. For instance, Mark often refers to events and prophecies in the Old Testament which show that Jesus is part of a much bigger picture. A first-century non-Christian historian named Josephus supported Mark's account of the events of Jesus' life; another, Papias, a Bishop of Asia Minor wrote of Mark's "great accuracy"; and importantly there's the fact that Mark knew Peter. Peter had worked closely with Jesus for three years, had witnessed all that Jesus said and did and had been commissioned by Jesus as an Apostle, to make Him known. Mark would have valued Peter's first-hand knowledge when recording his Gospel account.

On the course, several people who were new to Bible Study appreciated being able, in small groups of four or five, to ask questions, express their views, and through others in the group, discover a new understanding of what Christianity is, and what it is not. By contrast, one person who has long experience of our studies commented "It always surprises me, though it shouldn't, that every time we discuss the story of our faith, we discover more about Jesus and our relationship with him." Another said "The study material was familiar, but the course made me think about it in a new way". Each participant of the course will have made his or her own decision. There will be a follow-up course which everyone reading this is welcome to join, to discover or to affirm that in a world where there are so many deliberate lies, much unfounded speculation and fake news, we have a document in which we can find truth and whose authors we can trust.

Ann Turner

West Hill Art Group

West Hill Art Group sounds such a dull name but trust me it is anything but. Ten years ago in February we held our very first session. I had already recruited ten members from the telegraph pole advertising system. I was terrified as I was organising the running of the group.

I searched high and low for a teacher but they were costly. I had visions of the group not being expensive for members, just the hall hire, refreshments and if we could manage it paper, paints and brushes. Having had a

background in art, you guessed it, I became the teacher.

We still have 3 of the original members who we value greatly. Any time a member moves or leaves us the other members usually have a recommendation or know someone who has a friend wanting to join us.

We now have 14 members which is our perfect number. Everyone is always willing to help with set up, forgotten equipment and to offer encouragement and friendship.

Boy, have we had some characters and had lots of fun. We have some who paint in very exact styles and some whose work is free with lots of creative colour, some whose work is quiet and gentle and others strong and bold.

We have members who have been jokers, others tell it as it is, some talk a lot while others are in their own world of painting. Everyone has been kind and friendly. There are sessions that will never be forgotten: the lady who brought in a dozen fresh mackerel on a patterned plate for everyone to paint. I leave you to imagine the smell on a warm spring day and apologise to the group that followed us that day.

Each member has a different style and favourite subject to paint, but all try everything as well as take onboard the techniques that I introduce them to.

I hope that you have an insight now to what goes on in the Beech room of the Village Hall on Monday afternoons and thank you for allowing me to reminisce on our tenth anniversary. Normal format of pictures and tips next time.

I would like to thank Sarah and Mike, hall booking and maintenance, and the cleaning team who help our sessions run without any hiccups.

Rosemary Seymour 01404 234122

West Hill Village Hall

Registered Charity No. 1160370

Due to the Messenger's publication date, we will already be one month into the New Year before you read this article; nevertheless the Trustees of West Hill Village Hall wish to express their best wishes for 2025 to all users of the hall and to all local residents of West Hill and the surrounding area.

At the end of 2024 we had a very busy festive season with Christmas events enjoyed by local children and adults alike. I would like to thank Mike Hemming and Tony Fryer for erecting our Christmas tree and Sarah Woolfries for dressing it so beautifully.

A big thank you goes out to all the volunteers who assisted us with erecting and dismantling the marquee and stage throughout 2024 and we trust you are all willing and able to support us in 2025.

In the autumn West Hill Pre-School approached the Village Hall trustees to request that we raise the height of the fence surrounding the play area used

by the children. The request was made because of safety concerns of parents and staff that children could be lifted out of the play area by reaching over the fence from outside the play area.

We obtained quotations and had a small sample of the raised fence erected to allow the Pre-School staff to approve our proposal.

We obtained two generous grants towards the cost of the work, one from West Hill Parish Council and one from Jess Bailey's DCC Locality fund; we wish to thank both of them. The balance of the cost was covered by Pre-School. The fence was erected on 14th and 15th December.

Over the past year we have been seeking additional Trustees because, without a strong committee, we will not be in a position to provide the current level of facilities at the Village Hall or maintain the level of services we provide for users of the hall. So once again I am asking for community minded residents to contact me (**colinveale@btinternet.com** tel: 01404 813830), Sarah Woolfries or any trustee to let us know if you would consider becoming a Trustee.

Please visit our website <https://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 am and 5.30 pm.

You may also contact Sarah by e-mail on **bookings@westhillvillagehall**

Colin Veale, Chairman, Village Hall Trustees

Welcome Café in 2025

Welcome to our Cafés in 2025. Your Messenger might even arrive through your letter box in time to remind you that there will be one in the Church Hall at 10.30 am on 31st January. Hope you are free to come and join us!

Great news on the continuation of our regular Cafés on the last Friday of each month. I am delighted to let you know that we have a new team of organisers who will be keeping them running. Thank you to Christine (Smith), Pam (Baker), Barbara (Bennett), Celia (Barron) and Sue (Lock) who have kindly agreed to form the team.

Christine will be the new Co-ordinator and Pam will be the Deputy. If you are not already involved with the Cafés and would like to be, either by making an occasional cake, or helping in the kitchen, please contact **westhillpcc@gmail.com** and your message will be forwarded to them.

Please make a note in your diary for the last Friday of the month. We would love to see you - the homemade cakes are delicious and the fellowship and chat are warm and welcoming.

Sue Bonnie

West Hill Arboretum Group

Our next community walk will be in the spring on Saturday April 12th 2025. Watch this space for details.

As I write this, Storm Bert has just passed through, causing some devastation with our trees. I should like to remind residents with large conifers in their gardens to regularly inspect for signs of die back or disease. If you see changes concerning you, get a tree specialist, or EDDC if on roadside, to inspect them. If work needs doing, TPO trees need permission from East Devon District Council. A form is available on-line for you to apply, there are no fees. To help retain our beautiful woodland heritage please consider replacing any tree lost with a native (indigenous) species.

Highlight on Scots Pine - *Pinus sylvestris*

A tree that grows widely in West Hill and familiar to us all.

This was the sole European pine to survive the Ice Ages. It has a wide distribution from Scotland to Siberia. It is a widely used softwood in the building trade; also known as Baltic Fir, red deal, and Archangel Fir. The timber is cream/orange, with a unique pinkish/orange flaking bark in the upper reaches of the tree.

It can grow up to 40m high and has beautiful blue green paired needles with ovoid light brown cones when mature. A very attractive tree for us to enjoy in West Hill.

Eileen Perkins, Tree Warden, Tel 01404 815905)

Alan Cook alan.b.cook@btinternet.com

West Hill Men's Supper Club

We meet on the second Monday of each month in the Narthex, which is attached to St Michael's Church in Bendarroch Road. We invite a wide variety of great speakers with subjects encompassing science, the arts, history, sport and a whole range of life experiences.

Our evenings start at 6.45 pm for drinks followed by a two course dinner provided by a local caterer. The meal is then followed by a talk. The current charge is £25 per person which includes drinks, meal and speaker costs.

The talks arranged for the next three months:

10th Feb: "Inside Out" – 30 years a Prison Chaplain

10th Mar: The Yeoman of the Guard

7th Apr: Exeter Cathedral, Current Works

If you think you might like to come along please do contact us. All are most welcome, so if you are interested in joining us for a taster evening or finding out more about us, please contact:

John Rowland on 01404 813027 or j.v.rowland@btinternet.com

Birds of West Hill

For many, bird song is captivating and beguiling. As we move into early spring, birds detect the longer daylight hours and start a new cycle of breeding activity. Singing resident birds include the Robin, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Wren, Great Tit and Blue Tit amongst others. Perhaps take time just to listen to their fascinating song. Don't worry if you don't know the species or indeed if you can see it – just be drawn in by the beauty of their song. The writer of Ecclesiastes wrote about the power of bird song “Curse not the king ... for a bird of the air will carry the voice, and that which has wings shall tell the matter”. The prime function of bird song is to establish territory. Males sing to attract a mate, with females selecting a mate based on the strength and complexity of song (and of course how good looking they are). Females can identify the slight variations between each male's song. Tawny Owls engage in duetting where the tu-wit hoot is made by the female and the to-woo is the male's response.

Bird song is complex. Sound is generated by a syrinx located in the trachea which produces two separate frequencies at the same time enabling them to move seamlessly between high and low notes. The loudness of bird song is aided by air sacs linked to the respiratory system.



Yellowhammer

Blackbirds have a repertoire of about 100 phrases and the Song Thrush up to 300! It's estimated that a Wren sings 12 million notes a year! Practice does make perfect and young birds spend time refining their song, initially learning the species song from their father. Mature birds develop a more complex song. Several birds have the power of mimicry. Starlings are good mimics reproducing other birds' songs as well as traffic noise and phone rings. Dialects exist amongst birds with local populations developing their own specific song variation to create an identifiable dialect. For some birds we have converted their song into words – like the Yellowhammer above.

In the 1st century BC Lucretius wrote “Through all the woods they heard the charming noise, Of chirping birds and tried to frame their voice and imitate. Thus birds instructed man and taught him songs before his art began”.

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.

Geoff Green

West Hill Primary School

Happy New Year to you all.

Thank you to everyone from St Michael's for their support with our Christingle service on 19th December. It was lovely to have Mac Dick leading the service again this year after his ill health.

As we broke up on Friday 20th December, school returned on Monday 6th January 2025 with staff attending a teacher training day to renew their First Aid training. Pupils returned the following day on Tuesday 7th January and it was lovely to see everyone again after the 2-week Christmas break.

At West Hill Primary School our vision is to be a school where everyone shines and we achieve this through our six termly values: Achievement, Happiness, Friendship, Respect, Responsibility and Co-operation. This half term our half termly value is Achievement and, in our weekly assemblies, we will be introducing achievement, looking at achievement in school, considering achievement out of school and studying the achievement of famous people.

The Spring term is always much shorter than the Autumn term but nevertheless, we have many exciting activities planned:

- Dance lessons for all classes (every Friday in the Village Hall).
- Year 3 swimming lessons on Thursdays (10 lessons from 16th January to 3rd April).
- Year 6 residential at PGL Osmington Bay, Weymouth for 4 nights (3rd to 7th March).
- World Book Day 12th March with an author visit from Korky Paul. Pupils and staff always dress up as a book character and spend the day immersing themselves in book related activities.
- British Science week (10th to 14th March).
- Red Nose Day (21st March).
- Class assemblies for Year 1 (26th March) and Year 2 (5th February).
- Parents' evenings (25th and 27th February).
- Year 3 trip to RAMM, Exeter (6th March).
- Easter service by Year 3 and Year 4 pupils (2nd April).

Before we know, it will be the end of term and Easter will be here! It's scary how the Easter eggs have already started to appear in the shops and it's only the first week of January!

As we move into the spring, hopefully we will start to get some lighter mornings and warmer weather to enjoy.

Until next time, take care.

Cheryl Boulton, Headteacher

Tree Planting & Blessing at St Michael's Church



On November 30th, during National Tree Week, four native trees were planted in St Michael's churchyard. They have been generously sponsored by local families and planted in memory of loved ones or in thanksgiving for family life.

The tree planting ceremony and blessing was led by Rev. Mac Dick. This was followed by a cream tea for 25 family members.



The Hawthorn and Rowan varieties complete the avenue of blossom trees alongside the path. With welcome advice from West Hill Arboretum Group, the trees were chosen for their flowers and berries, which will attract birds and insects.



In its role as an Eco Church, St Michael's aims to continue to enhance the churchyard and create a habitat for more wildlife, whilst maintaining a tranquil place for all to share.

Rosemary Hudson

West Hill Women's Group



As one door closes, another door opens

Stepping into 2025, we have to remind ourselves that we are now in the second quarter of this decade. For many it seems that Millenium celebrations - remember the threat of the Millenium Bug to computers - was only yesterday.

Time passes fast!

The West Hill Women's Group continues to attract new members, bucking the trend for many similar groups. Perhaps it's the neighbourliness, as all members are from West Hill, perhaps it is the speakers, perhaps it's the outings and other social events, but most of all it's the friendships offered.

In February we have the intriguing mystery of whether Jane Austen's aunt was a shoplifter. David Pugsley will reveal all... guilty or not guilty?

March's speaker will be of particular interest to local people as Andrea Cook adopts the role of a Victorian Schoolmistress, describing life in our local Village Schools ... fascinating.

Held at the RBL in School Lane, membership is open to West Hill women with an annual fee of £15. We start at 10.00am with refreshments, for a 10.30 talk. You are most welcome to come along as a guest to sample three meetings, at a cost of £3.00 per meeting - this also includes refreshments.

For further details please contact:

Jane Overthrow, Chair, WHWG on 07867975631 or toverthrow@aol.com

Councillor's Column



I would like to wish everyone in West Hill a very Happy New Year.

Windmill Lane planning application

The planning committee at EDDC deferred its decision in October on the application for 34 houses on Windmill Lane because it was concerned about the density of the proposal. I am disappointed to note that there has not been a significant reduction in the number of proposed houses in the latest iteration of

the application – the number of houses has only been reduced by three. It is likely that this application will go back to committee to be decided on 25th February.

Devolution

The winds of change are blowing through local government, and it is not yet clear what this is going to mean for us.

I think we were all expecting devolution in some form from the new government, but few expected the scrapping of district councils envisaged by the White Paper published just before Christmas on 16th December 2024. It seems that the government intend to replace district and county councils with unitary authorities of around 500,000 people.

There are undoubtedly issues with the two-tier district and county system, but I think the district councils do play a really important role because the electoral wards are small in size and the overall geographic area of the district is small which enables effective decisions made at a relatively local level. Creating councils of 500,000 people would be a very different prospect and to put it in context, the whole of Devon has a population of around 1million people.

County Council elections across the country are due to be held on 1st May this year but there is the possibility that some might not go ahead pending the creation of a new authority or new authorities. Gloucester County Council for instance is applying to the government to postpone its elections. At the time of writing (5th January 2025) it's too early to say how this is all going to pan out, and various meetings are due to take place later this week after which matters may become clearer.

Local Plan

The East Devon Local Plan is due to go out to public consultation later this month – this is called the Regulation 19 consultation and it is the final consultation before the plan goes to formal examination by a Planning Inspector. It is still a long way off from being formally adopted by the Council as this is not likely to be before the end of late 2026 or early 2027.

With the prospect of district councils being scrapped and possibly no longer in existence in late 2026, it raises the question of what will happen to all the work that has been done to-date on the local plan.

Fines for schools

I was very shocked to learn that Devon County Council are proposing to introduce a £21,000 fine for schools each time they exclude a pupil. Devon schools are already amongst the least well funded in the entire country and yet DCC is potentially putting head teachers in an impossible position where they cannot afford to exclude pupils. DCC are suggesting that this is a way of improving pupil inclusion. Unfortunately, I do not believe that it is anything of the sort. DCC have a huge hole in their budget and they hope that they will raise £5 million from their exclusion fines. I will be pressing for this awful proposal to be scrapped.

Cllr Jess Bailey

Tel: 01404 814056 Email: Jessica.Bailey@devon.org.uk

Ottery Choral Society



The Ottery Choral Society has had a very busy winter season. This was the year of our biannual "Classics Galore!" concert, which was held on November 9th to a sell-out audience in the University of Exeter Great Hall. Every other year the choir, together with the Exeter St. David's Players and other singers, join forces with our good friends the Lymptone Band, with a

specially convened Classics Galore orchestra, to put on a spectacular night of popular classical music. The aim is to raise funds for the FORCE cancer charity. This year we were joined by the fabulous soloist Cheryl Enever, and the evening was admirably hosted by Victoria Graham. Through the efforts and generosity of everyone who gave their time and talents to this wonderful and much needed charity, we raised the extraordinary sum of £23,500.

We also started rehearsals in the autumn for our Christmas concert, singing Poulenc's "Gloria", a selection of other popular classics, and some much-loved carols. Our Christmas concert was held on December 14th at Ottery Parish Church, with a reprise for those who needed still more carols at Otter Nurseries the following Wednesday. The collections for these events raised £360 for Hospiscare.

We are now well into rehearsals for our Spring concert on April 12th 2025, where we will be performing Rossini's "Petite Messe Solennelle". This is a piece that really plays to the choir's strengths - full-throated choruses and soaring solos and beautiful tunes that you will hum afterwards and wonder where they came from. We're loving rehearsals, and we are really excited for you to hear it. Tickets will go on sale in March, so keep an eye out on social media and for our posters. **Peter Hudson osmcs@hotmail.co.uk**

Ottery St Mary Heritage Society and Museum

Registered charity CIO no. 1179598

Our Museum is now shut for the Winter and will reopen at Easter. Please check our website **www.otteryheritage.org.uk** for opening times as we regularly keep this up to date.

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 £3.00 payable at the door. Please check our website for any changes, but the schedule is as follows:

Tuesday 18th February at 7.30 pm: "Hunting the Hunter" (The Story of the only US Navy Airbase in Europe) by Brian Fernley

Centred on RAF Dunkeswell, this talk features the Battle of the Atlantic, the only battle that continued throughout the 6 years of the WW2 conflict. One

of those 'hunting' was Joe Kennedy, brother of JFK. We feature President Kennedy, only days before his death, reminiscing about his brother's time in the Navy.

Tuesday 18th March at 7.30 pm: West Country Mining – The Reality Behind the Myth or “Poldark With His Shirt On” by Ken McKechnie

A geologist turned novelist, Ken's illustrated talk centres on the lives of West Country miners. It is illuminated by his own experiences of 35 years mining metals, gold and diamonds in the remotest regions of the world. The men and women he worked with inspired him to take up writing his two books 'The Boy in the Dark' set in mid 19th century Cornwall and 'Cousin Jack' set in South Australia.

All enquiries, including annual membership (£20.00 single, £27.50 joint), to **Lynda Murlewski**, Hon. Secretary: otteryheritage@gmail.com

Otter Valley Rotary

December began with a very interesting talk from the Devon Air Ambulance charity who do such a fantastic job attending a variety of incidents across the County. Our Christmas events then started in earnest and Father Christmas proved very popular when he visited Ottery Library with gifts donated by Otter Valley Rotary.

On behalf of Rotary a couple of members decorated a very festive Christmas tree for the annual Tree Festival in St Mary's Church, Ottery St Mary, and later in the month we donated children's presents to Ottery Larder which were gratefully received.

Our annual President's Christmas Dinner at the Tumbling Weir Hotel was very well attended by members, partners and guests. We enjoyed a Quiz and a Raffle as well as lots of conversation and a delicious meal. Former OVR President Max Barnish presented a banner from his current Club, the London Rotary Passport Club, to OVR current President Richard Thomas, who reciprocated the gift.

Shortly before Christmas we undertook charity collections outside Morrisons, West Hill and Tesco, Honiton through which we raised a total of £950. In addition we were delighted to host our annual Christmas Carols concert, with Ottery Silver Band and Father Christmas, at the Royal British Legion hall. Ken Chun, on behalf of Rotary, presented a cheque of £300 to the Silver



Band towards their ongoing costs (see photo). A big thank you to all who attended, and to those who made mince pies, sausage rolls and mulled

wine, all of which were greatly enjoyed! We raised £175 from donations at this event, which will all be put towards local organisations and charities.

Otter Valley Rotary meet on a Tuesday evening at 7.00 pm at the Tumbling Weir Hotel for a meal, often followed by a speaker and fellowship. If you'd like to find out more about joining us please contact our Secretary, **David Incoll**, at d.incoll@live.co.uk

Lutra Vallis Ladies' Probus Club

New Venue, New Format, Same Friendly Members!

In October 2024, we moved to our new venue at the Royal British Legion Club in West Hill. Our meetings are now held in the afternoon, the second Tuesday of the month. Starting at 2.00pm, we have varied, interesting speakers, who give talks on wide ranging topics. We have linked up with "Mary & her Catering Team" from the Hospiscare Charity, who provide us with (an optional) delicious Afternoon Tea after the talk. For this they charge a nominal sum, all proceeds going to that charity. So far this has been extremely popular with our members and financially successful for Hospiscare: including October & November, approximately £650 was raised. What's not to like?! A win - win situation for all concerned.

In October 2024 our extremely interesting speaker was Lynne Carrol; her topic, "Early Settlers in Australia".

November's speaker was Maggie Duffy. A fun event: much hilarity and trying on of "fascinators" ensued!

2025 Programme

In January our speaker was Caroline Hemmings who gave us "An Uplifting Experience" as her talk was on DeBora lingerie!

February 11th Ken Atherton is our speaker. His talk is titled "Have you seen my little Rubber Ducky?" an intriguing title....."Oceans" – a clue??

March 11th our AGM. Once again, we are delighted to announce the return of our extremely popular speaker, the Rt. Hon. Ann Widdecombe DSG. This time her talk concerns her writing and book publishing career. Doubtless another amusing and fascinating presentation, with her usual good humour and wit. A champagne and cream tea follows after the meeting.

April 8th Keith Hayman is our speaker. His talk is titled "Medical Detection Dogs". How dogs are being trained to detect serious illness, such as cancer, through their wonderfully acute sense of smell.

If you would like to join us and participate in all our lively club's activities, then please contact: our Chairman **Trisha Fryer** on 01404 813408 or trisha.fryer@hotmail.co.uk or our Membership Secretary Monica George on 07368546944 or monicageorge895@aol.com



Tea & Toast & Toys on Fridays



We meet every Friday from 8.45-10.00 am, upstairs in the Village Hall, during term time.



Toddlers, Pre-Schoolers, Mums, Dads, Grandparents and Carers can enjoy a chat and a cup of tea or coffee, whilst the little ones play with the toys. For the children, there is squash or milk and buttered toast with jam/marmalade/ Marmite.

The group is growing and we see new faces every week. Do come along - you don't have to have a small person in tow!

All welcome!

Please give us a ring if you want to know more: **Pam** (814096) **Rosemary** (234578)

Welcome Café



**West Hill's
Village Cafe**

Friday 28th February
Friday 28th March

The last Friday of every month

Open at 10.30am in the Church Hall

Take a break!

www.whmessenger.info

West Hill Men's Supper Club

St Michael's Church Hall

(The Narthex)

Bendarroch Road, West Hill

6.45pm - 9.00pm



We meet on the second Monday evening of each month (except July and August) for an excellent meal and an interesting after-dinner speaker

Monday 10th February

'Inside out': 30 years a prison chaplain

Monday 10th March

The Yeoman of the Guard

Monday 7th April

Exeter Cathedral: current works

New members warmly welcomed

Contact: John Rowland 01404 813027

www.whmessenger.info

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



Services in Church

Feb 2	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Feb 9	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Feb 14	15.45	Messy Church
Feb 16	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Feb 23	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Feb 27	19.00	Simply Worship
Mar 2	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Mar 9	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Mar 16	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Mar 21	15.45	Messy Church
Mar 23	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Mar 27	19.00	Simply Worship
Mar 30 (Mothering Sunday)	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)

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.

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