

The Messenger



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



**August - September 2026
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?

<i>Other West Hill Clergy</i>	Revd. Mac Dick macdick1@aol.com Revd. Ann Turner jandaturner@btinternet.com	371064 813476
<i>Pastoral Care Coordinator</i>	<i>vacant - contact Team Vicar or Churchwardens</i>	
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PLEASE NOTE The last date for copy for the October/November edition is
Monday 7th September 2026.

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.

From the Vicarage

With the end of the school year having just passed and the new one starting, there's going to be a lot of change happening in many homes in our community. There'll be last days and first days; new classes and teachers; little ones starting school and last year's sixth formers heading off to work or university. It can be a challenging time, as well as one filled with much excitement.

Change is something many of us find difficult. We tend to be creatures of habit. We get settled into our routines and feel we've got a handle on things and then, suddenly, we're faced with something new. And yet change defines what it is to be alive, to develop and grow.

In our Otter Vale Mission Community of churches, we too are experiencing change. Our Team Rector, Lydia Cook, will be leaving us for fresh pastures on Sunday 16th August and we will, after a few months of vacancy, be welcoming a new Team Rector. It will be a big change for us and for Lydia as she swaps rural East Devon for the somewhat busier streets of Chelsea. She leaves with our love, our thanks and our prayers for her new ministry.

In all this, I am reminded of one of my absolute favourite Bible verses from the Letter to the Hebrews. It says this: "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8). It reminds us that although this world can be chaotic, unsettling and unpredictable, God never changes. His promises to be with us in every season don't evaporate and his mercy and love remain steadfast.

Whenever the ground seems to shift beneath our feet, and we are faced with the fact that our well-laid plans and expectations can dissolve in an instant, the Bible assures us that we can hold onto God who doesn't wobble or move. As a well-known hymn says: "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand".

And when life calls us to make decisions and take steps which move us away from the familiar into unknown territories, when it's time for us to grow and change, we can be sure that Jesus walks alongside us then too. To truly live is to embrace that change and growth as a core part of our Christian journeys of discipleship.

Change is a 'when', not an 'if'. So, my prayer for us all as we encounter it in our lives is that we may always remember, even when our feet feel a bit unsteady, that Jesus is there holding out his hand for us to grasp, and his feet have an excellent grip.

Carys

Lydia's Last Service: This will take place at Ottery St Mary church on Sunday 16th August at 10.30am and all are warmly invited to attend.

Children's Page



Our final Messy Church before the summer break was a fun event held in the Vicarage garden. Over fifty children and adults enjoyed crafts and activities accompanied by a BBQ and ice creams!

The face painting was very popular as these photos show.

Messy Church will be on holiday in August. We return in September with lots of fun ideas for our meetings.

We'd love more children to join us. We now have Messy Momentum (for the 9+ age group)



too. They have the opportunity for informal chat and other crafts after the all-age session with music and tea for the children.

If you think Messy Church might be something for you, please contact Rosemary HUDSONROSEMARY@HOTMAIL.COM

Dates for Your Diary

Friday 18th September – Messy Church (3.45 - 5.15pm)

Friday 16th October – Messy Church (3.45 – 5.15pm)

Saturday 31st October – Lite Nite
More details to follow

Enjoy the summer holidays!



Children's Craft

Paper Plate Crafts "Under the Sea"



Paper plates are wonderful inexpensive items for craft activities.

Pictured are a few ideas for the theme 'Under the Sea' - seahorse, seal, jellyfish and turtle.

For making these, you will need:

Paper plates

Tissue paper

Paints

Paintbrushes

Scissors

Glue/double-sided tape



Can you think of other themes for paper plate crafts? Enjoy making them!!



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CENTENARY BANNER

Celebrating 100 Years in West Hill and Aylesbeare!

We need your help to make the Centenary Banner for the RBL

Have we been in touch with your group or organisation
for your contribution to the banner?

If you have any of these items going spare, could you donate them to be used to make the banner?

- fabric paint or pens, paint brushes,
- beads, embroidery thread, tapestry needles,
- buttons, felt,
- printer transfer paper

Watch out for more information on FaceBook

West Hill Craft Group
westhillcg@outlook.com



West Hill Women's Group

June is the beginning of our Group's year and this is when a representative from the charity we will support during the year comes to explain exactly what they do and how

our donations will help their work. This year's charity is Hospiscare and Sharon Collins gave a very lively and sometimes moving talk telling us how they look after people in our community with terminal illnesses and work together with other agencies to give the best possible care, very often in the patient's own home.

Our talks for the next two months are:

Wednesday 5th August: Cllr. Francis Pullman is the Parish Council lead on the West Hill Emergency Plan and he will be coming to our annual summer coffee morning to explain the plan and give us an update on progress so far.

Thursday 3rd September: Stuart Raine is a returning speaker and his talk 'Crossing the Pond' describes the Golden Age of the Transatlantic Liners.

Meetings are held at the Royal British Legion. Arrive from 10.00 for a 10.30 start, finish by 12.00. Guests are most welcome at our meetings for a cost of just £3 which includes coffee/tea and cake – we'd love to see you!

For further details please contact: **Pam Bartlett** on 07816 919142 or e-mail **pamela.bartlett1@btinternet.com**

Monday Bible Study

Preparing for Christmas: The Background to Advent.

This is the course that we will be doing in the autumn. On the four Sundays of Advent, the readings and sermons in church focus on the people who prepared for the coming of Jesus as a baby in Bethlehem: the Patriarchs, the Prophets, John the Baptist and Mary.

In the six studies of the course, we shall consider the importance of these people, the many others who had supporting roles which were relevant, and the world into which Jesus came.

The aim is that by studying the background to the nativity it will help us, when Christmas comes, to focus with understanding on the most stupendous event in history when God came into His creation as a human child.

As we delve into history and think about many different people, the spotlight will always be on Jesus: the one who was perfect in every way, yet on the cross was willing to embrace our shame; the one who defeated death, emerged from the tomb on Easter morning, and is reigning in heaven now; the one before whom every knee, one day, will bow.

When decided, the dates of the course will be made known in church, to individuals by e-mail, or by ringing me on 813476.

Do join us in the church on the chosen Monday mornings for this gentle but informative course. As always it's free to all who come. **Ann Turner**



£25 per table

Calling all crafters, makers and bakers

Sell your wares at West Hill Grand Christmas Craft Fair

Saturday 28 November

West Hill Village Hall, EX11 1UQ

To book your table call Kim Holmes 07795 482065 or email: whccfhospiscare@gmail.com



Otter Vale Friends of Hospiscare present

SUMMER FETE

Cadhay, EX11 1QT

Saturday 29 August

12 - 4pm

Beautiful gardens & house tour available
Live music, BBQ, refreshments in the tea room,
bouncy castle, stalls, raffle, and so much more!

Entry - donation to Hospiscare
Well behaved dogs on short leads welcome

GREAT FAMILY DAY OUT!

With thanks to Mr R Thistlethwayte of Cadhay

St Michael's on the Web

Information about St Michael's Church, including service times, is now available at <https://whmessenger.info/st-michaels-church/>. For links to information about the other churches in the Otter Vale Mission Community, of which St Michael's is a member, please see <https://ottervalechurches.org/>

DHCT Cycle Ride

If you are a regular reader of the Messenger, you will remember that September is the month for the Devon Historic Churches Trust Cycle Ride. This year, the ride is taking place on Saturday 12th September.

Team West Hill has taken part in the ride for many years and we are hoping for another team to carry on the tradition this year. In 2025, we had 5 riders and it would be wonderful to encourage even more in 2026.

The ride is a great opportunity to support the work of the Trust and our village church, St Michael's. The riders' sponsorship is divided equally between the Trust and their chosen church. It is also a lovely day for visiting the beautiful churches in our glorious East Devon countryside. My bike has rested since September 2025, but if I can't ride this year, I will stride instead!

I look forward to hearing from you if you would like to take part and need further information about the day. I will have the sponsorship forms ready and waiting. We would welcome riders, supporters and sponsors please. Thank you.

Sue Bonnie

01404 812370

West Hill Village Hall

Registered Charity No. 1160370

We have been very busy over the summer months and have a number of events to be enjoyed over the remainder of 2026.

Future Events 2026

6 th Aug	NHS Blood Service
7 th Nov	West Hill Conservatives Lunch
21 st Nov	Pre School Bazaar
28 th Nov	Hospiscare Christmas Fayre
5 th Dec	Floral Workshop
5 th Dec	WHPC – Switch on Christmas tree lights
12 th Dec	Wedding Reception with full marquee
31 st Dec	Sheryl & Jon Sequence Dance

On 15th July West Hill Village Hall held its AGM; unfortunately I am unable to comment on the outcome as this article has to be submitted by 6th July.

At the beginning of August we are expecting a new ear wax removal service

to start at the village hall.

The Village Hall has been carrying out a number of building works and maintenance projects during the Pre-school and Primary schools' summer holidays. These works include the installation of air conditioning in Maple room and the construction of a new external storeroom for Pre-School. The wall which faces the rear of Oak Hall is badly in need of painting, so we will try to get that done during the school holiday. We are also looking for someone to give the hall a deep clean as our regular cleaners are not prepared to undertake the work.

Due to the absence of a Village Hall Manager, these works have been organised and overseen by Tony Fryer, our hard-working Vice Chairman. The regular weekly and monthly safety checks have been undertaken by Tony Fryer and me.

We are still looking for a new Village Hall Manager and have advertised locally for several weeks. If you know of anyone who would like to earn a salary for about 6 hours of work each week, then please get in touch with us.

Please visit our website www.whmessenger.info/west-hill-village-hall for details of the full range of clubs and activities on offer at the Hall, or call **Lynda Creegan** on 01404 623091 between the hours of 09.00 and 17.30. You may also contact Lynda by e-mail on westhillvillagehall@gmail.com

Colin Veale, Chairman, Village Hall Trustees

St. Boniface Awards

A churchwarden who saved a man's life, a former addict helping others rebuild theirs, a university vice-chancellor championing social mobility, and a youth leader transforming the lives of young people were among those honoured at this year's St Boniface Awards.

Eleven people were presented with the award. The St. Boniface Awards ceremony took place at Exeter Cathedral on Saturday 6th June. The awards are named after Devon's patron saint, who was born in Crediton. The awards were established as a way of celebrating people who go above and beyond to serve others. They were presented by the Bishop of Exeter, the Rt. Revd. Dr. Mike Harrison. Bishop Mike said, "It's so heartening to see the good work going on across Devon rooted in the Christian faith and showcased in the St Boniface award recipients. These recipients are just the tip of a very large iceberg of service - and a source not only of gratitude and appreciation but also of inspiration and example."

Becky Britton, a churchwarden, saved a man's life by administering CPR. During a service in Tiverton a member of the congregation suffered a heart attack. Becky was quick to step in and help, carrying out first aid until the emergency services arrived. The man made a full recovery.

Nick White, a youth leader in Exmouth, pioneered Football 4 All and co-founded Hygge Church, both outreaches which create welcoming spaces for those new to faith. Nick works with young people facing complex challenges. Nick said, "I feel really privileged and really blessed to be recognised for working with young people, particularly young people that are going through difficult times. For me, it's important that the church recognises those young people and families and their difficulties. To work alongside them and to join with them, journey together, and share Jesus' love with them."

Anne Byrne, from Heavitree, received an award for founding and leading a church community library. Heavitree Friendly Library creates a warm, welcoming, child-friendly space within the church. The library has become a valued expression of hospitality and mission, offering free access to books, refreshments and activities, whilst encouraging the wider participation in church events.

Nathan Hill, of Exeter Network Church, received an award for his evangelism work. Following a powerful personal journey from addiction and crime to faith and recovery, Nathan supports people struggling with addiction, leads Cocaine Anonymous in Exeter, and regularly shares his story to bring hope to others.

West Hill Parish Council

As I'm writing this, we're just putting away the equipment from our Crazy Golf attraction at the summer fête. It was a huge success, and many congratulations to the organisers! What I found so wonderful was seeing so many of our village residents together, all having a good time. It's rare for the whole village to get together like this, and we should try to find more opportunities to do so. A village group is currently planning a Christmas tree lighting event, and I hope as many people as possible will join in as another community event to bring us all together.

As you know, one of the Parish Council's responsibilities is to respond as a statutory consultee to planning applications. This sometimes means representing the village by speaking at EDDC Planning Committee meetings. There are changes coming to planning law that will mean fewer applications will be decided by the Planning Committee and instead will be decided by Planning Officers. This is meant to speed up the planning process, but it essentially means fewer planning decisions will be made by elected representatives and more by unelected council officers. This really highlights the importance of having an approved neighbourhood plan, so it's great that our plan is moving forward.

Our Playpark Working Group is working with equipment suppliers to finalise a plan for developing the children's play area. Now that the footpath is

complete, this is the Parish Council's next infrastructure project.

We are currently working on creating an Emergency Plan for West Hill, and it is coming along nicely. However, it is not moving as fast as I would like because we are juggling other projects and still need more Councillors to help. On the bright side, we have been lucky enough to get a grant to buy equipment, including hand-held radios, which will be used in an emergency.

It is important to talk about the need for Councillors because next year we have elections for a new Parish Council. There is no way to know if the current Councillors will be up for another term, so I would encourage everyone to think seriously about dedicating some of their time, skills and experience to help the community as Parish Councillors.

Francis Pullman, Chairman, West Hill Parish Council.

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

Email: clerk@westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk



1st Tipton St. John Scout Group

Over the past few months, our three sections, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have been busy working on various badges.

Beaver Colony - The Beavers visited Woodbury Castle; pulled up Balsam on Tipton Playing Fields; visited Sidmouth Lifeboat Station followed by litter picking; walked an animal trail at Seaton Wetlands and enjoyed a campfire and singing Scout songs.

Cubs Pack - the Cubs engaged in St. George's Day games and hiked from Salcombe Hill into the Byes. As part of their badgework, they made "Pharoah's Chariots" and then rode a cub on the chariot. They carried out a beach clean at Budleigh and practised archery and air rifle shooting.

Scout Troop - the Scouts had an evening of games; some did mountain biking on Woodbury Common, others doing a Blue Plaque quiz. They tried making and racing "Pharoah's Chariots" as well as brushing up on their archery and air rifle skills.

If you have a child aged from 6 to 8 or 9, who would like to join our Beaver or Cub section, please do get in touch.

Trustee Board - For several years the Tipton Scout Group Trustee Board has been made up mainly of group leaders. To help progress our plans for the scout plot, such as connecting electricity and water and building a shelter, we need help on our Trustee Board. Our hut is too small and needs rebuilding or extending; requiring lots of funds to do so! If you have some

spare time, just a few hours per year (4 meetings per year), please do consider helping on our Trustee Board.

We would especially love some help with some specific roles:

- A new Chairperson
- Additional Trustee Board members
- Beaver leaders- may not be a weekly commitment
- Support with development of the plot

Volunteering is a two-way street, improving wellbeing and building career-boosting skills. If you are interested, we will give you support and training.

Alison Clatworthy - Group Lead Volunteer for 1st Tipton St. John Scout Group
tiptonstjohnscoutgroup@gmail.com

West Hill Arboretum Group

Our **Wild Flower walk** at the end of July at Blackberry Honey Farm will have taken place by the time you read this. Report in the next Messenger.

We are seeing some mature trees succumbing to our extreme weather over the past few years. Either wet winters or droughts in the summer are putting them under strain. Please check the trees in your garden or area for any that did not come into leaf – deciduous; or browning of the foliage - evergreen. It's so easy to miss seeing them! Please report any on the roadside to Parish Council. Remove dead trees in your garden before they become a danger to people or buildings.

Newly planted trees should be watered regularly throughout the summer. A light shower does not reach the roots. Check tree ties for tightness; they need loosening as the tree grows.

What's in a name? Toadpit Lane

Toadpit Lane gets its name from an historical landscape feature. In rural and traditional English place names 'pit' or 'pitt' referred to a natural depression, pond, or hollow in the ground. The area's damp, wooded setting naturally provided an ideal habitat for toads, resulting in a local 'toad pit'. Over time, this description was attached to the rural lane that ran through or beside it. The lane remains well known today as a leafy, semi-rural residential road on the edge of the village.

Notice of our **Autumn Fungi Walk** - Our autumn fungi walk will be on Saturday October 3rd at Prickly Pear. Meet at 10.30 am in the Prickly Pear carpark. Wear sturdy footwear. This walk will be led by Ed Dolphin, a tree and fungi expert.

The Arboretum Group would welcome any new faces to join the walk.

Celina Herbert - Chairman Tel: 07912061530

Eileen Perkins - Secretary & Tree Warden Tel: 01404 815905

Birds of West Hill and other places

In this edition I'll pose a few questions about birds that will provide an insight into their fascinating lives.

Can all birds fly? No. Most birds do fly. Out of the 11,167 species on the world list, two small groups are flightless. The first group of 59 species have the remnants of wings but can no longer fly. This group includes Ostriches, Rheas, Cassowaries and the Kiwi. Most are far too big to fly, with the Ostrich weighing in at 115 kg. The upper weight limit for flight for a bird is 18 kg. The second group have taken to a life at sea; the penguins, of which there are 18 species. All British can birds can fly.

How do birds fly? To be able to fly, birds need to generate propulsion and lift. The wing feathers provide both. The outer wing feathers provide propulsion on the downbeat. These feathers (called primaries) are intricately designed to prevent air passing through them. Instead the feathers produce a vortex which pushes the bird forward. On the upbeat the clever design allows the feathers to twist and allow air through. If it didn't, the bird would go into reverse!

The inner wing feathers (called secondaries) produce lift and are designed like an aeroplane's wings. As air flows over the upper and lower surfaces, lift is generated.

How do birds steer? Accurate directional flight is achieved by the tail feathers acting as a rudder. Some birds rely on highly accurate directional flight to catch their prey. Swifts feed exclusively on aerial insects and their long, strong tail feathers help them catch their elusive prey. They spend over 90% of

their time in the air, including sleeping! Birds that swim under water, like the Gannet and Cormorant, use their tail feathers as a rudder.

Who are the record breakers?

Fastest level flight	Spine-tailed Swift	160 km / hr
Fastest stoop flight	Peregrine	200 km / hr
Highest flying bird	Bar-tailed Goose	8000 m over the Himalayas
Heaviest flying bird	Kori's Bustard	18 kg
Heaviest UK bird	Mute Swan	12 kg
Longest continual flight	Bar-tailed Godwit	11,100 km
Longest migratory flight (UK bird)	Arctic Tern	40,000 km, with stops



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.

Simply Worship

Please come and join us for an hour of acoustic guitar-led worship at St. Michael's on the following dates:

Sunday September 27th 6-7pm

Sunday November 29th 6-7pm

Sunday January 31st 6-7pm

Ottery Help Scheme

Are you struggling to keep on top of things around the home? Is weekly shopping becoming too difficult to manage on your own? If you feel that an extra pair of hands would really help, Ottery Help Scheme's Home Services might be perfect for you. We employ kind, caring and reliable staff to deliver our service and everyone has completed an enhanced background check.

Home Services is an hourly paid service where you are assigned the same staff member for each visit. Usually our clients have a visit either weekly or fortnightly and the service can be used for light maintenance, cleaning of the home, help with bed-making or laundry, or for shopping trips, either accompanied or unaccompanied. Some of our clients also enjoy a trip to a coffee shop, garden centre or for a walk along the seafront. We tailor support to meet your needs.

We receive wonderful feedback about our staff members and how much they contribute to people staying happy, comfortable and supported in their homes and by reducing the feeling of isolation.

Here's what some of our clients say about Home Services:

Marie: "Oh, I brag about Ottery Help Scheme to everyone! Especially after my recent surgery, I've found Home Services invaluable."

Jenny: Modern technology I 'aint got a clue
 No shillings or pennies so what do I do?
 No feet or inches so how tall am I?
 It is just as clear as the clouds in the sky
 So I asked The Help Scheme to sort it all out
 Ensure bills are paid before the trades shout
 Take me shopping buy long dated food
 Ensuring my health will always stay good.
 So how lucky we are to have Help Scheme so near
 To assist us all so we don't have the fear.
 Of getting things wrong in these modern times
 And ensuring in life the sun always shines.

If you would like to know more, please contact **Claire** at Ottery Help Scheme 01404 813041, or email info@otteryhelpscheme.org.uk

The Royal British Legion West Hill

Movie Nights

Doors open at 19.00, Film starts at 19.30, Admission free.
All welcome!

3 rd Aug	Michael, 2026
10 th Aug	Goodbye June, 2025
17 th Aug	Plots with a View, 2002
24 th Aug	Song Sung Blue, 2025
31 st Aug	Steve, 2025
7 th Sept	The Book Thief, 2013
14 th Sept	H is for Hawk, 2025
21 st Sept	The Adjustment Bureau, 2011
28 th Sept	The Sheep Detectives, 2026

Bingo Nights (Doors open 18.30)

Sundays 2nd & 16th August and 6th & 20th September

Opera Nights (Curtain Up 19.30)

September 24th Lucia di Lammermoor, Gaetano Donizetti

Jazz (with City Steam Jazz Band)

Sundays 9th Aug & 13th Sept (19.30 - 22.00)

Crafters' Evenings

Tuesdays 4th August & 8th September (from 19.00)

Dads' Nights

Fridays 14th August &
11th September from 20.00

Ladies' Nights

Fridays 7th August &
4th September

Codfather – Fish & Chips

Every Thursday from 17.00 – 19.00

Other Events

Ladies Probus, 8th September from 14.00

West Hill Women's Group, 5th August & 3rd September 10.00 - 12.00

Ottery Choral Society

Happy New Singing Year!

The Choral Society's new singing year will start in September, with rehearsals kicking off in the United Reform Church, Ottery, at 7.30pm on Wednesday 2nd.

We have a very busy first term ahead of us. Not only will we be practising for our annual Christmas concert on Saturday December 5th, but also the

biennial "Classics Galore!" concert on Saturday November 14th.

More details of "Classics Galore!" will be given soon. This series of concerts, held every other year since 2007, raises a considerable sum (the last concert in 2024 raised £20,000) for our local Exeter-based cancer charity, FORCE. We hold it in the Exeter Great Hall, a venue that seats up to 1,400, and aim to sell each and every ticket. It is a monumental organisational task, involving nearly 200 musicians on stage at the same time: our Classics Galore Orchestra, the combined choirs from the Ottery St. Mary Choral Society and the St. David's Players, and the fantastic Lymptone Band, our local Championship section brass band (that is, the best there is!). The programme of music is yet to be announced, but it will be a combination of well-known and popular choral music, orchestral pieces, and an inspirational selection of brass band music. The evening is rounded off with a Last Night of the Proms style finale, where joining in loudly is expected. It's a heavy roof, but we will raise it.

For our Christmas programme this year, the centrepiece will be Rutter's "Magnificat", propelling the choir from its recent programmes of 18th century music right up to the 1990's.

This is a relatively short piece at about 35 minutes long: energetic, exuberant, and tuneful. We can't wait to get started with it! At its first performance in 1990 some critics loved its Latin-inspired rhythms and its persistent optimism whereas others were less convinced. One critic, obviously intending to write a scornful barb about the piece, said that it was an "exercise in glitzy populism". Now, I don't know about you, but I think that's the best reason of all to hear it. Couldn't we all do with some of that in our lives?

If you would like to join us this term and take part in a packed autumn programme of singing glitzy populism to 1,400 people in Exeter Great Hall and then some more in the Ottery Parish Church at Christmas, you would be very welcome. We need new singers to keep going. We don't audition, so turn up, see if you like it, and hopefully stay with us.



Ottery St. Mary Floral Art Club

A bit like the schools, the Club takes a break in August which gives our members the opportunity to relax, spend time in their own gardens or alternatively get out and about to make the most of this beautiful part of the world that we call home.

Our Club nights re-start on Tuesday 15th September when we will be joined by florist Caitlin Anning-Pile. Caitlin trained at Bicton and the Academy of Floral Art and whilst working in Ilminster was shortlisted for the Under 30's Best Florist of the Year Award. Although now running her own business, Olive and Bloom, based in Wellington, Caitlin is a local girl, having been brought up in Ottery and we are looking forward to welcoming her back to her hometown!

We are a relaxed and friendly group with very different levels of experience with flowers so if you would like to come along and see for yourself what we're all about, why not join us for Caitlin's demonstration?

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

We hope all readers enjoy the summer and look forward to seeing our members and visitors at Caitlin's demonstration at **West Hill Village Hall, Beech Park, West Hill, EX11 1UQ – 7.30 pm on Tuesday 15th September.**

Any enquiries: **Karen Taverner**, Club Secretary – 0779 1013383

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 24th September: Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor"

Donizetti's greatest drama based on the Walter Scott novel, this production from the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa stars Stefania Bonfadelli as Lucia with Marcello Alvarez as her lover, Edgardo. (*Running Time of the Opera: 2 hours 25 mins*).

Opera Nights were started in 2012 by Peter Clarke. As many will know, Peter sadly passed away this April. It was his very keen wish that Opera Nights should continue, and so Joyce is happily taking over the running of them, as was her husband's wish.

Further information from Joyce Clarke: joyceclarkepiano3@gmail.com

Dear Lord and Father

This edition's hymn stands in contrast to many hymns, with the words and tune combining to make this a quiet, contemplative hymn. The hymn is Dear Lord and Father of mankind. John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892), an American Quaker poet, wrote the hymn in 1872. The words are extracted from a longer poem called "The Brewing of Soma" criticising highly emotional religious practices. Back in 2000 BC soma was an intoxicating drink taken by Vedic priests trying to experience the divine. Whittier contrasted this excess with a quiet, contemplative connection with God, reflecting his Quaker beliefs in silence and meditation. The hymn is a prayer for spiritual renewal and quiet.

The tune used with this hymn is based on an 1888 composition by the English composer Charles Parry for an oratorio titled Judith. In 1924 the melody was paired with Whittier's text by George Stocks, director of music at Repton School.

Verse 1 commences by asking God to 'forgive our foolish ways' and for us to lead 'purer lives'. Verse 2 then suggests that we place 'simple trust' in God and follow Him. Verse 3 directs us to quietly follow Jesus to the 'calm hills above' and 'share with Thee the silence of eternity'. Verses 4 and 5 continue the theme of calm and stillness 'with that deep hush subduing all ... the tender whisper of thy call'. And in Verse 5 'Drop thy still dews of quietness ... and let our ordered lives confess, the beauty of Thy peace'. Verse 6 asks for 'Thy coolness and thy balm' and then for God to speak His 'still, small voice of calm'. The phrase 'speak through the earthquake, wind and fire' comes from 1 Kings 19 when the Lord spoke to Elijah not loudly in an earthquake or stormy wind but in a gentle whisper. And that's how God can speak to us.

Welcome Café

What is Welcome Café? it is a pop-up Café run by volunteers at the Parish Church on the last Friday of each month. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy a freshly made cup of coffee and a slice of homemade cake, for the sum of £3.50.

All the helpers and cake-makers are volunteers who will make sure you are welcome. So come and join us and meet everyone there. The next Cafés will be:

Friday August 28th

September 25th

starting at 10:30am.

If you would like to volunteer as a helper we will be most pleased to have you join us, or if you just want refreshments that's OK as well.

Christine Smith 01404 812995

West Hill Pre-School

Whilst writing this article, we are focusing on the final events for the Summer Term. At the end of June we held a sports day on the Primary School field, where adults and siblings also joined in the fun. Parents evenings have been held recently, and we are gearing up to a celebratory leavers event towards the end of July for those reaching school age.

In September we have **spaces available** in Pre-School on a Monday, Thursday and Friday for children aged 2 - 4 (09.15-15.15). **Breakfast Club** is available each day (08.00-09.15), and currently the **After School Club** only has spaces on a Friday (15.15-18.00), with waiting lists available on the remaining days. Wraparound sessions are available for children aged 3 years and above, including Primary School children.

West Hill Pre-School is a Committee-run charity; therefore, you are invited to attend our **Annual General Meeting** on Wednesday 30th September at 8pm, Acorn Room, Village Hall.

One of the wonderful events organised by the Pre-School Committee and parents is the **West Hill Pre-School Christmas Bazaar**. This is scheduled for Saturday 21st November, so please save the date!

We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a lovely summer break and best wishes for the next academic year and thank everyone from the local community who have supported West Hill Pre-School in 2025-26.

Treasurer Vacancy

Treasurer wanted for St Michael's PCC (Parochial Church Council). The current treasurer has been in place for 2 years but would like to step down. Could that person be you? There is plenty of support and relevant training available. If you are interested, please contact Joanna Bromley and she will be able to discuss it with you: joannambromley@hotmail.com

West Hill Men's Supper Club

We gather monthly, usually on the 2nd Monday, for a couple of drinks followed by a two-course meal and a talk by an invited speaker. After the summer break our talks resume in September when the topic will be:

Monday 14th September: Establishing a vineyard at Dalwood

Our venue is the Narthex annex to St Michael's Church in West Hill starting at 18.45. We charge £25 (cash) which includes drinks and the meal. Visitors or prospective members are welcome. If you are interested in coming for a taster evening or finding out more about us, please contact **John Rowland** at j.v.rowland@btinternet.com or 01404 813027.

Charities St Michael's Supports

St Michael's has a policy of supporting other charitable agencies through tithing from the regular giving. The charities we currently support in this way are:

South West Youth Ministries

Mercy Ships

UCCF (Christian Unions)

Children's Hospice South West

A short description of the first three follows: Children's Hospice South West will be covered in the next issue of the Messenger.

South West Youth Ministries

South West Youth Ministries (SWYM) is a local charity with a vision that every child and young person in the South West would encounter Jesus, come to know him, and make a choice to live for more. They describe the work of their charity below.

Alongside our work equipping local churches and training youth workers, we run a range of different camps and events as a resource for youth and children's workers, most recently, SPREE South West, a Christian youth festival for ages 11-17, with over 3000 people in attendance. We had 7 venues this year meaning that we could provide an outreach venue (for those unsure re. faith) as well a discipleship venue (for Christians who wanted to go deeper) for each age bracket (8-11's, 11-14's and 15-17's), and a new separate venue specifically for children and young people with acute additional needs.

We want all children and young people to have brilliant fun at our festival so they can say they had the best fun whilst at a Christian event. We therefore have more activities than they can possibly engage in from fairground rides, lazer tag, inflatables including a slip and slide, skate park, sports, teen spa, escape rooms, craft and more.

Groups come from local churches or youth clubs around the region, from as far as Newport in South Wales, Gloucester, Bournemouth, Hayle and even 70 who flew over from Guernsey for the weekend. It really feels like a SW event. With churches of all denominations engaging in the event it also enables children and young people to realise that there are others like them in terms of having faith right across the region.

This year we ran an acute additional needs venue which doubled up as a sensory space for young people who needed it and this was hugely appreciated by all. We also partnered with Exeter Diocese to host a camp within a camp where small, often rural, churches who might only have 1 or 2 children or young people could come along with a leader from their setting but be hosted by a team from the diocese. This enabled churches and children and young people to be able to access the event who previously

might not have been able to.

Once again SPREE was a fantastic event with children and young people in a safe and inclusive space being given time to have fun with their friends and explore faith in Jesus at the same time.

For more information see: <https://swym.org.uk/>

Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is a faith-based international development organisation that deploys hospital ships to some of the poorest countries in the world, delivering vital, free healthcare to people in desperate need.

Conditions requiring surgical treatment kill more people in low-income countries than HIV/Aids, TB and malaria combined. Globally, five billion people have no access to safe, affordable surgery when they need it.

As well as completing thousands of urgent operations onboard floating hospitals, the *Africa Mercy* and the *Global Mercy*, Mercy Ships volunteers also work closely with host nations to improve the way healthcare is delivered across the country, by training and mentoring local medical staff, and renovating hospitals and clinics.

By improving healthcare delivery in every country it visits, Mercy Ships is working to eradicate the diseases of poverty and effectively do itself out of a job. Mercy Ships follows the model of Jesus by “bringing hope and healing to the forgotten poor”, helping people of all faiths and none.

For more information, see <https://www.mercyships.org.uk/>

UCCF: The Christian Unions

The Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) provides Christian Unions at Universities. They describe their work below.

At UCCF we are passionate about students reaching students with the good news of Jesus. Our mission is making disciples of Jesus Christ in the student world. We support Christian Unions (CUs) by resourcing CU students and forming CU leaders to reach over 2.5 million students at universities across Britain with the good news of Jesus Christ.

CUs are mission teams that operate at the heart of university and college campuses. They are led by students, resourced by CU Staff Workers and supported by the local church.

Students have an unparalleled opportunity to reach their friends with the gospel. In the academic year 2024-25, UCCF supported 158 active CUs. These CUs ran 96 evangelistic events weeks and 83 carol services, both examples of how students unashamedly and boldly share the gospel in a climate where there is more openness to explore who Jesus is. Wonderfully, more than one student came to faith for every day of the university term!

With your support, our work ensures that CU students continue to be resourced and formed to:

- Delight deeply in Christ.
- Declare Him boldly.
- Display Him fully.

Together, we are making disciples of Jesus Christ in the student world.

For more information see: <https://www.uccf.org.uk/>

Simply Worship Quiet Morning at Buckfast Abbey

“Be still and know that I am God” Psalm 46: 10a

Wednesday August 5th 2026 10.30am – 1.30pm

Join Cag and Jane for a short time of worship to begin and end these hours of quiet, for you to enjoy God’s presence in this beautiful centre of worship.

We will be based in the Methodist Chapel at Buckfast Abbey, but expect most people will spend some quiet time in the grounds and chapel.

There is a lovely café or bring your own lunch and refreshments. Please make your own travel arrangements – or speak to Jane to see who else is coming.

Cost: the hire of the church is £35 – any donations towards this would be welcome but there is no charge to come.

Please email or text Jane if you plan to come: janefoll@aol.com

text or phone: 07970431820

Studying the Bible on YouTube

When I first became a committed Christian in 1965, I read the **Psalms and New Testament** three times over 6 years, using the guide in my **Gideon Bible** but then drifted a bit without any clear plan.

A few years later, the church I belonged to used the **Scripture Union Commentary** covering the whole Bible in two years. We each read the passages at home, sermons from the weekly readings were preached on Sundays and in Home Groups we discussed what we had learned.

A lot of people use Bible notes but I find the temptation is often to read the notes but not the Bible passage. And today there are now great resources on the internet.

If you really want to be inspired I’d strongly recommend finding **David Guzik’s Enduring Word** on YouTube and just search for the part of the Bible you want to read. He is a most enthusiastic and inspiring commentator and he reads the Bible passage, a few verses at a time, before commenting.

Each episode is around half an hour. So why not start a habit, with a cup of tea or coffee, and enjoy some really excellent TV, giving fresh insight into every part of the Bible.

You can also get the written commentary on an App of the same name, if you want to read it for yourself later.

Ann Pangbourne

The Cellist of Sarajevo: Notes of uplift

In the novel *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, by Steven Galloway, a cellist goes out each day risking his life to play in the street where 22 people were killed by an enemy shell, as they queued for bread. A local sniper is given the task of keeping him alive by picking off enemy snipers in the hills surrounding the city. The cellist is a vital sign of hope for the people in that devastated and besieged place. And they must keep him alive.

The Bible is full of people who dare to stand up as signs of hope when all around is collapsing. In chapter 32 of his book, Jeremiah bought a field when the land was under siege by the Babylonians, and everybody else was selling up. It seemed mad to buy land when it was being occupied by the enemy, but Jeremiah wanted to show the people that they had a future and a hope, even though the odds were stacked against them.

We cannot stop the wars around us, we cannot heal all the pain and suffering, or quieten the bad news, but we can be signs of hope in a broken world. Our lives can be notes of uplift in an age of cynicism and trouble. The light shines out of our faulty lives and we may never know how much it can mean for others.

D. Hopwood – with permission



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!

If you've moved into the village within the last couple of months and haven't yet received a Welcome Pack, please email Rosemary at the address below.

As a new resident, Dave (Chair) & Andy (Treasurer) of the RBL Club (aka the "Legion") would like to welcome you to West Hill with a free drink for each member of the household. Please contact them via email at **rbclubwesthill@icloud.com** to take advantage of this offer. One or both of them will take the opportunity to meet you and show you the facilities at the club.

Note for Welcome pack contributors - have there been any changes to the details for your organisation/group? If so, please send an updated note to **hudsonrosemary@hotmail.com**

West Hill Art Group

In this issue, I'm featuring two more members of our Art Group, Rosemary Hudson and Emma Wilkinson.



Rosemary loves to do studies of animals especially elephants, often without drawing first, producing fresh results.

To celebrate the great Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday, Rosemary painted one of her rare portraits and produced a great likeness. Her work always has a relaxing feel to it.

Emma is our 'resident portrait expert' as this painting of Dame Judi Dench shows. She also loves to paint animals and people.

She is happy to share her expertise with all of us. She sees colours that the rest of us don't and this produces lively, vibrant paintings.



Councillor's Column



Additional Bus Stop on West Hill Road

In the previous edition of *The Messenger*, I reported that I was in discussion with Devon County Council (DCC) to explore whether it might be possible to amend the route of the 44/44A bus service to provide better coverage in West Hill.

Unfortunately, the current timetable cannot accommodate the longer route through West Hill. Although the proposed diversion would add only a

few minutes to each journey, the existing schedule does not allow sufficient time for this change.

I have been advised that the only realistic way to serve additional areas of West Hill would be through a complete review of the 44/44A timetable and route network. As part of this process, DCC will analyse current passenger usage and assess whether the existing service continues to meet residents' needs. The request for a revised route through West Hill will be considered alongside any wider changes that may be proposed.

The earliest any changes could be introduced is January 2027. I continue to support the introduction of an additional bus stop, but at this stage it is too early to say whether this will be achievable.

Library Update

The proposed reduction in opening hours across Devon's libraries prompted an unprecedented public response, with more than 25,000 people taking part in the public consultation.

The Friends of Ottery Library did a fantastic job in galvanising community support, presenting a petition to the Council and organising a protest at the library. I worked closely with the Friends Group throughout the campaign, and I am delighted that the proposed cuts have now been withdrawn.

Changes to Planning Rules

I am very disappointed by the new planning rules that the Government intends to introduce later this year.

From 31 October, a national scheme of delegation will require most routine and smaller-scale planning applications to be determined by planning officers rather than planning committees. Planning committees will instead focus on applications that raise issues of significant local, economic, social, environmental or planning importance.

These changes will remove the ability of ward members like me to "call in" applications for consideration by the planning committee where they disagree with an officer's recommendation. The changes will also reduce

the influence of parish councils in the planning process.

In my view, these changes diminish the role of local voices, which provide an important check and balance within the planning system. I believe this is a backwards step and risks reducing local democratic accountability.

Locality Budget

Each year, as a Devon County Councillor, I receive a Locality Budget that can be used to support community groups and local projects. This year's allocation is £10,000.

If your organisation is interested in applying for a grant, particularly if you have not previously received funding, please do get in touch.

One of the projects I am supporting this year is the testing of the River Otter for E. coli, helping to improve our understanding of local water quality and environmental health.

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

Hospiscare News

Otter Vale Friends held their Bumper Plant Sale in the middle of May. Thank you all who attended, grew plants, and popped in to say hello; this event raised a staggering £3,826. We simply could not do it without you.

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday 29th August 12 - 4pm: Cadhay Summer Fete

A fun-filled day with beautiful gardens and house tour available, BBQ, refreshments in the tea-room, bouncy castle, side stalls, crafts and so much more!!

Thank you, Mr. R Thistlewayte of Cadhay for allowing us to use this beautiful setting. We are busy getting everything ready! If you have any spare bottles of wine that you would be happy to donate for our Wine & Water Stand, we would be incredibly grateful.

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday 12th September 9am - 12pm: Charity Big Breakfast

Otter Vale Friends of Hospiscare invite you to join them for their Charity Big Breakfast on Saturday 12th September 9am till 12pm at the Institute - well worth a visit.

Full English Breakfast * Cereal * Toast * Continental option (Greek yogurt, Fruit, Croissants) * Tea & Coffee

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday 28th November 10am - 2pm: West Hill Grand Christmas Fair

If you are interested in booking a table call Kim Holmes 07795 482065 or email: whccfhospiscare@gmail.com

🌸 2026 Open Garden Season 🌸

Our Open Garden Season is still under way until September; you're warmly invited to enjoy a lovely selection of open gardens across our area. From tiny cottage gardens to vineyards, there's something for everyone to enjoy — all the while supporting a much-loved local charity. Local to us this year is Coldharbour Farmhouse, Ottery St Mary, which is opening on Saturday 1st August 2.00pm till 4.30pm. Sheila is already well into her planning and preparation, and we do hope you will be able to come along and support.

Hospiscare Monthly Bingos

Held every 2nd Sunday of the month at Ottery St. Mary Football Club. Thank you to all who continue to attend our bingo sessions. Otter Vale Friends are incredibly grateful for your continued support. Doors open 6.30pm - eyes down 7:45pm.

Recycle your unwanted gifts

With lots of events coming up over the Summer, if you have any new or unwanted gifts Hospiscare could recycle and use them at these upcoming fundraising events. Please contact Sharon on the number below.

If you are interested in the work of Hospiscare, or can help with any of the above requests please contact your Area Fundraiser Sharon Collins
Tel: 01392 424960 Mob: 07803 428363
Email: s.collins@hospiscare.co.uk



Tea & Toast & Toys on Fridays



We are now 'on holiday' until Friday 11th September.

On return, we will meet every Friday from 8.45 – 10.00am, upstairs in the Village Hall during term time.



Toddlers, Pre-Schoolers, Parents, 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 toast with jam/marmalade.

Do come along – you don't even have to have a small person in tow! **All welcome!**

If you want to know more, please ring:

Pam (814096) or **Rosemary** (234578)

Ottery St. Mary Heritage Society

Back in June, when the Duke of Gloucester visited to formally open the Feoffee Charity's New Street residential development, he took an interest in the historic minute books brought by the Ottery Heritage Society for the occasion. One of these listed donors from the 1700's, and the other detailed five-shilling gifts to the charity in 1905 – a more substantial amount than it sounds in an agricultural small town where a farm worker might earn a pound a week and need all of it.



The Duke of Gloucester, attended by Sir John-Michael Kennaway and Ottery Heritage Society chairman Peter Shrubbsall (facing away from camera) views historic minute books from the Feoffee Charity following his opening of its latest affordable homes.

Late Summer Pause The traditional August break in the talks' schedule has been extended to next month to enable a more relaxed and social AGM in September. The society may take the opportunity to involve members in discussing a proposed greater emphasis on the various teams that undertake the society's work and how projects can be developed within them.



Cover and a page from a Feoffee minute book dating from the mid-1700s.

Inspeximus Charter

We have recently received the text of a historic charter document from the mid-1500's Reformation period. We are finding out more about it with a view to making it available online for research. We now have it in digital (readable) form, but as is typical of the period, it is very long and repetitive. Watch this space for further news.

Join a Team Heritage Society trustees are responsible for managing the society, its activities, and its funds – but that's only part of their role. Each trustee represents a specific area of interest, and a recent paper has encouraged viewing them as team leaders who inspire others to join them or to develop their own projects within a team framework. It's early days, and we're still working it out, but this promises to be a great way to enable people to develop their own projects, researching the area, its buildings,

businesses, and people, while finding their interest in other aspects of the society's wider work.

News and dates of the autumn schedule of talks are available on the website – visit <https://otteryheritage.org.uk> – and will be included in the next edition of WH Messenger.

Ian Greig, Trustee / Ottery St Mary Heritage Society / Lead for publicity 07976 365798.

West Hill Garden Club

Firstly, thank you to everyone who supported our stall at the village fête which took place just as the heatwave temperatures dropped a little. Thank you also to all our members who helped with supplies, set up, sales and clearing away, we had excellent sales and enjoyed being a part of the fête day. We were complimented on the colour and variety of plants for sale and are so fortunate to have one member who very kindly donates plants from her nursery each year.

This year the Club decided to make a financial contribution to support another group within the community. The School was approached and suggested a garden in memory of one of their teachers. Our thanks to member Christine Morrison who led the project offering advice and guidance to the School and was present when our Chairman handed the Acting Headmaster a cheque for £300 at the fête (see photo). The new garden will be planted up in the autumn.



In **August** we will have our annual picnic in a member's garden, starting with Pimms followed by everyone tucking in to their own picnic lunch. We then have the chance to look at the garden and usually finish with tea. The date will be **Saturday 8th August from 12.30pm** venue as per member's programme.

On **Thursday 10th September** we meet in the **Village Hall (upstairs)** at **7.30pm** to hear **Alex Deakin, Channel 4 Weatherman** speaking about - guess what - the **Weather**. No doubt there will be several questions that evening as we all try to adjust to climate change and how it affects both our gardens and ourselves.

Visitors and new members are always welcome to our meetings. If you need further details please contact our Chairman - **Sheila Gillam** (01404 814074) or Secretary - **Pauline Wade** (01404 813191).

Either will be pleased to help you.

Monica Highnam

Welcome Café

West Hill's village café



Last Friday of
every month

See you there from 10.30 am
onwards

Friday 28th August
and
Friday 25th September
in St Michael's Church Hall

All welcome!

Contact us via the form at:
www.whmessenger.info/contact

Save the Date!
New event for 2026
West Hill's
Illuminations + Celebrations
4pm Saturday 5th December
Let's get together!
Look out for further details

**Open
Gardens**
for Hospiscare

1st August
2pm - 4:30pm

Raffle!

Coldharbour Farmhouse

A spacious lawn complemented by a small greenhouse, fruit trees—apple, plum and cherry—and soft fruits including redcurrant, blackcurrant and raspberries.

WHERE: Ottery St Mary, EX11 1QL
ADMISSION: Entry by donation
Wheelchair access with assistance
No dogs please
Refreshments available as well as a book & cake sale
CONTACT: 01404 82984

For full details please visit www.hospiscare.co.uk/gardens

Because every day matters
www.hospiscare.co.uk
Registered charity no. 222798

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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

Aug 2	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Aug 9	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Aug 16	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Aug 23	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Aug 30	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Sep 6	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Sep 13	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome, with baptism)
Sep 18	15.45	Messy Church
Sep 20	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Sep 27	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
	18.00	Simply Worship

Zoom Services

On the first and third Sunday of each month at 9.30am for the whole Mission Community. The Zoom link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89943585754?pwd=NnhEcW9HZjhwWHN4ZmlBdHpIOStoQT09>

If you don't have Zoom, you can join via telephone on 0203 481 5240.