

INSPIRE

APRIL 2026



The monthly magazine
for the Parish of
St John The Baptist, Frome

**The parish of Frome Selwood
in the Frome Local Ministry Group**

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April 2026



Holy Week
at St John's

Maundy Thursday - 2nd April
7pm: Eucharist of the Last Supper
With foot washing
8:30pm: The Watch
10pm: Compline

Good Friday— 3rd April
12pm: Three Hours Devotion
2pm: Liturgy of Good Friday
With veneration of the cross.
7pm: Film Night

Holy Saturday— 4th April
7pm: Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday— 5th April
10am: Choral Eucharist
5pm: Said Evensong

There are more services and events than can fit on this poster.
Please see page 21 for the list of services and events
for the whole week

The Vicar's view

In some ways this is one of the odder views I have had to write. Technically, this should be an Easter message, with joy and hope, but this article is going out before Holy Week, so most of you will still be in the doldrums of Lent when you read this. How to reconcile Holy Week and Easter? How to hold death and life, triumphant hope with the depths of human dysfunction? It's certainly paradoxical, or, perhaps a little more prosaically, it is 'a folly unto the gentiles, but, unto those who are called ... it is the wisdom and power of God'. (1 Cor 1).

The remarkable thing about the risen Jesus is that he still has the wounds of the cross – so vividly that the disciples could put their hands through them. The risen Jesus is precisely the holding together of the promise and hope of the future with the reality and grief of the present. The message of Easter isn't of a past obliterated but of a future to look forward to. Not that we now have no sin or wounds but that we are more than the sum total of these things. This year we celebrate Easter as a little oasis of calm and renewal amid a world of spiralling chaos and confusion: rising prices for us at home, escalating wars and tension around the globe, the increasingly failing grasp of law, fairness and ethics upon the powers and politics of states and leaders. It will, for many this Easter, seem more realistic to remain in the narrative of Good Friday than that of Easter Sunday.

Especially at Easter, this particular brand of pessimism is rarely appreciated or well received: once we are standing on the verge of Easter, it can be quite easy, and possibly quite natural, to cast away memories of Lent and Holy Week, the challenge of things given up, the hunger pangs of fasting, the perhaps 'too close for comfort' moments of self-reflection, making way for the gorging on chocolate and vapid cuteness of chicks hatching from eggs and the sunny skies and smell of freshly mown lawns on the horizon. This Easter, however, I wonder if we are called to keep these two opposing forces of Good Friday and Easter Sunday together, to keep vividly in mind that the same Jesus – risen from the dead, giving hope to disciples, breaking bread, dispensing Easter eggs – is precisely the same Man hanging

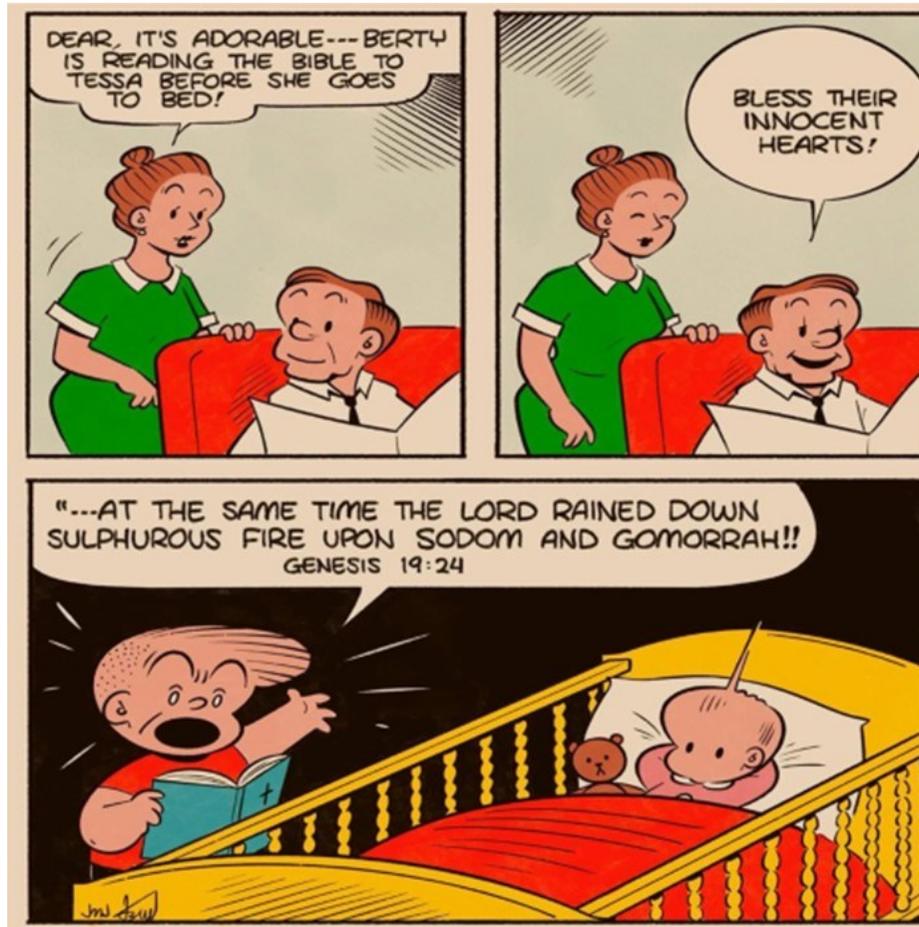
bloodied and abandoned on the cross, the same man flogged and spat on – that, graphically, in his body and life are held these same two realities. If we lose sight of this, we will have little to offer our community, the world, as it continues on its course, ever more battered and bruised. The world seems to be growing increasingly tired of people offering fairy tale endings and solutions. If we can still see Jesus, battered and bruised but undefeated, walking by our side in the midst of our personal and global chaos, then maybe Easter becomes a little less like Sleeping Beauty and a little more like the events of the bible.

In our Church the stations of the cross go up during Lent, yet these are not a depressing devotional tool, grudgingly put up on Ash Wednesday and then quickly hidden as soon as Easter arrives, lest we dwell any longer than absolutely necessary on the darker side of human living. They are, in fact, one of the most compassionate and hopeful objects a church can display during Easter and throughout the year: a covenant of solidarity with those who are not yet raised out of misfortune but need to know that Christ is walking beside them. They open up to those who are distressed and heavy laden that they are walking the journey of God, that the heavy burdens of their life form part of the same cross that Jesus is carrying with them – not rising up and abandoning them as quickly as possible but remaining with them until they are ready, or able, to take God's outstretched hand and rise from their struggle. For those who, this Easter, still feel the weight of the cross, the rejection of others, the struggle with forces beyond their control, we need to be a church which is for them and with them, to show a God who, though going before them, has not left them.

Any Easter, but especially this Easter, mustn't be a fairy tale ending, quickly yanking the Gospel message out of the depths of our human experience into the realms of platitude and idealism. Instead it should be the promise that 'though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear'. (Ps 27) We shall not be defeated, neither shall we be lost in fear, for there is one who has suffered more, endured more, confronted more than any of the terrors that this world can produce,

and if he could stand in the breach and rise from all he encountered there, then so can we. This Easter, Christ is indeed risen, but he is not apart from our pain but in our pain. He does not depart from us but draws us more closely into himself; our suffering, though real, is not final, and while we still experience it, we do not do so alone, but are joined by one who has given us the strength to 'bear all things, believe all things, hope all things' (1 Cor 13), who gives us of his own risen life so that, no matter what we encounter in the world, we shall be undefeated.

Rev Seamus Hargrave





A veiled article

One of my earliest memories is going into church during Holy Week and seeing the church veiled. I remember how unsettling it was, how bare and uncomfortable the church felt. The image is impressed upon my mind because it is one of the first moments I remember that I would call a “religious experience”. As I looked at the veiled statues and felt how wrong and unfamiliar the church I was so used to had become, I thought “This must be how Jesus felt.”

The veiling of images towards the end of Lent is one of the most dramatic and striking ways that we can manifest the emotions of Holy Week for our community. Strangely, we are not entirely sure where the practice came from: all we know is that it has happened for over a millennium and that it probably has its origins in the Early Church where, during Lent, a great veil would be put between the people and the celebration of the Eucharist to represent the way that sin obscures our vision of God. That said, no one can actually give a singular reason for why it started. In truth this probably means that different regions and cultures started it for different reasons and that these have gradually amalgamated as the Church became more aware of its universal identity. Certainly by the late Middle Ages veiling during Lent was practised across Christendom and, interestingly, is one of the few Lenten traditions neither condemned at the reformation, nor made illegal in England. Like the Hot Cross bun it has survived and thus is still be seen in Lutheran churches throughout the world to this day! But why, then, are so few Anglicans used to this custom today?

Well, whilst the idea of veiling the church wasn't condemned, a lot of religious imagery was. The churches became radically plainer in the

reformation's wake and so, too, did the number of things to be veiled. A plainer church meant the purpose of veiling was lost, so in many areas the practice fell into abeyance. Fortunately, even in the most extreme wings of the Church of England the iconoclastic puritan reign has given way to a more affirming attitude, where even those whose roots are very much in the Protestant identity of the Church can go on icon writing courses, or theatrically try to recreate scenes from the life of Jesus. Churches have again become hubs of art and beauty, and with God's glory in art and beauty returned to our churches, so too has come the clash of majestic glory at a time when our minds are focused on the mournful and darker side of humanity. The opportunity to restore the ancient tradition of veiling has returned. But why do it?

Some explain the veiling of images as part of the church's dramatic reliving of the Holy Week narrative. St John tells us that after driving the money lenders out of the temple Jesus went into hiding (John 8:59) and so the whole church participates, in a sense also hiding its splendour in the same way that Holy Week hides the divinity of Christ as we see upfront and in person the fullness of Christ's humanity. The veiling of images is a way the very building of the Church throws itself into the passion narrative, a reminder that what Jesus is doing is for the whole world, not just me, not just humanity even. As Jesus was stripped bare on the cross, so the Church, Christ's body on earth, is stripped bare as it joins him in the passion, an extension of the stripping of the altars.

The second reason for veiling is primarily psychological: what has been described in history as "a fasting of the eyes", as our Lenten fast intensifies in the weeks of Passiontide, it spreads out to the other senses of the body as well. You will notice more moments of silence in our Holy Week worship. The idea is to minimise the visual/sensual distractions and beauty, forcing our eyes, our minds and our senses to dwell on the stark reality of Christ's passion, with only the bare essentials of Christian life and worship remaining. We strip ourselves of the comfort and solidarity of the saints, the beauty of worship, as we open ourselves to the isolation and rejection of Christ's final days.

It is for this reason that the crucifix on the rood screen is the one image left unveiled, so that we can focus and constantly re-focus on this central point of faith in Holy Week.

Finally, veiling is a sign of mourning. For most of Christian history, those in deep mourning have worn veils as an expression of grief. The Church, as the



bride of Christ, goes into mourning for her beloved as he suffers the passion, and visually encourages her people to do the same, to empathetically feel the same grief of the disciples years ago, so that we might enter, compassionately, into the events of our redemption. By this same token, the veiling of particular saints and prophets is an inclusion of them into our worship and liturgy, remembering that they, too, alive in God's presence, still full members of the church catholic, share in our worship and liturgy, are a part of our community, and so are visually included in our commemoration of/ participation in these days.

The events of Holy Week and their liturgies are the most vivid and dramatic of the Christian year. As we participate in this, we include our Church, more than just a building but a place of living stones witnessing to the community, the truth, life and hope we profess, in our Holy Week celebrations. Our veils are an invitation to people to feel the events of Holy Week. People stopping and asking about them is an opportunity for us to talk about Holy Week and speak something of our faith and witness to them. As our church and world become more shrouded, let us look forward to the day that the veil shall be rent in twain, and all people shall see the glory of God.

Rev Seamus Hargrave

Post Script: It just remains to say thank you to Judith with the whole craft team, as well as press-ganged recruits, who have made all these veils and enabled us to re-establish this profound tradition. A big thank you to all of you, and we all look forward to entering you in the Great British Sewing Bee next year!

Another busy Saturday

Saturday 14 March was earmarked for our first 'Open Doors' day, as described by Rosemary in last month's *Inspire*. It didn't work out quite as we had planned, but we nevertheless achieved a great deal.

First, the sidesmen/welcomers held a brief meeting during which we talked about and updated our notes from last year's meeting. A casual observer might assume that all this team has to do is hand out the hymn books, but there are many other important aspects of this duty: these are the people who are 'the face of St John's', the first point of welcome to those who come though through our doors, and we are very grateful to them.

The first part of our Open Doors day over, we moved over to making the Mothering Sunday posies. Indeed, some poor souls who thought they had come to do vacuuming or even digging, were press-ganged onto the assembly line of daffodils, greenery, rubber band, moist cotton wool, foil and twirly ribbon which constitute St John's Mothering Sunday posies and which were distributed to everyone the following day. Some visitors made their own and took them away.

Meanwhile there was some significant vacuuming and dusting and tidying up going on elsewhere in the church.



Some managed to snatch a brief time away from church before the Kindness Festival 'Songs and Scones' event began. This was so joyful! The church was filled with singers – Songbirds, the Youth Choir, The Ukrainian Choir– and their supporters, who spilled out into the sunny forecourt during the all-important cake bit of the programme. The St John's welcome team was kept busy dealing with the loo queues and, at one point, administering first aid to

an over-exuberant young singer who took a tumble while tearing round the forecourt.

While some of us dragged ourselves home at the end of the afternoon, Saturday was not over, of course, until the 5 pm Vigil Eucharist ended.

This day reflected St John's at its best – open and welcoming, witnessing and worshipping. Thank you everyone!

Janet Caudwell

Sidesmen and welcomers

I allude to the Sidesmen and Welcomers meeting in my 'busy Saturday' piece, but I wanted to write a little more about this informal team who have been working overtime recently.



Whenever we have a funeral in St John's, an email goes out to the varied group of people who can be relied on to deal with the sound, marshal cars in the forecourt and give out service books. And by a miracle, enough people reply to offer their support. This is immensely reassuring to the person taking the service, and also to the funeral director and the people who mourn.

There is no set list of duties, but unobtrusively, extra chairs are put out, the loo rolls are checked, all the brass is put out, the oil in the candles is checked, people are directed to the loo, all are welcomed. Occasionally during the service, someone needs some extra attention and the sidesmen/ welcomers calmly produce water, make phone calls, comfort.

This is always a big undertaking, but recently our resources have been stretched by the necessity to hold two services in one day and then we have had to call on two separate teams. Two big funerals, one in the morning, one in the afternoon were quite challenging, but separate efficient teams emerged and both funerals went off eventfully but smoothly.

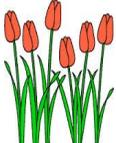
A rather different problem presented itself last month when a very big

funeral in the morning was followed by a Frome Area Christians Together service for the World Day of Prayer in the afternoon (with the Lunchtime Eucharist in the middle). By another miracle, for the funeral we managed to have 'all hands to the pumps', while a different set of people stepped forward to take part in the WDP, act as welcomers, take the collection and serve refreshments.

As always, these duties don't end when the service ends. There are candles to be put out, brass and microphones to be put away, pews tidied, cups washed up and collection counted (in the case of the WDP service), the vestry locked, the forecourt chains padlocked. Only then can our gallant volunteers go home, sit down with a cup of tea, or something stronger, and rest before the next thing has to be done!

Thank you all.

Janet Caudwell



St John's Church Spring Fair

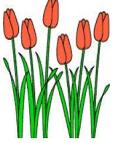
Saturday 11 April
10am to 2pm

Cakes & Refreshments – Tombola & Raffle
Books, Jewellery, Crafts – Bric-a-brac & Toys

Donations of all goods would be very welcome.
In advance of the day please put donations behind the South Porch curtain or bring in on Friday 10 April.
Please contact Mandy (467828) if you would like us to collect your donations.

Please bring perishable items in on the morning of the sale.

And do please support us on the day!



Well Dressing 2026: Calling all artists - any age!

If you would like to help in decorating the display boards for the Well Dressing this year – theme 'The Creation' – please let me know.

Thank you, **Alison Henderson**

Also at St John's during March ...

World Day of Prayer on 6th March



ick

Window Wonderland during Kindness Week



Photos: Angela Pater

'Surprises in the Garden' at '4th at 4pm' on 22nd March



Photo: Tony Hodges

Notes from the PCC - March 2026

The PCC (Parochial Church Council) met on 10 March.

The main topics discussed were:

Finance: The accounts for 2025 were discussed and approved. It had been a very successful year, marked by a significant increase in income. Planned Giving rose by 37%, while both collections and donations increased by more than 50%. Thanks were recorded to Christine Holland, our Treasurer, for all her work on the accounts and throughout the year.

Buildings and maintenance: The PCC noted that the joists under the north choir stalls had been repaired; further repair was needed under the westernmost seat of the north pews, so this was out of use at present. There would be a temporary repair of bitumen over the lead to keep the Lady Chapel roof watertight while funds were being raised for major works. Repairs were needed to the boiler, but these would be scheduled after Easter when the boiler could be switched off.

Bells: The specification for works to the bells and tower had been sent out to several companies. Visits were being arranged with bell companies when requested.

Safeguarding: The action plan was discussed, and it was noted that St John's was in a good position; a couple of PCC members needed to complete the mandatory courses.

St John's School: It was noted that the headteacher had resigned, and interviews would take place shortly for her replacement. The school system in Frome was under review, possibly changing to two-tier rather than three-tier.

Health and Safety: Pete Connew had kindly taken on the lead on this.

Elections: At the APCM (11.30am on 17 May) there would be elections for PCC members and Deanery Synod members.

Next meeting: the next PCC meeting would be immediately after the APCM. There would be a Standing Committee meeting on 9 April.

PCC meeting agendas are posted on the noticeboard by the north-west door. Minutes are posted up after they have been approved at the following PCC.

Angela Pater, PCC Secretary

VIVALDI'S TRUMPETS

SENSATIONAL TRUMPETS
AND BAROQUE STRINGS



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8TH MAY 2026 7.30PM



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amandacrook@blueyonder.co.uk

The Bristol Ensemble returns to St John's with a programme full of energy and colour. The programme includes:

- George Frideric Handel — Trumpet Suite in D major, HWV 341
- Johann Sebastian Bach — Three chorale preludes
- Henry Purcell — Sonata for Trumpet and Strings
- George Frideric Handel — Concerto Grosso, Op. 6 No. 1 in G major
- Henry Purcell — Chacony in G minor, Z.730
- Antonio Vivaldi — Concerto for Strings in G minor, RV 157
- Antonio Vivaldi — Concerto for Two Violins in A minor, RV 522
- Francesco Geminiani — La Folia – Concerto Grosso
- Antonio Vivaldi — Concerto for Two Trumpets

For more information on the Ensemble: www.bristolensemble.com

To be a pilgrim

It may just be the strange algorithm that dictates what I see on my social media feeds, but it seems to be the season for pilgrimages.



Remembering back to a very busy Sunday at the beginning of

March, when the first mini-market of the year was in full swing, I wonder how many people were aware of a group of people being guided round our church, before being led through the north porch door and down the steps of the Via Crucis? They were a group of pilgrims, organised by the British Pilgrim Trust, and they were walking from our church to Mells.

More recently I have been getting daily updates from the Cathedral Music Trust whose CEO, Jonathan Mayes, is currently completing the second, and final phase of a 3,000-mile cycling pilgrimage, visiting all the choral music foundations that are supported by his charity. And, of course, Dame Sarah Mullally is making history by walking from London to Canterbury (87 miles), where she will be installed as the first woman to hold the post of Archbishop. When she set out on 17 March, local celebrity and book-seller Luke Sherlock, who has his own online presence as the 'English Pilgrim', accompanied her on the first stage of her journey.

So just what is a pilgrimage? AI informs me that it is:

a transformational, intentional journey to a sacred or meaningful site, blending physical effort—often walking—with spiritual reflection, prayer, or personal growth. Unlike tourism, it serves as a devotional act, connecting individuals to a holy place, saint, or deeper meaning, often offering a break from daily routine for contemplation ...

... so it is more than just a pleasant country walk. It certainly seems to have become a very popular endeavour over the past few years – it has even generated a number of popular TV series, religious

broadcasting meeting reality TV as a group of celebrities undertake to walk a challenging and historic pilgrim path. While I am concerned that this seems to be rapidly becoming the BBC's only attempt to engage with religion at Easter, it does become almost compulsive viewing, as the participants, with wide ranging faith backgrounds, meet the challenges of completing a long and sometimes gruelling walk, while at the same time exploring their own beliefs. While some of the early series have followed some of the traditional European pilgrim trails, notably the Camino de Santiago, the Via Francigena and the Fatima Way, this year the pilgrims will walk (and take buses!) from Whitby to Holy Island, in the footsteps of Saints Hilda, Oswald and Cuthbert.

Pilgrimage has been an important element of many world faiths for thousands of years. The ancient Greeks and Romans journeyed to consult their gods at oracles such as Delphi or Dodona; in Persia the Zoroastrians had sacred sites where they would gather for important religious festivals; Buddhists walk to places historically associated with the Buddha, such as Lumbini in Nepal and Wat Pho in Thailand. For Muslims the *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) remains a mandatory religious duty to be undertaken at least once during their lifetime .

Pilgrimage has been central to Christianity for the past 2000 years, as people have wanted to see at first hand the sites of Jesus's ministry. When, as now, the Holy Land has been inaccessible, pilgrims have instead journeyed to other significant holy sites often associated with Saints and miracles. Last year Seamus and Jay made a pilgrimage to Lourdes, and this year, after Easter, their destination is Italy, where they will offer up prayers for us all as they visit some historic churches. In so doing they will be joining with an estimated 250,000 Britons who will undertake some sort of pilgrimage this year, in what is being described by some as a 'Pilgrimage Revival'.

Not all 21st century pilgrimages have religion or spirituality as a focus; there are groups of people who gather to mark other significant events. In his book: *On this Holy Island*, Oliver Smith writes about walking ancient routes, such as The Ridgeway, which crosses Wiltshire, but he also describes the annual Anfield pilgrimages when

footballers gather to remember those who lost their lives in the Hillsborough tragedy of 1989.

I have never undertaken a pilgrimage, but I can see the attraction – just as long as I can end each day of walking with a hot bath and comfortable bed. Maybe I could just do a local ‘church crawl’ around our deanery – would anyone join me?

Rosemary McCormick

St John’s Women’s group

The group was established to gather regularly for friendship and social activities and is chaired by June Barnes MBE. Membership is free and new members are very welcome!

Our next meeting is on Monday 27th April at 7pm, and it will be an outing by car followed by a bar snack/meal at a local pub. There is list in church to sign up for this.

Our programme for the rest of the year is set out below. There will be flyers in church for each event – or contact Jan Scudamore or Alison Henderson for further details.

Alison Henderson

Date	Activity
Mon 27 April	Outing by car with snack/meal at a local pub.
Mon 1 June	Cinema outing
Mon 29 June	Annual Summer Barbecue
Sun 30 August	Cream tea at East Woodlands followed by service in St. Katherine's.
Mon 21 Sept	A talk about the famous Frome Carnival
Mon 12 Oct	A talk/ practical demonstration – Flower arranging
Mon 23 Nov	Annual General Meeting – followed by a general knowledge and picture quiz.
Mon 7 Dec	Christmas Party
Wed 16 Dec	Bennett Centre Christmas Lunch



Christmas Shoe Box Appeal: thank you!

Rich Parsons, Operations Manager at
House of Opportunity, writes:

Thank you to everyone at **St John the Baptist Parish Church**. Your wonderful donation of 75 shoeboxes to our 2025 Christmas Box Appeal helped to spread joy to thousands of boys, girls, families and communities in Bulgaria. Well done!

Thank you!



He goes on to say: “In partnership with local churches and Christian organisations throughout Southeast Europe, we tackle big social issues all year round, such as human trafficking, extreme poverty and the marginalisation of vulnerable people, including Ukrainian refugees. Projects include the House of Opportunity Programme, which provides a safe and secure transition to independence for at-risk young state-care leavers, helping them to avoid poverty and exploitation at the hands of human traffickers.

We would be delighted if St John’s could consider supporting us in some further way, for example:

- Asking us to come and talk about the work we do in a service.
- Signing up for our e-newsletter and prayer updates.
- Nominating us for financial support from your church.”



Alison Henderson

News from other churches

St Katharine's, East Woodlands

We have planted a Prunus tree in memory of our valued choir member and friend, Steve Bainbridge, who died at the beginning of last year. It is just coming into blossom and will lift our hearts as we walk into church.



Work on removing the bells, making the beams safe and renewing the ropes is due to start at the end of March. It will be wonderful to hear them again soon!

Good Friday, 3rd April, 4pm: Hymns and Readings. My favourite service of the year. Please do join us if you can.

Village Hall, East Woodlands

Date for your diaries: Fri 1 May, Pop-up Pub 7pm onwards.

Pam Chapman



25 April 10:00 – 16:00

THE WISDOM TRADITION

EXPLORING CYNTHIA'S BOURGEOULT'S RADICAL ACCOUNT OF JESUS AS A TEACHER OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS. INCLUDES VIDEO MATERIAL.



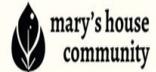
Suggested donation £10 - includes a soup lunch



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DIARY DATES – APRIL 2026

April

Wed	1	9.15am	St John's School Easter Service
Thu	2	2pm	Craft and Conversation
Sat	4	9am	United Prayer at St John's
		10am-12 noon	Saturday Working Party
		10am	Intercessions Team meeting
Wed	8	6.30pm	<i>Inspired to Read</i> Book Club (BC)
Thu	9	7pm	Standing Committee meeting
Sat	11	10am-2pm	Spring Fair at St John's
Thu	16	2pm	Craft and Conversation
Sat	18	3pm	Baptism
Fri	24	2pm	Hospital Service
Sat	25	10am-5pm	The Wisdom Tradition (Mary's House)
Mon	27	7pm	St John's Women's Group outing
Tues	28	11am	Julian Meeting
Thu	30	2pm	Craft and Conversation

May

Sat	2	9am	United Prayer at St John's
Sun	3	11.15am-2pm	Café & Mini-Market
Wed	6	6.30pm	<i>Inspired to Read</i> Book Club
Fri	8	7.30pm	'Vivaldi's Trumpets', Bristol Ensemble at St John's

**There is no Café & Mini-Market in April
as the first Sunday is Easter Day**

The next one is:

Sunday 3 May - 11.15am to 2pm

Refreshments and light lunches.

Cakes, bakes and preserves. Books and bric-a-brac



SERVICES at ST JOHN's – APRIL 2026

Regular weekly services

Sundays

- 8.45am Online service via Zoom – contact admin for link & code
- 10.00am Choral Eucharist*
* Palm Sunday 29th March—procession at 9.45am
* Easter Sunday 5th April
- 5.00pm Evening worship in the Lady Chapel:
(4.00pm on Week 1: Evening Prayer
the 4th Week 2: Benediction and Evening Prayer
Sunday) Week 3: Come and Sing Evensong
Week 4: 4th @ 4.00 'The Good Shepherd'
Week 5: Flexible Fifth

Mondays

- 8.45am Morning Prayer in the Ken Chapel

Fridays

- 12.30pm Lunchtime Eucharist in the Lady Chapel

Saturdays

- 5.00pm Evening Eucharist in the Lady Chapel

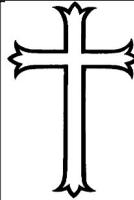
Additional services in April

For Holy Week and Easter services, see opposite

- Mon 6 12.30pm Eucharist – Easter Monday
- Thu 23rd 12.30pm Eucharist – St George
- Sat 25th 8.45am Morning prayer – St Mark
12.30pm Eucharist – St Mark

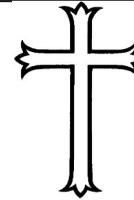
Note: 'Diary dates' has moved to page 19 for this edition

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER at ST JOHN'S



Palm Sunday 29 March

8.45am Zoom service
9.45 am Procession from St Aldhelm's Well for
10am Eucharist
5pm Words and music for Palm Sunday



Monday 30 March

8.45am Morning prayer
7pm Zoom Service for Holy Week

Tuesday 31 March

11am Julian Meeting
7pm Stations of the Cross

Wednesday 1 April

7pm Tenebrae service

Maundy Thursday 2 April

7pm Eucharist of the Last Supper with foot washing
8.30pm The Watch
10pm Compline

Good Friday 3 April

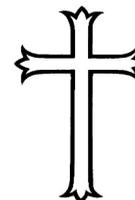
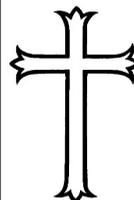
9am Service of Preparation at Via Crucis (FACT)
12 noon-3pm Three Hours Devotion:
12 noon Stations at the Via Crucis
1pm Private prayer
2pm Liturgy of Good Friday
7pm Film: Cabrini

Holy Saturday 4 April

7pm Easter Vigil

Easter Day Sunday 5 April

8.45am Zoom service
10am Choral Eucharist
5pm Said Evensong



Wells Cathedral Clock

My father was an enthusiastic member of the local YMCA in the 1930s and spent most of his summer holidays hiking with them around the west of England, having started by taking the paddle steamer from Penarth Pier to Weston-Super-Mare, Lynmouth or Ilfracombe. He often talked with great enthusiasm about the astronomical clock he found at Wells Cathedral.

My childhood, like most of its time, was almost devoid of clocks. My grandparents had a solid black one on their sideboard, and my parents a brown wedding present clock with a large glass door which needed winding up every Sunday morning. The local church had a clock on the tower, but yew trees mainly obscured it. No one in my family had a watch, so a clock with multiple dials, bells which rang and other moving parts was utterly fascinating to a small child.

The Wells Cathedral clock is still in the north transept of the cathedral, pretty well as in the 1930s. As an astronomical clock it is one of the group of famous 14th to 16th century astronomical clocks to be found in the west of England. The surviving mechanism, dated to around 1390, was replaced in the 19th century, and was eventually moved to the Science Museum in London, where it continues to operate.

The dial represents the geocentric view of the universe, with the Sun and Moon revolving round a central fixed Earth. It is one of the very



few clocks still extant that shows the philosophical model of the universe as it was understood at the time the clock was built: that the earth was the centre of the universe. This was before Copernicus published his theory that the Earth revolved around the Sun with all the other planets

and when religious authorities punished anyone who believed him.

The interior dial of the clock shows this model of the universe.

Against a background of stars, the Sun (the large gilded star on the outer ring) moves in a circle, and indicates the time using a 24-hour dial. marked in Roman numerals from I to XII, then from I to XII again. Noon is at the top of the dial reflecting the position of the Sun in the sky at this time. In the corners, four angels hold the four cardinal winds. Minutes are indicated by a smaller star on the ring inside.

The inner circle shows the Moon; the central Moon symbol is much larger than the outer Sun symbol. A pointer indicates the age of the Moon, between 1 and 30 days. The black and white disk above the centre shows the Moon's phase. The white disk rotates once a month. The inscription around the moon phase indicator says '*sphericus archetypum globus hic monstrat microcosm*', or 'This spherical globe here shows the archetypal microcosm'. Opposite the Moon circle is a weighted pivoted disc containing a small painting representing the Moon. The inscription reads: '*Sic peragrat Phoebe*' or 'So progresses Phoebe.'

At the centre of the dial, the ball and the clouds represent the Earth. Above the clock and to the right is a figure, known as Jack Blandifers, or Blandiver, who hits a bell with a hammer held in his right hand and two bells hung beneath him with his heels. A set of jousting knights also chase each other every 15 minutes, with the head of one being knocked over. My father said this represented Judas Iscariot, but I have found no other evidence of this, and he may have made it up or repeated a local guide who made it up.

Other local astronomical clocks that can all be visited easily from Frome are to be found at:

- Salisbury Cathedral, which has the mechanism but no dial;
- Exeter Cathedral, reputed to be the source of the Nursery Rhyme '*Hickory Dickory, Dock, the mouse ran up the clock*';
- Ottery St Mary, where the Earth is represented by a black ball and the Sun by a gold ball which rotates round the outermost ring of the dial;

- Wimborne Minster, where, on the outside north wall of the minster is a full-size soldier, called a quarterjack, which strikes the quarter hours.

There are many other astronomical clocks in churches or public squares throughout the world. The oldest record of such a clock is the '**Cosmic Engine**', designed and built in China in 1092, which was a hydromechanical clock tower about 30 feet high indirectly powered by a rotating wheel driven by water power. The original no longer exists, but a full-sized working replica can be found in Taiwan, built from Su Song's original descriptions and his mechanical drawings.

From the old to the new. In Europe and built in 2009 is the **Stara Bystrica Clock** (see photo), in a town in Northern Slovakia. This small town claims the world's most accurate and youngest astronomical clock in the world. This has already become a favourite for tourists and is set in a wooden Clock Tower that displays many important figures from Slovakian history.



Chris Lewis



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Metaphorically speaking

There were many ecclesiastical pleasures to be had at Seamus's Fashionable Faith extravaganza last year, none more so than a pelican making a welcome appearance on one of the garments. This is an image that has long fascinated me - the pelican piercing its own breast to feed its young with blood. It is often explained as a symbol of Christ's sacrifice, his blood nourishing believers through the Eucharist. In some versions the pelican has killed its young and is offering its blood for resurrection. It originated in the second century Greek text the *Physiologus*, a bestiary whose moral tales of often mythical beasts became immensely popular in the Middle Ages. It features in one of our own St Aldhelm's riddles "*The gleaming pelican who gulps a stream of sea in his broad throat*" (Riddle 59).

If you like this sort of thing then visit Venice. Churches there are full of symbolic mosaics. For instance, this one of two chickens carrying a fox suspended on a pole. It's not hard to see the spiritual significance of the predator transformed into a captive and the triumph of the vulnerable.

To the untutored eye, though, such images can be baffling if the intended meaning is absent. Yet paradoxically having the meaning of a symbol explained can be a disappointment – mystery becomes mundane, curiosity is dulled. Thinking about metaphors rather than symbols may help us here. Andrei



*The funeral of the Fox
(SS Maria and Donato, Murano)*

Tarkovsky, the Russian film-maker, whose films are rich in enigmatic images, makes a helpful distinction between symbols and metaphors. "*A symbol contains within itself a definite meaning, certain intellectual formulae, while a metaphor is an image.*" We can engage with an image in many ways if we allow it to fill our attention and summon emotions, associations and memories, as well as ideas. We can create our own metaphors without needing to know the intention of the image maker or their use of symbols.

One day last summer, walking in Armenia, I climbed up into the steep wooded hills of the Debed valley to reach the ruined Kobayr monastery. Weary, I sat drinking from a spring when my eye was caught by an intriguingly decorated stone slab about a metre and a half high. The central motif was unambiguously a cross, but it was unlike any other I had seen. It was embellished with such a profusion of intricately carved images of nature that it seemed alive. The points of the arms and head of the cross seemed to be bursting into bloom.



Khachkar at Sanahedin monastery

Vines curled around and within the outline of the cross and it seemed to stand in a bed of flames and was garlanded with leaves. There were birds, pomegranates, suns and stars. I was transfixed by the beauty of this strange object, at once familiar and alien.

That evening I wrote in my journal: *"It's the cross as a sign of life, growth and nature, not an instrument of suffering or atonement. There's an irresistible dialogue between the permanence of stone and the sense of life bursting out, between the geometric precision of the carving and an irrepressible organic blossoming. It emerges phoenix-like from billowing flames, rising above myriad concentric circles that seem infinite."* Looking at the stone I felt myself being drawn outwards and upward. It was a moment of exhilaration and wonder which needed no interpretation.

I think several factors contributed to the power of this experience. My long walks in remote landscapes tend to attune me to fresh experience, especially when, as here, I had been alone for several days. At the time I was tired from the climb and had little in my mind save getting to the top of the valley. My cultural ignorance created space for surprise.

Across Armenia you find these stones everywhere, not only in churches but in public parks and civic buildings. They are called *khachkars* and reflect the centrality of Christianity to Armenia's sense of national identity. The earliest ones date from the 9th century when the first Christian king Ashot superseded Arab rule. Their iconographic

traditions are rich and complex with various stylistic lineages arising from fabled mediaeval master carvers. Resting in the Debed hills, I knew nothing of this, and my naivety freed me to react intuitively. Had I done my homework I would doubtless have admired the artistry but I suspect the impact would have been less powerful.

As I visited more monasteries, mostly small unused churches in remote places which had escaped Soviet destruction, I learned about the stonemasons who turned *khachkars* into such a distinctive art form in the 13th and 14th centuries, and about the complex systems of symbols and historical references they employed. The unusual eight points of the cross reference the Beatitudes, and the braided tendrils signify the complexity and fertility of creation. Vines are not simply decorative but embody a theology of the abundant joys of heaven and Jesus's own metaphor of the "true vine". (John 15:1).

Over time *khachkars* accrued other meanings – memorialising a victory in battle or possessed of miraculous powers of healing or averting disaster. None of this mattered to me. What the *khachkar* offered me was an al fresco notion of faith rooted in creation. It transported me to Galilee and the hills of the Korazim plateau where Jesus taught in the open air with metaphors invoking the natural world rather than traditional symbols or codified beliefs.

UNESCO lists *khachkars* as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It notes drily that they act as "facilitating communication between the secular and divine". Perhaps that's a simple way of naming the transcendental moment that I experienced in the Debed valley that day.

Simon Keyes simon@onion.org.uk

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Sacred Art 4
Maundy Thursday: Jesus washing Peter's feet



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This year Maundy Thursday falls on 2nd April. Mostly Christians remember the evening of this day because the Church commemorates the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist; but the word 'Maundy' comes from the Latin word *mandatum*, meaning 'commandment'. This refers to John 13.34, where Jesus says to his disciples: "I give you a new commandment: Love one another".

This links to an event found only in John's Gospel: the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus. In John 13.6-10, Peter resists Jesus's attempt to wash his feet: 'You will never wash my feet'. Jesus replies that if he doesn't do this, Peter will have no part in him. At which point, Peter asks for his head and hands to be washed as well. He seems to think some sort of bodily purification is intended.

The Johannine portrayal of the man who will become 'the rock' (1.40-

42) on which the early Christian community will be built (21.15-19) is mixed. On the one hand Peter can say of Jesus, “You have the words of eternal life” (6.66-69), and on the other he can mistake the meaning of the washing. It is really a lesson in humility. Peter’s heart is in the right place, but his comprehension is limited.

This painting (a 19th century oil on canvas) provides a close-up of Jesus washing the feet of Peter. The artist does this in order to make us, the viewers, feel as if we are present in the room, maybe even participants in the event. The portrayal is realistic but for the golden halo around Jesus’s head, and the palette is muted (with olive green predominant bottom left and dark brown top right).

Note how Jesus and Peter are placed on a bottom left to top right diagonal, which means the Son of God is lower than his follower: a deliberate disruption of hierarchical expectation. Peter, who in the Gospel is horrified by this, is shown to be deeply disturbed. Look at his tight pose and clenched hands, and at the wrinkles on his forehead. He does not want to be there!

Then look at the background. The other disciples are shown still sitting at the table of the Last Supper. The man third from the left puts his hands to his head as if to say, “I can’t be seeing this.” On the far left is Judas, whose bag with thirty pieces of silver is on the table. He is putting on his sandals, ready to go out and betray Jesus. His position, physical and moral, pushes him to the edge of the proceedings.

So what is all the fuss about? In 1st century AD/CE Jewish society foot washing was the work of a slave. This is Jesus’s way of disabusing his disciples of the notion that the Messiah is coming as a warrior king. This is the work, rather, of the Suffering Servant; and he goes on to make the point that, to be his disciples, they must take the same place and show love for one another through serving each other.

This theme appealed to the painter Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), an artist on the fringe of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. His most famous painting is ‘Work’, where he drew attention to the snobbery of the ruling class who despised manual workers while depending on

an army of servants to maintain their lavish lifestyle. In the present picture he creates a 'Jesus for the Common Man'.

This reminded me of some comments made by Roland Walls, a hermit priest. "It seems to me that Christ was looking around for an elite. A back-to-front elite, who would follow him, and who would become because they were small the salt of the world. If you got some people to live the reverse of what everybody else was, then you might have a little effect, which nothing else could have."

The medieval traditions associated with Maundy Thursday survive in two places. In churches you will find priests or bishops washing the feet of men and women as a sign of humility and service in line with Christ's commandment. Originally they would have washed the feet of the poorest members of the community, whereas today the stress would be on members of the congregation.

Then there is the royal tradition of distributing alms to the poor, which has become a very formal matter of the monarch visiting an Anglican cathedral and handing out specially minted money to people chosen for their service to the community. In the Middle Ages the almsgiving took the form of distributing clothing, but in 1662 Charles II instituted the making of the special coinage.

Mark Golder

Hallelujah Chorus

I cannot recall how long ago when I first heard the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's *Messiah*. It could have been from playing it on the piano from a score borrowed from my grandmother or more likely from the Good Friday performances by the Welsh conductor Mansel Thomas in Cardiff that I went every year from about the age of eight.

A gang of us would pack into Mr Palmer's van – usually used by a local nurseryman to deliver flowers – for the journey. We were pretty stiff by the time we got to the concert, but this was the only reliable way of getting there and back. And for many churchgoers in the 1950s, attending Handel's *Messiah* was as much part of the Easter celebrations as the services themselves. All Welshmen sang, of

course, and knew the score well. So we were very critical of the soloists and orchestra. We often compared the performance adversely with those from the previous year. One year we dismissed a soloist as a 'drawing room tenor' because of his lack of power.



I was fascinated by the way the audience rose together as the Chorus started, echoing the fact that King George is supposed to have stood up at its first performance and all stood up with him. There is no evidence for this, but by Handel's death in 1759, this had become accepted practice and still happens in most performances in English-speaking countries. But a warning to the Britisher who tries to stand up in Germany or Switzerland, as I twice tried to do. You are likely to be met with cries of '*sit down*' or '*silly Englishman*'.

Since those days I have sung the Chorus many times myself and know the bass part by heart. I cannot recall all the choirs I have sung with, but these include the Glamorgan Youth Choir, the Treasury Singers, the Chichester Singers and the Corsley Festival Choir. My favourite part is when the trumpet matches the tune in 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords'. If this goes well I go home happy.

Handel was born in Halle in Saxony Anhalt in what is now Central Germany. As an adult he moved around Europe gaining experience as a composer in several music positions on continental Europe before permanently settling in England in 1712. In London he worked with the Royal Academy of Music and Covent Garden. Early on he wrote orchestral works and operas, but audience expectations changed, and he moved to writing oratorios such as *Esther*, *Deborah*, *Saul* and *Israel in Egypt*. In July 1741, his librettist, Charles Jennens, sent him the Messiah using texts from the King James Bible and the Coverdale Book of Psalms, which is why the words are so familiar to churchgoers, dealing with prophecies about Jesus, his life, death and ascension into heaven.

Handel was greatly inspired by the words and had the music written within 24 days, an astonishing feat. He started writing on 22 August and had completed it by 12 September, followed by two days of 'filling up' to produce the finished work on 14 September. This was only possible by using a few shortcuts such as recycling music he had used before. For example when singing the Hallelujah Chorus those familiar with the well-known Lutheran hymn *Wachet Auf* will find some familiar fragments: for example, compare 'The kingdom of this world' with '*what auf, der Brautgam kommt* – the bridegroom comes in sight' or 'And He shall reign for ever and ever' with '*Ihr musset ihm entgegen gehn* – you must go to meet him'. Several of the solos were adapted from operatic works completed several years before. At the end of the score Handel wrote 'Soli Deo Gloria – To God be the glory'. A week later he started the oratorio *Samson*, also finishing it within a month. Modern composers could not match this.

The first performance of *Messiah* was in Dublin in 1742, then the second most important English-speaking city after London. Londoners first heard it a year later, although its reception was mixed, and many changes were then made to the score. Initially, there were some misgivings about such holy words being sung outside a church. But by 1750, this had become more acceptable, and annual performances were given at the Foundling Hospital, conducted by Handel until he died in 1759. A ticket for the first performance asked for 'Gentlemen to come without swords and ladies without hoops', to maximise the audience.

Messiah became even more popular after Handel's death. In England and the USA, the number of singers and players grew and grew, the largest recorded being in 1857 at the Crystal Palace when 2,000 singers and 500 players took part. The coming of recordings in the 20th century continued this trend: examples are the recordings by the Temple Square Mormon choir, with their massed rows of sopranos, all in identical dresses with identical necklaces, Malcolm Sargeant with his Huddersfield Choral Society in the 1940s and 50s, and the Royal Albert Hall performances where the audience were expected to bring

their own music and organise themselves into sopranos, altos, tenors and basses. This was another annual pilgrimage for me from St Mark, Wimbledon, in the 1980s. More recently preference has moved back to small scale performances 'as Handel would have wished'.

On the continent, the emphasis was on revising the orchestral parts to include more modern instruments: for example, Mozart changed the orchestral parts, eliminated the organ continuo, and added parts for flutes, clarinets, trombones and horns, recomposing some passages and rearranging others.

Chris Lewis



Admission ticket for the Foundling Hospital performance in May 1750

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Links in a Golden Chain 19
William Law (1686–1761)

When King George I ascended to the throne, priest William Law held a Fellowship at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. His conscience did not let him take the Oath of Allegiance to the Hanoverian monarch, and he was deprived of his position. He returned to Kingscliff, Northamptonshire, his birthplace, and devoted himself to pastoral work and a life of simplicity and spiritual reflection.

He wrote extensively, and his writings influenced a wide variety of his contemporaries, including the Wesley Brothers, William Wilberforce, and other leaders of the evangelical revival of the period, also Samuel Johnson and the historian Edward Gibbon. He was an admirer of the scientist Isaac Newton and the German protestant mystic Jakob Böhme. His translation of the latter's writings influenced later thinkers and writers, such as William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and other up to our present times.

His most famous text was entitled *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. It enjoyed wide circulation and has remained in print to the present day. Herewith his opening words:

“DEVOTION is neither private nor public prayer; but prayers, whether private or public, are particular parts or instances of devotion. Devotion signifies a life given, or devoted, to God.

He, therefore, is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God, who considers God in everything, who serves God in everything, who makes all the parts of his common life parts of piety, by doing everything in the Name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to His glory.

We readily acknowledge that God alone is to be the rule and measure of our prayers; that in them we are to look wholly unto Him, and act wholly for Him; that we are only to pray in such a manner, for such things, and such ends, as are suitable to His glory.

Now let anyone but find out the reason why he is to be thus strictly pious in his prayers, and he will find the same as strong a reason to be as strictly pious in all the other parts of his life. For there is not the

least shadow of a reason why we should make God the rule and measure of our prayers; why we should then look wholly unto Him, and pray according to His will; but what equally proves it necessary for us to look wholly unto God, and make Him the rule and measure of all the other actions of our life. For any ways of life, any employment of our talents, whether of our parts, our time, or money, that is not strictly according to the will of God, that is not for such ends as are suitable to His glory, are as great absurdities and failings, as prayers that are not according to the will of God. For there is no other reason why our prayers should be according to the will of God, why they should have nothing in them but what is wise, and holy, and heavenly; there is no other reason for this, but that our lives may be of the same nature, full of the same wisdom, holiness, and heavenly tempers, that we may live unto God in the same spirit that we pray unto Him. Were it not our strict duty to live by reason, to devote all the actions of our lives to God, were it not absolutely necessary to walk before Him in wisdom and holiness and all heavenly conversation, doing everything in His Name, and for His glory, there would be no excellency or wisdom in the most heavenly prayers. Nay, such prayers would be absurdities; they would be like prayers for wings, when it was no part of our duty to fly.



As sure, therefore, as there is any wisdom in praying for the Spirit of God, so sure is it, that we are to make that Spirit the rule of all our actions; as sure as it is our duty to look wholly unto God in our prayers, so sure is it that it is our duty to live wholly unto God in our lives. But we can no more be said to live unto God, unless we live unto Him in all the ordinary actions of our life, unless He be the rule and measure of all our ways, than we can be said to pray unto God, unless our prayers look wholly unto Him. So that unreasonable and absurd ways of life, whether in labour or diversion, whether they consume our time, or our money, are like unreasonable and absurd prayers, and are as truly an offence unto God.

It is for want of knowing, or at least considering this, that we see such a mixture of ridicule in the lives of many people. You see them strict as to some times and places of devotion, but when the service of the Church is over, they are but like those that seldom or never come there. In their way of life, their manner of spending their time and money, in their cares and fears, in their pleasures and indulgences, in their labour and diversions, they are like the rest of the world. This makes the loose part of the world generally make a jest of those that are devout, because they see their devotion goes no farther than their prayers, and that when they are over, they live no more unto God, till the time of prayer returns again; but live by the same humour and fancy, and in as full an enjoyment of all the follies of life as other people. This is the reason why they are the jest and scorn of careless and worldly people; not because they are really devoted to God, but because they appear to have no other devotion but that of occasional prayers.”

Kevin Tingay

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Inspired to Read:
Rule Britannia
by Daphne du Maurier



When the *Inspired to Read* book group met at the beginning of March, it was to discuss the works of that most prolific Cornish writer, Daphne du Maurier, and what a wealth of material we had before us. I was not alone in confessing that, while I had devoured her books enthusiastically as a teenager – especially her historical romances – I had not been back to re-discover her work as an adult, apart from the occasional TV or film adaptation. She was a remarkably versatile writer, turning her hand from romance to thriller, to biography, to short stories, and in the 1940s she achieved success as a playwright, with three stage works enjoying long runs on London stages.

Despite being born into a family that included writers, journalists and actors, Daphne du Maurier struggled to have some of her early works published. It was through a great-uncle's connection with a weekly magazine *Bystander* that her first novel, *The Loving Spirit*, appeared in print in 1931 – Saki was another writer who owed his initial success to that publication. *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* followed within the next few years and were immediate best-sellers.

Du Maurier's family home was in Hampstead, but they spent summers in Cornwall, and after being widowed in 1965, she settled



permanently in that county, which features strongly in most of her novels – one might almost consider Cornwall to be an extra character in some of them. Certainly the idea of a big house overlooking the sea with cliff paths secret waterways is present in novels such as *Rebecca*, *Frenchman's Creek* and *My Cousin Rachel*. It is also the setting for her last, and, it must be said, least well-received novel, *Rule Britannia*, which a number of us had read for the first time in preparation for our meeting.

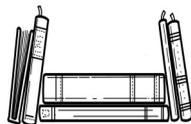
Written in 1972, *Rule Britannia* is something of a departure for du Maurier, presenting something of a dystopian novel, in which Britain, at some unspecified time in the future, has withdrawn from the Common Market (as the EU was then generally known) to form an economic and political alliance with the USA. Coming to it 50 years after its publication, the novel has quite chilling elements, especially in its depiction of the United States forces effectively invading our country, apparently with the view of turning it into a quaint theme park in which the British people are reduced to enacting those aspects of our cultural and historical heritage which appeal to American tourists.

In an introduction to a recent Virago Modern Classics edition of the book, the writer Ella Westland has written:

In Rule Britannia's sardonic scenario for the 1970's the United States administration sets up an alliance with the UK government over the heads of the British people and sends in the marines to quell any troublemakers. But the authorities reckon without the truculence of the Celtic fringe. In a big house in Cornwall, between the spectacularly beautiful south coast and the clay-mining country, an eccentric ex-actress, named Mad, and her crew of adopted boys throw in their lot with the emerging Cornish resistance.

The story that unfolds has many of du Maurier's trademarks – a large country house, a strong female central character, murder and intrigue, yet the story also has an uncharacteristic humour. It may not be her most gripping novel, but it is worth reading, and it generated an interesting discussion at our meeting, with copies being shared amongst those members who hadn't read it previously, whilst others of us resolved to go home and dust off some of our volumes that had sat, unread on our bookshelves, for several decades.

Forthcoming events



Wednesday 8th April (after Easter!) Our book choice is *The Devil You Know*, by Dr. Gwen Adshead and Eileen Horne: “*The Devil You Know* will challenge everything you thought you knew about human nature.”

Wednesday 6th May

Our annual dive into poetry – this year we have decided to focus on 2nd World War poets such as Dylan Thomas, WH Auden and TS Eliot.

If you would like to know more about the book group, please contact Rosemary.

Rosemary McCormick

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SERVICES ROTA FOR APRIL 2026

Date/Week	Readings	Duties for the 10am Sunday service			
		Readers	Prayers	Sidespersons	Chalice
Sunday 5 April Easter Day	Acts 10:34-43 Psalm 118 Colossians 3:1-4 John 20:1-9	B Essex S Smith	Rev Seamus	C Holland J Bruges	J Davies
Sunday 12 April Second Sunday of Easter	Acts 2.14a, 22-32 Psalm 16 1 Peter 1.3-9 John 20.19-end	S Caden R McCormick	J Caudwell	J Davies B Essex	A Crook
Sunday 19 April Third Sunday of Easter	Acts 2.14a, 26-41 Psalm 116 1 Peter 1.17-23 Luke 24.13-35	A Barr-Sim C Holland	A Crook	K Gurr M Smitherman	C Holland
Sunday 26 April Fourth Sunday of Easter	Acts 2.42-end Psalm 23 1 Peter 2.19-end John 10.1-10	J Arnall-Culliford N McCormick	A Henderson	A Crook M Veakins	J Davies
Sunday 3 May Fifth Sunday of Easter	Acts 7.55-end Psalm 31 1 Peter 2.2-10 John 14.1-14	C Harrison E Gilbert	Rev Seamus	A Barr-Sim B Essex	A Crook
Vicar: Revd Seamus Hargrave Reader: Janet Caudwell Reader: Rosemary McCormick	Sundays at 5pm Evening Worship (Third Sunday - Choral Evensong) Mondays at 8.45am Morning Prayer, Fridays at 12.30pm Lunchtime Eucharist Saturday at 5pm Vigil Eucharist Tuesday 28th at 11am Julian meeting				

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www.bennettcentre.com**

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Clerk to Governors Sam Nicol c/o school

