

CHALLENGE



The Parish Magazine of St Mary Sandbach

April 2024 £1
Volume 60 No 702



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Church Information

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on our new website

www.stmaryschurchsandbach.org

SandbachChurch

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Sandbach, CW11 1AN

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April 2024

Sunday 7th April	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Easter 2	10.00 am	Morning Worship
	12.00 pm	Baptism
Sunday 14th April	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Easter 3	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist followed by APCM
Sunday 21st April	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Easter 4	10.00 am	Family Worship and Communion
Sunday 28th April	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Easter 5	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
	6.30 pm	Choral Evensong
Sunday 5th May	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Easter 6	10.00 am	Morning Worship

Holy Eucharist, Parish Eucharist - Order 1 Common Worship
Holy Communion - Order 2 Book of Common Prayer

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary Sandbach
St Mary's Church, High Street, Sandbach, CW11 1AN
Charity Number 1205356

From the Editor

Welcome to the April edition of the magazine.

The cover picture is of the chair in the Chancel (locally known as the Bishop's chair) which compliments John Higgins' article this month about seating.

There is an update on the struggle we are having to repair the leaking church roofs. Also an update on the hall window refurbishments.

This month you have a chance to hear an update on the life of our church in 2023 at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Sunday 14th April after the 10 am morning service. Don't forget to be eligible to vote at that meeting you need to be registered on the church Electoral Roll - forms are available at the back of church.

The PCC is always looking for new members so if you would like to join, or find out more information, please contact any member of the PCC.

Coffee Rota

7th April	Jean Richardson and Jo Williams
14th April	Stella Craven and Angela Speedy
21st April	Kath Davies and Kath Beech
28th April	Janet Hides and Ellie Palfreman
6th May	Jim Thompson and Iris Kenilworth



The treasure of Easter!

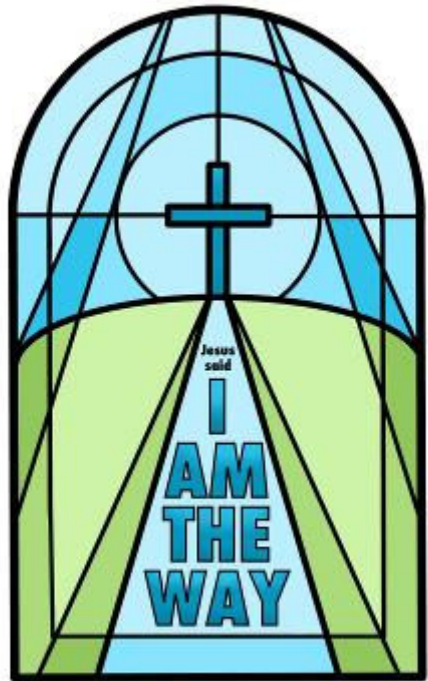
It's amazing what treasure can be unearthed with metal detectors! In this season of Easter, let's rediscover the greatest unburied treasure of the Resurrection.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that God 'has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.' (1 Peter 1: vs 3,4). What does he say about this treasure?

On the one hand, it is the reason for hope. Peter was writing to Christians in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) who faced persecution under the Emperor Nero. In an uncertain world we know that Jesus suffered, but by His resurrection has secured eternal life for us. This inheritance not only guarantees life now, but also for eternity, as it 'is kept in heaven for you' (vs4). Do we share this confidence? D.L. Moody, the 19th Century American evangelist, spoke of

the time when people would read his obituary: 'Don't believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now'.

On the other hand, this treasure is a source of joy. This unburied treasure fills us 'with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.' (vs8,9). We face all kinds of trials in our lives, but God uses them to refine our faith and character, 'These have come so that the



proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.’ (vs7).

We reflect this treasure by

developing the Jesus’ character and becoming more holy, obedient and loving.

‘Christmas is the promise, and Easter is the proof!’

Canon Paul Hardingham

Regular events and services		
Mondays	9.00 am	Tiddlers
Tuesday & Thursday	9.30 am	Morning Prayer in church
Tuesdays	7.00 pm	Prayer Meeting in church
Wednesdays	11.00 am	Holy Communion
Thursdays	9.00 am	Thursday Teas (except first Thursday of month)
Fridays	5.15 pm	Choir Practice - contact Kevin Birch (760778)
First Thursday of the month	10.30 am	Bereavement Group - contact Bee for details
First Sunday of the month	9.00 am	Music group practice before the service - contact Heather Bottomley (768744)

The next evensong is at the **summer time of 6.30 pm:**

Sunday 28th April

QUIZ NIGHT



Seven teams, with some very unusual names, took part in the Quiz in March. There were a good mix of questions giving participants of different ages chance to shine.

Four pieces of paper were on the tables as we arrived, each with 10 picture questions to identify: British Prime Ministers; covers of the Radio Times; board games; and sporting trophies.

The team that won went home with a voucher for Welles & Cross. In some rounds the team with the least points received a delicious Club biscuit each.

It was another great night of entertainment and our thanks go to Ruth and Bill who ran the night,

Almighty Father,

In these weeks after Easter, help us to receive afresh the new life Jesus' resurrection makes possible.

Lord, come to us. Walk through the locked doors of our fears.

Bring us your peace. Fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Send us onto our daily front lines to share your resurrection peace and hope and love with those who are lost and lonely.

Thank you for meeting us in Jesus, our Lord and our God.

We are your Easter people. Hallelujah. **Amen.**

God isn't politically correct; He's just correct

The Gift by Bob Grandsire

For many people leaving a financial gift to the church is a final opportunity to make a lasting gift to God. Such charitable legacies are a lifeline to the church, funding its mission projects and maintaining our beautiful building. Every gift makes a real difference and this story highlights how one legacy left for St Mary's church ensured that the bells continued to ring for calls to service during a time when they nearly became silent.

To the right of the decorative money box mounted on the wall by the door to the south porch is a humble small brass plaque.



It reads:

**In Memory of Charles J.
Salmon.**

**The Bushes and Clappers of
The Bells were Refurbished
October 1986.**

Charles Johnson Salmon, known to friends and family as 'Chas' was born in Elworth on 6th August 1910. He was the first child to Annie nee Hamshere and Charles who was employed as a Clerk at John Pring & Son wire works in Elworth.

The 1921 census indicates that Chas's father was now the Works Manager at 'Prings' and the family had increased by three, Edward, Kenneth and

Barbara and they were living at Garden City, Elworth. They were joined by Margaret four years later.

Chas went to Sandbach School and when he left in 1927 he first went to work with his father at 'Prings' until in 1932, when aged

22, he got a job at G. H. Heath and Co Ltd. The company had several factories in the area dedicated to silk throwing which is the process whereby silk is processed, cleaned, and thrown to make it strong enough to be used in a loom. He remained at G.H. Heath for the next 40 years, retiring as the Works Manager of their Sandbach Brook Mill factory in 1972 age 62.

In 1936, he married Nellie nee Abell known as Nell and the 1939 Register indicates that at the outbreak of WWII Chas and Nell were living at 3a Elworth Street Sandbach, along with several child refugees from Liverpool called the 'Dunns'. Chas would go on to serve as ground crew in the RAF during the war based in Yorkshire. After the war he returned to Brook Mill and it was in 1948 that he became its Works Manager. His accountancy responsibilities also extended to the Sandbach's Commons Mill.

Chas was a keen sportsman and as a young man played football for the Old Sandbachians and Old Ramblers. He also enjoyed

playing cricket and golf later in life.

When he retired in 1972, he and Nell were living at 187 Crewe Road, Sandbach.

His retirement came during a difficult period for the company, its employees and Sandbach. The whole textile trade was experiencing challenges owing to the processing of cheaper manmade cotton fibres forcing the company to change hands and reorganise. First the management at the company's Brook and Kidsgrove mills were merged and then, in late 1973, work activities at the Sandbach mill moved to Kidsgrove sealing the fate of both the Sandbach silk mills.

Chas remained active during his retirement only stopping his involvement in Cricket and Golf a year before his death because of illness. He was awarded honorary life memberships of the cricket club after 59 years service and of the old Sandbachians Association which he had supported since leaving school in 1927.

During this period, church

records report that in the mid-1980s the bells in St Mary's tower were in a poor condition, especially the clappers which were described as 'having a mind of their own as to where they struck on the bell'. Also, that '...the wheels were starting to disintegrate with an alarming increased frequency' and that '...the bell chamber was looking like a pigeon loft with droppings having seized-up several of the ground pulleys.'

The incumbent Bellringers had made representation to the

PCC who provided funding for wire mesh to be installed over the louvres to keep the pigeons out and a team of volunteers cleaned the bell chamber, reporting that 'the number of bags of pigeon droppings was well into double figures.' However, there was no funding available for the bells themselves and despite regular servicing and maintenance eventually in 1986, the 'Lignum Vitae Bushes' in the clappers had become so worn and cracked that they no longer retained

grease and there was a realistic possibility that ringing would have to stop until the bell issues were resolved.

On 1st October 1986, aged 76 Chas died, and he



*Chas and Nell
in 1980
outside the
South Porch*

left a financial gift to the church in his will. Some of this money was used to pay for the re-bushing of all the bells with an impregnated self-lubricating material by Eayre & Smith of Melbourne, Derbyshire. At the same time the ball of each Clapper was reground to remove the flats caused by the repeated striking from the Clapper on the bell, resulting in a truer strike note.

This work was paid for in memory of Chas and the plaque

was mounted within the church. Nell died in 1990 age 78.

The clappers had been installed in 1936, and the gift ensured that they continued ringing until 2001 when they were all replaced with new clappers. 'Chas's clappers' can now be seen on a mounted display board as you enter the church.

We and the future generation of bellringers and the parish are grateful for the legacy which kept our bells ringing.

Sandbach concert series

Tickets: Adults: £12.00
Snr Citizens/
Concessions: £11.00
School Children: £3.00
Family Ticket : £25.00
Doors Open 6.30 pm

Wednesday 24th April 7 pm

Rachel Helleur Simcock & Gwilym Simcock

Cello and Piano

St Mary's Church Hall

and spotlight concert with local young musicians

www.sandbach-concert-series.co.uk

All concerts at 7pm in **St Mary's Church Hall**

Tickets available on the door (cash only) or via WeGotTickets.

Ready for Spring

The hall window team are hoping this warmer weather holds up so they can recommence the refurbishment of the window. Thank you to everyone who has made a donation, the response has been fantastic and so we've nearly reached our target:

18/20 large windows. 7/8 small windows. 3/3 large doors and 2/3 small doors.

Over the winter we have had 16 broken or cracked window pains replaced and the main cobbles side door frame has been repaired.

We have 2 volunteers with excellent woodworking skills and a number of volunteers stripping and painting.

If anyone else is interested in helping could you please contact Brian Day (763716) or John Bottomley (768744).

What a success!

The booklet compiled by Pete Merrill and John Austin, about the 14 Commonwealth Graves that are in our churchyard has been a sell out!

The 50 copies were printed by the Congleton Museum in October 2023 and sold out in February 2024. We are pleased to say additional copies have now been printed and should already be in the church.

The History of the Stained-Glass Windows, written by Richard Vickery in 2020 is also very popular and is also in its second print run.

These booklets are so important for visitors to our church giving them a snap short of some of the buildings history. John Higgins is progressing well with expanding on John Minshull's history of St Mary's booklet and as you know, is providing us with little snippets for the monthly magazine.

Lord God, we thank you for giving us light here on earth,
where it is so often completely dark.

But in the darkness the name of Jesus Christ shines out as the
prophetic Word:

'Be comforted. After darkness comes light, after night comes day!'

We thank you for this light.

In joy we thank you, for we have experienced that Jesus lives
and comes to meet each one, bringing victory over enemy
powers.

In the name of Jesus Christ and in his name alone we ask you to
remember the needs of our time. We do not want anything that
comes from ourselves.

We do not want any earthly peace.

We want your peace, Lord God, the peace in which everything
becomes new, born anew even in suffering, to the eternal glory
of your name. **Amen.**

St Mary's Events



* **Saturday 4th May**
Ceilidh

* **Saturday 26th October**
Autumn Fair

If anyone would like to organise a social or fundraising
event then please book the Hall through the office.

Church roofs

As we reported earlier this year the Vicar's Vestry and Bradwall Chapel felt covered roofs leak. The situation in the Vicar's vestry has become critical with water flowing down the windows and completely soaking the carpet.

The cost estimate from the architect for replacing these two roofs with terne coated stainless steel, identical to the knave roof, is in the region of £100k. In 2018 we applied for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the repairs which was unsuccessful and any future application would probably be unsuccessful due to their success criteria.

Alternate solutions were investigated. Replacing the felt with Glass Re-enforced Plastic

(GRP), a type of fiberglass, was thought to be the best solution which would have a guarantee of 20 years but in practice last much longer. We have a provisional quote from a local company to repair the timber supports in the vestry and apply GRP to both roofs – approximately £32,500.

Receiving approval from the Diocese is a long and slow process. We have received approval in principle to use GRP and the architect has commissioned a company to obtain a Timber Survey before we ask for some up to date quotes. The architect will then complete the repair plan and we can apply for a Faculty (final approval from the Diocese).

We are hoping the process will be complete by early summer with work starting then.

Archivist

John Higgins has been researching the history of the church for the past two years. He has offered to act as the church archivist. This means he would have responsibility for the safe keeping of records and documents and would also be able to help with queries about the church's history, where to find information, records, etc. If you have any questions or want to offer information or material which you have, please contact John via the information on page 24.

What's happened in the last 13 years

This seventh article looking back into the recent history of the magazine, from the November 2012 edition, was a challenge that is as relevant today as any day in history.

Is our church a place

where God's presence and power are evident

where Jesus is at the centre of all we do...

where the Holy Spirit leads and we follow...

where it is fun to be serving God with excellence...

where we love God's word and love to study it...

where worship is exuberant, inspiring and genuine...

where deep and lasting relationships are formed...

where family and family values are promoted...

where leaders lead boldly and people serve willingly...

where love is a tangible part of the atmosphere...

where prayers are answered in the name of Jesus...

where healings and miracles are normal...

where all generations are on fire for Jesus...

where everyone's gifts and callings grow ...

where we give generously because we love Jesus...

St George's Day 23rd April

According to Wikipedia, Saint George's Day is the feast day of Saint George, notably England's patron saint, but celebrated also by Christian churches, countries, and regions of which he is the patron saint, including Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Greece, Georgia, Portugal, Romania, Syria, Lebanon, Catalonia, Alcoi, Aragon, and Rio de Janeiro.

The strange thing about St George is that no-one knows who he was, where he came from, or why he was made a saint, and there is no authenticated record of him ever visiting England! It seems that he was not even English, but then, only the English would choose such an unknown entity to be our patron saint!

There is the mythical tale about him saving a village somewhere in Europe from a dragon. I was taught this story when I was a Boy Scout – my troop met in St George's Church in Tarpots, Essex.

An 18th Century Georgian geographer and historian Vakhushti Bagrationi once claimed that there are 365 Orthodox churches in Georgia named after Saint George, that's one for every day of the year.

In the UK there are 243 churches dedicated to St George, that's 15th in the list of church names which is led by St Mary with 2,368 dedications!

Probably the best known church in the world that is named after St George is St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle which is privately owned by King Charles III.

Bob Peters



Do you remember your own PIN number?

Nearly one in five of us can't. We are so used to paying by contactless that when we have to withdraw cash or type our PIN into a card reader, our minds go blank.

'Contactless' payments hit a record high last year. A staggering 93.4 per cent of all in-store card transactions up to £100 was made using contactless, rather than cash or PIN and card reader.

According to Barclays, we now depend on contactless payments and smartphone technology so much that more than a fifth of young people now leave their wallets at home when they go shopping.

Contactless technology was first introduced by Barclaycard 17 years ago. It had a spending limit of £10. The limit was increased during the pandemic, to reduce physical contact in shops, rising to its current £100 limit.

On a similar theme. Here's a challenge..

How many **actual telephone numbers** can you remember that are stored in your home phone or mobile?

Remember the days where you couldn't store any numbers in your home phone? I bet most of used to be able to remember our close family, girlfriend and boyfriend, doctors, local taxi etc. I can't even remember my wife's mobile number!

Our God

Our God is able – (Daniel 3:17)

able to save (Hebrews 7:25)

able to help (Hebrews 2:18)

able to provide (2 Corinthians 9:8)

able to do far more than we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20)

Standing room only

When was the last time you came to St Mary's, for a service, only to be turned away because there was nowhere to sit? Never? But this wasn't the situation two hundred years ago when many people, usually the poor, were turned away because there was no room for them.

During the Georgian period (18th and early 19th century) worship was modelled on strictly Protestant lines and the emphasis was on preaching. Holy Communion was only celebrated about four times per year, ceremonial had all but disappeared, and there was a minimum of vestments worn - even as much as a surplice. Church buildings were rearranged to create "preaching houses."

If you had come into St. Mary's

at that time you would see a layout quite different from now. The church ended where the choir stalls now start - and there was a large east window. But you wouldn't see much of that window or the altar below it because everything was obscured by a large pulpit, maybe a three-decker combination of the clerk's desk (from where prayers were said), above that a reading desk (from where the Bible would be read) and at the top the pulpit from which long sermons would be preached.

The nave was filled with pews, not in neat rows, as now, but a collection of box pews, high sided with doors and of all sizes. The bigger ones at the front were owned or rented by the wealthiest parishioners. Above the pews, all the way down both sides of the nave, were galleries.

If you look at the stone pillars you will see where the galleries were attached and the stone has since been repaired. The upper part of the windows



were covered as this was the back of the galleries and they were barely high enough for a person to stand upright. There was a gallery at the west end too which now contains all the pipes of the former organ.

In 1801 the population of Sandbach was under 2000 but by 1851 it had grown to nearly 5,000. The church couldn't cope with the increase in numbers and parishioners, particularly the poor, were going off to the non-conformist churches which were springing up in large numbers at this time.

Meetings of the Vestry (the church council) were dominated by discussions about trying to provide more accommodation but they also had bigger problems. The tower was so



unsafe it had to be demolished, the south porch had fallen down and the external sandstone walls were crumbling away. In 1847, George

Gilbert Scott was appointed architect to put it right. His aim was to return the church to what it looked like when it was probably first built in the 1400s.



Galleries were no part of his vision but to remove them he had to convince the church officials that he could do so and at the same time increase the number of seats or “sittings”. Very conveniently, they were damaged during the restoration work and permission was given for them to be removed.

Scott replaced the box pews with open benches (pews) which we see now. There used to be a lot more but several were removed at the front and back in the second half of the 20th century. He extended the church by adding a chancel and two side chapels. They weren't strictly chapels with altars, etc., but a space to put more rows of pews which faced inwards.

In the chancel, for the choir, there was just one row of 8 seats on either side – the front rows were not added until 1919. Scott calculated how many people could be accommodated in the new layout and by some clever mathematical calculations he came up with the incredible figure of 1,114.

Although no early woodwork still exists – Scott threw it out - there are some nice examples of carving, particularly in the choir stalls where they go unnoticed by many who sit there – including me! (See the photos on the previous pages.)

John Higgins

Don't hesitate to use hearing aids

Here is something you didn't expect: using hearing aids if you are a bit deaf can be of great benefit to your overall health.

Crystal Rolfe, director of health at the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) said: "Hearing aids bring enormous benefits for people with hearing loss. Research shows that wearing hearing aids may reduce the risk of cognitive decline, and it is well known that they have positive effects on physical, social, emotional, and mental wellbeing.

According to hearing loss charity RNID, 12 million adults

in the UK are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus and an estimated seven million people could benefit from hearing aids, but only about two million use them.

The researchers hope the findings, published in The Lancet Healthy Longevity journal, will encourage more people to wear hearing aids. As one doctor said: "If you have hearing loss, get hearing aids. The benefits could be limitless."



Come and Dance the night away

Ceilidh

This Way Up Ceilidh Band

With Baz Parkes as our Caller

Saturday 4th May 7pm

St Mary's Church Hall

Tickets:

Adult £12.00

Children (under 16) £6

Available from: Church Office, Thursday
Teas, Heather 768744



Bar and Raffle

All proceeds to church funds



What's the Big Idea? - an Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Deuteronomy & Joshua

The setting for these books is Israel's entry into the promised land after 40 years of wanderings in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy gives us Moses' addresses on the plains of Moab, as the Israelites prepare to enter Canaan. The book of Joshua recounts the crossing of the Jordan and the victories that give the people control of Canaan.

The theme of Deuteronomy is God's covenant and his call for His people's obedience, loyalty and love. The '*shema*' (Heb: 'hear'), expresses this response to God: '*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.*' (Deut. 6:4-6).

The book contains instruction on how to live intentionally as God's people in response to His love and mercy. Total loyalty to God is also crucial, with the worship of any other gods being totally rejected. It is also widely quoted in the NT eg. Jesus' temptations (Deut. 8:3, 6:13, 16).

The book of Joshua, with its description of the conquest of the land and the destruction of cities and peoples, reminds us that God's love and purposes for us are worked out in the messes, storms and sins of our daily lives. As God says Joshua: '*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*' (Joshua 1:9).



Joshua (*'The Lord saves'*) is the same name as Jesus Himself. Jesus overcame all powers of evil to bring God's people into their eternal 'rest' (Heb 4:1-11).

The sound of swifts and trains

There was silence as Jesus very slowly made his way round the large, rough table. Each disciple in turn took the cup and drank from it. There wasn't a whisper, except that of the wind in the trees, but in the background could be heard the hum of the city. The only other sound was that of the swifts screaming around the abbey ruins. In the distance a train waiting outside the station hooted as a reminder of its presence, but no-one spoke or seemed to notice.

It must have been thirty years ago, but that moment is etched in my

memory. I can still see the scene, and hear the swifts, the train, and hear and feel the silence of hundreds of people.

A friend and I were sitting on raised wooden seating, together with a few hundred others, watching the York Mystery play being performed in the museum

gardens, in front of and among the abbey ruins. There had been a violent thunderstorm, with a lightening strike in the gardens, so the performance was delayed by an hour. A lot of mopping up ensued, but everything was still very damp as we found our seats.

We were a bit concerned when a large party of very excitable Spanish or Portuguese students

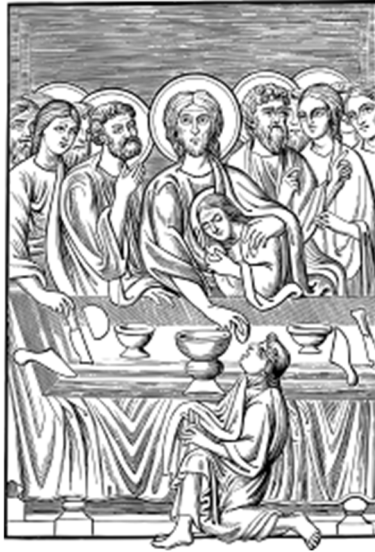
took their seats near to us, and the noise level shot up. But once the performance began they hardly made a sound.

Most of the cast were very enthusiastic locals, with a handful of professional actors. I can't now

remember much about the rest of

the performance, except for a very youthful God appearing high in the ruins looking down at the scene below. But every time I receive the chalice at the communion service, or hear screaming swifts, I am reminded of that very solemn moment.

Joan Plowman



From the archives



This month we are on the motorway bridge at Sandbach Heath looking south towards the bridge on the A533 Newcastle Rd. In the lower image, we are back to 1974, when the M6 was still just 3 lanes and the ground works to the services had just started. But, many of you will recall, prior to 1962 there was no M6 and these were green fields.

Stephen Minshull



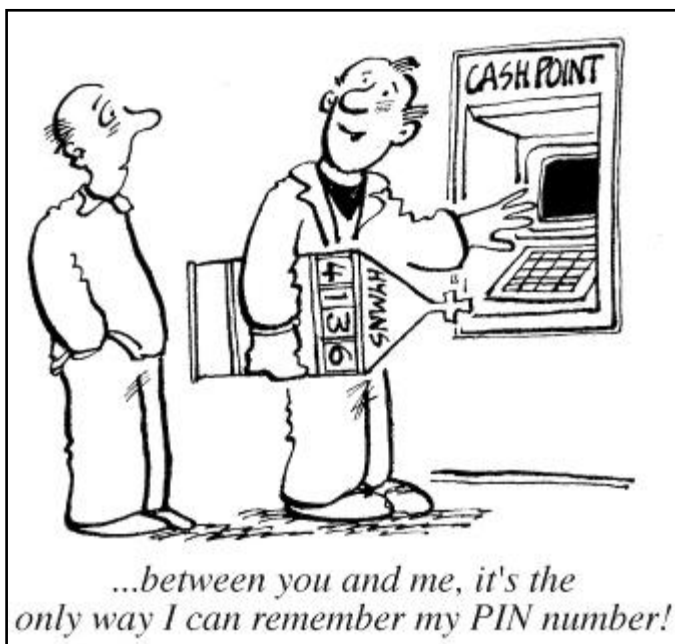
Seen in a parish magazine

“We shall be meeting on Wednesday, when the subject will be ‘Heaven – how do we get there?’

Transport by bus is available at 6.45pm opposite the King’s Arms.

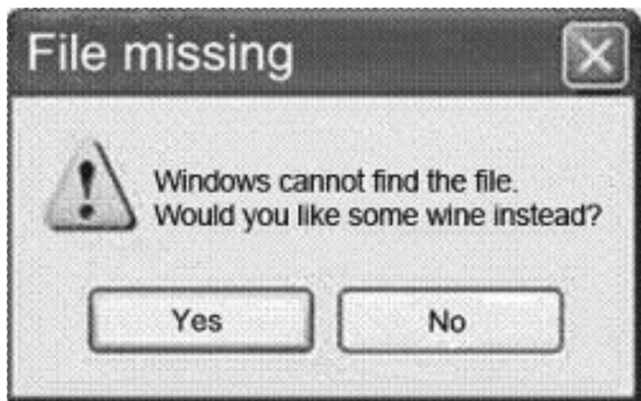
Also....

‘Next Sunday the choir will give a recital, after which the church will be closed for repairs.’



What am I?

I’m not old. I woke up, I lifted my arms, I moved my knees, I turned my neck. Everything made the same noise:



Crrrrraaaaaacccccckkkk! So I’ve come to the conclusion that I’m not old, I’m crispy!

Church Contacts

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Challenge

If you have any information or events that need publicising, or you would like to write an article, please contact the editor.

Articles must be received by **Sunday 21st April**

www.stmaryschurchsandbach.org

Donations

If you would like to donate funds for the mission of St Mary's then please use one of the following :

- Standing Order
- Contactless machine in church
- QR code (using JustGiving)

More details are available on the website:

www.stmaryschurchsandbach.org/donate

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