

# CHALLENGE



**The Parish Magazine of St Mary Sandbach**

January 2024     £1  
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## Church Information

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SandbachChurch

Office 07771 391667

St Mary's Church, High Street  
Sandbach, CW11 1AN

## St Mary's Thursday Teas

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# January 2024

Sunday 7th January	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Epiphany	10.30 am	Covenant Service at the Wesley Centre
Sunday 14th January	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Epiphany 2	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
Sunday 21st January	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Epiphany 3	10.00 am	Family Worship and Communion
Sunday 28th January	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Epiphany 4	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
	3.30 pm	Choral Evensong
Sunday 4th February	8.00 am	Holy Communion
2 before Lent	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

I can't quite believe we are starting another year already. I hope you were able to enjoy the wonders of the Christmas celebrations and the season as it continues. One of the things I have been pondering is how much I enjoyed the simple non 'flashy' things of the season. The children from schools singing in church, the low key but deeply meaningful Quiet Christmas service. I realise I have been striving to be content in the realities of life. I hope and wonder if this has allowed me to be full of joy and awe of the light in the darkness, the Son of God coming to dwell among us and to show us what love really is.

As we begin the next year my desire is to keep it real, to seek God in the realities of our world and my life. This feels especially important as we witness and grapple with just how far away the world is from Gods Kingdom, with widespread suffering, poverty and injustice. I hope that, perhaps in small ways, I can continue to actively wait as we do in advent. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus that advent had us waiting for but let's not leave it there. Let's live the year, not waiting for resolutions to make us perfect. Not waiting for when we have more time, money or energy. Not waiting until God sends us an angel with a message.

Let's live in the everyday ordinariness of life. Intentionally being the Christmas light and love through the year to those we are fortunate enough to cross paths, share an experience with and love as fellow children of God.

May we see the signs of God's kingdom here as we actively play our part in being his kingdom together.

May this year be full of wonder, hope and joy.

**Happy New Year**

**Bee**

# From the Editor

Welcome to the first edition of Challenge of 2024. We are now in our 60th year! The production of this monthly magazine is only possible with your help.

I would particularly like to thank the regular contributors who give the content a real local feel. Also the team of distributors who tread the pavements of our town delivering to local residents. I also know some of you send them further afield to ex members of our church.

I have only received positive responses to raising the price of the magazine to £1 per edition commencing from 2024.

I would also like to thank **Oakside Garden Services** who have joined our cover advertisements.

## In this Issue.....

**Christmas trees**

**Fonts**

**Magazine history**

**Bingo**

**Choir**

**Cleaning**

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## Gathering Prayer

Let us give thanks  
at the start of this new year.

God behind us in the past;  
Christ before us, the way ahead;  
Christ beside us in this moment;  
Christ beneath us in our weakness;

Christ above us to shield us;

Christ in us, providing us with his all-sufficient grace.

Thus, armed, guided and protected we face the new year.

**Amen**

# Registers for December Funeral

15th December      Robert Witter



<b>Regular events and services</b>		
<b>Tuesday &amp; Thursday</b>	9.30 am	Morning Prayer in church
<b>Mondays</b>	9.00 am	Tiddlers - starts again <b>8th January</b>
<b>Tuesdays</b>	7.00 pm	Prayer Meeting in church
<b>Wednesdays</b>	11.00 am	Holy Communion
<b>Thursdays</b>	9.00 am	Thursday Teas (except first Thursday of month)
<b>Fridays</b>	5.15 pm	Choir Practice - contact Kevin Birch (760778)
<b>First Thursday of the month</b>	10.30 am	Bereavement Group - contact Bee for details
<b>First Sunday of the month</b>	9.00 am	Music group practice before the service - contact Heather Bottomley (768744)

<b>Coffee Rota</b>	
7th January	Kath Davies and Kath Beech
14th January	Janet Hides and Ellie Palfreman
21st January	Jim Thompson and Iris Kenilworth
28th January	Jean Richardson and Jo Williams
4th February	Stella Craven and Angela Speedy



## The Christmas tree recycling

The scheme helps to raise vital funds for St Luke's Hospice and small local charities in our community.

For a donation we will collect your Christmas tree, take it away and recycle it for you. No hassle, no waste and no needles in your car! Collection 11-14 January 2024

Just go the website below and register your tree:

[www.just-helping.org.uk](http://www.just-helping.org.uk)

### Did you know?

Our tree collection has been running now for 12 years and we have collected 27,983 trees in that time and have raised a fabulous £430,081



## Children's Society Boxes

Please could you bring your Children's Society boxes into church for counting.

If you have not got a box and would like one then please contact one of the church wardens.

Last year Stella Craven retired from this role after many years service. Currently the church wardens will cover this role but rather than increase their already hectic workload, we would really appreciate someone coming forward to co-ordinate this yearly event. It's not a big chore!



# Celebration Choral Evensong

**O**n Sunday 26th November the additional new choir robes that had been bought were dedicated in a celebration evensong. The choir purchased them from money they had received from wedding fees.

The choir has grown in numbers over the last few years and this was the first time all choristers were robed. It felt like a really special event.

The music at the evensong was on a theme of singing and celebrating St Cecilia, the patron saint of church music. The hymns were - Angel Voices Ever Singing, Songs of Praise the Angels Sang, When in Our Music God is Glorified; the anthem was The Heavens Sing Praises to God in the Highest by Beethoven.







**Saturday 3rd February**  
**Church Hall**  
**7 pm**

£5 per person for the night

Hot drinks and cakes available - donation on  
the night

**Raffle**

Tickets from John and Heather, Thursday Teas,  
Church and the Office

# The Casson family military monument

This final article on the Casson Family Plaque, designed by FV Burridge, located on the southern wall inside St Mary's church is of the name engraved at the bottom, namely William Casson.

William was born on 18th August 1873, in Portmadoc, to Laura Ann, née Holland, (from Betchton, Sandbach) and Thomas Casson.

He was educated at Ruthin Grammar School between 1884 and 1890. In 1891, aged 18 and having passed the Matriculation examination at London University, he was enrolled at the City and Guilds Central Technical (Engineering) College in South Kensington. He took up lodgings nearby at 56 Farnborough Road and completed the course in 1893, having obtained a Diploma of Association.

Whilst a student in 1891, he joined the 2nd Battalion South Middlesex Rifle Volunteers as a private soldier, later rising to the rank of sergeant.

As well as being a part-time soldier, between 1883 and 1895 he was employed as an Assistant Engineer and Draughtsman

with the firms Electrical Installations Ltd of Cannon Street and Messrs Evershed & Vignoles Ltd of Chiswick. In 1895, he changed employers and moved to Sir W.G. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co. Ltd where he worked as a Draughtsman in the electrical department at their Elswick Works.

Whilst here, his military career took a different path when he was given a commission in March 1898. He was gazetted as 2nd Lieutenant and transferred to the 3rd Volunteer Battalion The Northumberland Fusiliers. He was promoted to Lieutenant in July 1899, and in the following February transferred again to the 3rd London Volunteer Battalion The Kings Royal Rifle Corps.

Just prior to this, in May 1899, he resigned from Armstrong & Whitworth and joined the staff of the London Wall Consulting Engineers, which specialised in the planning and construction of London's tramway system. He also went to live with his parents at 25 Heath Hurst Road, Hampstead.

In January 1903 he was

promoted to Captain.

In September 1904, he was elected as an associated member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

In 1905, he took up an appointment as Substation Engineer with the

Underground Electric Railways Company where he worked until June 1907, when he then joined the staff of The Central London Railway Company as Chief Assistant to the Mechanical Engineer in charge of the construction of the new rolling stock, which is where he remained until being mobilised for war.

1908 saw him transfer into a new 'all-territorial' unit, the 7th (City of London) Battalion, which was nicknamed the 'Shiny Seventh' because it wore brass buttons in a brigade where all other battalions wore black buttons.

After the death of his father in 1910, he moved to 24 Oxford

Gardens, Notting Hill.

In 1912, he was elected as a member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers.

On 2nd August 1914, his battalion had just arrived for annual training in Eastbourne when they received orders to

prepare for mobilisation, and the battalion immediately returned to London. Full mobilisation came on 5th August and a week later the battalion's men were asked if they would volunteer for foreign service.

Almost the whole battalion volunteered to be sent overseas.

On 7th November, at All Angels church, North Kensington, William married Manchester born Annie Gertrude, née Allsop, and they took up residence at 48 Cambridge Gardens, Notting Hill.

The battalion spent the winter of 1914/15 at Watford where they underwent a



reorganisation, and his unit was redesignated the 1/7th Battalion and became part of the 4th London Infantry Brigade of the 2nd London Division.

By early spring 1915, preparations and training was completed and they were ready to be deployed to France. On 18th March they sailed from Southampton to Le Havre. Initially, the battalion was destined to serve in the Ypres Solent, but their orders were changed and on arrival they moved into the line near the village of Bethune where they trained in trench warfare and undertook working parties until 20th April when they were sent to the front line.

The division took over the trenches in the L'Épinette and Festubert sectors and held the line during the Battle of Aubers Ridge, and on 16th May the 7th Battalion went 'over the top' for the first time when the division attacked German defences during the Battle of Festubert (15th – 25th May) and then again on 25th May when at 6.30pm the battalion advanced across open ground suffering heavy losses (23 killed and 128 wounded), reducing its fighting

capability by 70%. It was withdrawn from the line.

Once reinforced, they spent the summer in the Loos sector until the battalion was withdrawn for intensive training for the forthcoming Battle of Loos (25th Sept – 8th Oct). This was a carefully rehearsed attack that began following four days of bombardment and the release of poison gas.

The battalion's first objective in the attack was to capture a mining spoil tip, described as a formidable twin slag heap known as the Double Crassier, then it was to advance and take the German trenches about 400 yards further on.

At zero-hour (5.50am), gas and smoke operations began and at 6.30am they went 'over the top' with the 7th and 6th Battalions leading the advance. Within 30 minutes they had captured the Crassier and reached the first German trench, sustaining few casualties.

However, the second phase of the attack to take the enemy's second line trenches did not go so well. The gas attack had failed to incapacitate the enemy as planned; the artillery bombardment had not

destroyed the barbed wire defences, and it was here that the battalion suffered most of its casualties. However, by 8am, the second line of German trenches and the town of Loos were in British hands.

At this point, the Germans counterattacked but the battalion had consolidated their position and were able to beat off the attack. At this point in the battle William was killed.

William's citation and the battalion's war diary provides an account of what happened during the German counter attack.

...He had handled his company which was cut to pieces during the counter attack with great gallantry and considerable skill; by bold leadership he managed to hold back the enemy until reinforcements reached his hard-pressed division. In connection with the attack he was directed to lead his company to a position on the extreme right of the British line. The position in question was a dangerous one, but highly important. He occupied the position but shortly afterwards he was hit by a sniper's bullet as he stood on the parapet rallying his men.

The entry in the 7th London Regiment's war diary provides a stark account of the attack. ...

The day started with an artillery bombardment and gas attack on the enemy trenches at 5.50am.

On the whole this was ineffective due to 'unfavourable' winds sending the gas in the wrong direction, and although the bombardment had cut through the German defensive barbed wire it caused little damage to the trench system or the enemy soldiers. At 6.30am the battalion went 'over the top', A Company led by Captain Casson the first to leave the trench followed by the other three companies. The battalion reached its objective and captured the German trenches. However, as soon as the battalion took up position the Germans counter attacked vigorously round the west end of Crassier with bombs forcing the battalion to retreat. It was during this attack that Captain Casson lost his life.

His distinguished service was mentioned in dispatches (posthumously) in the London Gazette on 1st January 1916. Eight months after he was killed, the announcement of his

promotion to the temporary rank of Major was gazetted (London Gazette, 26th June 1916).

Sometime after the battle, those killed were all buried in a 'concentrated' grave at map reference M.4.b.2.8. In November 1920, they were all exhumed and reburied in Loos

British Cemetery.

Unfortunately, the principal method of identifying the remains of the officers killed was by their metal rank insignia. Everyone else is buried as an unknown soldier. William is buried in grave VIII. B. 19.

**Pete Merrill**

## **Our concerns for the world**

God of all ages, as the old year passes  
help us to walk your way.

Help us to greet your future and seize tomorrow's day.

As the old year passes  
we think of those loved ones no longer 'round us'.

God of compassion, heal each ailing heart.

May we feel your loving arms supporting and guiding us.

As the old year passes we cry for our struggling world,  
climate change and wars too often heard.

Jesus, you call us to cherish all you give.

Call us to your future where all in peace might live.

As the New Year dawns, we praise you.

Faithful God, come lead us onward in new ways  
to love and serve you in the faith of Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, people of new life.

We offer these prayers in the name of our Lord Jesus  
Christ. **AMEN**

The next evensong is at the winter time of 3.30 pm:

## **Sunday 28th January**

# Wordsearch

N	L	C	W	A	R	S	A	W	O	C	S	O	M	O
O	I	T	O	S	C	E	B	N	O	D	N	O	L	E
B	L	C	E	P	S	A	D	E	B	T	I	V	R	E
S	S	O	O	N	E	U	N	I	I	D	T	O	A	M
I	U	A	A	S	D	N	R	B	T	J	P	A	A	O
L	N	W	N	N	I	M	H	S	E	A	I	M	W	A
O	S	A	A	S	I	A	E	A	G	R	S	N	B	A
G	G	L	N	N	A	R	T	N	G	T	R	E	G	T
P	L	A	G	O	A	L	I	S	E	E	R	A	E	A
T	R	H	I	H	L	S	V	R	E	D	N	H	H	T
E	A	A	C	T	D	E	D	A	E	P	E	C	V	H
M	I	U	G	E	N	A	C	E	D	R	A	I	T	E
I	B	E	E	U	M	A	N	R	A	O	E	D	S	N
O	F	L	T	H	E	E	S	N	A	N	R	P	U	S
L	H	E	L	S	I	N	K	I	A	B	A	I	N	B

The grid above contains the names of 24 cities and one town. They all have five letters or more in their name. If you find all 25 names you will also find that the unused letters in the grid spell out a relevant verse from the Old Testament. You might even manage to identify the verse. Good luck. (Answers pg 21 )

# **Come and join the Cleaning Group... we'd love to see you!**

**T**he cleaning group has recently been launched and is a monthly event to spruce up our wonderful Church, so as to do it proud, and appear welcoming to those who choose to visit and worship here.

St Mary's is a very special Church, both to ourselves, and to the community in Sandbach, and we are very fortunate to have this old and beautiful building at the heart of our Worship.

There are many ways we can live out our faith and to give service so be assured of a very warm welcome if you should feel able to come and join us in giving your precious time and talents.

We provide the tools, the coffee and the biscuits!

We would also like to thank the PCC for the lovely new vacuum cleaner which will enable us to do a really good job.



The next dates for the diary are;

**Thursday 11th January at 10am**  
**Thursday 1st February at 10am**

**Ruth Filletti**



# The life-changing Epiphany *By Bob Peters*

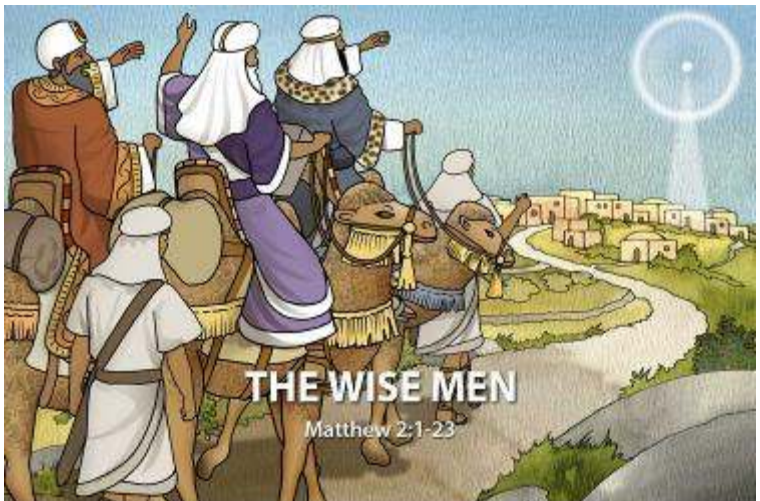
One thing that always strikes me about the Christmastide readings in the Bible is their briefness. Much of the traditions of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, such as the number of magi, their names and the time of their arrival, a description of the stable nativity scene we use, rather than an underground cave, and so on, are not found in the Bible. They are additions that add to the wonder of Christmas.

The space in the Bible given to the birth of the king of

kings, the greatest teacher and most admired and inspirational person to have ever walked on earth, and as the shepherds,

the angels and the magi show us is worthy of being worshipped as God, is amazingly small. The visit by the magi only appears in the Gospel of Matthew. Yet God's word in the Bible never becomes old news, there is always something fresh and new to be learned from every phrase because they are there for a good reason.

Bible scholars tell us that the main purpose of Matthew's gospel is to convince the Jewish people that Jesus is the Messiah who was promised in the ancient scriptures. It is about a Jewish King who is to



John Paul Stanley

save the Jewish nation. Jesus was to be the King of the Jews. Yet here, at the beginning of his book, Matthew includes the magi wise men from the East, probably from the Persian area that today includes Iraq and Iran. These men are clearly Gentiles, yet they had travelled great distances to worship the newborn King of the Jews.

So right at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, we find God revealing himself to be the God of all nations of the world – Jew and Gentile alike. The visit by the magi was clearly included in Matthew's gospel for this reason, it is part of God's revelation of his private plan for the universal

church.

This is one of the reasons why making time to study the Bible, helps us to understand God better and so develop a stronger relationship with him.

When we seek to do this with sincere determination as the magi did, we will find him. He is not hiding from us. He wants to have a closer more intimate relationship with each of us.

After the magi found and worshipped God, they did not go back the way they came. Likewise, as we get to know God we will be changed forever, and our new way of life will be different from the old way that we leave behind us.

## **THURSDAY TEAS STALL**

**The Thursday Teas book stall has had a fantastic fund raising year. It raised £800 between September 2022 and 2023 and an additional £300 has just been paid into Church Funds.**

**Well done Joan and team for all your hard work.**



**In God alone my soul quietly rests,  
for my hope comes from Him. Ps 62:5**

## An act of vandalism?

One of the oldest, and arguably the most sacred, items in the church can usually be found in use as a shelf, supporting coffee cups, a pile of hymn books or a packet of printed leaflets. I refer to what is known as “the old font” which stands at the rear of the nave on the north side.

It wasn't always there; its most likely original position was on the opposite side where the “new font” now stands. There is symbolism in locating the font there. The south door was the entrance to the church and the font represents the entrance, through the sacrament of baptism, to the Christian faith.

The age of the old font is not certain. It is said that it once bore the date 1667, but if it did, that has now been eroded. When Samuel Lysons, an archaeologist, antiquarian and engraver, visited Sandbach in 1810 he said that of all the fonts in Cheshire, “that of Sandbach is most



(C) British Library Board Add MS  
9462 fol. 84

remarkable.” He made a pencil drawing which is kept at the British Library and which is reproduced above with their permission. It shows the octagonal shape and the acanthus leaves and flowers – but not a date. Another antiquarian, Sir Stephen Glynne, visited the church in 1846 and dates the font as 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly in 1604, a Canon Ecclesiastical of the Church of England (a directive) ordered that every

church should have a stone font (as opposed to wood, metal, etc.).

In 1849, George Gilbert Scott completed his extensive restoration of St Mary's, removing everything that didn't fit with his idea of a Perpendicular Gothic church (which saw a revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) and replacing it with copies. Ten years later the Rev Richard Batty made the gift of a new font in what was thought to be the Perpendicular Gothic style, albeit a copy. This wasn't the Rev Robert Batty, who had been a curate at St Mary's from 1815 to 1830 and who died in 1837, but his son, the Rev Robert Eaton Batty.

So what happened to the existing font? Simple. Someone took it as a garden ornament.

In 1894, according to a little history of Sandbach by WJ Harper, it could be seen in a garden in Bradwall Road. The next mention comes in Arthur Mee's "The King's England: Cheshire", published in 1930, which says that "we found an old font bowl by the porch doing duty as a flower pot."

The porch probably refers to

the south porch which would have been the usual way into church. According to the PCC minutes it was moved under the tower in 1945 to protect it from the extremes of weather and in 1954 it was taken into the church and eventually ended up in its current position.

So was it an act of vandalism to replace a genuine 17<sup>th</sup> century font with a 19<sup>th</sup> century copy? Applying modern day values we would probably say yes but in 1859 the parishioners would want the best for their parish church and the fashion was Perpendicular Gothic. They would see nothing wrong in scrapping something which didn't fit with that architectural style and replacing it with something which did, even though it was a copy.

And as for using the top of the old font as a convenient shelf for a coffee cup or a pile of hymn books, how will we be judged for that? Hmm.

**John Higgins**

*(See the front cover for a recent picture of the font)*

## All in the month of January

700 years ago, on 8th Jan 1324 Marco Polo died. This Venetian/Italian merchant, explorer and writer is best known for his book *The Travels of Marco Polo*, which detailed his travels along the Silk Road in Asia.

175 years ago, on 13 Jan 1849 the Colony of Vancouver Island was established. It became part of Canada in 1871.

100 years ago, on 10th Jan 1924 that Columbia Pictures, the American film studio and production company, was established.

Also 100 years ago, on 21st Jan 1924 Vladimir Lenin, Russian Communist leader, died. He was the architect and first head of the Soviet Union.

80 years ago, on 17th Jan to 18th May 1944 the WW2 Battle of Monte Cassino, Italy, took place. This Allied victory is regarded as the hardest-fought and bloodiest battle of the war, with around 250,000 casualties.

60 years ago, on 11th Jan 1964 the US Surgeon General published a report which concluded that cigarette smoking caused lung cancer and chronic bronchitis. This was the first official US government report on the health issues of smoking.

40 years ago, on 22nd Jan 1984 the first Apple Mackintosh computer went on sale.

25 years ago, on 1st Jan 1999 the euro officially became the new currency in 11 European countries.

# St Mary's Events



\* **Saturday 3rd February**

**Bingo night**

\* **Saturday 9th March**

**Quiz Night**

\* **Saturday 4th May**

**Ceilidh**

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

## Answers to the wordsearch on Page 13.

LOT LIVED AMONG THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN  
The Hidden Bible Verse is from Genesis 13:12 (NIV):

The town is LLANDUDNO

KI, ATHENS

LISBON, NICOSIA, SAN SALVADOR, PRAGUE, HELSINKI,  
HAGEN, SEOUL, SANTIAGO, BARCELONA, OTTAWA,  
STERDAM, TEHERAN, VIENNA, BUDAPEST, COPEN-  
BIRMINGHAM, BUCHAREST, LEEDS, SINGAPORE, AM-  
MOSCOW, WARSAW, LONDON, CANBERRA, SWANSEA,

# Humanitarian visas

**A** Church of England Bishop is proposing legislation to provide a safe and legal route to the UK for those seeking asylum, as part of attempts to crack down on illegal people smuggling across the Channel in small boats.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rt Rev Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, has published a Private Members' Bill in the House of Lords which would permit an annual number of humanitarian travel visas to the UK.

The visas would allow people to safely enter the UK where there is a high chance that their asylum claim will be granted. The nationalities currently most likely to travel to the UK on small boats and have their asylum claim granted are Afghan, Syrian, Iranian, Eritrean and Sudanese.

The Bill also proposes that their asylum claim would then be considered in the UK through an accelerated process.

Under the terms of the Asylum Application (Entry to the United Kingdom) Bill, up to 10,000 asylum travel visas would be granted in the first year of its operation with subsequent limits set by the Home Secretary. Nationalities eligible to apply would be named by the Home Secretary.



Bishop Guli said: “I am pleased to bring forward this Private Members Bill on the introduction of a Humanitarian Visa Scheme, which will provide a much-needed opportunity to discuss safe routes into the UK for refugees fleeing conflict, persecution and disasters. The Bill had its first Reading in late November, and will be timetabled for a Second Reading at a later date.



# The Pugnacious vicar of Huyton

‘Muscular Christianity’ was a term used to describe powerful, blood- and-thunder, hellfire-and-damnation preaching in Christian churches, especially during the Victorian era - although quite a bit of this still goes on today! In the nineteenth century, one of the best exponents of this style of sermon was one of the vicars of St Michael’s Church, on Bluebell Lane in Huyton village. This has always been an important site of worship, probably even in Pagan times, and there has been a church on this site from at least the twelfth century. The present building dates from 1663 and is Grade II listed.

Many redoubtable vicars have ministered at St Michael's over the years, and the longest serving to date was the Rev Ellis Ashton (1789-1869). He was vicar for fifty-six years, between 1813 and 1869, and a local road is named after him.

He was a member of the very wealthy Ashton family and was born in the grand family home of Woolton Hall, in Liverpool.

Rev Ashton had a reputation for being a forthright and dominating personality, and he was appalled that the young men of his parish were using the village green, in front of his church, for cockfights and for the even more bloodthirsty ‘entertainment’ of bull baiting. So angered was he by this that he delivered many sermons condemning the practices and the gambling that went with them.

However, his preaching fell on deaf ears, so one day when there was a major bull-baiting bout taking place on the land in front of his church, he took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and marched out of his church and directly onto the green. He then proceeded to belabour each of



the offenders, quite impressively getting the better of even the biggest youths, who were all too ashamed and intimidated to take on their vicar, who was a big man!

The blood sports now stopped for good and church attendance increased, especially among the young men of the village. The forceful vicar had given a whole new meaning to the phrase 'muscular Christianity'!

Although St Michael's has altered much over the centuries, there are many signs of its ancient history in and around the building. These include two fountains, one dating from the eighth or ninth century and the other from the 1600s. The older fountain was discovered during repair work in 1872, when it was excavated from beneath the church tower. This was along with a capital from a Saxon stone column, which is decorated with four helmeted heads.

Huyton had become quite an important local market town by the mid-nineteenth century, with a large resident population. As a result, the church graveyard, which had

only a limited area, soon filled up. This meant that a branch burial ground was now needed. This was created at the end of Derby Terrace, in the corner of the village green.

One of the reasons why the graveyard needed to expand was that the church also served a number of other villages and Communities.

A remnant of this function can be found a little way down the hill from the church. Here, running opposite the road named The Garth, there is a wide passage. It is all that remains of a long track that once connected the nearby village of Tarbock with Huyton. Records dating from 1520 show that it was along this old pathway that the medieval inhabitants of Tarbock would carry the bodies of their loved ones for burial at St Michael's Church in Huyton village; hence the name of the passage - Corpse Way!

### **Ken Pye**

*(In 2005 Ken established Discover Liverpool, a website devoted to his studies of local history in Liverpool and Merseyside and to publicise the heritage of his own city.)*

# What's happened in the last 13 years

This fifth article, looking back into the recent history of the magazine, looks to the article below in the February 2012 edition.

## Choir News

A brief meeting, consisting of about ten keen singers, was held recently to discuss the ways in which we can enhance the musical worship within the church. There is already a small band of dedicated adults who sing in the choir every Sunday and we agreed we should work to enlarge this group.

Kevin, the organist, set out some ideas and we all agreed we should use a building block approach. It was agreed to start a regular choir practice on a **Friday evening at**

**7.30pm** in the Church and we had the first practice on 20th January. Initially we will be concentrating on practicing the music for the following Sunday. Future plans are: to learn a new setting to the Sunday Parish Eucharist; perform anthems on celebration days and possibly sing at weddings.

Please do come along and join us – young and old. Don't be frightened you do not need to be an accomplished singer to join us.



So that was 2012. Today the choir now has 15 dedicated choristers who sing at all Sunday services, monthly evensongs, weddings and funerals. If you would like any more details then please contact Kevin Birch on **760778**.

## From the Archives



**W**e start 2024 looking at Sandbach School, formally known as Sandbach Grammar School founded in 1677 and now a grade II listed building. In the lower image we see the school at the start of the 1900's. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1851 the original buildings have been enlarged and extended many times over the last 170yrs. **Stephen Minshull**



## Some Christmas Cracker one liners.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crêpes.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

I didn't like my beard at first, then it grew on me.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary?  
A thesaurus.

I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.

I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.

Velcro - what a rip off.

When chemists die, they barium.

## **The following have all appeared in British church magazines**

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house.  
Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

## Church Contacts

Vicar	Rev Bee Boyde <a href="mailto:revbeeboyde@gmail.com">revbeeboyde@gmail.com</a>	07872 326008
Reader	Joan Plowman	768079
Churchwardens	Sheenagh Ashworth Ruth Morrison <a href="mailto:warden.smcsandbach@gmail.com">warden.smcsandbach@gmail.com</a>	529187 07411 610962
Safeguarding	Joanna Blaiklock <a href="mailto:safeguarding.smcsandbach@gmail.com">safeguarding.smcsandbach@gmail.com</a>	07725 989374
Parish Office	<a href="mailto:smcsandbach@gmail.com">smcsandbach@gmail.com</a>	07771 391667
Baptisms	Ruth Morrison <a href="mailto:baptism.smcsandbach@gmail.com">baptism.smcsandbach@gmail.com</a>	07411 610962
Weddings	<a href="mailto:smcsandbach@gmail.com">smcsandbach@gmail.com</a>	07771 391667
Organist & Choirmaster	Kevin Birch <a href="mailto:kevinbirch60@gmail.com">kevinbirch60@gmail.com</a>	760778
Magazine Editor	John Bottomley <a href="mailto:jandhbottomley@gmail.com">jandhbottomley@gmail.com</a>	768744

## 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 January**

**[www.stmaryschurchsandbach.org](http://www.stmaryschurchsandbach.org)**

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**Sunday 21st January**



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