

The Parish Magazine

St Mary's, Alveley ♦ St Andrew's, Quatt



FEBRUARY 2026

60p

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The Rector writes

Dear Friends,

The year hardly seems to have started, but in February, we begin the season of Lent, as we prepare ourselves to walk once more the way of the Cross and for the events of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. Traditionally, it is a time for fasting and for repentance.

During Lent, we also have an opportunity to reflect on the lives we lead, by taking a good spiritual look at ourselves and if necessary to clean out those things which get in the way of our corporate and personal relationship with Jesus. We might also want to spend time thinking about the way we serve him and how our faith impacts on those around us.

The season also symbolises the time when Jesus was tempted for forty days and forty nights in the Judean Wilderness by the Devil, before he began his public ministry.

Part of my own Lenten observance is to think about the meaning of the cross and on the pain and suffering Jesus went through. In recent times this has involved me watching the film "The Passion of the Christ" directed by Mel Gibson and in particular the film's portrayal of what Jesus went through during the last week of his life in order to bring about our undeserved redemption and salvation.

As I prepare to reflect on the meaning of the cross once more in the coming weeks and to walk with Jesus to Calvary, may none of us this Lent lose sight of the fact that it was on the Cross that he revealed his great love for us, a love that not even our own death can ever separate us from.

Ash Wednesday Service

This year, Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, falls on 18th February and we will be marking the beginning of this season in the church's life with a said Communion service with the imposition of ashes at 10.30am in St Andrew's Quatt. Please put the date in your diary and join us if you can.

God bless,

Rev Jon

United Benefices of Alveley and Quatt

Rector	Rev. Jon Aldwinckle , The Rectory, Alveley (email: revjonaldwinckle@outlook.com)	01746 562159
Reader	Sue Chidwick , 28 Greenway Avenue, Alveley	01746 781786
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Contact for Alveley & Quatt Methodists

Deacon Becky Lovatt	01299 826641
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St. Mary The Virgin, Alveley, WV15 6ND

Churchwarden	Penny Jenkins , 34 Birch Grove, Alveley	07929 327164
Churchwarden	Alison Pearson , Brookfield, Daddlebrook Rd, Alveley	07882 888875
Treasurer	Anne Simms , Willowell House, Quatford	01746 768955

St. Andrew's Quatt

Churchwarden	Ann Lee , 7 Brook Hollow, Bridgnorth	01746 761138
Treasurer	Steve Jones , 72 Manor Road South, Kidderminster	01562 753828

From the Parish Register

Funerals	<i>Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection and the life.'</i>	
January 15	Margaret Childs	Telford Crematorium

For all church enquiries please visit our website

<https://www.alveleyandquattchurches>. In an emergency please call
Rev Jon Aldwinckle (01746 562159)
For Alveley burial ground enquiries call Jenny Sirrell 07484806605

COVER PICTURE

A chilly robin.
Photo by Don Bannister B.E.M.

Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Rector, PCCs, retired clergy, Hereford Diocese, the editor or the Church of England.

FEBRUARY SERVICES

Duty rotas for St. Mary's are on page 20.

Sunday February 1st

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion St. Mary's

Sunday February 8th

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion St. Andrew's

10.30 a.m. Worship 4 All Ages St. Mary's

Wednesday February 11th

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion St. Mary's

Sunday February 15th

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion St. Mary's

Wednesday February 18th Ash Wednesday

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion with imposition of ashes St. Andrew's

Sunday February 22nd

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion St. Mary's

10.30 a.m. 20-20-20 St. Mary's

4.00 p.m. Teatime Praise St. Andrew's

Wednesday February 25th

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion St. Mary's

ST MARY'S CHURCH PANCAKE MORNING

You are all invited to our Pancake Morning in the Pavilion on Tuesday 17th February from 10am to 12 noon. There will be pancakes, small cakes, stalls and a raffle. All proceeds in aid of the running of St Mary's Church.

We look forward to seeing you there, you will receive a very warm welcome.

Jenny Sirrell

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Men's breakfast will be held on Saturday 21st February 8.30am in the OCCO (Alvey Old Methodist Chapel). We look forward to seeing you and sharing good conversation and a hearty breakfast. If you haven't been before why not give it a try.

Rev Jon

ST. ANDREW'S, QUATT

February seems to have arrived quickly this year. As I write this we are enjoying a milder week after the cold icy blast of storm Goretta. I'm afraid I didn't venture out during that cold spell. It was just too tempting to stay inside and keep warm. I did think back though to the years when I looked forward to a skiing holiday. The thrills and spills of the mountain slopes, the stunning scenery, the après-ski and gluhwein all held a special appeal. The journey from the airport to the resort was less appealing though on icy, winding roads through the mountains. Now I just enjoy the memories of those days when I was younger and my joints were less painful! I have decided that getting older really doesn't suit me!

I'm looking forward to seeing the first snowdrops and daffodils peeping through the cold soil - new life springing forth as another season appears. I wonder what 2026 will hold for us all - hopefully a world where peace overcomes war, love replaces hate and common sense becomes infectious. Don't forget to smile - it may just brighten someone's day!

Ann Lee

ST. ANDREW'S DUTY ROTA

Please let Ann know if you are not available on these dates.

Date	1st Reading	2nd reading	Intercessions
Feb 8	Genesis 1.1-2.3 Rita Vernon	Matthew 6.25-34 Ann Lee	Ann Lee
Feb 18	Isaiah 58.1-12 Penny Jenkins	John 8.1-11 Paula Tristham	Ann Lee
Feb 22	Matthew 4.1-11 Rita Vernon		Wendy Aldwinckle

A man confided to his friend that he and his wife had had a serious argument the night before. "It finally ended," he said, "when she came crawling to me on her hands and knees."

"What did she say?" asked the friend, amazed.

The husband replied, "She said, 'Come out from under that bed, you coward!'"

QUATT VILLAGE HALL

Sunday 15th March. Bayliss and Seal.

Looking for a special treat for Mothers Day? Join us in Quatt for a wonderful afternoon of live music. Add a cream tea with homemade scones.

To make this day extra special, we are offering the mother figure in your life a free ticket with every 2 tickets purchased, because we love mums too.

Tickets are £16 to include cream tea. Buy 2 tickets and your mother figure gets in free. Available from Quatt Farm Shop. There will be a raffle for Acorns Hospice. *Steph Hinton*

ST. MARY'S CHURCH HEATING

We now have an update on the heating system in St Mary's.

We are looking at installing two air source heat pumps and a number of solar panels and batteries to run the existing wet system (radiators) as well as underfloor heating in the side chapel. This system will allow us to keep the church at an ambient temperature during the winter and be able to boost the temperature before services and events. This will provide a good environment for the fabric of the church and protect the stonework, historic chairs and alter frontals for many generations to come. We are currently in the design stage. Once we have a design we can apply for a faculty and planning permission and go out for tender.

This however is not going to be cheap as we have said earlier. It will be in the region of £150,000.00. Although we will be able to receive some of this money from grants, we will need to hold fundraising events.

As a community I'm sure you will support us as we endeavour to keep this lovely, wonderful building in good condition not only for our generation but for many generations to come.

Your community has over many years seen a lot of change, but the one thing that has remained constant is your church, which has been here since 1140 offering a place of worship, a place to celebrate many lives through weddings, baptisms and funerals. We hope and pray that this will continue for hundreds of years to come. Our predecessors have looked after this church so that we have its benefits, let us do the same.

If you have any ideas of fundraising events or places we may apply for grants please do contact me.

Every blessing

Rev Jon

ALVELEY VILLAGE HALL

On Saturday 14th March at 7.30pm, folk singers Arthur Coates and Kerran Cotterell will be performing their unique blend of styles and genres of music at the hall. "Their showmanship, with tall tales and comic touches is sure to keep all audiences entertained. They excite, enchant, inspire, comfort and spread love and joy to all those that hear them". You can see and hear them by visiting their website, www.arthurandkerran.com or check out 'Arthur and Kerran' on Facebook. Certainly, something to look forward to thanks to Arts Alive who subsidise and bring professional entertainment to rural communities like ours. Tickets are Adult £12, Child £6, Family £30 and are available from Norma on 780 478, Una on 780 568, the Londis Food store or online at www.artsalive.co.uk

This year the Annual Village Quiz will take place on Saturday 18th April at 7.30pm in the village hall. Next month I will be sending out entry forms to all village organisations, and I hope that the hall will be packed for this popular fun event.

Norma Crabtree

SHROPSHIRE LIBRARY VAN VISIT DATES

The Library van will be visiting Alveley and Quatt on the following dates:

February 6th	May 15th
February 20th	May 29th
March 6th	June 12th
March 20th	June 26th
No visit April 3rd (Good Friday)	July 10th
April 17th	July 24th
No visit May 1st (M.O.T.)	

The van will be found at the following venues and times:

Alveley: Arden Way Centre: 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.

Alveley: Peacock Hill shops: 10.35 a.m. to 10.55 a.m.

Quatt: Bus stop: 11.05 a.m. to 11.25 a.m.

Visits are subject to change due to inclement weather, vehicle breakdown etc. For more information or to renew items please visit the website: www.shropshire.gov.uk/libraries.

Email: libraries@shropshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01743 255024

NEW LIFE NEPAL SUPPORT TRUST

This is an exciting time for supporters of New Life Nepal Support Trust and especially for two of the trustees who are preparing to visit Nepal and strengthen the small charity's links with the projects they support.

Nick Armstrong, retired previous Rector of St Mary's Alveley and St Andrew's Quatt, and Richard Sheerwood, a longtime trustee from Thame, will leave UK on 31st January. They fly via Istanbul arriving in Kathmandu on 1st February. There they will spend a couple of days catching up with contacts and supporters established on previous visits.

On 3rd February they fly to Dhangadhi where they will spend six nights with the family and children at Shikhar Hostel re-establishing the important bond which was established some 26 years ago when the New Life Nepal project came into being. They take with them gifts and greetings from many supporters including friends in Alveley, Thame and Hereford.

Much has happened since Nick last visited with his wife Alison six years ago and Richard's last visit twelve years ago including the worldwide covid epidemic, the death of Gyanu Pradhan, wife of the original founder, and the forced reorganisation of the orphanage into a hostel. The need for continued support for the children as they move through schooling and sometimes for further education has meant developments of focus for funding. But the essential aim of the charity to support the poor in an evolving far eastern country has not changed.

Thank you to all who have supported this work in any way over past years. Please pray for the visit to be a time of friendship and discerning together the best future opportunities and for safety and good health during the visit. This is a time of political uncertainty in Nepal as it prepares for elections in March. We hope that Nick and/or Richard will be able to visit Alveley before too long and share with us news of their visit. *Penny Jenkins*

ALVELEY AND ROMSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

The February meeting of Alveley and Romsley Parish Council will be on Tuesday 3rd February, starting with open forum at 7.30pm. We really value your contributions during open forum, after all we are there to serve you and each of us, including the clerk, is a resident of either Romsley or Alveley.

As usual the meeting will be held in The Pavilion and we look forward to seeing you there.

Isley Jakeman Chair, Alveley and Romsley Parish Council.

ALVELEY TENNIS CLUB

Congratulations to our club chairman who on Tuesday January 13th appeared on television's 'The Chase'. Ben 'Mastermind' Spicer won a share of £23,000 with his team. They took on Chaser Anne 'The Governess' Hegarty. Ben managed to get £9,000 in his round and his team put together £23,000. Anne Hegarty said 'It was all over when Ben got through'. Ben said 'I'm going to put my winnings to a deposit for a house.'

In 2023 Ben got through to the final of television's 'Mastermind'.

Ben is a Bar Manager, keen quizzer and he plays tennis and pickleball four times a week at Alveley Tennis Club with his family.

PICKLEBALL FEVER HITS ALVELEY !

On Friday January 16th we launched the world famous pickleball mixing sessions at Alveley Tennis Club. It was fully booked in advance on all 6 Courts.

So it's pickleball every Friday starting at 6.20pm. It's open to members and non-members with a small charge of £2 to cover the cost of floodlights.

Non-members can have 2 free visits to try out the facilities.

Pickleball is a fun sport with a mix of tennis, badminton, squash and table tennis. To book your place for February dates - Fridays February 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th - ring Ben Spicer on 07443 578810 or send a message to Brian Davies or go to our FACE BOOK Page and book there. You can book as many dates as you want .

SPECIAL OFFER FOR NEW MEMBERS !

There's never been a better time to Join Alveley Tennis Club! Sign up today for annual membership and don't pay again till June 2027 (16 months). This includes tennis and pickleball plus Mixing Sessions on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays . We have an age range from 18 to 80 .

Available are Single Membership, Family, and Juniors as well.

There's a form on our Face Book Page with the rates. You can book online.

FACE BOOK PAGE!

Our new FACE BOOK Page was set up on June 1, 2025 with 31 active members. By January 2026 it has increased to 92 active members. On our FB page we feature all our weekly sessions & forthcoming events which you can register for.

If you are into tennis or pickleball, join now!

WHY NOT JOIN IN WITH OUR 7 WEEKLY TENNIS & PICKLEBALL SESSIONS !

MONDAYS: Tennis mixing, gents. Evenings 7-9pm . Under floodlights .

TUESDAYS : Tennis mixing, ladies & gents. Afternoon 1 to 3pm.

WEDNESDAYS: Rusty Racquets with Coach Jack Fletcher. 12 to 12.45pm .

THURSDAYS: Tennis mixing, ladies & gents. Evenings 7-9pm, under lights.
FRIDAYS: Junior tennis sessions: 5 to 14 year olds, 4.50 to 6.20pm .
FRIDAYS: Pickleball sessions on 6 courts. Evenings, 6.20pm under lights.
SATURDAYS: Tennis mixing, ladies & gents. Mornings 10-12 mid day.
SUNDAYS : No events. This is an ideal day for families to go and play together or singles who can go and practice their serves or play the Wall .
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBER: JACK FLETCHER (Tennis Coach) who runs Rusty Racquets on Wednesdays, Junior Tennis Sessions on Fridays & is available for one to one coaching. Telephone 07496 177385.

Brian Davies

SEVERN VALLEY COUNTRY PARK

Thank you to everyone who supported our Calendar competition. We very nearly sold out of calendars and managed to exceed the target we were looking to raise. Part of the funds raised will help create a reflection pool at our woodland bird hide which I am sure will encourage more wonderful photographs from the park. The kingfisher is continuing to make regular appearances in the wetland hide and we are even getting daylight photos of muntjacs! Our wildlife cameras have been picking up otters' activity recently so it is good to see the park thriving as a varied wildlife habitat.

The work on the sand pit play area continues through February and possibly into March. The new equipment is being delivered at the start of the month, so we should see pieces start to go in the ground shortly. In addition to this, Chapel Lane should have been re-surfaced. (I write this a couple of days before the work is due to begin and am hopeful of being able to glide into work from now on!) With both play areas being improved over the last 18 months and welcoming No 92 Coffee Lounge in the café, we are heading for a busy 2026!

Through February and March, parkrun continues each Saturday and our Nordic Walkers are with us every Wednesday (bar the last of month, when they walk at Comer Woods). Our Book Club meet every second Friday in the café and of course we'll have some February half term events. This will be a ranger led one on Wed 18th Feb and a free craft drop-in session on Fri 20th Feb. The One.Network website is showing roadworks in the village from 16th to 20th Feb, so keep an eye on our Facebook page and website in case we have to make any changes.) The café and visitor centre are open daily 8am-5pm.

Susie Comaish, Visitor Centre Manager, Severn Valley Country Park

ALVELEY LADIES' GUILD

Happy new year to everyone, hope you all had a good Christmas
Our February meeting will be on 23rd February and we will be playing BINGO.
At Alveley Village Hall at 2.30 p.m.

We hope to see you all there. *Kath*

BUNKERS

After reading Roy Page's article in last month's magazine, mentioning St Mark's Church Pensnett, it brought to mind an incident I attended as Officer i/c of a fire appliance, that was turned out to a 'late fire call', to Barrow Hill, Pensnett, Dudley, in the mid 1970s.

This was to inspect and make safe a fire that had burnt itself out, below ground. It transpired that miscreants had broken into a metal railing compound at the top of Barrow Hill nature reserve. This is situated between St Marks's church and Russells Hall Hospital, the site of a volcano formed some 300 million years ago, but in more recent times, used as burial mounds during the Bronze age.

The chamber top padlock had been cut off, (which must have taken them days to do), the perpetrators stole equipment from the bunker, then set alight the contents of the chamber to cover their tracks.

Unknown to myself and my crew, this location was one of over 1500 secret cold war stations, specifically constructed and used by the Royal Observer Corps, (R.O.C), between 1955 and 1991, to monitor radiation levels during a possible nuclear attack.

The concrete chamber, accessed by a 14' shaft, contained various pieces of telecommunication and radiation fallout equipment, two beds, a supply of drinking water, toilet facilities and a water pump, for use by two volunteers for up to 2 weeks. No mention of food supplies!!

Several officers from an army base at Hereford attended the site a short time after the incident, to remove any undamaged equipment, but would not confirm, presumably for security reasons, what had been damaged or stolen.

A very small number of these sites can still be accessed by visitors across the country, for those still interested in our cold war history.

It does beg the question, with the uncertainties of world politics at this moment in time, between the East and the West, how long it will be before similar bunkers are re-instated?

More to follow regarding a different type of bunker closer to home, in next month's issue.

Bill Smith

14th FEBRUARY – VALENTINE’S DAY MYSTERY

There are two confusing things about this day of romance and anonymous love-cards strewn with lace, cupids and ribbon: firstly, there seems to have been two different Valentines in the 4th century – one a priest martyred on the Flaminian Way, under the emperor Claudius, the other a bishop of Terni martyred at Rome. And neither seems to have had any clear connection with lovers or courting couples.

So why has Valentine become the patron saint of romantic love? By Chaucer’s time the link was assumed to be because on these saints’ day -14th February – the birds are supposed to pair. Or perhaps the custom of seeking a partner on St Valentine’s Day is a surviving scrap of the old Roman Lupercalia festival, which took place in the middle of February. One of the Roman gods honoured during this Festival was Pan, the god of nature. Another was Juno, the goddess of women and marriage. During the Lupercalia it was a popular custom for young men to draw the name of a young unmarried woman from a name-box. The two would then be partners or ‘sweethearts’ during the time of the celebrations. Even modern Valentine decorations bear an ancient symbol of love – Roman cupids with their bows and love-arrows.

There are no churches in England dedicated to Valentine, but since 1835 his relics have been claimed by the Carmelite church in Dublin.



Henry is making a real effort for Lent –
he's giving up the remote control and
walking to the TV

THE CRESSWELL BELL

In 1779, the year the Iron Bridge was built, new bells replaced Alveley Church's medieval set. Cast by Thomas Rudhall of Gloucester, the largest bell in Alveley Bell Tower – the 45in 11cwt (11 hundredweight – equivalent to approx. 88 stone or nearly 560 kgs) tenor bell bears the names of Churchwardens Stephens (I) Cresswell and William Crow, likely major donors.

Though the tenor bell has tolled to summon generations to prayer and worship, it also echoes a deeper legacy — the continuing lineage of a family rooted firmly in the local area. From the Churchwarden, through successive generations of descendants, to a modern-day bell ringer, this unbroken thread weaves an enduring connection from past to present.

On 25 March 1744 Stephens (I) had moved from Clent, Worcestershire, to Bowhills Farm in Shropshire—the site of the annual Court of the Liberty of Romsley where local constables and jurors assembled to adjudicate minor offences – with his father John (I) Cresswell, a farmer and silversmith, his mother Ann Stephens, and brother John (II). After Ann Stephens passed away, John (I) remarried Ann Jordan, and together they had another son – all of them buried in Clent.

Stephens (I) remained in Romsley — the cradle where the local family lineage began to grow. He married Mary Green of Barratts Farm and had five daughters and four sons—John (III), Stephens (II), Abraham Stephens (II), and Thomas. He was the first Cresswell buried at St. Mary's Church, Alveley in 1801, aged about 70. His eldest son John (III), an industrialist and fair master, acquired several properties in Romsley and died in 1844 aged 80. Stephens (II) died before age two. Thomas likely died in infancy.

Abraham Stephens (II) Cresswell married Keziah Hughes of Bridgnorth and had five children: Ezekiel, Edna, Stephens (III), Anne, and Sarah. They lived at Cross Farm, where Abraham built single storey brick buildings, including a stable that still has “ASC” and “1841” carved in blocks either side of the door. The 1841 census lists him at 70 years of age, with his son, Stephens III, aged 33, along with family and staff; by 1871, Elizabeth Lawley 39 and Henry J Lawley, a farm bailiff, were also in residence.

Stephens (III) married Priscilla Griffiths of Arley; they had five children: John (IV), Stephens (IV), Zephaniah, Georgina Anne (Annie), and Catherine. In 1847 he was managing Hart's Green Farm, owning it by 1856, but by 1871, aged 64, lived at Lower House Farm with his family and staff. Farming 350 acres, he was a Churchwarden and among the district's largest landowners dying intestate in 1877.

John (IV), his eldest son, married Annie Nicholls of Witley. A respected landowner and community leader, he served as Overseer, Tax Collector, Parish Clerk, and Churchwarden. After living at Pool House Farm, he became the first occupant of Fir Tree House in 1881, earning the nickname “John from The Firs.” He died in 1911 after an operation and brief illness; his well-attended funeral was detailed in the local press.

The youngest son, Zephaniah, was Victualler (Landlord) of The Squirrel Pub. He married Emma Harley and had three children: John Hubert (V), Katherine Frances, and Doris Nancy. Doris’s granddaughter, Suzanne Thomas, featured on Antiques Roadshow in 1998 with a Cresswell family table.

Stephens (IV), also a significant landowner, lived at Lower House Farm before renovating Cross Farm in 1914, where he moved with his wife Hannah Dunn of Stourbridge. They had one daughter, Catherine, known by her middle name of Ethel. A trustee of an Alveley charity, he died in 1926 aged 78.

Ethel married Chad Norgrove of Prescott near Stottesdon, a stronghold of the Norgrove family. Chad moved with his parents to Nash End Farm, Arley in 1914 and later farmed in Coton with his mother after his father’s death. Nicknamed “The Wild Man of Romsley” for his temperament, he died at 56; Ethel lived to 67 and both are buried in Alveley churchyard. They owned three cows: a black-and-white, a blue-roan horned, and a Jersey. Ethel had a fruit and vegetable round, delivering to people in Alveley. They had eight children, three of whom are still alive, all aged in their 90’s.

Stephens (I) Cresswell’s surviving lineage presently includes three 3x, eleven 4x (including the author and bell ringer), six 5x and two 6x great-grandchildren.

Kath Norgrove

I bought a G.P.S. for seniors. Not only does it tell me how to get to my destination....it tells me why I wanted to go there.

MESSY CHURCH

Our first Messy Church of 2026 continued the Christmas Story with the celebration of Epiphany and the journey of the kings to Bethlehem to visit Jesus.

In the craft session, the children made sparkling stars, bejewelled crowns and decorative gift boxes. They then listened to the story and learnt how each of the gifts represented something special – gold for Jesus' royalty and kingship, frankincense for his divinity and holiness, and myrrh for Jesus' humanity and the suffering he would bear.

A warming tea of jacket potatoes, beans and cheese was followed by chocolate cake and fruit, no one went home hungry!

Our next Messy Church is on Saturday 7th February, starting at 3pm. We will be thinking about John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. All the children of Alveley and Quatt, with their parents and carers are welcome – hope to see you there!

Alison Pearson

St Mary's Church, Alveley
Saturday February 7th
3pm – 5pm

Crafts

Worship

Messy Church

Games

Food

Family Fun

FREE TO ATTEND

Young people under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult

St Mary's & Alveley

Be Café

Bereavement Café
meets at The Old Chapel
every 3rd Monday afternoon of the month
2pm until 4pm
Our next meeting will be 16th February

This is a safe space for those who need to chat
and an opportunity to meet others and share experiences
of your loss
Our aim is to listen over a cup of tea and cake



What we can offer: a safe space, to listen,
opportunity to get out of the house for a while,
bereavement literature, memory craft ideas to remember your loved
ones, prayer if required

The café is run by the ladies of St Mary's Church
There is no cost or admission

You will be assured of a warm and comforting welcome

SHROVE TUESDAY - PANCAKE DAY - FEBRUARY 17th

Have you ever wondered why we eat pancakes just before Lent? The tradition dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when Christians spent Lent in repentance and severe fasting.

So on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the church bell would summon them to confession, where they would be 'shriven', or absolved from their sins, which gives us *Shrove* Tuesday. At home, they would then eat up their last eggs and fat, and making a pancake was the easiest way to do this. For the next 47 days, they pretty well starved themselves.

Pancakes feature in cookery books as far back as 1439, and today's pancake races are in remembrance of a panicked woman back in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire. She was making pancakes when she heard the shriving bell calling her to confession. Afraid she'd be late, she ran to the church in a panic, still in her apron, and still holding the pan.

Flipping pancakes is also centuries old. A poem from Pasquil's Palin in 1619 runs: "And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne."

Some people have noted that the ingredients of pancakes can be used to highlight four significant things about this time of year: eggs stand for creation, flour is the staff of life, while salt keeps things wholesome, and milk stands for purity.



This visitor to St. Andrew's hung around for a while, then disappeared!

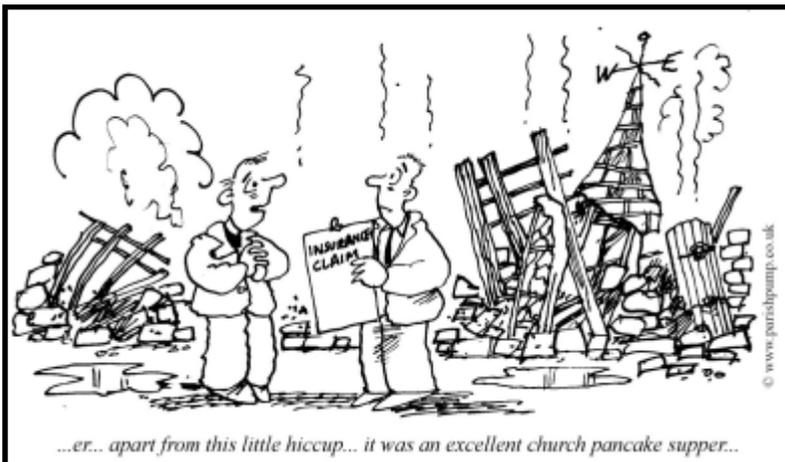
Picture by Anne Edwards

SUSTAINABILITY

In January of 2024 we decided to go for solar panels. There were 4 reasons for this. Our electricity bill was creeping up due to the increasing price. My impending semi retirement and a desire to reduce monthly bills. The talk in the media of possible power cuts due to gas or oil supplies being affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and most importantly a wish to tread a little more lightly on the planet. We fished about on the Internet to get a rough idea of the price but couldn't get on with clunky websites. However (surprise surprise) the following day we got a phone call from one of the companies. The rep said he just happened to be in our area (really!) And could he call in? He gave us some impressive statistics and said they had a special offer on that ended in a few days time. (Honestly?) I told him this sounded like hard sell but we agreed to go ahead. He then wanted a £1000 deposit. After a phone call to his boss he reluctantly accepted £500 and said a surveyor would be round in a few days. I was now rather sceptical but this fellow was independent and very thorough. He looked in the loft, at the roof, at the orientation of the house, at the consumer unit (fuse box) and said the company was a good one to deal with. I felt reassured. He said some companies do this survey from their office using Google Earth. (Inside the loft must be tricky!) The rep then rang to see if we still wanted to go ahead. There was a 14 day period in which we could cancel. We said yes and a few days later after another phone call the scaffolders arrived. A couple of friendly lads and very efficient. Just 2 days after that 2 vans arrived. The solar panel fitters and the electricians. I chatted to the electricians and made some cups of tea. The fitters drank their tea and left. They had installed the panels while I was fiddling with the kettle! The electricians' job took longer. The control unit and the batteries had to be carefully carried up the loft ladder and wired in. A cable came under the eaves at the back of the house where the panels are, into the control box and from there under the eaves at the front of the house and down to the outside meter and fuse box. All very neatly installed. So, at precisely 11.43am on February 29th our system was commissioned and I was given an app on my phone which shows how much electricity we are using at anytime, the state of the battery in percentage terms, how much the panels are producing and how much we are using from the battery or the grid or both.

For some years we have had a smart meter supplied by N-power and now taken on by E-ON. This has been helpful in showing us when our electricity usage is high. Between this and the solar panel app on my phone we have learnt not to use too many domestic appliances at once. So for example, if there is 70% plus in the battery it can easily cope with the washing machine or the cooker or the immersion water heater but NOT all together. We had 6 standard size panels fitted but left room on the roof for 3 more. With hindsight I think we should have had them. Maybe in the future. Our house is not ideally orientated. It faces west -south-west. South facing is the best. So from about 11.00am the sun appears from round the side of the house

until dusk. In the winter the low sun disappears very quickly behind the church about 4.00 to 4.30pm. Dull days provide almost no power but a bright day can give up to 2.5 kilowatts per hour and the battery is soon at 90% plus. In practical terms our monthly electricity payments have gone from £120 in January 2024 down to £32 in January 2026. During the duller winter the balance on our electricity statement goes into the red (debit) but in the brighter summer it goes into the black (in credit). AND after 12 months E-ON pay us for any electricity we have supplied to them once the battery is full. In February 2025 we received a cheque for £128. Very nice thank you. They currently charge us 25 pence for every kilowatt we use but only pay 16.5 pence for every kilowatt we send to them. (It's the same stuff!) The total cost of these panels, including scaffolding, deposit, batteries, everything, was £7,650. We took the money from the tax free part of our pension pot which hasn't really gained much over the last few years due to Covid, Vladimir Putin etc. If that money had been in an I.S.A at 4% interest it would have gained £306 per annum which of course reduces the potential savings of having solar panels. So, if my maths is okay. £120 a month down to £32 per month = a saving of £88 × 12 months = £1056 plus £128 for electricity sold = £1284 minus £306 lost interest on capital = £978 which divided into £7650 means the system pays for itself in just under 8 years. Apparently you can make more money from your panels by using Octopus Energy as your supplier but they take charge of your battery via the app. Draining it when they need electricity and filling it back up at night with cheap electricity when national usage goes down. In Feb 2025 I rang E-ON to find out how I got paid for the electricity we supplied to them. They initially said they had no knowledge of our solar panels or the certificates that they required regarding building regulations compliance and electrical installation. After several phone calls and endless hanging on the phone while the call centre eventually answered and then getting passed to a different department or simply getting cut off (sound familiar to anyone?) they finally found the documents and sent a cheque. They can read the amount via the smart meter. *Roy Page*



ST. MARY'S CHURCH ROTA FEBRUARY 2026

Please ring the churchwarden (see page 4) if you are unable to carry out your duty.

Date	1st Reading	2nd Reading	Intercessions	Chalice	Welcomers	Refreshments
February 1	Malachi 3.1-5 Colin Taylor	Luke 2.22-40 Jackie Hampson	Sue Chidwick	Alison Pearson Carol Wall	Alison Pearson Jenny Sirrell	Jenny Sirrell Carol Wall
February 8	Matthew 6.25-34 Laura Simms				Lynn Madden Carol Wall	Anne & Laura Simms
February 15	Exodus 24.12-18 Kirsty Ritzenthaler	Matthew 17.1-9 Alison Pearson	Jackie Hampson	Dale & Sue Chidwick	Dale & Sue Chidwick	David & Jackie Hampson
February 22	Matthew 4.1-11 Sue Chidwick				Colin Taylor Carol Wall;	Lynn Madden Sally Page Jenny Sirrell

DIARY 2026

- February 2** Alveley Art Group, Alveley Village Hall, 10am-1pm
 3 Alveley CC Indoor nets start, Winterfold School
 3 Alveley & Romsley Parish Council meeting, Pavilion 7.30pm (p 9)
 7 Messy Church, St, Mary's 3pm-5pm (p 16)
 13 Alveley Chapel Crafters, Old Chapel, 10.30am-12.30pm
 16 Alveley Art Group, Alveley Village Hall, 10am-1pm
 16 Be Café, Alveley Old Chapel Community Centre 2pm-4pm (p 16)
 17 St. Mary's Pancake morning, Pavilion, 10am-12 noon (p 5)
 21 Men's Breakfast, Alveley Old Chapel Community Centre 8.30am (p 5)
 23 Alveley Ladies' Guild, Village Hall 2.30pm (p 12)
 27 Alveley Chapel Crafters, Old Chapel, 10.30am-12.30pm
March 13 Alveley Chapel Crafters, Old Chapel, 10.30am-12.30pm
 14 Arthur Coates & Kerran Cotterell, Folk music, Alveley Village Hall 7.30pm (p 8)
 27 Alveley Chapel Crafters, Old Chapel, 10.30am-12.30pm
April 14 Alveley CC registration & open evening, Alveley CC
May 1 Alveley CC junior coaching begins, Alveley CC
 7 Women's Softball Cricket starts, Alveley CC
 15 Race Night, Alveley CC
Sept 4 Alveley CC Junior presentation evening
 26 Alveley CC Senior presentation evening
October 31 Fireworks display, Alveley CC

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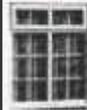
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Alveley Charities	Daryl Cooper	780378
Alveley Cricket Club	Richard Twigg	780437
Alveley Day Centre	Sue Taylor 07973 343491	
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Alveley Entertainers	Ian Maddock	780936
Alveley First Responders	Martin Hill	780794
Alveley Historical Society	Lorraine Heath	07970 637727
Alveley Ladies' Guild	Barbara Spragg 780200 Kath Bishop	780707
Alveley Mining Heritage	Andrea Edwards	86206
Alveley Old Chapel Community Centre		07799 465211
Alveley Parish Council/Street Lights	Steve Kerry	07711788782
Alveley Patient Group	Chris Noble	780715
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Alveley Rec Assn/Pavilion	Margaret Shaw	780459
Alveley School	Mr. P. O'Malley	780284
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Quatt Village Hall bookings	Steph Hinton	781214
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Squirrel Bowling Club	Roger Ford	780413
Strollers & Striders Walking Group	Andrew Crabtree	780478
Voluntary Car Scheme Community Transport (Mon-Fri 9.30-12.30 only)		768539
Whittall Meadows Trust	Jan Higgins	780259

PLEASE NOTIFY THE EDITOR (780936) OF ANY CHANGES

THE BACK PAGE

February is the month when we celebrate romance and remember Saint Valentine. Card shops will do a roaring trade and the price of flowers will rise mysteriously overnight.

A friend noticed recently that, after fifty-nine years of marriage, when talking to The Head Gardener I call her sweetheart, darling or honeybunch. He thought that was really romantic and asked if that was one of the reasons that we had such a strong marriage. I had to admit that the real reason I use such endearments is that sometimes I can't remember her name!

Valentine's Day reminds me of our first date. We met at the bank where she worked as a cashier and I was paying in the takings of my temporary employer, having recently returned from living and working in France. The temporary job, incidentally, had been arranged for me by a former girl-friend, and we remain friends to this day.

The date should have been for lunch on the Head Gardener's birthday and I duly turned up at the bank at the appointed hour, only to be told that she was off work that day. Clearly the thought of lunch with yours truly was too much for her and had made her ill. I don't know how I came to have her address but I did, so that evening I arrived at her house on my Vespa and, helmet under an arm and a bunch of flowers in hand, I knocked at the door. I was invited in and our date day ended up having a pint with her father at his club.

Obviously I passed scrutiny and what's-her-name and I were married less than two years later. I have been into banks many times over the years and made many withdrawals, but The Head Gardener is obviously the best withdrawal I ever made from any bank - and if that remark doesn't get me brownie points, nothing will!

May your month and year be filled with love.

Ian

Please send items for the **March edition by 9 am on Tuesday February 17th** to the editor (email ianmaddock@btinternet.com or phone 01746 780936). For advertising please contact David Hampson (telephone 01746 780034 or emaildavid.hampson2025@gmail.com)



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