

PARISH MAGAZINE

APRIL 2026

50p



Warbleton

Dallington



Bodle Street
Green

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Please contact Marc Lloyd
Social Clubs etc. see page 27

From The Rectory

I think I may come from a long line of accomplished worriers. Some of my family have made worry into an art form. My great Aunt Ann – Aunty Nan, we called her – seemed to have a “worry drawer” in her little flat. She filled it with news clippings of things to worry about. There was the woman who was knocked over by a bus when buying fish in Swansea. Did she have her hood up and therefore didn’t see the bus as she stepped out into the road? It became a cautionary tale for our family. None of us ever got our fish in Swansea. Another relative of mine once told us she was worried about the fact that she didn’t seem to have anything to worry about.

On average we must be one of the most comfortable and secure generations ever to have lived, but perhaps we are also one of the most anxious. The 24-hour news on our smart phones probably doesn’t help.



Jesus famously addressed this question of worry or anxiety in his Sermon on the Mount. He is speaking to his disciples, with the crowd listening in, about the blessed life of the Kingdom of God – life as it is meant to be lived, according to the Maker’s instructions. He urges his disciples to actually think and live like Christians, not like the Gentile nations nor like religious hypocrites. What Jesus has to say about worry (Matthew 6:25-end) comes shortly after his teaching about prayer (6:5-15), and unsurprisingly the two subjects are related. The Christian life and faith are a package. The Christian believer has a loving heavenly Father who sees and knows our needs. He is willing and able to give good gifts to his children. And our awareness of him should make all

the difference. Jesus gives us a vision for the Kingdom of God which raises our eyes from the concerns of this present age to eternity, and beyond ourselves to God and his purposes for the church and for all creation. His people are to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal (6:19-21). This life will always be somewhat uncertain. But Jesus’ disciples can build their lives on the solid rock of Jesus by putting his words into practice. Terrible storms may still come, but the life built on Jesus will stand (7:24-27).

When it comes to worry specifically, Jesus would have us learn from the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. The birds do not sow or reap or store stuff away in barns, but God feeds them. The flowers do not labour or spin, but who is dressed more splendidly?

Jesus argues that worry is unnecessary. The Christian can trust God. Worry is also pointless. Jesus asks: who of you, by worrying, can add an inch to his height or a minute to his life (cf. 6:27)? In fact, anxiety is likely to be counterproductive. It may well shorten our lives.

No, instead we are to seek first the Kingdom of God and trust God to get us safely to heaven.

All this doesn’t mean we should be irresponsible or fail to plan for the future or seek to provide for our families. Other passages of Scripture address these things. But Jesus concludes here perhaps rather grimly, maybe with a smile: “Do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Jesus wants us to trust God afresh each day for our daily bread – not to hope that God will give us a life time’s supply of bread today that we can hoard for ever. Even if we had all the money in the world “safely” in the best bank, much about the future would be uncertain. Jesus tells his people they can expect their fair share of trouble. But also that their Creator, who made and rules all things, cares for them like the perfect all-knowing, all-wise, infinitely loving and powerful Father that he is.

I’m still not sure about shopping for fish in Swansea in the rain, but I hope what Jesus has to say here about the ever-relevant subject of anxiety might make us think about whether we dare to trust everything to him. His death and resurrection should give us good reasons to do so.

A very happy Easter to you all!

The Rev’d Canon Marc Lloyd

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Warbleton Parish Church Diary

Sanctuary Guild Flower Arrangers and Brass Cleaners

All the members of the Guild will decorate the church and maintain the decorations on the 4th and 11th. Liz Christeson & Kelly Allen will then take over on the 18th & 25th.

Easter Lilies

The absence of flowers for the few weeks of Lent serves to emphasise the splash of springtime colour at Easter, the return of resurrection life - which brings me to the subject of lilies which we always like to use when decorating for the Easter Festival. In the past people have liked the idea of giving a lily in memory of a loved one at Easter. It would be good to carry on this tradition this and every year.

If this idea appeals to you, please get in touch with me (01435 830204) or hand your donation for the lily to any of the other flower arrangers or brass cleaners whom you may know.

Helen Bowern

Good Book Club

We will meet on Tuesdays the 14th & 28th at White Birch Farm at 7.00pm for 7.30pm. We will continue our studies in 1 Samuel all welcome normally we meet at White Birch Farm at 7.00 for 7.30pm

Little Warblers Toddlers' Group

Little Warblers is a group for adults with preschool children which meet in the Church Rooms on Tuesday mornings during term time from 9.15-10.45. We welcome you to join us and follow the school term dates. . For more information please go to the Little Warblers Toddler group page on Facebook or email littlewarblers@warbletonchurch.org .

WarbleArt

We continue to meet on Wednesdays in the Warbleton Church Rooms from 10.00 am to 12 noon. Please contact Gail Welford on 01435 812514 or gwelford51@gmail.com

WarbleSingers

We are now meeting every week on Mondays at 7.15 pm for 7.30pm to 8.30pm. Dates for April are the 13th, 20th & 27th. New members are always welcome. Contact Gail on: gwelford51@gmail.com or 01435 812514, if you are interested.

Warbleton Weeders

We meet (weather permitting) once a month on a Wednesday morning at 9.30am for a couple of hours. Help would be very much appreciated with pruning, sweeping and other light jobs as you feel able. To find out which day we will meet please contact Judith on judithmhemsley@btinternet.com. or look in the weekly news bulletin.

Easter Egg Hunt

This wonderful annual event will be held on Saturday 4th of April at Warbleton Church.

For further information turn to page 9

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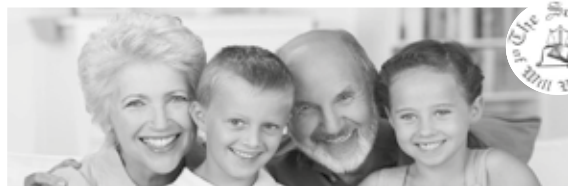
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Mission Support for April

Ken and Sue Vissers, Latin American and IAWAH Adventure Camp Canada

A recent prayer letter from Ken and Sue reminds us that exactly thirty years ago they joined Latin American Mission. After studying missiology at All Nations Christian College they went out to Costa Rica, then served many years in a number of countries before returning home to Canada to complete their children's education. Readers may remember that Sue still works for LAM as 'member care' partner caring for the well being of partners and their families working in various South American countries. She is able to keep in contact with them digitally, encouraging, counselling and supporting, a challenging task but so vital since many are working in very tough places.

Ken is now director of a big Christian Adventure camp for young people which also offers training in Christian leadership. His link with LAM is still maintained when groups of youngsters go out to Latin America for short periods to help in specific projects.

To enable us to pray more definitely Sue has sent a list of some of the upcoming Member Care events this year:

- Orientation for new missionaries, twice monthly meetings.
- Workshops: Third Culture Kids - for school -age missionary youngsters.
- Parenting Q&A - a workshop for parenting while also in ministry.
- Self-care - a useful reminder for those in ministry who face huge demands on their time Rest - a workshop which focuses on different types of rest and recharging.
- Prayer meetings for all mission partners run monthly.

Sue herself often travels out to South America to meet with partners in the field. Recently I met up with her when she was over here for her father Ken Barham's 90th birthday. She has asked us to pray especially for her upcoming visit to Honduras, that she may have time to listen and encourage, that all the arrangements will work out and that she may travel safely in difficult circumstances. An example of the visits Sue will be making with a small team is to see Benjamin and Isabel; they run a small but thriving seminary in Puerto Lempira, an isolated community on the north coast accessible only by air. What an encouragement this visit will be to them and the local church there!

Sue's letter contains more information than can be recorded here. If anyone would like a copy of her email, do ask me and please pray for her and Ken this month.

Helen Bower

Warbleton and District History Group

Sally Dickinson was the speaker at our March meeting, and she spoke of the history and restoration of the Windmill Hill windmill. The mill is very tall, I think the tallest in Sussex and second tallest in the country. It is a post mill, which means it rotates on a 2-ton central post to face into the wind, a job the miller did manually but now done by a special device at the bottom of the access ladder. Built in the 1700s it had a varied history until c 1914, after which it gradually deteriorated until the 1990s when the mill trust was formed and the long and expensive restoration process started, aided by two large National Lottery grants. The mill now produces flour, and is open at various dates during the year, usually Sundays and Bank Holidays.

April 13th is our AGM, followed by a talk from Ian Everest on Newhaven Fort – Then and Now. We meet at 7.30pm for 8pm start in the Dunn Village Hall, Rushlake Green. Refreshments are served prior to the meeting

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Nusrat Ghani MP champions Rushlake Green Village Store to win a Rural Oscar



Nusrat Ghani, MP for Sussex Weald, is delighted to announce that Rushlake Green Village Stores is a South East of England finalist in the Countryside Alliance Awards Village Shop/Post Office category.

The Countryside Alliance's annual celebration and recognition of British food & farming, enterprise, heritage and community life is now into its nineteenth year. The Rural Oscars are driven by public nomination, offering customers the chance to decide which favourite businesses are worthy of national acclaim. Every year, thousands of nominations are received, showcasing the passion, dedication, and impact of rural businesses across the UK.

Sussex Weald has a strong history of participating in the Awards, with South Brockwells Farm in Little Horsted and Smiles Sensory and Family Farm in Eridge previously being crowned winners of the Rural Enterprise category in 2023 and 2024.

This year, the fantastic Rushlake Green Village Stores is the South East of England finalist in the Village Shop/Post Office category.

Judging will now continue via a public vote, which is now open and closes on Monday 6 April.



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Last Autumn I potted up all the geraniums that beautified the Stores flower beds on Rushlake Green during the summer - they would only get thrown away, so many thanks to Paul Huntley for letting me have them - and they seem to have done well. So please do consider taking home a little bit of Rushlake Green colour to brighten up your summer pots.

Look forward to seeing you there.

Julia Padbury

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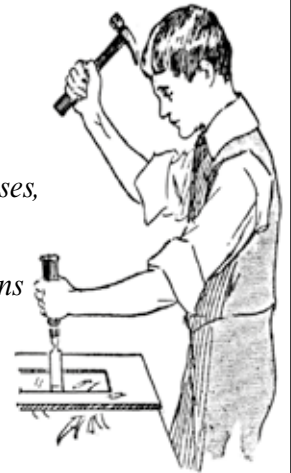
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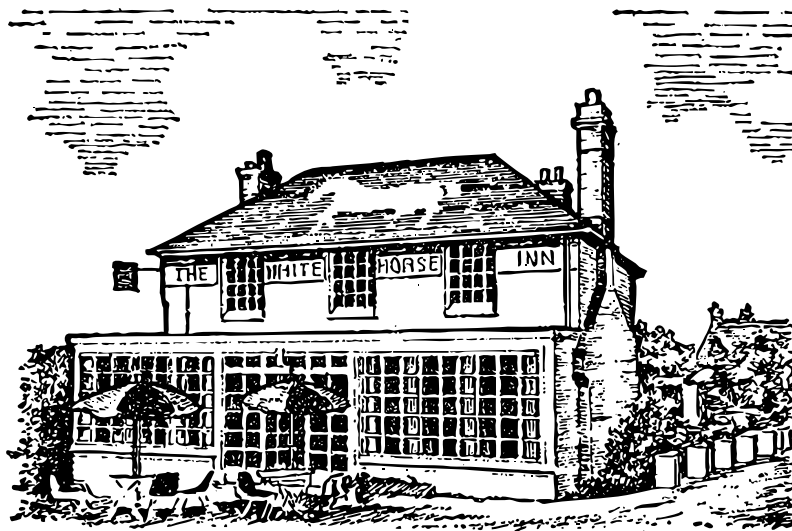


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ANNUAL SUMMER SHOW

It's that time of year again and we are well underway organising the Annual Show taking place on **Saturday 25th July 2026**. There will be the usual marquee with all the classes exhibited plus the children's races, dog show and show gardens outside, the brass band, refreshments in the tea tent and our Pimm's stall, raffles and stalls galore to find things you never knew you needed! Plus in the evening, there will be a band in the marquee and on Thursday evening a quiz night in the marquee to get the party started. **But, please can you help us?**

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Henry Grant – Warbleton clockmaker and watchmaker.

Henry Grant (1812-1893) was the second son of Henry Grant (1780 -1822) and Sarah Funnell (1786-1855), both from Brightling.

At the age of 25 he married Ann Collins (1818-1890) from Barming Maidstone, Kent on the 7th February 1837 in Dallington.

They lived in the Warbleton area all their married life. Listed as a clockmaker in the 1841 census, they were in 'Bunces' in Rookery Lane. In 1851, as a clockmaker, they were at the 'Stream' off Bodle Street Road and Back Lane, in Rushlake Green. In 1861, as a 'clockmaker master', he moved into a house, rented from the Dunn family estate in the centre of Rushlake Green, opposite the Village Hall. It was just a numbered house in the 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891 surveys. Sometime after Henry's death in 1893, William (1860 - 1940) and Elizabeth Oxley (1863- 1941), who ran 'Oxley' grocers and drapers, in what is now called 'The Bakery', moved to Henry's old premises where they expanded their shop and in 1921 they named the house 'The Grantees' after Henry Grant. The Oxleys' bought 'The Grantees' from the Dunns' in 1931.

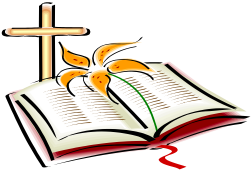


Henry and Ann Grant had 10 children and the four sons all became watchmakers/clockmakers. In 1861 Henry Grant declared himself to be a Master Clockmaker, which indicates that all his sons became his apprentices. Three of the sons ended up living in the Cade Street /Punnetts Town area. The eldest son emigrated to Connecticut USA with his wife and children.

It is not known where Henry Grant (1812-1893) learnt his watchmaking trade, his father became a turner by profession. However, one of his uncles and two of his cousins were watchmakers, so there must have been skilled workmen around this area.

Both Henry and Ann Grant are buried in Warbleton Churchyard, as are three of their children, John Grant,(1932), Ruth Grant, (1896) and Ellen Grant (1898). If anyone finds their tombstones do let me know, as I have been unable to find them.

Diana Paterson-Fox, The Grantees, Rushlake Green



SERVICES IN April 2026

Warbleton Parish Church

Thursday 2nd	11.00 am	United Benefice Maundy Thursday Holy Communion At St John's Bodle Street
Good Friday 3rd	3.00 pm	An Hour at The Cross
Sunday 5th	11.00 am	Easter Sunday Family Communion service
Sunday 12th	11.00 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion
Sunday 19th	11.00 am	Holy Communion and Sunday Club
Sunday 26th	11.00 am	Holy Communion and Sunday Club, followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

May

Sunday 3rd	11.00 am	All age Family Service
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St John's, Bodle Street Green

Thursday 2nd	7.30 pm.	Joint Benefice Service of Holy Communion for Maundy Thursday followed by coffee & Hot Cross buns
Friday 3rd	10.00 am.	An Hour at the Cross. Readings and prayers for Good Friday.
Sunday 5th	9.30 am.	Family Service with Holy Communion for Easter Day. followed by children's Easter Egg hunt in the churchyard
Sunday 12th	9.30 am.	All-Age Family Service.
Sunday 19th	9.30 am.	Morning Worship with Holy Communion.
Sunday 26th	9.30 am.	Morning Prayer.

St Giles Dallington

Thursday 2nd	11.00 am	United Benefice Maundy Thursday Holy Communion at St John's Bodle Street
Friday 3rd	12 noon	An Hour before the Cross
Sunday 5th	11.00 am 6.30 pm	Easter Celebration of hymns and readings, Holy Communion for Easter Sunday
Sunday 12th	6.30 pm	Evensong
Sunday 19th	11.00 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 26th	9.30 am	Holy Communion

Three Villages Calendar for April 2026

Thursday 2nd	Coffee & Company at Osborne House	10.00am to 12 noon
Saturday 4th	Easter Eggstravaganza at Warbleton Church	2.00pm
Thursday 9th	Coffee & Company at Osborne House	10.00am to 12 noon
Monday 13th	Warbleton & District History Group At The Dunn village Hall	7.00pm for 8.00pm
Thursday 16th	Coffee & Company at Osborne House	10.00am to 12 noon
Thursday 16th	Warbleton Annual Parish Assembly At Bodle Street Green Village Hall	7.15 pm
Monday 20th	Villages Lunch Club at Bodle Street Green Village Hall	11.30 to 2.30pm
Thursday 23rd	Coffee & Company at Osborne House	10.00am to 12 noon
Thursday 30th	Coffee & Company at Osborne House	10.00am to 12 noon



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EDITOR'S NOTE: May 2026 Magazine

Please send your magazine articles, notices and any other contributions
by **7th April 2026**

to **Simon Cowley, Tel: 01435 812040**

e-mail: Warbleton.mag@gmail.com

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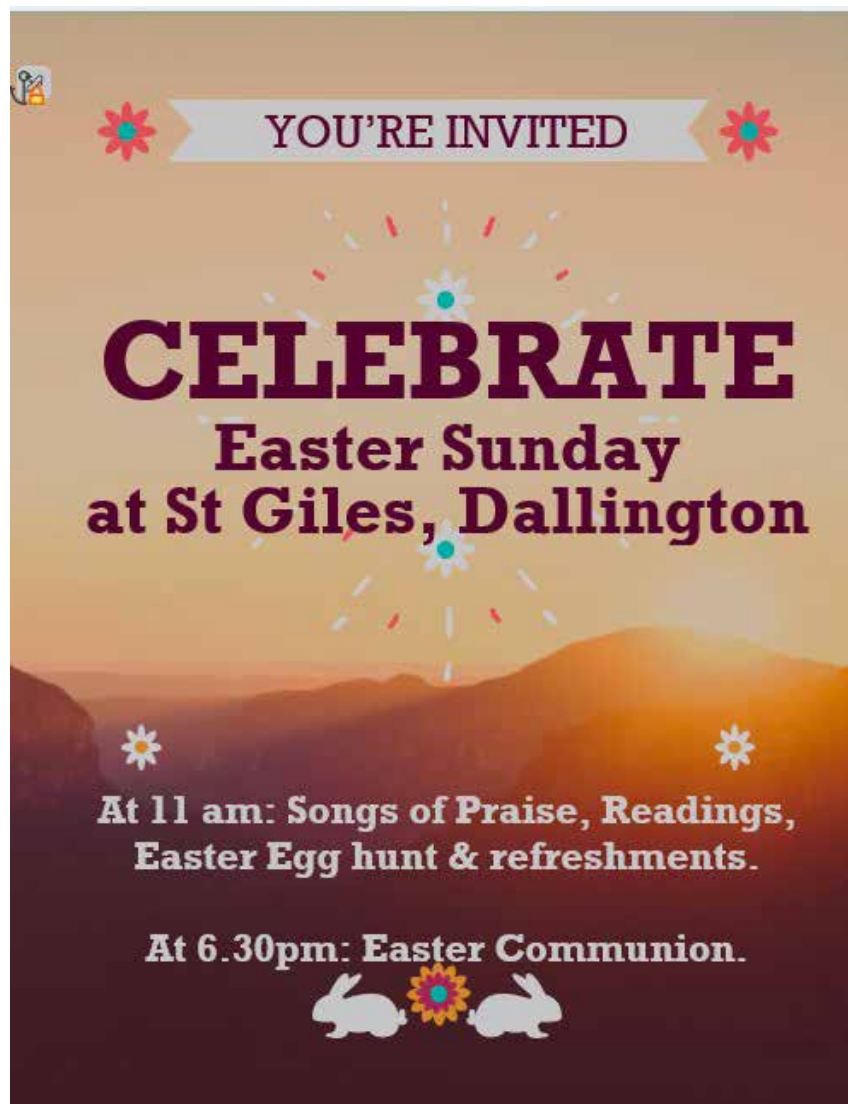
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	6.30 pm	Holy Communion for Easter Sunday
Sunday 12th	6.30 pm	Evensong
Sunday 19th	11.00 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 26th	9.30 am	Holy Communion



On Saturday 4th it will be all hands on deck as the church is decorated with flowers to celebrate Easter. Flower-arranging skills are not necessary, do come and spend a very happy hour or so. From 10.30am.

Easter Lilies in remembrance of loved ones.

This year, as usual, there will be lilies in the church in memory of loved ones and their names will be read out at the service on Easter Sunday. The cost for a lily is £5 but there is no need to pay individually for each person you wish to remember. There will be a list on the table at the back of the church so do please add your request and then give £5 to Bobbi. Then, even if you are not able to attend the service you will know that the names of those whom you have lost will be remembered.



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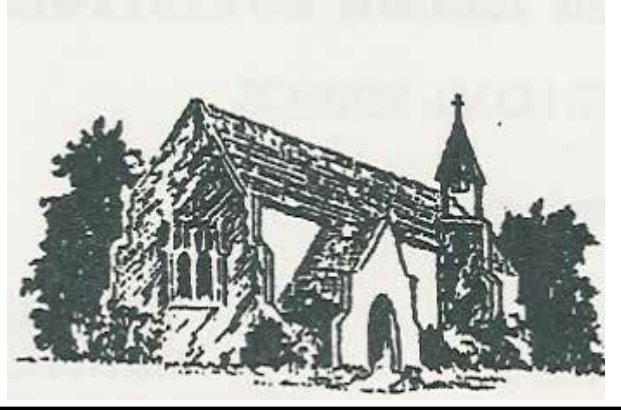
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Miracles

“I believe in miracles,” not sung by an evangelical choir, but by Hot Chocolate in the 1980s, and the next line is less inspirational. “Where you from. You sexy thing, You.” (Now I can’t get that jingle out of my head!) We use the term loosely, as in “it’s a miracle I’m still alive.” But do I believe in real miracles? We live in a sceptical and scientific age and are more comfortable with the idea that everything that happens has a rational explanation, whereas a miracle, by definition, can’t be rationally explained, being “a marvellous event exceeding the known powers of nature.” We are heirs of the Enlightenment and many would agree with the atheist Thomas Paine, who wrote, “All the tales of miracles, with which the Old and New Testament are filled, are fit only for imposters to preach and fools to believe.”

The first part of that harsh statement is certainly true, the Old and New Testaments are full of miracles and, as Christians, we need to believe in them. And, officially, miracles are still happening. To become a Catholic saint at least two miracles have to be confirmed by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Miracle cures were recorded after prayers to Saint Carlo Acutis, for instance, before he was named a saint in 2025.

The medieval church had absolutely no problem with miracles. Miracles were expected. Perhaps when they are expected they happen more often. After the martyrdom of Thomas Becket in 1170, pilgrims were soon flocking to visit his tomb and to receive a mixture of blood and water (highly diluted, I am sure, like homeopathy). This blood and water mixture could literally work miracles. A Canterbury monk, Benedict of Peterborough (named because he later became abbot of Peterborough) set about recording all the miracles, complaining that he couldn’t write fast enough to keep up. He stopped after recording 275 miracles. The task was continued by another monk, William of Canterbury, who recorded a total of 425. Benedict’s work was the more popular, at least twenty copies survive in libraries throughout Europe. In contrast there are only two copies of the 425 miracle list. A surfeit of miracles perhaps.

We don’t have to read a Latin manuscript or even an English translation, we can visit Canterbury cathedral and see a selection of Becket’s miracles in wonderful stained glass. The Miracle Windows – is it a miracle they have survived? – show the Saint at work. Each scene has a short inscription in Latin, which can then be referred back to the full story in Benedict or William. The range of illnesses cured is wide, including dropsy, leprosy, lameness, blindness and castration, and on the point of death. Goditha of Hayes was dropsical. Ralph of Longueville was a leper. The two sisters of Boxley were lame and needed crutches until cured. Hugh, a monk of Jervaulx, was near death. It was poor Eilward of Westoning who was blinded and castrated as punishment for the theft of goods worth one penny. We live in a different world! The blinding and castrating is shown in bright stained glass, as is the cure, a touch from Becket’s crosier, and Benedict provides the fuller account. Eilward’s sight was restored first. “He then left and took up the journey to Thomas, the author of his salvation. Wherever he went, a great multitude of the people followed him, for his fame preceded him and roused everyone to meet him. Whatever gifts were given to him, he distributed to the poor for the love of the martyr. When he had gone about four miles, he put his hand down to scratch an itch on the scrotum of his testicles, and he discovered that his members had also been restored to him. They were very small, but they grew bigger, and he did not deny those who wished to feel them.” This wasn’t a miracle that was taken on trust, it was one that was seen and felt to be believed, and famous.

Miracles may seem out of step with our world today. But there is one miracle we must believe in, the miracle of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Day.

Charles Harding

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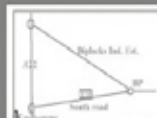
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Local Charities

Our charities are playing a crucial role in our communities, supporting those who are most in need and providing an exceptional service to thousands of local residents. Since first being elected as your MP in 2025, I have had the privilege of working with so many fantastic groups including MAYFACS, Rotherfield St Martin, Carillon Cottage in Wadhurst, Crowborough's Artytime, Whitesmith-based East Sussex Wildlife Rescue & Ambulance Service, Horam Community Garden, Heathfield's Wealden Works, Groombridge Men's Shed, and many others.

Most recently, I was proud to become a Patron of a unique Hailsham charity Medi Tech Trust who promote recycling of unused and unwanted medical equipment that NHS could not use and would end up in landfill. Medi Tech Trust collects it and distributes it to those who need it locally in East Sussex, as well as to low-income countries with accompanying training programmes enabling local doctors and health staff to use it. Medi Tech Trust is one of only two charities in the UK carrying out this work.

The charity's work initially started as a project to raise funds for a laser machine in Eastbourne Hospital over twenty years ago. Since then, they supplied over £1 million worth of equipment to East Sussex hospitals and related medical services.

To name just a few successes, last year, medical supplies have been donated to East Sussex Food Banks and Baby Banks, and sensory lights were delivered to an East Sussex Primary School and are now used by SEND pupils. Additionally, hospital beds were recently donated to the charity by Hospice in the Weald and have been recycled to further education training colleges in Cornwall and Buckinghamshire, and also to overseas hospitals in Democratic Republic of Congo and Malawi.

I was pleased to team up with Medi Tech Trust to deliver a donation of hundreds of baby bottles and associated items to Crowborough's incredible charity and recipients of The Kings Award for Voluntary Service, Family2Family, who supports local families by distributing packages of baby and children's clothing, toys, toiletries and other essential items.

Medi Tech Trust is always looking for opportunities to support our local community and is aiming to support East Sussex First Responders in 2026. If you know of a local organisation or charity who would benefit from a donation of medical supplies; or if you know of a local GP surgery that would welcome having a free collection bin installed, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Medi Tech Trust team by visiting www.meditechtrust.org or calling 01323 442211.

Nusrat Ghani

St Wilfid's Hospice Charity Shop, Herstmonceux

With increasing signs of Spring it's time to reassess our wardrobes and maybe have a spring clean of the many items hiding away at the back of cupboards? We all keep things that may 'come in handy' but they seldom do! However they may be just the treasure someone else is searching for, so please come and donate them to St Wilfrid's to raise urgently needed funds to help the local Hospice .

Looking towards sunny days the shop is replacing winter and cold weather stock with lighter wear. Toys and play clothes quickly get outgrown so donate and replace at bargain prices!

We still need volunteers to help greet customers, sort and price stock and generally help out in a happy, relaxed atmosphere. Want to know more? Pop into the shop (opening hours displayed in the window) or contact Lucy the part-time Manager on 01323 832287. Please leave a message if no answer and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

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It came to pass in 2020 that a decree went out from the General Synod that all the Church of England must be carbon net-zero by 2030. And this ruling was first made when Justin Welby was Archbishop of Canterbury. And all went to have a good hard look at their church heating systems, every one into his own vestry cupboard...

How easy it is to issue a decree from on high; and how hard it is for the people on the ground to have to deal with its consequences.

One of many consequences of that arbitrary round-number target – and it's a microcosm of the centralised C of E's attitude towards its parish churches – was that three months ago the vicar and churchwardens of Christ Church, Chineham, in the diocese of Winchester, received a consistory court ruling from the chancellor of the diocese, Cain Ormondroyd, which came across as an absolute bollocking. It was as if they were a group of mis-behaving prefects summoned to the headmaster's study. The ruling was along the lines of: 'You've let God down, you've let the diocese down – and you've let yourselves down.' The Chineham 'Petitioners' (as they were referred to in the ruling) are now beginning their long-drawn-out punishment.

The miscreants now have to rip out the new gas boilers and replace them with an eco alternative.

Their offence was that, after enduring a freezing winter of coughing, sneezing, dwindling congregations and demoralised volunteers while they waited for the hopelessly slow Diocesan Advisory Committee to respond to their request for advice on which kind of heating system they should install to replace their failed gas boiler, they'd dared to take matters into their own hands. Having taken advice from energy providers about the possibility of installing either heat-pumps or a bio-LPG fuel system, they'd concluded that both options were impractical and far too expensive. The most viable solution for the time being was to replace the broken gas boiler with new, more efficient gas boilers.

The work had begun by the time the Diocesan Advisory Committee got around to objecting to replacement gas boilers, a year after the request. The committee also never once visited the site to see for themselves the impracticability of their preferred bio-LPG option, which would have required the felling of trees or the taking up of a large chunk of the church's outdoor space.

'The case,' wrote the chancellor in his lofty ruling, 'presents a cautionary tale in respect of the difficulties that can arise when proper consideration is not given at an early stage to the Church Buildings Council's net-zero guidance. The Petitioners compounded the difficulties by deliberately proceeding with works which they knew to be unauthorised. The combined result is most unfortunate.'

The result is, in fact, that Christ Church, Chineham, is a heated, well-attended church again, to the relief of all who worship there. But the 'unfortunate' situation to which the chancellor referred is that the miscreants will be forced to rip out those new gas boilers and replace them with an eco alternative.

Like a headmaster who decides to show a spot of leniency at the last minute and not expel the prefects on the spot, the chancellor decreed that, as another winter was on its way, 'I am minded to grant a faculty for the gas boilers to remain for three years' with the condition 'that any carbon emissions from the operation of the gas boilers be offset'.

I contacted the vicar, the Revd Jonathan Clark, to ask him how the church was dealing with this ruling, while the clock ticks down to the moment in 32 months' time when the new boilers must be ripped out. He responded that he didn't have time to speak to me, as 'this affair has already taken far too much attention away from our core mission'.

What a time-consuming distraction it must have been! He's trying to run a church, for goodness' sake. His first duty is to his parishioners' spiritual needs. The people who help him are unpaid volunteers, who give hours of their time to the C of E, an increasingly thankless task. They're the ones who get clobbered for their trouble. Clark referred me to a letter he wrote to the Church Times in November, in which he advised churches, first, 'to pray earnestly that your existing boilers don't fail', and then said to the General Synod: 'We support the drive to net-zero carbon, but was this the kind of result intended in your formal drive to it?'

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Veteran Sussex writer and nine-year-old illustrator collaborate on their children's book *Otto*



A unique creative partnership between a veteran Sussex writer and a nine-year-old illustrator has resulted in the publication of *Otto*, a new children's book aimed at readers aged 7–12.

Otto tells the story of an octopus whose home is destroyed by debris dumped from a ship. With help from his friends, Otto sets out to clean up the reef and restore it to health – with a little assistance from some humans along the way.

Author **Neil Mackwood**, a former journalist living in East Sussex, wrote *Otto* as an adventure story set beneath the sea. Unsure how it would resonate with its intended audience, he shared the manuscript with a local (then eight-year-old girl) – Amelie Vakil. Her verdict was immediate: she loved it.

Without being asked, Amelie began illustrating the story on her iPad, bringing to life Otto the octopus and a cast of colourful sea creatures. When Neil saw her drawings, he was instantly captivated by their humour, charm and authenticity. Her artwork reflects the story as seen through a child's eyes – playful, expressive and full of personality.

“The book is pitched at Amelie's age group – one that I exceed by about six decades,” said Neil. “Her illustrations brought a freshness, warmth and wit to the characters that I simply couldn't have imagined myself.”

The book has been endorsed by the **Sussex Kelp Recovery Project (SKRP)**, chaired by the **Sussex Wildlife Trust**, whose mission is to champion, study and facilitate the recovery of the seabed off the Sussex coast.

Nikki Oliver, Support Officer for SKRP, said:

“Many pressures, including storm damage and destructive fishing techniques, destroyed around 96% of Sussex's kelp forests, leaving the seabed empty and silent – not unlike Otto's

Parishes across the country are experiencing much the same thing. To comply with the C of E's 'Routemap' for the 'journey to net zero' churches must apply for official permission from the diocese before installing a 'like-for-like' gas or oil boiler. They must provide all kinds of documentation to explain why they are asking to go against approved practice. Dozens of churches are left without heating for months, sometimes years, during the agonisingly slow decision-making process, in which time damp damages the interiors and makes the parishioners ill.

'It's enlightening but not in a good way.'

Most of us are familiar with all sides of the net-zero argument. We've read journalists telling us to buck up, stop complaining and install heat pumps. We've also kept abreast of climate-emergency sceptics, who question apocalyptic global-warming models and remind us that renewable energy is intermittent. They point out rare-earth metals for EV batteries are often mined by child labour in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ed Miliband's obsessive push for net-zero targets is going to immiserate Britain.

There are many facets to 'the science' and to the economics. But the Church is in the grip of eco-zealots, who pour shame on parishes if they dare to resist a heat pump. Each diocese has its 'net-zero carbon engagement officer', or sometimes 'creation care engagement officer', paid higher salaries than parish priests. They're employed to be zealous.

The Church Commissioners have committed £190 million for grants to support the net-zero project. That money would have been enough to provide an extra ten parish priests in each of the C of E's 42 dioceses for the next decade.

The C of E's loss of a sense of proportion on this subject is encapsulated by the fact that, in the timetable for next month's General Synod, the issue of 'Lowest income communities funding' has been relegated to 'Contingency business' (i.e. 'we'll discuss it if we have time at the end'), while a full hour on the afternoon of 12 February has been allotted to a motion to 'promote the use of local, seasonal flowers and foliage and discourage the use of floral foam'.

*Ysenda Maxtone Graham
21 January 2026*

**Steeple Chasing – by Peter Ross
(pub. 2023 – Headline Publishing Group)**

Seldom have I enjoyed such a fascinating, entertaining and beautifully written book. I can measure on the fingers of one hand the number of books I have wanted to re-read immediately after finishing it. Peter Ross' travelogue of churches, chapels and cathedrals along with the people and animals who live and have lived in them is one such book.

You accompany him through pages written with a quiet charm as a friend. He manages to encompass topics and characters as diverse as monasticism, bats, plainsong, the Angel of the North, masons, wall paintings, Stanley Spencer, Samuel Pepys, a cathedral cat, hammer beams and well dressing, Picasso and mudlarking in a lyrical and compelling way. I defy any reader not to learn something new and delve into the extensive bibliography to find out more about a topic.

He writes in praise of place and people. This is no textbook on ecclesiastical architecture, nor does he disclose any belief that he does or does not follow. He is in awe of what he sees and the people he meets as he takes you with him.

This is the first book I have read by this award-winning journalist and it will certainly not be the last.

Paula Nicholson

AD INDEX – WARBLETON, DALLINGTON AND BODLE STREET (AS AT MARCH 26)

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Chairman:	Clyde Young	01435 830059
Membership Sec	Jane Uren	01435 863640
Book Club, Dallington	Trish Wilson	01435 830389
Bodle Street Green		
Short Mat Bowls Club	Brian Wootton-Whitling	01323 833560
Christian Aid: Hon Sec	Brian Dodd	01825 890318
Coffee & Company, Rushlake Green	Kay Nicholls	01435 830353
Dallington Art Club	Pauline Ridley	07702 104392
Dallington Village Hall: Bookings	Pauline Ridley	07702 104392
Dunn Village Hall: Hon Sec	Mrs Denise Bailey	01435 831565
Bookings	Mrs Denise Bailey	01435 831565
Gardening Club (BSG): Hon Sec	Mrs M Williamson	01323 832509
History Group Warbleton Hon Sec	Jonathan Austin	01435 830722 joncaustin@btinternet.com
Housing Assoc. Warbleton Chairman	Clyde Young	01435 830059
Parish Council Clerk, Warbleton	Jackie Cottrell	07522 900169 warbletonparishcouncil@gmail.com
Little Punnetts Town Pre-School	Toni Wheatley	01435 831515
The Rest, Three Cups	Roy & Barbara Lovett	01435 882241
Punnetts Town Toddlers	The School Office	01435 830361
Village Hall, Bodle Street: Hon Sec	Mrs M Williamson	01323 832509
Bookings	Ros Billingshurst	01323 832062
Villages Luncheon Club	Mrs P Gentry	01323 833201
Warbleton Brass Band Musical Director	Mrs Sian Buss	01273 493469 secretary@warbletonbrassband.co.uk
Warbleton Hort. & P'ltry Soc Chairman	Sue Copp	07780 585757 wdhps.chair@gmail.com
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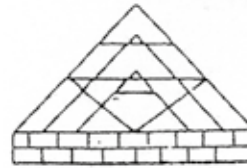
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