

New Life



St Mary the Virgin

The Monthly
Magazine for the
Parishes of
St Mary the Virgin,
Fen Ditton,
St Peter, Horningsea
and
All Saints, Teversham

April
2026



All Saints



St Peter

50p

**THE PARISHES OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, FEN DITTON,
ST PETER, HORNINGSEA AND ALL SAINTS, TEVERSHAM**

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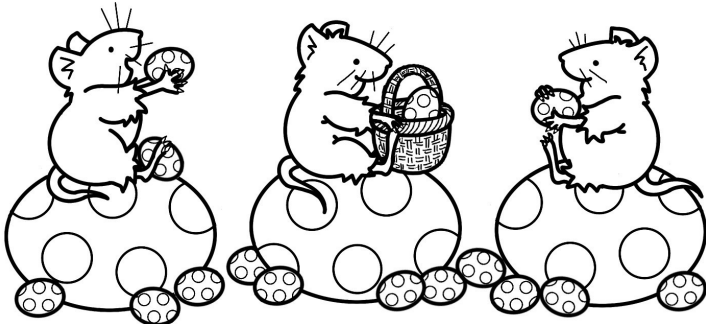
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April 2026

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Dear friends

'Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you might have life in his name.'

John 20.30–31

We have been spending some time during Lent reading and reflecting upon the Gospel according to St John. We started – naturally enough – at the beginning, with the great words we usually hear at Christmas: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' (John 1.1)

We then read the long accounts

- of Jesus's night-time conversation with Nicodemus, a member of the governing class searching for truth (who was told that he must be re-born);
- of Jesus's encounter with a Samaritan woman at a well (who was told that her chaotic love life would never bring the satisfaction for which she was craving);
- of Jesus feeding a large crowd (and teaching that the receiving of bread from heaven would provide a means of abiding in and with him through all our days);
- of Jesus confronted by the pain of losing a dear friend to death and refusing to allow the grave to have the last word.

John's Gospel is the legacy of a man who lived close to Jesus – the 'beloved disciple' who was reclining next to him at the Last Supper (John 13.25). This was a man who had spent a lifetime teaching the world about his friend and Saviour – who, day by day, week by week, told and retold the stories and teachings that had captured his mind and soul; and in so doing had won many new believers, but had also faced considerable opposition. The final version of the gospel was probably put together after his death, and was a way of ensuring that his words

and memories would continue to draw into faith new generations of believers – those who not only came to know *about* Jesus but through faith came to know him for themselves.

During Holy Week we will be following John's story. I will be giving three addresses (from John 12) at St Andrew's Cherry Hinton on the Monday to Wednesday (7.30pm) and preaching at the Maundy Thursday service on the foot-washing and Jesus's great discourse in the upper room (as told by John); I will also be using John's account of the Passion on Good Friday (2pm Last Hour at Fen Ditton) and we will hear and reflect on John's account of Mary Magdalene in the garden on Easter morning.

My prayer is that, drenched in John's beautifully crafted words, we may all be deepened in our belief in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God – and that so believing we may be further drawn into the Life that is his gift for us all.

Every blessing for this holy season

Nick




Holy Week and Easter Services

We will gather for a 3 Parishes service on Maundy Thursday evening at Fen Ditton, 7.30pm.

Good Friday begins with Morning Prayer at Teversham (10.30am; Tony Kirby will be returning to play the organ for us); there will be a short outdoor service in Horningsea at 12.30pm followed by a Procession of the Cross to Fen Ditton in time for the Last Hour at 2pm.

The Easter Vigil and Renewal of Baptism Vows will be at Fen Ditton on Easter Eve (8pm) and there will be services at 10.30am in all three churches on Easter Day.



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Our Parishes

If you would like to discuss baptism or thanksgiving for the birth of a child, the reading of marriage banns and weddings, or arrangements for a funeral at any of our churches, please contact Nick, our Rector/Vicar (see inside cover for contact details).

Stamps

I am still collecting used postage stamps which I now take to CamSight. I would love you to save them for me, but I only need approx. 1cm around the stamp please, not half an envelope!

Thank you

Gill

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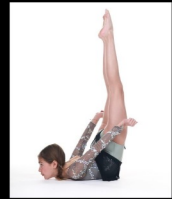
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Ancient Shepherds' Book Club

We meet at The King's Head, Fen Ditton, on the first Wednesday of the month, at 7.30pm. Please join us there or contact Carol, on 07941 492271, for further details.



Wed, 1st April, 7.30pm, 'Leonard and Hungry Paul' by Ronan Hessi-an

Wed, 6th May, 7.30pm, 'Keep the Aspidistra Flying' by George Or-well

Celebrate the spring at St Peter's Church Horningsea Saturday 18 April

The Friends of Horningsea Church are organising a morning of singing and dancing to children's favourite songs – all families are invited to come along and join in – wearing their best Disney dressing up costumes if they like! Details of the morning will be posted on Facebook and in the Horningsea Herald nearer the time.

In the afternoon the St Clements young bell ringers (mainly from school years 7–10) are visiting the church – by boat! – to ring the bells between 3.15 and 4.15.

If the Heritage Lottery Fund give St Peter's the grant that has been applied for, this will be the last day of activity in the Church for a couple of months as it is hoped work can get underway in April. Church services will continue using the chancel whilst the work is being done.

FEN DITTON 200 CLUB

The lucky winners for **April** were:

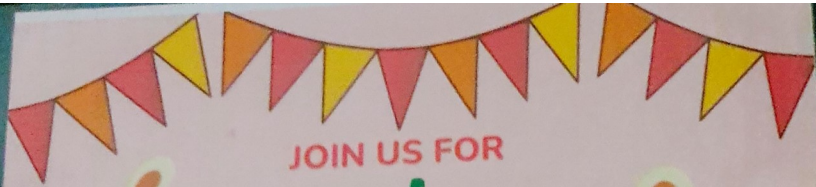
£50 Owen Johnson (3)

£10 Lesley Jenkins (119)

£20 Margaret Buxton (26)

£10 Mark Woolfenden (195)

£10 Sam Hyde (10)



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RSVP laurie.woolfenden@icloud.com

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5th	Feb	Village Hall	6th	Aug	Recreation Ground*
5th	Mar	Village Hall	3rd	Sep	Village Hall
2nd	Apr	Village Hall	1st	Oct	Village Hall
7th	May	Village Hall	5th	Nov	Village Hall
4th	Jun	Recreation Ground*	3rd	Dec	Village Hall

*Weather permitting



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The Guardian, February 2018

'A perfect gastropub'

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The Telegraph August 2021



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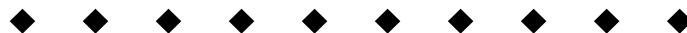


200 Club – call for new members and subscription renewals!

We have a selection of numbers available for anyone who would like to join the 200 Club this year, please get in contact to take part in our little church lottery. We have a draw every month and you can win prizes up to £50.

If you are already a member and haven't paid for this year's subscription yet, please do so soon!

Do get in touch with me with any queries (Schia.mitchell@gmail.com)



The Assassins in Persia – a reflection

Lindsay Davies

When I heard the news that the Supreme Leader of Iran had been assassinated on Saturday 28 February, my mind went straight back to the expedition I joined in 1998 to explore the Valley of the Assassins in Iran. I re-read my journal and reflected on the journey – and on the Assassins.

In the 11th Century the Islamic world was split into a number of factions. In about 1095 Hasan-i-Sabbah was chosen as the first grandmaster of a sect who were based at the castle of Alamut in the Elburz mountains of Northern Persia. His followers were fanatics who, armed with a dagger, would set out to kill their enemies and any passing traders. It was said that Hasan had a secret garden where he drugged his followers with hashish, promising them a future in paradise. The word “Assassin” has (apparently) the same root as the word “hashish”. The Assassins took over and strengthened castles in Syria as well as Persia. The expedition I joined was to explore some of these castles.

We had to wear full Islamic dress – not easy when you were putting up your tent! – and we took care not to make any statements that could have political implications. We spent a few days in Tehran before heading north to the mountains. The further away we got from the cities, the more relaxed people became – but we still had to be fully covered at all times. The mountains were beautiful. The castles were built high up on cliff tops with views that commanded the countryside all round. There were pomegranate bushes and wild roses on the hillsides and walnut trees growing alongside pretty streams. Within the castles we were trampling on broken pottery and very old glass – there had been very little archaeological investigation. We always camped outside a village and the local people greeted us warmly – we were taken into a house for tea, somehow managed to find our way into a village Hammam, were given a rose from a Persian garden, grapes and fresh bread from a village bakery.

Alamut, the Assassin’s headquarters, was described by Freya Stark as “standing out like a ship ... an impressive sight to the pilgrim”. Marco Polo wrote that it had the biggest and most beautiful garden, planted with all the finest fruits of the world, ornamented with gold, with four conduits – one flowing with wine, one with milk, one with honey and one with water. He had a good imagination!

Walking in the remote mountains enabled us to see a side of Iran that was never shown in the news with kind, generous and welcoming people. A countryside rich with fruit and fields full of crops and livestock.

As we crossed the Elburz mountains and headed down towards the Caspian Sea we saw another side of life – with pollution and a valley that looked as if there had been a major ecological disaster – and very large warnings not to take any photographs. Iran appeared to be on the brink of a war with Afghanistan. The Iran/Iraq war was still a vivid memory. We saw convoys of tanks heading towards the northeast border and saw young soldiers leaving a mosque, putting their boots on and being driven off in buses.

At the end of my journal I noted my immediate thoughts – about our female mountain guide who longed to travel the world; about the little boys who always emerged from the villages to watch us set up camp and I asked myself the question – “how many of these little boys will lose their lives in future conflicts in this beautiful, fascinating and unstable part of the world?” I wonder where they are now.



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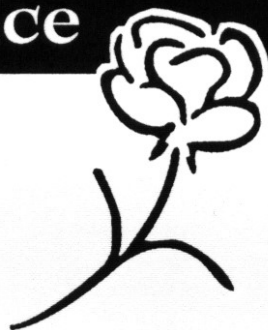
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FEN DITTON GARDENING CLUB

Our February meeting this year heralded a number of firsts for the Gardening Club. We held the event for the first time at the Marleigh Community Centre and rather than an invited external speaker, the content for the evening was provided by members. We mixed up the format with one of our members, Cerys Wren, providing us with a brief talk on local soil types and principles of soil conditioning. This was followed by an opportunity for the testing of the pH on soil samples brought in by members and small group Q&A discussions on the art of composting. The feedback from members was positive and the format described as enjoyable. There was particular interest in the identification of local soil types from the official geological records, with Fen Ditton being mainly chalky clay and chalky loam with a few isolated areas of sandy loam in parts of High Ditch Road. These types were reflected in the outcome of our soil testing samples, all of which impacts on the plants and vegetables most suitable to grow in our own gardens.

During March, as the days become noticeably brighter, I have been motivated to start tidying the garden after Winter and to start planting some seeds ready to plant out later in Spring. New varieties of Pansies and Dahlia's are on my 'try to grow' list this year. I hope that not only will I have enough to plant in my own garden, but a few extra seedlings to offer to the gardening club's annual plant sale in May. Donations of seedlings and excess plants in your garden are welcome.

On Tuesday 24th March, we will have hosted Diana Cook, who works for Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust as the Coordinator of the Cambridgeshire Churchyard Conservation Award. I have been looking forward to hearing Diana speak about her programme which encourages churches and burial grounds to manage their land for biodiversity.

In April, we will welcome Tim Scott from the Country Regeneration

Trust (CRT), who will be discussing modern eco-friendly farming. He will be talking to us about turning a blank canvas into a wildlife friendly farm. Did you know that the CRT have both record numbers of different species and record population densities of numerous red listed species? This puts them in the top 1% of farms in the country.

Hope to see you soon!

Amy Cudmore (Chair)

Dates for your diary:

Tuesday 28th April Tim Scott: Nature Friendly Farming

Saturday 9th May Bring & Buy Plant Sale

Saturday 12th Sept Fen Ditton Village Show

Members range from those with a passionate interest in gardening and allotment growing, to those who enjoy visiting gardens and coming to listen to our varied and interesting speakers.

We meet monthly (from October–April), on the fourth Tuesday of the month and listen to some varied and interesting speakers. All talks take place at Fen Ditton Village Hall. Doors open 7.15pm. Talks start at 7.30pm.

The programme changes during the summer months and includes weekend garden visits, a picnic and a plant sale.

Membership is £10 for the year. This can be paid on the night of a talk in cash or via BACS in advance. Guest price on the night £3.

For all enquiries about Fen Ditton Gardening Club including membership, please visit <http://fdgc.uk> or email c@fdgc.uk.

We can also be found on Facebook at **FenDittonGardeningClub**



All in the month of...

It was:

400 years ago, on 9th April 1626 that Francis Bacon, philosopher and politician, died.

100 years ago, on 6th April 1926 that the Revd Ian Paisley, Baron Bannside, Northern Irish politician and Protestant evangelical minister was born.

Also 100 years ago, on 21st April 1926 that Queen Elizabeth II was born.

90 years ago, on 23rd April 1936 that Roy Orbison, American singer, songwriter and musician was born.

80 years ago, on 21st April 1946 that John Maynard Keynes was born.

75 years ago, on 17th April 1951 that the Peak District National Park was established. It was Britain's first National Park.

65 years ago, on 10th April 1961 that South African golfer Gary Player became the first non-American to win the Masters Tournament.

Also 65 years ago, on 12th April 1961 that Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space and to orbit the Earth.

50 years ago, on 3rd April 1976 that the UK won the 1976 Eurovision Song Contest with Save Your Kisses for Me by Brotherhood of Man.

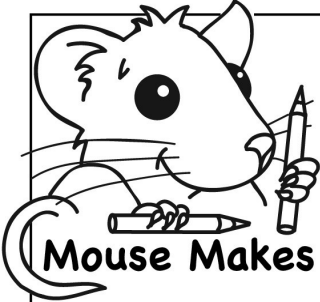
40 years ago, on 11th April 1986 that Halley's Comet made its closest approach to Earth during its most recent visit.

Also 40 years ago, on 26th April 1986 that the Chernobyl disaster took place in Ukraine, then within the Soviet Union.

25 years ago, on 7th April 2001 that NASA launched its Mars Odyssey spacecraft to search for water and volcanic activity on Mars.

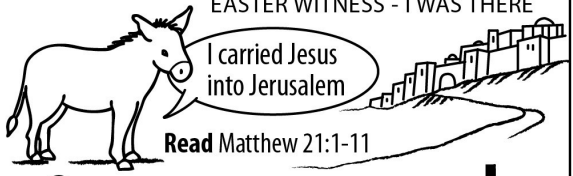
15 years ago, on 29th April 2011 that Prince William and Catherine (Kate) Middleton were married at Westminster Abbey in London.

10 years ago, on 22nd April 2016 that the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was signed.

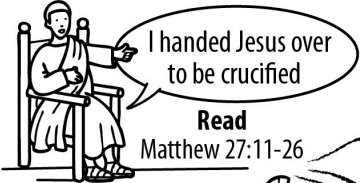


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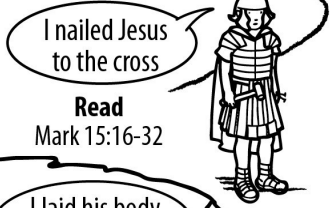
EASTER WITNESS - I WAS THERE



Read Matthew 21:1-11



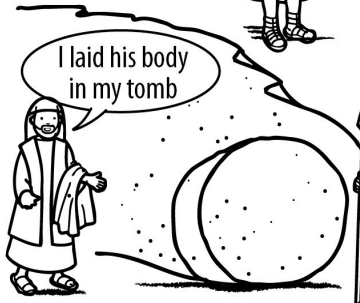
Read Matthew 27:11-26



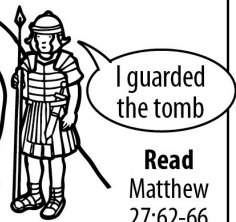
Read Mark 15:16-32



Read Mark 15:33-41



Read Mark 15:42-47

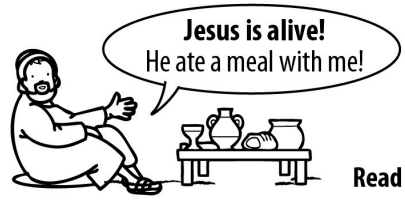


Read Matthew 27:62-66



Read Matthew 28:1-10

and spoke to the angel



Read Luke 24:13-35



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ALL SAINTS
TEVERSHAM

2 April <i>Maundy Thursday</i>	7.30pm Holy Communion & Stripping of the Sanctuary		
3 April <i>Good Friday</i>	2.00pm The Last Hour	12.30pm Outdoor Service & Procession	10.30am Morning Prayer
4 April <i>Holy Saturday</i>	8.00pm Lighting of the New Fire, Easter Vigil & Renewal of Baptism Vows		
5 April <i>Easter Day</i>	10.30am Holy Communion	10.30am Holy Communion	10.30am Holy Communion
12 April <i>2nd of Easter</i>	10.30am Holy Communion	4.00pm Village Service	10.30am Holy Communion
Wed. 15 April		8.30pm Compline (Night Prayer)	
19 April <i>3rd of Easter</i>	8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) 10.30am All-age Worship		10.30am Holy Communion followed by Annual Meeting
26 April <i>4th of Easter</i>		10.30am United Holy Communion	