



Walbury
Beacon
Benefice

MARCH



SACRED

**TO BOW THE HEAD
IN SACKCLOTH AND IN ASHES,
OR REND THE SOUL,
SUCH GRIEF IS NOT LENT'S GOAL;
BUT TO BE LED
TO WHERE GOD'S GLORY FLASHES,
HIS BEAUTY TO COME NIGH,
TO FLY, TO FLY,
TO FLY WHERE TRUTH AND LIGHT DO LIE.
*PERCY DEARMER***

SECULAR

**“INDOORS OR OUT, NO ONE RELAXES IN MARCH, THAT MONTH
OF WIND AND TAXES, THE WIND WILL PRESENTLY DISAPPEAR,
THE TAXES LAST US ALL THE YEAR.”
*OGDEN NASH***

**“LET’S MARCH THIS MARCH TOWARDS POSITIVITY.”
*(UNKNOWN- JUST FOUND IT, BUT MUCH NEEDED)***

THE BEACON

You are the light
of the world.
(Matthew 5.14)

MARCH
2023

FACTS ABOUT MARCH

"The word 'March' comes from the Roman 'Martius'. originally the first month of the Roman calendar and named after Mars, the god of war. March was the beginning of our calendar year. We changed to the Gregorian calendar in 1752, and it is only since then that the year begins in January. The Anglo-Saxons called the month *Hlyd monath* which means Stormy month, or *Hraed monath* which means Rugged Month.

All through Lent the traditional games played are marbles and skipping. The games were stopped on the stroke of twelve noon on Good Friday, which in some places was called Marble Day or Long Rope Day. The game of marbles has been played for hundreds of years and some historians say that it might have been started by rolling eggs. In the past, round stones, hazelnuts, round balls of baked clay and even cherry stones have been used."

COMMEMORATIONS THIS MONTH

5th March: St Piran: born in Ireland, studied the scriptures in Rome, returned and was made a Bishop. In Ireland he was said to have performed many miracles, but the Kings of Ireland at the time were not impressed. It is reported that in the 5th Century St Piran was flung into the sea in Ireland. He had a millstone around his neck but miraculously floated across the water to Perran Beach in Perranporth. Here he built a small chapel. He built his oratory amongst the sand dunes. People would come from miles around to hear him preach. By accident St Piran discovered tin. A black stone on his fire leaked a white liquid. He had discovered tin. The Cornish Flag, the Flag Of St Piran (white cross on a black background) represents white tin flowing from the black rock, or good overcoming evil. St Piran is believed to have lived for 200 years, was fond of a drink and met his end falling down a well. No date of his death was recorded. *(for any cornish exiles in the benefice)*

25th March: The Annunciation: Lady Day was the first of the English quarter days, when the countryside cycle of life began afresh with spring dispelling winter. It was considered the first day of the year. The church's measuring system for time was Anno Domini (A.D.), in the year of our Lord. In the most technical sense, this would be measured from the incarnation, rather than the birth of the Christ child. Hence, the year would start at the annunciation.

(Scotland changed its new year's day to 1 January in 1600.) Lady Day occurs close to the Vernal Equinox, very near the beginning of Spring. It also occurs during the Lenten season of fasting, which makes it difficult to celebrate an actual feast. So, people would make a special effort to make what they were allowed to eat during Lent more interesting. Occasionally, it could also fall on Good Friday - considered bad luck in England. An old saying explains: "If Our Lord falls in Our Lady's lap, England beware of some mishap!" In this case, the observance of Lady Day is moved to the first Sunday after Easter Sunday.

WEATHER

March borrows its last 3 days from April

As many mists in March as there are frosts in May

(the weather at the end of March and beginning of April is usually similar)

Dear Friends,

Lent runs throughout March leading up to Easter. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday (22nd February this year) and ends on Easter Saturday (8th April). It is seen as a time of observance, reflection, and preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus at Easter. It has traditionally been a period of fasting or abstinence to get our minds and hearts ready for remembering Jesus' life, death, and bodily resurrection.

Fasting is a common practice in other religions and was much more common in Christian England prior to modern times. A pillar of Islam is the practice of fasting during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan. Many of us know something about this from our Muslim friends and colleagues and I have great respect and admiration for the very many of those who practice it.

So why has abstinence gone so out of favour in this country and indeed why bother to do something so alien to our modern way of life? Should we consider giving up alcohol or chocolate or tobacco or similar pleasures, or go for the full fasting experience? Abstinence may be very helpful in encouraging us to reflect on our faith when before we would have reached for a drink or snack or smoke. How much better that will be for us anyway than a short-lived dopamine boost!

We will not be giving up the things that we truly need. We will still have shelter, sufficient food, family and friends, community, and our faith. However, observance of Lent with some form of abstinence may well help us to focus better on the things we need to do to build our spiritual life. There are many ways to approach Lent. Here are just some suggestions...

1. Reduce your time on technology and social media and instead take an hour reading a book or going for a walk, staying away from your mobile telephone and computer.
2. Every day for 40 days, clear out a different part of your home.
3. A popular 40-day Lent Challenge is about distributing random acts of kindness. Why not set yourself the challenge of doing something nice for someone every day. E.g. send your co-worker a nice message or hold the door open for someone. It could really brighten their day.
5. Give up unhealthy food for lent. It could be anything from sweets to chocolate or alcohol to fast food.
6. Set yourself a steps goal for Lent. It could be 5,000, 10,000, or even 15,000 if you're feeling extra active.
7. Everyone has a lot of clutter in their house that they never use, so why not fill up a bag of unwanted goods every day and take it to your local charity shop.
8. Place an item into a box every day for 40 days and then take the box to your local food bank on Easter Sunday.

Now I have to decide how I might spread the Christian message this Lent.

Yours in faith **Revd Annette**

REVENGE

'By taking revenge for an injury, one is even, in passing it over, one is superior'
(*Sunday Reading for the Young:1884*)

ALL AGE SERVICE

After a long interval Jenny was able to resume leading an All Age Service in St. Mary's Kintbury. It has to be said that the congregation upon this occasion consisted of roughly the same age (except for your ancient editor)

The service is simple and meaningful. Being the first Sunday after Candlemass celebration the theme was light and Matthew 5:14,

As part of the talk we had an en-lightening shared bible study on the words, 'You are the light,, with many examples of the images the word light engendered.

We sang the hymn, 'Walk in the Light' and Gill and I were able to explain that Brother Damian, the composer, then at St. Cassians, had rehearsed us in one of the first renditions of this hymn when he led one of our monthly ecumenical services in St. Marys.

This is always an enjoyable, thought provoking service suitable for all ages. In the past children have given us many topics for reflection.

We thank Jenny and trust that it will resume with its usual congregation of 'all ages'.

Penny Fletcher

THE RAILWAY COMES TO KINTBURY & BEYOND

For hundreds of years, the fastest form of transport known to most people, either in towns or villages, was the four or five miles an hour of the carrier's cart. The heady speeds achieved by the stage coach might be enjoyed by the wealthier classes but for most, life could only continue at a gentle, plodding pace.

Then the railways arrived, first in the industrialised north then, thanks to Isambard Kingdom Brunel, in the south and west as well. By 1841, Brunel's Great Western Railway between London and Bristol had fully opened and for the very first time passengers could experience travelling through the Vale of the White Horse at over 25 miles an hour.

Clearly, railways were the transport of the future and many in our part of Berkshire were keen for a slice of the action. In 1845 an Act of Parliament was passed which, with the support of the already well-established GWR, created the Berks & Hants Railway Company. This was to be a branch line from the Great Western, leaving the main line just south west of Reading towards Theale. This was the "Berks" section of the line; the "Hants" section turned south east towards Basingstoke.

There were to be four stations on the way to Newbury: Theale, Aldermaston, Woolhampton and Thatcham, then to the west, Kintbury and Hungerford. The line finally opened on the very cold morning of 21st December 1847 when, according to the report in the Newbury Weekly News of December 24th, there were initially few spectators but, as the day advanced, however, " the bustle began to increase and it was very evident that something of great public interest was occurring."

The NWN was not impressed by the speed of the new service which covered the eight and a quarter miles between Newbury & Hungerford - with one stop at Kintbury - in 25 minutes, but commented, "this will doubtless be improved". The reporter seems to have forgotten that this speed was probably four times faster than a carrier's cart would have completed the same distance, but perhaps expectations had been raised by the railway company.

However, those who travelled along this new branch line were, apparently, unanimous “with respect to the very great smoothness, absence of oscillation and of noise which appears to distinguish the Berks & Hants from other railways.”

It would be interesting to know how many of these travellers enjoyed seats in first class carriages and how many, if any, took that first journey in a second or third class carriage. Many of the wealthier classes of our villages – the inhabitants of West Woodhay House, Kirby House, Hamstead Marshall Park, Barton Court and so on - might well have availed themselves of the opportunity to travel up to London at previously unimagined speeds though I doubt many cottagers would have joined them. For some people, the arrival of the railway meant a serious decline in business: canal travel could in no way compete with the speed of the train, for example. Coach travel took a blow, too: previously, seven horse-drawn coaches a day had left Newbury for Reading but this service was soon discontinued. William Huskisson M.P. was famously the first person to die in a railway accident when he was unable to get out of the way of a moving engine before it ran him over. That had been in 1830. But other people failed to appreciate how dangerous it could be to get too close to a fast moving engine.

The Bath Chronicle of November 1847 reported the story of , “a lad in the employment of Mr Alderman of Kintbury” who was crossing the line at Hamstead (*sic*) with a donkey and cart when he saw an engine coming down the line, “at a pretty rapid rate”. Presumably to get a better view , the young man, “actually pulled up with his donkey and cart on the middle of the line on which the engine was running.” His stupidity, the paper opined, was second to none. Luckily, “the son of Mr Gibbons of Hamstead” was passing by and he ran up to him and, “succeeded in hurrying the donkey off the line just as the engine came up.”

You can imagine something the conversation in the Gibbons’ household that evening! It is perhaps not surprising that fare dodging arrived with the railways. The Reading Mercury of January 1848 reported the case of Daniel Gingell and Richard Tiggell who had jumped out of a second class carriage at Kintbury, “to evade the payment of their fares and thereby defrauding the company.” They were fined £2 3s 6d each (the equivalent of several weeks pay at least) or one month’s imprisonment.

I bet they didn’t do it again.

By 1862, our branch line was extended to Devizes. Originally, this line was of Brunel’s preferred broad gauge of 7 feet ¼ inch although lines across the Great Western were eventually replaced by standard gauge to conform with the rest of the country’s growing railway network. However, if you walk along the canal to Vicarage Bridge, Kintbury, you will see two lengths of former broad gauge rails being used to buttress the bridge on the east facing side. A relic of Brunel’s engineering!

If you are a railway enthusiast or if you know anything about the early days of the Berks & Hants railway, I would really like to hear from you. Email me at theresalock@waitrose.com

Tessa Lock

Forest Church at Enborne

Forest Church met in the grounds of St Michael's church, looking out towards Beacon Hill on Sunday 5th February at 4pm – rather earlier than services held later in the calendar for obvious reasons.

The service had a strong emphasis on thinking about faith wonder and awe through the lens of nature and the seasons.



Evening sky Hampstead Park



The view towards Beacon Hill

We began with a short meditation and a song by Donovan (The Lullaby of Spring) followed by the Emily Dickinson poem “A Light Exists in Spring”. We then went for a short walk into Hampstead Park where we admired and heard about the cedars of Lebanon growing there. Upon our return to the church grounds there were final blessings and prayers by the firepit before singing the final song Johnny Nash’s appropriate & uplifting “I can see clearly now”.

Thanks to Gary and all from the South Newbury Benefice for another wonderful and thought provoking Forest Church.

There is another Forest Church at Enborne on Sunday 26th March at 6pm – the day the clocks change and we celebrate the arrival of British Summer Time once more!



The firepit



A cedar tree in Hamstead Park

Report by Phil Ireland based on a description by Father Gary of South Newbury Benefice

West Woodhay Morning Praise *a report by Jenny Veasey*

The service started with the Christian Aid payer for Ukraine.

It concluded with the congregation standing for a spirited rendering of the Ukrainian National Anthem played spontaneously by Howard the organist

The Christian Aid Prayer for Ukraine:

Almighty and Great God, accept our gratitude for your boundless mercy towards us. Hear the supplication of our afflicted hearts for the land and people of Ukraine, as they confront foreign aggression and invasion.

Open the eyes of those who have been overtaken by a spirit of deception and violence, that they be horrified by their works. Grant victory over the powers of evil that have arisen and bless Ukraine with your gifts of liberty, peace, tranquility, and good fortune.

We implore you, O Merciful God, look with grace upon those who courageously defend their land.

Remember the mothers and fathers, the innocent children, widows and orphans, the disabled and helpless, those seeking shelter and refuge, who reach out to you and to their fellow human beings looking for mercy and compassion.

Bless the hearts of those who have already shown great generosity and solidarity, and those who prepare to receive their Ukrainian brothers and sisters in Ukraine's greatest time of need.

Bring us together as your children, your creation, and instill in us your strength, wisdom and understanding.

May you be praised and glorified, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

Amen.



THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS

ONE CAN HEAR THE TREES SINGING GENTLY IN A CALM BREEZE
LOUDLY IN A STORM.

TO ENTER A WOOD IN A STORM IS TO SUDDENLY HEAR THE NOISE OUTSIDE STOP.
A CALM PEACE ENVELOPS YOU
IT IS PERHAPS TO FEEL THE ARMS OF GOD SHELTERING US,
REMINING US THAT WHATEVER HAPPENS HE IS ALWAYS THERE.
MATTHEW 28:20

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KINTBURY

SATURDAY 25TH MARCH

ST MARY'S CHURCH

6.30PM

HUNGERFORD

SATURDAY 1ST APRIL

ST LAWRENCE'S CHURCH

6.30PM

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT INFO@OPUS2.ORG.UK

Services in Walbury Beacon Benefice for March 2023

To check for changes please check the weekly benefice email if you are on the circulation list (add your name: email wbboffice@gmail.com), look on the website: <https://www.walburybeaconbenefice.org.uk/> or A Church Near You <https://www.achurchnearyou.com> for up to date information / confirmation of service times and location.

In order to protect more-vulnerable parishioners, we would appreciate those attending services in all our churches to continue to practice hand sanitizing, wearing of face masks, and respect for those who wish to maintain social distancing.

Sunday 5th March	Kintbury	Holy Communion	8.00am
<i>2nd Sunday of Lent</i>	Inkpen	Holy Communion	9.45am
	Kintbury	All Age	9.45am
Sunday 12th March	Kintbury	Holy Communion	9.45am
<i>3rd Sunday of Lent</i>	West Woodhay	Holy Communion	11.15am
	Inkpen	Holy Communion	8.30am
	Enborne	Holy Communion	11.00am
Sunday 19th March	Kintbury	Holy Communion	8.00am
Mothing Sunday			
<i>4th Sunday of Lent</i>	Kintbury	Holy Communion	9.45am
	Inkpen	All Age	9.45am
	Combe	Holy Communion	11.15am
Sunday 26th March	Kintbury	Holy Communion	9.45am
<i>5th Sunday of Lent</i>	West Woodhay	Holy Communion	11.15am
Clocks change	Enborne	Forest Church	6.00pm