

The Black Mountains Group Benefice

NEWSLETTER

May 2020



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as well as all the carers and NHS staff.**

And a special local thank you to Hopes of Longtown.

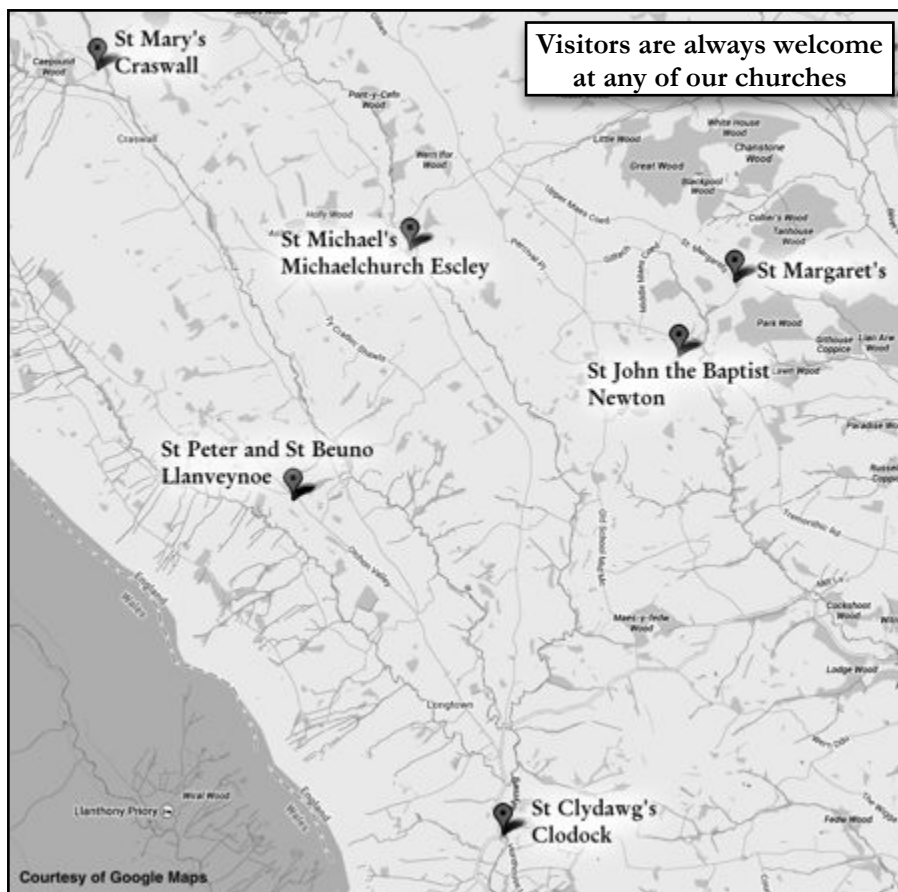
The Parishes of Clodock & Longtown with Craswall, Llanveynoe,
St Margaret's, Michaelchurch Escley & Newton

Vicar and Rural Dean:

The Revd Nicholas Lowton
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01981 510675 lowton.nicholas@virgin.net

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Mr John Pritchard 01981 510628

Mrs Jane Baxter 01981 510388

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Newton

(Vacant)

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From the Vicar

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

Well, this certainly is an Easter like no other. I am writing this on the Wednesday of Easter week with a memory of having walked up on to the side of Black Hill for a solitary – apart from two spaniels – vigil at dawn and then down for the Deanery Service on YouTube.

The absence of all the surrounding jollities at the very least enabled me – and many others – to focus on what Easter is actually about. Which is a helpful thing, as, when you look back to that first Easter, there were many reactions – shock, puzzlement, disbelief, excitement, fear, awe – but simple joy or jollity were not there. And that is for obvious and understandable reasons. For Jesus's followers, the resurrection changed everything, and it takes a while for that realisation to be taken on board.

And life really had changed for them. They might revert to their old occupations, but, as those fishermen disciples discovered in that wonderful story at the end of John's gospel – the knowledge and understanding of the presence of the risen Christ in their lives even transformed their work.

That message of transformation is vital. It is – let's face it – all too easy for us to go through all the rituals of Holy Week and Easter without it necessarily changing everything. This year, however, the world around us has changed unimaginably, and that allows us to look at how it has changed, and how that will change us, both individually, and collectively.

There are obvious things: many people have discovered it is perfectly possible to work from home; many people have shown active care and concern for the people around them; many people, apparently, have discovered the importance of washing hands; many people have discovered how important, and how easy it is, to keep in touch with those they love; and many, I hope, in the church and elsewhere have discovered that meetings are not necessarily all they are cracked up to be.

And many in the church have discovered new ways of spreading the good news of God's love. The headlines may say 'Churches are shut', and that reveals a sad and prevalent attitude to what 'churches' actually are. They are not buildings: they are groups of people, and, while church buildings provide a wonderful numinous presence where people can feel themselves at peace with God, you cannot have church without people, while you can have church without buildings. And that is something which has been so apparent this Holy Week and Easter. Having to find new ways of connecting has been a really good challenge. There has been much communication both on paper and online, a huge sharing of ideas for prayer, for worship, for discovery and for fun on the Abbeydore Deanery Facebook page and, as I write this, over twenty videos of homegrown worship on the Abbeydore Deanery YouTube channel, which will obviously remain there and which will equally obviously grow. And what has been really wonderful is the fact – clearly attested by people's responses – that this is drawing more new people into the community of the church.

What is absolutely obvious is that, when the current crisis is over, we cannot simply go back to what life was like before.

We have new people to feed along with all those who have been faithful members of the body of Christ for years. How we do that is something for which your views will be more than welcome. And if you have time to think of any, do let me know. Christ came to make all things new: here is a wonderful opportunity for us to bring that about. *Nicholas*

KEEPING IN TOUCH

There are many ways in which we are trying to keep everyone in touch at the moment but, as with everything, I am sure we could be doing more.

On a deanery level, Anne Lloyd, our Deanery Mission Coordinator, is sending out regular emails about things in the deanery: if you are not on her receiving list, do drop her an email at abbeydoredmc@gmail.com. As not everyone is on email, she is also posting hard copies out: if you would like to be on that receiving list, do give her a ring on 07432 873422.

The Abbeydore Deanery Facebook page is a veritable treasure chest of resources. At the time of writing, there are 220 members of the group, some of whom have joined Facebook simply to be members. It is the easiest thing in the world to join them!

I am emailing out weekly letters to people in the benefice with news and views for them. If you are not on the receiving end and would like to be, drop me a line at lowton.nicholas@virgin.net. If you are not on email and would like copies, do please phone Anne Lloyd – number above – and she will make sure that happens.

I am trying to phone as many people as possible each week, but finding slots has been problematic. If you would like to be added to my list, give me a ring on 01981 510675. We have within the benefice trained Pastoral Visitors: if you would like regular contact with one of them, please let me know.

A group of us is meeting on line every Wednesday evening for the wonderful and peaceful service of Compline: if you would like to join us, do please drop me an email.

And we keep together quietly. I have suggested that we set aside 8.00pm on a Tuesday for quiet prayer, and it is immensely powerful, believe me, to know that people are praying together, even when you can't see them. If there is anyone or anything that you would like prayed for at that time, do please let me know. *Nicholas*

HARVESTS

Why is this deranged man talking about harvests now? Well, as some of you have time for gentle thought, I optimistically hoped that you might want to turn your attention to what we might do this year, hoping that, by harvest time, we will be able to gather together again. Do please exercise a degree of imagination, as any service which remains more or less preserved in aspic inevitably tends to lack spirit.

If you do decide that you really do want to have, over a short period of time, six virtually identical services in six not entirely dissimilar places, then, with a deep sigh, I will say 'So be it', but it would be wonderful to have fresh life blown in. Happy to talk about this at any time. *Nicholas*

Deanery Events

We're also working hard to make sure that we make what we're able to offer as accessible to everyone as possible.

The Deanery continues to offer services each Sunday through its YouTube channel "Abbeydore Deanery". Some are recorded live, but don't worry if you miss the timed slot, they remain there for viewing whenever it's convenient for you.

If you're on Facebook but haven't joined Abbeydore Deanery Group yet – please join up. You'll then have access to daily meditations, prayer, links to all services and much more.

If you're not on Facebook but do have an email address, drop an email to abbeydoredmc@gmail.com and we can add you to the circulation list for our regular Deanery updates. Keep an eye on *A Church Near You* too.

Please don't feel that because you haven't got access to the internet, you can't join in with what's going on. We're sending postal packs on a regular basis too, with news, prayers, services etc. Just ring 07432 873422 and we will send you a copy too.

We also have a wonderful team of Pastoral Visitors within the Deanery, so if you'd like a call from a friendly voice, or know someone who would, do please get in touch with Anne for more details on the number above.

The Deanery Team has increased in strength as we have welcomed Geri Miller, an Intergenerational Missioner to work with us across the Deanery with a focus initially on the new and growing communities of Kingstone and Clehonger. She was commissioned to this role by the new Bishop of Hereford, Rt Rev Richard Jackson in an online service on April 26th.

We'd like to share this prayer with you in the hope that you may find it of comfort in the coming days.

**Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy,
in this time of uncertainty and distress.**

**Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift
up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort**

**Knowing that nothing can separate us from your love.
In Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Amen

Thanks

**TO THE PRECIOUS MEMORY OF HELEN LUCRETIA
WOOD-COLE, 19.09.1930 - 22.03.2020**

Sadly, on Mothering Sunday, Mum passed away peacefully at home.

A small grave side service was held at St. Michael & All Angels' Church 1st April at 1pm.

The family would like to express sincere thanks to everyone, who has comforted us with their kind words, messages and cards.

Donations received will go to the Hereford Street Pastors.

If anyone would like to make a donation in Mum's memory, please send it directly to, The Hereford Street Pastors, The Venn Legacy Centre, 45 Venns Lane, Hereford. HR1 1DT.

Cheques made payable to Hereford Vennture and they have asked for the donation to be noted in memory of Mum (Helen).

You can also donate on

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/woodcole

The Reading and Poem was read at the service

The Reading - Proverbs 3. 1 - 10

"Warning" – *Jenny Joseph*

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat that doesn't go, and doesn't suit me,
And I shall spend my pension
On brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals,
And say we've no money for butter.

I shall sit down on the pavement when I am tired,
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells,
And run my stick along public railings,
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick the flowers in other people's gardens,
And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat,
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go,
Or only bread and pickle for a week,
And hoard pens and pencils and beer mats
And things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry,
And pay our rent and not swear in the street,
And set a good example for the children.
We will have friends to dinner and read the papers.
But maybe I ought to practise a little now?

So people who know me
Are not too shocked and surprised,
When suddenly I am old
And start to wear purple!

AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES

A very big thank you to everyone who so generously supported the Australian Bushfires Coffee Morning. We are absolutely delighted to announce that £780 has been sent to the Australian Red Cross.

Thank you one and all for your most generous support.
Phil Baxter and Sue O'Neill

Forthcoming Events

MICHAELCHURCH FLICKS IN THE STICKS

The remaining FLICKS season has of course, needed to be cancelled. However, our DVD library is available to borrow from (phone 07794920729 for the choice of nearly 100).

A couple of LIVE SHOWS have been provisionally booked for next winter:

21 November 2020 An Evening with Victor and Albert: *Songs of merriment and slapstick!*

29 or 30 January 2021 ALAW : World class music from Wales
Hopefully Flicks will recommence before then!

Best wishes from the Flicks Team

Jane Hopcraft

NATIONAL MILLS WEEKEND

Regrettably, National Mills Weekend is cancelled, but we will try to arrange something later in the year, if circumstances permit.

CRASWALL BIG BREAKFAST

The Craswall Big Breakfast scheduled for the end of May will be postponed until we have some clarity on social gatherings, etc.

Christine Cleaton

Notices and Advertisements

LONGTOWN THURSDAY CLUB

We very much regret that it seems wise to cancel all meetings and activities scheduled for May. In the unlikely event that circumstances change, all members will be contacted individually.

Pauline Jones (01873 851782)

NEWTON WOMEN'S GUILD

We hope to be able to meet once again in the Autumn. In the meanwhile, wishing everyone well.

Jane Hopcraft

OFGEM - ABOUT THE PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER

The Priority Services Register is a free service provided by energy suppliers (Gas and Electricity) and network operators. Each energy supplier and network operator maintains its own register. To get on it, you need to contact your energy supplier.

Who is eligible? You are eligible if you:

- are of pensionable age
- are disabled or chronically sick
- have a long-term medical condition
- have a hearing or visual impairment or additional communication needs
- are in a vulnerable situation.
- You may also be eligible for priority services from your supplier and/or network operator if you live with a child under five years old.

How to get on the register

You need to contact your energy supplier to get on the Priority Services Register. Each energy supplier and network operator maintains its own register.

You can ask your supplier to pass your details on to your network operator, especially if you are dependent on your supply for medical reasons or if you have children under five years old.

If you have a different supplier for your gas and electricity, you need to contact them both.

If you switch supplier, you'll need to register for the service again with them.

Help you can get by being on the register

Advance notice of planned power cuts. If you rely medically on your energy supply you can arrange for the company that

runs the local energy network (the network operator) to give you advance notice of planned power cuts. For example, when they plan to carry out engineering work.

Priority support in an emergency. This could involve the local network operator providing alternative heating and cooking facilities in the event of a supply interruption.

Identification scheme. This is to reassure you that callers, for example meter readers, are genuine. Suppliers have to provide additional support to help you identify someone acting on behalf of their company. This could include arranging a password or showing an agreed picture card upon visit.

Password protection. Network operators must offer to agree a password with you (or your representative) that can be used by any representative of the company to enable you to identify them.

Nominee scheme. Customers can ask their supplier to send communications (such as account statements or bills) to someone you have nominated who agrees to receive them. For example, this could be a family member, carer or someone you trust.

Arrangements to ensure that it's safe and practical for you to use your prepayment meter. For example moving a prepayment meter if you are unable to access it safely to top it up.

Meter reading services at appropriate intervals. If nobody living at your property is able to read the meter and there isn't anyone else you can nominate to read the meter on your behalf, your supplier may be able to read it for you.

Accessible information. Account and bill information in an accessible format, for example in larger print or braille.

Similar support services

Suppliers and network operators may also offer you other similar services relevant to your needs, where it is reasonable to do so. Ask them how they can support you.

Suppliers provide free gas safety checks (e.g. for appliances such as a gas boiler) for homeowners. These are available once every 12 months. You are eligible for this service if you:

- get a means-tested benefit and live with a child under five.
- live alone and are of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick and live alone.
- live with others who are of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick or under 18 and you are also of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick.

Contact your supplier to request your free gas safety check if you're eligible and haven't had one in the last 12 months.

Free services similar to the Priority Services Register are available in the water, phone and public transport sectors. Some energy companies and network operators have agreed to work together with water companies to jointly signpost the extra help you can access for water and energy. We're encouraging all energy companies to do the same.

Round and About

VOWCHURCH

In the absence of the regular Vowchurch Market, Alex Gooch bread will be on sale on alternate Saturdays for collection at Vowchurch Village Hall. Interested parties should contact Jane on 01981 550791 or janeheatley@gmail.com to place an order.

We believe that all Vowchurch residents who may need support, food delivered or prescriptions collected have been identified and contacted. However if anyone knows of someone in need, please contact Jane at the above number/email.

PETERCHURCH VILLAGE HALL WHAT'S ON?

The hall is closed at the moment due to the Coronavirus outbreak. We hope that once restrictions have been lifted we will be able to re-open the hall as soon as possible.

We as a committee hope that everyone stays safe and well and that we can all be together once this is all over.

We are working with the Parish Council and the Hub with the Community helpline.

If anyone is in need of any assistance during this time please ring the helpline 01981 551143 where they will be happy to help with shopping and collecting prescriptions.

Thinking of having a Birthday party, a Celebration or starting classes? Why not hire your Village Hall £10 per hour.

Just ring Sarah Murrin on 07774457887 for details.



01873 860 444

Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri:	7.30 am - 5.30 pm
Late night Thurs:	7.30 am - 7.00 pm
Saturday:	7.30 am - 4.00 pm
Sunday (May - Oct):	10.00 am - 2.00 pm
(Nov - April):	10.00 am - 12 noon
Bank Holiday Mondays	10.00 am - 2.00 pm

Community Spirit

You may be at home and not seen anyone for a while, let me tell you there are so many people offering support and help. If you feel you need something don't hesitate to contact the Longtown Community Network team, **01873 280028** / ewyas.lacey@gmail.com, doing sterling work coordinating what is happening in the area.

How to get supplies from us - The Details

When self-isolating, call us 01873 860444 for our same day personal shopper service

1. We will call you back on a different number to keep our telephone line clear
2. We collate your items when you are on the phone, offering alternatives where needed.
3. Scanning it through our mobile till at the same time, then we take payment over the phone by card.
4. If you can drive we will put it in the boot of your car or we will arrange to have it delivered.
5. If you can't pay by card we are happy to accept cash or cheque this is not a problem

If you are thinking of having a newspaper everyday, we accept all newspaper vouchers and it will reduce the cost by 20% – 40%.

We accept **Healthy Start Vouchers** so please ask your health visitor if you are eligible and don't miss out.

Our refill shed is still operating **Thursday between 3pm and 6.30pm** with plant based Bio D cleaning products, Faith in Nature body products and Dr Bronner Lavender & Peppermint liquid 18 in 1 and the Little Soap Company **Organic** Grapefruit & Orange range, including a hand & body lotion. Let's keep making a difference in 2020.

You can refill as little as 100ml at any one time. Appreciating habits need to change everyday we have 5 litres of laundry fragrance free and lavender liquid, fabric fragrance free & lavender conditioner, toilet cleaner, original & pink grapefruit washing up liquid, multi-surface sanitizer, all purpose cleaner, home & garden sanitizer and Fragrance Free handwash. When we have empty branded bottles back or matching sizes we are also trying to prefill popular lines such as washing up liquid to make it all easier.

May Truffle Treat, when spending £25 choose a **FREE** 150g bag of Two Farmers crisps (This also applies to telephone orders) plus you can plant your seeds in the crisp packets then straight into the ground as they are compostable.

We have such an **eclectic variety** of stock, just ask us.

Book of the month - Alfred Watkins' Herefordshire in his own words and photographs

Alfred Watkins (1855–1935) was born in Hereford and lived all his life in Herefordshire. Best known for his discovery of ancient tracks (the 'Ley Lines' of his book, *The Old Straight Track*) he had many gifts and interests, and was especially keen on photography and his beloved Herefordshire.

The core of this book is an unpublished manuscript by Watkins entitled *The Masefield Country*, of 1931 – an evocative piece about Herefordshire and the area around Ledbury, inspired by John Masefield's glowing speech in praise of his native county when he accepted the Freedom of Hereford in 1930, after becoming Poet Laureate. The piece is composed of stories gleaned from Watkins' chance meetings with a variety of people on his travels, and reflects on three poets with Ledbury connections: William Langland, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and John Masefield. It is

full of asides, insights, wryly amusing anecdotes and deep feeling, coupled with respect for the rural wisdom of ‘men of the soil’, expressing his feelings for Herefordshire as a whole, and concern that it should sustain its traditional values and native wisdom in a fast-changing world.

Alfred Watkins’ text is prefaced by an introduction to his life and work by Ron and Jennifer Shoesmith, and followed by a section on his pioneering photography and developments in photographic equipment. This extended revised edition includes more than 200 of his photographs of Herefordshire.

POST OFFICE

How to use Post Office Services - The Details

When self isolating, call us during Post Office Hours **01873 860444**

1. We will log the call and a Post Office representative will call you back
2. We will advise the best course of action to limit exposure to yourself
3. When agreed we collect items from the boot of your car and process as agreed.
4. Next time we see you, all receipts and change will be given back to you via your car boot.

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Keep track and **pay your Council Tax, BT, Water, nPower**, at the Post Office on a day you choose. Come and talk to us about other bills you can pay.

SAVE TIME even more banks have joined our banking scheme with the Post Office, so pop in and see what you can do with **YOUR business or personal bank account**.

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Need to **top up your mobile phone**? Do it at Longtown Post Office. When the Post Office is not open, leave your card and cash, the next time it is open we will complete the transaction. Next time you are in the shop you can collect your receipt. This can also be a perfect gift to keep in touch.

Hopes of Longtown – Open seven days a week **01873 860444**

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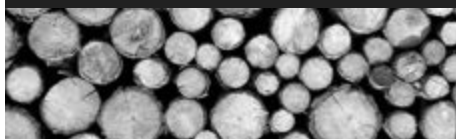
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