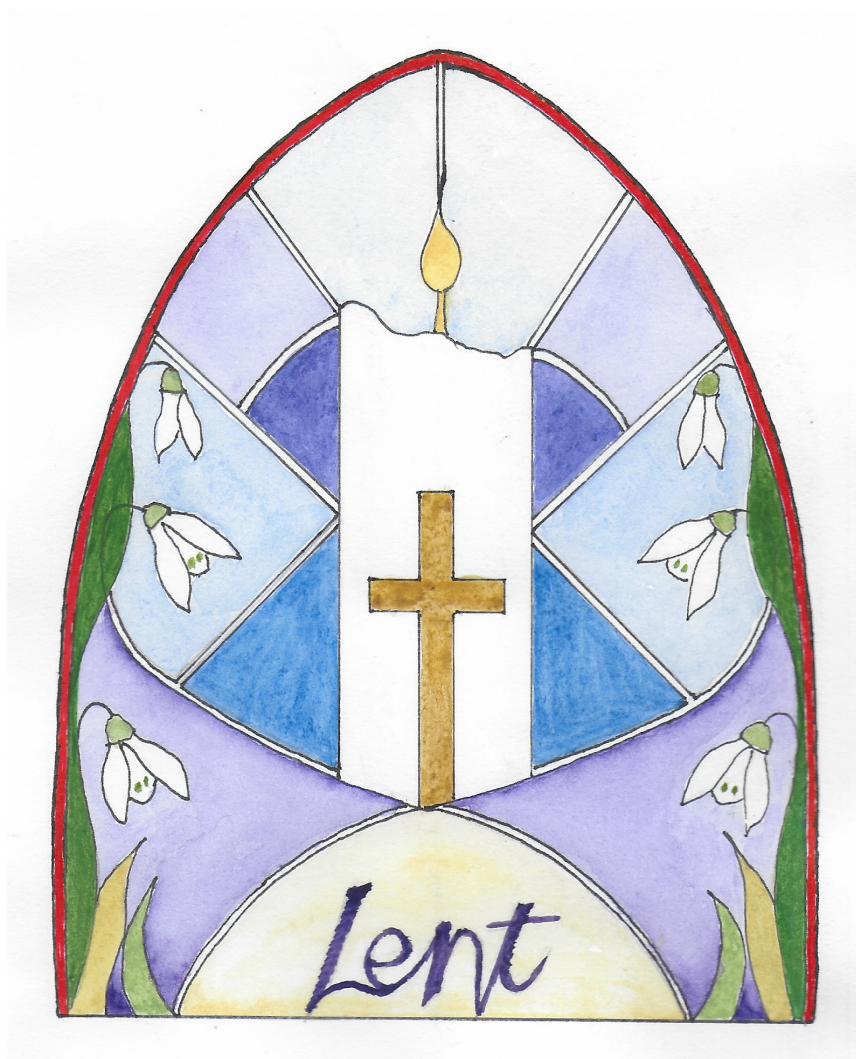


Bollington Church News

The magazine of Bollington Parish Church, St Oswald's



February 2024

Price 50p



Who's who at St Oswald's

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Letter from Nancy

Dear All

The nine fruits of the Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control. We don't strive for the fruits of the Spirit, rather we plant ourselves in good soil, allow ourselves to be fed by the Holy Spirit, keep taking in nourishment, turn to face the light of Christ and these fruits will develop and grow in our lives.



Can you tell whether a tree is an apple tree or a pear tree? Not easily when they are in blossom, but very easily when they bear fruit. Bearing fruit takes time and a lot of planting, preparation, nurture and growth.

February is the time of year when gardeners begin to plant seeds ready for summer, but patience is needed – the seeds will take a while to germinate, and the gardener needs to write the names of seeds on labels and not forget which are fruit, flowers and vegetables. The seeds need to be in the dark, or the light, or the warmth or the cool, depending at what stage of life they are at.

So too, is God with us. God writes our names on His heart; God knows what fruit we can bring forth. God nurtures us and gives us light to grow. But first, we need to be planted and that can be scary.

Maybe you are feeling in a cold dark place this February, maybe it feels as if you've been buried, maybe you've got a weight above you and you can't see the way out. Just think that maybe you've been buried because you've been planted. With patience there will be warmth and light, be like a seed, trust God, and begin to grow out of the darkness towards God's marvelous light. We won't see fruit immediately; we have to be nourished and mature and ripen. Patience will be given to us, fruit of the seed of the Holy Spirit. Happy February, God bless.

Nancy x



Lent – February 2024

Brian Reader comments on the front cover

Some of you may have been surprised to see a picture that reminds us of Lent on the front of this month's Newsletter. This year Easter is very early so Lent begins in mid-February. As a child I wondered why the date of Easter was always changing so I looked it up.

Easter is the time when Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. According to the gospels he was crucified three days before the Resurrection, around the time of the Jewish Passover. So, Christians chose to have their feast day around the same time as the Jewish festival. This was fixed by the first full moon following 21 March, which approximates the vernal equinox – the spring day when night and day are exactly the same length.

Prior to Easter it has been a tradition to spend a time of preparation for Easter which we call Lent, and it is also a reminder of the 40 days Jesus Christ spent fasting in the desert and enduring temptation by Satan, before beginning his public ministry.

Many years ago, I told my father-in law, a good village priest that I had given up beer and spirits for Lent but that I had excluded wine so that I could partake of communion on Sundays. He laughed, and explained that if you count the days from Shrove Tuesday to Easter, it comes to 46 days, so Sundays, which are regarded as feast days, are not included as part of the 40 days of Lent!



While some kind of abstinence is commendable, it is just as important for Lent to be a time of reflection when we give more attention to our Bible reading and prayer life.

When making a Lenten sacrifice, it is customary to pray for strength to keep it; and your friends may wish you well in your endeavours, so may I end with –

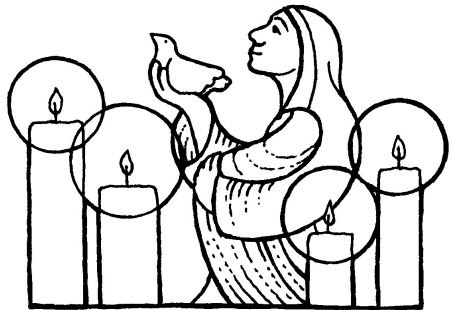
May God bless your Lenten sacrifice.

Candlemas, Presentation of Christ in the Temple

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2nd February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'.

Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'.



At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West.

But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

**

Happy moments, praise God. Difficult moments, seek God. Quiet moments, worship God. Painful moments, trust God. Every moment, thank God. - *Anon*

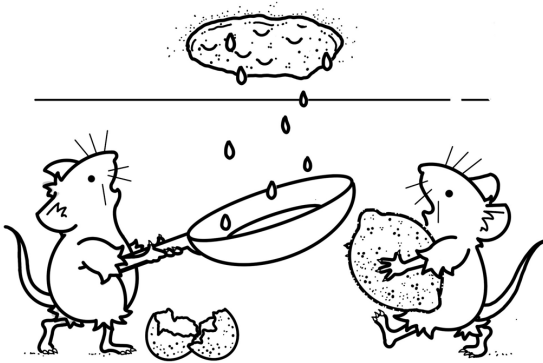
13st February is Shrove Tuesday, Pancake Day!

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

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

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

still in her apron, and still holding the pan.



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

Some people have noted that the ingredients of pancakes can be used to highlight four significant things about this time of year: eggs stand for creation, flour is the staff of life, while salt keeps things wholesome, and milk stands for purity. Shrove Tuesday is always 47 days before Easter Sunday and falls between 3rd February and 9th March.

**

Every action of our lives touches on some chord that will vibrate in eternity. -
E H Chapin

14th February - Ash Wednesday, mourning our sins

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. But why 'Ash' Wednesday? The reason has to do with getting things right between you and God, and the tradition goes right back to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites often sinned. When they finally came to their senses, and saw their evil ways as God saw them, they could do nothing but repent in sorrow. They mourned for the damage and evil they had done. As part of this repentance, they covered their heads with ashes. For the Israelites, putting ashes on your head, and even rending your clothes, was an outward sign of their heart-felt repentance and acknowledgement of sin. (See Genesis 18:27; 2 Samuel 13:19; Job 2:8, 30:19; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 6:26; Jonah 3:6)



In the very early Christian Church, the yearly 'class' of penitents had ashes sprinkled over them at the beginning of Lent. They were turning to God for the first time and mourning their sins. But soon many other Christians wanted to take part in the custom, and to do so at the very start of Lent. They heeded Joel's call to 'rend your hearts and not your garments' (Joel 2:12-19). Ash Wednesday became known as either the 'beginning of the fast' or 'the day of the ashes'.

The collect for today goes back to the Prayer Book, and it stresses the penitential character of the day. It encourages us with the reminder of the readiness of God to forgive us and to renew us.

The Bible readings for today are often Joel 2:1-2, 12–18, Matthew 6: 1-6, 16 – 21 and Paul's moving catalogue of suffering, "as having nothing and yet possessing everything." (2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10)

The actual custom of 'ashing' was abolished at the Reformation, though the old name for the day remained. Today, throughout the Church of England, receiving the mark of ashes on one's forehead is optional. Certainly, the mark

of ashes on the forehead reminds people of their mortality: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return..." (Genesis 3:19)

The late medieval custom was to burn the branches used on Palm Sunday in the previous year in order to create the ashes for today.

The Collect for Ash Wednesday is:



Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**

With the beginning of Lent in mind...

God's love is not drawn out by our lovableness, but wells up, like an artesian spring, from the depths of His nature. - *Alexander MacLaren*

All a believer's present happiness, and all his future happiness springs from the eternal purposes of God. - *Thomas Brooks*

There is nothing round the corner which is beyond God's view. - *J Charles Stern*

We no more earn heaven by good works than babies earn their food and drink by crying and howling. - *Martin Luther*

I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be; but I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.' - *John Newton, former slave trader*

'Lenten Valentines'

This month both Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day fall on the same day! The link between the two can be summed up in terms of the nature of real love! Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, focuses on learning to love God more, as we give Him space in our lives. This is what Jesus found when He was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan. (Luke 4:1-13).

Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. Yet loving God and His word comes before satisfying physical desires.

Satan tempted Jesus to worship him. However, worshipping God is an expression of loving God and serving Him.

Finally, He was tempted to put God to the test, by jumping off the Temple. Real love for God does not put Him to the test, but wants to obey Him.

Lent also teaches us how to live out the love of God in practical ways, as we follow Jesus in the way of the Cross. We see this clearly demonstrated in the life and death of Saint Valentine.

Valentine was a Christian who demonstrated the importance of sharing God's love with others. We know little about him, except that he was a priest who lived in the 3rd Century AD and that he was martyred on 14th February.

Emperor Claudius felt that soldiers in the Roman Army were distracted from their duty by their wives, and so had attempted to outlaw marriage. It is believed that Valentine married couples in secret, which is why today we celebrate our love for one another on his day.

In trying to understand the meaning of her revelations from God, Julian of Norwich found:

*'What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing?
Know it well, love was His meaning.'*

The very first Valentine card, a legend

The Roman Emperor Claudius II needed soldiers. He suspected that marriage made men want to stay at home with their wives, instead of fighting wars, so he outlawed marriage.

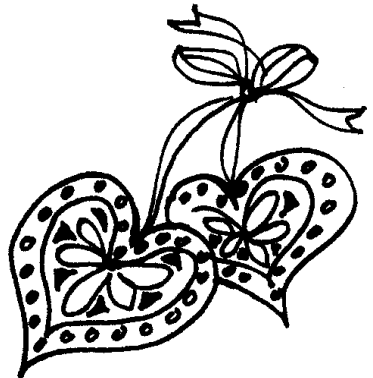
A kind-hearted young priest named Valentine felt sorry for all the couples who wanted to marry, but who couldn't. So secretly he married as many couples as he could - until the Emperor found out and condemned him to death. While he was in prison awaiting execution, Valentine showed love and compassion to everyone around him, including his jailer. The jailer had a young daughter who was blind, but through Valentine's prayers, she was healed. Just before his death in Rome on 14th February, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine.'

So, the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die, and a little girl, healed through his prayers.

**

St Valentine's Day

Saint Valentine's Day, many believe, was named after one or more Christian martyrs and was established by Pope Gelasius 1 in 496 AD. Valentine of Rome was martyred about 269, and this day usually 'belongs' to him.



The first recorded association of Valentine Day with romantic love (1382) is from Geoffrey Chaucer. He wrote, 'For this was Saint Valentine's Day, when every bird cometh there to choose his mate.' This poem was in honour of the first anniversary of the engagement of King Richard II of England to Anne of Bohemia.

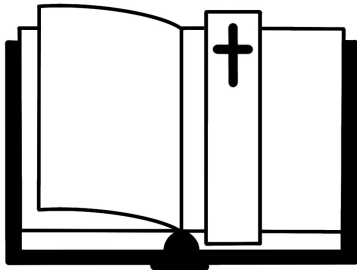
Valentine Day is even referred to by Ophelia in Hamlet (1600-1601).

What's the Big Idea?

An Introduction to the Books of the Bible: Genesis

This is the first of a new series aimed at providing an overview of the Bible. This month we consider the first book, Genesis.

As the title suggests, Genesis is primarily about beginnings. In chapters 1-11, it records the creation of the heavens and the earth and human beings; marriage and family; sin's effect on society and the world. The following chapters record God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and their families. In this story of the Patriarchs, we see God establishing a people called to bless the world, as He blesses them.



The book of Genesis is key to understanding the whole Bible. It is supremely about relationships; the relationships between God and the created order, God and human beings, and between human beings themselves.

Fundamentally man has been created in the image of God, so that he can relate to God in a personal way: 'God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them' (1:27).

However, Genesis plots how this relationship was broken by sin, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, resulting in the fall of human beings and the created order. By creating people with free will, God risked the possibility that they might reject Him. This is inherent in His love for human beings.

In Genesis, God enters into covenants with the world (the rainbow following the flood) and with Abraham and his descendants (circumcision), pledging His love and faithfulness to them and calling them to respond to Him in faith. It reminds us that God is fundamental to living.

Without a sense of the centrality of God's place in our lives, we can never get our lives right.

All in the month of ... February

It was:

150 years ago, on 15th Feb 1874 that Sir Ernest Shackleton was born. This Irish-born British polar explorer was one of the leading explorers during the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration. He led three British expeditions to the Antarctic.

100 years ago, on 5th Feb 1924 that BBC Radio broadcast the 'six-pips' Greenwich Time Signal for the first time.

Also 100 years ago, on 12th Feb 1924 that George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* was performed for the first time, in New York.

90 years ago, on 23rd Feb 1934 that Edward Elgar, the British composer, died.

75 years ago, on 22nd Feb 1949 that Niki Lauda, Austrian racing driver was born. He was Formula One World Champion in 1975, 1977 and 1984. He was severely injured and burnt in a crash at the 1976 German Grand Prix.

70 years ago, on 23rd Feb 1954 that the first field test of the polio vaccine began in Pittsburgh. It grew into a national trial involving 1.8 million children.

65 years ago, 3rd Feb 1959, became 'the day the music died', when American rock-and-roll performers Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and The Big Bopper were killed in a plane crash in Iowa.

60 years ago, on 7th Feb 1964 that the Beatles arrived in New York for their first US tour. They were met by thousands of screaming fans.

50 years ago, on 7th Feb 1974 that Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath called a snap general election following the miners' strike and three-day week. It ended in a hung parliament, and Labour leader, Harold Wilson, became Prime Minister.

40 years ago, on 14th Feb 1984 that figure skaters Jayne Torvill and Christopher

Dean won the gold medal in ice-skating at the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo. They scored the first perfect 6.0 in Olympic history.

30 years ago, on 25th Feb 1994 that serial killer Fred West was arrested in connection with the disappearance of his daughter. Police then discovered human bones buried in his garden. He was eventually charged with 11 murders, and his wife Rosemary with ten murders.

25 years ago, on 1st Feb 1999 that the International Maritime Organisation stopped using the Morse code 'SOS' distress call. All sea-going vessels were required to have a Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) fitted by this date.

20 years ago, on 4th Feb 2004 that Facebook, the social media networking platform, was launched.

15 years ago, on 7th Feb 2009 that the Black Saturday bushfires took place in Australia. The worst in Australia's history, they destroyed 1.1 million acres of land, killed 173 people, injured 414, and burned 3,500 buildings.

**

With Valentine's Day in mind....

Marriage requires falling in love many times – always with the same person. - *Anon*

Marriage is like twirling a baton, turning handsprings, or eating with chopsticks; it looks so easy till you try it. - *Helen Rowland*

Life has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction. - *Antoine De Saint-Exupery*

Two heads are better than one. - *Homer (Illiad)*

The heart has its reason, which reason knows not, as we feel in a thousand instances. - *Blaise Pascal*

SAINT OF THE MONTH

This month we start a new series, looking at Christians in the Church calendar.

1st February – Seiriol, the saint of Puffin Island

You can find traces of old saints in most corners of the British Isles, but Seiriol is one of the only two saints connected to Anglesey, and certainly the **ONLY** saint connected to Puffin Island.

It was back in the 6th century that this gentle abbot first settled in Penmon, and built a little church. His ruined beehive cell still survives there today, as does the well from which he drew water, both for his own use, and also for baptising local people.



Puffin – photo Charles Sharp

Like many other Celtic saints, Seiriol would have travelled by sea. So, he felt comfortable near the coast on Anglesey, on low-lying land. Although he lived as a simple hermit, Seiriol soon attracted followers, and eventually he decided to establish a small monastery. He chose to build it on nearby Ynys Seiriol, now called Puffin Island.

That little monastery on Puffin Island saw some scary action in 632, when Edwin of Northumbria was chasing the Welsh king, Cadwallon, and ended up besieging him on the island. Cadwallon was finally conquered, and history moved on, but the monastic ruins of Seiriol's little monastery are still there today.

Seiriol seems to have been a purely local saint who never attracted a very great number of followers. The only known dedications to him are at Penmon and Puffin Island. But Seiriol's life and work are still a testimony today. He is a gentle and encouraging reminder of what an impact even a simple local Christian can achieve, by simply being faithful to Jesus Christ in the place where he is.

Book of Remembrance for February

4th Feb	Gilbert John Capper
5th Feb	Phyllis Jackson
6th Feb	John Arthur Ashton
7th Feb	Ian Mather
7th Feb	Hilary Mary Morgan
7th Feb	Barbara Audrey White
7th Feb	Gary Mark Kendrick
8th Feb	John Neville Bamford
8th Feb	Bessie Hughes
9th Feb	Arthur Houghton
10th Feb	Revd. John Bryce Warburton <i>(Vicar of this parish 1981-1991)</i>
11th Feb	Amy Osbaldiston
14th Feb	Hubert Wallworth
15th Feb	John H Downes
15th Feb	Alan Heathcote
16th Feb	Colin Bailey
16th Feb	Dorah Stanesby
17th Feb	Emmeline Worthington
17th Feb	Walter Chadwick
19th Feb	William Lea
20th Feb	Joseph Bowden
21st Feb	Catherine Elizabeth Mallon
25th Feb	Joseph Bowden
25th Feb	Elizabeth Bowden
27th Feb	Kate Amelia Mills
28th Feb	Charles Clifford Arnold
28th Feb	Amy Elizabeth Molineux



Would you like to include the name of a departed loved one? An entry costs £10. Please contact Ann Stringer on 01625 574325

From the Registers

Baptism:	7 th Jan	Freddie Alan Neal
Burial of Ashes:	8 th Jan	Mark Foster

Ukraine - Two Years Later

Although Russian troops were massing near the borders of Ukraine in February 2022, we naively believed their denial that an attack was imminent.

Since then, an all-out war has resulted in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, and hundreds of thousands of military casualties. A quarter of the Ukrainian population has been displaced. Eight million are now refugees, spread across Europe.

Few of us realised that a war between the two countries really started in 2014, when pro-Russian regions of Ukraine rebelled, and Crimea was annexed.

Hostilities between the two countries had begun even earlier. Ukraine had joined the Soviet Union in 1922 and ten years later lost more than a million of its population in the 'Holodomor' famine, now widely regarded as genocide inflicted by Joseph Stalin, the Soviet leader.

Relationships between the two countries have always been turbulent, and Russia's possessive attitude towards its neighbour is deeply resented.

Ukrainian refugees in the UK are mainly women and children, for their men are needed for war service. So, they have organised themselves into self-help groups, painstakingly learning to read and write in English, as well as working full or part-time and keeping up their morale by organising groups for young and old. Choirs have sprung up, often assisted by British musicians. One member wrote movingly of how singing helped her cope with the mental trauma of her homeland fighting for survival.

Ukrainians are unceasingly grateful for our hospitality, but they fear our compassion may wear thin, as our attention has been diverted by news of the barbarity between Israelis and Palestinians. That conflict also has a long history of smouldering hatred on both sides.

Wars rarely solve disputes. When wearied people recognise their futility, settlements may be negotiated. Forgiveness takes longer.

Why tea is “the drink of getting things done”

The drinking of tea has found an unexpected new champion: James May, the former Top Gear presenter. Speaking recently on Radio 4, James May said: “I’m just worried that the cult of coffee is going to destroy tea. And I don’t like coffee, it is just rubbish. I like tea.” He added: “Tea is the drink of getting things done.”

How did tea get so embedded in UK culture? Food historian Polly Russell says the answer lies in the Industrial Revolution of the mid-18th century. “Tea became less expensive and at the same time you had agricultural wages slumping, and agricultural workers literally not able to buy food, to buy fuel, or to afford a hot meal. So, tea became a way of having something hot and restorative – often with sugar – and that habit then also translated into the urban, as the industrial revolution expanded into our cities.”

And so it was that “tea became absolutely central to the diet of the working poor.” And this provided the basis for the idea “that tea and sugar were fuelling the industrial nation.”

James May argues that tea drinking is still fundamental to “bringing everyone together and ensuring happiness as well as productivity.”

He says: “Tea in the British workplace is more than a drink, it’s a social glue. Britain is falling apart because we don’t drink enough tea.”

Abandoned and helpless

The RSPCA reports that animal abandonment incidents have reached a three-year high. Latest figures for 2023 reveal more than 20,000 reports of animals being simply dumped by their owners.

Yet many rescue centres are already full to bursting, so the RSPCA is facing an unprecedented winter crisis. It’s rescue teams are busier than ever, and it is asking animal lovers to donate to “help us be there for animals in desperate need.”

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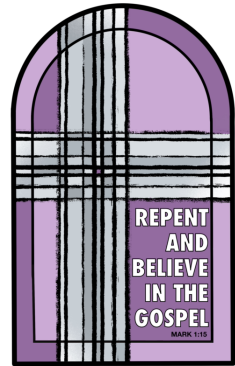
Get the magazine: please ring Ann Stringer on 01625 574325.

Deadline: Material for the March issue to reach Anne by 16th February.

Giving to St Oswald's: Our bank account name is 'The Anglican Parish of Bollington PCC'. Our account number is **39536416** and the sort code is **01-05-41**. Or talk to Richard Raymond, our treasurer, on 01625 612025.

Worship in February

Sunday 4 th Feb	9.15am Holy Communion 10.30am All Age Worship
Sunday 11 th Feb	10.30am Parish Communion
Wednesday 14 th Feb	Ash Wednesday 10.30am Holy Communion with imposition of ashes (no Thursday 10.30am Holy Communion this week)
Sunday 18 th Feb	10.30am Parish Communion 6.30pm Choral Evensong with Knutsford Deanery Choir
Sunday 25 th Feb	10.30am Parish Communion



**



Five-week Lent Course

Led by Nancy, our vicar.
Tuesday evenings
7.30pm
Begins 20th February.

All welcome!

**

Regular midweek activities

Every Tuesday during term time, 9.30-11.00am, Little Owls
Every Thursday at 10.30am, Holy Communion