

St Mary 's Church, Yatton Spring 2024



Spring is here—but when is it going to stop raining?!

Foreword

Easter must feel odd in the southern hemisphere. How do you celebrate resurrection when the leaves are falling? We are fortunate that springtime resonates with Easter here: winter is over and life blossoms again. This is the foundation of our faith: Christ has died and Christ is risen. When we feel our own mortality or mourn the loss of loved family or friends, we may well ask, 'Is death the end?' The resurrection answers, 'No! It is just a gateway to even more life.'

The gravity of Holy week has given way to rejoicing which is not mere relief at a happy ending. Life finds meaning in the resurrection: we are not trapped in endless cycles of seasons and pain, but we are always working towards God's kingdom: Christ will come again.

Easter day also marked the moment when our churches said farewell to Rev Nigel Thomas and Nickie Fidgin.

There is pain in this parting: they step into an uncertain future, while we are supported now by the faithful service of our retired priests. And yet we are blessed with so many who are willing to use their time and gifts in our churches. The addition of a new full-time priest – whenever that happens – will add a valued ministry but it will not replace anything that now builds our common life of regular worship or our constant proclamation of this great news: death is not the end.

Mike Cooke



The choir leads the procession round the church on a blowy Palm Sunday whilst singing 'Make Way'

Farewell to Nigel and Nickie

On Easter Sunday, 31 March, Rev Nigel Thomas left us after five and a half years as Team Vicar based at Cleeve and Claverham. A short, moving service was held at St Mary's, led by him and afterwards tea, sandwiches and cake were served in the Chapter House. He and Nickie will be much missed. We send them all our very best wishes for the future.

Nigel sent this message to us all: Nigel & Nickie wish to express their gratitude for the many kindnesses shown during their time here and for the generous leaving gift. Much appreciated.

St Mary's Spring Festival—27-28 April

Time to get together with music

Saturday 27 April

Our usual monthly coffee morning will take place in the Chapter House 10am-noon (ish), and there will be live music with our very own group—the Blackcaps!



At 7.30pm Ian Hubbard will lead his Yatton & Winscombe Chorale in a performance of the Faure Requiem.

Sunday 28 April



At 10am we will have a 'Bells' service led by Mike Cooke. This will be in celebration of the Bell Ringing team having a new 'peal board' for their Coronation peal.

St Mary's Church tower will open between 2.30—5pm for visitors to climb up and admire the views from the top! And when they come down welcome refreshments including cream teas will be available in the Chapter House.

At 6pm there will be an Evensong service to round off the celebrations.

Lions Beer Festival : 28-29 June



The festival will be held over the weekend of Friday 28 and Saturday 29 June at our usual venue of Claverham Village Hall. This will be our 21st annual festival since the first one in 2003. The only year we haven't run one was in 2020 due to Covid.

The festival has now raised over £116,000, the vast bulk of which has been spent locally helping those who were not as fortunate as others in the grand lottery of life.

There will be about 25 different beers and a selection of ciders, a gin bar and BBQ along with stage acts on the Friday and Saturday nights and a family-friendly focus on Saturday afternoon – with a suitable entertainment for the children.

Further details can be found at www.yeovalleylions.org.uk

Lent Lunches

So many activities stopped when Covid hit, and never restarted. The ecumenical Lent lunches are no longer a pandemic casualty – they restarted this year! Weekly throughout Lent, between 15 – 30 people shared a simple lunch of soup, bread and cheese on Wednesdays in St Mary’s Chapter House. Teams from St Mary’s, Yatton Methodist and the Catholic chapel in Claverham took turns to cater. (With butter except for the Catholic weeks — clearly our fasting lacks purity. Some protestants were even spotted smuggling butter into the Catholic sessions.)



More than £500 was raised, split between CAFOD and Christian Aid. Just as important, we refreshed links with Christians in neighbouring churches. Thank you to those who got this going again, to the cooking teams and to everyone who came.

Holy Oil

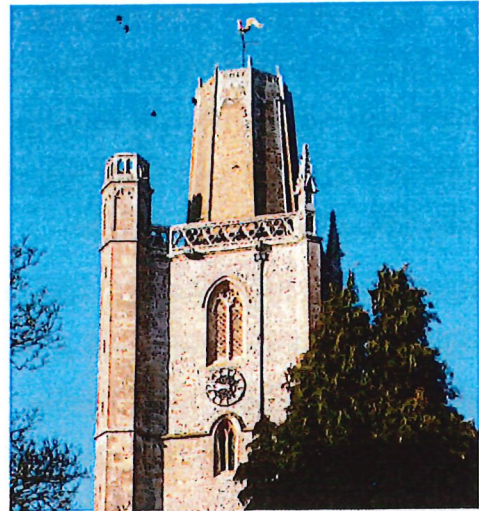
The Bible records many instances of the use of oil to anoint someone, such as Samuel anointing the future king David (1 Sam 16:13). It is also mentioned in the New Testament in the context of praying for the sick (James 5:14). The Church of England uses ‘holy oils’, blessed and set apart for special use. During Holy Week, we attended The Chrism Eucharist Service in Wells Cathedral presided over by our Bishop. Apart from taking communion, we were anointed with oil as we reaffirmed our vows as Lay Ministers (Readers), and the Holy Oils from our team were replenished for the new Church year.

The Oil of Catechumens is used prior to Baptism and the Oil of Chrism can be used at Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination. Chrism oil is also used when dedicating holy places or items. The Oil of the Sick is used for anointing the sick or those close to death. Pure olive oil is used for each of the oils and a perfume such as balsam is added to the Oil of Chrism to make it fragrant. All are to give God’s strength in The Holy Spirit in His service. These oils are kept for our whole team in the Aumbry, a locked cupboard recess near the High Altar, together with any reserved sacrament. A light burns throughout the week over them: it is often the only light in the church. They are no longer ordinary ointments, but holy gifts from God and the grace of The Holy Spirit to do His will.

Allan Attwood and Mike Cooke

St Mary's Weather Vane/ Cockerel

I wonder how many people still look at the Cockerel on the top of our church's truncated spire to learn what the weather will be for the day or even hour. I suspect very few. Is it now one of those things that is always there and has been, for over a hundred years, one that most of us probably take for granted? But before television, radio and mobile phones giving us our weather forecasts the Cockerel was an important way for Yatton villagers to know



what weather they could expect.



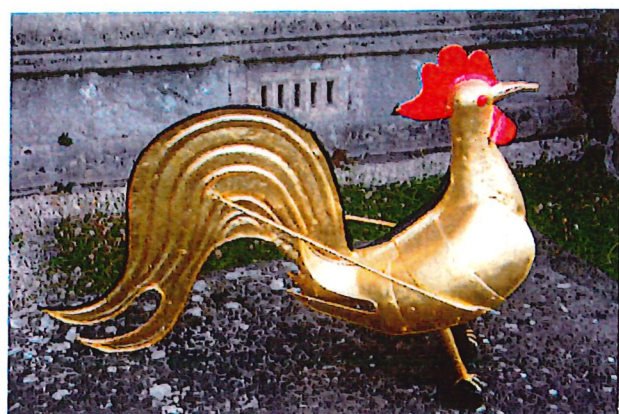
The Cockerel is mounted on a spindle which swings or turns by the wind, the head facing into the wind giving us its direction.

If the head was facing into the North then cold weather could be expected and if in the winter months, possibly snow—time to wear warm clothes! If it faced South then sunshine and a warm day was likely. East would forecast cold winds and West, rain—as we've seen all too often this year! It was a valuable asset to the villagers

especially as, in its past, Yatton was very much a rural and farming community and knowledge of the weather was very important for the care of animals and in the sowing, growing and harvesting of crops.

The Cockerel/Rooster design dates back to Pope IV, who mandated the installation of rooster-shaped weather vanes on church towers in the 9th century. This was a symbolic gesture to remind Christians of the biblical story where Peter denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed.

In fairly recent times the Cockerel has been lowered to be regilded and the pictures of this show how grand it looks close up and its size.



Pat Denny

Gaza and The West Bank—an update

I never dreamt that the war in Gaza would be lasting so long. It is now six months on from the horrific Hamas attack on southern Israel. Hostages are still held in Gaza, fighting continues unabated, thousands have been killed (33,000 so far) the majority women and children. Homes have been destroyed and the infrastructure of daily life is in piles of rubble.

There is very little medical help (the huge Shifa Hospital in Gaza City – built incidentally with a majority of USA money) has been destroyed. Food is scarce, famine and hunger are causing the young and the elderly frail to die. Here are the words (Google translate of the Arabic) from one of our dear friends in Gaza received two weeks ago. His house has been destroyed and he is now living with his family and nearly 400 Christians in the Roman Catholic Church compound...

“We are very tired and we no longer have the energy to suffer. Our days are useless, our children are collapsing, in fear, without education and life has become extremely difficult. Food is at ridiculous prices, even if it is available in the market, and a lot of food has run out from the market. There are many, many words that cannot express about our psychological and spiritual situation. We no longer have the energy to express or explain what is happening in our country. We are surprised by the silence of the world, but we are optimistic about God’s mercy and love”

As many of you will know I was able to visit Israel and the West Bank in early March (there was no possibility of entry to Gaza). I spent time with many friends who themselves have friends and family still in Gaza. They were sad and troubled as you can imagine and finding it very difficult to know what to do or how to help. Added to this was the constant awareness of the Israeli Army invading and destroying homes looking for suspected terrorists and killing and injuring many. Road blocks and checkpoints and denial of permission to travel outside the West Bank makes life very difficult. I experienced this myself in my travels. In visiting the Holy Land throughout the intifadas and also the frequent wars in Gaza, I have never experienced the people living with such fear and a sense of hopelessness. Many I met wanted to leave for a better life abroad – the Christian presence in the Holy Land is rapidly diminishing.

We are extremely grateful to so many of you reading this who have been supporting the Hope Christian Trust with your prayers and financial gifts, both as churches and as individuals. Thank you so much. The contacts made in my visit has enabled us to work with partners to help in a small way to alleviate the suffering – our focus has been on the families and staff of the Lighthouse School in Gaza City in the north of the strip. We have been able through your support and gifts to do the following...

* Give 22 teachers and administrative staff their salaries from October until February so they can buy food and other necessities for their extended families – this has cost just over £50,000. We can do this through the school and local banking account system which is still functioning, although with interruptions.

* Where we can locate them we are giving support to the weekly paid staff, gatekeepers, cleaners, gardeners etc and also our regular taxi driver.

These folk have fled south and we have been able to find some of them and give support. Two tranches of just over £1500 have been sent to personal bank accounts for distribution.

* Through a contact I met on my visit we have sent as a gift through the school the sum of £8000 to help give food to the 400 Christians holed up in the two churches. The photo above shows nuns and helpers preparing food for a meal for them in the grounds of the Roman Catholic School in Gaza. .

* Through partners and an American humanitarian organisation we have been able to bring through Rafah in the south limited medical supplies and particularly much needed insulin for the son of a teacher we know well, living in the central area of Deir a Balah.



As a Trust we are being asked constantly through Messenger or email to support families (many we know personally) who are seeking to leave Gaza for a better life. This is possible into Egypt but it is very expensive (yes there is a black market on permits!). An individual has to be put on a list and the position on the list depends on how much you need to pay – an individual can cost as much as \$10,000, a family request can reach \$50,000. As a Trust we are not responding to these requests, although we do feel emotionally confused and conflicted as we think of our friends there. We feel our responsibility is to support those who remain in Gaza and support their future which is going to be very difficult. Words from the Lord to one of the churches in Revelation we are holding before us “Strengthen what remains... and is about to die “ (Rev.3.2). We have hope for the future.

Please continue to pray for the situation both in Gaza and the West Bank.

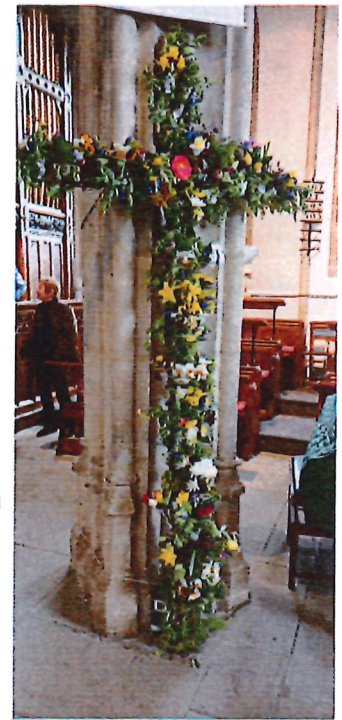
John & Janet Angle

Easter 24...

In our church on Good Friday we are a congregation of maybe less than thirty including the organist and his gran. It's been a strange day weather-wise—sunny, rainy, blinking cold, a little sleet, glorious rainbows and then repeat. Today we are sat in a churchwarden's pew—one of the few places we haven't ever sat in before and we've been going to this church since 1982.

It's going to be a 60-minute service. We are all quiet and contemplative. We are all prayerful and mournful too for it's the familiar theme starting with denouncement, pain and death and then resurrection and a glorious uplift. It's about a man at the centre of a frenzy and a maelstrom and a certainty of inevitability. It's about passion.

It's a difficult service for me because I find myself easily immersed in the words and the images. The readings from John's testament often move me to tears—the words are simple and ample to conjure the scene—and today I sit there with my eyes shut and just thinking. Thank goodness, however, we no longer have the sound of nails being driven into wood, as was the case many years ago. It was all just too much for me. They were done to add effect but they were too figurative. I digress.



But, I am just a man sat in this pew and I confess during moments of quiet contemplation and prayer that, in the peace and silence, my mind wanders off or at a tangent. It's sometimes hard to drag it back into the currency of the moment. For some random reason I find myself thinking of the Youth Fellowship Group which I helped to run during the 1980s. I think of how those teenagers have all grown into adults with careers and families and mortgages.

What a fantastic group they were. And are. I remember yomping across the Gordano valley in the dark, or resting in the band-stand on Clevedon sea-front in the early hours followed by a full breakfast at 172. And then my mind returns to the service. I'm back in the here and the now.

Consider this - that a man should willingly give himself up for arrest and then to be pilloried and thence to be nailed to a cross is just too much for me. We have all experienced pain and loss and mourning but for Jesus to let himself be crucified for our sins is beyond my comprehension. I know it happened. I believe it happened. I accept it happened. But I find it hard to accept the brutality and the crudeness of the

execution. It's true I don't really want to dwell on it for too long for it's too gruesome even when considered against today's happenings around the world but needs must. It's what we're here for.

Let's be honest—it was not just courage—it was above and beyond that. It was the certainty and pure belief that His spirit would be transported to Heaven. There was no ounce of doubt. It was the full and utter belief in His father. Yes, there was pain to be borne. Yes, there was the final piercing. But—as He said—"It is finished." But, of course, it was just the beginning of a religion and a belief system.

I left the service both humbled and more alive than before. On the way to the car we got drenched in a downpour while the sun shone brightly. What a day.

Peace and love to all and many thanks to AG.

Graham Bachtold

Yatton Music Society

This magazine may not be published before the concert on the 20th April which will feature the organist Richard Johnson who combines a professional career as a patent attorney with a busy schedule of musical activities. He studied at Oxford University where he simultaneously held an academic scholarship in physics with the organ scholarship at Oriel College. He is organist at Westbury-on-Trym Parish Church and accompanist to the City of Bristol Choir. His recital will include Bach's Fantasia and Fugue in G minor and Mendelssohn's Sonata no 2 in C minor. His recital will be enhanced by the Bristol and District Organists Association video display equipment.

The final concert of the season will be given on the 18th May by Stephanie Gilbert [flute] and Helen Reid [piano]. Stephanie studied at the Royal Northern College of Music followed by a Masters course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Helen gave a solo recital for us in October 2022 and is a former BBC 'Young Musician of the Year' keyboard finalist. Helen leads the Professional Studies course at the Guildhall School of Music. Details of their programme are not available at present but will be shown on the Society's website after 20th April.

The Society will hold its AGM in the Chapter House on the 5th July at 7.30pm.

The Society's 44th season will commence on 28th September with a welcome return of the Polish born pianist Natalia Williams-Wandoch. Natalia completed her studies at the Royal Academy of Music where she won every piano competition she entered.

Concerts are held in St Mary's and commence at 7.30pm. Entry for the current season costs £10 payable on the door [students over 16 £5.00, children free].

Mike Blackwell

Yatton and District Horticultural Society

Our Spring Show which was held on Saturday 16th March was well attended with fewer exhibits than last year but more exhibitors, which is encouraging. The photo shows some of the floral exhibits.

As soon as one show ends we start planning for the next—our Summer Show is to be held on 7th July. Weather permitting, we will have stalls outside on Glebelands with live music. Last year we had dreadful weather and had to cancel all but a few brave folk who had stalls despite strong wind and heavy rain.



Our talk on 18th April (the last until the Autumn) will be on Beekeeping and Bee Friendly Gardening. Our talks take place at Hangstones Pavilion on Stowey Road and we have a raffle and refreshments. The cost is £2 for members and £2.50 for non-members.

We will be holding our annual plant sale at 9.30am on 11 May in Yatton precinct, otherwise known as Pages Court. The profits of this will go towards this year's project which will be installing planters in the precinct. The plans have not yet been finalised but the idea is to make the precinct more interesting by introducing flowers and greenery.

Our outing this year will be a coach trip to Sudeley Castle on 15 June. Sudeley is a private castle with 10 acres of award winning gardens. It is steeped in history with royal connections and 1,000 years of fascinating history. The cost for members will be £35. Further details will be available on our website.

We have purchased two cherry trees that, by the time you read this, will be in place in Glebelands. We will also have planted snowdrops between the trees where the crocus and daffodils flourish, the plan being to increase the time in which flowers are visible. We have bought five hundred snowdrops which will give scope to plant in other areas of the village, yet to be decided.

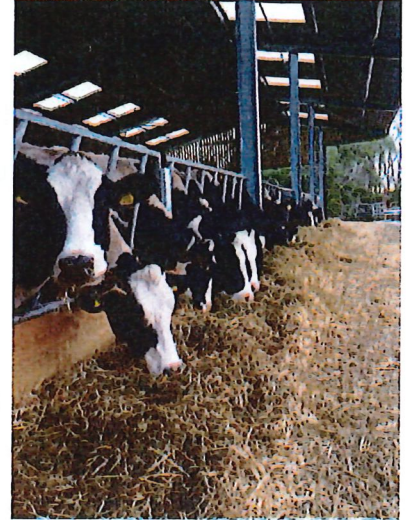
Stephen Thorne 01934 833813

www.yattonhorticulturalsociety.co.uk

Down on the farm

We are grateful to Anita Simmons from Yew Tree Farm in Kingston Seymour, for this account of life on her farm during the late winter.

The cattle at this farm are all housed during the winter. Firstly to protect the fields from damage due to the wet and cold weather and also to ensure that the livestock have shelter from the elements and that they have ample good quality food and water. The daily husbandry tasks can be monotonous and tiring but it is more than satisfying to see the livestock contentedly chewing the cud whilst sat on fresh dry bedding in airy light sheds with ad lib quality feed and water.



The Kerry Hill ewes arrived in the lambing shed looking really well, and ready for the next round of lambing. The ewes were scanned a while back and we are expecting an explosion of lambs any time now. The cameras carefully positioned will assist, but there will be some long and tiring nights ahead!

A few drier days on the farm have provided an opportunity to spread some manure and slurry on to nearby fields. These essential organic nutrients enhance the soil structure and promote growth and biodiversity, providing diverse habitats for soil organisms such as earthworms. Earthworms were cultivating the soil long before the plough was invented!

This activity has been observed by Trevor Riddle, our local expert when it comes to identifying bird activity. Trevor reports that following spreading on the Wemberham fields, the area became a magnet for many birds. First in the action were 500 herring gulls who were joined by a similar number of carrion crows a few days later.

Redwings and fieldfares were feeding on the field and flying back to the orchard to digest and rest. In mid-January Trevor identified almost 150 lapwings feeding, with many more heading south west ahead of approaching freezing weather. Skylarks, meadow pipits and pied wagtails were also spotted. Later around 250 lapwings made a brief appearance then departed leaving a peregrine falcon to feed alone, until it flew into a host of redwings and fieldfares. Herring gulls and a few hundred starlings also joined in the feast. More recently a red kite was seen coasting low over the fields searching for worms. Kites are very unusual here in winter so it was a notable record.

February is a time for crop planning for the year ahead and purchasing seeds. Maize is an important crop for all round feed for the cattle. Soils will need to be tested to identify the pH and nutrients in the soil to assist in making decisions for optimum crop production. All fields will be tested over a three year rotation. Herbal leys will also be planted this year which will be nitrogen fixing, also they will have deeper roots to improve soil structure and benefit carbon sequestration.

The days are now getting longer and next time hopefully we will report on some spring growth and some sunshine!

Anita Simmons

Cadbury Hill

Situated between Yatton and Congresbury, Cadbury Hill is a gem which is probably little known by the majority of people living around it. At the top there is a Iron Age Fort covering about eight acres complete with ramparts and remains of Iron Age round houses. Evidence of our Iron Age ancestors has been found during the course of archaeological excavations in 1968 and 1973. Among the artefacts discovered there were glass vessels of Mediterranean origin showing a fairly developed settlement. Although the hill is small, its sides around the Fort are steep so the site was well chosen from a defensive viewpoint. The Fort itself is owned and managed by Yatton and Congresbury Parish Councils supported by English Heritage. Several years ago, it was decided to graze a small herd of cattle

twice a year for about six weeks in order to control the grass and maintain the site. To begin with the cattle were the tiny Dexter breed but latterly they have been much larger cattle which, though quiet and relatively friendly, have put off some walkers from using the hill while they are there. I have to say that the arrival of these cattle has become somewhat controversial because of this and also because their size and number has made many paths unusable especially after wet weather such as we've had this year.



The area around and below the Fort is owned by North Somerset Council and is now a Local Nature Reserve. Walking there during the pandemic when there were no aircraft overflying was wonderful—the birds are in full voice at this time of year. In 2009, the Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group (YACWAG) restored a 19th century agricultural stock pond which had been



hidden by encroaching undergrowth. In the spring, there are many wildflowers growing in profusion—celandines, primroses, wood anemones, violets, wild orchids, cowslips and bluebells. On the north side there was a quarry which closed in the early 1970s and was subsequently used for landfill before being landscaped back to grass. If we get any snow this area is taken over by local children with every kind of sledge imaginable!

The whole hill is very popular with walkers especially those with dogs as it is a unspoilt, wild place well away from traffic whilst very accessible to local folk. The views from all around the hill are amazing, stretching from the Mendips and Crooks Peak, Clevedon, the Welsh hills, Weston super Mare and down towards the Quantocks. During Covid when we were so confined and restricted, many people from the surrounding area walked there with their families which was lovely to see. So get your walking boots on and come and enjoy Cadbury Hill this spring!

Val Dickens

With thanks to Ian Harrison for his photos and reproduction of his painting above of Pip and Millie on their daily walk!

Wellbeing Lifestyle Club

The next meeting of The Wellbeing Lifestyle Club is on 25th April at Yatton Methodist Church Hall from 10-12. The discussion will be on '*Breaking free from your stress cycle: how to navigate life with a new perspective on stress*'. Everyone is welcome and refreshments are provided before the talk.

Wellbeing Lifestyle Club is a group of volunteers led by Sarah Stammers and her Social Prescribing Team from Mendip Vale Medical Practice. They aim to encourage people to improve their own health and wellbeing by making simple changes to their lifestyle. They provide support and information on a variety of lifestyle topics in an informal setting. Sessions are free and run on the last Thursday of the month.

April – May Services at St Mary’s

All services at St Mary’s unless otherwise stated and some are subject to change

3rd Sunday: 21st April

10am Holy Communion

6pm Songs of Praise at Kingston Seymour

4th Sunday: 28th April **SPRING FESTIVAL**

10am Morning Prayer

6pm Evening Worship

Weekday services

Tuesdays & Wednesdays: 8.15 Morning Prayer on Zoom (contact Mike Cooke)

1st Sunday: 5th May

10am Holy Communion

Thursday 9th May **ASCENSION DAY**

7pm Team Ascension Day Service at St John’s, Kenn

Followed by refreshments. Also available on Zoom

2nd Sunday: 12th May

10am Morning Prayer

3rd Sunday: 19th May **PENTECOST**

10am Holy Communion

4th Sunday: 26th May **TRINITY SUNDAY**

10am Morning Prayer

Weekday services

Tuesdays & Wednesdays: 8.15 Morning Prayer on Zoom (contact Mike Cooke)

Yatton United Charities

Yatton United Charities is a local charity that gives small grants to any resident of Yatton, Claverham and Cleeve who are in need of financial support due to their own limited funds. This includes the elderly, children, students, local non-commercial organisations, people with disabilities or learning difficulties, and people experiencing hardship in their life, for example through illness. Grants are considered throughout the year but please note they may take a few weeks to arrange. In the case of someone going to college, it’s better to apply in July, August at the latest.

Application forms are available from Yatton Parish Council and Cleeve Parish Council websites, or email: yattonunitedcharities@yahoo.com. The Clerk to the Trustee can be contacted on 07912 890467.

QUIZ -ISE

All the answers in this quiz end in the letters ISE. They are in alphabetical order.

Assess	Make it up as you go along
A shade of pink	Put at risk
Nightdress	Learn
1986 John Cleese film	2018 top 10 George Ezra hit
If I can't have my way then neither can you!	Blunt nosed sea creature
Holiday afloat	Advertise
Downfall	Become aware
Formulate	Dawn
Camouflage	Petrify
Work out	Long-living reptile
Proficiency	Use
Hero worship	Suitcase
	Sage

Answers to Happy New Year: Happy families, happy talk, Happy Valley, if you're happy and you know it, Oh Happy Day, happy ever after, happy hour, Happy go lucky, Happy Together, as happy as Larry, happy medium, new tricks, New Delhi, New York Times, A whole new world, New kids on the block, The Emperor's New Clothes, new broom, turn over a new leaf, Newgate, New model army, gap year, light year, in the year 2525, tax year, it's the most wonderful time of the year, Chinese new year, it was a very good year, the year dot, A year in Provence

Nancy Thorne

Tower Lighting

The tower was (and will be) lit to mark the following dates:

March 29th Remembering Paul Carr on his Birthday, Love Sue and family

April 28th Remembering Mum (Nan Ford) on her Birthday.

June 10th Remembering Gladys Guard (Mum) on her Birthday.

If you have a special event— anniversary, birthday, memorial etc which you'd like to mark in this way, please contact Clare at the Church office on 01934 832184



THE YATTON MOOR TEAM MINISTRY

Website: www.yattonchurches.org

Facebook: [Yatton Moor Churches](https://www.facebook.com/YattonMoorChurches)



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We welcome articles, stories, poems, reflections, news and announcements. Contact details are above. Content can be sent to Val electronically or in hard copy to the Team Office.

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