

# Alton Methodist Church

## NEWSLETTER



Robert Schneider, iStock

### May 2022



**Minister: Rev. Philip Simpkins**

**Tel: 01420 83167**

**Church website [www.altonmethodist.org.uk](http://www.altonmethodist.org.uk)**

**Circuit website [www.hsbccircuit.org.uk](http://www.hsbccircuit.org.uk)**



*Dear Friends,*

You may be surprised to know that one of my favourite books in my study is 'The Journal of John Wesley'. In his journal Wesley gives us 'a vivid and sometimes amusing picture of his life in Eighteenth century Britain'<sup>1</sup>. It paints a picture of a man who travelled over 250,000 miles in his desire to spread the Christian message. It speaks of his 'open air preaching, his inner



doubts and conflicts, his journeys on horse-back and by ship, and his encounters with many people – the famous, the infamous and the ordinary.'

The journal includes such entries as:

**Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> October** – *I preached in the morning at Newport to the most insensible, ill-behaved people I have ever seen in Wales. One ancient man, during a great part of the sermon cursed and swore almost incessantly...*

**Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November** – *The roads were extremely slippery, it was with much difficulty we reached Bedford. We had a pretty large congregation, but the stench from the pigs under the room was scarce supportable. Was ever a preaching place over a pigsty before? Surely, they love the gospel who come to hear it in such a place.*

Of course, Wesley's journal contains the account of his initial struggles with faith as he reflects: *I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God.*

And shortly after he speaks of his conversion experience.

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<sup>1</sup>The Journal of John Wesley – abridged by Christopher Idle, Lion Publishing 1986

**Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> May (Whit Sunday)**– *In the evening I went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.*

And it is from this point on that Wesley becomes anointed and inspired to preach with passion the good news of the Christian faith to people from all walks of life both within churches (when allowed!) and often in the open air.

Of course, it was brother Charles who wrote most of the hymns we love to sing like ‘Christ the Lord is risen today’, ‘O for a thousand tongues to sing’ and -

*And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour’s blood?  
Died he for me, who caused his pain?  
For me, who him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

The Methodist Church sets aside a Sunday each year to remember and be inspired by the life story of John Wesley, Church of England cleric and unintended founder of the Methodist Church. This year it is May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Why not dip into history and be fascinated and encouraged in your faith by this man of God?

Every blessing

*Philip*

Alton Methodist Church is in a covenant partnership with the Parish of the Resurrection in the Greater Alton project.



## Accepted for Training!

We are delighted to announce that Liam Sheridan has been accepted for training as a Methodist Minister following intensive interviews and studies – we pray God’s blessing on you and all the family as you set out to walk in the footsteps of Mr Wesley! Julie Clark, a local preacher and Children’s and Family Worker in our circuit was also successful.

## Looking back on Lent & Easter

This year members and friends from our different churches in town came together to share in the Lent course ‘Serving the King, Serving the Kingdom’.

Around 50 people gathered in ‘The Maltings’ each week for a time of worship, bible teaching, an interview with a local service provider (Jill Thorne did us proud when we looked at ‘Caring for the Broken-hearted’) and a time for discussion.

On Maundy Thursday we finished with Holy Communion and prepared ourselves to walk out into the night, ready in body and spirit to then relive the events of Good Friday.



On Good Friday, we gathered in the grounds of St Lawrence Church to share in a re-enactment of the events we read of in scripture pertaining to Holy Week. With donkeys and sheep adding to the atmosphere the message of the

cross was brought alive to us in a very moving and dramatic way.





You had to rise early for the Son-Rise Service on Easter morning held in Beach at 6am. It is a very special time as we gather, like the women who visited the tomb, at the break of day to celebrate the discovery of the empty tomb.



Angela was up!

Easter Sunday morning always feels special as we gather as a congregation to exclaim 'Christ is risen – He is risen indeed, Alleluia!'.

It was a shame that Philip woke and tested positive for Covid – but we are indebted to Liz who led the service at the last minute... I really mean the last minute!!



## Messy Church

During April our monthly Messy Church centred on an Easter theme.

Following refreshments, we all enjoyed a group memory game where the adults, at least, got very competitive!

Gathering to listen to the Easter Story we watched 'The Easter Poem' written by Bob Hartman and produced by the Bible Society.

Both children and parents enjoyed making Shredded Wheat chocolate nest crispy cakes.



Alongside creative daffodils and clay modelling there was the big picture to paint, easter stories to create, handy chicks and perhaps my favourite the Palm Sunday donkey. Hot cross buns made a lovely change as we enjoyed a late morning snack.

Thank you to everyone who was able to help.

The next Messy Church is planned for

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 10am to 12noon.**

Please do invite those you know to come along and/or share on Facebook.

## Church AGM

The Annual General Meeting of Alton Methodist Church is due to be held on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May at 4pm.

There will be a short act of worship, an opportunity for discussion on the life of the church and the election of our congregational reps to the Church Council. The stewards will also be elected to serve the life of the church. If you wish to be nominated or nominate someone (with their permission) to the church council or as a steward, please let Philip know in advance of the meeting.

We will then enjoy a **Bring and Share Tea** when we can continue our fellowship in an informal way.

A big and sincere thank you to everyone who serves and supports the life of the church – your contribution to the life of our congregation is very much appreciated.



### Great Alton Project (GAP) Afternoon Tea

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2-4pm**

**Alton Methodist Church**

This is a wonderful opportunity for an enjoyable afternoon to meet and share one another's company and everyone is invited.

It is not only a time for fellowship with our friends from the Parish of the Resurrection, but also an opportunity to support the work of the Anna Chaplaincy as donations and gifts will be given towards funding this project. The Anna Chaplaincy is totally dependent on our fund-raising efforts and together we seek to raise in the region of £18,000 per year to cover salary and running costs. Your local contributions really do help support our grant applications as they demonstrate how much you value the work of the Anna Chaplain. Thank you for your generous gifts!

## Lunch Club

We seem to be back to a normal number of "customers" for lunch these days which is great!

However it makes it even more essential that places are booked and paid for in advance.

When you come for lunch club the charge is £3.50 each time. If you wish to book for the following month please make sure that is also paid for. If you are unable to attend please contact me on 84739 and I will move your payments forward. This must be done in good time as I do the shopping the day before! Obviously last minute reasons such as illness will be taken into account! It would be really sad to run out of food!

**Next Lunch Club dates are Tuesday 10th May , Tuesday 14th June and Tuesday 12th July. There is no Lunch Club in August.**

Christine Allan (84739)

## GAP Travelling Meal - Help Wanted

It is the turn of Alton Methodist Church to host the next part of the GAP Travelling Meal which is **Afternoon Tea**.

**This will take place on Saturday 21st May from 2pm -4pm.**

I expect this will be well attended and therefore I will need to call on many to help on the day!

I think we will offer small sandwiches, small scones with jam and cream and a selection of small cakes.

If you feel you would be able to provide any of these goodies please let me know so we don't have mountains of scones and nothing else!

I am also looking for some people to help serve and clear away any offers?

Please speak to me soon!

Christine Allan.(84739)



## May Market

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 10am-12noon**

Planning is well under way and we look forward to seeing you at our spring fund-raiser on 14<sup>th</sup> May, together with all the friends and family members you have encouraged to come.

- Geraldine Mason (01420 88726) will be running the plant stall and would welcome contributions of home-grown plants.
- Terri White (01420 617339) will be running the Bric-a-Brac stall and would welcome donations of goods. Do you have any presents which you have put aside but are just what someone else would like?
- Helen Smith (01420 544161) has valiantly agreed to run the book stall again, so do look out those thrillers you bought last year and won't read again and we'll happily recycle them! Helen is happy to collect some books in advance but would appreciate offers of help to load and unload the books when delivering to the church on the Friday evening and clearing up after the sale.
- Sonja Williams (01420 84611) will be running the cake stall and would welcome contributions of home-baking.
- Our resident artist, Pam Jones, will be selling some of her work.

Judy Nicholls is putting together a team to provide the ever-popular refreshments.

As usual, the various rooms at church are in use most days and this year the Boys' Brigade Annual Display will be taking place on the evening of Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May so all space will be in use that evening! We will be setting up for the fair after the display (about 9.00-9.30pm) so goods to sell may be brought then or on the Saturday morning from 9am. If you would like goods collected in advance, please contact the stall-holder or me.

Offers of help with the fair or with clearing up afterwards would be very welcome.

Nancy Buck (01420 85994)



## Action for Children

It's the time of year when I would normally be emptying the home collecting boxes. I'm very happy to do that, but if you haven't had much use for cash and it's not been fed – perhaps you would like to write a cheque out to **Action for Children** to continue your support. The work has increased with all the problems of the pandemic and the rising cost of living, so our help is much appreciated. Last year you were incredibly generous. Let me know if you'd like me to empty your box, or cheques can be left at church for me to collect or popped through my door (92 Queens Road). Thank you in advance – Jennie Marlow (85698).



## Ladies @ Wetherspoons

There's another chance for a chat over a coffee at the end of the month – if you're free on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May – do pop in any time from 10am.

## Church Bible Study

We have been working our way through the Beatitudes and we are hoping to round off that section with Holy Communion on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May at 2.30pm. We plan to continue looking at the rest of the Sermon on the Mount on the first and third Tuesdays.



## Family News

It was such a shame that **Philip**, followed by **Angela Simpkins** were struck with Covid at the Easter weekend. It's good to have them back in action again..

We hope **Iris Anderson** is making progress after a short time in hospital.



**Rev Keith Underhill**, formerly minister here, writes:

‘Just to let you know that Liz and I are now Grandparents!  
William Fells János Lancaster was born a week ago at 06:11.  
Amy, William and Dan all doing okay. Can’t believe how much joy he has brought into our lives!’

**I would like to thank the Church** for all the cards, sympathy and kind messages. the family have received in praise of Ray’s long life. Also for attending his thanksgiving Service on the 24th March. I would also like to thank everyone for their kind generosity in supporting two very worthwhile charities.

Shirley Benjamin



## Summer Stroll

The next seasonal walk – open to all – will take place on **Tuesday 24th May**. The route and starting point haven’t yet been decided, but full details will be put up on the usual notice board in the foyer.

The walk, typically four miles in length, will take us along country footpaths and bridleways, and it will finish with us having lunch together in a local hostelry.

You are very welcome to join us for the meal, even if you choose not to walk!

Everyone wishing to eat needs to add their name to the list on the notice-board, so that we can reserve a table in advance.

David Allan (84739)

## Anna Chaplaincy – Successful Grant Application!



Thanks to the efforts of the Anna Chaplaincy Grants Fund-raising Team, we are delighted to report that we have been given a grant of £5,000 per year for three years from ‘The Mercers Company’.

This is wonderful news and with the new appointment of

Kate, who is doing such a fantastic job, we are delighted to be supported in this way. Pictured is Kate visiting Fielders Court and leading an Easter Service.

Thank you to everyone who has filled in a questionnaire about elderly care in Alton that circulated during April. This was provided both for our ongoing research into the needs of those who are maturing in years and to act as supporting evidence for a grant application we are making during May to the ‘East Hampshire Supporting Community Fund’. There is a lot of competition for this excellent fund – but it would be a great help and blessing financially should we prove successful. We will know the outcome in August.

## Ink-jet Cartridge Recycling

The Anna Chaplaincy Fund has received the first payment of £40 for cartridges sent for recycling.

If you have used cartridges to dispose of, please put them in the green box in the church foyer. Thank you.

Nancy Buck



## Mercy Ships – Amazing Grandmother!

A grandmother of six from Gamlingay in South Cambridgeshire is walking 500 miles to help bring life-changing surgery to the world's poorest nations.

Dawn Martin celebrated her 69th birthday just days after she started walking the full length of the Camino de Santiago from St-Jean-Pied-de-Port from France to Spain for Mercy Ships at the end of March.

The ancient pilgrim route, also called the Santiago de Compostela, will take her around six weeks to walk and ends at the cathedral of the same name in northern Spain, where the remains of St James the Apostle are said to be.



Mum of three, Dawn, has spent most of her working life in medical and caring settings with the NHS including being a physical therapy technical instructor at Chase Farm Hospital in Enfield and then Age UK Hertfordshire discharge co-ordinator at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage. She said: "I love walking but I have never done any fundraising on walks before but I realised there is such a great need and I wanted to help so I decided to do this to raise money for Mercy Ships."<sup>2</sup>

**A BIG thank you for all the fundraising efforts we have been doing as a church in Alton – the latest being the Good Friday Concert by Alton Choral Society which raised £410.**

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.mercyships.org.uk/grandmother-walking-500-miles-for-life-saving-surgery-in-africa/>

## 2nd Alton Company News



Things really are getting going as we head towards our summer programs.

In case you didn't see the certificates in the hall, **our Junior section** did themselves proud at their Competitions Day, ending up with a 2<sup>nd</sup> place for the day. Well done boys.

Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find a note about our display on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May. This will give you a chance to see some of the things that all of the boys get up to throughout the year.

The Battalion Chess Tournament is being held here at our church on the day after the display, but after the church fair...a busy couple of days

Other things coming up include a Parade in Winchester on the 20<sup>th</sup> May to mark the Queens Jubilee.

The biggest issue we have is one of numbers. We really could do with boys of primary age, school years 1 to 6, to join the Anchors and Juniors. Not only will it make it a lot better in each of these sections to play games and do activities, it will mean that we have boys that will progress into the Company section. Please speak to me or any of the leaders about this.

Pete Burgess (Captain)

**For the Company Section**, April 2022 has been a quiet month.

We were unable to meet on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April due to a number of leaders testing positive for Covid. We did meet the following Friday, having an informal meeting as a number of the boys were absent. Then we have had the Easter holidays during which we don't meet, so the next meeting will be on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April. At that meeting we will be readying ourselves for the Annual Inspection and Display evening on 13<sup>th</sup> May at which we will be showing the boys' families and guests some of what we do in the Company.

Lt. Rolfe Bridson

## Anchor Boys

We may only be a small group but that doesn't mean the boys don't have the same amount of enthusiasm!

We had a busy term with the boys making prayer boxes, clay handprint bowls for Mothers Day, as well as cooking pizzas and of course the boys made some amazing pictures.

This term the boys also learnt to sign along to a new song using Makaton, which they are getting incredibly good at.

Friday night also comes with playing games, this term the boys particularly loved playing dodgeball with the Juniors.

When we return we will be getting ready for the Annual Inspection and Display where we get a chance to share with everyone what we get up to on a Friday night

As always any new members are welcome to come and join in the fun we have on Friday nights.

Glenda Bentley

### Invitation

The Staff and Boys of 2nd Alton Company,  
The Boys' Brigade,  
Invite you to join them at a

### Display Evening

in the Church on **Friday 13th May at 7pm.**

## Girls' Brigade News



In the past month the members of the company have been busy.

At the end of March, we joined the Church Family for our Parade & Church Service.

This term our older girls have been looking at the Easter story, through Palm Sunday where we made felt palms then the Last Supper, making key fobs with the colours of faith. Beads in different colours represented aspects of faith. Purple reminds us that God is King, Black for our sins, Red for the blood that was shed for us, White is for our forgiveness, Blue is for our Baptism, Green is for how we grow in knowing God & Yellow is for our eternal life in heaven.

We also discussed the Crucifixion and made Cross shaped bookmarks and to finish, and to remember the Easter story, we coloured a story wheel.

The n:vestigate section continued with our 'Spring' topic and made cards for Mothering Sunday. On the last evening of the term we heard the Easter story and made cards to take home.

Unfortunately, all sections lost a week when key members of staff came down with COVID. The staff are for the most part recovered, thankfully.

Looking forward, we return from a restful Easter break and are looking forward to our Annual Camp at the end of May. Initially we had planned a camp in Littlehampton but due to numbers and the changes to the bank holiday days for the Queens Platinum Celebration we have changed our plans to a few days based at Church with days out.

Kym Burgess (Captain)



## On the Welsh Borders



The five young people who are tackling Duke of Edinburgh's Silver

Award expeditions set off for their Practice venture at the start of April, travelling by minibus to their campsite near Hay-on-Wye. Overnight was interesting, to say the least, with the temperature around minus 4 degrees, and the tents covered in frost in the morning.

On the way to their starting point the following day, disaster struck – the minibus handbrake cable snapped! That made life interesting for the driver . . . on hilly Welsh single-track roads.

The group were accompanied on the first part of their journey on Black Hill – just as well, as the blue skies soon gave way to flurries of light snow, and the decision was taken to come down from the hill to the shelter of the valley. But fortunately the snow came to nothing.

Day 2 went completely according to plan, and Jacob, Freya, Jessica, Elise and Ollie duly completed their seven-hour hike with full kit. They're now thinking about where to go for their Assessed expedition later in the year.



*Sunshine at the start*



*Enjoying the view, before the snow flurries*

## Enjoying their journeys



At the beginning of April, on two successive days, groups of young people from School Year 7 undertook their first-ever expeditions under the watchful eyes of Karen Murrell and Geoff Goodall. On the Saturday, one group chose to walk in the Odiham and Dogmersfield area, while on Sunday the other group navigated from Newton Valence to Alton. And the weather was kind to the walkers on both days.

Dione Watson will be helping me to look after the Year 8s this month, when they will have their first experience of camping wild in local woodland.

David Allan



## CAMEO News

CAMEO members were delighted to welcome Kate Powell, our recently appointed Anna Chaplain, to their April meeting. Kate talked about her commitment to working with older people and how experiences gained in previous posts - especially her most recent role as a hospital Chaplain - enabled her to meet the criteria in the job description for an Anna Chaplain. She saw the advertisement just one day before the closing date for applications!

After her talk, Kate remained to share tea and chat with the group. For many of them this was their first opportunity to meet the person who will play a significant role in their lives and well-being in the future.

We thank Kate for responding so readily to our invitation and visiting CAMEO at the earliest opportunity.



**This month's CAMEO meeting on 21st May, will be combined with the GAP Afternoon Tea, which will take place at AMC from 2pm to 4pm.**

Judy Nicholls



## All Saints Hard of Hearing Group

### LIP READING REMINDER



Lip Reading is a valuable tool for those with a hearing loss.

Starting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May at 2pm in All Saints Church Hall, Queens Road, Lip Reading lessons led by Maggie Short (ATLA), qualified Lip Reading tutor, will recommence. These will continue on the first Tuesday of each month.

The cost will be £3 per person and each class will last for an hour and a half; the first hour will cover the art of lip Reading which will be followed by a cup of tea and an opportunity to practice the skills learnt.

For further details contact Kate Dando [kaddando@gmail.com](mailto:kaddando@gmail.com)

Why not come along and join us!

## *Knitters Anonymous*



*Handmade—with love*

'Thank you' seems such a little word and does not really indicate how all your knitted donations are appreciated by those receiving them, but rest assured everything is found a home and a very grateful owner. It is hoped to hand over the woolly hats to the Deep Sea Fisherman when a representative of the charity visits Alton at the end of this month. Items for refugees are collected and delivered via AltonAid and the Bliss knits for premature babies are collected at the Spire Church Farnham and sent to many of the baby units at hospitals here in the south. Please note for a change from knitting tiny garments we now have various patterns for tiny teddy bears which use up oddments of wool. For more information contact Kate 83514 [kaddando@gmail.com](mailto:kaddando@gmail.com)

## Clearing out bras?

If so, please can you give them to me or to Judy Nicholls at church, anytime between now and November! Alternatively, leave them in the small bin at the right side of my house.

My cousin is travelling to Namibia in December, and is taking as many as she can.

Wearing a bra helps reduce attacks on and rape of women there - horrific I know, but sadly the reality for many, so an important "symbol of support"!

Karen Booker

## Prayer for Ukraine

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ, wept over Jerusalem.

Today, we weep over Ukraine.

We weep for those uprooted from their homes and lives.

We weep for those cowering in basements.

We weep for those who have witnessed death and destruction on their streets.

We weep for those separated from parents, from children, from spouses and siblings.

We are amazed at the resilience of people seeking to comfort those in need and so we pray for Governments opening up borders so that Ukrainians can have safe passage.

We pray for churches and individuals providing food, clothing and shelter.

We pray for medical workers ensuring that shattered bodies are put back together again.

We pray for ordinary Russians demonstrating and voicing their disapproval of the military actions in Ukraine.

May the Holy Spirit give us the willpower to turn our tears into action also.

May we, through our words, prayers and example pursue the things that make for a just peace in the world today and especially in Ukraine.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

Amen

[From [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)]

## Eco Corner

### All in it together

In previous Eco Corners, I have covered some of the really big things which need to be done if the World is to achieve net zero by 2050. Many of these can only be achieved by Governments and Big Industry.

However, it is already evident that we are all subject to the effects of climate change. We truly are all in it together and none of us can expect to be isolated from the actions which need to be taken.

So, what can we do to play our part in responsible care for God's creation?

The other day I stumbled across an interesting announcement on the Institution of Mechanical Engineers web page. It said:

"The importance of sustainability for the Engineering Industry is more important than ever before. Manufacturing and Engineering Week will include a Net Zero event on 8-9 June at the NEC in Birmingham. One tree will be planted for every visitor who attends!"

What a good idea. Trees take years to grow to a size where they become really effective in absorbing carbon dioxide. The sooner we start the better and even if, on average, we each only plant one tree, the effect will add up over time.

This has been done before. Those above a certain age may remember the slogan 'Plant a tree for 73' launched in 1973. I wonder what happened to the tree we planted?

Nigel Hughes





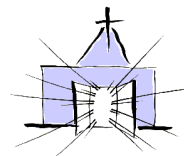
## Dates for your Diary

### MAY

Tues 3	2.30pm	Church Bible Study Group
Sat 7	10:00-12:00	Messy Church
Tues 10	12.30pm	Lunch Club
Fri 13	7.00pm	Boys' Brigade Display
Sat 14	10:00-12:00	May Market
Sun 15	4.00pm	Church AGM—all welcome
Tues 17	2.30pm	Church Bible Study Group
Sat 21	2.00-4.00pm	GAP Afternoon Tea & CAMEO
Tues 24	tba	Summer Stroll
Thurs 26	10.00	Ladies @ Wetherspoons
Mon 30 May to Wed 1 June		Girls' Brigade Camp based in Church

Please look at articles in the Newsletter giving more information.

The June issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 29th May.



## Services at Alton in May 2022

<b>Sunday 1st</b>	<b>3rd Sunday of Easter</b>
	10.00am Annah Mwadiwa
<b>Sunday 8th</b>	<b>4th Sunday of Easter</b>
	10.00am David Moll
<b>Sunday 15th</b>	<b>5th Sunday of Easter</b>
	10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins - Holy Communion
<b>Sunday 22nd</b>	<b>6th Sunday of Easter</b>
	10.00am Liz George
<b>Sunday 29th</b>	<b>7th Sunday of Easter</b>
	10.00am Pam Jones

### CONTACT US

**Church Office:** Email [altonmethodist@hotmail.com](mailto:altonmethodist@hotmail.com) (Tel 01420 82695 )

The church office is not usually staffed. Emails will be picked up and passed on to the relevant person, but answerphone messages may be overlooked.

**For pastoral matters,** please phone or email Rev Philip Simpkins.

Tel: 01420 83167 Email: [philip.simpkins@methodist.org.uk](mailto:philip.simpkins@methodist.org.uk)

**For administrative matters,** including bookings, please contact Mrs Liz George via the church email address (above) or Tel 01420 561543

Items for inclusion in the **June** issue of the “**Newsletter**” should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 22nd May** at the latest, please.

If you are able to email your contribution to the office (or to Nancy) it would be much appreciated.