



St Mary's Church Eccleston / St Mary's Church Pulford

[Eccleston and Pulford Churches](#)

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Dear Reader,

The parish newsletter is also available to download from the church website:

<https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/category/newsletters/>

*For up-to-date service information please see the church website:*

<https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/services/>

*Please feel free to email suggestions for future newsletter articles.*

Thank you to Helen Allison, Rob Hughes, Mike Nethercott and Rachel Williams for their contributions this week.

Kind Regards

Stephen Hutchinson ( [hutch@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org](mailto:hutch@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org) )

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## Parish information

### Rector:

Pulford/Eccleston	Revd. Dr Stephen Torr	Rector@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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### Church Wardens:

Pulford	Sue Payne and Bridget Marsden	PulfordChurchWarden @ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Eccleston	John Richards (assistants Julie Rowland & Steve Hutchinson)	EcclestonChurchWarden @ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

### Licensed Lay Minister

Pulford/Eccleston	Jeanette Howe	Jeanette@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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### Planned Giving Officer / Treasurer

Pulford/Eccleston	Bridget Marsden	Treasurer@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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### Safeguarding Officers

Pulford/Eccleston	Jeanette Howe/ Hilary Garard	Safeguarding@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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### Electoral Roll Officer

Eccleston	Andrew Wilkinson
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Pulford	Clare Willan
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### Organists and Assistants

Pulford/Eccleston	Derek Whatling /Dennis Jones
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### Director of Music

Eccleston/Pulford	Maureen Richards	mothemusic@gmail.com
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### Tower Captains

Eccleston	Andrew Pridding
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### PCC Secretary

Pulford/Eccleston	Andrew Wilkinson
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### Newsletter/Website

Pulford/Eccleston	Stephen Hutchinson	Hutch@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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## Church Service Dates Times and Locations.

All services will be led by the **Reverend Dr Stephen Torr**.

All services are on **Sunday** unless indicated otherwise.

Date	When and Where	Reading	Reader	Prayers	Sides-person
17/03/24	Eccleston 11.15am HC	Jeremiah 31.31-34	Nayland	Helen Glaze	Nayland
24/03/24	Eccleston 11.15am HC	Isaiah 50.4-9a	Terry	Steve Hutch	Steve Hutch
Thur. 28/03/24	Pulford 7.30pm HC	Exodus 12.1-14	Ann B.	Rob Hughes	n/a
Fri. 29/03/24	Eccleston 2pm Sung Hour at Cross	Isaiah 52.13-53 Psalm 22. 1-21 Hebrews 10.16-25	Jeanette and Andrew W.	Steve Torr	Garth
31/03/24	Eccleston 11.15am All Age	Acts 10.34-43	Hilary	Mo	
07/04/24	Pulford 9.45am HC	Acts 4.32-35			
14/04/24	Eccleston 11.15am HC	Acts 3.12-19			



**HC** = Holy Communion,

**MW** = Morning Worship.

*N.B. Communion will **not** be served at **All Age** services. These are services aimed at a younger audience. The prayers, sermons and hymns will be much shorter and aimed at a younger audience.*

## Important News and Reminders

### Food Bank

A reminder from Rachel Williams. Here are a few of the facts being highlighted on the Foodbank website: 3507, Emergency Food Parcels issued in 6 months to 30 September 22 - up 60% on pre pandemic levels, 7617, Local people in crisis fed, 2828, Feeding the equivalent of 2828 local children. The charity is very grateful for all donations - but especially non cook items such as crackers, Ryvita, Fish/meat pastes, Instant pastas/rice/soups and toiletries (toothpaste and brushes). They have PLENTY of dried Pasta, Baked Beans

### Urgently Wanted

- Tinned Meat and Fish, Tomatoes, Desserts & Potatoes, UHT Milk & Juice, Custard, Small Jars Instant Coffee, Jams and Spreads, Instant Mashed, Cereal Bars, Instant Pasta & Instant Noodles

### Also Wanted

- 'Cuppa' Soup, Pot Noodles, Pasta Sauce, Biscuits, Breakfast Cereal

[Rachel Williams]

## Mothering Sunday Service

On behalf of everyone at Pulford Church and Eccleston Church on Sunday, I would like to thank all the ladies who made such beautiful posies for Mothering Sunday. They were exceptional and I am sure all the Mums and Grandmothers greatly appreciated receiving such lovely flowers. It was such a lovely gesture.

## Rob Hughes: Silent Church



I've been struggling to find the 'language' to adequately introduce and explain the purpose, and potential scope, of Silent Church. In truth, it's easier to explain what it isn't - but that sort-of-implies negativity. That's not what I want to do - quite the opposite. But I hope that the homily that follows this 'promotion' might go some way to explain how important it can be to supplement corporate worship with corporate (as opposed to private) 'silences'.

The truth is, humankind isn't all that comfortable with silences - if you've interviewed people, or been interviewed yourself, you'll know what I mean!! That's probably true of public worship, too. Important though it is to demonstrate, corporately, our faith and beliefs, in public prayer and song, there is comparatively little time available (during a service) for silently listening, and waiting on God.

The reason for re-introducing the opportunity for a 'Silent Church' is that several of us benefitted greatly from participating in such events initiated by Roger during the latter stages of the pandemic as restrictions eased. So we would like to commend Silent Church to all who might wish to simply 'listen', rather than speak or sing.

- It isn't 'silent prayer' as such, but you may perceive a need to do so as you 'listen'
- It isn't a way to completely chill-out and stop incessant thinking, but it can, and will enable you to quickly refocus on what we are there to do - simply wait on God
- There is no formal effort as such, other than a willingness to remain quietly attentive to what the Holy Spirit wants you (as an individual) to focus on at that time
- It's rare to feel fundamentally "transformed" - immediately or profoundly (though I have known this happen). So Silent Church requires perseverance and 'practice' - so we would hope you can experience personal and corporate spiritual benefit over time.

I'll leave it there for now; because as soon as we try to define or explain 'things spiritual', they cease to be spiritual. Spiritual experiences are deeply personal, so I hope the homily following might paint a picture of the importance of silences ('awareness' / 'stillness' / 'presence') as a means by which to honour our personal relationship with our Lord.

**[Rob Hughes – March 2024]**

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## Rob Hughes Homily: What Kind of Ruler?



In preparing for this, it occurred to me that the very first Palm Sunday was a far-from-quiet affair throughout Jerusalem. I've mentioned this before...

On one side of town, crowds had gathered to welcome Jesus as (potentially) a warrior king - 'another King David' - who would lead some sort of rebellion to rid the Jewish race of their Roman oppressors. Noisy celebration came willingly from the crowd of people, who would have been there (probably at considerable personal risk!) to welcome Him. What they got was an ordinary-looking chap, with no weapons or army, riding a beast of burden.

On the other side of town, fully armed Roman soldiers marched into town, as yet another show of force - asserting their (and Pilate's) authority in no uncertain manner. Any shouts of welcome from the Jewish crowds would probably have been coerced or paid-for; and in any case, whatever they shouted would have been drowned out by the stamping of feet and clanking of weapons.

The Roman authorities (and their local Jewish collaborators), imposed, by force of arms, a tyrannical and oppressive rule that was detested by the people as a whole. But Jesus came back to Jerusalem preaching (as always) His Gospel of peaceful and loving forbearance and restraint. He was, of course, condemned to death by the previously-welcoming crowds, who had quickly become disillusioned and disappointed, in spite of Zecharia's prophesy:

***"Say to the daughter of Zion, "See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."***

This might well have been mis-interpreted 2000 years ago....

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In a previous series of Lenten homilies (during lockdown), Jeanette and I wrote about Jesus as being a “**Creator, Carpenter, Gardener and King**”. This theme was suggested by a series of four guided meditations that I followed, and each encouraged a period of silent, private, Lenten contemplations (not, strictly speaking meditation, as such - but pretty close!).

The Gospels tell us a bit more detail, of course:

- In “John 1-1” we’re specifically told: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*”. A clear statement that Jesus and God are one-and-the-same Person. **Creator...**
- Prior to His earthly ministry, we learn that Jesus worked with his adopted father in the family business as a carpenter (a probably more accurate translation would be “builder”, but **Carpenter** is fine)
- Fast-forwarding, on the day of His resurrection, Jesus was mistakenly identified as the **Gardener** (a short time later, of course, the full truth was revealed)
- And having had the experience of being fully-human, Jesus’ ministry would ‘come to life’ after the resurrection, which enabled him to truly be seen as “our King”

...Not a warrior-king, as the first century Jews were hoping for; not as the commander-in-chief of a fabulously powerful army. But as an itinerant preacher leading a peace-loving movement, and promoting a better (more righteous) way of living.

- As wholly divine, only He knew God’s mind and purpose.

- As wholly-human, He demonstrated the power of loving and caring for everyone (and I mean **everyone**). He simply invited everyone who'd listen to learn the truth about God, then learn from each other, and then spread the word.

As practicing Christians, I guess we're pretty sure what sort of king we choose to worship... The world-as-a-whole doesn't yet seem to have made up its mind what sort of global leadership it really needs. Even so, God (in the persons of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit) is already here-and-now (everywhere, and every-when!) - waiting for us to simply '**be still, and listen**'. But globally, I'd suggest that He remains largely unheard. These days, more than ever, it's become nigh impossible to imagine a different world because of the stream of thoughts and concerns racing through our minds, and all the time wanting things to change for the better.

I've come to understand (through practice) that the power of silence often goes unnoticed, and overlooked - as was Christ's silent resurrection from the quiet of a borrowed tomb. No fanfares for Him - He simply resumed His ministry.

So, what if, even if only for a moment-or-two, now-and-again, we could experience the profound stillness that exists between the chaos of modern living and over-thinking? Because silence (often referred to as 'presence' or 'awareness') isn't merely the absence of noise and mind-clutter. For sure, it gives our minds a rest; but more importantly, it creates 'space' for thoughts and feelings that really matter, and for those that don't matter to float on by...

**And what could possibly matter more than perceiving what God's trying to tell us?**

The wisdom of God can be accessed through stillness, as well as during public worship. Stillness requires no effort - but does need to be practiced.... Because it's only 'in the silence of our hearts' that sufficient space can be created, within which we can perceive **God's wisdom**, and find the inspiration to follow more closely the message of the Gospels - as Christ always intended.

That was His reason for being human (yet divine)! And surely that's the kind of king that's needed now, more than ever before.

***God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things that we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.***

[Rob Hughes – March 2024]

## Barges at Rest – Painting by Mike Nethercott

This painting by Mike Nethercott won the competition for favourite painting at the recent Pulford Art Club Sale.



## Official Facebook pages for Eccleston Church and Pulford Church:

There are now 2 official pages for Eccleston and Pulford Church on Facebook. There were already 2 unofficial pages, but these new official pages, it is hoped, will be more relevant to the Church and its activities.

Eccleston Church: <https://www.facebook.com/EcclestonChurch>

Pulford Church: <https://www.facebook.com/PulfordChurch>

***If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to be our church Facebook administrator, please email me at***

[admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org](mailto:admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org)

## Rectors of Eccleston part 8 (Thomas Aubrey 1704 to 1758)

***This fascinating article by Peter Jackson originally appeared in the October 2009 edition of the Parish News. Thank you to Helen Allison for allowing me to republish.***

The 18<sup>th</sup> Century, so far as the parochial clergy were concerned, was a curious mixture of either crushing poverty, for the vast majority, and growing affluence and influence, for a growing minority, particularly in rural parishes. The poverty was, to some extent, alleviated by Queen Anne's Bounty, which utilized moneys raised by two separate taxes upon the clergy. The first of these, pre-Reformation, was known as "First Fruits", which required the first year's value of the living to be paid to the Pope. At the Reformation, Henry VIII transferred this to the Crown. The second tax, effectively a tithe, was introduced by Henry himself. "First Fruits" was, by its very nature, payable over a number of years whilst the tithe was annual.

At the other extreme, the practice was growing whereby rich patrons appointed their relatives to incumbencies. They may not even have lived in the parish and may have resorted to the prevalent practice of appointing a curate.

This period has been referred to as the "gentrification of the Clergy". Many clergy brought with them personal wealth, and they were at the forefront of the surge in Rectory and Vicarage rebuilding. An example of this was in Eccleston, where Charles Mytton built a new Rectory using personal resources.

Both Aubrey and his wife Elizabeth, were charitable and she is reputed to have founded the Bluecoat Girls' School in 1720. Its objects were to teach poor children "to read and write, to understand the Church Catechism and to sew, knit and spin". It continued until 1872 when a new school was built in Vicar Lane on a site given by the first Duke of Westminster, closing finally in 1940.

The influence of James II was still to be felt: first, when his son, the Old Pretender, invaded England in 1715 in the first Jacobite rebellion the object was simply to restore the Catholic faith in England and the hope was that, as the

invasion progressed; the population would flock to join. This was a vain hope. In the northern towns and cities there was much civil apprehension. In Chester, it would appear that this amounted virtually to panic, leading the City Fathers to block up the gates and accesses. There was much by way of troop movements. It was said that a plot to “surprise the Castle” had been discovered. Aubrey was unimpressed and said that he thought the plot to be of the City Fathers’ own making. He was called before the Recorder and ordered to appear at the Sessions, presumably to explain his conduct. He survived, however, a similar general panic occurred in 1745, in the second Jacobite Rebellion, but there is no record of Aubrey’s comments at that time.

Aubrey had other brushes with authority, however and the Grosvenor archive contains a complaint made by parishioners as to his conduct. He stood accused of “clandestine” activity in the appointment of a clerk. This appears to mean that he made the appointment without reference to the parish.

Another complaint was that he promised to give £5 towards the casting of 5 bells. Only two bells were cast bearing his name but he refused to pay the £5! Again, a complaint stated that he had sold brick and timber, which materials were earmarked for repairing the church. Finally, the overseer of Highways asked for Highway Tax (5/) but Aubrey refused to pay.

The outcome of the complaints is not recorded, but he evidently survived to complete 54 years in office! Elizabeth died in 1738 and Aubrey married again. His second wife did not appear on his wall memorial which may simply indicate that she outlived him.

What emerges is an autocratic herald of the new clergy who felt able to criticize the civil power, and it is possible to see the seeds of the conflict between the temporal powers and the Church which became a feature of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. I would very much like to have met Aubrey.

**[Peter Jackson, October 2009]**



## Features of Chester - a history of the Eastgate Clock

If like me, you have grown up in Chester, you probably never give the Eastgate Clock a moment's notice. It is something you grew up with, and has always been there, so you just accept it. It comes as a surprise when you find out that it is the most photographed clock in the UK after Big Ben. It actually has a clock face on all four sides.



Photo by S. Hutchinson

A scheme initially proposed to enhance Eastgate after a visit by the Prince of Wales to Chester in 1869, was revived to celebrate the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1896. A committee was set up, to decide exactly how this should be executed. The 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Westminster suggested that the city should support Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute of Nurses. Other suggestions included a statue of Queen Victoria in the Town Hall square, or a clock in the Town Hall tower. It was finally decided however to erect a memorial tower and clock on Eastgate. The architect John Douglas was invited to prepare a design. His first design for a stone structure costing £1000 (equivalent to £121,000 today) was rejected as this was found to restrict the daylight to the neighboring properties. In 1897 a meeting with the subscribers to the fund carried a motion to erect a light iron-work structure containing a clock. John Douglas prepared a new design, which was approved in 1898.

The clock mechanism was made in 1897 by J.B. Joyce and Company of Whitchurch, Shropshire who until 1974 supplied a technician to travel to Chester every week to wind it. The ironwork for the tower was made by the firm of James Swindley of Handbridge; James Swindley was John Douglas's cousin. The official opening of the clock was performed on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1899, Queen Victoria's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

After souvenir-hunters stole the hands of the clock, the city council glazed the clock faces in 1988. In 1992 an electric mechanism replaced the original wind-up mechanism. In 1996, the clock faces were restored with their original colours.

More details can be found on Wikipedia (which was used as the reference material for this article).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastgate,\\_Chester](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastgate,_Chester)

**[Stephen Hutchinson]**

## Another photo of old Eccleston church (taken from Riverside).

Photo courtesy of Hugh Fearnell





## Adverts.

There have been several requests to return to including adverts in the Parish Newsletter. If anyone would like to advertise, please email:

[admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org](mailto:admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org)

## Pulford and Poulton Local History Group Talks (Held at Pulford Village Hall)

There will be a talk on the “Vikings in the Wirral” by Rob Philpot at Pulford Village Hall (CH4 9ES) on **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March** at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5 (non-members) and £3 for members. For details of up-and-coming lectures please contact the Pulford and Poulton Local History Group. Email: [info@pplhg.org.uk](mailto:info@pplhg.org.uk) for details.

Their website is available at <https://pplhg.org.uk>

## Pulford Church App

A Pulford Church tour guide is available for Android Phones only.

[Click here for Pulford Church Tour Guide for Android Phones](#)

## Cemetery Map

A reminder to anyone who might be interested in Eccleston Cemetery. The map of the cemetery is now complete. I have added the location and names of all graves. If anyone wishes to add a short tribute, or photo to the pin, please contact me at [admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org](mailto:admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org)

Also please contact me if there are any errors or omissions.

<https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/cemetery-map/>

Pulford cemetery has been mapped by the public on the FindAGrave.com website ...

[St. Mary's Churchyard in Pulford, Cheshire – Find a Grave Cemetery](#)

## Reader/Intercessor/Sidesperson Rota

At the last PCC meeting it was suggested that Eccleston Church return to having a sidesperson. ***It was suggested that either the reader or prayer lead for the service act as sidesperson to make things easy.*** If someone is already available to read then it saves having to try and organize an additional rota for sidespeople.

Duties of the sidesperson include

- ***greeting people*** as they enter the church
- ***handing out hymn books/service sheets and collecting them at the end of a service.***
- ***inviting people to communion (for Holy Communion Services)***
- ***recording the total number in the congregation.***
- ***Putting the correct hymn numbers in the hymn boards.***
- ***Taking the plate money to the vestry for counting.***

***If any of the readers/intercessors do not want to appear as sidesperson, please let me know***

by emailing me at [admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org](mailto:admin@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org)

**The Rota for readers/intercessors and sidespeople is accessible at:**

<https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/rota>

## Foxhills Events

To Print off a full list of foxhills you can download their brochure from the following link: [Foxhills events. – ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org](https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/foxhills-events)