



Two Shires Link - Weekly News

for the Parishes of
**Tatworth, Chaffcombe, Winsham,
Thorncombe and Cricket Malherbie**

May 17th, 2026



I have a real love for flowers and I'm looking forward to visiting Cricket Malherbie church to see the flower festival on the weekend of the 23rd to the 25th.

Thinking about Cricket Malherbie's Flower Festival led me to ponder the history of church flower festivals, whose roots go much deeper than the modern festival weekend.

Flowers have been used in Christian worship for many centuries. Churches have long been decorated for great festivals such as Easter, Christmas, Pentecost and Harvest. In medieval times, greenery, herbs and flowers were

often brought into churches to mark the seasons of the Church's year. Many flowers also carried symbolic meanings: lilies became associated with purity and Easter hope, roses with love and devotion, and evergreens with eternal life.

After the Reformation, church decoration became plainer in many places, but the custom of bringing flowers into church never disappeared completely. By the Victorian period there was a renewed interest in church beauty, symbolism and parish life. Churches were increasingly decorated for major festivals, and flower arranging became a recognised way for parishioners to offer their gifts in service of worship.

The flower festival as we know it today developed more fully in the twentieth century. It became especially popular in rural and historic churches, where local people could work together to create displays around a theme: a Bible story, the seasons, a village anniversary, a hymn, a saint, or the life of the church itself. These festivals often combined worship, art, fundraising and welcome. Visitors came not only to admire the flowers, but also to enjoy refreshments, music, prayer spaces, church history and the chance to meet others.

Yet, at their best, church flower festivals are not simply decorative events. They invite us to notice beauty, to pause, and to give thanks. Jesus himself pointed to the flowers of the field when he said, "Consider the lilies of the

field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin” (Matthew 6:28). In a world that can often feel rushed and anxious, flowers remind us that creation is full of quiet grace. They speak of God’s care, generosity and delight.

The Bible often uses the natural world to draw our hearts towards God. The prophet Isaiah writes, “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom” (Isaiah 35:1). Flowers are fragile and temporary, yet they can still speak powerfully of hope, renewal and life. Their beauty does not last forever, but perhaps that is part of their message: they call us to cherish the present moment and to recognise God’s gifts while they are before us.

Flower festivals also tell a story about community. Behind every arrangement are hours of planning, gathering, arranging, sweeping, welcoming, baking and serving. People who may not attend church every week often feel able to contribute, visit, or take part. In this way, a flower festival can become a gentle doorway into the life of the church — a place where beauty, hospitality and faith meet.

So the history of church flower festivals is really a history of worship, creativity and neighbourliness. From simple seasonal decorations to carefully planned displays, flowers have helped generations of Christians express praise, remembrance and thanksgiving. They remind us that beauty matters, that the church belongs to the whole community, and that even the most delicate bloom can point us towards the Creator.

I look forward to seeing many of you at **Cricket Malherbie’s Flower Festival**, and to sharing together in the colour, creativity and quiet joy that such an occasion brings.

Services this week

Tatworth 10:30am Holy Communion

Winsham 10:00am Morning Worship

Readings

Acts 1: 6 to 14

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’ ⁷ He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’ ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. ¹³ When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew,

Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

John 17: 1 to 11

17 After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. ⁶ I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸ for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

Collect

Risen, ascended Lord, as we rejoice at your triumph, fill your church on earth with power and compassion, that all who are estranged by sin may find forgiveness and know your peace, to the glory of God the Father.



Loving God, you are close to the brokenhearted and you hold the weary in your arms. Be near to all who are unwell, bringing them peace and strength. Be gentle with those who grieve, surrounding them with your love and the hope of eternal life. May they know they are never alone, for you walk beside them, today and always. Amen.

Services next Sunday


Cricket Malherbie - Worship amongst the flowers at 10am HC

Thorncombe - 10am Holy Communion

Chaffcombe - 6:30pm BCP Evening Prayer

Readings next week

Acts 2 verses 1-21 and John 20 verses 19-23



St Mary Magdalene Festival Church
Cricket Malherbie TA19 0PW

Flower Festival

*A blaze of floral colour awaits
inside the picturesque,
historical Grade II* listed church*

**10.00 AM
to 5.00 PM**

**MAY
23rd, 24th, 25th**

Morning Coffee
Afternoon Cream Teas
Bric-A-Brac, Plants and Books

Contact Us

For administrative and booking enquiries
contact **Claire** at adtwohires@gmail.com

Benefice Website: www.twohiresbenefice.org

Revd Anne Perez: Deacon 07504338529 revdanne@outlook.com
(contact Anne to add your event to our newsletter/website)

Churchwardens

Tatworth: Vacancy

Chaffcombe: Stan Robinson 01460 239121

Cricket Malherbie: Audrey Hinkins 01460 52783

Thorncombe: Charlotte Roper

Winsham: Tom Holt 01460 30302, John Webster 07989 675956