



The Downs and Valley Parishes Magazine No. 21 Dec. 2024

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3

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The Downs and Valley Parishes Service Rota December 2024

December 2024	St George's Darlingscott	St Mary's Ilmington	St Mary's Preston-on-Stour	St Peter's Stretton-on-Fosse	St Gregory's Tredington	St Mary's Whitchurch
1st Advent Sunday		11.00am Holy Communion (1662)	6.00pm Evensong for Advent Sunday (1662)	9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Morning Worship	4.00pm Advent Service
8th	No Service	11.00am Morning Worship	9.30am Holy Communion (1662)		11.00am Holy Communion	
15th	4.00pm Carol Service	11.00am Holy Communion		No Service	11.00am Morning Worship	11.00am Holy Communion (1662)
22nd	No Service	6.00pm Carol Service	No Service		11.00am Carol Service	

For Christmas Services, see separate list at the front of the Magazine

Church web-pages - For further information, please search for the Church name and click on the relevant 'A Church Near You' page. (This is more effective than searching 'A Church Near You' directly.)

Ministers:

Rector: The Revd Canon Dr Richard Cooke 07952 544820 (mobile) or 01608 544821 (landline) or Richard.Cooke.Ilmington@Outlook.com
 Hon. Assistant Minister: The Revd Dr Tim Seller 01608 682244 (landline)
 Reader: Ros Wakefield 01608 682146 (landline)
 Reader Emeritus: Malcolm Davies 01789 450793 (landline)

Churchwardens:

Tredington *Posts vacant – contact the Rector*
 Darlingscott Doreen McCarroll 01608 682949 (landline)
 Ilmington Jane Downie 01608 682720 (landline) Helen Patrick
 Preston-on-Stour Andrew Holman- West 07712 193773 (mobile)
 Stretton-on-Fosse *Posts vacant – contact the Rector*
 Whitchurch Carol Rutter 01789 450795 (landline) John Craner 01789 450200 (landline)

Richard Cooke, the Rector, writes

Resignation of the Archbishop

There's been a lot of upheaval in the Church of England in the last few weeks. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has announced that he is to step down from his role after many calls for his resignation over his failure to pursue more vigorously a particularly horrific abuser, John Smyth, who he had known himself many years before, though he was unaware of the abuse Smyth perpetrated.

I'm not sure there's anything that I can usefully say on the subject – I have no desire to add to the many voices inside and outside the Church which have offered opinions about the past and the future, what has gone wrong and what changes are needed. Sometimes when terrible mistakes have been made it may be better simply to be silent after accepting responsibility and admitting failure, as the archbishop has done. Then the focus can be where it ought to be, on those who have suffered and in many cases continue to do so psychologically for years afterwards.

Our own group of parishes has had its own taste of being caught up in an abuse case, of course, five years ago when my predecessor as Rector was arrested and subsequently imprisoned. Bishop Ruth, who has been acting Bishop of Coventry in the last year, came to a joint service recently, and has expressed her regret that the parishes were not supported as well as they might have been through that difficult time. I know from talking to a good many people in the villages that this has left emotional scars for some, and an understandable lack of trust in the church. Although I recognise that I may not be the person you'd like to talk to, I am always available to talk about this, or any other issue that you'd like to take up with me.

My hope and prayer is that, whatever is happening at the national level of the Church of England, on the ground, in local parishes, the simple faithful work of pastoral care for all, regular worship and prayer, and love and acceptance, will still be found. At its heart, the mission and message of Jesus was to show God's love to the world, and that, however imperfectly, is what our parish churches are still committed to doing.

Sophie Jelley - the New Bishop of Coventry

It was announced on 4 November that Bishop Sophie Jelley, currently the Bishop of Doncaster, will become Bishop of Coventry early in 2025. She will be the first woman to hold the post on a permanent basis. To find out more, see the Diocesan Website – search for 'Diocese of Coventry'.

Downs and Valley Churches Christmas Services 2024

Sunday 15 Dec	4.00pm	Darlingscott Carol Service
Thursday 19 Dec	7.00pm	Whitchurch Carol Service
Sunday 22 Dec	11.00am	Tredington Carol Service
	6.00pm	Ilmington Carol Service
Monday 23 Dec	7.00pm	Ilmington 'Blue Christmas' Service (<i>quiet space for those who find Christmas difficult</i>)
Christmas Eve	3.30pm	Ilmington Christingle Service

Tuesday 24 Dec	4.00pm	Stretton Carol Service
	6.00pm	Preston Carol Service
	9.00pm	Whitchurch Christmas Night Communion
	11.00pm	Ilmington Christmas Night Communion
Christmas Day	11.00am	Preston Christmas Morning Communion
Wed. 25 Dec	11.00am	Tredington Christmas Morning Communion
	11.00am	Ilmington Christmas Morning Communion-
Sunday 29 Dec	11.00am	Darlingscott Morning Worship with Carols

From the Registers

Funerals & Memorials

At St Mary's, Ilmington on 12 November, Betty Jean Bryan, aged 94 (followed by cremation at Oakley Wood).

At St Mary's. Preston-on-Stour on 16 November, Thomas Keningale, aged 32 (memorial service).

The Downs & Valley Magazine is intended as a forum for village news from within the Parishes of Ilmington, Stretton-on-Fosse, Whitchurch, Preston-on-Stour, Tredington and Darlingscott. Opinions expressed are those of the individuals contributing and the publication of these and of news items does not imply support for those opinions or items by the churches.

Editor's Note

The *deadline for copy for the Ffrst issue of 2025 is **Saturday 14 December***. Send to Susan Brock, Editor, E. s.brock9@btinternet.com, Daisy Cottage, Front St., Ilmington, CV36 4LA. Please note that the limit for editorial articles is 150 words. Enquiries about advertising to Tim Seller: E. Tim.Seller@outlook.com, Long Barn, Back St., Ilmington, CV36 4LJ.

The image on this month's cover of is from Fran Chapman of Ilmington. I'm always looking for artwork so if you have a painting, drawing or photograph which you would like to submit, email it to me, Susan Brock, as a jpg or PDF file (portrait layout). Age is no barrier! No computer? Drop it round to my house (see address above) and I'll scan it for you.

For a while I have been printing news from the parishes in alphabetical order A-Z. In 2025 they will be listed in reverse order starting with Whitchurch. The world turned upside down!

Susan Brock, Editor

Nature Notes December 2024

The dove with an olive leaf in its beak is seen on many Christmas cards. It was depicted in ancient art. Noah sent the dove out of the Ark three times to see if the flood waters had receded, the second time it came back with an olive leaf. The dove became a symbol of peace when Picasso was approached to design a poster for the World Peace Congress held in Paris in 1949. Since then it has been known as the peace dove. Doves can be found in most countries in the world and

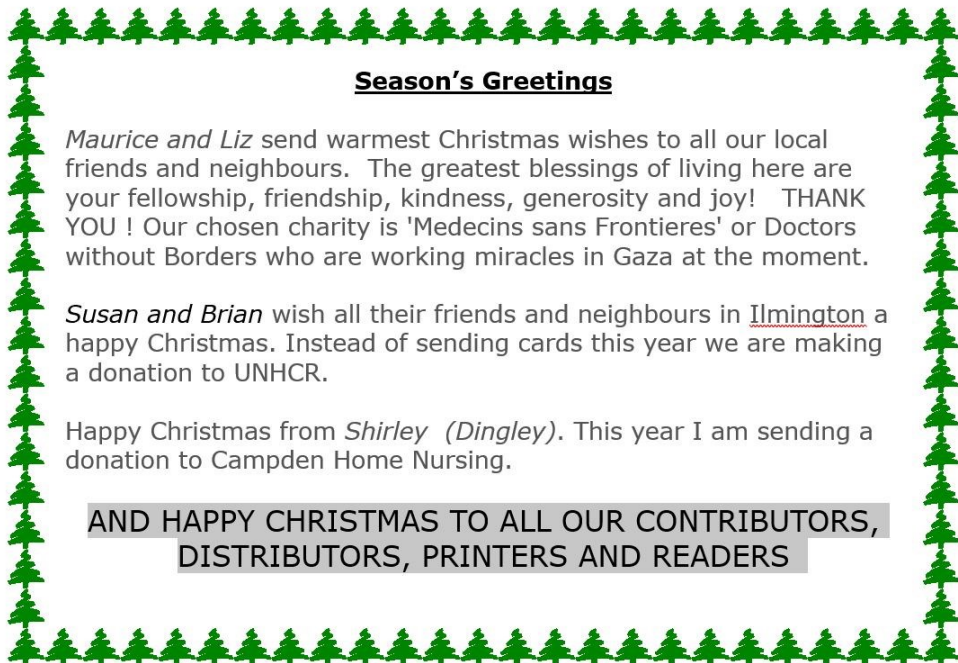
mate for life often returning to the same nest site each year. They can navigate over long distances using the Earth's magnetic field. There are several different varieties of doves including the rock, stock, turtle and collared doves, but the one we most think of is the white dove on our Christmas cards.

Gill

Link to Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the Appeal across all our five Parishes. We sent 115 brightly wrapped Shoeboxes to those living with war in Ukraine, with severe flooding in Romania, and in abject poverty in Moldova and Bulgaria. All will be delivered to families and the elderly in time for Christmas. We also received generous donations of £270, which will help the charity to buy items in bulk to fill more shoeboxes at their Worthing HQ. And several ladies delivered hundreds of knitted scarves, hats and gloves, all lovingly made during the past year. Eleven cartons full are also on their way to Eastern Europe. Many thanks to our village collectors and to everyone who gave so generously. May your Christmas be especially joyful knowing you have brought smiles to so many vulnerable people at this special time of year.

Wendy Lewis Edwards, Appeal Coordinator



Season's Greetings

Maurice and Liz send warmest Christmas wishes to all our local friends and neighbours. The greatest blessings of living here are your fellowship, friendship, kindness, generosity and joy! THANK YOU ! Our chosen charity is 'Medecins sans Frontieres' or Doctors without Borders who are working miracles in Gaza at the moment.

Susan and Brian wish all their friends and neighbours in Ilmington a happy Christmas. Instead of sending cards this year we are making a donation to UNHCR.

Happy Christmas from *Shirley (Dingley)*. This year I am sending a donation to Campden Home Nursing.

**AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR CONTRIBUTORS,
DISTRIBUTORS, PRINTERS AND READERS**

Church Bell 400th Year Anniversary Celebrations

St Gregory's Church, Tredington
Saturday 14th December 2024
11:30am – 13:30pm



Come and join us to celebrate the 400th year anniversary of our 5th bell

Everyone Welcome!

Tea, Coffee and Refreshments

Hear the church bells ringing
Handbells, raffle and other activities
Expert ringers will be on hand to support anyone wanting to try ringing
for the 1st time!

Donations welcomed which will go towards the restoration of our bell frame

We look forward to welcoming you, please call in to see us!

For further information please contact Harie Claire - mobile no: 07756710970 or email:
harieandair@gmail.com

A CHRISTMAS CAROL



BY
CHARLES DICKENS

ST. MARY'S ILMINGTON

TUESDAY 17TH DECEMBER

❖ 7PM ❖

WARM UP FOR CHRISTMAS BY COMING TO A DRAMATISED READING OF THIS CHRISTMAS FAVOURITE. A CAST OF ILMINGTON RESIDENTS WILL BRING TO LIFE THE REDUCED SCRIPT PREPARED BY DICKENS FOR HIS MANY PUBLIC READINGS. JOIN US FOR A WELCOME DRINK OF MULLED WINE WITH A MINCE PIE BEFORE THE SHOW. TICKETS ARE £10 FOR ADULTS AND FREE FOR THOSE UNDER SIXTEEN AND ARE AVAILABLE IN THE COMMUNITY SHOP

THE EVENT IS A FUND-RAISER FOR ST MARY'S CHURCH, ILMINGTON.

ILMINGTON

St Mary's Church

Warm up for Christmas by coming to a dramatised reading of 'A Christmas Carol' on Tuesday 17th December at 7pm in St Mary's Church. A cast of Ilmington residents will bring to life the reduced script prepared by Dickens for his many public readings. Join us for a welcome drink of mulled wine with a mince pie before the show. Tickets are £10 for adults and free to those under sixteen and are available at the community shop. The event is a fund-raiser for St Mary's Church.

Andrew Trotman

St Mary's Church

Calling all carol singers! St Mary's is putting together a choir to sing carols at the Howard Arms on the evening of Monday 23 December. If you'd like to join us, please contact Helen at hock-eyhelen59@gmail.com or on 07903 186 722 for more details. Thank you!

Jane Downie, Churchwarden

Church Christmas Tree

Enormous thanks are due to Stuart Fleming who for over 40 years has made sure that there is a lit Christmas Tree on the tower of St.Mary's. Thank you, Stuart, we love it! And thanks to Tim Seller too who donated our Christmas star.

Liz Bott

Ilmington Show Disbursements

The Show Committee is delighted to announce that it has been able to disburse £14,000 to more than ten good causes in the parish of Ilmington and to its four named charities which benefit our community: Myton Hospice, the Shakespeare Hospice, Shipston Home Nursing, the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance. Thanks to everyone helped to raise those funds.

Susan Brock, Committee Secretary

Forthcoming Village Hall Events

7th December - Meet on the Ledge

"Award-winning, festival-storming thrash morris phenomenon" Ents 24; "Big Country in a bar brawl with Thin Lizzy" Stratford Herald; "Masterful instrumentation... glorious harmonies" folking.com; "Stunning... powerful material played with great style and panache" Coventry Evening Telegraph. Tickets £12 at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/meet-on-the-ledge/t-xmjagg>

14th December - Christmas Concert with Emmanuel's Ground

A costumed group of 29 singers and instrumentalists who perform music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reviving the psalmody and hymnody of the rural parish church from around 200 years ago, so much beloved of Thomas Hardy and exemplified in his novels and poetry. This raw and exciting music is genuinely "music of the people", taking to heart the instruction of John Wesley to "sing lustily and with good courage". Tickets available from the shop at £12.5

Village Hall Wellbeing and other Regular Events

Mondays at 09:30 - Tai Chi

Tuesdays at 10:45 - Exercise for those with Parkinson's Disease

Tuesdays at 18:00 - Yoga

Second Wednesdays of the month at 14:00 - Wednesday Club

Wednesday monthly at 19:00 - Sound Bathing

Wednesdays 20:00 - Ilmington Traditional Morris Dancers

Thursdays at 14:30 - Indoor Curling

Alternate Thursdays at 18:00 and Tuesdays at 14:00 - Table Tennis

Last Friday of the month - Cinema Group

Saturdays at 09:30 - Drama Classes for Children

Contact details for the organisers of these events can be found here <https://ilmington-villagehall.com/regular-activities>

Wednesday Club next meeting 4th December, 1 pm, Village Hall

Carole Love gave us a beautiful demonstration with the sounds of her giant gongs at our last meeting. Sound bathing worked its magic throughout the room and we all benefitted from the feeling of peace we were left with. Carole's next session will be on the evening of December 4th at the Village Hall so forget your stress and book an appointment. Our very next meeting is going to be the best one in the year as it's Christmas lunch! Get your glad-rags on, bring £10 for your lunch and some for a raffle and come filled with Christmas spirit! See you at 1pm. Our only birthday in December is Sheila Ribbons and she has her birthday on the 13th. Happy birthday SHEILA! That just leaves me wishing you a very happy Christmas and a healthy 2025.

Carole Clifford, Chair

Ilmington Community Shop and Café

Winter is cosy in the Community Café, with mince pies and mulled wine on the menu and a mini market of Christmas goodies. We've got food and drink tastings every Saturday and "Christmas in a Box" forms so you can pre-order your festive fare for collection just before the big day. Your support is invaluable to us and our local suppliers. OK, pencils at the ready...

Tues 3 Dec, 2pm: Book Club @thecafe is reading Clan of the Cave Bear by Jean M. Auel

Tues 10 Dec, 12.30-2.30pm: Tea & Tech support from Warwickshire Libraries

Wed 18 Dec, 2pm: Knit & Natter

Sat 21 Dec: Last day of Café, until Tues 7 Jan (also our next Book Club at 2pm)

Please see posters and social media @ilmingtonshop for our Christmas opening hours. Have a good one!

Ilmington Community Shop Committee

PRESTON ON STOUR

Preston Film Night

Please note that we will not be showing a film this month but will be back as usual on the last Friday of January. Many thanks and happy Christmas to all of you who have supported us over the past year.

Table Tennis Evening

We have two table tennis tables at the hall and they don't get used very often so on Tuesday 3rd December they will be set up from 6pm to 8pm. All levels of ability are welcome to come along for a taster with no charge. We have a few bats for use but if you have your own please bring it with you. We will provide tea or coffee; if you would like anything stronger bring that with you too.

The Annual Preston Quiz - 2025

It is time to start getting your teams of four people booked in for the quiz night to be held on Saturday 1st February. Contact Mick Jennings on 01789 450797 e.mickandsally76@gmail.com or Margaret on 01789 450710 e.prestonbrocks@gmail.com.

Margaret Brocklehurst

STRETTON ON FOSSE

Stretton Soup Lunches

Last soup lunch before Christmas Dates Village Hall is on Dec 11th. We will provide a choice of 3 soups, at least one of which will be vegetarian and all ingredients listed in case you have food allergies.

Geri Hunting

TREDINGTON WITH DARLINGS COTT

St George's Church Darlingscott

Carol Service with choir, Sunday December 15th at 4pm. After the service we will serve food and drinks. All welcome. Church decorating will be Friday or Saturday whichever you can help at. All offers with food will be appreciated. Please let Doreen know if you can help: 01608682949.

Doreen McCarroll, Churchwarden

Come and Practise Singing Christmas Carols

On Tuesday 3rd, 10th, 17th December at 6pm in St Gregory's Church, Tredington for about an hour. Everyone is welcome, including families and children who enjoy singing – no matter how you think you sound! Come and join us on any or all of the above Tuesdays, to choose and practise favourite carols to sing at St Gregory's Carol Service at 11am on Sunday 22nd December
John and Paul

Church Bell 400th Year Anniversary Celebrations **Saturday 14th December 2024, 11.30am - 13.30pm**

Please join us to celebrate the 400th Year Anniversary of our 5th bell at St Gregory's Church, Tredington and to help raise funds for the restoration of our bell frame. EVERYONE welcome! **Tea, coffee and refreshments will be available.** Hear the church bells ringing. Even have a go yourself (expert ringers will be on hand to support any non-ringers)! There will also be handbells to ring, a raffle and other activities. We look forward to welcoming you, please call in to see us! Any donations of cakes and raffle prizes would be gratefully received. For further information please contact Harie Claire on mobile no: 07756 710970 or email: har-iemandair@gmail.com

Craft and Chatter

Craft & Chatter will meet at 2pm on Thursday 5th and Monday 16th December. This is a social event, with plenty of conversation, tea & cake, whilst craft is optional. £1 per person, no membership required. For more information contact Vanessa on 07818 599353 or email vanessa@tredingtonandblackwellwi.com
Gill Goodlad, Hall Secretary

Tredington & Blackwell WI

Members will meet for Christmas lunch in December. The next WI meeting is on Thursday 9th January, starting at 1pm with lunch.
Gill Goodlad, WI Treasurer

Tredington & District Garden Club

There is no meeting in December. Members will meet for a New Year Lunch in January.
Gill Goodlad, Member

Community Film Night

The next film will be shown on Friday 13th December in the WI Hall. Doors open at 7pm, with bar available, and the film begins at 7.30pm. Based upon a true story, it tells how an unexpected diversification saves a family shoe-making business. Critics said "it will delight fans of both comedy and shoes!" Certificate 12, running time is 1hr 36mins, plus a short interval for bar and ice creams. Free admission. To book places, or find out more, contact Gill via text to 07789810877 or email gillgoodlad@hotmail.com.

Gill Goodlad, WI Treasurer

WHITCHURCH

A Tribute to Robert Howe

If you've been interested to read 'notes from a small church in a field' over the past months, you should know that these mini-histories that describe some of the curiosities of St Mary's derive entirely from the researches of our parishioner, Robert Howe. For a couple of decades now Robert has been working in archives, libraries, and record offices with documents, press cuttings, land registers and earlier accounts by Nikolaus Pevsner and Rev. Harvey Bloom to write an up-dated (and corrected) history of St Mary's. It's down to Robert that we know about our bell, the lamb sculpture over our door, the coffin road, the patrons whose shields appear in our stained glass, the substitution of St Mathias in the east window, the look of the churchyard in 1900. Robert keeps turning up new material: more 'notes' are coming in the new year. In the meantime, THANK YOU, ROBERT. Your history needs publication.
Whitchurch PCC

OUTSIDE THE PARISHES

Stour Singers Christmas Concert

The concert will take place at St Edmund's Church, Shipston, on Saturday 14th December at 7.30pm. We will be performing Vivaldi's Beatus Vir and Magnificat, plus excerpts from Handel's Messiah and carols for all. With soloists Caroline Taylor (soprano), Cathy Bell (alto) and Matthew Pochin (tenor) and orchestra from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Tickets £16 from ticketsource.co.uk/stour-singers or on the door.

Gayle Burch, Coordinator, Stour Singers

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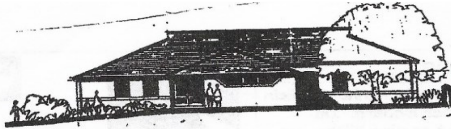
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by *Caroline*

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I AM EXCITED TO BE IN A POSITION TO HELP OTHERS ACHIEVE THEIR TRAVEL GOALS

I have been fortunate to travel extensively throughout Europe, Southern and Central America, and Southern Africa. As a result I have first hand experience of a wide variety of destinations and holiday types.

On those travels I have been fortunate to amass amazing memories from tracking elephants in Botswana, cruising the Galapagos Islands, entering Machu Pichu via the Sun Gate at the end of the Inca Trail.

Please feel free to contact me, as I would welcome the opportunity to help you build your own fond travel memories.



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