



The Downs and Valley Parishes Magazine No. 22 Jan. 2025

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The Downs and Valley Parishes Service Rota January 2025

Jan 2025	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
5th Epiphany Sunday <i>(transferred from 6th)</i>		11.00am Holy Communion <i>(1662)</i>	6.00pm Evensong <i>(1662)</i>	9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Morning Worship	
12th Baptism of Jesus	11.00am Morning Worship	11.00am Morning Worship	9.30am Holy Communion <i>(1662)</i>		11.00am Holy Communion	
19th Epiphany 2		11.00am Holy Communion		9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Morning Worship	
26th Epiphany 3	4.00pm Evening Worship <i>(1662)</i>	6.00pm Evensong <i>(1662)</i>	11.00am Morning Worship		11.00am Holy Communion	

No services until March

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)

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

A Christmas Carol

Bah, humbug! says Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. As the 12 days of Christmas come towards an end it's time, perhaps, to reflect on the season and what it means for us. Some of us were involved before Christmas in presenting a reading of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* – after the story of the birth of Jesus, perhaps the most famous Christmas tale of them all. It was first published in 1843 on 19 December, and its first edition had sold out by Christmas Eve. It's never been out of print since.

A Christmas Carol is really an appeal that Christmas should not just be a time for retreating from the winter, but a whole-hearted celebration where we seek to embrace all of humanity, especially those who are less fortunate than we are. Christmas can be a time when we are able to be glad for what we have, and the relationships that sustain us. Scrooge's nephew Fred speaks for this early in the story, as he says that he seeks to honour the spirit of Christmas all year round. He is an appealing character, from whom generosity overflows. Eventually, of course, after meeting the three Spirits of Christmas past, present and future, Scrooge echoes what Fred has said. He wakes up to his responsibilities, discovers his own generous self, and with it, happiness after all.

Dickens was one of our greatest writers, and the role of Christianity in his novels is an interesting one. Some would say that he really developed the idea of Christmas as a time for caring for others instead of just a midwinter festival, taking it decisively away from its pagan roots. Above all, *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens emphasised that Christian faith, if it is to mean anything, should be practical, and make a difference to the world. He reserved some of his most scathing words for 'right reverends and wrong reverends' who did not care for the poor and needy, and when I read those words their passion never fails to touch me. It was partly through the influence of Dickens' novels that child labour, for example, was prohibited in this country. Though his own life was far from saintly (he behaved awfully to his wife), the message remains a powerful one.

Christmas, in other words, is not just for Christmas! Its themes and values need to be worked out through the whole year, not just for 12 days. So, as we go into a New Year, perhaps we can echo Tiny Tim's words that end *A Christmas Carol*: 'God bless us, every one!'

From the Registers

Funerals & Memorials

At St Mary's, Ilmington on 6 December, Sylvia Jean Mann, aged 72 (followed by burial).

At St Mary's, Preston-on-Stour on 27 December, David Churchill Grigg, aged 91, of Long Marston, formerly of Preston (followed by burial).

Editor's Note

The *deadline for copy for the February issue **Saturday 18 January.** A full schedule for 2025 can be found on p. 11. **Top tip: Keep it for future reference!** Send copy 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.

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.

n 2025 news from the Parishes will be listed in reverse alphabetical order starting with Whitchurch. Watch out!

Susan Brock, Editor

Nature Notes January 2025

The mountain hare is an amazing creature! At this time of year it has a white coat and black ear tips. The mountain hare's white coat is its camouflage so it stays hidden in the snow. In the summer the mountain hare has a grey brown coat with a bluish tinge. The difficulty can be when the snow has melted or there is a lack of snow causing it to be more visible. Mountain hares are larger than rabbits, smaller than brown hares and have shorter ears. Unlike the brown hare, introduced in Roman times, now naturalised, the mountain hare is native to the Scottish Highlands and Peak District and introduced on some Scottish islands. God's creation is amazing have fun going out and exploring locally. If we have snow you might find some animal tracks, see if you can identify them! <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2022/01/animal-tracks-snow-print-identification/> Or simply enjoy watching from your window!

Gill

Armscote, Blackwell, Darlingscott and Ilmington Poppy Appeal

On behalf of the Royal British Legion, I would to thank everyone that generously donated towards this year's appeal, the collection raised £2029.57p. I would also like to express my thanks to everyone that kindly helped with the collection; your assistance is greatly appreciated.

David Larnar

OUTSIDE THE PARISHES

A Ladies Spring Breakfast at the Halford Bridge Inn, Halford Saturday 29th March 9.00am for 9.15am

It's a new year and with a new diary to hand, do please make a note of the next date when we meet again for a continental breakfast in Halford. **Our Spring speaker will be Sue Wright**, who comes from Ladbroke, near Southam. Sue has a heart for the villages and rural churches where she lives. She is a member of the ministry team at the Well Christian Healing Centre in Leamington and she is one of the

the leaders for the Rest and Receive (soaking prayer) sessions. All women are welcome at these breakfasts – and there is no need to belong to a church or wonder if you would be welcome – just come and enjoy sharing in a buffet breakfast and listen to the different speakers we invite. We'd love to see you! for more details please contact Liz Harvey on ma_harvey@hotmail.com or 07914026451. The cost is £9 on the day, but places do need to be reserved.
Liz Harvey

WHITCHURCH

St Mary's Church

St Mary's PCC thanks everyone who contributed this year to making our church welcoming, well-cared for and beautiful. Arranging flowers. Mowing grass. Polishing brass. Ironing altar cloths. Clearing gutters. Painting signage. Cutting back ivy. Making music. Contributing to the parish share. Joining us in worship, ensuring St Mary's vibrant life on-going as a place people have gathered for more than a thousand years to thank God for our blessings and to pray for the peace of the world. Regular services are suspended after Christmas until Mothering Sunday in March, but St Mary's remains open, a quiet place for meditation and prayer. Access is by public footpath from the corner of Park House or, if you're driving, by permission as indicated from Church Farm gate. Please don't forget to sign the visitor book, a record of what St Mary's has meant to so many people. And please, as lambing approaches, keep your dog on a lead.
Whitchurch PCC

STRETTON ON FOSSE

Burns Supper and Ceilidh Saturday 18 Jan.2025 Stretton-on-Fosse Village Hall, 7-11.30 p.m.

Come and enjoy an informal Burns Supper with haggis, neaps and tatties ([vegetarian and GF options available](#)). Address to the Haggis, and a few poems and songs, followed by a traditional Scottish Ceilidh with *Brimstone*. Please enter the spirit and wear tartan. Bar available. Raffle in aid of the Air ambulance. Tickets: adults £25 children under 12 £15.00 ([advance only paid by 11 January](#)). Tickets and further details from: Keith or Sue Finlay 01608 661157; Izzi Hazelwood 01608 661816.
Sue Finlay

PRESTON ON STOUR

Poppy Appeal Result 2024

Many thanks to everyone for their tremendous generosity in supporting the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal 2024. The total amount raised for the local area, covering Alderminster, Wimpstone, Crim-

cote, Preston and Atherstone-on-Stour, was £1,874.75 - a terrific effort, and an increase compared with last year. Altogether a fantastic achievement.

Sally Keegan, Poppy Appeal Organiser

Table Tennis Evening

Our first evening was not overwhelmed with players but those who came enjoyed themselves and were keen to see it continue, so Tuesday 14th January 5pm to 7pm is booked in. Please do come and join us, open to all ages, previous playing skill unnecessary but a desire to have some exercise and fun essential.

Preston Film Night

The first film of the year will be 'Outrun', a story of recovery and hope, mostly set in the wild and windy Isle of Skye. Doors open at 7pm on Friday 31st January.

The Preston Village Quiz

Saturday 1st February 7.30pm will be Quiz night in the village hall. Teams of four to be booked ahead by phoning or emailing Mick on 01789 450797, e. mickandsally76@gmail.com or Margaret on 01789 450710, e. prestonbrocks@gmail.com. There will be a raffle and a platter of half time treats to reboot the grey cells. An evening not to be missed. Only £7 per person.

Future Events

The village hall committee would like to wish you all a very happy new year and, in an unaccustomed flurry of efficiency, we have booked our main events in for the whole of 2025. Please get them into your new diary or onto the calendar so you don't miss out.

May Day - Monday 5th May

PrestFest - Saturday 28th June

Summer BBQ - Sunday 13th July

Harvest Supper - Saturday 11th October

Margaret Brocklehurst

TREDINGTON WITH BLACKWELL AND DARLINGS COTT

Blackwell League of Friends

Colette & Hazel would like to thank all those Blackwell residents who kindly donated to the League of Friends, the charity who supports Low Furlong care home, Shipston first responders, Shipston stroke group & more recently the Ellen Badger Hospital for which we are fighting to reinstate beds. If anyone wishes to donate or has mislaid their blue envelopes please contact: Colette Nock 01608 682272.

Many thanks

Colette Nock & Hazel Suthurst

St George's Church Darlingscott

I would like to say thank you for all the help that we have received at Darlingscott Church. We are very fortunate. Offers of help, which I am very grateful for, always appear, flower selection and monthly arranging, also special services when we celebrate the British Legion, Easter, Harvest and Carol Services are always well represented as are other services. If anyone would like to join the Flower rota please let me know, Doreen on 01608682949
Doreen McCarroll, Churchwarden

Newbold and Tredington C of E Primary School

Happy New Year from the children and staff at Newbold and Tredington C of E Primary School and Day Nursery! At the end of the Autumn term, we thoroughly enjoyed watching our youngest children across the school perform in Christmas carols and a nativity play. It was a truly wonderful experience and the children should be very proud of themselves. Thank you to everyone who supported with this event. Some of the children across the school also sang a range of traditional Christmas carols at the elderly home in Shipston. It was an enjoyable day for all. Our amazing PTFA also held a spectacular Christmas Fair which included a ginormous raffle, turkey rolls and a visit from Santa! We look forward to the upcoming events in school during the Spring term.
From all of the staff at Newbold and Tredington C of E Primary School and Day Nursery

Tredington Village Supper 1 December 2014

Thank you to everyone who came to the Village Supper, those who helped and gave donations of food and money. We made £240 profit which we will pass on to Cancer Research which we hope will benefit the large number of people locally who are suffering from this terrible disease.
Jenny Plenderleith

Tredington & Blackwell WI

A big "Thank You" to everyone who supported our Christmas Fair. We raised over £600 for our charity. The next WI meeting is on Thursday 9th January, starting with lunch at 1pm in the WI hall. Alissa Powell, a Nutrition and Breath Work Therapist, will be talking to us about Winter Wellness the Natural Way. All women are welcome.
Gill Goodlad, Treasurer/Hall Secretary

Craft & Chatter

Craft & Chatter will meet at 2pm on Thursday 2nd and Monday 20th January in the WI Hall. This is a social meeting, with plenty of conversation, tea and cake, whilst craft is optional. £1 per person, no membership required. For more information contact Vanessa on 07818 599353 or vanessa@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk
Gill Goodlad, Treasurer/Hall Secretary

Tredington & District Garden Club

Our Members' annual lunch is on Thursday 16th January. The next meeting will be on Thursday 20th February, from 7pm in the WI Hall. For more information see tredingtongardenclub.weebly.com
Gill Goodlad, Member

Community Film Night

Our next film (Cert 15) is on Friday 7th February. Bar from 7pm; film at 7.30pm. The full programme of films and optional membership for 2025 will be available. To book places or join our email group for film details, please contact Gill: gillgoodlad@hotmail.com
Gill Goodlad, WI Treasurer

Early Morning Qigong Express

These classes continue 8.00 - 8.45am, Tuesdays 7th, 14th & 21st January in the WI Hall. Qigong is an ancient practice that harmonises body and mind, leaving you refreshed, focused and sets a positive tone for the rest of the day. £7.00 per person (cash/card on the day of via <https://btrath-therapy.uk/events>). Classes are taught by Alissa Powell: alissa@breath-therapy.uk
Gill Goodlad, Hall Secretary

ILMINGTON

Wednesday Club Next Meeting **January 8th, Village Hall, 2pm**

At our special Christmas party, Bev Webb gave us a delicious turkey lunch and the Ilmington Choir sang their lovely hearts out!! We had a great time so big thanks to those people who contributed to making our afternoon one to remember.

Now back to earth, our next meeting is on the serious subject of conserving energy. We have a knowledgeable speaker who besides talking about the different ways to make savings, will answer any questions. As usual, there will be plenty of delicious cakes and lashings of tea. Tempted? January is a popular month for birthdays starting with the debonair Bryan Clifford on 4th and our very own past leader, Christine Wright, on 8th. Genny Walker and David Shell follow with the same birthday on 22nd. A very happy birthday to you all. That just leaves me to wish the year ahead, 2025, will be a peaceful one for all of us.

Carole Clifford; chairperson

Ilmington Community Shop and Café

Following our annual Christmas closure, the Community Café reopens on Tuesday 7th January, with a warm New Year's welcome and our afternoon Book Club. We will be discussing A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles. Set in the Hotel Metropol in Red Square in 1922, this bestselling novel is warm and witty, an absolute delight!

We'd love you to join us at 2pm in the Café. Even if you haven't read the book, why not make a New Year's Resolution to come along, enjoy a cup of tea and make new friends? Other community groups are available... eg. Knit & Natter @thecafe at 2pm on Wednesday 22nd January. If anyone fancies starting a Games Club or other community activity, please contact Michele on 01608 682838.

Ilmington Community Shop Committee

Screen-on-the-Green **"The Problem with People" (rated 15)**

We launch our 2025 programme on Friday 31st January with a screening of **The Problem with People**, a playful Irish comedy that sees two estranged cousins (Colm Meaney and Paul Reiser as his brash New York relative) attempt to repair a generations-old family rift ... only to find they have new reasons to fight. Doors open 7pm for a 7.30pm start at Ilmington Village Hall. Tickets £4 from the Village Shop, although some are available on the door. Licensed bar and raffle.

Lis Ribbans, Ilmington Cinema Group

Wellbeing and Other Regular Events at Ilmington Village Hall

- Mondays at 09:30 - Tai Chi
- Tuesdays at 10:45 - Exercise for help those with Parkinson's Disease
- Tuesdays at 18:00 - Yoga
- Second Wednesdays of the month at 14:00 - Wednesday Club
- Wednesdays evenings but please check with organiser - 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>.

Bryan Clifford, Chair

Happy New Year to Ilmington Café's Cake Bakers

A Happy New Year to all my cake bakers. A big thank you for your co-operation and support during the past year in helping me to ensure the Cake Rota operates in an efficient manner. The cafe and our customers look forward to more of your delicious cake in 2025.
Sheila Lowe

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Downs and Valley Parishes Magazine Publication Deadlines 2025 Copy to s.brock9@btinternet.com

Issue date and number	Deadline copy Saturday	Deadline editing Sunday	To printer Monday	Collect/distribute/deliver Friday-Saturday	Publication
JAN. 2025 23	14 December '24	15 December '24	16 December '24	20-21 December '24	31 December 2024 (Tuesday)
FEB. 2025 24	18 January	19 January	20 January	24-25 January	31 January (Friday)
MAR. 2025 25	15 February	16 February	17 February	21-22 February	28 February (Friday)
APRIL 2025 26	15 March	16 March	17 March	21-22 March	31 March (Monday)
MAY 2025 27	19 April	20 April	21 April	25-26 April	30 April (Wednesday)
JUNE 2025 28	17 May	18 May	19 May	23-24 May	31 May (Saturday)
JULY 2025 29	14 June	15 June	16 June	20-21 June	30 June (Monday)
AUG. 2025 30	19 July	20 July	21 July	25-26 July	31 July (Thursday)
SEPT. 2025 31	16 August	17 August	18 August	22-23 August	31 August (Sunday)
OCT. 2025 32	13 September	14 September	15 September	19-20 September	30 September (Tuesday)
NOV. 2025 33	18 October	19 October	20 October	24-25 October	31 October (Friday)
DEC. 2025 34	15 November	16 November	17 November	21-22 November	30 November (Sunday)
JAN. 2026 35	13 December	14 December	15 December	19-20 December	31 December 2024 (Wednesday)



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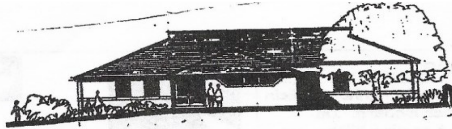
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Please feel free to contact me, as I would welcome the opportunity to help you build your own fond travel memories.



Rob Kennedy

01608 696555

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