



The Downs and Valley Parishes Magazine No. 23 Feb. 2025

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The Downs and Valley Parishes Service Rota

Feb 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
2nd Candlemas/Presentation of Christ		11.00am Holy Communion (1662)	6.00pm Evensong (1662)	9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Morning Worship	
9th 4th Sunday before Lent	11.00am Morning Worship	11.00am Morning Worship	9.30am Holy Communion (1662)		11.00am Holy Communion	
18th 3rd Sunday before Lent		11.00am Holy Communion		9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Morning Worship	No services until March
23rd 2nd Sunday before Lent	4.00pm Evening Worship (1662)	6.00pm Evensong (1662)	11.00am Morning Worship		11.00am Holy Communion	

4

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

Reader: Ros Wakefield

Reader Emeritus: Malcolm Davies

Churchwardens:

Tredington *Posts vacant – contact the Rector*

Darlingscott Doreen McCarroll

Ilmington Jane Downie

Preston-on-Stour Andrew Holman- West

Stretton-on-Fosse *Posts vacant – contact the Rector*

Whitchurch Carol Rutter

Helen Patrick

John Craner 01789 450200 (landline)

A Love Story

In early 1477 a young woman in East Anglia called Margery Brews fell deeply in love with an older man, John Paston, and he with her. They wanted to be married, but her father, Sir Thomas, was worried that John had been betrothed before, and that he had not proved to be very careful with money. A generous marriage settlement for Margery might simply go to pay off John's debts. Like many fathers over the centuries, he was wary of his potential son-in-law's intentions. Margery didn't care. She wrote to John that though her father was driving a hard bargain, she dearly hoped that it would not make him change his mind, 'if that you love me, as I trust verily that you do, you will not leave me therefor, for if that you had half the livelihood that you have...I would not forsake you', for he was her 'good, true and loving Valentine', and she signed herself 'Be your Valentine. Margery Brews'.

Margery's mother sympathised with the couple, She also wrote to John: 'Friday is St Valentine's Day, and every bird chooseth him a mate; and if it like you to come on Thursday at night and so purvey you that you may abide there till Monday, I trust to God that you shall so speak to my husband; and I shall pray that we shall bring the matter to a conclusion.' Eventually it was John's widowed mother who answered the prayer by promising the couple some property of her own if they married. So Sir Thomas came round, and the wedding took place within a few months. Their first child of three was born in August 1478. When, some years later, John went away to London on business, Margery wrote to him as 'Mine own sweetheart', and asked if she might come to the city, 'for I think long since I lay in your arms', so clearly this was a love-match that lasted. Margery died in 1495, and John in 1504.

Margery's letter to John is the first Valentine's letter in English to survive. It's a nice reminder that the realities of human love are universal over the centuries. Valentine's Day is a good time to give thanks for the experiences of love that we have received and given, and to think, perhaps, that these human experiences reflect God's love for us. Our human love is a shadow of the love God has for us, which we see in Jesus.

Margery's letters were hidden away in the family home until 1735 and eventually published in 1787. Today, with other Paston family correspondence, they are in the British Library. Margery ended her 'Valentine letter' to John by asking, 'I beg you that you will not let anyone on Earth see this letter, except yourself.' I wonder what she would think of us reading it still?

From the Registers

At St Gregory's, Tredington, on 31 December, Hermione Nicholl of Shipston-on-Stour, aged 91 (followed by burial).

Editor's Note

The *deadline for copy for the March issue* **Saturday 15 February**. 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.

The image on the cover is Tredington Church's 400th birthday bell which recently celebrated its anniversary. The photographer is Harie Claire. 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.

In 2025 news from the Parishes will be listed in reverse alphabetical order starting with Whitchurch.

Susan Brock, Editor

Nature Notes for February 2025

February is a month of change, as the weather warms, the days grow longer, new shoots appear, and many birds are pairing up in readiness to nest. However, the heron will lay their eggs in February, usually nesting in communal sites known as heronries. Their youngsters are generally born in March/April. They are large birds and can be seen along rivers, lakes and unfortunately fishing in garden ponds. They are beautifully elegant birds, standing still in the water to try to catch a fish and with their big wing span they fly effortlessly. One of the best sites to see herons is at Coombe Abbey, CV2 3AB. Our waterways, lakes and rivers are full of wonderful wildlife so why not head out to see what you can find. The Earth is filled with God's creatures, how wisely He has made them all Psalm 104:24.

Gill

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

Notes from a Small Church in the Field (continued): Our Missing Minister

If you stop to read the names of our rectors going back to Edward the Confessor on the illuminated list that hangs inside the door of St Mary's, you'll see a gap after 1642, across the years of the Civil War. Where's our missing minister? Minutes in the Quarter Sessions Record Book for 1649 give us a clue. Parliament had set up a committee, intriguingly-named 'For Plundered Ministers', to support puritan clergy forced out of their livings by royalists. 'Sequestors' acted for 'plundered' Whitchurch. But Thomas Marriott, Lord of the Manor, evidently wanting no puritan preaching on his patch, got together with 'other inhabitants...to the hazard of the breach of the peace' to oppose 'Mr Winter.' The Committee responded, ordering Marriott 'and the rest' to 'take notice' not to interfere but to allow Winter 'peaceably to officiate at the said church...*as they will answer for the contrary*'. What happened next? Watch this space.

Robert Howe (with Carol Chillington Rutter, churchwarden)

STRETTON ON FOSSE

Soup lunches

Fortnightly Soup Lunches are up and running again at the Village Hall on Wednesdays at 12.30pm: January 22nd, February 5th, February 19th, March 5th, March 19th, April 2nd. We continue to provide a choice of 3 soups at each session and guarantee that at least one will be vegetarian. Plenty of friendly companionship so don't feel anxious about coming on your own. If you need transport to get down to the hall, please contact Geri Hunting in advance and I will arrange a lift for you 07968 338848

Geri Hunting

PRESTON ON STOUR

Table Tennis

Numbers are picking up so we are going for two evenings in February. 5 pm until 7 on Tuesday 4th and Tuesday 18th. Please do come and join us for an active fun evening which is open to all age groups and abilities.

Preston Film Night

Our next film will be 'The Critic' on Friday 28th February. This film describes a London theatre critic in the 1930's who lures a struggling actress into a blackmail scheme which has deadly consequences. In a nutshell, it is intense and compelling with a lot of suspense! Ian McKellen stars in a very theatrical and entertaining role.

'Three Men in a Boat' 7.30 pm on Friday 7th March

Preston Village Hall is pleased to be hosting a one man show from Giles Shenton as Jerome K. Jerome recounting the hilarious story of his boating holiday along the Thames with his two companions and Montmorency, the dog. Doors open at 7pm. Tickets from ticket-tailor.com., for more information contact Carole on 01789 450486 e.prestononstour.hall@gmail.com.

Margaret Brocklehurst

Memory Lane: Preston on Stour in Old Photographs

A new book published by Hannah Spencer and available from Preston shop, Park Farm or 16 Wimpstone, or email Hannah on lightone-candle339@gmail.com Price £12. See page 10 for an illustration.

Hannah Spencer

TREDINGTON WITH BLACKWELL AND DARLINGS SCOTT

400th Anniversary Update

A very big thank you to everyone who supported our fund-raising event at St Gregory's Church, Tredington in December when we celebrated the 400th Anniversary of our 5th bell which was cast in 1624. The day was a tremendous success and the bellringers would like to offer our grateful thanks for the wonderful support given to us by so many from Tredington and our neighbouring villages. A fantastic £790 was raised towards the cost of having our bell frame re-painted! Special thanks go to the local businesses shown below, who donated raffle prizes and cakes:- The Lion, Whichford Pottery, Beverley Webb Catering Ltd, Blue Bean Cafe, Cotswold Distillery, Halford Garage, Harry's Barber Shop, John Lyne Home Improvements, L'Academie, Little Co-op, Morrisons, Mrs Brown's Tea Rooms, Richardson-Hill's, Shipston Car Wash Ltd, Tesco Express, The Flower House, The Richard Harvey Collection, Turners.

Once the painting has been finished (the frame was last painted when it was installed following the 2nd World War) we hope to give visitors the chance to go up into the belfry to see the bells at close quarters and to admire the inside of our wonderful spire - watch this space!

With thanks from St Gregory's Bellringers

Kathy McCarthy, Tower Captain

Newbold and Tredington C of E Primary School

As we approach half term, we would like to share with you all of the exciting events that have taken place at Newbold and Tredington Primary School since the New Year. In January, the PTFA held a talent show whereby the children showcased their amazing skills, tricks, singing and dancing. It was a wonderful event full of talent, laughter and support. Following this, the children across the school had the opportunity to participate in a friendship disco and the parents of our

SEND supported children came together for a coffee morning. During the rest of the term we still have a Mother's Day tea party to look forward to and World Book Day in March!

From all of the staff

Tredington & Blackwell WI

The next WI meeting is on Thursday 13th February, starting with lunch at 1pm in the WI hall. Roy Coyle will be talking to us about First Responders. All women are welcome.

Gill Goodlad, Treasurer/Hall Secretary

Craft & Chatter

Craft & Chatter will meet at 2pm on Thursday 6th and Monday 17th February 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

The next meeting will be on Thursday 20th February, from 7pm in the WI Hall. Lucy Hartley is returning to speak about "Not Just my Garden - nurturing a shared ecosystem". Bar open 7-7.30pm; Bring & Share table. 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; interval with bar & ice creams. 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

Tuesday Morning Qigong Express

These classes continue 8.00 - 8.45am, Tuesdays 18th & 25th February 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

Important Changes to Heating and Metering at the Village Hall

Are you fed up with having to find and feed the electricity meters at the village hall with £ coins? Salvation has arrived. The old coin me-

ters have been replaced with a single meter using online payments. **Just scan to QR code and select the amount you wish to pay directly from your smart phone.** Both the meter control and the main hall heating switching are now located outside of the electrical equipment cupboard to make them easier and safer to use. We have also installed additional heating to the main hall in the form of a high powered air curtain. The additional heating can be controlled locally and is intended to provide a quick warm up at the commencement of any hiring and until occupants are comfortable just using the main heating system.

Bryan Clifford, Chair

February at Ilmington Shop and Café

We welcome you to the Shop and Café this month with events to brighten the depths of winter! We start with a stall run by Warwickshire Wildlife outside the shop from Friday 31st Jan to Sunday 2nd Feb. They run ecology projects and offer gardening wisdom. At 2pm on Tuesday 4th, our friendly BookClub@thecafe meets to discuss Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng: do come, even if you haven't read the book. On Friday 7th Feb, it's our February Feast, a three-course long table supper with drinks for only £20. Call 01608 682838 to find out more. "Knit n Natter" meets at 2pm on Wednesday 26th Feb. And finally, Coffee & Connect is a chance to chat to Linda from VASA about life's practical problems – from 2pm on Friday 28th February.

Ilmington Community Shop Committee

Celebrating Ilmington Horticultural Society's Centenary Year

How better to start this special year than with our annual **Spring Flower Show on Saturday 5 April** in the Village Hall? There's photographic evidence of a Flower Show in Ilmington as early as 1919, but the Society was formally established in 1925 to encourage the cultivation of gardens and allotments in the village. This year's 100th birthday celebrations will begin with the scent of spring flowers at the Show in April and will be followed through the year by a programme of plant sales, garden visits and talks open to everyone. Watch this space for further details but in the meantime put **5 April** in your diaries. Chase those winter blues away, go into the garden and look for the shoots of spring which will become those prize-winning flowers. Schedules will be available from the Community Shop in March.

Also, our friendly and active committee is looking for like-minded enthusiasts to join us, roll up their sleeves and help us to organise and run our activities: enthusiasm and a sense of fun are key, expertise always welcome but not essential. An added bonus is that we enjoy the social side of volunteering! If you are interested in joining us do please Tim Allen on 01608 682646 / email:

t.d.allen@btinternet.com

IHS Committee

Screen-on-the-Green: The Wild Robot (rated U)

On Friday 28th February we are showing **The Wild Robot**, nominated for best animated film at this year's Bafta and Golden Globe awards. Based on Peter Brown's bestselling children's novel, and voiced by Lupita Nyong'o and Bill Nighy among others, it's a journey through love, loss, identity and friendship as an AI robot forms bonds with native animals after being stranded on an uninhabited island. The Daily Telegraph called it "the most moving animation in decades", the Guardian "clever, heartfelt and frequently stunning". 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, including mulled wine, plus hot sausage rolls, interval ice-creams and raffle.

Lis Ribbans, Ilmington Cinema Group

Next Wednesday Club Meeting Feb 12th, 2pm in the Village Hall

If thanks must be given for our last meeting, then it's to the members who showed us they were all eco warriors in their homes. Well done everyone! They shared some useful tips as well as showing their good knowledge in the energy quiz. Unfortunately the presenter couldn't attend but that didn't faze our members! Our next meeting will be held in the week when we think about love (not lust). Yes, it's Valentines week! To celebrate, we have invited Betsy Harmony to come and sing for us. There will also be a full afternoon tea so who could complain about that for the price of just £2? If you are a non-member but would like to come, then please give me a ring on 682996. You would be most welcome. We have three birthdays in February, starting with Christine Warmington on 11th. Clive Allinson comes next with a birthday on 21st and Sue Matthews is on 22nd. A very happy birthday to you all. Here's a reminder to our members that they will need to pay their subs (all of £6!) this month.

Winter months can make you feel isolated. Telephone support volunteers offer a friendly voice and a listening ear, helping to reduce loneliness in these winter months. RVS members can request support for themselves or on behalf of someone they know:

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Carole Clifford, chairperson

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Mr Fred Hartwell, roadman (1954) from Memory Lane: Preston on Stour in Old Photographs By Hannah Spencer

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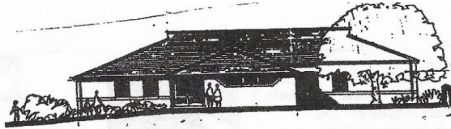
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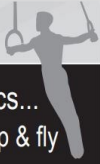
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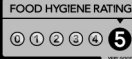


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Please feel free to contact me, as I would welcome the opportunity to help you build your own fond travel memories.



Rob Kennedy

01608 696555

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