



The Downs and Valley Parishes Magazine No. 12 Mar. 2024

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The Old Church, Upper Green, Ilmington

**Looking for a new challenge
that keeps you fit?**

**Want to be part of the modern
evolution of folk traditions?**

- Make new friends
- Learn in a relaxed environment
- All welcome
- Dance out at local fetes and shows during the spring & summer
- No pressure to perform
- *Not as difficult as it looks!*

Enjoy a taster session with
Flowers of Ilmington
any Tuesday, 7:30pm
at Ilmington School

Contact Kathryn 628087

The Downs and Valley Churches Service Rota March 2024

March 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
3 rd Lent 3		11.00am Holy Communion (1662)	6.00pm Evensong (1662)	9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Morning Worship	
10 th Mothering Sunday	11.00am Mothering Sunday Service	11.00am Mothering Sunday Service	9.30am Holy Communion (1662)		11.00am Mothering Sunday Service	4.00pm Mothering Sunday Service
17 th Lent 5		11.00am Holy Communion		9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Holy Communion with Revd Thomas Powell	11.00am Holy Communion (1662)
24 th Palm Sunday		6.00pm Evensong (1662)	11.00am Morning Worship		11.00am Holy Communion	
28 th Maundy Thursday			7.00pm Maundy Thursday Communion			
29 th Good Friday			3.00pm Last Hour at the Cross		7.00pm At the Foot of the Cross	
31 st Easter	4.00pm Easter Evening Prayer (1662)	11.00am Easter Holy Communion	9.30am Easter Holy Communion (1662)	9.30am Easter Holy Communion	11.00am Easter Holy Communion	4.00pm Easter Celebration

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)

Enquiries about Weddings or Baptisms are very welcome! Please contact the Rector, Richard Cooke.

John Craner
01789 450200 (landline)

Richard Cooke, the Rector, writes

Skylarks

It's Lent through most of March this year. Lent is an old Anglo-Saxon word that didn't originally have anything to do with giving up chocolate or alcohol, or with the church either. It just meant spring, and probably refers to the lengthening of days at this time of year. But when England became a Christian country the forty-day fast leading to Easter was simply named after the time of year, and the natural season and the church season seem to have been inseparable. Spring meant Lent and Lent meant Spring. Alongside the more miserable aspects of Lent come also the lengthening days and the growing life of Spring.

For me, while snowdrops and daffodils are always a welcome sight, it is the sound of a skylark that really says Spring is here. These tiny birds usually start nesting in late March and it's from then on that you can begin to hear them singing high up in the sky. If you're really lucky one might burst out from the ground near your feet. Their song always sounds to me like one of pure joy, and says that the Winter is over.

Perhaps because they go so high – up to 1000 feet – they have always had a spiritual association. In Poland it was believed that they were the favourite bird of angels, who would catch and protect them in a storm and allow them, when lightning flashed, to look into heaven itself. The English poet George Herbert mentions them in his poem 'Easter-Wings' (easily found on the internet if you want to read it), where he links them with Easter day. Skylarks are of the earth, earthy. Small, muddy-brown and undistinguished, they look like Lenten birds: rather miserable. But then they rise and take flight with that sublime song which is out of all proportion to their size and appearance. Who would believe such creatures could undergo such a transformation? George Herbert in his poem seems to be linking that transformation to what we celebrate at Easter: the resurrection of Christ. The ruined and destroyed body of Jesus on the cross becomes the glorious, risen, Son of God.

You can't have one without the other. Good Friday is the necessary prelude to Easter Day. For me the skylark is a reminder of that. Out of the dull, insignificant mess we have made of the world and often of ourselves, God can bring about hope and new life. That's what Easter tells us, year by year, and what the skylark embodies in its soaring rise from the fields.

One final skylark fact. The collective noun for them is an 'exaltation'. They are the kind of 'praise bird', really. So if you meet one or more out in the fields, stop and listen for a while to the song. A song that says, after plodding through Lent and the soggy Spring, the promise and joy of Easter is just on the horizon.

Margaret Holdsworth

Just as the Magazine was going to press we heard the sad news of the death of Margaret Holdsworth, who was churchwarden at Stretton-on-Fosse for many years, only a few weeks after the passing of her husband Donald, who was long-time organist at St Peter's. Both will be greatly missed.

Holy Week and Easter Services

Please see the service rota or the Church websites (search for the Church name) for details.

From the Registers

Baptism

At Ilmington on 17 February, Oliver Michael St John Salt-Forster, aged 4 months

Funerals

At St Peter's Stretton-on-Fosse on 15 February, Sheila Longford, aged 102.

At Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground on 20 February, Peter Hatch of Talton Lodge, aged 85.

Editor's Note

The deadline for copy for the April 2024 issue is Saturday 16 March 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 is by Michael Ritson of Tredington. 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.

VASA Ethos – "Changing Lives by Connecting People"

VASA Community Charity has a new "Community Connector", Linda Eunson Lockett, whose new role is to connect people with help, support, services and online information. People are simply told to "go online" these days to print forms, for information and to access discounts. However, VASA realise that this is a daunting task for some, who may not have access to the internet. Linda is reaching out to village communities, and is hoping to be invited to village hubs, so that she can assist further and provide people with appropriate information, signposting and give online assistance. It is hoped that VASA's "Coffee and Connect" free service will assist the community, in feeling fully connected and Linda looks forward to meeting you all and assist with her laptop and portable printer. Linda welcomes any invites to attend community hubs and looks forward to meeting you. VASA Community Connector – Linda - 01789 616015 - communities@vasa.org.uk .

Linda Eunson Lockett, Vasa Community Connector

Nature Notes March 2024

There are many symbols associated with Easter. One is the Easter bunny symbolic of fertility (from pagan times) and symbolic of the new life we celebrate in Jesus. The Easter bunny is however a fictional character! The Normans brought the rabbit to the UK from Spain in 12th Century. They live around 3 years and can be found in most habitats living in large groups in underground burrows called warrens. They are on the Near Threatened IUCN red list, due to disease, habitat loss and predation.

tors. Rabbits are herbivores that feed by grazing on grass and leafy weeds, which help to naturally wear down their teeth as their teeth never stop growing! Rabbits perform an athletic leap with twists and kicks in mid-air called a binky when they are happy and can jump as high as 90cms/36 inches. Rabbits will purr when content and relaxed.
Gill

ILMINGTON

Ilmington Community Shop and Café: Join up and join in!

This is the month to get involved in your local cooperative and make a real difference. We open our membership every year before the AGM and for only £10 a share you can join more than 450 members and have your say. The offer runs until 11th March and entitles you to vote at the AGM in Ilmington Village Hall on Thursday 14th at 7pm. Forms in store and online.

Meanwhile, there's Book Club @thecafe on Tuesday 5th March at 2pm (reading *A Shot in the Dark* by Lynne Truss) and Knit & Natter on Wednesday 27th March, also at 2pm. Also a second chance to try Tea & Tech, a very popular session which might not be repeated. Bring along your devices and technical questions on Friday 22nd March from 10am to 12, for expert help from Warwickshire Libraries' technical whiz Lewys Morgan.

Ilmington Community Shop and Café Committee

Ilmington Horticultural Society: Spring Events

First off is the annual Spring Flower Show in the Village Hall on Saturday 6 April 2-4pm. Enter your daffodils, blossom, spring flowers of all sorts. Schedules will be available shortly from the Community Shop. Secondly, our first garden visit of the year will be on Friday afternoon 12 April to Coton Manor, Nr. Guilsborough, Northampton. **As always everyone is welcome** and transport will be in shared cars. We aim to depart about 1pm. The entry fee is £8.50. teas will be available. Contact Susan Brock (01608 682409 s.brock9@btinternet.com) for more information and to book a place.

Susan Brock, Secretary

Ilmington Screen-on-the-Green

On Friday 29 March, our film will be *Allelujah*. Adapted by *Call the Midwife* creator Heidi Thomas from a 2018 stage play by Alan Bennett, and with a stellar cast including Jennifer Saunders, Judi Dench, Derek Jacobi and Russell Tovey, this is a warm, humorous and moving story about surviving old age. When a geriatric ward of a small Yorkshire hospital is threatened with closure, the hospital decides to fight back. Richard Eyre directs. Rated 12. 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

Ilmington Village Hall - Wellbeing Events

As part of the village hall wellbeing programme of events we are pleased to be able to offer an opportunity to play **table tennis** on Tuesdays 2-3pm. Previous ability in this activity is not important, our objective is to provide an opportunity for exercise and fun with fellow villagers with tea/coffee and biscuits on the side. The young and not so young are equally welcome. We are able to provide this free of charge for the next 6 months courtesy of Think Active, Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership, The Ilmington Village Fete Committee and the Ilmington Tennis Club who all generously contributed to the cost of buying 3 sets of tables and bats.

Our other popular well-being events continue with **indoor curling** on Thursdays 2:30-3:30 and **tai chi** on Fridays 11:15-12:15 except on the last Friday of the month when it is at 13:00-14:00. There is a small charge but well below cost since these events are supported by grants from Think Active, The Village Fete Committee, Cinema Group and Warm Hub. All are welcome.

Bryan Clifford, Chair

Wednesday Club: Next Meeting on March 13, 2 pm, Village Hall

Valentine's Day was celebrated in style at the Wednesday club. We had an excellent turnout and all were very happy to listen to Mark Currey reading love poetry. Thank you Mark for adding such a note of quality to our afternoon. Chris Young told us about his dream of helping the lonely by way of a radio programme where people can join in. He will soon be distributing fliers so do see if you can help or spread the word. Sue Matthews had a special birthday and we all helped her to celebrate! Next month we have the community police visiting us to discuss how not to be scammed. This should be very useful to us all and it will be an opportunity to ask questions. Visitors will be very welcome.

March sees the birthday of Stephen Wright on 23rd. We wish him a very happy birthday on that day and thank him very much for all the time he has given to helping the Wednesday Club in the past.

Carole Clifford, Chair

Hedgehog Talk, Tuesday 19th March at 6:30pm

Hugh Warwick, ecologist and writer, will give a talk sharing his expert knowledge of the hedgehog, in the Village Hall on Tuesday 19th March at 6:30pm. Hugh is a passionate spokesperson for the British Hedgehog Preservation Society and has been studying these much-loved spiny mammals for 30 years. We've lost a third of all our hedgehogs since the millennium. Learn more about them and how we can all help support them in our gardens and green spaces. The talk is free; collection towards a wildlife camera.

Jackie Prosser and Mary Trotman, Ilmington 20:20 Wildlife Group

PRESTON-ON –STOUR

May Day - 2.30 pm Monday May 6th

Please put this date in your diary as it our biggest event and not to be missed. There will be a parade starting from the village hall car park to the Church green where our May Queen will be crowned. Then there will be various stalls and delicious homemade cakes and tea to enjoy. There will be some music, dancing by the maypole and children's races topped off with a tug'o'war which is always a highlight too.

Margaret Brocklehurst

Film Night

7 for 7.30 Friday 22nd March - Note, not the last Friday this time!

We will be showing 'The Great Escaper'. Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson star in this drama based on a true story of pensioner, Bernard Johnson, who escapes from his care home to attend the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Landings in France. This film is described as having humour, a touch of sarcasm and a spirit of optimism.

Margaret Brocklehurst-

STRETTON-ON-FOSSE

Stretton-on-Fosse Village Hall

Our village hall is now closed for insulation and refurbishment until approximately mid-March, when we hope to welcome everyone back to a warm and much improved hall. We will advertise re-opening in this magazine and on our village website: strettononfosse.com. For bookings after mid-March please go to our website and look for Village Hall Details. The booking secretary is currently Izzi Hazelwood (01608 661816).

TREDINGTON with DARLINGSCOTT

Tredington & Blackwell WI

Our next meeting in the WI Hall is on Thursday 14th March. We begin at 1pm with lunch, then hear from our speaker, Alan Rogers, on the subject of 'A Policeman's Lot'. All women are welcome - if you'd like to attend (Guests £5), please contact Gill (for catering purposes) by text to 07789 810877, or email secretary@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk

Gill Goodlad, Secretary

Ladies Evening

All women are welcome to an evening in the WI Hall on Friday 22nd March at 7.00pm. The theme for the evening is a look back to the

fashions and lifestyles of the 1960s and 70s. Our guest Ruth Lowe, will focus on the fashion designer Mary Quant and bring along vintage clothes from the period. Admission is by advance ticket at £10.00, which includes a glass of prosecco and nibbles. To secure your place, contact Gill at secretary@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk or text 07789810877.
Gill Goodlad, Secretary

Welcome to Tredington Booklet

The WI maintains a directory of local activities and services. It can be downloaded at <https://tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk/welcome-to-tredington>. If you would like your group or activity to be included, please contact Gill at secretary@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk.
Gill Goodlad, Secretary

WI Community Film Night

Our next film, in the WI Hall, CV36 4NP, will be on Friday 5th April. This British film (2022) tells the heart-warming story of a cleaner's ambition to own a Dior gown, which takes her on an adventure to Paris. It is certificate PG. The bar opens at 7pm with the film starting at 7.30pm. We include a short interval when the bar and ice creams are available. Non-members are welcome and are invited to make a voluntary donation. For details of this film, or the programme of films for 2024, contact Gill at treasurer@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk, or text 07789 810877.
Gill Goodlad, Treasurer

Craft & Chatter/Chatter & Craft

The next **Craft & Chatter** is in the WI Hall on Thursday 7th March. The next **Chatter & Craft** is in the same venue on Monday 18th March. Each meeting starts at 2pm, with a charge of just £1 towards tea or coffee and cake. For details contact Vanessa on 07818 599353 or email vanessa@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk
Gill Goodlad, Hall Secretary

Qigong (Movement, Breathwork & Meditation)

These popular classes are based on ancient techniques that are shown to reduce stress and enhance energy levels. They are suitable to those with all levels of experience (or none) and may be done seated or standing. Classes by Alissa Powell are available twice each week in the WI Hall: Tuesdays 6.15-7.15pm and Fridays 9.30-10.30am. To book a place visit <https://breath-therapy.uk/events/> or email Alissa at alissa@breath-therapy.uk for more information. £7.00 per person per class.
Gill Goodlad, Hall Secretary

An introduction to the Parish Giving Scheme



Why are regular gifts so important to our Church?

The Church of England offers a Christian presence in every community. Together we seek to make this Christian presence the heart of all our cities, towns and villages: by our wonderful buildings; by worshipping together; by serving our communities and by sharing our faith and values. This valuable contribution to our community has a cost, of which 75% is met by personal gifts. For our Church to survive and grow, we rely on regular gifts so that we can plan confidently for the future.

What is the Parish Giving Scheme?

The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) has been set up to help us best manage regular gifts. It is run as a partnership between dioceses on a cost sharing basis.

How does it work?

Gifts can be made on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis, by downloading, printing and completing the gift form and the Direct Debit instruction. Even though gifts are made to the Parish Giving Scheme, they are restricted to our parish, giving you peace of mind that your gift cannot be used elsewhere. Unlike a utility bill you are always in charge of what you give. Your gift will be passed back to our parish by the 10th of the month. Gift Aid will be received separately once the PGS has received it from HMRC. The unique feature of this scheme is the option for you to commit in principle to increase your gift annually in line with inflation. Whilst this is a voluntary decision, it is one that could potentially have a huge impact on the life and future of our church.

What are the main benefits?

The main beneficiary of this scheme will be our church. Through your generous commitment, we can be assured of a regular, tax-efficient source of income which has the capacity to increase with the cost of living, yet involves virtually no administration. You will benefit from a system that is secure, confidential and easy to use, while supporting our church today and for the future.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Who is responsible for my personal information?** Although the PGS has been set up to help us manage gifts, it is a separate legal entity from our parish and must comply with data protection law. By returning the gift form you consent to the PGS using your information for the purposes of the Parish Giving Scheme. For more information please see the PGS privacy notice available on the PGS website www.paritygiving.org.uk/privacy-policy. Alternatively, please call the PGS on 0330 002 1260 for a copy of the privacy notice.
- **Why can't our parish offer direct debit?** Direct Debiting is a highly regulated system, and is only offered by Banks for established businesses or organisations who are considered financially sound and reputable with proven internal control systems. Will our parish be charged for this scheme? There is no direct charge to us for using the Parish Giving Scheme or processing your gift. The annual running cost of the scheme is met by our diocese.
- **Why am I donating to the PGS?** In order to claim Gift Aid and manage your gift on behalf of our parish, it is necessary that your gift is legally given to the PGS who are handling all the administration on our behalf. The gift is restricted to our parish and cannot be used by the PGS for any other purposes.
- **Can I choose the day my gift is collected?** Unfortunately not. In minimising costs it is important that all gifts are collected on the same day each month, which has been agreed as the 1st.
- **What rate of inflation will be used?** Retail Prices Index (RPI) will be used as an independent and well known measure. The scheme will increase all relevant gifts using the rate for January of that year (if this rate is unavailable the rate for the previous January will be used for consistency).
- **What if I say yes to an inflationary increase, but my circumstances change?** We fully understand that circumstances can change; please rest assured that you will be written to 30 days in advance of any increase with the revised amount. If you are unable to meet it simply let us know.

What next?

How do I go about signing up to the scheme? Download, print and complete the gift form with as much detail as possible using a black pen in BLOCK CAPITALS and post it to the address given below.

Important: *It is essential to complete all sections of the gift form in particular 'Church / Parish name / Diocese of and Parish code'. Without this information in full the PGS cannot process your gift. Note: The church/parish name and PGS parish code may have already been completed for you. Note: We welcome gifts from couples, so if you wish to make a joint gift please write 'Mr & Mrs' in the 'other' box. For the purpose of Gift Aid however they need the signature of just one individual who pays sufficient tax to cover the gift. Please add your title in the Gift Aid signature box so they know which individual the declaration belongs to.*

Then what can I expect?

Within 10 working days you will receive a letter confirming your personal details, the level, frequency and date of your first gift and the parish you wish to restrict it to. Please check this letter thoroughly to ensure that all the details are correct. In this letter you will receive a PGS reference number (located below the address) which needs to be retained by you, and quoted in any future communication you have with the Parish Giving Scheme. There will also be a bank reference code which begins with 'PGS Thank You', and ends with a unique number code. This is the description which will appear on your bank statement when each gift is given.

How will our parish be notified of my gift?

We will receive your gift in our parish bank account by the 10th of the month and Gift Aid will be received separately once the PGS has received it from HMRC. Our parish's Planned Giving Representative receives a statement detailing the names of those who have donated and all the gifts given through the PGS. The PGS will provide our parish's Planned Giving Representative with your postal address, however you can decide to remain anonymous by ticking the box on the right. If you decide to remain anonymous only the amount of the gift will be shared with our Representative. We wish to encourage you to remain known to us, so that we can thank you and tell you more about how you can support us and to avoid mistakenly approaching you in the future to consider a regular gift to our church.

I currently give by standing order; how do I stop this?

Unfortunately the PGS is unable to cancel a standing order for you, only you may do this. If you bank online it is very simple to do through your online account, otherwise you will need to contact your bank direct.

How do I go about changing my gift in the future?

We know that circumstances change and your ability to give may increase or decrease over time. If you wish to make a change please notify the Parish Giving Scheme using one of the methods provided in the contact information box below quoting:

- Your PGS reference number (found below your address on PGS correspondence)
- How much your existing gift is for
- What you would like it changed to
- When you would like this change to be brought into effect

Should you wish to have a confidential conversation about your options in changing your gift, please don't hesitate to contact our parish giving representative or the Parish Giving Scheme at the address below.

Note: For administrative reasons the Parish Giving Scheme cannot make any changes within 10 working days of the next gift date.

Who do I contact for help?

Parish Giving Scheme, 76 Kingsholm Road, Gloucester GL1 3BD

Tel: 0333 002 1260 Email: info@parishgiving.org.uk

www.parishgiving.org.uk

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Completing the Gift Form

'Information on pages 1 and 2' has been fully reproduced above.

The PGS Parish codes are:

Preston-on-Stour: St Mary	110611208
Ilmington: St Mary	110611203
Stretton-on-Fosse: St Peter	110611211
Tredington: St Gregory	110611213
Whitchurch: St Mary	110611219

The Diocese is Coventry.

Tredington & District Garden Club

The next meeting is in the WI Hall on Thursday 21st March. We open at 7pm with the bar available, then begin our meeting at 7.30pm. This will be our annual meeting and members' evening. Items are welcome for the free 'bring and share' table. . If you'd like to know more about the club see

www.tredingtongardenclub.weebly.com

Gill Goodlad, Programme Secretary

WHITCHURCH

St Mary's Whitchurch

'The winter is past...Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come'. That means it's time to spring clean Whitchurch and tidy the churchyard for the reopening of St Mary's on 10 March 4pm for our Mothering Sunday service. If you can help, turn up between 10.00 and 12.00 on Saturday 9 March. Indoor work will include re-laying the carpets, dusting, polishing and hoovering. (Bring your domestic weapons of choice + mari-golds.) Outside, we'll be cutting back shrubs and (we hope) finishing the job of stacking bricks from the collapsed north boundary wall. (Boots and gloves are advised; secateurs and loppers welcome.) If you've never joined one of these work parties before, come for any amount of time you can give. You'll be surprised at how much laughter and joy (along with the grunts and sweat) this community effort produces. On Sunday, we'll celebrate the blessings in our lives of all our mothers and mother-figures. During the service, no child will be required to sit still.
Carol Rutter, churchwarden

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Maximum 30 words £6.00 per month. Please supply text as a Word document and send to the Editor s.brock9@btinternet.com



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