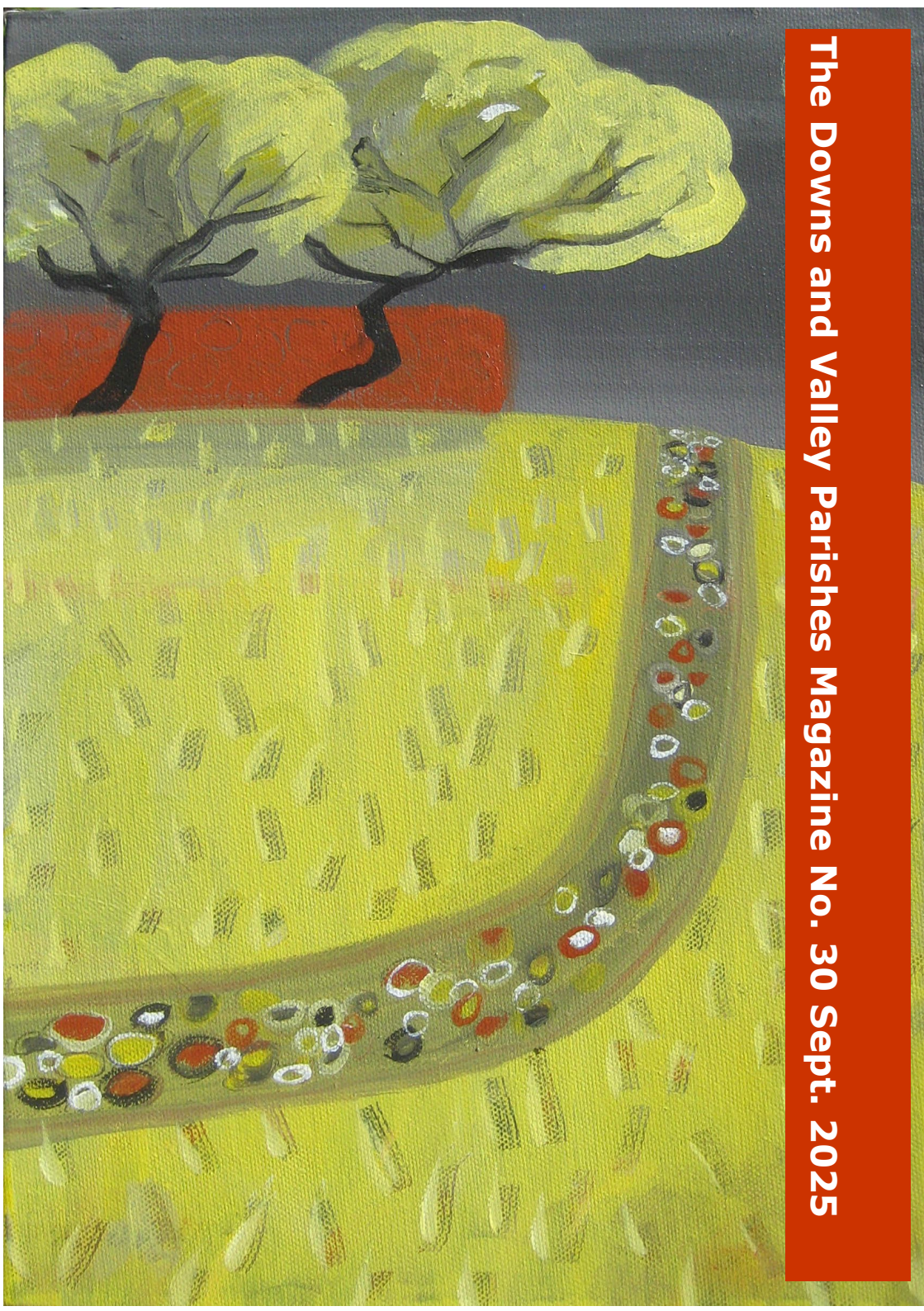


The Downs and Valley Parishes Magazine No. 30 Sept. 2025





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**Shipston-on-Stour Area u3a**  
**A Friendly and Stimulating Local Community**

**Are you no longer working full time and  
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Join us at u3a on a fulfilling journey of learning, friendship, and fun, where individuals come together to explore new interests and share experiences.

We offer many different activities including **arts, nature, history, physical activities, music, languages, and social events**. Our welcoming community of over 350 members from all over the Shipston on Stour area encourages you to pursue lifelong learning and discover new hobbies while enjoying the company of like-minded people.

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For more information and a full list of activities, please look at our website [www.sosa.u3asite.uk](http://www.sosa.u3asite.uk)  
Come along to one of our monthly meetings which start at 2pm normally on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Townsend Hall, Shipston, or contact Secretary, John Keayes, by e-mail [secretary@sosa.u3acommittee.org](mailto:secretary@sosa.u3acommittee.org) to find out more

## Service Rota September 2025

| September 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          |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  |                               | 11.00am Holy Communion (1662) | 6.00pm Evensong (1662)       | 9.30am Holy Communion        | 11.00am Morning Worship | 9.30am Morning Worship        |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> | No service                    | 11.00am Morning Worship       | 9.30am Holy Communion (1662) |                              | 11.00am Holy Communion  |                               |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> |                               | 11.00am Holy Communion        |                              | 9.30am Holy Communion        | 11.00am Morning Worship | 11.00am Holy Communion (1662) |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> | 4.00pm Evening Worship (1662) | 6.00pm Harvest Festival       | 11.00am Morning Worship      |                              | 11.00am Holy Communion  |                               |

u

**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](mailto:Richard.Cooke.Ilmington@Outlook.com)

Hon. Asst 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)

Paul Clark 07868 526830 (mobile)

Andrew Holman- West 07712 193773 (mobile)

Posts vacant – contact the Rector

Carol Rutter 01789 450795 (landline)

Preston-on-Stour

Stretton-on-Fosse

Whitchurch

*Richard Cooke, the Rector, writes...*

## **A Groom's -Eye View**

*One of the privileges of being Rector of the Downs and Valley Churches is to take weddings. I get to meet wonderful couples embarking on a new level of commitment to each other, and it is a real delight to do so. Duncan Smith married Emily Morrison at Ilmington last year, and as he is a professional writer I asked him to let us have some thoughts on how the wedding was from his perspective. He's called it 'Old and Wise'*

What goes through the groom's mind as he waits, with minutes to go before his bride-to-be enters the church? I didn't ask myself this question before the day arrived – and the true answer is that many things went through my mind at that moment.

As I stood alone, with my shiny black shoes planted firmly to the spot on the deep red pile of the carpet at St Mary's Ilmington, I had a moment to gaze around. I observed the sun's rays forging great columns of golden light as they passed through the leaded lancet windows of this ancient place of worship, splashing golden spotlights across the oak, stone, carpet and tiles. The comforting aroma of the beeswax polished pews, warmed in the afternoon sun, hung in the air. Every single person I knew and loved was packed into this small church behind me, all waiting for the arrival of the one person I loved more than any other, my bride Emily. I was thrilled, excited, full of anticipation – balanced with just a dash of nerves.

One thought that passed through my rushing mind was – do buildings have memories? And if they do, what was this building thinking at that moment? This church, its stone walls, had been watching me and my family for centuries. Under its roof my grandmother was christened, my great grandparents were married, took their first Communion, grew old. Between its ancient walls I had sung Christmas carols, its bells had rung for the weddings of many great aunts and uncles. Generations had first visited as new-born babies, married, worshipped, and said goodbye to each other at the end of their earthly journeys. And what of all the other families who have lived and worshipped here? If these walls could talk, as they say.

So, what would this old and wise building think as I entered through its tall doorway, in a morning suit, on my wedding day? Might it think, "Oh, it's you again – I remember you – the little blonde boy looking to spot the carved mice on the pews."? Or, "I remember those summer holiday camps, when you learned about, and couldn't get over, the talking donkey."? Or even: "Look, just over there, that's where your grandmother sat over there, under the window, every Sunday until she was nine..."?

Standing at the altar, in the eyes of God, in the eyes of this old and wise building, is more meaningful a moment than I can convey. But I like to think this church was in some way speaking to me. Its soothing presence – the divine presence of God – filled me with confidence and joy in that moment, and for the moment that was about to come...

We already have 9 weddings booked for 2026 across our 6 churches, but there's always room for more! Do get in touch if you'd like to discuss a wedding with me: [Richard.Cooke.Ilmington@Outlook.com](mailto:Richard.Cooke.Ilmington@Outlook.com).

### **Harvest Festivals 2025**

|                              |         |   |
|------------------------------|---------|---|
| St Mary's Ilmington          | 28 Sept | 6.00pm  |
| St Gregory's Tredington      | 5 Oct   | 11.00am                                       |
| St Mary's Whitchurch         | 5 Oct   | 4.00pm  |
| St Mary's Preston-on-Stour   | 12 Oct  | 11.00am (note change from usual service time) |
| St George's Darlingscott     | 12 Oct  | 4.00pm  |
| St Peter's Stretton-on-Fosse | 19 Oct  | 4.00pm  |

### **From the Registers:**

#### **Baptism**

At St Mary's Ilmington on 2 August: Dexter Leslie May-Devereux

#### **Weddings**

At St Gregory's Tredington on 23 August: Victoria Botting and William Lavelle  
and on 30 August: April Wall and James McPherson

#### **Interments of Ashes**

At St Gregory's Tredington on 11 August: Carol Ann Coles (nee Eccleshare) & Martyn Eccleshare  
At St Mary's Ilmington on 22 August: Iris Murison (nee Sabin)

### **Editor's Note**

The *deadline for copy for the October issue* **Saturday 13 September**. 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 this month is original artwork by Sarah Hobson of Ilmington, titled Moon Path. If you have a piece of art work or a photo you would like to share don't hesitate to send it in to me. It should be portrait shape so it fits on the cover and a jpg or PDF file makes my life easier!

*Susan Brock, Editor*

### **Thank You to Our Delivery Team**

The distribution of the Magazine across five parishes, is a logistical miracle resting on the willingness of teams of people to take a copy to every household in the villages and hamlets that make up our territory. David Shell is the lynchpin who collects from the printers and bundles up packages for each Parish. Tim Seller takes the packages out

To the local coordinators who distribute copies to people on the ground who go house to house. This can be a delightful way to enjoy local byways and bump into friends and neighbours. But when the weather is bad and the bundles are heavy (as they were last month with the addition of Ilmington's Show programme) it can be hard work.

One of our revenue streams come from charging for distributing fliers etc. with the magazine. So thank you to everyone involved. Remember that not only are you serving your communities but you are helping to keep the magazine going! We salute you.

*Susan Brock, Editor*

### **Nature Notes September 2025**

When you were a child did you play the game of conkers? Did you soak your conkers in vinegar to try to make them harder, so you were more likely to win?! The horse chestnut tree produces beautiful flower spikes of white and pink in May, providing a rich source of nectar and pollen for insects, particularly bees. Caterpillars love to feed off the leaves. The conkers are usually ready to fall off the tree in their spiky green protective case during September/October. The conker is nestled in a lovely soft white lining and is beautiful and shiny when the case opens. The conker provides food for deer and other mammals. This tree is valuable for wildlife, because God thought of everything when He created our trees on the third day of creation.

*Gill*

## **WHITCHURCH**

### **Anthony Russell 25 January 1943 - 9 July 2025**

Before he was appointed Bishop of Dorchester then Bishop of Ely and summoned to the House of Lords, Tony Russell was ours. He was priest-in-charge of Whitchurch and Preston-on-Stour, 1973 - 1986, and simultaneously served as Chaplain to the Arthur Rank Centre. In all of these places his dedication to rural communities and churches was at the forefront of his ministry. (He would eventually produce books titled *The Country Parson* and *The Country Parish*.) A man of commanding stature, he was also deeply humble., never mind the challenges of preaching to a near-frozen congregation in a tiny church lit only by candles (and at Christmas, tractor headlights rigged up by our farmers). He loved this corner of Warwickshire and regularly walked the parish in company with his black labrador, Jasper. Whitchurch, he said, was a parish where you knew all the people -- and the dogs. He was a dedicated family man, and his ministry among us was visibly a *partnership* with Sheila who managed also to involve herself actively in parish affairs while raising four children at the Rectory in Wimpstone. Our farmers, in particular, respected Tony because he so demonstrably respected them, advocating for continuity in rural life even as he spoke positively about change. At the centre of

everything was his faith, which he made evident to us in the pulpit -- but also at our kitchen tables when he came, as so often he did, to call.  
*Carol Rutter, churchwarden*

## **TREDINGTON WITH BLACKWELL AND DARLINGS SCOTT**

### **Newbold and Tredington C of E Primary School**

A warm welcome back from all of the staff and children at Newbold and Tredington C of E Primary School! It is the start of a brand new academic year and the children are settling into their new classes and making lots of new friends. It is a joy to have them back in school after a well-deserved rest and relaxing Summer holiday. We have enjoying hearing all about their adventures and enabling children the opportunity to share their news with staff and their peers. This term there are some exciting events to look forward to.

*Samantha Welsby, Head Teacher*

### **Harvest Lunch on Sunday 5 October 12.30 for 1.00pm in St Gregory's Church**

Please join us to celebrate the harvest in St Gregory's Church, Tredington. We are planning a cold buffet lunch with a choice of cold meats, fish and a variety of salads with hot potatoes, (vegetarian option). Beautiful desserts, cheese and biscuits. Soft drinks provided but please bring your own wine. Tables will be set up in the church and it will be dry and warm, whatever the weather outside. We would like volunteers to help with the refreshments and a list will be on the table just inside the church so add your name, (as soon as possible please), if you would like to come and/or help. We can provide transport - please let us know. Profits will go to a church charity. No set charge but please be generous with your donation. A local dementia charity will benefit from the Christmas meal on 7 December. These meals are open to local residents, it is NOT just for people who attend church. Enquiries Marilyn Payne 666206, Sarah Taylor 662782, Jenny Plenderleith 664278.

*Jenny Plenderleith*

### **Tredington & District Garden Club**

Our next meeting takes place on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September when Ros Anscombe will be talking to us about The Heart of England Forest, a charity which has grown out of the late Felix Dennis' ambition to re-forest Warwickshire. They have already planted over two million trees, developing new woodlands and protecting ancient forest & woodland. As usual doors open at 7pm with the talk starting at 7.30pm. A pay bar is available before the meeting and tea/coffee will be served at the end. Visitors are very welcome to join us (£4). We're a friendly group and offer a varied programme of talks, garden visits & social events so come along and find out more. We offer a discounted membership fee of £12 for new members joining us for the second half of our club year.

Check out our website – [www.tredingtongardenclub.weebly.com](http://www.tredingtongardenclub.weebly.com) – for more information.

*Marian White, Chair*

### **Tredington & Blackwell WI**

The next WI meeting is on Thursday 11th September at 7pm in the Community Hall - the speaker will be Phillip Yorke, a journalist. All women are welcome (Guests £5)

*Marilyn Payne, WI Programme Secretary/Hall Trustee*

### **Craft & Chatter**

The next meetings are at 2pm on Thursday 5th and Monday 18th September in the Community Hall. This is a social group, 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 [vanessa@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk](mailto:vanessa@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk)

*Vanessa Ward, WI Secretary/Hall Trustee*

### **Tuesday Morning Qigong**

Start your day with balance and energy by joining our 45-minute Qigong class at 8.00am—perfect for those heading to work. This class is designed to suit all levels of experience, from beginners to seasoned practitioners, and is accessible to everyone, with seated exercises available for those who prefer them. £7 per person (cash/ card on the day or via <https://breath-therapy.uk/events>.)

*Gill Goodlad, Hall Secretary*

### **Film Night**

Our next film will be shown on Friday 3rd October in the Community Hall. The bar opens at 7pm, with the film, an Oscar-winning political drama, starting at 7.30pm. There will be a short interval with bar and ice creams available. Admission is free - a voluntary donation from non-members is appreciated. For more details of this and future films, or to join our email group or membership contact Gill at [gillgoodlad@hotmail.com](mailto:gillgoodlad@hotmail.com) or text to 07789810877.

*Gill Goodlad, WI Treasurer/Hall Trustee*

### **St George Church Darlingscott**

Our Harvest Service is on October 12th at 4pm, we normally serve finger food, and a drink for after the service, last year some of our congregation were kind enough to provide cakes etc., jam was also a popular choice, these we kept at the back of the church and donations were given for the church funds. If anyone would like to do the same this year, it will be very much appreciated. Any food that is left will be taken to the Food Bank in Shipston.

*Doreen McCarroll, Churchwarden*

## **STRETTON ON FOSSE**

### **Cream Teas**

The last cream tea afternoon for the summer will be held on September 21st, 3.30pm at the Village Hall. As well as having a cup of tea, there will also be the opportunity to see the 'treasures' unearthed by our local detectorist, Pete Bacchus Knight and have a look at some of the photographs of old Stretton on display in the meeting room. Any offers of cake contributions and/or help with serving will be gratefully received!

*Gerri Hunting*

## **PRESTON ON STOUR**

### **Film Night - 7.30 Friday 26th September**

This month's film will be 'The Penguin Lessons', a comedy drama starring Steve Cougan. During the 1976 coup in Argentina, an English teacher rescues a penguin and brings it to his school. His life begins to change when the bird's presence starts to have a positive effect on the school.

### **Harvest Supper - 7 for 7.30 Saturday 11th October**

Don't miss Preston's last big event of the year. A delicious selection of cold meats or vegetarian alternative served with salads, followed by homemade apple crumble or trifle. Tickets in advance from Margaret on 01789 450710 or email prestonbrocks@gmail.com.

*Margaret Brocklehurst*

## **ILMINGTON**

### **"Fungi Frida and the Myco Heroes"**

#### **at Ilmington Manor Gardens.5pm. Friday 19th September**

Fungi Frida is an hour-long interactive outdoor family show. Ideal for 8 - 11 year olds but all ages are very welcome. The show is silly, warm and magical. It uses clowning, song, poetry and puppetry. The Myco Heros (the audience) will join Frida (Georgie Taylor) and be taken around the lovely Ilmington Manor Gardens in search of the perfect fungal friend. The aim of the show is to get children even more interested in the natural world. They will learn all about mycology, the environment but most of all have some top fun. Huge thanks to Martin Taylor for inviting Frida and all her friends into his wonderful garden. Tickets £10. Now available from this link:

<https://buytickets.at/stratfordtheatrecompany>.

*Mark Currey*

### **Ilmington Village Hall. Phenomenal Elite Wrestling – This Is It**

Proudly presents an afternoon of male and female wrestling on Sunday 7 September from 4:00pm - 6:45pm. This is an afternoon of family fun and entertainment watching the goodies battle with the

baddies. A Stratford-based show with 5 star reviews from around the region - come and cheer them on and enjoy drinks and snacks from the bar. For tickets visit:-[www.tickettailor.com](http://www.tickettailor.com)

Other regular events through the summer are kurling on Thursday afternoons 2:30-3:30pm and table tennis on alternate Tuesdays 2:00-3:00pm and Thursdays 6:00-8:00pm.

*Bryan Clifford, Chair*

### **Wednesday Club's Next Meeting** **10th September at 2pm, Village Hall.**

A big thank you must go to Helen Porter who made the music room at the Manor House worthy of its name. Tim and Helen Porter play a considerable role in making the Shipston Proms such a success.

Thank you Helen for giving us a delightful afternoon.

Our next meeting will be on 10th September at the Village Hall.

Dave Raeburn, alias Judge the Poet, will be entertaining us with his poetry. Dave has performed poetry all over the world, from Sydney to Windsor Castle, appearing on TV and radio. He has a unique talent of composing as he stands in front of you! September is a busy **month** for birthdays in our club. We start with Janet Allinson on 23rd, Marilyn Figgitt on the 24th, Mary Brain on the 28th and Carol Hawkins on 29th. Have a lovely birthday ladies!

A reminder to finish off with! Any books and tombola prizes to go anytime to Carole and Bric a brac on the Show Day (25th) to the Village Hall between 9 am to 10.30 am.

*Carole Clifford, Chair*

### **Screen-on-the-Green: Mr Burton (12)**

Please join us on **Friday 26 September** for *Mr Burton*, a heart-warming "origin story" that follows the transformation of a young Richard Burton (Harry Lawtey) from wayward teenager to legendary actor in the making. Toby Jones plays the inspirational schoolmaster, Philip Burton, who guided this underprivileged boy from a Welsh mining town towards his destiny ... and even gave him his name. Lesley Manville also stars.

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, interval ice-creams and raffle available (cash only please).

*Lis Ribbans, Ilmington Cinema Group*

### **Stepping into September**

'Tis the season of apples and pears, and if you've got more than enough, please think of sharing of your harvest with the Community Shop. Our apple cart accepts donations of all fruit and vegetables, which we "sell" in return for donations to the cooperative. On 19<sup>th</sup> September we have our next long-table supper, a three-course feast for only £20. For tickets, call in or call us on 01608 682838.

Book Club is taking a break this month, but will be back on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October at 2pm for a discussion of *Troubled Blood* by Robert Galbraith, aka J.K. Rowling. It's a big book, the fifth in the Cormoran Strike detective series, so now's the time to get reading! For dates and details of all our community groups, please go to [www.ilmingtonshop.co.uk](http://www.ilmingtonshop.co.uk)  
*Ilmington Community Shop Committee*

## **OUTSIDE THE PARISHES**

### **Shipston-On-Stour Area u3a** **A Friendly and Stimulating Local Community**

After moving to Shipston in 2023 to be nearer to our Children and Grandchildren, I was still concerned that I would be lonely as I had left behind other family and close friends. I discovered the u3a website on the internet. I had not heard of them but was delighted to see that there were many groups available to join. Having an interest in Genealogy I decided to join the Family History Group first. It can be a bit daunting going along to a new group of people on your own, but I went along and needn't have worried. They were all very friendly and I was made to feel very welcome. I have since joined three more groups, one of which was a Walking Group, I had asked my husband to come with me on the first walk and although he had said that joining groups wasn't for him, then got hooked himself. He now belongs to three groups and started and runs his own group. For us, the u3a has meant becoming part of a community, keeping our minds and bodies active, learning new things, but best of all making new friends along the way.  
*Lesley Reed*

### **A Date for your Diary**

An invitation to A BREAKFAST FOR LADIES, AT THE HALFORD BRIDGE INN, on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2025 9.00am for 9.15am continental breakfast with our Speaker, Wendy Biddington. Wendy lives in Wellesbourne with her husband Norman. She was a nurse and midwife by profession, and latterly an associate director leading a hospital build. She is now retired and is an associate minister at St. Peter's, Wellesbourne and is very involved in community schemes. £9 for Breakfast and more details from Liz Harvey [ma\\_harvey@hotmail.com](mailto:ma_harvey@hotmail.com). This is a very friendly relaxed morning, and everyone is welcome.  
*Liz Harvey*

## *September*

The grasses are light brown  
and the ocean comes in  
long shimmering lines  
under the fleet from last night  
which dozes now in the early morning

Here and there horses graze  
on somebody's acreage

Strangely, it was not my desire

that bade me speak in church to be released  
but memory of the way it used to be in  
careless and exotic play

when characters were promises  
then recognitions. The world of transformation  
is real and not real but trusting.

Enough of these lessons? I mean  
didactic phrases to take you in and out of  
love's mysterious bonds?

Well I myself am not myself

and which power of survival I speak  
for is not made of houses.

It is inner luxury, of golden figures  
that breathe like mountains do  
and whose skin is made dusky by stars.

Joanne Kyger

from *About Now: Collected Poems*. Copyright © 2007 by Joanne  
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References available on request.

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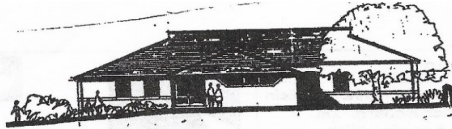
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