

Ruby Country Benefice

The parishes of Ashwater, Beaworthy, Black Torrington with Highampton, Clawton, Halwill, & Tetcott with Luffincott

Bulletin November 2025



*God is our mighty fortress,
always ready to help
in times of trouble.*

Psalm 46:1 (CEV)



October

19th

Baptism

(St. Peter ad Vincula, Ashwater)

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From the Parish Registers image (pg. 2) © Parish Pump,

Cover image: Jigsaw Festival at St. Mary's, Black Torrington. Photo by Dee & David French

Tailors photos © Kay Napier

Thanks to Revd. Dr. Paul Fitzpatrick, David and Dee French,

Shirley Richmond and Sandra Ward for their contributions.



NOVEMBER

From the Rector's Desk

It is Friday, yesterday's sun filtered into a red sunset last night and a steel light is now delivering a gentle drizzle. Henry has just nuzzled me to get his head rubbed and is now gently snoring by my feet. I have just come back from a week away (more of that later), to the brilliant, magnificent, joyous, jigsaw puzzle festival in St Mary's. The team scored wonderfully, I am so proud of all of them, and there were hundreds present who loved the event as much as I did. I have never seen the church looking so good and as the buying was so brisk, I too, stashed a couple for Christmas.

But what of the last seven days? I left Devon for London on Friday to attend the 'London Pen Show'. This is an international event held in Hammersmith in a conference centre, where paper, ink and fountain pens are sold, exchanged or invested in. there are about two hundred exhibitors and thousands upon thousands of pens and equal numbers of visitors. The pens range from 1920's stranded fillers to freshly released Montblanc's. The prices are from affordable to pens that will never be inked because they are so expensive. I loved every minute. The special times though are at the end of the day when friends gather and explore their new pens and empty wallets, over a coffee or a pint, Jew, Christian, Muslims,

Secularists, (some strange hippies) and Hindu's happily relaxed together as darkness falls over something as simple as pen & ink.

Exhausted I arrived home Sunday night to be picked up Monday by my colleague Mark to travel up to Cliff College, Sheffield to attend the first three days of the germinate course. This is a seventeen-month rural church leadership program. There are six of us from Exeter Diocese undertaking it, all three from our Deanery, then Vicars from Lifton, Honiton and the area around Lee Abbey. The course is intense and runs all day until supper at six. There is a strict timetable and fixed points for supervision, journals, reports, portfolios and extensive research. The next meeting at Cliff is in March and then again June. The idea is to have a reservoir of expertise in our rural parishes.

We get to choose our own themes and mine was relatively easy. Recently I have spoken to many of you about the ethics and value(s) decisions in the Church of England; decisions made by our leadership Bishops around subjects like 'reparations' and 'end of life choices'. I have genuinely been impressed by the scope, maturity and theological debate that I have heard from all of you. I have been less impressed with how decisions are explained, or how Christian ethics are applied, from the top down. I have also noted that there is a real separation from what many of you believe and what our leadership decides.

Christian ethics is central to our faith in every way, it is, at foundation level, how we live our lives and why. It is the pursuit of 'the good' and the rejection of 'harm'. Theology is about understanding God in our world, Ethics is about how we live that faith in the decisions we make in the real word. Neither can exist without the other. I want to use this time to look at how ethical

decisions in the church are made, at all levels, how our priests are trained in ethics, and the direct effects that has in our churches in North Devon.

Bishop Mike has indicated strong support and has offered me six weeks research leave next year (All of Feb and ten days after Easter.) Archdeacon Verena has also offered me a grant to cover research expenses, both of which I have accepted. In a few short years I will retire and I want to be able to support other clergy and churches in this area when I do. Watch this space...

So, a Pen show, an intensive lecture and research program, ethical reviews, a major church jigsaw exhibition and a snoring Labrador, what is the linking theme? All of them have been, and are, utterly joy-filled. I love them all, I have been blessed and have that happy feeling one gets after a big holiday. The real joy is that this will go on and on.

My final point; I found Christ in all of them and in all of you.

That is priceless. Thank you.

Paul.

Please note: The Bible Study that takes place on the 4th Sunday in Highampton has now moved location to St. Mary's Church, Black Torrington and is at the earlier time of 6pm.

Ruby Country Benefice

Services for November 2025

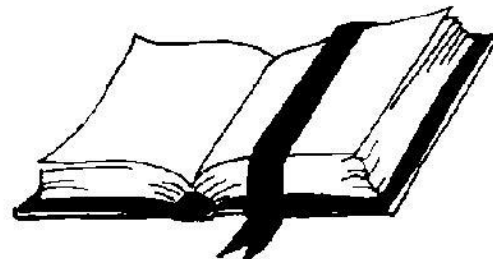
Sunday 2nd 4 th Sunday before Advent	9:30am	Ashwater	Morning Service
	11am	Black Torrington	Benefice All Souls Service Remembering loved ones lost
	5:30pm 6pm	Tetcott	Tea and Service
Sunday 9th Remembrance Sunday 3 rd Sunday Before Advent	10:50am	Ashwater	Remembrance Service
	10:50am	Beaworthy	
	10:50am	Black Torrington	Beginning at Village War Memorial (except Beaworthy)
	10:50am	Halwill Junction	
	10:50am	Tetcott	
	2:30pm	Clawton	
Sunday 16th 2 nd Sunday Before Advent	9:30am	Ashwater	Holy Communion
	11am	Black Torrington	Morning Prayer
	11am	Halwill	Holy Communion
Sunday 23rd Sunday before Advent	11am	Beaworthy	Holy Communion
	11am	Clawton	United Service Café Church
Sunday 30th 1 st Sunday of Advent	11am	Beaworthy	United Benefice Service

Sunday 23rd November	6pm	St. Mary's Church, Black Torrington	Informal Bible Study (all welcome)
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Weekly – all welcome from the benefice

Every Wednesday	10am	Black Torrington	Morning Prayer
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Lectionary Readings for November 2025



Sunday 2nd 4th Sunday before Advent Isaiah 56:3-8 <i>or</i> 2 Esdras 2:42-48 Psalm 33:1-5 Hebrews 12:18-24 Matthew 5:1-12 Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Tetcott.	Sunday 9th 3rd Sunday before Advent Remembrance Sunday Job 19:23-27a Psalm 17:1-9 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-5, 13-end Luke 20:27-38 Services at Ashwater, Beaworthy, Black Torrington, Clawton, Halwill Village Hall and Tetcott.	Sunday 16th 2nd Sunday before Advent Malachi 1:1-2a Psalm 98 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13 Luke 21:5-19 Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill.
Sunday 23rd Sunday before Advent Jeremiah 23:1-6 Psalm 46 Colossians 1:11-20 Luke 23:33-43 Services at Beaworthy Clawton.	Sunday 30th 1st Sunday of Advent Isaiah 2:1-5 Psalm 122 Romans 13:11-14 Matthew 24:36-44 Benefice Service at Beaworthy	

*To help you prepare for one of our services or to
read at home-*



Dame Sarah Mullally, Former Bishop of Crediton, Announced as Next Archbishop of Canterbury

The former Bishop of Crediton, Dame Sarah Mullally, 63, has been announced as the next Archbishop of Canterbury designate. The current Bishop of London is the first woman to be appointed to the role in the Church of England.

Dame Sarah was the first female bishop in the Diocese of Exeter – serving as Bishop of Crediton, which covers the north and east of Devon, from 2015 to 2018.

She was ordained in 2001, and served her curacy in the Diocese of Southwark. In 2012 she was installed as Canon Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral and three years later she took on the role of Suffragan Bishop of Crediton, where she served for three years, before becoming Bishop of London.

Archbishop-designate Sarah's Installation service will take place at Canterbury Cathedral on 25th March 2026 – The Feast of the Annunciation.

Monthly Bible Study at St. Mary's, Black Torrington

The 12 Minor Prophets in the Bible are a collection of twelve books from the Old Testament, often referred to as the "Minor Prophets" due to the shorter length of their writings, not because of their importance. They convey messages from God to the people of Israel and Judah. Each has to be seen in its own cultural and historical context. These are powerful messages, short and pointed and come from real issues in real communities. When we look at these in context the Old Testament opens up for us and we begin to understand it in the same way that as Jesus did.

Oct 26

Hosea: God's love for Israel despite their unfaithfulness.

Nov 23

Joel: The day of the Lord and repentance

Jan 25

Amos: Social justice and God's judgment.

Mar 22

Obadiah: Judgment against Edom

A new (very relaxed) monthly Bible Study starts this Sunday 6pm at Black Torrington St Mary with tea, coffee, laughter and cake; do join us!

*This is a sermon for our times and is of vital importance.
I have asked Bishop Mike's permission to publish it in
full. Paul.*

Presidential Address 11.10.25 Bishop Mike.

When I was about 8 years of age, I remember asking my father as he was driving the family to town “Are we Catholic or Protestant?” My father was very cagey in his response, not because he was unclear but because he suspected this question was dubiously motivated. “Why do you ask?” he said. “Just wondering” I said. He was right to be suspicious – I had been seeing the terrorist troubles in N. Ireland on the News and I just wanted to know which side I was on, who I was supposed to be supporting.

This taking of sides, this polarising of groups, this potential fracturing of human society is writ large in our society and world of late. It has seemed very difficult to be able to lament with the Jewish people the barbaric treatment of so many young Jewish men and women on Oct 7th 2023 and the continued suffering of many Israelis through those events AND at the same time lament the appalling suffering of the people of Gaza; to do the one is to be painted as approving of genocide while to do the other is to be regarded as approving of antisemitism.

Or the issue of flags, whether of St George or Union Jacks, hoisted on lampposts, draped over roundabouts, and sprayed across road signs. The claim is restoring and indeed

celebrating patriotism. But the support has come mainly from far-right corners of the internet, while many Black and ethnic minority communities have responded with fear and disgust. There are reports that the mass flag-raising has already emboldened racist abuse: and more than one person of Global Majority Heritage has spoken to me of a sense of unease walking their own streets. To approve of the flags being flown is on the one hand to be accused of implicit racism and aggressive hostility to refugees fleeing for their lives, while to approve of their not being flown is to be anti-patriotic, oppressive of citizens freedoms and the celebration of Englishness. And this feeds into wider political issues paraded at political conferences recently – not least being pro or anti-immigration. Defend our borders, stop the boats, we're foreigners in our own country

...you know some of the threads and on the other hand compassion for those fleeing danger, we've all been immigrants historically, enriching our society with skills and gifts, purposeful integration not destabilisation. And I could go on but does our Christian faith speak in to any of this? Well Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen would say yes, it is.

Recently he stood before a group of university students, speaking about war in Europe and the sharp rises in defence spending and intensified strategic readiness, and said "we need a form of rearmament that is just as important as the military one. That is the spiritual one". Denmark is among the most secular nations on earth with religion regarded as an entirely private matter and yet the PM not only in that speech but

elsewhere is encouraging the Church to step up, to offer fellowship and grounding to help people through crises as historically the Church has done. What's this, a quiet revival now even among politicians? Hmm, I think one needs to be sanguine about this – surveys have suggested many young Danes are unwilling to fight for their country, (as elsewhere in Europe), not for the flag, not for democracy, not for a modern welfare state that offers comfort but no inspiration...and the State could be looking to coopt Christianity to inspire such commitment. The co-option of the Christian faith for one side of an argument or another is as old as the hills and we need to be wary of it.

The Christian faith does have much to say about how we engage with the fractures, the polarisations, the tribal markers in our world – but irritatingly for politicians not in ways which can be coopted for my party, irritatingly for a bishop not in ways offering knock-down arguments which are immediately compelling to synods, and irritatingly for ourselves not in ways which give quick practical methods for overcoming such polarisations.

Take the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew whose feast we celebrated recently – a gospel unique among the Gospels in paying attention to the tensions between Rome and the East, between the Romans and the Parthians. It is after all the Magi who came to search for Jesus, the priests and kingmakers of the Parthians and it is in that role that they are surveying the political developments in the Near East. The Parthians and Romans had been at loggerheads for decades but relations had improved by the time of Caesar Augustus, as through

diplomacy Augustus was able to retrieve the Roman standards from the Parthians. Augustus on his coinage presented this as a Roman triumph and depicted the Parthians handing over the Roman standards whilst kneeling in reverence to the Romans – worse than the Daily Star’s journalistic fabrications.

What Matthew is saying in his Gospel is that in fact the Parthians came, not to worship emperor Augustus, nor his vassal king Herod, but instead Christ. And when a few chapters later, Matthew is sharing Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, this whole teaching is in fact about developing kingdom hearts, belonging to Jesus’ kingdom — not a political kingdom, but an entirely different sort of kingdom, a non-political kingdom with an entirely different form of constitution that offers true fulfilment to those who do His words.

After Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount this alternative kingdom, this kingdom of heaven, is not only offered to the Parthians, but also to the Romans. When in Mt 8.11 Jesus meets a Roman centurion he tells him that ‘many will come from the East’, from Parthia, ‘and from the West’, from Rome, and will take their places in a shared kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. Matthew’s angle is highly provocative for first-century readers. Translated into the political world of our days, he says more or less the following. The Magi from the East are not Parthians, they are Russians, who come from the East, are looking for Jesus in the Ukraine, the contested area between West and East, and the kingdom that they find, is a kingdom that is also open for those who come from the West, from Europe, from the United Kingdom, and from NATO.

Regardless whether they are from the East or from the West, theirs is the possibility of a shared kingdom, a nonpolitical kingdom, the kingdom of heaven.

This alternative kingdom is not satisfactory for those who are interested in political power. For those gunning for the Romans OR the Parthians. Indeed, it makes one dissatisfied with power and might. It is exactly how T. S. Eliot in his well-known poem about the Magi describes their situation after they have returned home, ‘We returned to our places, these Kingdoms | But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation’. Resident aliens you might say from now on - only natural once one has learned about this alternative constitution, this different system of laws with its alternate Kingdom and way of ultimate fulfilment.

And of course most heartbreakingly Jesus himself will not be coopted; from the examples Jesus gives of the Widow of Zarephath and Namaan the Syrian, to the Samaritan leper and the Roman Centurion, to Jesus refusal to be coopted by the Romans or the Herodians, the Pharisees or the Scribes, the Sadducees or the crowds; inexorably, ineluctably, inevitably we see Jesus becoming more isolated, more vulnerable and more targeted - moving through his passion and cross to death.

The Gospel accounts signal in various ways that at least some of those responsible recognise only too late their guilty complicity whether by action or inaction; the soldier acknowledging Jesus’ at his moment of death “truly this was the Son of God”; the crowds who had shouted “crucify him”

going home “beating their breasts” and his followers, not least the women, who ”watched these things” from afar, bewildered by Jesus’ death but conscious of something momentous and unprecedented here.

Even if we’re tribal, partisan and coopted, Jesus, thank God, is not. And something happens here that our faith says is Good News. Something happens here that is gift for us, something happens here which we cannot do for ourselves ... and somehow, we are made new, released, saved. So I thank my father for his caginess about Protestant or Catholic – for thereby teaching me something about the Christian faith, and pray that we might not be coopted by anything other than the person, and way ,of Jesus Christ.

Monthly Bible Study at
St. Mary’s, Black Torrington

Sunday

23

NOV

6pm

JOEL

*The day of the Lord and
repentance*

The Minor Prophets 2/12

LAMERTON FESTIVAL 2025



This is the fourth visit the Ruby Ringers have made to the festival, and the third time we have entered the competition. There were eight handbell teams from Somerset to Cornwall and of course Devon.

There is a peal ringing class; fiercely competitive, highly complicated and amazing to watch and hear; not for us!

We entered the tune ringing class – outclassed of course, but we did it. Our warm-up piece, not judged, was 'Kum, ba Yah', with Carolyn singing, and all the visiting ringers and audience joined in. This apparently added 'a new dimension' to handbell ringing performance and was much appreciated. We discovered Carolyn's deep contralto voice at practice one day when we were all 'singing along' and she has been gaining in confidence ever since.

Our judged piece was 'Aura Lea'. This is the traditional folk version of 'Love me Tender'. The ringers enjoy this and we felt we couldn't have played it any better. We didn't win the cup for 'most improvement', that went to the children from Horrabridge School or the 'Best tune Ringing cup' but we have a certificate to prove we entered.

The team came away pleased and happy; full of enthusiasm and inspired.



Carolyn and Kum ba Yah



Our certificate



Say cheese

St Alban's Beaworthy

Alan French's talk "How to Colour Your Autumn" was a delightful evening in the Beaworthy Village Hall at Patchacott. Alan used his wealth of knowledge and experience to introduce the audience to a huge range of shrubs and plants – many of which were less familiar to his guests. He explained the conditions which each would need in order to flourish: soil, position, need for protection from weather and its likely longevity.

Alan also dealt generously with the many questions asked. The plant sale was eagerly attended with many of the plants sold with strong competition for many prize specimens. That with the grand garden draw stimulated the usual groans and whoops as tickets were drawn and all the prizes were eventually won. That with access to tea, coffee and biscuits throughout the evening encouraged the cementing of new and old acquaintanceships.

We hope to hold a similar talk next year

The next phase of church refurbishment is the new universal frontal. We decided that we wanted to use a crafts person from Devon and having researched embroiders who could tackle our sort of work. Richard Prior and Ian Sanders have now visited Heather Everett in South Molton. They were very impressed with her work and she is visiting Beaworthy on October 16th to see the church, its surrounding countryside and meet the fabric committee of Richard and Ian, Jane Wonnacott, Caroline Hayes and Sandra Ward.

Do wish us much inspiration and that that we get a good result.

Sandra Ward, PCC Secretary.



St. Mary's, Black Torrington

JIGSAW
FESTIVAL



Held on Friday 17th and Saturday 18th October, the Jigsaw Festival at St. Mary's Church, Black Torrington marked the culmination of over a year of hard work and planning. The result? A wonderful event for the community.

Beginning last year, members of the church, Black Torrington and wider village communities started taking puzzles home to complete or attending events in the church to chat, have a cuppa and 'puzzle away'. The completed efforts were then whisked away to be mounted and covered by Dee and David, and stored patiently in waiting.



Then at the beginning of October, the true hard work began where Dee and David's house was emptied and almost 1,200 puzzles were
19 loaded into the back of



almost 1,200 puzzles were loaded into the back of a van and conveyed to St. Mary's in readiness. These were then lovingly displayed on chairs in easy-to-find category groupings ready for the awaiting public. Paul led us in prayer before the doors open, and at 10am, the crowds started coming to browse – and what awaited them was nothing short of breathtaking.



The church was converted into a perfect display space for just two days, and the buyers and browsers were met with an experience crossed between an art gallery and an old record store; with people marveling at the displayed puzzles, and able to thumb through the stacks to find the right puzzle for them to take away with them.



“Something for everyone” was promised, and ultimately delivered – with prices ranging from just £1 for the children’s puzzles, boxless and “pot luck” (puzzles which couldn’t be guaranteed as complete as we ran out of time to complete them for the display!) up to around £50 for the rarer, older puzzles including some hand cut by makers such as Harry Thornton, and even some wonderful amateur-cut puzzles from Dr. Gwynne who is buried at St. Mary’s and much-loved villager Katharine’s late father.

Although very much a community effort, the festival attracted visitors in their hundreds from around the local villages, extending into the wider county (with several mentions of “I’ve never been to Black Torrington before, what a pretty little village being heard) and even further afield including Kent and Warwickshire!

There was a tombola for new, sealed puzzles and a wonderful spread of cakes and savories (gratefully made and donated) and a never-ending supply of teas and coffees. A local keen crafter made and sold jigsaw themed craft goodies, to add to the total raised for the church.

Many visitors ended up visiting both days to pick up some more puzzles, such was the success of the festival. Some people even just came to have a look and ended up leaving with a puzzle or three under their arm.

Even Radio Devon reached out because of our niche and fun community event, and they asked Churchwarden David what it was all about live on air.



The festival was designed to engage with the community first and foremost, and fundraise as a worthy second. People have loved the community feeling of making up a puzzle and this will be continuing beyond the festival.

A large team, drawn from church and the wider community were involved in running the event. All helped create the warm and friendly atmosphere which has generated so many great comments. We wish to extend a massive thank you to everyone who contributed in any way – from making up the puzzles, to setting everything up, pouring tea to visiting (and all in between.)

As for the fundraising element? The event raised in excess of £3,000 in two short days – absolutely phenomenal. As with any old building, there's always something that needs doing or fixing, and that money will obviously help greatly. But the real gift of the festival is that St. Mary's has shown its doors are well and truly open for everyone – Anglican or not – and its people are ready to welcome with a friendly smile, a cup of tea (or coffee) and maybe even a jigsaw or two.

Photos © David and Dee French. Writeup by Kay Napier.





St. Mary's Church, Black Torrington

BACK TO PUZZLING

Wednesday November 12th 2025

11.00 - 12.30

Puzzles, cake, tea and coffee

Make up, borrow, lend, donate

We look forward to seeing you again



Five Strategic Priorities



Missional Leadership



Missional DNA



Vocations



Children & Young People



Mixed Ecology

Don't forget: THE NEXT BULLETIN WILL BE FOR
DECEMBER/CHRISTMAS AND JANUARY

As such, we will accept entries up to 23rd November **IF** you
have let me know it will be coming before the 15th November.

TO THOSE WHO SUBMIT TO THE BULLETIN

Firstly, thank you for your contributions, which
always shape our Bulletin.

Please make sure you send submissions to

rubycbulletin@gmail.com

Anything not sent to the above email **will not** get into
the publication.

Work begins on the bulletin on the 15th of each month,
so please get submissions in BY THE FIFTEENTH.

Thank you.

Please feel free to join us!

No experience needed!



Church Tower Bell Ringing

Wednesday evenings

6:30pm – 8:30pm

1st Wednesday – Langtree

2nd Wed. – Black Torrington

3rd Wed. – Shebbear

4th Wed. – Black Torrington

5th Wed. – Roaming!

ST MARY'S RUBY RINGERS



Weekly Handbell Ringing

Tuesday afternoons at St.

Mary's, Black Torrington

2:15pm setup

2:30pm – 4:30pm



St Mary's, Black Torrington

Morning Prayer

Every Wednesday

10am

Attendance at Church of England churches rises for the fourth year in a row

Attendance at Church of England churches grew for the fourth year in a row last year, statistics have confirmed. The overall number of regular worshippers across the Church of England's congregations rose to 1.009 million in 2024, a rise of 0.6 per cent, according to the annual Statistics for Mission findings.

It was the second year in a row in which the Church of England's "worshipping community" – the combined number of regular members of local congregations – has stood above a million since the COVID-19 pandemic.

All age average attendance on a Sunday also rose 1.5 per cent to 581,000 in 2024, extending rises over recent years.

And overall attendance across the week edged upwards by 1.6 per cent in a year, and stood at just over 702,000 last year, according to the figures.

The increase was driven by a recovery in attendance by adults (over 16), among whom average Sunday attendance was up by 1.8 per cent and weekly attendance rose by 1.8 per cent.

It is also recognised that the number of teenage and adult baptisms in the Church of England rose by more than 1,000 last year, the highest since the age categories were first recorded six years ago.

Adult baptisms - 18+ - rose to 8,700 in 2024 compared to 7,800 the previous year and there was also a rise in the number of young people, aged between 11 and 17 years old who were baptised, from 2,100 in 2023 to 2,400 last year.

If you're reading this on a computer or tablet, you can [Click here](#) to read the full news story on the Church of England website

You go nowhere by accident.
Wherever you go, God is sending you there.
Wherever you are, God has put you there.
He has a purpose in your being there.
Christ, who indwells in you, has something He
wants to do through you, wherever you are.
Believe this, and go in His grace, and love and
power.

Rev. Dr. Richard C. Halverson's Benediction
U.S. Senate Chaplain from 1981 to 1994
Photo by [Francisco Delgado](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Endre Syvertsen BERG (1824 – 12th June 1912)



This is another grave which presented itself – I stumbled across the name and thought it a bit... Nordic for deepest, darkest Devon, so went looking. I hadn't even taken a photo of it in my grave cataloguing mission a few years back, so returned to St. Mary's, Black Torrington a few short days ago, armed with Gerry Matthew's fabulous list of extant gravestones.

And this one did not disappoint. Now felled, one can see it would have been an absolute towering spectacle in its heyday. But to paraphrase Loyd Grossman on *Through the Keyhole*, who would live beneath a grave like this?

Nordic was about right. Endre SYVERTSEN was born in Norway in around 1825. His marriage record places his birthplace as Stavanger (now known as the 'oil capital of Norway') in the Southwest, but his census record in 1865 provides a birthplace of Flekkefjord, also in the Southwest, but some two hours drive away in modern times.

Regardless of his exact birthplace, he was the son of Syvert SORENSEN – at this point, I introduce you to the horrors I have discovered while researching this. Not 'skeletons in cupboards', but how unfamiliar I am with the Scandinavian surname system, in addition to the lack of consistent spelling.

Endre SYVERTSEN was the child ("sen") of Syvert – SYVERTsen. So his father Syvert was the "sen" of Soren – SORENSen. So far, so good.

Endre married Anne Hansine Handsdr SINGDAL, daughter of Hans SINGDAL at Stavanger, Norway on 23rd February 1849. However, we are told in the record, Endre SYVERTSEN is also going by the alias BERG, which follows him through life. I am not sure why he took up "BERG", and can find no explanation through my primitive research.

I have managed to find evidence of five children of this marriage between Endre BERG and Anne SINGDALSEN ('sen' of Singdal...) there may well be more, but my Norwegian isn't good, and the names and records aren't helping me out!

Mathilda Hansine BERG – born 26th December 1848 at Stavanger.

Anna Elise Sivertsen BERG – born 12th December 1850, baptised New Year's Day 1851 at Stavanger but died 22nd April 1953, and buried on 28th April at Stavanger.

Anne Elise, born 8th June 1855, baptised 20th June in Skien Parish, which is Southern Norway rather than Southwest. It was thought that the ENDER family had moved here for better job prospects. For

anyone interested, Skien is the birthplace of playwright Henrik IBSEN, although that's just an aside.

Carl Ander BERG (possibly Ender or Endre), born 22nd February 1857, and baptised at Skein on 26th April of that year.

The last child I could find of the marriage is Emelie, born around 1858 at Skein.

By 1865, Endre's first wife Anne has died. I don't know how, nor where, but sometime between 1858 and 1865, he becomes a widower. This I can tell from the 1865 census – or “folketelling”, which is Norwegian for ‘people count.’ He has returned to south west Norway, living at Skudenes, a market/port town not far from Stavanger and is living with his son Karl.

Daughter Anne is living as a “Pleiebarn” at the time of the 1865 census – a “foster child”. She is living at Stavanger with her foster parents Torkild SVENDSEN and his wife Bergithe ELIASDATTER

Daughter Marthilde has also been fostered out to Skudenes, living with Salve HAGE and Anne Malene HAGE and their family.

Emelie is at Skudenes also, with her fosterparents Lars Endresen RUSDAL and his wife Anne Malene RUSDAL.

Presumably following his wife's death, Endre was unable to cope with bringing up all the children, perhaps financially. However, we know at some stage he was made a Captain in the Merchant Navy (from later newspaper reports where he was referred to as such), so perhaps this is why his daughters were elsewhere, while he made his money.

At some stage within the next year, Endre BERG made the decision to move to the UK, as in Plymouth 1866, he marries Elizabeth Jane WATTS, daughter of Richard Ireland WATTS, a tailor.

From this marriage, there were four children; Endre Richard Ireland BERG, born 22nd June 1868, but died 29th November 1873, Maud Hetty BERG, born 1877, Annie Elizazbeth BERG, born 1878, Albert Edward BERG, born 30th May 1879, and another Endre Richard Ireland BERG, born 3rd August 1883.

By the time of the 1871 census, the family are living at 257 High Street, Exeter.

45-year-old Endre is listed as a dealer, and has children Matilda (20) and Amelia [sic] (12) from his first marriage living with him and his 24-year-old wife. They have a 17-year-old servant, Mary HOPKINS of Silvertown, Devon (8 miles north of Exeter) living with them.

The 1870s are not kind to the family, losing three children to tuberculosis within the space of a year, including the youngest daughters from both marriages. Endre witnesses the horrors of the deaths and registers them.

Emelia Berg	Female	21 Years	Daughter of Endre Siverton Berg a Sewing Machine Dealer	Phthisis Pulmonalis Certified by William Henderson M.D.	E. S. Berg Father Present at death Fairfield Parish
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Above: From the death registers – Emelia BERG, 18th Dec. 1879.

Below: Annie Elizabeth BERG 11th July 1878. © Crown Copyright

Annie Elizabeth Berg	Female	3 Years	Daughter of Endre Siverton Berg a Sewing Machine Manufacturer	Tubercular Meningitis and Convulsions 1 month. Coma Certified by Wm Henderson M.D.	E. S. Berg Father Present at death 261, High Street Exeter
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However, the 1870s were not all doom and gloom; Endre was in the business of sewing machines, and on 6th June 1873, he acquired a patent for the invention of improvements to sewing machines. And he became a Naturalised British Citizen in 1874.

His sewing machine business was located on Exeter High Street – around where John Lewis (the Old Debenhams building) is now.



His sewing machines are now considered antiques, and these were sold on eBay a while back.

It was also about this time that his father-in-law, Richard WATTS became mayor of Devonport in Plymouth. Things were definitely looking up.

In the 1881 census, his family are living at Sydney House, Culverland Road, Exeter. Nowadays the heart of student accommodation, then it would have been a lovely little place away from work. Endre was living with his wife Elizabeth, children Albert and Maud and Caroline SHEPHERD, a widowed 50-year-old Nurse from Plymouth and 15-year-old Ellen BASTIN of Exeter, their general servant.

At some stage, daughter Anne Elise from his first marriage has followed her father to England, as she marries tailor and outfitter Edward James TOWILL in 1883 in Southampton. They move to Orchard Terrace in Lynton, Devon and have a son Karl Oscar Edward Severtson TOWILL in 1884 (note 'Severtson' being an alternative spelling of Syvertsen/Sivertsen).

Times are still good in the 1891 census. Living back at 260 High Street, Exeter, 61-year-old Endre is still a sewing machine dealer, living with his wife Elizabeth (42), three scholar children, Maude (11), Albert (10) and Endre (6) and their 22-year-old servant Bessie Denham.

Oldest son Carl/Karl starts going by the anglicised name Charles BERG, and marries Emmeline Ellen GOULD on 17th August 1897 at St. James' church, Exeter.

However, with the turn of the century, things start 'going south' for the BERGs, and by the end of the decade, Endre would only have two children remaining alive.

From the available records, it appears that both oldest son Karl/Charles and youngest son Endre followed their father into the Merchant Navy, or were at least experienced in sailing. In December 1900, young Endre joined the crew of a merchant ship in Liverpool, sailing wines and spirits. It set sail for Vancouver on 23rd December 1900. The ship was called the Primrose Hill. It was caught in a gale on the 28th December and lost several of its sails. The ship tried to drop anchor, but this failed. The weather was so terrible that even the lifeboat had to turn back.



Primrose Hill – as found on <https://www.nautilusint.org/en/news-insight/ships-of-the-past/2021/april/primrose-hill/>

The ship broke onto two rocks near the South Stack lighthouse on Anglesey in North Wales. The vessel sank within fifteen minutes. There was only one survivor.

Most of the recovered bodies were buried at Maeshyfryd Cemetery, Anglesey, including Endre BERG junior. Several of the crew were never found, and several washed up in such a state that they could not be identified before burial. There is a large memorial to the lost in the cemetery.

We next find the family at 4 Richmond Grove, Heavitree Exeter. Endre senior has retired and is living on his own means, and he lives with his wife Elizabeth and daughter Maude.

Shortly after this census was taken, Endre's daughter Anne TOWILL died at Heavitree. Her husband Edward died at Dorset County Asylum three years later. Their son Karl TOWILL married Gertrude

Minnie PIDGEON in Southwark, London in 1904 served as a Private in the Devonshire Regiment in World War One and survived, and died in Exeter in 1935, going by the name of Charles Edward – a far cry from Karl Oscar.

1903/04 was definitely “wedding Hat season”, as daughter Maud married Henry Roy STOCKER, a tailor in Exeter, and son Albert found love, and married Elizabeth Ann FRIEND of Hatherleigh.

At Hatherleigh, Albert and Elizabeth made their home at the Post Office. Albert was a trained pharmacist and photographer (and later, even dentist!) and is well known for his photographs of old Hatherleigh. He even built a house, “Oslo” in Oakfield Road.



Oldest son Charles/Carl’s wife Emmeline finally has a child – Norman BERG, born on 16th February 1906. However, their happiness was not to last, as in 1909, Charles would die in Kensington, London from cancer of the mouth and tongue.

Charles Berg	Male	52 Years	Master Mariner from Jorda Black Torrington North Devon	Carcinoma of Tongue & mouth Exhaustion Certified by Guy Wood M.B.
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As you can see from Charles BERG's usual place of residence on his death record, he is residing at "Forda, Black Torrington" – and so we begin our last chapter of Endre's life.

Some time between the 1901 and 1911 Census, the family join Arthur in our particular part of Devon, and we find them in the 1911 Census at the 12-roomed Forda.

The householder is Maude H STOCKER, wife, aged 29. She is living with Esme R STOCKER, her 5-year-old daughter, born at Black Torrington. Her husband is not listed in the record although she is recorded as "wife". She is living with her father Endre who is 85 and living on private means, her 69-year-old mother Elizabeth and their 24-year-old servant from Black Torrington, Norah BUSE.

The next year on June 12th 1912 at Breakwater Road, Bude, Endre dies of senile decay and chronic Cystitis.

Twelfth June 1912 7 Breakwater Road Bude Stratton Bude RD	Endre Sivertsen BERG	Male	86 years	of Independent Means	Senile Decay Chronic Cystitis Certified by A. M. Braund M R C S
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From the Death Record of Endre Sivertsen BERG © Crown Copyright

His body was conveyed back to Black Torrington for burial in the afternoon of Monday 17th June 1912.

It was reported in the Western Times (19 June) that "a magnificent huge anchor wreath was contributed by the family with the card attached by a purple silk rope, bearing the words "Safe Home in Port." This is further echoed by the prominent anchor on his gravestone.



It is not until his obituary in the Devon and Exeter Gazette of June 13th that we find out his nautical heritage. Referred to as “Captain E.S. BERG”, we read that he had a residence at Bude, Highampton and Black Torrington, he had lived at Mont-le-Grand, Exeter and was captain and owner of a vessel “and has travelled the world over.”

After Endre’s death, his son Albert remained at Hatherleigh for some years, moving away in the mid 1930s. His wife Elizabeth died at Seacote, Dartmouth in August of 1935, shortly after their move. He remarried, and took Phyllis LAMBERT as his wife in 1937. They relocated to Jersey during the Second World War, and Albert died on the 8th January 1953 at Oak Tree Farm, St Leonards, near Ringwood, Hampshire.

I can’t be sure where Endre’s widow Elizabeth lived, however at the time of the 1921 census, she is living with her daughter Maud STOCKER and granddaughter Esme Rowye STOCKER at Worle Hill in Somerset. The family later moved to Weston Super Mare, and the STOCKER family took care of Elizabeth in her later years.

She died at Weston Super Mare on 14th July 1935 and her funeral was to take place at Black Torrington where she would be interred with her husband on Wednesday 17th July.

The funeral was reported in the Devon and Exeter Gazette of the 19th July 1935.

The family had requested that only relatives were present.

The funeral was conducted by Rev. Buncombe, and his daughter was the organist. Children Albert and Maud were in attendance with their spouses, and granddaughter Esme was there also, alongside four members of the wider family.

Elizabeth's grave was lined with sateen and sweet peas and there were apparently many floral tributes. In addition, "the funeral was somewhat out of the ordinary for Black Torrington, as it was the first where the relatives have had the courage to break away from the old tradition of wearing black for mourning."

Thirteen years later, Maud STOCKER would return to be interred beneath a simple cross at the feet of her parents, the word "Mother" showing of Esme's deep love.

Coincidentally and poignantly, Endre lays between the graves of a completely unrelated Matilda (BAILEY) and Amelia (GERMAN); reminders of his other daughters interred elsewhere in the country and in the world.





On the Hatherleigh History Society Facebook page, I came across this image of Albert BERG and his 'family from Norway'.

Apparently, the man with the pipe is Albert.

I would suspect that the people in the picture are Ender, his second wife Elizabeth, son Charles/Karl from the first marriage, and other surviving children at the time Maud, Ender junior and Albert.

Kay Napier
October 2025

Sources:

Findmypast.com, Familysearch.org, GRO Births and Deaths records

<https://www.nautilusint.org/en/news-insight/ships-of-the-past/2021/april/primrose-hill/>

facebook: Hatherleigh History Society

<https://earlyrareantique.com/rare-vintage-antique-rare-early-e-s-berg-of-exeter-table-top-sewing-machine-2/>

<https://au.pinterest.com/pin/560487116136882873/>

https://www.xxxxantiques.com.au/antiques_collectables_old_vintage_antique_items_for_sale/sewing_machines/display/14979-rare-and-early-e.s.-berg-of-exeter-sewing-machine..

<https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/local-news/terrible-catastrophe-primrose-hill-holyhead-2697736>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1145262430774893&set=pcb.1145251200776016> image of memorial

Western Times. Western Morning News, Devon and Exeter Gazette

November Quiz:

- 1) The Guardian newspaper was founded in 1821 in which English city?
- 2) What dessert was created in the 1970s by Nigel Mackenzie and Ian Dowding at the Hungry Monk Restaurant in Jevington, East Sussex?
- 3) What did Sir Cecil Chubb do in 1918?
- 4) Which sport must left handed people play righthanded because of safety?
- 5) What is the name of the Picasso painting which depicts the horrors of the Spanish Civil War?
- 6) Which bestselling item of IKEA furniture is named BILLY?
- 7) Who played Violet Crawley in *Downton Abbey*?
- 8) In the poem "The Owl and the Pussycat," what type of spoon did they eat mince and slices of quince with?
- 9) In 2024, for which town did Nigel Farage stand as Reform party candidate?
- 10) Who was Isaac Newton writing to in 1675 when he wrote, "If I have seen further than others, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants?"
- 11) Which South West city is often described as England's smallest city?
- 12) In Geometry, how many sides does an icosagon have?

The answers will be in December's Bulletin.

Answers to October's Quiz

1. Mycology. 2. Kuala Lumpur. 3. 1918. 4. George Frideric Handel. 5. Ostrich.
6. Winston Churchill. 7. Horse. 8. Giuseppe Verdi. 9. Persia. 10. Claire Foy.
11. Margaret Thatcher. 12. Mediterranean Sea. 13. Nelson Mandela.
14. 1994. 15. Co. 16. The Great Escape. 17. Edward VIII. 18. Redwood.
19. The Michelin Man. 20. Eggs.

Senior Clergy Reflection from the Venerable Jane Bakker, Archdeacon of Plymouth

November 2025 | Anticipation

As the leaves fall and the days grow shorter, the church year quietly approaches its end. The close of the liturgical year invites us to slow down and reflect on what has passed. We are invited to pause before beginning again.

November serves as a bridge linking what has been with what is to come. In this in-between time we live in anticipation, not only of Advent and Christmas, but also of the deeper promises of God unfolding in our lives. The Gospels offer many images of anticipation. We are told of **watchful waiting** in the parable of the ten women called to stay awake and be ready, even when the wait is long. The parable of the talents speaks of **active waiting** and of being faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Simeon and Anna are the embodiment of **faithful waiting** as they look forward to the fulfilment of God's promise. Theirs is a posture of hope, rooted in trust. They did not know when or how the promise was to be fulfilled, only that they should wait in expectation.

We live in a culture of instant gratification, where waiting is often seen as a problem to solve or a void to fill. But for Christians, waiting is not wasted time, it is sacred time. It is a spiritual discipline; a quiet resistance to the rush of the world and the lure of busyness.

To wait is to live in the tension of the now and not yet of God's kingdom. It is to trust in God's promises without needing to know the outcome. In surrendering our need for certainty, waiting becomes a quiet act of rebellion against a culture that demands immediacy.

When we choose to wait with intention, we open ourselves to the slow, transformative work of the Spirit. We learn to listen more deeply, to notice more fully and to discover God in the longing itself. As St Augustine of Hippo said:

"The entire life of a good Christian is in fact an exercise of holy desire. You do not see what you long for, but the very act of desiring prepares you, so that when He comes, you may see and be utterly satisfied."

Ven Jane Bakker, Archdeacon of Plymouth

Worried about a Child or Vulnerable Adult?

Please speak to your Parish Safeguarding Representative if you have any concerns for the wellbeing of a child or adult, or about the behaviour of someone towards a child or adult.

Your Parish Safeguarding Representative is:

ASHWATER: Not Known.

BEAWORTHY: Not Known.

TETCOTT: Sharon Wonnacott Sharonwonnacott@hotmail.co.uk 07980 989 262

HOLYWELL JOINT COUNCIL (Black Torrington with Highampton, Clawton and Halwill)

Val Letheren rubycountry.beneficeadmin@btinternet.com 07484 880 770

If you cannot reach your Parish Safeguarding Representative, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team:

Costa Nassaris Head of Safeguarding and Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
01392 294 969 costa.nassaris@exeter.anglican.org 07809 339 501

James May Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
01392 345 910 james.may@exeter.anglican.org 07889 542 646

Rebecca Lane Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
01392 294 975 rebecca.lane@exeter.anglican.org 07889 542640

David Cross Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
david.cross@exeter.anglican.org 07572 923 242

General Enquiries: safeguarding enquiry@exeter.anglican.org
01392 294 929

IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM

If you believe someone is at immediate risk of harm or that a crime has been committed dial **999**.

If you have serious concerns about an individual's wellbeing, you should contact the relevant agencies:

Concerns about Children	0345 155 1071	Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Concerns about Adults	0345 155 1007	Devon Care Direct
Domestic Abuse	0345 155 1074	Devon Helpline for professionals & Individuals
Rape Crisis	0808 802 9999	

Please notify your Safeguarding Representative and/or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team after contacting any of these agencies.

All information in this bulletin correct at time of publication

Ruby Country Benefice

RUBY PEOPLE WORSHIPPING IN GOD'S COUNTRY

St. Peter Ad Vincula, Ashwater EX21 5EY
St. Alban, Beaworthy EX21 5AB
Holy Cross, Tetcott EX22 6QZ

Ruby Holywell

St. Mary's, Black Torrington EX21 5PU
St. Leonard, Clawton EX22 6PS
St. Peter & St. James, Halwill EX21 5UH