Puby Country Benefice

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

Bulletin December 2025 / January 2026



Tell everyone of every nation, "Praise the glorious power of the LORD."

Psalm 96:7 (CEV)

| egisters | | November |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| and the second s | 4^{th} | Funeral of Margaret BAKER |
| Par | Ÿ. | (Highampton Churchyard) |
| Pe | 7^{th} | Funeral of Jose TAYLOR |
| E. | | (St. Peter ad Vincula, Ashwater) |
| OTH MAN | 12^{th} | Interment of ashes of Patrica BROWN |
| | | (St. Peter ad Vincula, Ashwater) |
| | 24^{th} | Funeral of Freda BRANTON |
| | | (St. Leonard, Clawton) |
| | 29 th | Interment of ashes of Sheila HANCOCK |
| | | (Holy Cross, Tetcott) |
| | 29 th | Wedding |
| | | (St Mary's, Black Torrington) |

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Rector

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DECEMBER

From the Rector's Desk

It is closing dark 4pm after two consecutive days of storm force rain. Henry and I have just returned from his walk, he is asleep and I am writing this.

Val commented that our benefice diaries are nearly full for the rest of the year back in October, and they are bulging now.

The words of Bishop Mike ring in my ears about Christ's load being light, whilst I sit contemplating what Advent will bring and what advent will mean this year.

Advent is my favourite time of the year. I love the chill, the bustle of crowds surging, empty churches where one can think, and pray, and rest. Holly, Mince pies, endless coffee, excited children, purple stoles, and a stillness... a not-quite-yet-ness.

Advent traditionally is the empty space before Christmas; fasts were common, work was hard, prayer mandatory, people grumpy and the time pretty miserable.

One of the joys of post-reformation Britain is that this changed and has become a time of retreat, a time to breathe, a time to wonder about Christ, his birth, the adventure to come; it is a time to empty ourselves and find, in silent prayer, the birthing of a fresh

relationship with Christ, and with each other.

Of course, there are the school concerts, the nativity services, carols, the mandatory visit to Waterstones (and the avoidance of the awful huts outside the cathedral), the pleas for no more silly socks or jumpers, and the longed-for day itself (and the week of rest thereafter!)

Much as I love Christmas (I do), there is always, every year, without fail, a sadness that Advent has gone again, like a welcome guest who knows when to leave, but whom, secretly, you can't wait to invite back again. A deep-seated sadness of something special passing. It is the time of the year when I most readily, and very warmly, remember the family and friends who are no longer with us.

Don't let this special time go by. Days and weeks are all too quickly lost and their meaning made absent by busyness.

Take this time and use it well. Enjoy it and share it with God. It doesn't matter what you do, or how you use it - so don't do what someone else tells you to do!

But do not let it pass. Don't lose it. It is, literally, irreplaceable.

Happy Advent and Happy Christmas. Paul.

From the Parish Registers image (pg. 2) © Parish Pump,
Cover image: GWR Puzzle from Shirley Richmond
Clawton Carol Service poster - Photo by <u>Aaron Burden</u> on <u>Unsplash</u>
Pg. 10, Advent Candles at St. Leonard, Clawton - display and photo by K. Deacon.
Thanks to Revd. Dr. Paul Fitzpatrick, Val Letheren, Lorna Bowden, Diana Cutler,
John Lawlor, Diana Marriott, Nikki Mitchell and Shirley Richmond for their contributions.

וותח בחישר עודיד וחד ושמח מעשל כשודי ב 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. Hosea: God's love for Israel Oct 26 despite their unfaithfulness. Joel: The day of the Lord and Nov 23 repentance Amos: Social justice and God's Jan 25 judgment. Obadiah: Judgment against Mar 22 Edom

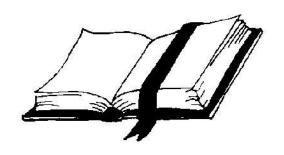
Ruby Country Benefice Services for December 2025

| Sunday 7th | 9:30am | Ashwater | Morning Service |
|---------------------------|---------|------------------|--------------------|
| 2 nd Sunday of | 11am | | |
| Advent | 11am | Halwill | Morning Service |
| | 5:30pm | Tetcott Tea and | |
| | 6pm | | Service |
| Sunday 14 th | 11am | Black Torrington | Café Church |
| 3 rd Sunday of | 11am | Clawton | Holy Communion |
| Advent | 6:30pm | Beaworthy | Evening Service |
| Friday 14 th | 7pm | Black Torrington | Carol Service |
| Sunday 21st | 11am | Halwill | Carol Service |
| 4th Sunday of | 2pm | Clawton | Carol Service |
| Advent | 1 | | |
| | 6pm | Ashwater | Carol Service |
| Tuesday 23rd | 7pm | Beaworthy | Carol Service |
| Wednesday 24th | 2pm | Ashwater | Crib Service |
| Christmas Eve | 3pm | Black Torrington | Nativity Service |
| | 7pm | Tetcott | Christmas Eve Crib |
| | 50.4576 | | Service |
| Thursday 25th | 9am | Beaworthy | Said Christmas Day |
| Christmas Day | | 50th | Holy Communion |
| | 10:30am | Halwill Baptist | Ecumenical Service |
| | | Church | with Revd. Paul |
| Sunday 28th | 11am | Beaworthy | Holy Communion |
| Christmas 1 | | | |

Weekly - all welcome from the benefice

| Every | 10am | Black | Morning Prayer |
|-----------|------|------------|----------------|
| Wednesday | | Torrington | |

Lectionary Readings for **December 2025**



| Sunday 7 th 2 nd Sunday of Advent | Sunday 14 th 3 rd Sunday of Advent | Sunday 21 st 4 th Sunday of Advent | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-7, 18, 19 Romans 15:4-13 Matthew 3:1-12 | Isaiah 35:1-10 Psalm 146:4-10 James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11 | Isaiah 7:10-16 Psalm 80:1-8, 18-20 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-25 | |
| Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill, Tetcott. | Services at Black Torrington, Clawton, Beaworthy. | Services at Halwill, Clawton, Ashwater | |
| Sunday 24th | Sunday 25 th | Sunday 28th | |
| Christmas Eve | Christmas Day | Christmas 1 | |
| Isaiah 52:7-10 | Isaiah 9:2-7 | Isaiah 63:7-9 | |
| Psalm 98 | Psalm 96 | Psalm 148 | |
| Hebrews 1:1-4 | Titus 2:11-14 | Hebrews 2:10-18 | |
| John 1:1-14 | Luke 2:1-20 | Matthew 2:13-23 | |
| Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Tetcott. | Service at Beaworthy. | Service at Beaworthy. | |

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

Ruby Country Benefice **Services for January 2026**

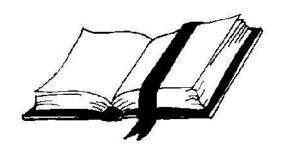
| Sunday 4th | 9:30am | Ashwater | Morning Service |
|---------------------------|--------|------------------|-----------------|
| Epiphany | 11am | Black Torrington | Holy Communion |
| | 11am | Halwill | Morning Service |
| | 5:30pm | Luffincott | Tea and |
| | 6pm | | Service |
| Sunday 11 th | 11am | Black Torrington | Café Church |
| Baptism of Christ | 11am | Clawton | Holy Communion |
| | 6:30pm | Beaworthy | Evening Service |
| Sunday 18th | 9:30am | Ashwater | Holy Communion |
| 2 nd Sunday of | 11am | Black | Morning Prayer |
| Epiphany | | Torrington | |
| Sunday 25 th | 11am | Beaworthy | Holy Communion |
| 3 rd Sunday of | 11am | Clawton | United Service |
| Epiphany | | | Café Church |

| Sunday 25 rd | 6 pm | St. Mary's Church, | Informal Bible Study |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| January | W | Black Torrington | (all welcome) |

Weekly - all welcome from the benefice

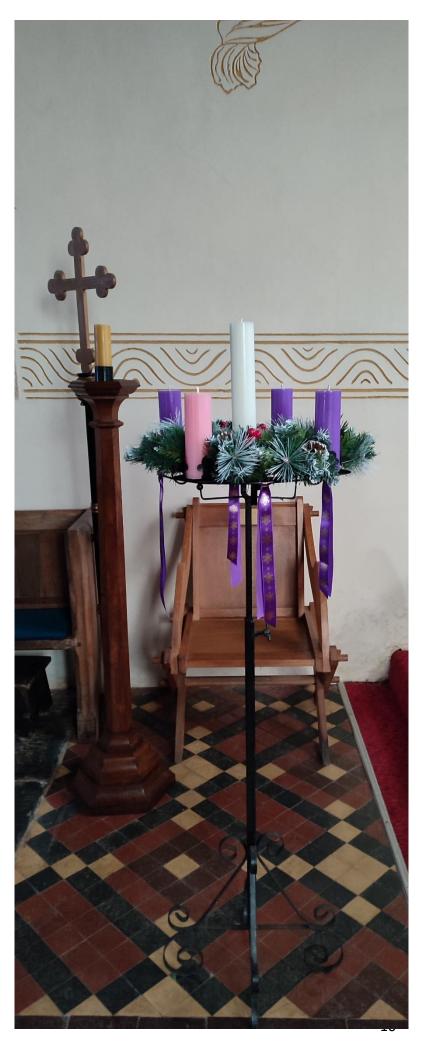
| Every | 10am | Black | Morning Prayer |
|-----------|------|------------|----------------|
| Wednesday | | Torrington | |

Lectionary Readings for **January 2026**



| Sunday 4 th Epiphany | Sunday 11 th Baptism of Christ | Sunday 16 th 2 nd Sunday of Epiphany |
|--|--|---|
| Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12 | Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm Acts 10:34-43 Matthew 3:13 - end | Isaiah 49:1—7 Psalm 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 John 1:29-42 |
| Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill, Luffincott. | Services at Black Torrington, Clawton, Beaworthy | Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington |
| Sunday 23 rd 3rd Sunday of Epiphany | | |
| Jeremiah 1:4-10 Psalm Acts 9:1-22 Matthew 19:27-end | | |
| Services at Beaworthy Clawton. | | |

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



Mission Matters

Building upon our mission theme of 'sharing our stories', and Kay's wonderful narratives around memorisation this last year, this Advent I plan to mark each Sunday with a letter, from me, or, to me, instead of a sermon. I want us to think carefully about this amazing time, and to use it wisely. This is not a new idea; the concept of 'narrative theology', a movement that rightly seeks to adopt standards of truth and reasoning from the biblical narratives itself, whist keeping the biblical position of revelatory truth in the Holy Spirit portrayed in the narrative form of scripture itself. This form of theology allows scripture to work in the context of its setting.

Our brains respond to story, our identity is based upon story; so, as we look to the unveiling of the birth narrative afresh this year, I want us to explore how we share Christmass with those around us.

The Advent adventure begins...

Sunday 14th December Cafe Church

St Mary's Church

Black Torrington

11am

Val is unavailable so we have

Special Guests

Camile and Camron

helping with this service

Come and give them your support.

St Mary's Church Black Torrington with Highampton The Nativity Christmas Eve at 3pm

Come and be part of this wonderful Story.

Come dressed as someone who may of been there!

Our Vicar has said he will include all that come. Who's up for the challenge

Morning Prayer

Every Wednesday Morning, the Benefice holds a Morning Prayer service at St Mary's Church, Black Torrington.

10am

This service is Lay led and lasts for about half hour.

Everyone is welcome to attend

If the weather is bad

Please phone Val 07484880770

to check it's happening

Shirley Richmond

Wooden jigsaws that never made it to the Festival

Sadly there were several jigsaws that didn't get there. Each had one piece or more missing.

'Yachts' was cut by Dr Gwynne. The box was marked 'complete', so we made it up and it wasn't - but we still hope that perhaps the missing pieces will be found. Typically it was push-fit - slides everywhere or non-interlocking - and so it rests in a temporary frame. No picture was provided and it was dark and stormy and hard to do. The original was a watercolour by JW Gozzard 1861 - 1926





'Zambezi River' dates back to the late 1920s-30s. It is one of the South Africa series cut by AVN Jones, a company whose expertise rivalled those of Chad Valley and Victory. Sadly the box was incomplete, but the puzzle has been re-homed.





There was a very happy ending to 'Model Railway'. This is a Chad Valley poster/puzzle for GWR [Great Western Railway.] Chad Valley won a prestigious contract from GWR and produced over a million promotional puzzles for them between 1924 and 1939. When we finished the puzzle there was a piece missing, so we bought the puzzle and have since had the missing piece made. Can you spot it? (picture on Bulletin cover)

Come and join us - open to all



Every 2nd Wednesday
of the month
Meet fellow puzzlers, puzzle,
chat, donate, loan, borrow
Tea, coffee available.
We look forward to seeing you



12th November 2025

The First gathering of <u>St. Mary's Ruby Puzzlers</u> We met, we puzzled, we chatted over tea, coffee and biscuits. A successful social community time. Ann made a generous donation of a Wentworth puzzle to our collection, thank you very much





St. Leonard's Church, Clawton United Church Carol Service

ten-der and mild. Sloop as All - le - lu - la. Christ des Sections

deem - ing grace. As - see less as the

Silent Night, Holy A

Sunday 21st December 2025 at 2pm

with the Black Torrington Ruby Ringers

Mulled Wine

Mince Pies

MISSE Asserting A STAR

all welcome

Carols by Candlelight

HALWILL CHURCHES TOGETHER

invite you to join us to celebrate Christmas at a service of Carols By Candlelight

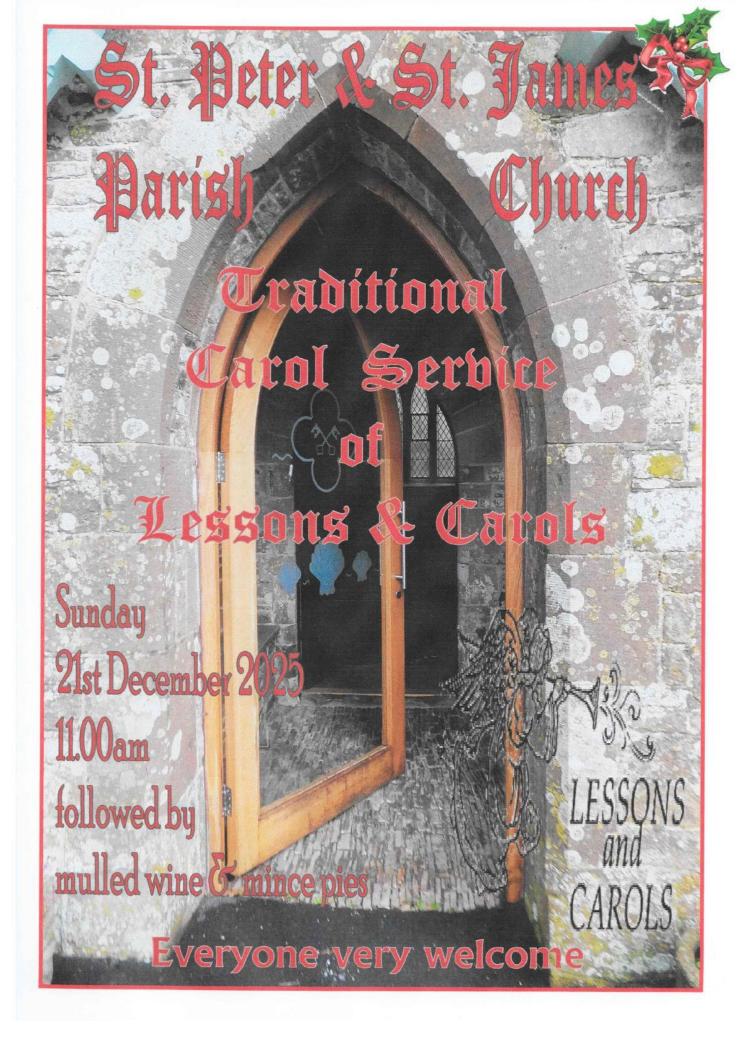
YOUR FAVOURITE CAROLS

Sunday
7th December 2025
7.00pm
BAPTIST CHAPEL
Halwill Junction

WRAP UP WARN!!

Carol Singing around the Village Assemble outside the cillage shop DECEMBER 22ND 6.00PM

Hawill Churches Together





LUFFINCOTT CHURCH SUNDAY 4TH JANUARY 5.30PM MULLED WINE 6PM SERVICE

CANDLEUT SERVICE





Sunday 21st December: Nine Lessons & Carol Church Service

Wednesday 24th December – Crib Service, 2pm

Halwill Church

Halwill Churches Together - Village Candle-lit Carol Service in the Baptist Chapel on Sunday 7th December at 7.00pm Halwill Church - Traditional Service of Carols and Lessons in Halwill Parish Church at 11.00am on Sunday 21st December followed by Minced Pies and Mulled Wine.

Halwill Churches Together - Carol Singing Around the Village - assemble at 6.00pm outside the village shop. Wrap up warm.

For January

4th January Halwill Church - Morning Worship at 11.00am 18th January - Halwill Churches Together 11.00am Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at Madworthy Chapel (no service in Halwill)

21st December 2.00pm Carol Service at Stowford Meadow Baptist Chapel lead by the Stowford Meadow Singers.

Parson Jack Russell

Art, Craft & Photography
Exhibition



June 12th -15th 2026

St Mary's Church, Black Torrington



PJR Exhibition

Little Acorns, Burdon Lane,

Highampton, Beaworthy EX21 5LX

Phone: 07484880770

val.letheren@btinternet.com





Five Strategic Priorities



The next Bulletin will be for FEBRUARY and will arrive at the end of January 2026

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to our readers.

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 <u>will not</u> 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

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

Victorian-Era Ruby Christmas Marriages

This month, I thought I would use Christmas as an inspiration, and set to looking through the burial records. On finding little inspiration – no babies born named "Holly" or "Christmas" (I have a distant cousin, born in the 1800s on December 25th who had "Christmas" as a middle name – alas, no such luck here.)

My next thought was, again, inspired by my own family tree, and I set about finding people from our parishes who were married on Christmas Day, as it was quite "popular" in the Victorian years.

I say popular, but for many workers, it was the only time that people had guaranteed off work, so an ideal day. In some churches, Christmas Day weddings and Baptisms were encouraged and done free of charge – well, if you were going to be in church anyway, why not!

Despite my ancestry – and those who inspired the Find My Past Article <u>"Why did so many people marry on Christmas Day"</u>, it seems not to be the case at all for Ruby.

I was unable to access the marriage records for Tetcott online, but trawled through records 1837-1915 for Ashwater, Beaworthy, Black Torrington, Clawton, Highampton, Halwill and Luffincott, taking in around 800 marriages, and can confirm that between the years, there were three Christmas Eve weddings, six Christmas Day weddings and six Boxing Day weddings. I'll pop all the info on a table on the next page, just in case you were interested.

Next in my plan was to find one of these couples buried in our churchyards. This was a complete failure. I've got parents and children, but not an extant gravestone for any of the couples.

| Date of Marriage | Bride | Groom | Church married at |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Christmas Eve 1852 | Ann MARKS | Richard MASON | Clawton |
| Christmas Eve 1881 | Harriet HILL | John WATKINS | Highampton |
| Christmas Eve 1910 | Margaret Louise RABLEY | Archibald Edward COE | Ashwater |
| Christmas Day 1839 | Elizabeth VENTON | Henry Perkin BLIGHT | Black Torrington |
| Christmas Day 1848 | Anne PARSONS | Josiah BASUT | Halwill |
| Christmas Day 1873 | Mary BALSDON | Lewis PERKIN | Black Torrington |
| Christmas Day 1875 | Eliza Ann STEVENS | William DAWE | Ashwater |
| Christmas Day 1879 | Mary Elizabeth BAILEY | Benjamin PHARE | Black Torrington |
| Christmas Day 1880 | Rebecca Kate FROST | Richard HILL | Highampton |
| Boxing Day 1837 | Joanna PRIOR | William COLLACOTT | Black Torrington |
| Boxing Day 1862 | Fanny HEYSETT | James HARRIS | Highampton |
| Boxing Day 1867 | Amelia HOCKIN | Albert HEARN | Black Torrington |
| Boxing Day 1871 | Mary Ann Cutland PETHERICK | James HOLE | Highampton |
| Boxing Day 1898 | Eliza Ann GAY | Fred NIX | Highampton |
| Boxing Day 1904 | Eda LAMBLE | Arthur GOMER | Black Torrington |

So, my last – and current - plan is to just have a look at some of these Christmas Day couples – people from our Benefice whose Christmases looked that little bit different over a hundred years

Elizabeth VENTON and Henry Perkin BLIGHT married 25th December 1839, Black Torrington.

Both Elizabeth and Henry were marrying for the second time. Henry had married Grace DAMEREL on 1st May 1820 at Bradford, and Elizabeth had married John VENTON at Black Torrington on 3rd June 1824 – definitely less romantic sounding dates!

Both their spouses were buried at Bradford, so one can assume this to be where they met. John VENTON's gravestone is still visible at Bradford Churchyard.

Elizabeth was the daughter of Joseph CHAPMAN and his wife Susanna ODAM. Their gravestone is displayed to the side of the

porch at St. Mary's, Black Torrington.

At the time of their marriage in 1839, Henry was listed as a butcher, and Elizabeth a dealer in China.

We first find them in the 1841 census at Totleigh Mill, where the 40-year old Henry is the Miller. He is living with 35 year old Elizabeth and their daughter Elizabeth, aged just one year. Also with them are the children of Elizabeth's first marriage, the VENTONs: William (15), Mary (13), John (11), Elizabeth (9), Caroline (7), and Joseph (aged 4).

CHAPMAN grave at Black Torrington >



In the 1851 census, the family have moved to Upcott Mill in Sheepwash.

Henry is still a Miller, and it is revealed that he was born at Langtree in Devon. He is living with his wife Elizabeth, Elizabeth's daughter Caroline VENTON, and four children of the marriage — Elizabeth Grace (11), George Odam BLIGHT (9) — he is buried at Chilla Chapel, Hubert Blight (7) and Ann Blight (4).

The family are at North Street in Torrington by the 1861 census. Henry and Elizabeth – aged 62 and 57 – are living alongside their children, daughters Elizabeth (21) and Ann (14) their sons George (19) and Herbert (16) [sic] who followed their father into the milling profession, three servants – William VINTON [sic] who, is technically a stepson! Henry DAWN, aged 19 from Black Torrington, and 11-year-old Daniel HOWARTH from Devonport. Also living with them is 3-month-old "Visitor" Rose E HORNE from Shebbear.

Elizabeth BLIGHT, nee CHAPMAN, previously VENTON was buried in 1866 at St. Lawrence Churchyard in Sheepwash. Her husband Henry Perkin BLIGHT died and was buried there the following year.

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Ann PARSONS and Josiah BASUT married 25th December 1848, Halwill.

I have been able to find very little out about this couple. Anne PARSONS was aged 27 at the time of her marriage and was the daughter of George and Phillippa PARSONS of Halwill Moor. When she married Josiah, he was listed as a minor, and son of John BASUT of East Wonford, Milton Damerel. It is possible that BASUT is an

30

alternative spelling of BASSETT, however I have been unable to trace either Josiah or Ann in a census. This could be because they have moved out of the county or country, died, or their names are spelled so incorrectly, it would take me a long time to figure it out.

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Mary BALSDON and Lewis PERKIN married 25th December 1873, Black Torrington

Lewis PERKIN was born in around 1850 in Shebbear, the son of William and Fanny PERKIN, and by the time of the 1871 census, he was a servant to the SLADE family at Dipper Mill.

Mary was the daughter of William BALSDON of Gravesend and Susanna SQUIRES of Black Torrington. At the time of the 1851 Census, the family were living at Jennings in Black Torrington.

At the time of the 1881 census, the family are living at Braundsworthy Moor. 31-year-old Lewis and Mary are living with their three children, Bessie (6), William (5) and Rosina, born that year.

The family have moved to Gorvett, Black Torrington by 1891. Lewis and Mary are no longer declaring themselves as the same age; in the preceding decade, Lewis has only aged 8 years while 41-year-old Mary has aged as expected! They are living with their ten-year-old daughter Rosina, sons Lewis (5) and Frederick (2), and a 5-month-old "Lodger", Glidar SANDERS.

The 1901 Census shows the family still at Gorvett. Lewis is

employed as a Stone Quarry Contractor, still living with Mary and his son Frederick, but his uncle Richard PERKIN aged 86 has moved in with them, presumably for care in old age.

Lewis died in 1909. I have been unable to find the burial record but it is likely he is buried at Black Torrington.

In the 1911 Census, Mary is living alone at Gorvett. I then lose track of her.

Briefly, I picked up on the short life of their daughter Rosina. Rosina PERKIN married Thomas James CORNISH and they had seven sons and a daughter, and they lived at Derril.

Rosina lived a short life, and died on 10th April 1919, aged 38. She was buried at Pyworthy. However, at the same time as her death, she delivered her youngest son Arthur Fred CORNISH who died a year and seven months later on 1st November 1920. He is buried with his mother.

Also commemorated on their headstone is their second-born son, Harold Ernest CORNISH who was killed on 13th September 1920, shortly before the death of his baby brother.

Harold was working at the Meldon Railway Quarries near Okehampton when he was hit by a train and "cut to pieces." He stepped out of the way of a ballast train and into the path of a faster-moving train approaching on the other road.

A third of their children, Wilfred Clarence CORNISH, a Private in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry died on 11th July 1944, and is buried at Bayeux, France and commemorated on the War Memorial outside the church at Holsworthy.

Thomas CORNISH remarried shortly after Rosina's death, and both he and his second wife Kate are buried elsewhere in the cemetery at Pyworthy.

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Eliza Ann STEVENS and William DAWE married 25th December 1875, Ashwater

At the time of their marriage, both William and Eliza are servants. William is the son of John DAWE, and Eliza's parentage is unknown.

On the 1881 Census, they are at Forda Cottage in Ashwater. William is a 25-year-old farm labourer from Tetcott, his wife Elizabeth [sic] is a year younger at 24, and they have three children; Frederick (4), Sarah Ellen (3) and James (1).

I was unable to find the family in the 1891 census or 1901, but by the time of the 1911 census, they are living at 1 Ratherton Cottage, Holsworthy Hamlets.

William and Elizabeth are living with their 20-year-old daughter Emma who has married insurance agent John STONE, and they live with Margaret STONE, the DAWE's 18-month-old granddaughter.

By the 1921 Census, the family have moved south, and are in Harberton. William DAWE is a general estate worker for Sir Robert HARVEY on the Wimbridge Estate. He is living with his wife Elizabeth, daughter Emma STONE and her two children, Margaret and Bernard. I then lose track of this family.

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Mary Elizabeth BAILEY and Benjamin PHARE married 25th December 1875, Black Torrington

Benjamin was the son of John PHARE and Mary WHITE, born and baptised at Highampton. In the 1871 census, he is the Indoor Servant to the MARTIN family at East Odam, Highampton.

Mary Elizabeth was the daughter of Joseph BAILEY, tailor at Black Torrington and his wife Elizabeth KNIGHT. Mary was born around 1858, and, in the 1861 census, they are living at 2, Long Cross, Black Torrington.

In the 1881 census, Benjamin and Mary PHARE are living in Back Lane, Black Torrington. 25-year-old Benjamin is a Carpenter, and he is living with his 23-year-old wife Mary and one year old son, John.

In 1891, the family are living at Dimson, Calstock. Benjamin is a general labourer, living with his wife Mary and children John (11), Mary (9), Richard (5), Thomas (3) and Henry (1). The last three children were born in Calstock so the family would have moved down in the mid-1880s.

In the 1901 census, the family are still at Dimson, Calstock, but one can see what drew the family south. Benjamin's occupation is listed as "arsenic burner – invalided." He has moved to Calstock to work as a miner, and this shows the less romantic side of the banks of the Tamar down near Morwellham Quay. Benjamin and Mary are living with seven sons; Richard (15), Thomas (13), Henry (10), George (8), Sydney (7), Ernest (5) and Charles (2).

In the 1911 Census, the family have moved to Gunnislake. Benjamin does not have an occupation listed while they live at Chelsworthy. Mary is still living with them, as are sons Ernest (15), Charles (12) and William (8).

By this time, their son Richard has taken up work as a Coal Miner Hewer – "hewing" or cutting the coal away from the face. What we think of when we think of a coal miner. He had moved to Witton Gilbert in Durham. This Colliery was open until 1960.

Around 1918, Mary and Benjamin moved up to Chester-Le-Street near their son in Durham. Mary died here in 1919, and Benjamin died in 1923.

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Rebecca Kate FROST and Richard HILL married 25th December 1880, Highampton

Another family I know little about. At the time of their marriage, Richard HILL is a Butcher, son of James HILL, a shopkeeper, and Rebecca – Known as Kate – is a schoolmistress, the daughter of Thomas FROST.

Prior to their marriage, I can find them both in the 1871 censuses. Richard HILL is living with his parents James and Elizabeth HILL at Longwood, Highampton, where his father is a farmer of 50 acres. His sisters Ann (27), Elizabeth (22), Harriet (13) and Rhoda (10) are all glovers, and his younger brothers Thomas an errand boy, and William (6) a scholar. The fact that almost all the family were in employment indicates they were likely in need of money.

Rebecca is living in Macclesfield with her family, her father Thomas a builder and machine maker, employing 5 men and 2 boys.

The 1881 census is the only one I find the couple together in. They are at Bonfire Hill, Black Torrington. 26-year-old Richard is still a butcher, and 23-year-old Rebecca a Public Elementary Teacher.

So, as you eat your turkey and watch the King's speech, raise a glass to the couples that a century plus ago were celebrating their wedding day or anniversary. All would have had very Merry Christmasses, and – one day – heartbreaking ones alone. Where there is light, there is dark, and my heart goes out to all of you experiencing a less-than-bright season. But even in the darkness there is hope, love – and light again. And that is what I wish you this Christmas. Love and hope.

Kay Napier November 2025

Sources:

Findmypast.com
Familysearch.org
GRO Births and Deaths records
Marriage records 1838-1915 of Ashwater, B

Marriage records 1838-1915 of Ashwater, Beaworthy, Black Torrington, Clawton, Halwill, Highampton, Luffincott

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/blog/discoveries/christmas-day-weddingshttps://www.calstockhistory.org.uk/mining-in-calstock-parish.html

Similes

Can you complete these common phrases?

- E.g. Fit as... a fiddle
 - 1. Dull as...
 - 2. Fresh as...
 - 3. Pretty as...
 - 4. Sharp as...
 - 5. Hard as...
 - 6. Dead as ...
 - 7. Right as...
 - 8. Guilty as...
 - 9. American as...
 - 10. Clean as...

12 Days of Christmas Maths

If on the first day of Christmas, you got a partridge in a pear tree (one gift), on the second day of Christmas you got a partridge in a pear tree and two turtle doves (3 gifts today plus yesterday's one = 4) ... By the end of the 12 Days of Christmas, how many total gifts would you have?

TRICKY QUESTION: How many of them would be birds?

Nativity

Unscramble these well-known

Nativity characters

- 1. SHOEJP
- 2. DEESSRHHP
- 3. ELRBGIA
- 4. UJSSE

- 1. How many ghosts show up in *A Christmas Carol*?
- 2. What colour are mistletoe berries?
- 3. Which King was crowned on Christmas Day?

The answers will be in the February Bulletin.

Answers to November's Quiz

- 1. Manchester. 2. Banoffee Pie. 3. Donated Stonehenge to the British Government. 4. Polo. 5. Guernica. 6. Bookshelf. 7. Dame Maggie Smith.
 - 8. Runcible. 9. Clacton. 10. Robert Hooke. 11. Wells. 12. Twenty.

Senior Clergy Reflection from the Rt. Rev'd Dr. Mike Harrison, Bishop of Exeter

The church has often used the season of Advent, the start of the Church's year in December as a run up to Christmas and all the nostalgia, sentimentalism, and bubbliness that comes with it. BUT, Advent was never meant to be just about a warm-up act before Christmas. In fact, it was meant to be serious preparation for the second coming of Jesus and his final judgement.

And as Christians we are called in Advent (and beyond) to bear witness to the coming of the Lord. We see signs of our Lord and His Spirit coming among us even now, for example, when a family conflict doesn't happen, when works of mercy or kindness occur, when the refugee is welcomed and the hungry shown compassion...these are anticipations, signs of the end, when complete breakthrough occurs with the Kingdom coming on earth. Advent also tells us to wait expectantly for the coming of the Lord – whether that is in daily moments in our mundane lives as we open the door to God's power and persuasion, or as we await the final New Age which Jesus alone will inaugurate.

The Good News of Advent is that ultimately our hope lies not in our own personal or communal efforts, initiatives or agendas, but rather the God of Advent who drew near to us in the babe of Bethlehem. He will come again to take away the darkness forever and be our eternal light. Advent is deeply counter-cultural, because it speaks not of human progress but of God's progress, about the Lord progressing towards us, which is Good News.

And there is **joy** in Advent because it centres on the One who is moving towards us, who is doing away with death, whose good judgement on evil is banishing darkness, who wildly desires us to reign with Him in the new heavens and new earth.

- The Bishop of Exeter, the Rt. Rev'd Dr Mike Harrison

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 <u>costa.nassaris@exeter.anglican.org</u> 07809 339 501

James May Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

01392 345 910 <u>james.may@exeter.anglican.org</u> 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: safeguardingenquiry@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

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Ruby Holywell

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