Wheatland News



Christmas 2026

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Editorial

The combined December/January edition is always packed full of the good stuff so the editorial is going to be very short, just to say this period emphasizes gathering with family, supporting the less fortunate, and showing goodwill toward all people. So, whatever you're doing, wherever you're going and whoever you're seeing, please have a

VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Psst! Please read the Wheatland News Renewal Reminder on page 30

Please send reports to your contact for your parishes listed below. The deadline for getting your contributions for the **February 2027** edition of WN to the **Local Coordinators or the EDITOR** will be **noon on WEDNESDAY 20th January 2027.** Due to editing and printing deadlines, late submissions **CANNOT** be included in the current months edition.

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Lights! *by The Venerable Sam Hustwayte - Archdeacon of Ludlow*

When the children were teenagers, upstairs I kept finding bedroom lights left on, and when questioned got the response – 'I'm going back up in a minute'. Eventually I threatened to remove bulbs if lights stayed on. However, it was particularly dark when the lights were off, and the winter gloom does feel unpleasant. Winter can be a time of depression and loneliness, longer nights and cold temperatures don't tend to encourage us to be joyful and smile. Maybe it's no wonder the children leave their bedroom lights on!

Lights though bring a smile, a glimpse of joy and wonder to our faces throughout the year, the flames of a bonfire, the candle flame flickering on a table, the warmth of the sun on your face....and so as the Christmas lights go up (and so do our electric bills), it struck me that our home doesn't feel quite so gloomy and the streets and communities are lifted briefly. The lights that decorate our homes and streets through December and into January may well be part of the temporary secular celebration of Christmas, but they speak about the permanent light of Christ, the light that shines in our lives, banishing the gloom and darkness.

The Bible is full of the contrast between light and dark, perhaps one of the most famous passages is in John's gospel where Jesus speaking to the Pharisees says 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life'. We often say of Jesus, over the Christmas period, that he is the light that shines in the darkness. Christmas comes and goes again so quickly, for a moment we focus on the birth of Jesus, the gifts, the food and family, and then the lights are put away! But the cold wet weather and dark winter nights remain, perhaps even more starkly than before the joy of Christmas time.

Christians believe that the light of Jesus, who has come into the world has not gone, he is with us each day bringing light into our lives and often we need to open our eyes to see it. As we put up and take down our lights this year let's not forget that Jesus brings light to everyone, every day of the year.

Have a Happy Christmas everyone



Sermon: Awake and Faithful - Using Our God-Given Talents

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. As we gather here today, I invite you to open your hearts to the words of Scripture, to the wisdom of our tradition, and to the gentle call of the Holy Spirit urging us onward on the journey of faith. Today, we reflect on two compelling passages: Paul's exhortation in First Thessalonians and the Parable of the Talents from the Gospel of Matthew. Both speak to us about the urgency of discipleship, the responsibility of stewardship, and the hopeful call to use our God-given gifts - without delay, without fear, and without cynicism.

Paul writes to the Thessalonians (5:2, 6), "You yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night… So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober". In these words, we hear both warning and encouragement. The warning is clear: we do not know the hour when Christ will return. The encouragement is even clearer: God calls us to stay alert and awake, to live with purpose, and to embrace each day as a gift. There is no time for resting on what we've already achieved, no room for complacency, no reason to hide our talents for fear of failure or ridicule.

Jesus, in the Parable of the Talents, drives this point home: "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability" (Matthew 25:14-15). Each servant was given something valuable. Each was entrusted with a share of the master's wealth. And, as the story unfolds, we see that it was not the amount given that mattered, but what was done with it. The servants who put their talents to work - who risked, who acted, who tried - were welcomed with the words, "Well done, good and trustworthy servant… enter into the joy of your master." But the one who buried his talent, paralyzed by fear and negativity, was cast out - not because he wasn't given enough, but because he refused to try.

My friends, this parable invites us first to consider: Where do our talents lie? What gifts - small or great - has God entrusted to each of us? Perhaps it is a talent for listening, a heart for compassion, a mind for learning, hands skilled for cleaning, flower arranging, building, crafting cooking or gardening or a voice tuned for singing, or the wisdom to guide others. Some gifts seem grand; others seem humble. But all are precious in the eyes of our Lord. The question is not whether we have received gifts, but what we do with what we have been given?

Too often, we let negativity or cynicism stand in the way. We convince ourselves that our contribution doesn't matter, that others are more qualified, that the world is too broken for our small acts to make a difference. Or we fall into the trap of nostalgia, resting on past accomplishments, thinking we have done enough. But Christ calls us to something deeper, something more hopeful. Our tradition reminds us that the Holy Spirit is always at work, breathing life into our efforts, multiplying what we offer, weaving our talents into the fabric of God's kingdom.

We are not called to wait idly for the Lord's return, nor to bury our gifts for fear of judgment. We are called to live out the good news - not with anxiety, but with bold and joyful trust that every act of love, every word of encouragement, every step toward justice and peace matters. As Saint Paul writes, "God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him" (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10). This is the promise that makes cynicism obsolete. This is the hope that overcomes all discouragement.

Let us, then, put down the burden of negativity. Let us resist the temptation to judge, to despair, to do nothing. Instead, let us embrace the good news: Christ trusts us enough to share his work with us. He calls us to light, to love, to action. Let us use our talents - great or small - for the glory of God and the good of others, every day, as if the Lord might return at any moment.

In conclusion, dear friends, let us be awake and ready. Let us be faithful and courageous. The Master has entrusted his work to our hands, and though we may not know the hour, we know the promise: If we live in hope, if we use our talents for love, we will hear those blessed words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." May it be so for each of us. Amen.

As we pray today, let us remember in our intercessions all those who struggle to see their own worth, who doubt their gifts, or who feel overwhelmed by darkness. Let us pray especially for those whose talents are overlooked or unappreciated.

Let us bring our prayers to God, who entrusts each of us with gifts to share. Lord in your mercy

For the Church: that we may be faithful stewards of all God has entrusted to us, using our gifts generously in worship, witness and service. Give us courage to put love into action rather than bury our gifts in fear. Lord, in your mercy

For those entrusted with power and leadership in our world: that they may use their authority and resources wisely, respect those they serve uphold justice and work for peace. May the needs of those who are weak, poor or overlooked and touched by hatred, war and violence be ever in your care and guide our leaders in their decisions. Lord, in your mercy,

For our Benefice and especially this parish community: that we may recognise and welcome the gifts of every person. Bless those who serve quietly through listening, caring, cleaning, arranging flowers, making music and offering practical help. Show each of us one way to serve this week. Lord, in your mercy,

For those who doubt their worth or fear they have nothing to offer: that they may discover the gifts God has placed within them. Help us to encourage one another, making room for new beginnings and patient growth. Lord, in your mercy,

For those who are ill, lonely, exhausted or grieving: that they may know your comfort and the kindness of others. Remind us that our worth does not depend on how much we can do, and help us to use our time and compassion to support those in need. Lord, in your mercy,

For all who have died, and for those who mourn them: receive the departed into your peace, and sustain those who grieve with your love. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Today we remember Paul, friend of Sean and Monica, whose anniversary of death is at this time and may God comfort all who mourn his loss. Silence…Lord n Your Mercy

Generous God, receive these prayers. Keep us awake to the needs around us, faithful in the gifts you have entrusted to us, and joyful in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Merciful Father…

The Month of December

So here we are at the last month of the year again. Why does it keep coming round more quickly? December means tenth which should not be right, but it is. So here we are in a month with the wrong name and it's cold!

Hundreds of years ago, some people did have a go at creating a calendar. For example, we have 750BC the Calendar of Romulus (one of the founding twins of the city that was to become Rome). This calendar began in March and thus December was the tenth month. In those days January and February did not exist. The Anglo-Saxons referred to December/January as *Ġēolamonab* or in modern English, Yule month.

The first real try at a calendar that everyone could understand was down to the work of Julius Caesar, it had 365 days in a year and an additional day every 4th year – does it sound familiar? This Julian calendar was adopted in 45BC and lasted for the next 1600 years.



At that point the future Pope Gregory XIII, was a man of law and jurisprudence at the university in Bologna, holding many positions within the law and working for several Popes. He became a priest at the age of 56 and was elected Pope 14 years later and set about reforming the Church. But he is remembered most for his invention of the Gregorian Calendar, which is the universal system used by most countries today.

I have come a long way from December to the Gregorian Calendar but there is still lots going on in this month and I don't just mean Christmas. I will be handing out chocolate coins on the feast of St Nicholas (6th December), because I like doing it.



I shall be looking out for tiny spots of red in the garden, which are hibernating ladybirds. If you are lucky, you may also see overwintering butterflies, Small Tortoiseshells or Peacocks or even the occasional moth. If you are walking near hedges, look out for blackthorn and the tiny white eggs laid by Hairstreak butterflies – they are laid where the new growth meets the old wood, but you will need good eyesight. I saw a primrose last month, while scything with Caring for God's Acre so again, eyes open for some. Don't stop there; I always like the date I see the first Snowdrop; will it be December or January? All this and I hope a very happy Christmas for all of us.

Anni Holden Calver,
Secretary of Shropshire Churches Tourism Group
Trustee of Caring for God's Acre

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

Brown Clee Group of Parishes

Brown Clee Benefice

Rector – Revd Joe Simons

The Vicarage, Ditton Priors, Shropshire, WV16 6SQ

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St John the Baptist, Ditton Priors, and Holy Trinity, Wheathill and Loughton

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SS Peter & Paul, Cleobury North

CHURCHWARDENS:

Mike Bradbury: 01746-787676

All Saints', Neenton

CHURCHWARDEN:

Dot Cartwright: 07854-559474

Brown Clee Readings for December 2026 & January 2027

Sunday, 6th December The Second Sunday of Advent	Purple	*Psalm 85. 1-2, 8-end; Isaiah 40. 1-11; 2 Peter 3. 8-15a; Mark 1. 1-8*
Sunday, 13th December The Third Sunday of Advent	Purple	*Psalm 126 or Canticle: Magnificat; Isaiah 61. 1-4, 8-end; 1 Thessalonians 5. 16-24; John 1. 6-8, 19-28*
Sunday 20th December The Fourth Sunday of Advent	Purple	*Psalm 89. 1-4, 19-26 or Canticle: Magnificat; 2 Samuel 7. 1-11, 16; Romans 16. 25-end; Luke 1. 26-38*
Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve	Purple	*Readings as Christmas Day*
Friday 25th December Christmas Day	Gold or White	*Psalm 96; Isaiah 9. 2-7; Titus 2. 11-14; Luke 2. 1-14 (15-20)*
Sunday 27th December The First Sunday of Christmas	White	*Psalm 117; Exodus 33. 7-11a; 1 John 1; John 21. 19b-end*
Sunday 3rd December The Second Sunday after Christmas *or* Epiphany	White *or* Gold or White	*Psalm 147. 13-end; Jeremiah 31. 7-14; Ephesians 1. 3-14; John 1. 10-18 or Psalm 72. 10-15; Isaiah 60. 1-6; Ephesians 3. 1-12; Matthew 2. 1-12*
Sunday 10th January The First Sunday after Epiphany. The Baptism of Christ.	Gold or White	*Psalm 29; Genesis 1. 1-5; Acts 19. 1-7; Mark 1. 4-11*
Sunday 17th January The Second Sunday of Epiphany	White	*Psalm 139. 1-5, 12-18; 1 Samuel 3. 1-10; Revelation 5. 1-10; John 1. 43-end*
Sunday 24th January The Third Sunday of Epiphany - Septuagesima	White	*Psalm 128; Genesis 14. 17-20; Revelation 19. 6-10; John 2. 1-11*
Sunday 31st January The Fourth Sunday of Epiphany – Sexagesima. The presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)	Green	*Psalm 111; Deuteronomy 18. 15-20; Revelation 12. 1-5a; Mark 1. 21-28 or Hebrews 12. 1-4; Mark 5. 21-end*

Brown Clee Services for December 2026 & January 2027

Sunday 29th November	**The First Sunday of Advent**		
10.00am	Group Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Neenton
4.00pm	Christingle	Marjorie Jones & Carole Smith	Ditton Priors
Saturday 5th December			
3.00pm	Carol Service	Rev Joe Simons	Loughton
Sunday 6th December	**The Second Sunday of Advent**		
9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Val Smith & Keith Smith	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Morning Worship	Rev Val Smith & Keith Smith	Chetton
4.00pm	Carol Service	Dot Cartwright	Neenton
Monday 7th December			
10.30am	Carol Service	Dot Cartwright & Marjorie Jones	Care Homes
Sunday 13th December	**The Third Sunday of Advent**		
9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Carol Service	Rev Joe Simons	Cleobury North
4.00pm	Carol Service	Rev Val Smith & Keith Smith	Chetton
Monday 14th December			
2.00pm	Brown Clee School Carol Service	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
Friday 18th December			
7.30pm	Brown Clee Young Farmers Carol Service	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
Sunday 20th December	**The Fourth Sunday of Advent**		
9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Cleobury North
11.30am	Carol Service	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
5.00pm	Christmas Festival & Carol Service	Rev Joe Simons	Aston Botterell
Thursday 24th December	**Christmas Eve**		
4.00pm	Crib Service	Marjorie Jones, Carole Smith, Ragni Whitlock	Ditton Priors
7.00pm	Carol Service	Rev Joe Simons	Wheathill
11.15pm	Midnight Mass	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
Friday 25th December	**Christmas Day**		
10.00am	Group Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Chetton
Sunday 27th December	**The First Sunday of Christmas**		
10.00am	Group Holy Communion	Rev Val Smith & Keith Smith	Ditton Priors
Sunday 3rd January 2027	**The Second Sunday of Christmas**		
9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Val Smith & Keith Smith	Ditton Priors
11.00am	Informal Worship	Rev Val Smith & Keith Smith	Middle House Farm, Aston Botterell
Sunday 10th January	**The First Sunday of Epiphany – The Baptism of Christ**		
9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Morning Worship	Rev Joe Simons	Chetton
Sunday 17th January	**The Second Sunday of Epiphany**		
9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Morning Worship	Rev Joe Simons	Neenton
Sunday 24th January	**The Third Sunday of Epiphany**		
9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Cleobury North
Sunday 31st January	**The Fourth Sunday of Epiphany –The Presentation of Christ in the temple**		
10.00am	Group Holy Communion	Revd Val Smith & Keith Smith	Chetton

Christmas Services in Brown Clee Benefice 2026





Thursday 26th Nov - 6.30pm - Lights & Carols - Ditton Priors
Sunday 29th Nov - 4.00pm - Christingle - Ditton Priors
Saturday 5th Dec - 3.00pm - Carol Service - Loughton
Sunday 6th Dec - 4.00pm - Carol Service - Neenton
Sunday 13th Dec- 11.30am - Carol Service - Cleobury North
Sunday 13th Dec - 4.00pm - Carol Service - Chetton
Friday 18th Dec - 7.00pm - Carols in the Street with Brown Clee YFC - Ditton Priors
Sunday 20th Dec - 11.30am - Carol Service - Ditton Priors
Sunday 20th Dec - 5.00pm - Carol Service & Christmas Songs- Aston Botterell
Thursday 24th Dec - 4.00pm - Crib Service - Ditton Priors
Thursday 24th Dec - 7.00pm - Carol Service - Wheathill
Thursday 24th Dec - 11.15pm - Midnight Mass - Ditton Priors
Friday 25th Dec - Christmas Day - 10.00am - Group Holy Communion - Chetton

We look forward to welcoming you!

A Christmas Concert

Friday 11th December 2026 at 7.30pm

At Ditton Priors Village Hall

Raising funds for The Movement Centre, The Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Hospital in Oswestry and Brown Clee School

One of Shropshire's best mixed voice choirs, Of One Accord, will be performing a variety of songs, joined by Brown Clee Community Choir and Brown Clee School Choir

Tickets £10 per adult (Under 16s free) – included tea/coffee and cake/biscuits

Raffle

Tickets available from Ruth (01746 712029 evenings), Ditton Priors Post Office, Browncleechoir@gmail.com and www.ticketsource.co.uk/brown-clee-community-choir

Brown Clee Benefice News

Another full month of activity in the Benefice as well as an outing to Hereford Cathedral on Sunday 25th October where our sister **Jane Bufton** was awarded the **Order of St Ethelbert**.

The Order of St Ethelbert is awarded to those in the Diocese of Hereford who have given long and distinguished service to the diocese. Our parishes are wonderfully served by men and women who give selflessly of their time and skills and to uphold the life and ministry of our communities. Of course, we understand that this service is so often given with no thought of reward or recognition, but we also know that many parish clergy and fellow parishioners/members of communities value a means of celebrating the devotion of those in their midst.



Since 1984, Jane Bufton has served faithfully as churchwarden of St Peter and St Paul, Cleobury North.

Her steadfast faith, loving welcome, quiet resilience and generous commitment to others have enriched the life of her church and offered an enduring example of Christian discipleship.

Here is Jane supported by the Cleobury North PCC and Revd Joe

Toilet and Drainage Project – Ditton Priors

We have secured full approval from the planning authority and from Hereford Diocese to install an accessible toilet and drainage in St John the Baptist Church, Ditton Priors, this will be the only publicly available toilet in the village. We are really excited about improving the facilities we are able to offer existing congregants and visitors.

The next few months are dedicated to raising funds as the cost is in excess of £100,000. We have already had offers of financial support from a number of different sources including Friends of St John, Shropshire Historic Churches Trust and a number of other organisations and individuals. Any financial support you could offer would be greatly appreciated.

If you want to discuss making a financial donation do please speak with **Revd Joe Simons – 01746 599217**



Our **All Souls service** was held on Sunday November 1st at St John's Ditton Priors. All Souls is a wonderful service. It is a touching time for all, when those we love but can see no longer are remembered. Candles are lit and the Memorial Tree was started for this year - The tree is in church now for anyone who would like to add a leaf or sign the memorial book.

On **Remembrance Sunday** we held services at Cleobury North and Ditton Priors, both were well attended and the display boards were put up in both churches for people to read all the details of our hero's. Full report on the Royal British Legion collections later in this edition.







New Children's Tables and Chairs

As part of our vision for our church we have now acquired a number of children's tables and chairs. Our grateful thanks to Mrs Jo Culley for her support in procuring these. They have now been launched by a number of children (and animals) and we pray that others may join them soon.

Do please let us know if you have any questions or comments, we are here to serve you.



We intend to start a **Community Hub** in the New Year for those who would like to spend time with others in a safe and welcoming place. We would like to develop the hub potentially around bereavement, mental health, loneliness and isolation. Do watch out for our announcements on social media or let us know if you wish to join our weekly pewsheet. Contact us at the church office 01746 599217 for more information or to talk through your thoughts

Ditton Priors News *Marjorie Jones writes:*

The month of November has been marred by so many viruses flying around and meetings and Church services have been affected. Let's hope we all recover in time for the joyous Christmas period to come. As I write we look forward to our Christmas Fair and the switching on of the Christmas Lights around St. John the Baptist Church - a delight for everyone.

First Saturday Coffee Mornings. Continue in Church - 10.30-12.30pm on 6th December, missing out January, 6th February and 6th March. There is no charge for this popular community event and all are very welcome. I would like to say a 'Very Big Thank You' to all the ladies (and Bob) who put on this event every month. I know it much appreciated by us all.

Care Homes. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our visit on 16th November, but we hope to sing Carols on 7th December.

Open the Book. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our visit in November, but we will tell the Christmas Story on Wednesday 9th December and welcome the School into the Church for their Christmas Service on Monday 14th December.

Looking forward to our first event in the New Year:



Cleaning rota for December and January:

- Sunday 6th December. Mr and Mrs Graham Russell
- Sunday 13th December. Mrs Debbie Jones and Mrs Anne-Marie Shilling
- Sunday 20th December. Mr and Mrs Dennis Griffiths
- Sunday 27th December. Mr and Mrs John Ballard
- Sunday 3rd January. Mr and Mrs Tony Brown
- Sunday 10th January. Mrs Jutta Langham and Mr Steve Allen
- Sunday 17th January. Mrs Carole Hancox and Mrs Maureen Lloyd
- Sunday 24th January. Mr and Mrs Graham Russell
- Sunday 31st January. Mrs Shirley Wall and Mrs Anita Casswell

100 club results for November as follows:

- £20. Stuart Wentworth
- £10. Joan Millard
- £5 each to Dot Cartwright, John Lawrence, Sue Carpenter

I would like to wish you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas, with all good wishes for the New Year. Marjorie.

Wheathill and Loughton News *Marjorie Jones writes:*

There is sad news that a tree in Wheathill Churchyard has partly fallen and damaged a Haybarn next door. The tree has now been removed entirely, and it looks likely that another tree close by will also need to be removed. Repairs are urgently needed to the Haybarn. - We await further reports.

A Service of Remembrance was held at Wheathill on 15th November, attended by eight people. A Wreath was laid at the War Memorial following the Service.

Carols at Loughton Chapel. Saturday 5th December. 3pm. Led by Revd. Joe. Refreshments following the service at Loughton Hall (next door) by kind invitation of Jo and Steve Culley.

Christmas Eve at Wheathill. Carol Service on Thursday 24th December at 7pm.

Aston Botterell News *Anne Preece writes:*

Wishing people that are ill and waiting for operations all the best and a speedy recovery.
Anyone who can spare a bit of time to clean or tidy up outside the church will be much appreciated as I am out of action for a while. We are getting prepared for our Christmas Festival event on Sunday December 20th at 5pm with mulled wine etc, brass band and Father Christmas. Do come along to support us to get into the Xmas cheer.

From us all at Aston, we wish you a very Happy Xmas and New Year. 🎄 🎄 🎼 🔔 🥂



Aston Botterell PCC Draw November

- £20 - Alan Watkins - No 177
- £10 - Molly Whiteman - No 83
- £5 - Lynn Morgan - No 24
- £5 - Josiah Brassington - No 220

Anyone wishing to come to the local parish council meetings let me know. All are welcome.

Chetton News *Shelia Millington writes:*

With Christmas nearly upon us, we have a few diary dates. We look forward to our annual Carol Service on Sunday 13th December, 4pm. The Church always looks beautiful in the fading light with all the candles and decoration. Then we hold our Christmas Day service at 10am.

On December 4th we have our Christmas supper at Church House, 7pm for 7.30pm. £20 per person. Please let Lisa or Sheila know if you wish to join us.

This is the time of year we wish to thank everyone for their help and support for St Giles Church. Flower and cleaning volunteers, bell ringers, cake and coffee makers, Joe and his mower, and everyone who helps us keep our Church and Churchyard looking well cared for.

We wish you a peaceful and happy Christmas.

Neenton News *Dot Cartwright writes:*

As I'm writing this, we just had our small act of remembrance at Neenton. It was a lovely quiet way to remember those that died in the 1st and 2nd world wars, and all subsequent wars. We'd also like to thank Alan from Wheathill for maintaining the monument that has recently been refurbished.

Our carol service this year is at 4pm on the 6th December, followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Pheasant. On the Thursday before the service (Thursday 3rd December), we are meeting at the church at 3.30pm to decorate the church for the carol service. Children will be welcome, and there will be crafts for them to do, and we're looking for fresh foliage and decorations if you have any spare.

Anyone in the church tote is welcome to join again next year. It's £12 a year, and new members are always welcome. For details or to pay, please contact Dot Cartwright on 07854 559474. Thank you.

We'd like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.



Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2026

As we bring another very successful RBL Poppy Appeal to an end I have been reflecting on the past and thinking of the future for this necessary charitable organisation. Many contributing members have passed on, and I seriously wonder who will take their place in times to come.

I am pleased to say that my need to ponder and worry is somewhat reduced if the likes of Jack, Harry and Nico are anything to go by. These three youngsters are pupils at Brown Clee Primary School and took it upon themselves to take responsibility for the sale of Poppy Appeal material at the school. Their efforts and total commitment resulted in a collection of **£217.62** from fellow pupils and staff. Thank you all very much for your efforts.

As a local community we have collected a total of **£2,324.04** for the Poppy Appeal, all banked and credited to the account. Thank you very much on behalf of all RBL members for your generosity.

We live in very difficult financial times, and potential hardship is never really far away, but nevertheless this wonderful, generous community comes to the fore when needy charitable causes are highlighted, in addition to the Poppy Appeal I refer to our recent MacMillan Cancer Support coffee morning where we raised **£1,210.00.** That makes a grand total of just over **£3,500.00** for charity in a matter of a few weeks. Unbelievable, well not really when you know what a special caring community we have.

Thank you all very much and I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Tony Brown

Local Poppy Appeal Organizer.

Cleobury North and Burwarton News *Glenis Kedwood writes:*

The church looked lovely for Harvest and Remembrance Services. Thanks to Sandy Bennett for making the wreaths, Megan Helen Griffith for doing the alter cloths. We wish to remember Jane for her long service as churchwarden; Honouring her long and devoted service at Hereford it was so nice that the PCC was there to see it. She will be missed now that she has moved to Shrewsbury.

Thank you for all the donations to our Bric-a-Brac sale on Saturday 14th November, we had a good day, and the total takings were **£737.38p** for church funds. We would like to say a special thanks to Dave, Dawn, Ginnette, Elisha and Pat for all their help as well as the PCC. Also, thanks to Cleobury North Shop for the **£55** in the collection tin.

Lottery: 1st Carol Radnor, 2nd Richard Brockway, 3rd Darren Bufton.

A big thanks to Carol for playing the organ for us

We would like to wish you all Merry Christmas from Cleobury North Church.

Brown Clee Community News

Cleobury North Village Hall *Sharon Jenkins writes:*

Winter is almost upon us and as we are all preparing to celebrate Christmas and the holidays, I am sure you will spare a thought for those who are going through loneliness and illness, which can be difficult at any time of year but especially around this time. I want to offer my thanks to my fellow volunteer Julia, who, with her monthly coffee mornings, spreads a lot of joy, raises funds for our village hall and of course provides great cake!!

December is a busy month for bookings and includes meetings for the Shropshire NHS Mental Health Team, Brown Clee Football Club and a special welcome to Jayne O'Grady, who is actioning a wreath making course.

We do have spaces for more bookings for private parties as we head through the Autumn, so please think of us if you wish to hire a space for your loved ones to meet or to celebrate an occasion. Please note booking information below.

May I take this opportunity to thank all of our regular and new customers whose bookings help keep this vital service for the local community. In addition, may I wish you all a healthy and peaceful Christmas and a happy 2027!!

Remember if you wish to book the hall, please contact Sharon on sharonjenkins1605@yahoo.com or 07854538645.

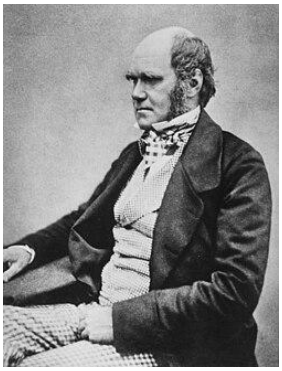
Chetton Village Hall *Sue Bayliss writes:*

With redecoration complete and the cleaning of the hall's exterior, we are looking very tidy. Thank you to my fellow committee members for their commitment and support throughout another busy year. Thanks too for the support from everyone who uses the hall and those attending the hall.

The first event in 2027 on Sunday 24th January is the film 'Pressure' about the last 72 hours before D-Day. We will serve lunch beforehand. Lookout for more information on our Facebook page.

Many thanks for the grants received from the National Lottery 'Awards for All', Edward Cadbury, Bridgnorth Aluminium, The Turner Trust and William A Cadbury, for their generosity towards our improvements and for the running of Chetton Active Friends. Without this support the hall would be unviable.

May I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.



How a Shrewsbury boy grew into a Botanist

At November's meeting we welcomed Mark Duffell, an enthusiastic and accomplished botanist and horticulturist who began his talk 'Darwin the Botanist' by explaining the influences on Darwin's early years. He was born on 12 February 1809 in Shrewsbury, into a wealthy, scientifically minded family that nurtured his curiosity about nature from a young age. His parents influenced his interest in botany through gardening and open-minded inquiry. Robert Darwin, his father, was a respected physician, who maintained extensive gardens at their home and encouraged Charles's general curiosity. Susannah, his mother, was the daughter of the famous pottery manufacturer Josiah Wedgwood. She loved gardening and kept a greenhouse full of exotic plants and introduced Charles to the basics of plant care and encouraged him to observe how different flowers grew. She died when Charles was only eight years old.

Charles grew up in a Unitarian household and was raised in an environment that valued rational inquiry and observation. In his early schooling in Shrewsbury, Darwin befriended a fellow pupil William Allport Leighton which sparked their lifelong botanical correspondence. Leighton went on to become an Anglican clergyman and a leading botanist, batologist and lichenologist.

During his university years, Darwin met several other influential botanists and naturalists who directed his path towards natural science. Reverend John Stevens Henslow was the University of Cambridge botany professor who founded the university gardens and mentored both Darwin and Leighton. He taught them how to observe, collect, and classify plants systematically, introducing them to natural variation within species.

Alexander Humboldt was Darwin's inspiration and role model, whose writings sparked Darwin's desire to explore the tropics. Humboldt pioneered biogeography, showing how climate, altitude, and geography shape where plants and animals live. His view of nature as an interconnected web of life directly influenced Darwin's observations on species distribution.

Darwin primarily studied carnivorous plants, orchids, climbing plants, and wildflowers. He examined species like the common sundew, Venus flytrap, and Madagascar star orchid to see how plants trap insects, attract pollinators, and climb toward light. Through these detailed experiments, Darwin showed that natural selection drives plant adaptation and that cross-pollination creates healthier offspring.

We learned so much about Charles Darwin from this fascinating and informative talk to which I cannot do justice in my short summary here. You do not need to be a member to hear any of our speakers or attend our meetings.

December's meeting is an informal event, with members' talks, including 'What I would like for Christmas for my garden', Christmas afternoon tea, a Christmas decoration competition and a quiz. If you are interested, just come along where you are guaranteed a warm welcome. If you would like to find out more about our gardening club, visit our webpage:

www.stokestmilborough.info/burwarton-gardening-club email us:

burwartonanddistrictgardening@gmail.com or call me on 07933724728.

Bev Harris Secretary



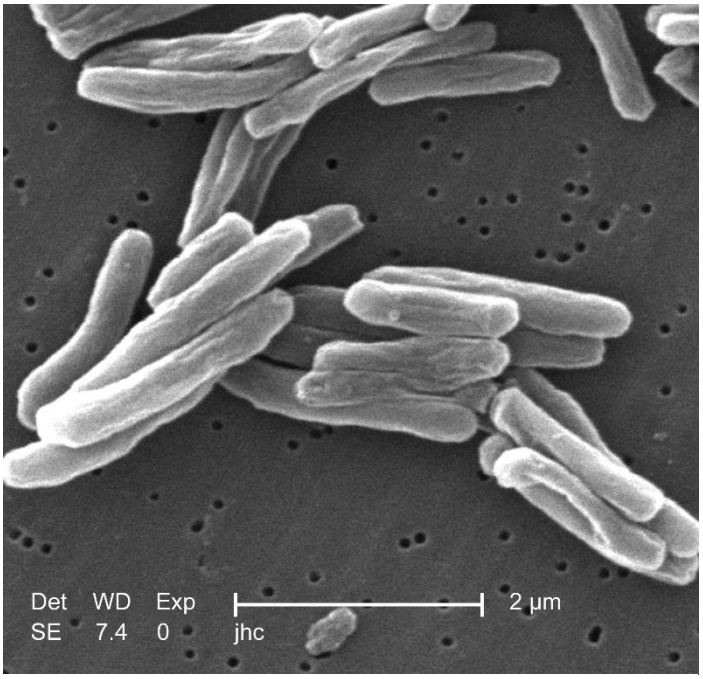


Parker Motors would like to wish all readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Garage, Ditton Priors, WV16 6SQ

For all of your MOT and services

MOLECULE OF THE MONTH; ISONIAZID *by David Poyner*



Mycobacterium tuberculosis: CDC/ Dr. Ray Butler; Janice Carr

A friend was recently telling me about her father, who as a child contracted tuberculosis (TB) and was treated in a sanatorium. TB, sometimes called "consumption" in the past, is a bacterial infection of the lungs caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis; it frequently infects young people and can be fatal if not treated. It causes nodules to form in the lungs, so patients cannot breathe properly. In most cases, people with the infection show no symptoms but it is bad news if it becomes active. It is passed on to others by those with the active disease through coughing or sneezing.

In the 19th century, around a quarter of all deaths in Europe were due to TB. Mycobacterium tuberculosis was identified as the cause of the disease in the late 19th century by Robert Koch, a pioneering microbiologist who was awarded a Nobel prize for his discovery. Infections started to fall with the discovery that TB could be caught from milk from infected cattle; pasteurization stopped this by killing the bacteria. In the early 20th century an effective vaccine was found, the BCG vaccine although it took many years for this to widely deployed.

Until after the Second World War there was no effective treatment for those who had the disease. The sanatorium was not particularly effective in treating sufferers; around half of inmates still died. The patients were confined to bed out of doors for a period of around 6 weeks. There was an operation called a "pneumothorax", where an infected lung was collapsed, in the hope that it would then heal. However, with the development of antibiotics, prospects for sufferers changed. The first to be used was streptomycin, but game-changer was the drug isoniazid.

Mycobacterium are surrounded by an outer layer known as the cell wall; this is the equivalent of a suit of armour which protects them and allows them to grow and multiply in what would otherwise be hostile environments. A key part of the cell wall is a chemical called mycolic acid. This is only produced by mycobacteria and they have their own special pathway for making this. In turn, this renders them vulnerable to drugs that target the pathway; they can be used (relatively) safely as humans or any other animal) does not make this chemical. Isoniazid is by itself harmless even to the mycobacteria; however, they absorb it. Once inside, it resembles essential chemicals that the bacteria need to make mycolic acid and so they begin to use it. However, instead of changing it into substances that will give mycolic acid, they inadvertently convert it to a toxin that inhibit the proteins that are needed to produce this. As a result, the supply of mycolic acid dwindles and the bacteria cannot produce their cell walls. These are particularly important when the bacteria start to multiply; as soon as they try to do this, they die as they do not have their suit of armour, the cell wall.

Isoniazid was discovered in the 1950s and it still part of the first line treatment for TB, despite the development of resistance. Millions now owe their lives to it.



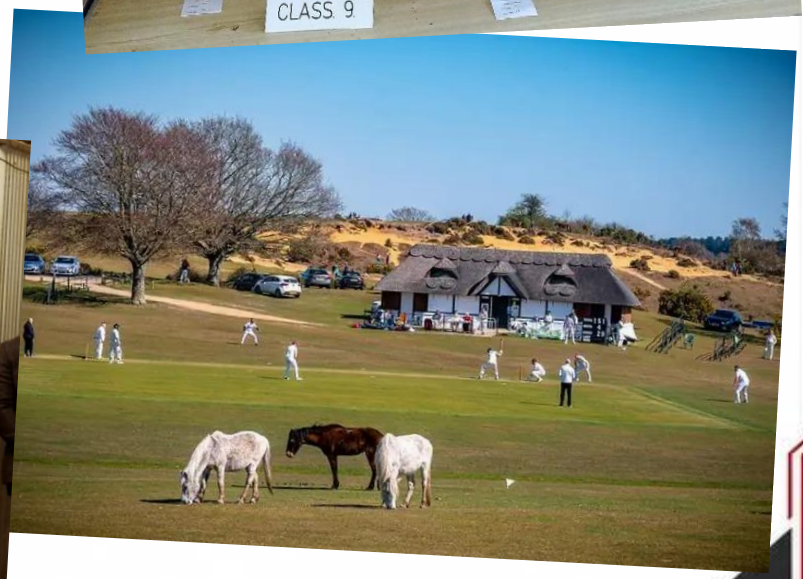


A year in Pictures




















USA
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A (very) brief history of Christmas carols

If you've ever wondered when Christmas carols first came about, the answer lies in the 14th century – although their evolution dates back even further. Even before Christianity, Wassailing in midwinter means offering a toast of good health—originally from the Old English *wæs hæl* ("be well")—and refers both to a traditional spiced drink and to customs involving festive singing, drinking, and blessing households or orchards.

Christianity spread across Europe from the fourth to the 14th centuries, and the first carols were produced by Franciscan friars. These took the form of a dance in a circle with linked hands and everybody singing the song. Huge numbers of Christmas carols survive from the 15th century, making it the best-preserved aspect of English medieval music.

England's oldest surviving carol depends on how you define it. "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night", has a 16th-century tune and 17th-century words. The oldest complete carol is probably "O Come All Ye Faithful", both the tune and the words were put together by the end of the 18th century.'



Many Carols have undergone various iterations in both tune and words. The lyrics of 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' was originally written by Charles Wesley (1707–88) who, with his brother John, founded Methodism. The original first two lines were, "Hark how all the welkin rings, Glorious the king of kings." Welkin was a rather old-fashioned way of saying heaven or sky. And so quietly and tactfully, the Methodist preacher George Whitefield tidied the thing up and, in 1754, changed the two opening lines that have remained ever since. However, the carol didn't get the tune we know today until the composer Felix Mendelssohn wrote it in 1840.

'O Come All Ye Faithful' can be traced back to a Latin version, 'Adeste Fideles', which is known to have existed as far back as 1640 – and may go back even further. It's the carol that services normally end with because you go out with a bang. It is so compellingly convivial that it has been translated into many languages and sung in many denominations.

And that perhaps explains the enduring popularity of carols. Whether they were created by Franciscan friars in the 14th century or later, they are so inextricably festive that they still capture our collective imagination today – a heartening, seasonal link between past and present.

THE MALT HOUSE HENS & GARDENS

Malt House Hens & Gardens
Monkhopton
Bridgnorth
Shropshire WV16 6XD

07841 597833

info@malthousehens.co.uk

We are a small family business based in South Shropshire. Phil has been growing produce on his family farm since he could walk and with Rachel's love of all things 'chicken' and garden we created Malt House Hens and Gardens





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HAIRY HOUNDS

Keeping your pets clean, happy and stylish every visit.
Weekend availability to suit needs.
Relaxed and calm environment to accommodate for all dog types

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Morfe Valley Nursery

We are a Plant Nursery based in Bridgnorth, supplying seasonal plants, hanging baskets, compost and garden sundries

Stourbridge Road, Bridgnorth,



The Severn Valley Group of Parishes

Rector: Revd Kina Robertshaw - Revkinarobertshaw@gmail.com
Revd David Poyner, Assistant Curate - email D.R.Poyner@aston.ac.uk,
Tel 0780-100-9693 (mobile) or 01746-861121
Revd Angie Foster – Assistant Curate (in training) revangieforster@icloud.com

6th December		
9.30am	Morning Prayer	Chelmarsh
10.30am	Holy Communion	Highley
13th December		
9.30am	Holy Communion	Chelmarsh
10.30am	Morning Prayer	Highley
19th December		
4pm	Crib service	Chelmarsh
20th December		
10am	Service of lessons and carols	Glazeley
4pm	Service of lessons and carols	Chelmarsh
6pm	Service of lessons and carols	Highley
21st December		
7pm	Service of lessons and carols	Billingsley
24th December		
4pm	Nativity service	Highley
11pm	Holy Communion	Chelmarsh
11pm	Holy Communion	Highley
25th December		
10.00am	Holy Communion	Billingsley
10.30am	Informal worship	Highley
27th December		
10.30am	Benefice Service	Highley
3rd January		
9.30am	Morning Prayer	Chelmarsh
10.30am	Holy Communion	Highley
10th January		
10.00am	Holy Communion	Chelmarsh
10.30am	Morning Prayer	Highley
17th January		
9.30am	Holy Communion	Chelmarsh
10.00am	Holy Communion	Glazeley
10.30am	Morning Prayer	Highley
24th January		
8.00am	Holy Communion	Billingsley
9.30am	Holy Communion	Chelmarsh
10.30am	Informal worship	Highley
31st January		
10.30am	Benefice Service	Highley

Chelmarsh News:



The Caring for God's acre team came to Chelmarsh in late October to cut back coarse vegetation on the south-west side of the churchyard. They especially appreciated the refreshments provided and, as our photo shows, they were joined by the Grim Reaper who had clearly heard about the quality of cake.

There is good news about the parish hall, following a meeting on the 9th November attended by 45 people. All the key positions needed for the future of the hall were filled and we may also have more help with the village fete. Many thanks to all who attended.

At our Remembrance Sunday service, we welcomed the Rev Simon Boxall from Bridgnorth who stepped in at short notice to lead the act of Remembrance. Our Remembrance Sunday correspondent writes "We had a very moving service with Simon. He brought a genuine interest in the particular relationships of people in the congregation to the names on the memorial. Everyone enjoyed his short sermon and said it would be nice to see him again."

During December the highlights will be our Christmas services; the crib service on the 19th at 4pm, carols in church on the 20th and 4pm and Holy Communion at 11pm on the 24th.

In January we will largely be following our usual pattern apart from Sunday 10th. On this day, as a one-off, the service has been moved back 30 minutes for the christening of Constantine Moore-Myers. It is usually difficult to change service times, but on this occasion we did have the necessary flexibility.



Billingsley News

This year, we were able to hold an act of Remembrance in Billingsley on November 11th; Armistice Day, marking the ceasefire in the First World War. Billingsley has no war memorial, but it does have the cross that once marked the grave of Lt Harold Gibbs before it was replaced in stone. Lt Gibbs was the only man from Billingsley to be killed in action in either of the two World Wars, although Privates Frederick Mole and John Brown both died of illness. Lt Gibbs's cross was taken from the church to the green by Lincoln Field where we held the act of Remembrance. Thirteen people attended, including an ex-forces Openreach engineer who was working in the street at the time of the service. Afterwards we enjoyed refreshments, prepared by Ellen McConnell and served by Carole Timms; husband Michael provided music.

Our Christmas carol service will be on Monday 21st December at 7pm, in the church and on Christmas Day there will Holy Communion with carols. In January services follow their usual pattern with an 8am communion of the 4th Sunday on the month, the 24th.

Glazeley News:



Our next event by the time this article appears will be a breakfast at the Down on 12th December at 9am; please contact myself (d.r.poyner@aston.ac.uk) or Marion (marion.corfield@talktalk.net) if you want to come; cost £10.

This year, the Christmas service will be somewhat different. It will still take place at 10am on the3rd Sunday of December, (20th) but will take the form of lessons and carols, not communion. Andrew and Laura Jones have kindly offered refreshments after the service at The Old Rectory.

The PCC are investigating whether we can afford a sound induction loop to help those in church who use hearing aids.

We held out act of Remembrance at the war memorial at 10.45am, for the silence at 11.00, with refreshments in church afterwards. I am very grateful to George and Anita Morley, Eileen Reynolds, Roger Gabb and Jack D'Arcy for help in and after the service. Our numbers were up compared to the last couple of years and the I loved the wreathe and candles on the font inside the church.

We didn't get much response to Christmas poetry, so I'm going to print the first 2 verses from the great Sir John Betjeman, an appropriate poem for when anything goes wrong at Christmas (or any other time!).

Betjeman wrote in the 50's and 60's, so all of you lady vicars take note, you can substitute "he" for "she"!!

So, if your carol service is a disaster, the turkey is overcooked, your mulled wine served cold, and please let's not mention sprouts, or anything else that doesn't work over Christmas you know what to do.

Blame the Vicar!

When things go wrong it's rather tame
To find we are ourselves to blame,
It gets the trouble over quicker
To go and blame things on the Vicar.

The Vicar, after all, is paid
To keep us bright and undismayed.
The Vicar is more virtuous too
Than lay folks such as me and you.
He never swears, he never drinks,
He never should say what he thinks.
His collar is the wrong way round,
And that is why he's simply bound
To be the sort of person who
Has nothing very much to do
But take the blame for what goes wrong
And sing in tune at Evensong.

Stottesdon group of Parishes

	St Mary, Stottesdon *CHURCHWARDEN* *Clare Tibbits: 01746-718007*	St Mary, Cleeton St Mary *CHURCHWARDEN* *Sue Dolphin: - 01584-890583*
	St Giles, Farlow *CHURCHWARDENS - VACANT –contact the key holder, Pam Phillips – 01746-718475*	Holy Trinity, Sidbury *CHURCHWARDENS* *Andrew Sierakowski - 07934-714149* *Sarah Crook - sarah@sidbury.plus.com*
	St John, Middleton Scriven *CHURCHWARDEN - vacant – contact Parish Rep Ann Constable 01746-789420*	St Michael, Silvington *CHURCHWARDEN - vacant – contact Parish Rep Katie Hickman*

Rector – Revd Dr. Sally Wallace-Jones. Email: revsamwj@gmail.com Phone: 01746 599076 / 07999 482107

Remembrance Sunday at St. Mary's, Stottesdon



In a very moving service, Revd Sally led a tribute to those from the Parish and everywhere else that had died in conflict. The congregation gathered around the War Memorial Window where a poppy wreath was laid, and names of the Parish fallen were read. In Sally's address two things stood out. Firstly, in the whole of the 20th Century there has never been a year without war in one part of the world, and precious few days where conflict has not claimed many lives. There is a quote "*those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it".* It seems that even now there are people in power who have not learnt that conflict seldom resolves anything and just results in tragic loss of life.

The second thing is that war and conflict doesn't just affect those killed and injured. How many parents have embraced their children before they leave to go to war? how many partners have kissed their loved ones goodbye? How many children have hugged their parents before they left? War affects individuals, families, communities, nations and all of humanity.

We'd like to especially thank Trevor Jones who played the Last Post and Reveille, and we'd like to thank Rob Kennett for reading the names of the fallen and for laying the wreath.



In a service marking Armistice Day, on the 11th at 11:00, we were very proud to welcome the children from our local Stottesdon primary school to mark Remembrance. The children shared a poignant poem and the beautiful wreaths they had made. Everyone shared a time of silence in a very moving occasion. Well done everyone and thank you for joining us.



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Services in the Stottesdon Benefice in Dec/Jan

Sunday, 06 December			
9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Farlow
10.30am	Morning Prayer	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
Tuesday, 08 December	**Carol Service**		
7.00pm	**Carol Service**	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
Sunday, 13 December			
9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Cleeton St Mary
10.30am	Informal Worship	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
6.30pm	**Carol Service**	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Silvington
Wednesday, 16 December	**Carol Service**		
7.00pm	**Carol Service**	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Cleeton St Mary
Thursday, 17 December	**Carol Service**		
6.30pm	**Carol Service**	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Farlow
Sunday, 20 December			
10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
6.30pm	**Carol Service**	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Sidbury
Thursday, 24 December	**Christmas Eve**		
6.30pm	**Carol Service**	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Middleton scriven
11.30pm	Midnight Mass	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
Friday, 25 December	**Christmas Day**		
10.30am	Family Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Silvington
Sunday, 27 December	**Benefice Group Service**		
10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
Sunday, 03 January			
9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Farlow
10.30am	Morning Prayer	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
Sunday, 10 January			
9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Cleeton St Mary
10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
Sunday, 17 January			
10.30am	Informal Worship	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
11.45am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Sidbury
Sunday, 24 January			
9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Silvington
10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
Sunday, 31 January	**Benefice Group Service**		
10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
Sunday, 07 February			
9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Farlow
10.30am	Morning Prayer	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon

From the Register:



The funerals of Peter Datlen and Alan Wilkes, both from The Glebe in Stottesdon, took place on November 6th and 14th respectively.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Peter's and Alan's families and friends at this difficult time.

Christmas Trees!

Our fresh-cut and root balled Christmas trees will be on sale from Friday 27th November along with our homemade door and grave wreaths.

We have traditional Spruce, Nordman Fir & Fraser Fir varieties.
Sizes ranging from 3ft to 8ft.

We will then be open 7 days a week in the run-up to Christmas:
Monday to Saturday : 9:00am – 4:30pm
Sunday : 10:00am - 4:00pm

Keep your eyes peeled for our annual Christmas competition.

And of course we have our Christmas Fayre on Sunday 6th December!

We look forward to seeing you all soon!

FARLOW FARM NURSERY

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

SUNDAY 6TH DECEMBER
10AM - 4PM

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING | CHRISTMAS TREE PICKING | MULLED WINE & MINCE PIES | THE PIZZA TRAILER

Chorley Village Lights Up on Saturday 5th December.

Join Santa for carols and cake at the Village Hall from 4pm.

With the Lights switch on and village walk at 6pm

Don't forget to bring your letters for Santa



All voices and talents welcome!

Christmas OPEN MIC & SING-A-LONG

Music People Community Christmas

FEATURING

The Stotty Strummers

Songs, music, poems, jokes... or just come and join in!

THURSDAY
17th DECEMBER 2026
AT 7.30PM
AT
The Fighting Cocks
Stottesdon
DY14 8TZ

Come along for a festive evening of music, community and Christmas cheer!

Good Music Brighter Together

LIVE MUSIC ★ GOOD COMPANY ★ FESTIVE CHEER ★ ALL WELCOME

THE POLAR EXPRESS Movie Night

AT CHORLEY VILLAGE HALL
12TH DECEMBER
DOORS OPEN AT 4PM
FILM STARTS AT 4.30PM

Come and watch the film!
ALL WELCOME
(No charge for the film – but you must book your free space)

CHILD'S GOLDEN TICKET
INCLUDES:
HOT CHOCOLATE + COOKIE
£3
A TICKET
Please pre-book your child's ticket in advance

MULLED WINE, MINCE PIES & HOT DRINKS / SQUASH
AVAILABLE ON THE NIGHT

Children's sweet cones available to buy in the interval!

Come wearing pyjamas!

To secure your place, please book and pay for your child's ticket in advance by contacting either:
Sammi 07940527581 | Claire 07905811989
Parents to remain responsible for their children.





St Marys Stottesdon is asking for your help.

We want to know how best we can serve the Community. To share your views good and bad we are asking you to complete a questionnaire. These are available online on the Stottesdon Benefice Facebook group page and in paper format at the surgery in the church and at the pub. You can also contact Rev Sally for a copy. They were also circulated in the school newsletter.

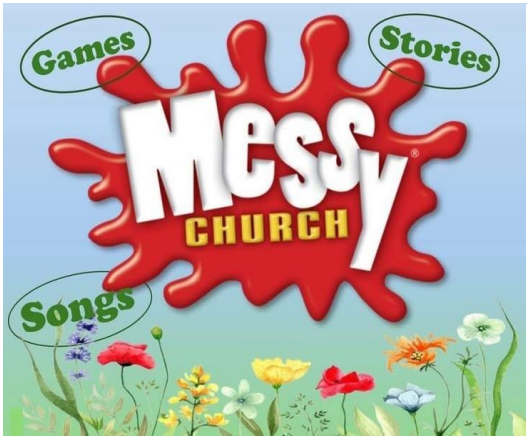
We really do want to know what you think. Please let us know. The responses are anonymous unless you want to give your details and can be left in the boxes or at the church or Rectory.

We are here for the whole community so please have your say

Every blessing

Events and news across the Festive Season in the Stottesdon group of Parishes





The next Messy Church will be on **Tuesday 22nd December 10-12** at St. Mary's Stottesdon.

If you would like more details, please ring Rev Sally on 01746 599076. Children do need to bring an adult or two with them, but everyone is very welcome.

THE FIGHTING COCKS STOTTESDON

Opening Times, food and Quizzes at the 'Cocks

Sunday Dec 6th from 3pm – Alfie's Kitchen

Wed 23rd Dec at 7:30pm Quiz Night

Pub is closed from Dec 26th to Dec 30th

Stottesdon and Parishes News

Middleton Scriven *Ann Constable writes:*

After a busy November with a successful **Soupa Saturday** with delicious soups from Donna and Matt and then an informal workshop creating a wall hanging, here are the events for the coming two months:

Christmas coffee morning- Saturday December 12th 10-12 in church with Christmas Bake sale. (Bring and buy homemade Christmas foods)
Come and join us for coffee/ teas/ hot chocolate and mince pies. Plus, a Christmas raffle.
Please note – there will be no coffee morning in January.



Christmas celebration- Carol service - Thursday 24th December at 6.30pm, followed by wine and mince pies. This is a community event - please choose your favourite Carol and / or Christmas reading or poem (replies to Ann by 18th December). Donations of wine and mince pies very gratefully received.
Everyone is most welcome to join us.



Look out for our first community event in the New Year – Burns' Night on Saturday January 30th. More details to follow on our community WhatsApp and posters/ invitations.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our church and community events this year. A huge thank you to everyone on the grass cutting rota, hosting coffee mornings or organising community events.

We look forward to seeing you at events in 2027. Our community events planning group (Fund Raisers) have been busy putting together a range of social events for us to come together, share friendship and have fun.

"A Merry Christmas and a Happy and peaceful New Year to all."

Farlow and Oreton *Janice Howells writes:*

<u>November 100 Club Winners</u>

Doris Price £20
Steven & Deb Phillips, John Derricut £10
Ann & Dave Farmer, Alistair & Ann Blake £5



Heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported us at the Christmas Market. We raised a total of £230.

<u>Save The Date!</u>

The 'Community Christmas Tree Festival' will take place at Farlow Church on Saturday 12 December from 10am-5pm supporting the charity Crisis.



<u>Farlow Church Carol Service</u>

Thursday 17 December. 6.30pm.

All welcome for some merry carol singing!

Cleeton St Mary *Sue Dolphin writes:*

100 CLUB NUMBERS FOR October

£20, Carol Howells 81.
£10, Charalate Baxter 46.
£10, Elliot Muscat 116.
£5, Andrew Gibbon 122.
£5, Joanne Gibbon 11.

Many thanks to all for their attendance and support.

News from Stottesdon

This is the final edition of Wheatland news until February 2027. Contributions are needed for events in February 2027 by mid-January 2027. Times of Christmas services are given at the beginning of this section of WN for all churches in the Stottesdon Benefice.

The demands being made on charitable organisations are ever increasing there is so much we can all do from purchasing charity Christmas cards to lending a hand either regularly or for special events and the benefit is in all directions, society in general, the charity in question, it's beneficiaries and of course the volunteer (you).

And the black labrador continues to grow and chase about showing her gun dog genes. Aspiring to catch a hare (well she can try) she puts on an impressive (to me) turn of speed. The hare however casually and gracefully leaves her standing, vanishing with alacrity into a stand of trees.

A toot of the whistle enables the dog to save face and come panting back to base as if nothing had happened. 'Drop' is also a command recently acquired, although what gets dropped is sometimes so disgusting I won't share the detail here. They do say dogs see with their noses.....

STOTTESDON & DISTRICT WI
theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Stottesdon & District WI

On Wednesday 21st October we had our monthly meeting at Chorley Village Hall.

We decided to do a fundraiser as part of Severn Hospices 'Communi-tea' events throughout October.

We had wonderful homemade cakes and tea and coffee, and we have raised £78 so far!

Our speaker was Nicky Long (Physio and Pilates teacher). She gave us a history of how Pilates began and how it is so beneficial for our bodies. We even did some chair Pilates which we all felt was very beneficial!

If you are interested in finding out more about Stottesdon and District WI, then please contact me.

Debbie Haynes
07780113869
debbiehaynesflp@hotmail.co.uk
President of Stottesdon and District WI





Please see Joe's article on the toilet and drainage project on page 8 – I think we might need it sooner than you think!





Holly - the King of Winter

Many of us who celebrate Christmas each year place evergreen trees in our homes and in our churches, we often decorate them with holly, ivy, mistletoe and other plants. But have you ever considered where this custom originates from or why we favour these plants so highly at Wintertime?

Well, ancient peoples of Europe, such as Druids and Pagans, believe that these plants that we hold synonymous with Christmas held special powers. At a time when many other plants have died off for the year, they remind us of the rebirth that happens every year with the Winter Solstice, where the light returns, days grow longer and warmer and life returns to the world. The **Holly King** and **Oak King** are personifications of the waxing day length of the sun and the waning day length of the sun. The two kings engage in endless "battle" reflecting the seasonal cycles of the year. The Holly King regains power at the summer solstice, after which the waning day length rules, until the winter solstice, at which point the Oak King is reborn, regaining power, and perpetuating the succession.



The Holly and the Oak Kings are depicted in Celtic myths in a variety of ways. Sometimes they are mortal men, sometimes brothers or even twins. You may see depictions of the Oak King as a Green Man type figure, much like some you may see in some church carvings. The Holly King on the other hand, is depicted as a jolly fellow dressed in red with sprigs of Holly in his hair, like the present-day version of Father Christmas. The Oak King represents the Summer, while the Holly King represents the Winter. It is said that during the Summer, the Oak King is at the height of his strength. However, as colder days draw in and leaves start to fall, the Holly King slowly regains his power, taking control, peaking at the Winter Solstice on the 21 December. On the solstice, the Oak King is reborn as new leaves begin to emerge, and so the cycle repeats.

Why do we decorate Christmas Trees in our homes?

When you think of Christmas, one of the first images to spring to mind is probably a Christmas tree, covered in sparkling lights, decorations and tinsel. But why do we decorate our trees?

In medieval Europe and particularly in what is now modern-day Germany, “paradise trees” decorated with apples were displayed on December 24 for the feast of Adam and Eve. These gradually evolved into Christmas trees. Martin Luther is often credited with adding candles to trees in the 16th century, helping shape the modern decorated tree tradition.



By the 19th century, Christmas trees were spread widely through Europe. Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert were known to be very big fans of Christmas! Prince Albert was German by birth, and he helped to popularize them in Britain. The couple made Christmas trees a prominent part of the holiday’s festivities, and in 1848 an illustration of the royal family around a decorated tree appeared in a London newspaper. Christmas trees soon became common in English homes.

This illustration was later published in the influential American magazine Godey’s Lady’s Book, though the depiction of the family was altered to appear American.

At first, people used to put their trees on tables, as they were smaller. But when it became possible to get bigger trees, people began to put their trees on the floor, with presents underneath.

Since 1947, Norway has donated a tree to London to say thank you for helping them during World War II. A special ceremony is held in Norway in November, when the tree is cut down in the forest in Norway. Then, it comes over to the UK by sea, before being driven to London on a lorry.

Christmas Jumper Day 2026 takes place on Thursday 10 December 2026



The charity Save The Children UK launch a nationwide fundraiser each year where people wear Christmas themed jumpers and donate to support children in the UK and worldwide.

Schools, workplaces, and groups often participate. Christmas Jumper Day has raised **over £42 million** since 2012, supporting children's safety, health, and education globally. The 2025 event alone raised **£2.6 million.**



What is Mulled Wine?

Mulled wine, also called spiced wine, is a warm, spiced drink made by heating red wine with spices such as cinnamon, cloves, and sometimes with fruit or sweeteners, traditionally served during winter and especially at Christmas.

The first record of wine being spiced and heated can be found in Plautus' play *Curculio*, written during the 2nd century BC. The Romans travelled across Europe, conquering much and trading with the rest. The legions brought wine and viticulture with them, along with their recipes including heating and spicing wine.

The *Forme of Cury*, a medieval English cookery book from 1390 is an extensive collection of medieval English recipes, written in Middle English. It mentions mulled wine as mixing spices with red wine.

Season of Advent

The season of Advent anticipates the "coming of Christ" with the nativity in Bethlehem and the reception of Christ in the heart of the believer.

In the Anglican calendar, Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (the Sunday that falls on or closest to 30 November, always between 27 November and 3 December; it is the Sunday between the last Thursday of November and the first Thursday of December) and ends by Christmas Eve on 24 December.

It is not known exactly when the period of preparation for Christmas that is now called Advent began, though it was certainly in existence from about 480. Shortly after this date Advent was associated with fasting as a time of penitence.

When Pope Urban V ascended the papal seat in 1362, he imposed abstinence on the papal court during Advent but there was no mention of actual fasting. It was then customary in Rome to observe five weeks of Advent before Christmas.

In the early 13th century Pope Innocent III declared black to be the proper colour for Advent, but from around the mid-13th century the usual liturgical colour for Advent has been purple or violet.



In England, especially in the northern counties in the Middle Ages, there was a custom (now extinct) for poor women to carry around the "Advent images", two dolls dressed to represent Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary. A coin was expected from everyone to whom these were exhibited and bad luck was thought to menace the household not visited by the doll-bearers before Christmas Eve at the latest.



The keeping of an Advent wreath is a common practice in churches. The concept of the Advent wreath originated among German Lutherans in the 16th century. However, it was not until three centuries later that the modern Advent wreath took shape with three violet or purple and one pink candle surrounding a white "Christ" candle.

Wheatland News Subscription Renewal!

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The next edition will be in February. If you would like to continue to receive the Wheatland News in 2027 it's time to renew your subscription.

The price for the year is still £18

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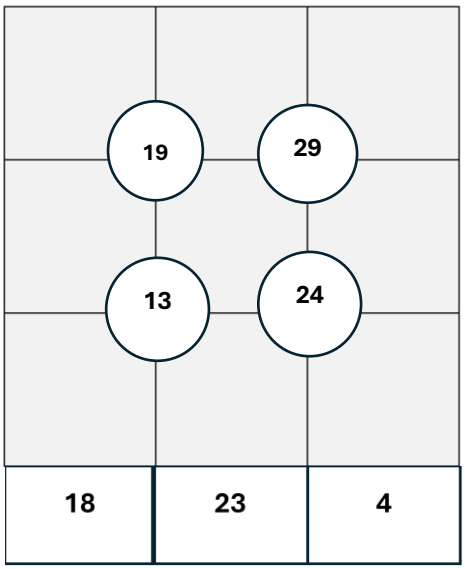


Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces in the grid so that the number in the circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces and each of the columns equals the total at the bottom.

Puzzle Page

L		***Y***
T	***G***	***A***
R	***E***	***H***

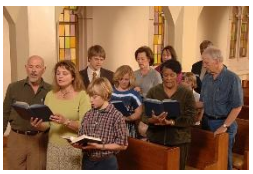
From these letters make words of four or more letters, always including the central letter “G”. Answers must be in the Oxford Dictionary (no cheating!), excluding plurals – that is you cannot have the same word twice, once as a plural form.

The Back Page

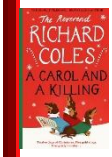


Is “Love Actually” really the best Christmas film? or is it “Die Hard”, “Miracle on 34th Street”, “A Christmas Carol”, “Zulu”, or one of the many films that comes on just in time to fall asleep to after eating and drinking far too much on Christmas Day. Then again what’s the best Christmas advert? “Marks and Spencer” always goes to town, but so do the other supermarkets, “Tesco”, “Sainsbury’s”, “Morrison’s” and the rest, and please watch out for Wallace and Gromit in the Barbour advert – now that one is good.

It’s quite easy to be cynical about Christmas and sometimes I wish I was of that age when this might be the first Christmas you really take in. Opening and playing with presents is the most exciting thing you’ve ever done, and it feels like it’s over far too quickly.



One of the things I do find myself really looking forward to is singing Christmas Carols although given that I can’t sing, whoever is standing next to me can’t be enjoying it much! I also enjoy the simple things that surround Christmas and New Year, things like lighting advent candles, hearing Big Ben sounding midnight (actually I prefer hearing our own village clock) and I look forward to going to a midnight church service.



I also try to read a book that is about Christmas or at least includes Christmas. I’m going to start reading Richard Cole’s “A Carol and a Killing”, the latest in his books about the Vicar of Champton. The cover says “five gold rings, and one grisly murder”, just the job for Christmas. I’ll start it on Christmas Eve and should finish it on Boxing Day.



Do you know why it’s called Boxing Day? There are two plausible answers, one explanation traces the name to alms boxes in churches, which were used to collect donations for the poor during Advent. These boxes were opened on December 26, the feast of St. Stephen. Another accepted origin involves servants in large households, servants worked on Christmas Day and were given the following day off, receiving a “Christmas box” from their employers containing money, food, or gifts as a token of appreciation for their service throughout the year. It’s a kind of Christmas day on the day after Christmas!



Are you going to make a New Year’s Resolution? I’m going to try something different this year because usually I’ve broken them by the time the twelfth night is up. So, this year I’m going to resolve to eat more chocolate, drink more alcohol, definitely do less exercise and get out of bed later. I’m quite looking forward to midnight on New Year now.



So, for the big debate, is it New Year’s Eve, or Old Year’s Night? The literal meaning of Hogmanay is the last day of the year. And for the really difficult question, do you know the proper words to “Auld Lang Syne” or do you just mumble the first couple of bits and sing “for the sake of Auld Lang Syne” as loud as you can – which of course is wrong anyway! In fact, when you see the correct lyrics (roughly translated) “And surely you'll buy your pint cup!”, “And we'll take a right good-will draught”, it’s actually a drinking song, I suppose that’s appropriate!

Anyway, who cares if you fall asleep in front of the telly and if you don’t know the right words to Auld Lang Syne, whatever you’re doing this this Christmas and New Year, have a great time.

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year from everyone involved in the Wheatland News!