



Blyth Valley Times

A Service of the Church for our Local Communities

January 2025

Volume 46

Issue 1

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Eco Church Awards for St Peter's Wissett and St Margaret's Heveningham

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get involved #ecochurch ecochurch.arocha.org **ECO CHURCH**
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

We are so excited to announce that a further two of the Blyth Valley churches have recently received A Rocha Eco Church UK project awards.

St Andrew's Church in Wissett has received a bronze award, and St Margaret's Church in Heveningham with Ubbeston has received a silver award. Congratulations!

Alongside our other award-winning Blyth Valley Churches, these two churches have shown commitment through things such as calculating carbon footprint, having church beehives, reducing printing, using LED lights, having composting facilities, signs reminding us to switch off lights, encouraging native wildlife, and special services dedicated to caring for God's creation.

A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment.

This article continues on page 8 of this magazine...

ECO CHURCH
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

Blyth Valley Times is published monthly by Blyth Valley Churches.

To subscribe, with a copy delivered locally through your door each month, the minimum donation is £18 a year please.

You can also request a postal subscription, costing £40 a year.

Please telephone 01986 875941 or 07752 275328

or email: blyth.valley.times@gmail.com for further details

Blyford - Bramfield - Chediston - Cookley - Halesworth - Heveningham with Ubbeston - Holton - Huntingfield - Linstead - Spexhall - Thorington - Walpole - Wenhaston - Wissett.

www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk

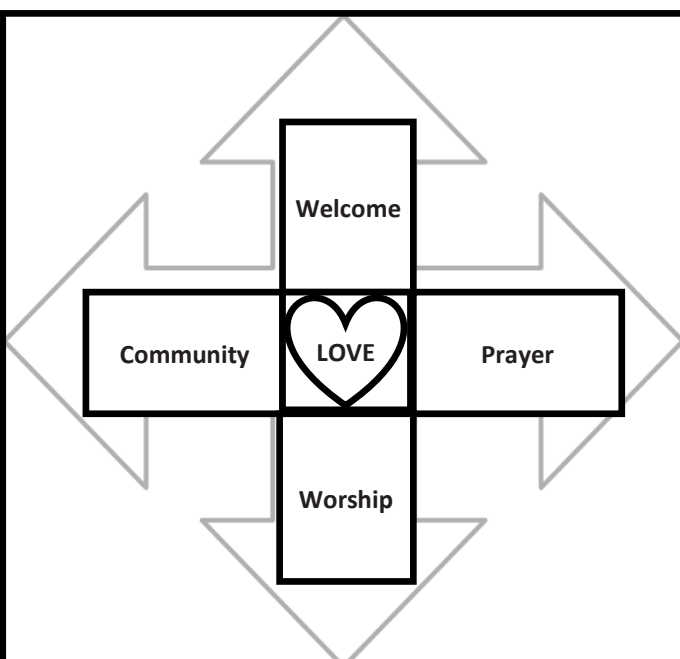
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St. Mary's Church Halesworth

WORSHIP WITH US ONLINE

 [www.youtube.com/
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January 2025 Lectionary for Traditional and Holy Communion only.

Please refer to the lectionary for other services
e.g. Daily Office (Morning Prayer).

Sunday 5th**Traditional Communion – Second After Christmas (White)**

2 Corinthians 8: 9 (KJV)

John 1: 14 – 18 (KJV)

Holy Communion – The Second of Christmas (White)

Jeremiah 31: 7 – 14 (NRSV)

John 1: 10 – 18 (NRSV)

Sunday 12th**Traditional Communion – First After Epiphany (Green)**

Romans 12: 1 – 5 (KJV)

Luke 2: 41 – end (KJV)

Holy Communion – Baptism of Christ (White)

Isaiah 43: 1 – 7 (NRSV)

Luke 3: 15 – 17, 21 – 22 (NRSV)

Sunday 19th**Traditional Communion – Second After Epiphany (Green)**

Romans 12: 6 – 16 (KJV)

John 2: 1 – 11 (KJV)

Holy Communion – Second of Epiphany (White)

Isaiah 62: 1 – 5 (NRSV)

John 2: 1 – 11 (NRSV)

Sunday 26th**Traditional Communion – Third After Epiphany (Green)**

Romans 12: 16 – end (KJV)

Matthew 8: 1 – 13 (KJV)

Holy Communion – Third of Epiphany (White)

Nehemiah 8: 1 – 10 (NRSV)

Luke 4: 14 – 21 (NRSV)

Worship in the Blyth Valley in January 2025				
CW – Year C Continuous	5th CW – Second of (White) BCP- Second After Christmas (White)	12th CW – Baptism of Christ (White) BCP – First After Epiphany (Green)	19th CW – Second of (White) BCP – Second After Epiphany (Green)	26th CW – Third of (White) BCP – Third After Epiphany (Green)
Halesworth St Mary	8am Matins Jason 10am Holy Communion Gini	8am Traditional Communion Dominic 10am Great Communion Adventure Alison A and Pauline 6pm Evensong Dominic	8am Traditional Communion Dominic 10am Morning Payer Jason 6pm Evensong Dominic	8am Traditional Communion Dominic 10am Holy Communion Linda
St Peter Group				
Holton St Peter		10am Morning Prayer David	10am Iona Worship Alison C	10am Holy Communion Gini 6pm Taize Alison A
Wenhaston St Peter		10am Ecumenical Communion Dominic		10am Pause for Thought Alison A
Bramfield St Andrew			10am Holy Communion Linda	
Blyford All Saints			10am Wild Church Vic	
Thorington St Peter				10am Morning Prayer Jim
St Andrew Grp				
Wissett St Andrew		10am Plough Sunday Veronica M	10am Holy Communion Gini	10am Breakfast Church
Chediston St Mary		10am Holy Communion Linda		
Spexhall St Peter			10am Holy Communion Alison A	
Linstead St Margaret		10am Matins Malcolm		
St Michael Grp				
Cookley St Michael			9.30am Traditional Communion Dominic	
Heveningham St Margaret		10am Holy Communion Vic		
Huntingfield St Mary			10am Morning Prayer David	
Walpole St Mary				10am Morning Prayer Dominic

Additional Regular Service: 9.30am Thursdays, Morning Worship, St Andrew Bramfield

Wenhaston Methodist Church

Coles Lane, Wenhaston

Minister: The Revd Martin Keenan

JANUARY 2025

5th Mrs Julie Warren

12th United Service at St Peter's
Wenhaston, 10am

19th The Revd Martin Keenan
Covenant Service

26th The Revd Les Richards

ALL SUNDAY SERVICES at 10.30am
(unless stated otherwise)

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Father Christopher Smith

Tel: 01502 723207

Email: Christopher.Smith@rcdea.org.uk

Please enquire about our Service times and details



Morning and Evening Prayer

with the Revd Dominic Doble,
from Tuesdays to Saturdays

(Live streamed and later audio on Dominic's
YouTube channel).

From

St Mary's Church, Halesworth

In person, or join via:

8am Morning Prayer

Zoom Meeting ID - 883 5778 9092

Passcode - 607673

6pm Evening Prayer

Zoom Meeting ID - 850 0997 6304

Passcode - 825686

Halesworth & Bramfield URC

Minister: Revd Jon Sermon

JANUARY SERVICES

- Sunday 5th 11am Gathered Worship
Minister Jon Sermon
- Tuesday 7th 10am to 12 noon Coffee morning at
Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship
- Friday 10th 9.30am Prayer Meeting in the Church and
Zoom followed by Coffee Morning
- Sunday 12th 11am Gathered Worship TBA
- Tuesday 14th 10am to 12 noon Coffee morning at
Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship
- Friday 17th 9.30am Prayer Meeting in the Church and
Zoom followed by Coffee Morning
- Sunday 19th 11am Gathered Worship
Minister Jon Sermon
- Tuesday 21st 10am to 12 noon Coffee morning at
Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship
- Friday 24th 9.30 am Prayer Meeting in the Church and
Zoom followed by Coffee Morning
- Sunday 26th 11am Gathered Worship Aviation
Fellowship Visiting Speaker
- Tuesday 28th 10am to 12 noon Coffee morning at
Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship
- Friday 31st 9.30am Prayer Meeting in the Church and
Zoom followed by Coffee Morning

FEBRUARY SERVICE

- Sunday 2nd 11am Gathered Worship
Minister Jon Sermon

Jon Sermon: 01986 873761 jon@sermons.me.uk

Judy Morton: 01502 724572

judy.morton@themortonpartnership.co.uk

Elizabeth Aslett 07710 916737

(for families and children)

familyhurc@gmail.com



The
United
Reformed
Church

Zoom Meeting ID: 776-044-1926,
Passcode 811885

Café Church Tuesdays!

Café Church is held on a TUESDAY morning
at 10am, via Zoom.



*For login details of how to join,
or to be added to the mailing list,
please email:*

The Revd Canon Alison Alder at:
revalialder@gmail.com

or

The Revd Linda Berry at:
revd.linda@huntingfield.uk

From the Rector...

From nightfall and/or midnight on December 24th the season of Christmas begins. It continues until Candlemas or the Presentation of Christ in the Temple on February 2nd. Traditionally, decorations went up on Christmas Eve and came down on Twelfth Night. Unless you are Orthodox when your Christmas is just getting underway as you still use the old Julian calendar. For those of us on the Gregorian calendar we will be commemorating the Epiphany that day. This is the day when non-Jews getting to grips with Jesus as being God incarnate, is celebrated.

For all who live in the northern hemisphere, these are, otherwise, literally dark days. For many around the world they are metaphorically dark days. Then, as now, east and west were fighting over their respective interests in the Middle East. Now, as then, the ordinary people find themselves internally displaced, exiled, giving birth in makeshift maternity wards, denied work, relying on charity, deprived of privacy. Then it was Rome and Persia. Now it is Russia and the United States of America and related protectorates.

As we prepare to meet our maker in what was one of the two occasions in the year when the faithful turned out for Mass, are we looking for a child or a ruler? Here is another of the great openers of the season. What does light in the darkness look like for you? Do you want someone with you, a special someone with you, at your bedside, as you struggle with man flu or something even more serious. Would you rather be assured that an anonymous someone at the top, perhaps literally on the top floor, had a hold on the policies and budgets that meant there will be adequate, rested, personnel and appropriate resources to give you your best possible outcome.

Of course sometimes it is both, and at the same time.

Perhaps, this is yet another of the dizzyingly paradoxical wonders that this Christian tale brings to the season's festive fireside truths. Namely, that this Jesus was, is and will be known by the storytellers as both the answer to their emotional needs and their practical ones. The baby shows a vulnerable God. Like the one in Second Genesis, who loses the creatures they've just made. Yet, the deity also shows the omnipotent child. Like the one who spoke it and it was in Genesis one.

Does this darkness, or do these injustices, overwhelm you or provoke you? Does the image of a child disappoint you or is the icon of an overwhelming spirituality comforting to you? There is a text more often associated with Lent. Preceding the Easter season when we are again presented with a manifest paradox of the celebration of God's death and Jesus' re-activating. It reads 'who do you say I am?' Jesus is asking his disciples. He uses God's name as given to Moses 'I am'. In turn, this text asks us who do we think God is? Who do we think Jesus is? Or in other words, are you provoked or overwhelmed? Are you comforted or disappointed.

I hope and pray that as you sing songs and search for a sixpence in your puddings across this Christmas season, alone or in company, that you are supported and inspired. Do stand with God, the church and those that believe in all our brokenness and aspiration as our northern hemisphere world moves from darkness to light. Then and only then will we see the star of wonder rise over the metaphorical darkness, as the songs of messengers of good will are overheard. Then and only then will what has been birthed in you in the world come into being.

Dominic

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**HALESWORTH & BRAMFIELD
 UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES**
 Revd Jon Sermon – Minister

Dear Friends,
 Like other churches we have been through the excitement of anticipation in Advent, and celebrated the coming of the Lord Jesus at Christmas. Special occasions this year included parties with Messy Church and the toddler group, our young families Christingle service, carols by candlelight and a special all together service with Nativity.

We also have a special excitement, that ran through December and continues up to Easter: We have a student, studying for ordination on placement with us: His name is Alex and he brings a freshness to all he engages with. Alex is attending Sunday worship and a variety of mid-week events, both with us here in Halesworth and our sister church in Lowestoft. He has a particular interest in the young families’ ministry and will be at several more of our Messy Church sessions.

For me, it is a particular joy. Having been involved in training and mentoring in my previous career, and in training and mentoring with pastors in Uganda over many years, I am thrilled to also be offered the chance to support someone on their journey towards ordination here and now.

Alex will also be joining our group attending Spring Harvest in April, towards the end of his time with us.

Blessings
Jon

Revd Jon Sermon,
 Minister of Halesworth & Bramfield URC
 and North Lowestoft URC
*also Chair of Trustees:
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What has your Team Vicar been up to?

So sorry, it's a very short column from me this month. I've just had a very hectic weekend and have been busy with Advent and Christmas and unfortunately, I have run out of time to meet the printer's deadline for this month's *BVTimes*.
 I'd like to wish you all a Happy New Year. May we cherish the highs, endure the lows and, whatever happens, be kind to others as well as ourselves.
 That's all for now folks.

With love and blessings to all for 2025.

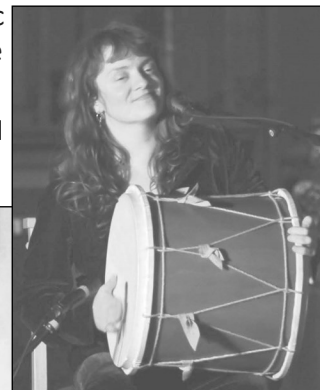
Revd Gini

LADY MAISERY CONCERT - ST MARY'S HALESWORTH

On December 6th, a wonderful time was had with the incredibly talented Lady Maisery, Jimmy Aldridge and Sid Goldsmith. Their angelic voices and wonderful music filled the church of St Mary's in Halesworth.

On a slightly chilly evening, we warmed up with mulled wine, sausage rolls and mince pies. And the joy the music brought to our hearts. A perfect start to the Christmas season was enjoyed by all.

Thank you to everyone who came along and supported the concert. PM





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Eco Churches Across the Blyth Valley Churches

Have you heard of Eco Churches?

Across the Blyth Valley Churches we now have six of our 14 churches which have been awarded the A Rocha Eco Church bronze or silver award. This project covers five key areas to support church life, and our dedication to environmental stewardship.

These are:

- Worship and Teaching
- Land
- Buildings
- Community and Global Engagement
- Lifestyle

As mentioned on the front page of this month's *BVTimes*, the latest two churches to work on the project - St Andrew's Church in Wissett and St Margaret's Church in Heveningham with Ubbeston - have both received awards.

Part of the funding that was received from the Diocese for children, families and young people's work is going towards supporting the Blyth Valley Churches with our commitment to the Eco Church Project.



Recently, we have developed two bags to support the project, one contains resources for Lichen and the other has some Fungus resources. We also have a digital microscope that can be used to take a closer look at what we find.

The children from Halesworth Day Nursery visited St Mary's Church on Friday 29th November 2024 (see photo) and we had a Lichen workshop.



We looked for and found different types of Lichen in the churchyard, characterising them as leafy, shrub-like or crusty. If you would like to borrow one of the Eco Church bags, please contact Pauline.

What will 2025 bring:

In 2025 we already have things in the diary to continue our commitment across the Blyth Valley Churches to the A Rocha Eco Church Project, such as:

- 12th January 2025 - Plough Sunday Service at St Andrew's Church in Wissett
- Continuing to work with local children's nurseries, preschools and schools to help with Eco Church Projects at Bramfield, Halesworth and Holton (to begin with).
- Wild Church on the third Sunday of each month at All Saints Church in Blyford.
- School Uniform and Toy Exchange at St Mary's Church Halesworth on Thursday 20th February 2025 from 11.30am till 1pm.
- Halesworth Climate Conference - 3rd September 2025

Three Things You Can Do:

Arrange car shares to events or services. Or walk or cycle to services and events, when possible.

Use the I-Naturalist App or website to help record wildlife and add to global surveys.

Support the work of Halesworth Morsbags and use a Morsbag (linen bag) instead of a plastic bag.

Pauline Milsted

Email: pauline@growingtogetherearlyyears.co.uk

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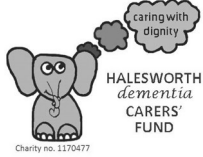
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New Year Greetings from Halesworth Dementia Carers' Fund

As I write this column, the Christmas season is well underway, and I expect most people are getting very involved in preparing for the festive celebrations. By the time *BVTimes* is published, I'm sure many of you will have attended, and hopefully enjoyed, our Musical Spectacular at Holton & Blyford Village Hall. We are very grateful to all who worked so hard on it.

As we look back, 2024 was another very good year for HDCF. We continue to review our weekly activities, and these are growing in popularity. Our latest venture is the weekly Art and Craft session. This has proved worthwhile to those with dementia and those caring for them.

One of the highlights in 2024 was the very successful Golf Competition held back in May. Thanks to the very hard work of the organisers and sponsors, this raised several thousand pounds, and the date is already booked for 2025.

The *Ladies who Lunch* have been very supportive of us, and have made some very generous donations. We just cannot say enough how grateful we are to all those companies, organisations and individuals who have been so very generous to us. Without such wonderful work we would not be able to continue.

Our 100+ club is another great success. With 150 members, it continues to thrive, with monthly draws offering prizes of £100, £75, £50 and £25.

We must also express our gratitude to the Halesworth Co-op for allowing us free use of their Community Room, and being so generous with refreshments every week. Our thanks, too, to the Pear Tree Centre and the local care agencies who do so much wonderful work with our families.

Our next film at The Cut will be *Keeping Mum* to be held on Wednesday 15th January. This is a black comedy film starring Maggie Smith, Rowan Atkinson and Kristin Scott Thomas. Doors open at 1.30pm for a 2pm start. Entrance by £5 donation. Please save this date and come and join us.

I would like to express the heartfelt thanks of the HDCF Trustees to everyone who has supported us in any way, it is impossible to name everyone. Thanks also go to our wonderful band of volunteers and helpers.

For further information about our various activities, ways to support us, and to find out what we do, please visit our website: halesworthdementia.co.uk where you will even find a way to donate direct to us. Alternatively please email: info@halesworthdementia.co.uk or call us on 07990199632. On behalf of all at Halesworth Dementia Carers' Fund, may I wish every one of you a peaceful, prosperous and healthy New Year.

John Wood

LIFE EVENTS

FROM THE REGISTERS IN DECEMBER

FUNERALS/INTERMENT OF ASHES

Charles Francis at Halesworth

Sylvia Rose Foster at Bramfield

Family Carers Support Group

Facilitated by

Halesworth Dementia Carers' Fund

Helping people with memory problems and their family carers

Charity No. 1170-477

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In partnership with the Pear Tree Fund

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Glaucoma & Diabetic Screening

Children, Family and Young People Update

Wow! It's crazy to think that I am writing to you for the last time in 2024 and by the time you read this article, it will be 2025. We have had a very busy end to 2024 with a variety of Christmas activities, sessions, a successful Lego Christmas trail, Trudi Mouse's Advent on Facebook, carol services and Christingle services. And the continuation of making new connections with other organisations and schools within our community.

Church Mice Tots continues to be a delight as we meet every Thursday from 11.30am till 1pm. As part of our Diocese funding, we have purchased new resources, such as some sensory toys, baby play mats, a ball pool, Playdough toys and arts and craft bits. It has been lovely to explore this with the babies and parents as they have explored the new resources, as well as the friendship and support within the group. Throughout November and December, we consistently had between five and ten families each week and we have connected with over 20 different families. We are so excited as we continue to see the group grow in numbers, friendship and as the little ones develop together.



On December 12th, Church Mice Tots had a very special lunch with Santa, held in the Community Larder.

We had a great time sharing food, chatting and hanging out with Santa!

We would love to say a huge thank you to Spar Halesworth and

the Halesworth Co-op who both helped to provide food for this event and for future children and family events.

We had a special evening at Youth Space where locals involved in Youth Action Halesworth, including Town Council and East Suffolk County Council came together. Discussions took place about what potential funding could be used for future projects with the youth. The Town Council gave an update on the skate park's MUGA. Information about this can be found in the youth space in St Mary's Church in Halesworth. Numbers are still low for those who are attending/using the youth space on a Monday night between 6.30pm and 8.30pm and we hope you will help us to continue to spread the word.

We had a wonderful grotto made by the Friends of St Mary's at the Halesworth Christmas Lights switch-on. Although, the main event didn't happen, the church was full of Christmas cheer and families. Santa saw about 60 children in the grotto! We had a Nativity photo booth, where children and families could dress up for a photograph opportunity. Mince pies, carols, hot chocolate and mulled wine, all added to the very successful event!

On Saturday 7th December we ran a Christmas craft session in St Mary's Church in Halesworth.

We were low in numbers due to the bad



weather and the Christmas Market being postponed, but nonetheless, we had a wonderful time. We made Christmas decorations, decorated Halesworth Morsbags and made some fantastic Christmas cards. We would like to say a huge thank you to Halesworth Co-op who gave us a £30 voucher for this session, which we used towards biscuits, treats and refreshments.

By the time this article is published, we will have held our First-2-Prayer meetings for Children, Family and Young People Ministry. This prayer meeting will continue to run on the final Thursday of each month, from 9.30am - 10.30am. We come together to pray for the building of work we are doing within our church and in our community. We take time to give thanks, pray for the families we are working with, as well as our wider community. If you would like to find out more about the prayer meetings, please feel free to contact Pauline.

As Christmas approached in my new role, I was invited to a couple of special Christmas parties, one at Halesworth Day Nursery and another with a group of mums from Church Mice Tots that had been organised in the Rifle Hall for the babies. This was really encouraging for me, as I continue to make links in the community and we always strive for our vision of community in church and church in community. In the new year, I have plans to meet with Holton Primary School, Bramfield School, Bramfield School House, and Edgar Sewter Primary School. What a blessing and excitement to come.

Future Dates

Youth Space at St Mary's Church in Halesworth, every Monday from 6.30pm till 8.30pm.

Church Mice Tots at St Mary's Church in Halesworth, every Thursday from 11.30am - 1pm.

The Great Communion Adventure (Family Communion) January 12th at 10am.

Wild Church at All Saints Church Blyford on January 19th at 10am.

RSPB - Big Churchyard Bird Watch at St Peter's Church in Holton on January 25th, 2pm - 4pm.

Prayer for Children, Family and Youth Ministry - January 30th, 9.30am till 10.30am.

Starting Rite - 5 week programme starting in February 2025.

Family Picnic and Toy/Clothes Exchange - St Mary's Church Halesworth on February 20th from 11.30am - 1pm.

Prayer Requests

Please pray that we build strong relationships and connections as we continue our work with different community groups and schools and that we will be a blessing to all.

Join us as we thank the Lord for all his answers to prayers and guidance and we ask you to pray that we continue to follow his will, not ours.

Pray that we will be guided in what to do in regards to the youth space and how we can effectively engage with them in 2025.

Pray for wisdom for Pauline, as she decides which of the million and one ideas she has to follow up and pursue!

Pauline Milsted

Email: pauline@growingtogetherearlyyears.co.uk

THE HALESWORTH BRANCH OF CANCER RESEARCH

The committee and volunteers at the Halesworth Branch of Cancer Research would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who braved storm Bert and came along to support our Christmas Fair on Saturday 23rd November. The hall looked wonderfully festive and there was such a happy atmosphere with people catching up over a cup of tea and a mince pie. The turnout was amazing and you raised the unprecedented amount of £3055.77. This is the first time we have exceeded £3000 for a single event. Well done everyone.

As well as contending with storm Bert, we also had to overcome an issue in the kitchen which meant we couldn't deliver our menu for the lunches quite as planned. The ladies in the kitchen did a sterling job, under very trying conditions and still managed to deliver a selection of hot food.

We have quite a few people to thank for making the Fair so successful. We are so indebted to the following businesses/people for their generosity as they provided all the food for the lunches: Cleveleys, Halesworth Co-op, Spar, Market Fields Holton, Tesco's and Maureen Took. The lunches contributed £549 towards our total.

Also our thanks to the following businesses who provided some of the wonderful raffle prizes which raised £711 towards our total: Allen's Butchers Halesworth, Woodside Farm Holton, Adnams Southwold, The White Hart Halesworth, Gecko Shoes Halesworth, Patrick's Newsagents, Mumford's Southwold, Hillfarm Oils, Pleasure Beach Great Yarmouth, Morrison's Pakefield. Thank you to everyone who donated a raffle prize and congratulations to the lucky winners.

The Bonus Ball Gin hamper was won L Edmunds from Saxmundham. The hamper, kindly donated by Market Fields Holton, was won by G Pudney with ticket 171.

Thank you to everyone who cooked, baked, loaned hot plates or helped in anyway to support our Christmas Fair. Special thanks to Shirley, John and the car parking team, Bill, Maggie and Bob.



Above: Homemade produce on Sue and Debbie's stall.
Below: The Christmas decorations stall.




Most of all thank you to our wonderful supporters who support our events, we couldn't achieve what we do without all of you. You genuinely are helping fund the incredible and vital work undertaken by Cancer Research to improve the lives of cancer patients.

Our next event will be our Jumble Sale on February 8th in Holton & Blyford Village Hall, 10am - 12pm.

If you feel like having a declutter after Christmas we are always pleased to accept saleable items (unfortunately we can not accept electrical items).

The committee and volunteers at The Halesworth Branch of Cancer Research would like to wish everyone, a very Happy New Year.

**Dawn Davis (Chair),
01986 873640**



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At COP29 in November, the UN Secretary General António Guterres described 2024 as “a masterclass in human destruction”. The scenes of chaos and misery we have seen in the news this year from around the world – due to flooding, wildfires, heatwaves, droughts and storms – have been deeply distressing, especially since those who are suffering the most, globally, are those who have done the least to create the crisis.

But there is hope! In January 2025, the landmark Climate and Nature Bill will have its Second Reading. This urgent cross-party Bill is backed by almost 200 MPs from all the main parties. Its supporters include Waveney Valley MP, Adrian Ramsay, Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher (Lead Bishop For the Environment) and Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Bill has been written by scientists and asks the UK to lock its two, pre-existing international commitments on climate and nature into law. These commitments are: (1) to ensure that the UK stays within its fair share of the remaining global carbon budget for 1.5°C, as agreed at the Paris climate COP in 2015 under David Cameron’s premiership (this led to the UK committing to cut emissions 68% on 1990 levels by 2030).

(2) to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, as agreed at the Montreal biodiversity COP in 2022 when Rishi Sunak was PM. At present we’re not on track to meet either of these

commitments and neither our existing legislation nor Government policies match their ambition.

The “CAN” Bill will make these commitments legally binding and ensure the UK does exactly what the science says is necessary to avoid disaster... while also bringing huge benefits for the poorest and most vulnerable in UK society through warmer homes, cheaper energy, better public transport and cleaner air and waterways.

Can you email your MP before their diary fills up to urge them to attend the Second Reading on Friday 24th January? (It is still worth contacting Adrian Ramsay even though he is a supporter.) For it to pass to the next stage, the Bill needs 102 MP’s to attend and vote for it.

Why get involved? Jim Green, a Lay Reader with the Blyth Valley Churches, says, 'The Anglican fifth mark of mission is to safeguard the integrity of creation, and one of the sections in the Eco Church scheme involves 'Community and Global Engagement'. Eco Church suggests various ways of taking action, and supporting this Bill would clearly fit in with this. In addition, it may be the last chance of meaningful legislation to make a difference, so if we want to love our local and global neighbour we should get behind this Bill.'

The Zero Hour website, makes it really easy to write a personalised email. Watch Ros Savage’s 1.5 min video about it. https://youtu.be/70gCw_aMotA

The Climate and Nature Bill is supported by tearfund.

JG

‘The Trinity Pilots of Aldeburgh’ - Chris Broom

I first came across Trinity House and their pilots when I was researching my husband’s ancestors. He descends from three generations of Thames’ Pilots, so I was very interested to attend Chris Broom’s Talk at the Fromus Centre, Saxmundham on Monday 18th November. Several others in the audience also had ancestral connections with long lines of Pilotage families in Suffolk.

The Talk covered the history of Trinity House as well as its current role. Now Trinity House is responsible for the provision and maintenance of navigational aids, such as lighthouses and buoys. However Trinity House once provided expert navigators (pilots) for ships trading in Northern European waters and in 1808 the Pilotage Act extended their powers to cover all coastal areas of England and Wales.

So why were Pilots needed on the Suffolk coast? Chris explained that the shoals and sand banks close to the English coast were perilous to ships, therefore a pilot was needed to assist with navigation into or from English ports, in order to prevent a shipwreck. A quote from Reverend J Ford clarified that in Aldeburgh, *“A great proportion of the seafaring inhabitants are Trinity Pilots who, forming themselves into small associations, purchase swift cutters in which they roam about the great northern ocean, frequently approaching the coast of Norway in search of ships bound to London which need the skillful assistance of an English pilot.”*

Why Aldeburgh? Aldeburgh was an ideal location for pilots to be based as it had a history of fishing and shipbuilding and was on major shipping routes from Scandinavia to Holland. Chris mentioned and showed images of some of the vessels used by the Aldeburgh pilots to get to the ships such as Yawls, Pilot Cutters and other beach boats.

So how did they know which ships needed assistance? It was very interesting to learn that different flags were hoisted by the ships indicating whether they needed, or already had, a Trinity Pilot

In addition, Lookout Towers were built at Aldeburgh to spot a ship in need. There were two competing Lookout companies of men: the Downtowners who used the North Tower and drank in the Cross Keys, and the Uptowners (South Tower) who drank in the Brudenell Tap. There were about 32 men in each company and if a ship was sighted then pilots would race to provide assistance. One attendee at the Talk said that whichever company got to the ship first threw their hat onto it!

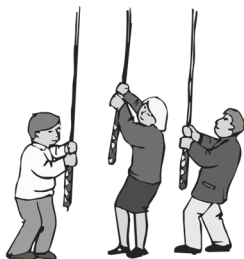
What brought the Aldeburgh pilotage to an end? There were several factors such as new ways to transport goods, steamships and the railway. Navigational aids had improved so experienced pilots were not in such demand but the most significant impact was a Trinity House Decree in 1899 which moved all North Channel pilots to Harwich.

It was very disconcerting to discover that although the courageous Aldeburgh pilots saved many lives, many of them also died at sea. Identification marks such as tattoos were recorded about the pilots in case they drowned at sea!

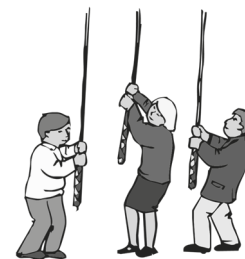
Some of the Aldeburgh families who were pilots were: Chatten, Dance, Green, Clodd, Thorpe, Flick, Norton, Rust, Filby, Burwood, Catmore, Pallant, Gibson, Norton, Ward & Gibbs.

Ernest Edward Gibbs was the last of the Trinity licensed pilots from 1922 - 1946.

Jane Evans



From the Ringing Chamber



It is always exciting when a new learner starts on the long journey to become a ringer. Alex lives in Rumburgh but is being taught at Halesworth, because Rumburgh bells are so easy they ring themselves (almost), whereas if you can ring at Halesworth you can ring anywhere. It's early days, but the signs are promising, so watch this space. Joanna, the last person to start the process, has worked really hard over the last year or so and is already working to get her ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) level 3. We could do with a few more recruits though as we are still short of bodies. A word of warning: if you think "that's what I can do when I retire" it will take you twice as long as if you start now, and everyone over the age of 20 that I've ever taught says "I wish I'd done this years ago."

The teaching process is helped these days by the Sole Bay Teaching Hub, an initiative based at Reydon and backed by ART. Learners and teachers come together every Saturday

morning for two hours to exchange tips and experience, and eat tons of cake that always materialises.

The December Halesworth quarter peal for Evensong went without a hitch. It made a nice change to have seven out of the eight ringers from the Blyth Valley Team, even if one does live most of the time in Bishop's Stortford. The only other performance of note was a quarter at Wissett to congratulate Pete on becoming a grandad.

As I write this column, the carol service season has started, one of our busier periods. We kicked off with Heveningham, and good to see the congregation outnumbering the ringers!

PJG

Stella @ KHG

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There are collection places for Foodbank donations in
Chediston; St Mary's Church, Halesworth;
Halesworth Co-op; Holton; Rumburgh; Spexhall (2);
Wenhaston and Wissett.

ADDITIONAL FOODBANK DONATION POINTS
Donations of food for the Foodbank can also be left at Woolnough's
Funeral Services office at the entrance to Halesworth Cemetery on
Holton Road and also at Rosedale Funeral Services in the Market
Place, Halesworth.
There are collection boxes outside the offices, where produce can
be placed.

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"MEMORIES & STORIES OF OLD HALESWORTH"
by James W Newby
£7.99 available from St Mary's Church.
Proceeds to St Mary's Halesworth Regeneration etc.

"The LIFE and TIMES of DEREK NEWBY"
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FULL CHURCH FOR ALL ACCESS CAROL SERVICE

St Mary's Church, Halesworth was packed for the All Access Carol Service on Thursday 19th December. What a wonderful service it was, led by the Revd Gini Williams. We were joined by Mencap, Beech House, Holton Singers, Halesworth Volunteers and many others. Carols were sung with gusto and songs led by different groups. Some carols were accompanied by being signed in British Sign Language. The Revd Linda Berry gave a lovely talk on what you might have in your bag this Christmas!

A massive thank you to the Halesworth Volunteers who provided amazing refreshments after the service. By all accounts, it was a relaxed and very precious service.

PM



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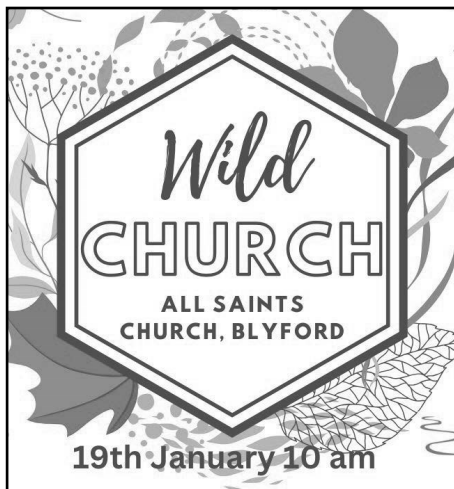
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News from Town & Villages

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Bramfield

Correspondent Alfred Mullett
snowmein@mac.com

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Bramfield House School

A group of students from Bramfield House School came to Bramfield Church in November to look around the church and learn about the history and festivals we have here. They were particularly interested in the giant key which we have to open the doors and they also read, with gusto, the writing on the historical and famous gravestones in the chancel and took a good look at our stained-glass windows depicting Christ in many different settings. For most of these children, they had never been in a church before, so I felt very blessed to be showing them around. We were really pleased as some of them were interested in

attending the primary school's St Andrew's church service too, so later on that week they came back and sat in on the service. We look forward to seeing them again soon.

Bramfield Primary School

Bramfield Primary School held their service in the Church in memory of our Patron Saint, Saint Andrew. The service was led by the Revd Linda Berry. A lot of cheerful hymns were sung and the children listened to prayers about Saint Andrew, too.

St Andrew's Day Service

We held our Holy Communion Service this year on our patron Saint's Day - Saturday 30th November at 6pm. We had a lovely service taken by the Revd Dominic Doble. We were pleased to see some parishioners from St Andrew's Wissett, St Peter's Spexhall and St Mary's Halesworth and it was lovely to talk to them afterwards. Thanks to Louise Cunningham for the lovely mulled wine and food and to Alfred for the mince pies.

Christmas Fair - December 7th at Bramfield Village Hall

We had a stall selling books and also jumble at the Fair and, despite the terrible weather, it was lovely to see so many locals and have a good chat. We raised £67.20 altogether. Thank you to everyone who donated books and jumble and even cakes. We really appreciate it.

Looking Ahead to New Year

We are planning to hold the Bramfield Village Fete on the Village Green again this year, as it was such a success last year. Make a note in your diaries for Saturday 26th July 2025. If you would like to help us to make the event even better, please contact Jinnie Barham at: standrewsbramfield@gmail.com

Reported by Jinnie Barham:

Village Happenings

Bramfield Village Hall held a Christmas Fair on Saturday 7th December, despite then weather, it was a great success and took £551.30. It was lovely to see new stalls this year as well as loyal regulars. The family of Pat Potts with Paul, did us proud with the

famous turkey rolls, mince pies and mulled wine. Our heartfelt thanks to them and our love and best wishes to Pat who was unable to be with us on the day.

Reported by Jane Edwards

As the Christmas season comes to an end once again, please take some time to remember what the real reason for the season is. It isn't meals, candy, cakes and toys (for all ages of course), it is about the most powerful being in our universe, kneeling down, holding out a hand and saying 'What can I do to make your lives better?', and doing just that.

Take a moment this year, and the next, and find someone who can't afford that latte, take a moment to be totally in the moment and give the gift of humanity and genuine human kindness... the true Christmas spirit. Happy New Year, and may everyone's life go forward with the added sparkle of love and joy.

Chediston

Correspondent Veronica Downing
veronica@veronicadowning.co.uk

As part of Chediston's Christmas celebrations, a party was held in the church around the splendid 14 foot Christmas tree, with champagne and nibbles. Christmas wishes were written on gift tags and tied to the tree as decorations. About 35 villagers enjoyed a very sociable evening. The nativity was displayed on the altar. (See photo below).



The church was filled on November 27th with many family and friends for the funeral of long standing and much-loved resident, Joan Williamson who died in November at the age of 98 years. Joan, who was originally from east London had lived in Chediston for many years and was a very active member of the community and always full of fun and humour. In her 90's Joan loved to dance at the New Year parties and barn dances. She was a remarkable lady and is greatly missed.

As this magazine goes to print, we are looking forward to the traditional Chediston Christmas Eve carol service of readings and carols. Four keen young people will be some of the readers. We will report on this next month. David Bunkell will be our organist and we look forward to hearing our newly refurbished organ fill the church with glorious sound.

Wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

Cookley

St Michael & All Angels Church, Cookley

has joined the "Give a Little" online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-michael-and-all-angels-cookley> or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.



Halesworth

Correspondent Jason Busby
01986 873336

halesworthparish@gmail.com

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning"- If you know me well, those are the words to my favourite organ descant verse at Midnight Mass! Now that is past, like at the first Christmas, there is a calm as God enters into our world with peace and humility. And there is also joy as brightness shines out of the ordinariness of everyday life. For me the key word is 'calm', after the chaos of December filled with social events, services, Christmas presents to buy, the never-

ending to-do list we can finally sit down and celebrate. December was one of the busiest I've known in recent years at St Mary's.

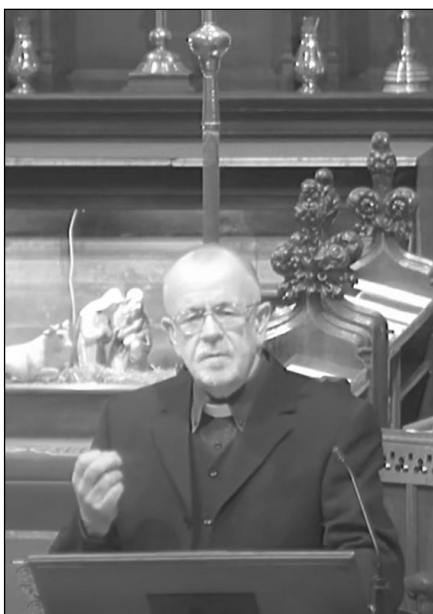
From the magnificent tree festival, the final recital of the 2024 FoSM series, the town, Linstead and Pear Tree's Christmas markets, and if that wasn't enough a total of 15 services, one funeral and one gig, took place in December.

THANK YOU to everyone who, in whatever shape or form; supported, set up, cleaned up, provided refreshments or attended! THANK YOU for sharing the joy of Christmas with us.

The highlights in December for me were the All Access Carol Service on December 19th and the Town Carol Service on the 20th.

On both occasions the Church was FULL of happiness, joy, laughter, singing, hospitality and sharing the familiar stories. Over 200 people in total attended those two services alone. Reading and hearing endless headlines about war, natural disasters and violence in all forms has been so wearing in recent months, these words from Luke "Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people" have been a great comfort and our worship a much-needed distraction!

I must thank Pastor Jon Sermon (*pictured below*) who stepped in for the Town Carol Service as Dominic was poorly. Thanks Jon.



2024 in summary has been incredibly positive in the life of our beloved St Mary's. I've lost count of the number of community events we hosted, new

faces discovering what we can offer and seeing the versatility of our building. As we promote our mantra "Church in Community - Community in Church", 2025 will be bringing very much more of the same! Do read the 'What's on in St Mary's page in this magazine (OBC).

Following services on Sunday 15th December, the choir gathered over mulled wine and nibbles and thanked Karen Wynne Evans for 10 years of training and leading the Blyth Valley Churches choir. So many years of collating music (with husband Pedro), hauling the keyboard around, providing tea and shortbread/flapjacks and helping us all to be much better church singers.

Such patience and encouragement for 10 years. Thank you, Karen, as you retire from the post! The future of the Team Choir is uncertain, but we pray a new director can be found in time for Palm Sunday when the choir returns from their winter break.

As we prepare and work our way towards the Baptism of Christ, Epiphany and the presentation of Christ in the temple (Candlemas), our usual pattern of worship continues for 2025: Wednesday's 10am Holy Communion. Sunday worship at 8am, 10am and 6pm. Remember you can join Dominic in the Lady Chapel from Tuesday to Saturday 8am and 6pm for Morning/Evening prayer.

Happy New Year from your PCC, let us pray:- Eternal Lord God, we give thanks for bringing us through the changes of time to the beginning of another year. Forgive us the wrong we have done in the year that is past, and help us to spend the rest of our days to your honour and glory; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St Mary's Church, Halesworth

has joined the "Give a Little" online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-marys-church-halesworth> or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.



HALESWORTH WI

We had a large audience for our Annual General Meeting and Cindy Lawes, our WI advisor, led us through the details and voting with good humour.

Molly Page is our President for the next year, a popular choice.

Members then chatted and socialised over refreshments before perusing and purchasing items on display at the Silent Auction.

We then wended our way home, looking forward to our Christmas lunch at the Angel Hotel .

We wish all WI members a Happy and Healthy 2025. **BP**

Heveningham**Correspondent**

Jeanette Griffin 01986 798280
stmargaretchurch11@gmail.com

St Margaret's celebrated the festive season with our Craft Market and then our Carol Service. With Storm Darragh raging away on the Saturday, our stallholders battled the wind and rain to bring in their wares. We then sat and waited in anticipation, hoping that people would also come out in the storm. We had quite a few brave souls who graced our doors and we had a wonderful morning, with some lovely stalls of handmade crafts, festive tombola and hot chocolate available. *(Photos of the craft market below).*

But even though the weather outside was frightful, inside it was just delightful and a good time was had by all. On the Sunday the candles were lit and we welcomed around 30 people to the Carol Service. Followed by some warming mulled wine and mince pies. The weekend finished with a warm and happy feeling.



We held a Midnight Mass service on December 24th.

We now have a few quieter weeks ahead.

Just a reminder, there will be no coffee mornings held in January and February; We will be holding traditional Holy Communion services on the second Sunday of the month.

From everyone at St Margaret's, we wish you all a very Happy New Year and look forward to an eventful year ahead.

**St Margaret's Church,
Heveningham**

has joined the "Give a Little" online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-margaret-heveningham-with-ubbeston>

or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.

**Holton****Correspondent**

Jill Hewlett

01986 875913

jill.hewlett1@btinternet.com

A HAPPY NEW YEAR to all St Peter's people and to the wider Team!

The first thing I must do is to thank Jackie Watts for stepping into the breach and writing this column for the last three months! It is no mean task, and if there is anyone out there who would like to give it a go, please contact me!



I am writing this in the week before Christmas, so nothing has happened yet! Well, none of the Christmas services! But an awful lot is going on in Holton, Halesworth and the other villages of the Blyth Valley, as well as in all our homes as we frantically write cards, buy last minute presents, wrap and send parcels, as well as trying to think of all the food stuffs that we will be buying this week and next.

Hopefully among all this activity we will have remembered what it is all about and will be able to carry that joy into the New Year.

**St Peter's Church,
Holton**

has joined the "Give a Little" online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-peters-church-holton>

or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.

**THE LABYRINTH EVENT**

There will be no Labyrinth meeting in January. The next event will be on **Monday 6th February in the Church (and on the Paddock) from 2pm until about 4pm.** Do come along for a time of contemplation, fellowship and friendship.

CHRISTMAS FAIR

Our Christmas Fair on November 16th raised a fantastic **£1,343.34!** It was a lovely morning with a real buzz. We had a good variety of stalls, some new to us,

and the people who came were also a varied bunch with people new to the area as well as all our regular stalwarts. A big thank you must go to Chris and Helen Knevett and to Dottie Booley, and to all the stallholders.

DOT'S CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING

Dot held her annual coffee morning in aid of the Pear Tree Centre, on December 12th in the village hall. The hall was packed with happy punters enjoying the selection of cakes and savouries on offer along with their drinks. Conversation was the order of the day and most people stayed for the duration. **Congratulations to Dot for organising such a lovely time and for raising the magnificent sum of £655.70.**

CHURCH FINANCES

We are still looking for a new Treasurer to replace John Hewlett, so if you are interested please contact him. We have not yet paid all this year's share to the Diocese and are still some thousand pounds short; but hopefully this will improve next year.

STOP PRESS: Holton School Plays

Rehearsals for the School plays in the church are going well. The younger children are producing a Nativity play, with good singing and the speaking parts very clearly spoken, and the older classes will show a "Christmas Carol" in some form. I will report further in the next issue. **John Hewlett**

Conservation at St Peter's Holton is back

The area under discussion is still there and is, at the moment, in dire need of special attention so that it can be brought back to the condition it was in around six years ago.

In the late '90s, the PCC commissioned a survey by Suffolk Wildlife Trust which gave a list of all the wildflowers and grasses growing in the churchyard at that time. The survey showed that the area with the most delicate plants was just below the church on the south side. This area has been reduced and roped off, so that a few interested people, including myself, can look after it to encourage conservation as the original survey suggests. We will be cutting paths round and across the area to give people a close-up experience when they visit.

Jim Watts

Christmas Thoughts '24

When Christmas comes it comes quite fast with fairs and food and things. The children are busy writing their Christmas lists, and thinking what Santa may bring.

We somehow seem to miss the point of what it's all about.

That baby born on a starry night who came to love us for of that there's no doubt.

We see the pictures of that lowly place where Mary's babe was born. But is that what we celebrate together when it comes to Christmas morn.

Even Advent calendars nowadays have Santas, elves, reindeer and snow. They have chocolate inside or jigsaws and Lego, not a babe with his halo aglow.

Our grandchildren all learn in school that Jesus came to earth.

They've heard the story in their Nativity plays about that special baby's birth.

So as we listen to that ancient tale and enjoy the carols we sing.

Spare a thought for the children whose Christmas morning is just what Santa will bring.

Let us hope that in years to come the Christmas story which still is so strong.

That the youngsters will understand and recognise that their grandparents weren't very wrong.

Enjoy your Christmas however it comes with family and friends all together.

But remember it's up to us all to spread the word that Jesus is with us forever.

Dottie Booley

Huntingfield

Correspondent Sally Clarke
sally.clarke@live.com

A Happy New Year to everyone! It always feels like a new school term greeted with a mix of anticipation and excitement about the next 12 months, new places to visit and perhaps new people to meet and friends to make. Here in Huntingfield, we are looking at recruiting new people to our PCC. We are a friendly bunch who enjoy a good debate over our quarterly PCC

meetings whilst sampling the wonderful baking delights of our churchwarden. If you are interested in having a vicar in your parish and keeping the church open, then why not come along to our next meeting on Wednesday 15th January, 7.30pm at Newall Hall, Huntingfield and see if it is something you would like to get involved with. A warm welcome awaits you.

If you are a visitor to the area, or have never been inside St Mary's church Huntingfield, then why not put it on your list 'of things to do or places to visit', it won't disappoint you. The beautifully painted ceiling is the work of Mildred Holland, the wife of the Rector back in 1859. If you would like to find out more there is a podcast free to download on your phone, just search St Mary the Virgin on your usual podcast provider and follow the instructions. Perhaps you prefer the 'written word'? Guide books available to buy at the church for £2.50, or for £1 there is a very informative and full colour leaflet about the ceiling. We hold copies of the novel *The Huntingfield Paintress*, £10 to buy (very popular with book groups) and it brings lots of people to the church.

If you, or a group of friends, would like a guided tour of the church then contact our Churchwarden, Emma Ward on 01986 785343 to arrange a visit.

We look forward to welcoming you all.

St Mary's Church, Huntingfield

has joined the "Give a Little" online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-marys-church-huntingfield> or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.



Linstead

Correspondent

Malcolm Heath 01986 785289

www.linstead.suffolk.gov.uk

I GOT QUITE EXCITED YESTERDAY. A group of very earnest gentlemen, dressed from head to foot in bright

orange waterproof overalls, spent the day hosing down the road outside our house. For a moment I considered the possibility that we might be about to receive a Royal Visit. Sadly not the case, they were just reopening part of the B1123, beset by roadworks - and mud, lots and lots of mud. Not all the road, you understand, just a bit of it. Those of us who have been feeling sorry for the residents of Chediston Green (normally a rather quiet and exclusive area), must carry on feeling sympathy. However, those who live on Linstead's School Lane, must be feeling a degree of relief. Roll on the day, about a month hence, I believe, that all goes back to normal. THE LINSTAD GIFT DAY YIELDED A very generous total of £870 in donations. Thank you to all who contributed. IF YOU TRY TO GOOGLE 'Linstead' the chances are that you will find your self in Linstead, Jamaica and, as we scrape the morning ice off our windscreens, we think 'If only!'. This was, however, the original inspiration behind Linstead Market, held towards the end of November, and another great success, raising in the end, a few pence over £1000. Again, our deep thanks for all who helped and made it go so well. For me it is always the start of Christmas.

MAY I, AS YOUR TREASURER, THANK those who support us via monthly standing orders. May I urge more of you to do the same, a modest sum £10 or so a month, is hugely helpful. If you were able to contribute, I can supply a form for you to fill in.

CHEDISTON & LINSTAD WI celebrated Christmas at the Huntingfield Arms and were, as usual, very well looked after. They meet next at 2.30pm on January 14th at Linstead Village Hall. The speaker will be Serena Hall and her subject 'Morsbags'. LINSTAD VILLAGE HALL HELD ITS annual Beetle Drive, which was great fun, with dice, flying in all directions. Sometimes we managed to get them on to the table. You wait for a six - and then throw three more sixes in rapid succession. Apart from testing the laws of probability to destruction, it is always a great social event and made £318 for Village Hall Funds.

SO WHERE NOW? WELL YOUR PCC will be meeting in January and will plan out the year. We always used to get for Christmas those very useful little diaries, with a pencil stuck down the spine. I am told that nowadays we are supposed to putting things on our

'phones. Notwithstanding, the February Linstead Letter should contain all you need to know for your 2025 social calendar. SO MAY I WISH ALL OUR READERS A very Happy New Year.

DATE: FLOWERS & CLEANING

1st	No Service
8th	Mrs P Keable & Mr D Keable
15th	No Service
22nd	No Service
29th	No Service

Spexhall

Correspondent Keith Noakes
spexhallwoodpecker@gmail.com
*(*Spexhall is thought to be Anglo-Saxon for 'woodpecker')*

Facebook: St Peter's Spexhall and Spexhall Village Hall

'Adventus' Concert by the Aurora Consort

December could not have started better than with the beautiful harmonies of the Aurora Consort. Please see the separate review on page 25 of this issue of this very special concert. Woodpecker is 'feeling loved' as Facebook would say. Thank you Vetta and the Consort.

Christmas Carol Service

Thank you to all who gave of their time, talents and money for the Christmas Carol Service on December 8th. We were 'first off the blocks' in the Carol Services in the Blyth Valley Churches, and the congregation sang heartily to the traditional carols. Gini was so taken with the knitted figures in the crib scene, she even forgave us for including the wise men before the feast of Epiphany! The special baking skills of the Chair of the Parish Council were enjoyed in the tea afterwards, and we thank him and all others who contributed to the beginning of the Christmas celebration in our small ancient church.

Love Came Down at Christmas

The title of Christina Rossetti's poem sums up the specialness of Midnight Mass when we welcomed in the Christ Child. At Christmas and Easter we bring out the Elizabethan chalice and paten to link us to the Christmasses in Spexhall through the ages, and we look with courage and commitment to the challenges 2025 will bring. Our thanks to the Revd David Sochon for leading our worship and to those who gave so much as, 'Christmas came once more'.

'Rebuild my church'

These words from Jesus to St Francis in the 12th Century have a double meaning. For the moment we will just focus on the physical church! Many know that St Peter's needs repair in many ways.

Watch this column in the coming months as we make a case for funds from various bodies to help us in the significant repairs and renovations that are needed. We in the village also need to do 'our bit' to preserve a building that has parts dating back to the 12th Century if we want it to be enjoyed by future generations. 2025 will be quite a challenge in making our case for renovation, but also exciting!

Plough Sunday and Sunday 19th January

On **Sunday 12th January at 10am** we join our friends at **St Andrew's Wissett** for the **Plough Sunday Service**, which we now share and rotate each year between us.

It is an opportunity to reflect on the importance of the land and farming community, especially in our area. On **Sunday 19th January** Spexhall will have a **Holy Communion Service at 10am**. All are warmly invited to these services.

The Village Quiz and Spring Bulbs

An excellent Quiz night was enjoyed by all at the end of November and the village hall committee planted around 700 bulbs in the perimeter of the hall field and around some trees.

The bulbs were provided by the local council. We look forward to what blooms in 2025.

Wishing all in Spexhall and our friends peace and joy in the New Year and a bloomin' great 2025!

St Peter's Church, Spexhall

has joined the "Give a Little" online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-peters-church-spexhall> or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.



Thorington

Correspondent

Trish Gower 01502 478078

trish@coastal1.plus.com

A very Happy New Year to all our readers, and thank you to all for supporting our church at Thorington. A quiet time of year for us now, but please watch this space over the next few months for news of 2025 events! Very best wishes from all at Thorington church.

St Peter's Church, Thorington

has joined the "Give a Little" online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-peters-church-thorington> or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.



Walpole

Correspondents

Lee & Anita Hill 07713 450078

anita.hill2006@gmail.com

St Mary's Church, Walpole

has joined the "Give a Little" online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-marys-church-walpole> or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.



Wenhaston

Correspondent

Margaret Bloomfield

01502 478502

margaret@wrush.plus.com

Now that the old year is past and a

new one has just started, on behalf of St Peter's Church, I would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported us throughout last year.

Thank you to our clergy who have been happy to minister to our small congregation, and to Jonathan our organist and to the other team members who have taken our services. Many thanks to the flowers ladies for lovely arrangements, and to the cleaners who have kept the church spruce. Thank you to the people who have done the readings and lead the prayers. To the bell ringers who have woken folk up to campanology, and to the coffee makers. We are grateful to all who have helped at our fundraising events and who have donated items for sale or given donations, and to all our regular givers. Also to the church unlockers who faithfully open and close the church in all weathers. And to anyone else who I may have forgotten, thank you!

On a personal note, I should like to thank Jonathan, our Churchwarden, who works so hard for the church and its members.

In January Arthur Musk is putting on a Plough Day in aid of the church, for which we are most grateful. See poster on page 29 of this issue.

All it remains for me to say now is that everyone at St Peter's Wenhaston wishes one and all a very happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

January Services

- | | |
|------|---|
| 5th | 10am, Holy Communion,
St Mary's Halesworth |
| 12th | 10am, Ecumenical
Communion |
| 26th | 10am, Pause for Thought |

WENHASTON M U

Carols rang out from Spindleberry on Wednesday 11th December when we had our annual Christmas party. Carols and readings, chosen by the members, were enjoyed by us all and it was good to have the Revd Canon Alison with us to lead our singing. This was then followed by tea and cakes, accompanied by lots of chat and exchanging Christmas wishes, it was lovely to have several guests with us and we hope that they enjoyed their afternoon.

In January we will start the New Year with a Communion Service on Wednesday 8th in the Methodist Chapel at 2.30pm and anyone who would like to join us for this Service will be very welcome.

We wish all our readers a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Margaret G (01502 478378)

St Peter's Church, Wenhaston

has joined the "Give a Little" online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-peters-church-wenhaston> or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.



WENHASTON FLOWER CLUB

Our December meeting was our Christmas party where everyone brought a sharing plate of food and the Club provided the drinks.

The amount and variety of food was amazing and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. Jean provided the decorations for the tables and everyone took part in the Secret Santa gifts.

It was wonderful to see so many members attend the evening and there was a lovely festive atmosphere.

The highlight of the evening was a demonstration by Roger who made three beautiful arrangements. We were so lucky that he agreed to come along as it was possibly one of his last demonstrations as he is now concentrating more on workshops.



It was very fitting that we should be one of his last demos, as he was the first demonstrator when Jean and her colleagues first started Wenhaston Flower Club over 40 years ago. Congratulations to the lucky winners of the raffle who won Roger's beautiful floral arrangements.



Roger with Jean Spindler, one of the founder members of the Flower Club.

A further raffle was also held to raise money for The Halesworth Branch of Cancer Research. Congratulations to everyone who won a prize and thank you for your support.

We don't meet in January, as this will be our Christmas meal which this time is being held at The Randolph in Reydon. All the details will be sent out by Beverley in our newsletter.

We resume in February with a new programme of demonstrations and workshops and February's details will again be sent out by Beverley, via the newsletter.

We meet as usual on the first Tuesday of the month in Wenhaston Village Hall at 7.30pm.

For more information please contact Jackie Chenery on 01502 478401.

Wenhaston Walks

Just the one local walk in January. We will start out from Wenhaston Village Hall at 10am on Tuesday 7th. Plenty of time to have recovered from the Christmas and New Year exertions and to breathe in some fresh air! If you wish to add your name to the circulation list, please email:

ipbigwood@btinternet.com

Best wishes for 2025.

Heather Phillips (01502 478545)



Wissett

Correspondent Mary Pester

01986 835869

marypester@rocketmail.com

As I write the church is yet to be decorated for our Christmas celebrations, apart from the splendid tree, kindly donated by Bob Stephens and the light shining on St Andrew, but very soon many helpers will have decorated the church beautifully, carols will have been sung, and hearts lifted in joy and thanksgiving!

And then...

“Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.”

I expect Tennyson saw more snow in his day, more wet and windy weather it seems for us here now in Wissett.

We don't know if the Magi had “a cold coming of it” but on Monday 6th January at 6pm, we remember their journey and revelation in our Epiphany Service. A beautiful service, lit again by candles as the figures of the Wise Men (and single camel) join the other figures in the crib.

There will be refreshments after the service, maybe star shaped biscuits and sweet wine, almonds and dates perhaps. Do come and join us!

Only a few days later we have another special service that we share with our

friends and neighbours in Spexhall and this year it is Wissett's turn to host the Plough Sunday service on Sunday 12th January at 10am. Unlike Spexhall we will not have a real plough in the church, but there will be a plough and tractor just outside. We will give thanks for all who work on and care for the land and remember the beauty of the earth and our responsibility to preserve it.

Refreshments again after the service, maybe not a full Ploughman's Lunch but appropriate to the occasion - maybe cheese, oaten biscuits?

Thank you so much for all who help look after our church here in Wissett in many different ways and help us to...

Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out wild bells!

Happy New Year.

St Andrew's Church,

Wissett

has joined the “Give a Little” online donation service.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk/st-andrews-church-wissett> or you can scan the QR code printed here using your mobile device.



ST ANDREW'S
CHURCH,
WISSETT

*Plough
Sunday*

12th January 2025 at 10 am

Everyone Welcome

Karen Wynne Evans Retires from Leading and Conducting the Blyth Valley Churches Choir

For ten years Karen has given her time and talents in training and conducting the Blyth Valley Churches Choir. Her endless patience and skill in preparing us to sing at the first and fifth Sunday BVC services and at evensong around the parishes has been a remarkable gift to us all. So many weeks of Thursday rehearsals: the keyboard lugged around in the back of the car and providing us with tea, shortbread and flapjacks in the break. Above and beyond the call of duty! It was great to have a party on Sunday 15th December to be able to thank Karen, and Pedro in his administration, for all they have done in enabling the choir to achieve so much, and to present her with a gift as a sign of our grateful thanks. **Keith Noakes**



Aurora Consort 'Adventus' Concert on Advent Sunday 1st December 2024 at St Peter's Spexhall

On the First Sunday of Advent the first candle of the wreath is lit as a sign of hope, for the world and for our own lives. To have the honour and pleasure of a concert freely given by the Aurora Consort directed by Vetta Wise was, for St Peter's Spexhall, an occasion for further hope as funds raised will be used for ministry and in maintaining the fabric of the building.

Advent is the time of preparation for the Christmas festival. As well as anticipation it is traditionally a time for personal reflection. The concert opened in that reflective mood with a darkened church, save for the light of candles, as the choir of five voices began with Palestrina's Matin responsory for Advent Sunday (a staple of the Advent Carol Service of King's Cambridge). This was followed by *Virgo splendens* of the 14th century, music dating from the same century as one doorway of the church, linking us with ancient Spexhall, and the 'hopes and fears' of the many villagers who have worshipped in this space. The choir processed to the chancel to treat us to a lovely collection of a capella carols and seasonal music, which blended the ancient with the new. The familiar *Adam lay-y-bounden* (Boris Ord), *Coventry Carol* (arr. Shaw) and the always popular *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree* (Elizabeth Posten) were among pieces dating from the 14th to the 20th century. There was a wonderful texture of voices, mingling solo parts with beautiful harmonies.

During the concert we were treated to two pieces by composers present with us in church. *I sing of a Mayden*, a setting of an old English poem by Christopher Upton (singing bass) had perfect harmonies for this choir. Alexander Campkin (who joined us in the audience) composed *Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella*, a setting of a 17th century French poem ending with the two female farm hands finding the baby Jesus. Their excitement of finding the Christ child is tempered by the end of the piece, as the girls are hushed while the baby peacefully sleeps. These remarkable compositions spoke quietly of the wonder of the annunciation and the beauty of the love of Mary for her sleeping son.

Many of us recall *Gaudete* when it was a hit recording by Steeleye Span in 1973. The choir processed from the back of



the church to a drum beat, once more transporting us to the 16th century and the Latin devotions of old. The lovely carols in the second half, together with Alex Campkin's work, led to the glories of Christmas in *Deck the Hall* (arr. Willcocks) and *Ring Christmas Bells* (Leontovich). A "cheeky" *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* rounded off the concert with warm applause from a very appreciative audience.

After the candle for hope of the first Sunday in Advent, come the candles for joy, peace and love. The concert programme, so well chosen by Vetta Wise, was a journey through the emotions and longings we experience through Advent, and we thank her and the choir for leading us to the manger and the celebration of that first Christmas morning by shepherds and angels.

Keith Noakes

Light shining in darkness



Taize Workshop and Service

Sunday 26th January

St Peter's Church, Holton

4pm Singing Workshop (followed by refreshments)

6pm Taize Service

Everyone is welcome to come and learn some Taize music or simply experience the quiet reflective service.

For further details, please contact the Revd Canon Alison Alder at:

revalialder@gmail.com

or 07584 416277

Thinking of your New Year's resolutions? Halesworth Library can help!

Whether you want to read more books, learn a new skill or join a social group, the library can help. Don't forget that it's free to use the library and sign up for a library card. With your library card you have access to thousands of physical and online books, access to free newspapers/magazines, and even exercise equipment!

Starting off the New Year, on Friday 3rd January we're hosting another Blank Page Project which is the free creative sessions for those aged 10-16. Join us and Nat Whitney for 'Sonic Self: A Creative Technologies Workshop'. For more information, please visit our website or speak with a member of library staff.

On Thursday 16th January at 2.30pm, the Friends of Halesworth Library are delighted to host author Michael Bartlett for their 30th session of the monthly 'Thursday Book Talks'. Norfolk-based Michael Bartlett has been a writer for over 50-years, with his latest novel *Mr Redmond's Mending Day* was published on 12th December 2024. Come along to hear all about his writing life, as well as his previous work in television, radio and theatre.

If you have little ones at home, join us every Tuesday from 10am-11.30am for our free Rhyme Time & Play session to sing fun songs followed by free play with our toys. We also hold a Time Out group for older people every Wednesday 10am to make new friends and chat over a cup of tea. There are also two sessions of Sociable Sundays on January 12th and 26th, 10.30am – 12.30pm, and Board games is January 27th, from 2pm – 4pm, both hosted and run by volunteers of the Friends of Halesworth Library.

Did you know that the library can deliver books to your home? If you're unable to visit us at the library, one of our volunteers can come to you. Please contact us on 01986 875095 for further information.

Catherine Draper



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BVTimes subscription price increase for 2025

With effect from 1st January 2025, the home delivery price for an annual subscription to *Blyth Valley Times* has increased to £18 per year. This is our first increase in the subscription price for many years.

For subscribers who currently have their magazine delivered to their home each month, the new price will take effect from the 2025-6 subscription renewal issue. In most cases, this will be from the May 2025 issue, and, should you wish to renew for a further year, your local distributor will collect your annual subscription payment.

If you wish to pay by BACS, the account details are as follows: Barclays Bank plc, account Blyth Valley Team Ministry 13647579, sort code 20-53-06. Cheques should be made payable to Blyth Valley Team Ministry please.

The *BVTimes* cover price is now £1.50 per copy (where sold).

We have delivery rounds in most of the BVChurches parishes, should you wish to find out more about the home delivery service in your town/village, please telephone 01986 875941, or email: blyth.valley.times@gmail.com

We also offer a postal delivery service - a copy of the latest *BVTimes* is posted to your home address each month. The price for a postal subscription is £40 (incl p&p) per year. (Payment details as above).

For all *BVTimes* enquiries, please telephone the church office on 01986 875941 or email: blyth.valley.times@gmail.com

Thank you!



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BY APPOINTMENT**



RSPB



Big Churchyard Bird Watch!

**St Peter's Church, Holton
25th January 2025 from 2-4 pm**



All welcome:
Join us as we complete surveys, have information about birds, craft activities, bird feeder making and refreshments.



WHAT'S ON

HALESWORTH BRANCH OF CANCER RESEARCH

JUMBLE SALE

SATURDAY 8th FEBRUARY, 10am - 12pm
HOLTON & BLYFORD VILLAGE HALL, Lodge Road, Holton IP19 8RZ
 Tea/coffee and delicious cakes
 Bric- a-brac, books, toys.
 Ladies, men's, children's clothes etc.




Church Mice Tots Group

St Mary's Church, Halesworth
 Thursday's 11:30 am - 1 pm
 Term-Time

Special Film Matinee of KEEPING MUM

Starring Rowan Atkinson, Kristin Scott Thomas, Maggie Smith and Patrick Swayze
at The Cut, Halesworth
WEDNESDAY 15TH JANUARY
 Doors open at 1.30pm for 2pm start.
 Entrance by £5 donation



Please do support us and enjoy this British black comedy film

COME PLOUGH A FURROW WITH 1938 STANDARD FORDSON 2 FURROW TRAILED PLOUGH.

RIDE ON A MODERN DAY TRACTOR PLOUGH (SEE HOW IT ALL WORKS).

SEE A 1928 CATERPILLAR 60 WITH A BOARDWALK PLOUGH IN ACTION.

DONATIONS TO WENHASTON CHURCH

19TH JANUARY 2025


10 AM TILL 4PM



ON LAND OPPOSITE STAR PUB (BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE LEECH FAMILY)
CONTACT ARTHUR 07827018896

TOY AND SCHOOL UNIFORM EXCHANGE

11:30 TILL 13:00



ST MARY'S CHURCH, HALESWORTH
20TH FEBRUARY 2025

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The Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin Halesworth

2025 concert / events highlights

Wednesday, 12 March
12noon for 12.30pm

2025 Lunchtime Recital Series BEGINS!

A lunchtime recital organised by the Friends of St. Mary's
FREE ENTRY / retiring collection / refreshments / bring your own lunch

Saturdays 5th OR 12th April

PAKEFIELD SINGERS CONCERT
TO BE CONFIRMED!

Sunday, 13th April
9.45 for 10am

PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION

The procession leaves the library at 9.45am up to St. Mary's
for a 10am Holy Communion Service

Sunday, 20th April
2.30pm for 3pm

ST GEORGE'S DAY PARADE & CIVIC SERVICE

A 2.30pm procession through town from the Library up to St. Mary's
for a 3pm CIVIC SERVICE

24th - 28th April

INK FESTIVAL ACROSS HALESWORTH

Sunday, 18th May
6pm

Choral Evensong by Martyn Bagnalls singing group Jubilate

Join us for a special Choral Evensong Service

Sunday, 25th May
3pm

Come to the Fair

We welcome back Malcolm & Elizabeth of CHANTERS JIGGE for an
afternoon concert - Tickets £10 on the door

Saturday, 2nd August
Timings TBC

BREAD & WINE FESTIVAL

The second Lammas bread & wine festival
More details to follow soon...

Wednesday, 13th August
12 for 12.30pm

CONCERT PIANIST JILL CROSSLAND PERFORMS- FIRST RECITAL APPEARANCE

A lunchtime recital organised by the Friends of St. Mary's
FREE ENTRY / retiring collection / refreshments / bring your own lunch

Sunday, 5th October
10am

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Join us for a 10am Harvest Festival Service followed by
a community lunch in St. Mary's - EVERYONE IS INVITED

TBC
(likely in November)

SILENT FILM NIGHT

The Phantom of the Opera - with Tom Horton on the organ
Tickets £10 on the door

Sunday, 9th November
3pm

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PARADE & SERVICE

Parade leaves Coopers at 2.30pm for a 3pm service followed
by the act of Remembrance round the arboretum

Thursday, 18 December
2pm

All access Carol Service

A carol service with a difference! LARGE print order of service, different
organisations who support local people taking part. OPEN TO ALL

Friday, 19 December
7pm

TOWN CAROL SERVICE

Come hear the story and sing the carols

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