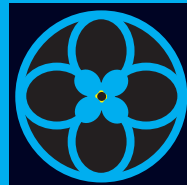


ELMBRIDGE



ELMLEY LOVETT

FEBRUARY



2023

HAMPTON LOVETT



RUSHOCK



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EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to our February 2023 edition.

Indeed, it is 2023; the 21st century; plans of humans travelling to Mars are more and more realistic in our lifetimes and yet on the 24th February it is going to be one year since Russia invaded Ukraine. There are no words that can describe the horror of what is happening there or for us to imagine the evil that is being rained down upon the innocents in the villages and towns..

As we long for and prepare for the joyful signs of spring around us, most of Ukraine is still experiencing temperatures below zero; many have no heat or light or food. Life there could not be more different from what we have here

I wish you all the joy and hope of Spring time but let us not forget those victims of Russia's aggression.

Marzena Cartwright

AGEING- THE BEAUTY OF AN INNER HARVEST

We all eventually grow old and if we don't get there we feel that someone has "has gone before their time". It doesn't feel right somehow. But growing old has many challenges just as with all the other stages of life. So how can we live our later years as well as possible?

This year's Lent Course will explore this question.

We will look at our own experience from the perspective of people of faith from across the ages, wisdom from the Bible, and from John O'Donohue's wonderful book, *Anam Cara* (Soul Friend in Irish).

We will meet over 5 sessions in 2 venues. We will meet on Wednesday evenings at the Cutnall Green tea rooms beginning on Wednesday 1st March and on Thursday lunchtimes in the Narthex at Ombersley Parish Church beginning on Thursday 2nd March.

There will be a light meal of soup and rolls provided and you will be asked to make a contribution of £5 a session to cover expenses with the balance going to a Lent charity.

For more information please look at The Message (the benefice newsletter) or contact Rev Stephen Winter directly at stephenwinter991@gmail.com

RUBY TUESDAY

If you would like to join others in the community to maybe write to someone whilst having a cup of tea, coffee and biscuits, you are more than welcome to come along to **Lord Morton's Tea Rooms** on the **2nd Tuesday of every Month**. The first meeting will be on **14th February** between 10 and 12 for refreshments.

If you feel you don't have anyone you want to write to come along anyway as Donna knows of two charities that distribute kind words to people. The charity post can all be placed in one envelope.

Lord Lee is keen to welcome us into his lovely tea room and Donna will be present to help you with your writing or just sit and take in the atmosphere.

Hope to see you there. Any questions please feel free to contact me.

Donna Quinn 07714458080

FOR SALE AND WANTED

Please send all of your personal For Sale and Wanted adverts to the Editor for inclusion in the next issue.

THE WORCESTERSHIRE SEVERN PARISHES CENTRE

Tel 01905 622464 (please leave a message)
or 07968 531216 (in emergencies only)

Email admin@w7b.org.uk

Web www.7parishes.co.uk

Post Seven Parishes Centre
c/o St.Andrews Church,
Main Road, OMBERSLEY
Worcestershire.WR9 0EW

THOUGHTS FROM THE RECTOR



I have struggled to write this piece for the parish magazines which puts some stress upon the editors who have to get their finished copy to the printers in time otherwise people will complain that the magazine has come late to them. I have struggled to write this because it is hard to look forward to the coming year with an easy optimism. If the work of a member of the clergy of the Church of England is to cheer everybody up then I don't think that I can manage that at the moment. Mind you, there is a certain kind of cheeriness that can be deadening. I often think of a line from John Betjeman's poem, *Death in Leamington*, in this regard. "Oh! Chintzy, chintzy cheeriness, half dead and half alive." What a terrible thing to impose on someone else.

It is going to be a difficult year and yet, for me, it began with something truly joyous. It began with a wedding in Hartlebury. I am always moved by weddings. Whatever is happening in the world two people have chosen to say yes to each other, for better for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health. They promise to love and cherish each other until death parts them. When I was ordained back in the 1980s I used, quite often, to hear the stories of people who got married during the Second World War. Some of the stories were quite amusing, such as the couple who had to drag a drunken clergyman out of the pub in order to get him to perform the ceremony. But all carried the sense that in troubled times it was a wonderful thing to find someone who cared about you, and especially about you. I remember taking the funeral of a man who had been a part of the Chindits, a special forces unit who fought behind Japanese lines in Burma. They had to undergo great privations and were always in danger. His family told me that he would encourage his comrades not to give up by reminding them that they had families back home who were waiting for them. No chintzy, chintzy cheeriness here but a call to something deeper, something more nourishing.

I find it helpful to think about times that have been hard in the past and how people found courage in them, how they even found joy. I am reminded that my roots need to go down deep into something richer than whether I am having a jolly time or not. I need to go deeper than the distractions offered by the entertainment industry whose main task sometimes seems to be to stop me going deeper into anything.

That work of going deeper into things that really matter is the work of a spiritual practice. It might be a conscious decision to be grateful for life even in troubled times, a decision that you keep on making, especially on difficult days. It might be a conscious decision to seek out beauty in the world and to be grateful for that. It might be a conscious decision to do what good you can in the world. In my private prayer each day I say these words. They give me strength and so I offer them to you.

May I be a bearer of joy, I who am invited to share in the Cosmic Dance! May I walk in faith all the days of my life- confident in your Divine Presence, even in times of trouble, and with assurance for what is and all that is to be. May I have faith in the unfolding of my life, and radical trust in the universe.

And in this sense I wish you all a happy 2023.

Revd Stephen Winter

MORNING PRAYER

Happy New Year to you all! Thank you for your continuing help with our Morning Prayer services.

The dates for Morning Prayer are as follows: (All are Wednesday morning at 09.15 am):

February

01.02.23	Ombersley
08.02.23	Doverdale
15.02.23	Elmley Lovett
22.02.23	Elmbridge

Diana Glendenning

2023 THE WORCESTERSHIRE SEVERN PARISHES

Service schedule

Elmley Lovett, Hampton Lovett, Elmbridge, Rushock, Hartlebury, Ombersley, Doverdale

February 5th 3rd Sunday before Lent				February 12th 2nd Sunday before Lent			February 19th Sunday next before Lent			February 22nd Ash Wednesday	
9.00 am	Hampton Lovett	HC-CW	9.00 am	Rushock	HC-CW	9.00 am	Elmbridge	HC-CW	7.30 pm	Hampton Lovett	HC-CW
10.00 am	Hartlebury	Sunday First	10.00 am	Ombersley	Family Service	10.00 am	Ombersley	MP-CW			
10.30 am	Elmbridge	HC-CW	10.30 am	Elmley Lovett	MP-BCP	10.00 am	Hartlebury	MP-CW			
11.00 am	Doverdale	MP-BCP	11.00 am	Hartlebury	HC-CW	11.00 am	Doverdale	HC-BCP			
11.00 am	Ombersley	HC-CW				6.00 pm	Hampton Lovett	ES-BCP			
February 26th 1st Sunday of Lent				March 3rd World Day of Prayer			March 5th 2nd Sunday of Lent				
9.00 am	Elmley Lovett	HC-BCP	2.00 pm	Elmley Lovett	World Day of Prayer	9.00 am	Hampton Lovett	HC-CW			
11.00 am	Ombersley	HC-CW				10.00 am	Hartlebury	Sunday First			
						10.30 am	Elmbridge	HC-CW			
						11.00 am	Doverdale	MP-BCP			
						11.00 am	Ombersley	HC-CW			

KEY

BCP - Book of Common Prayer
 CW - Common Worship
 HC - Holy Communion
 MP - Morning Prayer
 ES - Evensong

Fossicking Blackbirds, Earth movers and singing bats

We have certainly had some interesting weather since my last article with torrential rain, high winds and a spell of very cold weather where daytime temperatures stayed below freezing for a number of days. At 7.30 am on one morning my car thermometer showed a reading of -10° Celsius! This has meant that wildlife, especially birds, have relied on us to provide food and water. I was having to top up my bird table with lots of high fat foods at least twice a day and it was a real struggle to keep the bird baths unfrozen so that the birds could keep their plumage in good order. On one day I clocked up 17 different bird species in the garden at various times including 8 Collared Doves. Redwings and Fieldfares made good use of the Rowan berries and Crab apples and Blackbirds were seen frantically 'fossicking' (left) where they rummage through leaf litter to find worms and other invertebrates in a nature-friendly 'untidy' garden.



Other animals will have relied on different strategies to survive the cold. Hedgehogs and Dormice will have hibernated while badgers will go into a state of torpor, sleeping peacefully in their setts and living off fat that they have laid down. Amphibians and reptiles will hibernate in any sheltered place such as under rocks and in compost heaps. Frogs may also hibernate at the bottom of a pond. Insects such as Ladybirds and some butterflies will overwinter in the adult form and can often be found lurking in corners in the house or shed (right). Others rely on vegetation left standing in the garden making use of hollow plant stems and leaf litter, overwinter as pupae or, in the case of some Bumblebees, hibernate underground. If you disturb any hibernating animals when tidying your garden please make sure that they are safely covered up again.

At the time I am writing the weather is relatively mild which will help the birds get into breeding condition by their traditional pairing-up date of 14th February – St Valentine's Day. Many birds are now singing, with Robins and Blackbirds choosing a high point, while the Dunnocks (right), who, despite their rather drab appearance, lead a Sixties commune lifestyle, can be seen broadcasting their beautiful song whilst dancing on the hedge tops. Wrens will suddenly burst into song, usually at low level, and it is amazing that something that small can be so loud. By the time that you read this there is every chance that the Skylarks will have started to sing in the fields along Park Lane and Purshull Green Lane. On a bright sunny day it is well worth walking in these areas or at least getting out of your car to have a listen. You may even be able to see the songster as a small speck in the sky above you if you use your ears to aim your eyes.



Town or Country Birds?

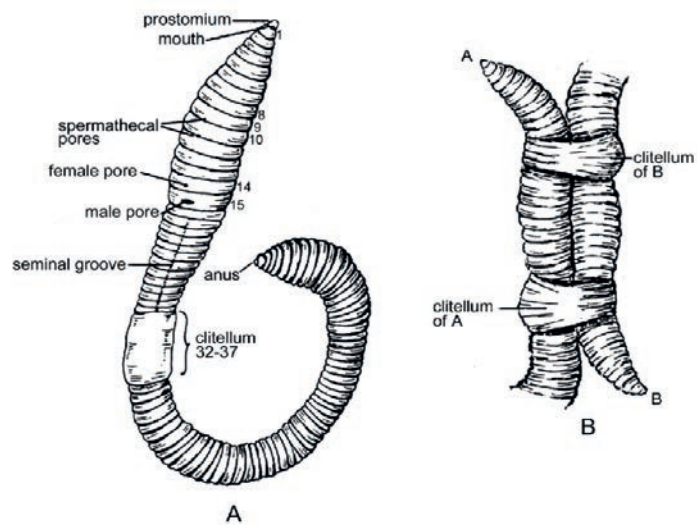
Towns have long been recognised as holding significant populations of birds but little was known about how these populations are connected with birds resident in the wider countryside. It was generally assumed that rural birds only visited urban sites for supplementary food in winter but a study carried out by the British Trust for Ornithology has identified what actually happens. Blue Tits and Great Tits were captured at a number of rural and urban sites and fitted with coloured rings to identify the capture site. During the following breeding season a skilled surveyor visited the sites to identify the location and activity of any colour-ringed birds.

The survey showed that rural-ringed birds moved further than garden-ringed birds between winter and the following breeding season. Individuals that did move mainly went to more urbanised areas in the following breeding season whereas urban-ringed birds stayed at home. This has possible implications for population gene flow and transmission of disease.

Helping the Earth move for you

An essential resident for a healthy garden is the humble Earthworm. A poor garden soil may contain only 30 worms per square metre but a fertile soil with lots of organic matter may have up to 300 per square metre. The actions of the worms will turn the soil over and enrich it with organic matter.

Lumbricus terrestris (diagram A) is our largest earthworm and can grow to about 35 cm in length. The body consists of numerous ring-like segments each of which is covered in tiny bristles to help it move through the soil. Earthworms are hermaphrodites but still need to mate, using the saddle-like band called the clitellum, to produce young, as shown in diagram B. Each worm then makes a lemon-shaped cocoon, fills it with eggs and sperm and deposits it in the soil. The young worms take between one and five months before they hatch.



Earthworms are detritivores and are an essential part of Nature's recycling process. They will eat decaying vegetation which is then deposited in the soil where it helps to improve soil structure and fertility. Leaves can be raked up or noisily blown around your garden with a leaf blower but, if leaves are left on the ground

they will magically disappear by early Spring as the worms become more active. They will also incorporate homemade compost into the soil which will avoid you destroying the soil structure by digging it in.

Earthworms aerate the soil whilst mining their way through it and their tunnels improve drainage. In normal conditions they will live in the top few centimetres of the soil but will burrow deeper in very cold or dry conditions. As well as helping soil fertility they are an essential food source for many animals including birds, amphibians and mammals such as Moles, Hedgehogs, Badgers and Foxes.

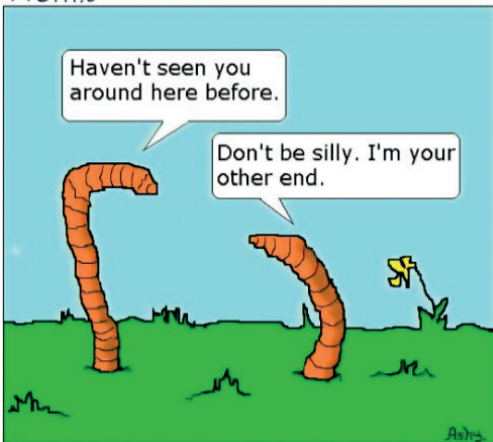
Unfortunately there are signs that, as with insects, earthworm populations are declining, particularly in farmland. Data from over 100 different studies carried out between 1928 and 2018

show a decline in earthworm abundance of between 33% and 41% in the last 25 years. This is thought to be due to drainage, pesticide and herbicide use, inorganic fertilisers and repeated ploughing over the years. Hopefully our essential garden-dwelling worms are in a more protected environment particularly if we avoid the use of pesticides, weedkillers and inorganic fertilisers. Fortunately the sale of worm killers, which were used to avoid worm casts on lawns, has been banned and your lawn will benefit from the improved drainage and increase in soil organic matter if your worms are left unharmed.

Bats in Churches

Some of you may recall that I volunteered for the Bats in Churches survey last year. Unfortunately, due to time restraints, I was only able to complete a survey of Rushock Church with background information provided by Clare Jennings and John Nicholls. There was no evidence of any bat activity found, even after a thorough search of all the nooks and crannies in the church, which was probably a relief to the PCC! Overall the survey has looked at 753 churches and found signs of bat activity in 420 (55.8%) including some very rare species. It's a little bit past the festive season now but if you would like to hear a Common

Worms



Pipistrelle bat's rendition of O Come All Ye Faithful please use this link *Have a very Batty Christmas!* - *YouTube* or Google it.

And finally

A useful guide to owls.



Terry Green

COUNTRY DIARY - February

The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.

L.P. Hartley – The Go-Between

A short walk from my house is a ford over a delightful little river and I pause awhile to watch for any signs of life. Sometimes I see 'ratty', the resident water vole, busying himself where the bank meets the flowing water. Today though, I watch a pair of mallards intermittently quacking and foraging as they paddle against the steady current. Just out of sight I can hear moorhens too. I bid them farewell and walk across a marshy paddock towards the stand of deciduous trees in the next field.

In fact there are three fields side by side; the marshy one is lower went, then middle went and upper went. On a neighbouring farm there is a field called 'Four Wents', although I am unsure of the etymology of the word 'Went'. Middle went has recently been under the plough and atop a furrow some 20 yards in from the headland I espy a glint of metal reflected by the low winter sun. I hop over the clods and ease the object out of the brown earth, rub it on my sleeve and put it in my jacket poacher's pocket.

I look up at the trees, which rise away up a short escarpment and note that there is a subtle change in the look of the wood; in December the thin, black branch tips were like a crone's fingers pointing towards the distance whereas now, with hazel and alder loaded with catkins, and buds imperceptibly swelling, the entire wood has filled out and lightened in colour. At the edge of the wood is an old bench and a huddled figure was sat there taking in the stillness of the day. It was the oldest resident of the village, the 'old man' as he is known, well into his 90's but still sharp in mind if slower in movement. I sit down and exchange pleasantries and we speak a little of the turning of another year and the prospects for the spring.

He tells me that he was born in the same month as our recently departed monarch and this is his first winter without her. He left school at 13 at the beginning of the war to help out on the farm; his father and grandfather before him were head horsemen on the same estate and he planned to follow in their footsteps. In September 1939 the world changed forever. He started the war as a boy and when it was over he was a man, but things were different with tractors replacing the Suffolk Punch horses that he was always at one with. The War Ag needed acres ploughed to grow corn and potatoes to feed the nation – a horse could plough an acre a day, a tractor with a two or three furrow plough could turn over 10 to 15 acres a day.

He paused for a while, resting his elbows on his knees and steepling his fingers, thinking back. Across the field to the village in the late winter silence we heard the church bell ring out the quarters but little else apart from an occasional crow overhead, a ruffle of black feathers against the clear blue sky. I reached into my pocket and told him I had just picked something out of the plough ground in the next field; it was a big horseshoe and his eyes lit up as I passed it to him. He rubbed it between his gnarled fingers and turned it this way and that, and then his eyes glazed over and he quietened as time travelled backwards. I am sure he could hear the two Suffolks pulling the plough, the creak of the thick leather against their giant frames, the rustle of the chains that linked the plough to the harness on their powerful flanks, and the burst of their breath in the cold air like silent pistol shots as these most noble of beasts plodded forward turning over the dark brown sods.

"You know," he said to me after a while, "until the war I thought it would always be like that. I thought I would work horses and pass the skills to my son and then to his." I agreed and said that in my own younger farming days only half a century ago I didn't foresee the changes to come either. Then we talked of modern tractors with huge wheels and even bigger implements, of cows giving twice the milk yield of his day, and of the disappearance of so much wildlife. We talked of turtle doves, nightingales and yellowhammers, and a dozen skylarks above the earth, and of the now almost extinct corncrakes in the wheat whose buzzing call would accompany the men as they left the fields in the dusky twilight at the end of their day's labours.

And there were wildflowers and insects aplenty in the hedgerows, bullfinches scared away from the orchards by young boys, the dung beetles in the meadows and the blood red poppies nodding above the whispering barley in the days before herbicides. He was thinking back to his youth and harder but simpler times as was I in another era but again, so different to today. As I bade him a good morning to continue my ramble a thought came to me, "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."

A.J.Selby -Kindly submitted by Barrie Audis

LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER



Happy New Year! For me, it is always exciting to stand at the start of a new year with feelings of hope and potential for the year ahead.

Of course, it's not that way for everyone. For many 2023 will already feel very daunting with the cost-of-living crisis, increased use of food banks and worries about being able to afford to put the heating on. I pray that those who are worried will find the support they need and that 2023 might not be as bad as they fear.

I have just returned from visiting our partner Diocese of Peru - going there is always an affecting experience. Poverty there is of a different order of magnitude: no running water or electricity, no work, no social security, no health care; enough food barely to survive. It's a very humbling.

Although there is wealth in Lima, the majority of the several million inhabitants live in shanty towns. Elsewhere, the people are predominantly very poor. It is among them that the Anglican church mostly ministers. It was moving to visit and be offered hospitality in the poorest areas of Arequipa, at a food kitchen which we have supported financially. Money goes a long way there and donations from churches in the Diocese of Worcester during Lent 2020 enabled it to continue during the pandemic. It is one of quite a few projects among the poor which the Diocese of Peru organises.

Easter is early this year and Lent will be upon us before we know it next month. This year, we'll be once again raising money for our friends in Peru. The need continues to be enormous, and I hope that many of us will be able to afford to share a little of what we have with them. In the meantime, please pray for all who are finding life difficult and for whom the new year is not as happy or exciting as it might be for many of us.

Rt Revd Dr John Inge Bishop of Worcester

LETTER FROM THE DEAN OF WORCESTER



I am writing these words on the 90th anniversary of the death of Bishop Charles Gore. If you know St Philip's Cathedral in Birmingham, then you may have noticed the statue of a tall, thin, rather gaunt bishop outside the main entrance, his hand raised in blessing. That was Charles Gore, the first Anglican bishop of Birmingham. When some of the leading citizens of Birmingham formed a committee to put up a statue to him, he replied, 'Kindly convey to the committee my mingled feelings of gratitude and repugnance', and when someone asked him what he thought about the finished product, he said 'It looks horribly like me'.

Before he became Bishop of Birmingham, he was Bishop of Worcester. He was a monk (he founded the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield in Yorkshire), a scholar, and a public figure, of the calibre of Rowan Williams in our own time. He could speak to intellectuals in their own words, debate with vigour those who opposed his beliefs, and helped to keep the Christian faith in the forefront of public debate. But at heart, he had a very simple faith. He believed in the love of God. At confirmation services, by way of a sermon, he would march up and down the aisle, saying 'God will never, ever, give you up'.

God will never, ever, give you up. That is the heart of the Christian faith. That is the message as we continue through this new year, when the world looks bleak, and our country is struggling. For all his wisdom and scholarship and intellectual power, those are the words of Bishop Charles Gore I treasure most.

Peter Atkinson Dean of Worcester

OPEN THE BOOK

Can you help?

Within the Four Square parishes we have a small but dedicated team who take stories from the Bible into Cutnall Green School. We are part of a well organised national scheme to promote the message of Christianity, by acting out tales from the Old and New Testament during assemblies about three times each term.



Just before the Christmas holidays we took on a double epic production covering the visits of both the shepherds and the wise men to baby Jesus, with a cast of adults children and sheep and angels.

These assemblies are always enjoyed by an enrapt audience of both children and staff and we feel that, with a light touch and a degree of humour, the children are introduced to Christianity through a different approach.

All who take part have great fun with the presentations, which can sometimes be a little chaotic and we always repair to the post office for a restorative coffee afterwards.

We are, however, desperately in need of some more volunteers to continue this mission as, of course, not every date is convenient for everyone. It really is worthwhile, good fun and requires absolutely no thespian ability.



If you could spare one hour just twice a term please get in touch with either;

Dee Cutler - 07584660104 or

Diana Glendenning - dianaglendenning1@gmail.com.

We would be very pleased to hear from you!

Dee Cutler



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

St Michaels Church, Elmley Lovett

Friday 3rd March 2023 at 2pm. All welcome!

I Have Heard About Your Faith

Ephesians 1:15-19

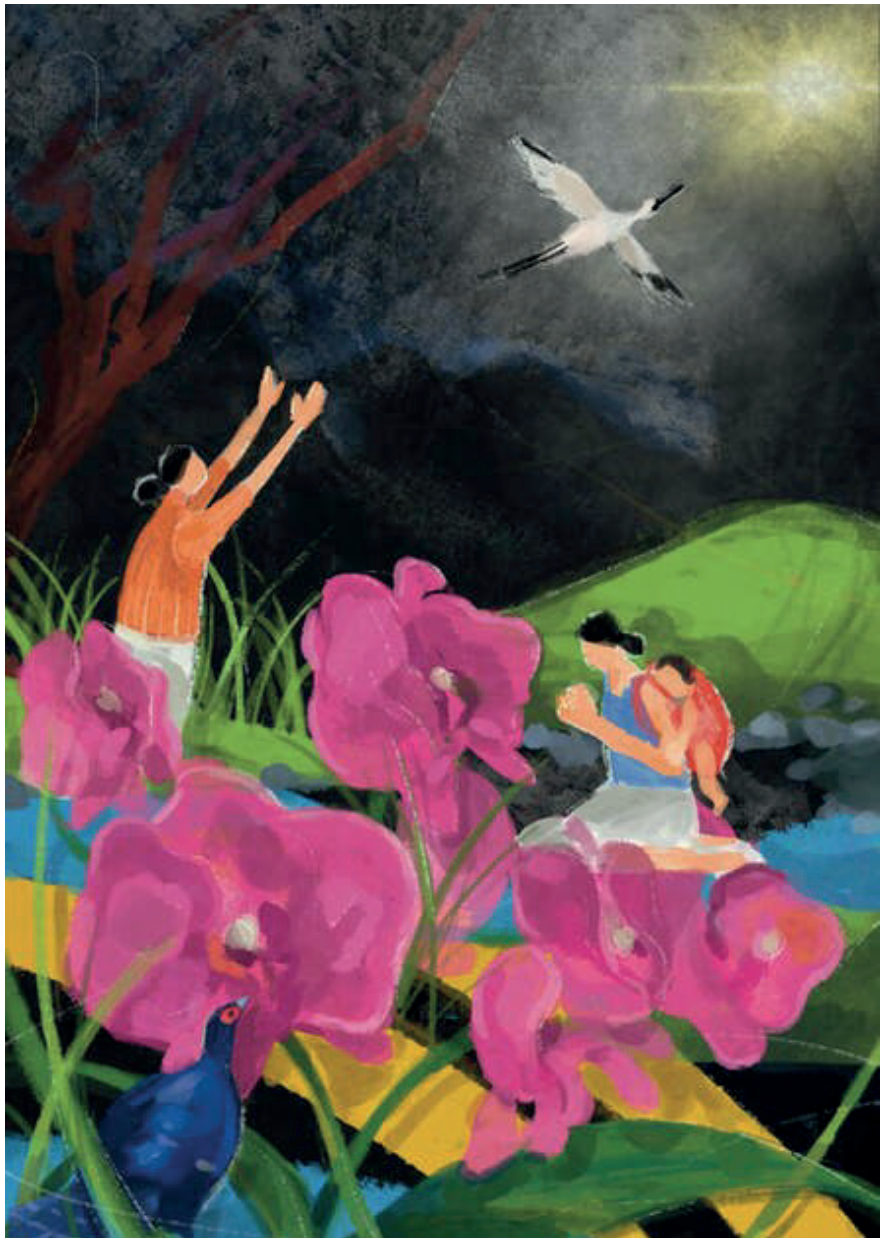
World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice.

The Program is written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Taiwan for WDP 2023.

One of the WDP Guiding Principles states that 'Prayer is rooted in listening to God and to one another. In WDP we listen to the Word of God and to voices of women sharing their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows, their opportunities and needs.'

The theme of the worship service "I Have Heard About Your Faith," based on the letter to the Ephesians, is an invitation to active listening, which is the ground of our prayers. Following the example of the letter (1:15-19), where the author praises the church for their faith in Jesus and love toward all the saints, the worship service contextualizes the witness of the saints with the stories from Taiwan.

Do come and join us at Elmley Lovett on Friday 3rd March.



Wednesday Morning Prayer Services



A morning prayer service continues to be held in each of the churches of the combined benefice on Wednesdays at 9.15am.

These are short and simple services which are led by different lay members of our churches and each, therefore, reflects different takes on both current and historical events. We all usually leave with at least one piece of new knowledge and a feeling of being part of a worldwide movement of prayer. Attendance varies dependent upon season and weather. We have our stalwarts, generally of a certain age but it was lovely to have a very well behaved Harry, Rachel Wyatt's grandson in church with us at our last Wednesday service in October.

This year we began holding Wednesday services at St Mary's church, Crossway Green. It is a delightful church which many in our combined benefice may not have had the opportunity to visit. The church was originally built by Bishop Henry Philpott in 1882 and has subsequently been used mainly as a cemetery chapel. It was rededicated in 1987 but sadly has now had to be closed temporarily because of electrical issues.

Nevertheless the stalwarts of the Wednesday congregation continue to worship in its beautiful churchyard while the weather remains reasonable. Hopefully the structural problems will soon be sorted and we can again begin to hold our services indoors. Every Wednesday has a very different focus so, if you feel that you would like to attend a mid week service in one of our beautiful churches, do come and join us. Dates and locations are in both the parish magazine and The Message.

Dee Cutler



SATURDAY 18 MARCH 2023 7.30PM

WORCESTER
FESTIVAL
CHORAL
SOCIETY

ELGAR

THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

WORCESTER FESTIVAL
CHORAL SOCIETY

MERIDIAN SINFONIA

MARTA FONTANALS-SIMMONS MEZZO SOPRANO

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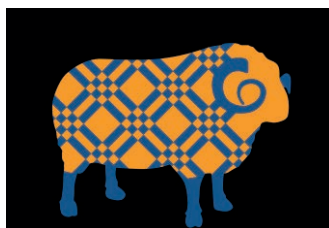
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REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 506826

Talks and Workshops at the Museum of Carpet

Spring 2023



We have a number of fascinating historical talks happening at the Museum of Carpet this Spring, as well as a special Collections talk with items from the archive. Read on to find out more or visit museum-of-carpet.arttickets.org.uk to book your place.

“This town stinks from one end to the other!”

Wednesday 15th Feb 10.30am-12pm £10

The transformation of Kidderminster included a revolution in health and care. Hear how the town coped with a fearsome outbreak of typhoid in 1884.



A COURT FOR KING CHOLERA.

The Great Golden Jubilee Baths Insurrection

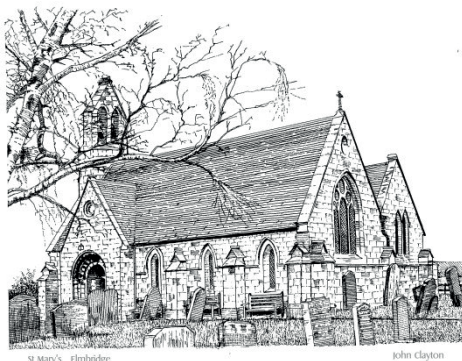
Wednesday 15th March 10.30am-12pm £10

Kidderminster built one of the country's very first municipal public baths. This talk explores how ambitions to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 were washed away by public resistance to the plans.

Breaking through the boundaries

Wednesday 5th April 10.30am-12pm £10

This talk looks at the expansion of Kidderminster, charting the expansion into the Foley Park area from the 1880s to the outbreak of war in 1939, and looking at the homes and residents of the new area.



ELMBRIDGE NEWS

JOY GREEN

Joy Green of Longlands Farm has died at the age of 102. She lived for almost 70 years in Elmbridge parish taking a great interest in the farm she ran with her husband Simon. She also was involved in local affairs and could often be seen walking the lanes with an ever present dog. She had many interests, particularly English poetry and literature. She recently moved into a care home, near to her family, where she died peacefully in her sleep. She leaves children, grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. Her funeral is to be at St Mary's Elmbridge at a date to be arranged.

Charlie Green

JOHN CLAYTON

John Clayton formerly of Oak Tree Drive, Cutnall Green sadly passed away at the beginning of January 2023. John and Beryl moved to Oak Tree Drive when John retired in 1998 and were very much involved in the local community, particularly in the early years supporting the many fund raising events to build the new Cutnall Green Memorial hall. John was an accomplished artist and when I took over as Editor of Four Square Magazine some years ago I asked John if I could use the drawings he had done of the four churches (Elmbridge, Hampton Lovett, Elmley Lovett and Rushock) as the heading for each of the four parish pages that are still used today. In December 2021 John and Beryl moved to an apartment in Hagley to be closer to family as John's health was deteriorating.

Our condolences and thoughts are with Beryl and the family at this sad time.

Andrew & Sandra Hawes

ELMBRIDGE CHRISTMAS POST

Elmbridge Christmas Post delivered 492 cards to 57 houses. Many thanks to those who helped sort and deliver. Donations to Acorns Children's Hospice amounted to £434, much of it gift aided. Thank you for your very generous donations. They will enable Acorns to continue to provide specialist care 24 hours a day for children with life-limiting conditions and their families.

FRIENDS OF ELMBRIDGE

Our Annual General Meeting was held on the 21st November when we met to look back on another year of activity. Once life had returned from Covid we held two hot suppers both of which were enjoyed by a good number. Thanks to all who came and supported us. The financial result of our suppers made it possible to support the following organisations – Kemp Hospice, St Richard's Hospice, Air Ambulance, Macmillan Nurses, Marie Curie and the local Food Bank. Over the years we have raised thousands to support many local charities and money raising efforts by local people. We have done this by thoroughly enjoying our activities and holding just two events per year. We have also, over the years, welcomed many new residents and newborns into the parish, as well as supporting those who have experienced bad times. We are always glad to welcome 'new faces' into the Friends of Elmbridge.



CHRISTMAS IN ELMBRIDGE

Our Christmas kicked off with Carol Singing preceded by mulled wine (kindly prepared by John and Sue Allen) and mince pies and nibbles in the Village Hall. Nick Wright then led us in a quick rehearsal with the handbell ringers before we set out to our first port of call - The Priory Rest Home. Both residents and staff were delighted to welcome us as we stood outside on the terrace and sang them some carols to start their Christmas festivities. They are always so pleased to see us.



We then moved on to Lord Morton's Tea Rooms where we entertained a party of guests who Lee had invited. He had also generously organised a raffle, the proceeds of which he gave to Acorns.

Altogether, a great start to our Christmas celebrations.

Christmas Day began with a full church and Stephen led us in a lovely moving service.

The church had been decorated beautifully and the handbell ringers, under Ann Carter's accomplished leadership played better than ever and we joined in lustily singing some of our favourite carols. The bellringers certainly deserved their chocolate oranges afterwards and we are so grateful for the way they so often add variation and interest to our services throughout the year.





PAY ATTENTION PLEASE!



FRIENDS OF ELMBRIDGE HOT SUPPER

Friday 24th March

7.30pm

Elmbridge Village Hall

Followed by a fascinating talk on

THE HISTORY OF BROMSGROVE SCHOOL

By

Philip Bowen

Retired Master and Deputy Headmaster, with over 30 years service to the school.

NOTE: Because of the local connection of the speaker and his subject, we expect this to be a very popular event so book your place (£15) early by phoning **Chris Gray** on **01299851469**.

BYO Drink and Glasses



COME AND ENJOY A

BIG BREAKFAST



Saturday 4th February, 9.30 – 12 noon

Elmbridge Village Hall

Adults £7.50, children under 5 free.

*Nearer the time, please book your place
so we know how many to cater for.*

Robin Wilson 01299 851658





A ROYAL INVITATION

We can't invite you to the Coronation on May 6th

BUT

we can invite you to a

CORONATION LUNCH

On

Sunday May 7th at 12.00 noon

In

Elmbridge Village Hall

Note: *Numbers will be limited so please ring Janet Miller on 01299851589
to reserve your place.*



ELMLEY LOVETT NEWS

Carol Service

" Therefore let us hear again from Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our sin unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child; and let us make this Church glad with our carols of praise ":

So begins the Bidding Prayer of our traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols at St Michaels. A fixed point in our calendar which marks the end of a very busy few months, beginning with Harvest in the middle of October and progressing through All Souls, Remembrance and Advent Evensong. For all of these services which so many enjoy, there are a group of mainly unknown individuals who make things happen for which we all are surely most appreciative.

The donation of our Christmas Tree. The decoration of our tree. The cleaning of the church. The preparation of the mulled wine and mince pies. The practice of the choir in the weeks beforehand. The flower ladies. The bell ringers. The readers. The Organist! And our Rector. And those who clean up when everyone has gone home. Thank you all!





We are indebted to Pam and the Wilden Choir who without fail always come to support our service. Without them it would be a quite different sound! We also had a visiting Bass, Willy Austin, from Lindridge Church choir near Tenbury.



Our bell ringers were in full swing!

The readers this year were well practised and it was a pleasure to hear the words of King James spoken so confidently by so many young people.

This was a very happy event made more so by the generosity of the Cartridge family who provided the most moreish mulled wine and also the Talbot family who organised the plentiful mince pies. Thank you very much.

Finally, our Organist and Choir master Nick Wright, who attends every service in the Four Square and without whom our services would be but pale imitations. There is a risk that such a willing person may be taken for granted. Elmley PCC appreciate every note he plays, even the right ones played not necessarily in the right order!

We are also so fortunate to have our Rector. We should be cautious about taking his availability for granted too. I doubt we will ever have his like again.

Midnight Mass

Our service on Christmas Eve was kindly led by Stephen Owens who stepped in at the last moment for which we are most grateful.

The final candle of the Advent Wreath was lit and Christmas began.



Upcoming services

Feb 12th - Morning Prayer at 10.30am

Feb 26th - Holy Communion at 9am

Mar 3rd - World Day of Prayer at 2pm

Do come along and support your church. You will be made most welcome.

Richard Cartwright

Articles for Elmley News

Please do not hesitate to send in any items you wish to appear in this section. Historical, topical, artistic, seasonal – poetry, photographs, essays, news, all of which may be anonymous if you so wish. Please just email the editor on 4SquareEditor@btconnect.com .



HAMPTON LOVETT NEWS

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Our Carol Service this year was held on 11th December and was well attended and enjoyed by everyone. The church was festooned with many lights, candles, greenery and of course a lovely tree which immediately got you into the Christmas spirit as you entered the church.



The service took the usual pattern of readings and carols telling the story of the Nativity and we were also pleased to welcome our group of hand bell ringers who played a few carols and festive songs for us. Thank you all so much for coming and ringing for us. We always enjoy that part of the service.





After the service most stayed to enjoy a glass of wine, warm homemade mince pies and plenty of festive banter.

Thank you to everyone who contributed in anyway to our service. It always makes a lovely start to our festivities here in Hampton Lovett.

Our Christmas Eve Communion service was also taken by Stephen Winter at our earlier time now of 6.00pm. As there was no service on 1st January may we all wish you a very Happy 2023.

People in our thoughts

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Ken Twigg shortly after Christmas. We send our condolences to Shirley and his daughters and Grandson (who both spent Christmas with him) and of course to the rest of his family.

Our thoughts are also with Alison Ricketts, Carole Dancox, Doreen Bale and Joan Farmer and anyone else who may have experienced ill health or sadness this Christmas time.

Two Nuns

Two elderly nuns were shopping and as they passed the beer section Sister Julia said to the other "Wouldn't a nice cool beer or two taste wonderful on a hot summer evening."



Sister Monica answered "Indeed it would, sister, but I wouldn't feel comfortable buying beer, since I am certain it would cause a scene at the checkout.

"I can handle that without a problem" sister Julia replied picking up a six pack and heading for the tills.

The cashier had a surprised look on his face when they both arrived to pay but the nun quickly said "We use beer for washing our hair. We call it catholic shampoo."

Without blinking an eye the cashier reached under the counter and pulled out a packet of Pretzel sticks which he placed in the bag with the beer.

He then looked the nun straight in the eye, smiled and said "The curlers are on the house!"

A Few Thoughts for this year

1. How important does someone have to be before they are considered assassinated rather than just murdered?
2. Once you are in heaven, do you get stuck wearing the clothes you were buried in for eternity?
3. Why is it we managed to put a man on the moon before someone invented luggage with wheels?
4. Why do we say "I slept like a baby" when babies wake up every two hours?
5. Why do toasters have a setting that burns toast so much nobody could eat it?
6. If corn is made from corn. Vegetable oil from vegetables at is baby oil made of?
7. Do the Alphabet song and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" have the same tune?
8. Why do we press hard on the remote control when the batteries are low?
9. Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?
10. If people evolved from apes why are there still Apes?
11. Is there any day when mattresses are not on sale?
12. Why do we keep running over a thread with the vacuum cleaner, pick it up, examine it and then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?
13. Why does a plastic bag never open from the end you try first?
14. Why do we never hear father-in-law jokes?
15. Why is it that when you try to catch something that's falling off a table you always manage to knock something else over?
16. Why are actors in a movie but on TV?
17. Why do doctors leave the room when you undress? They see you naked anyway?
18. Why do people believe you if you say there are 4 zillion stars but check when you say the paint is wet?
19. Why use sterilized needles for death by lethal injection?
20. Why does it matter what colour bubble bath is if the bubbles are always white?

Glorious Insults

These are from an era before the English language got boiled down to 4-letter words....

"He had delusions of adequacy" *Walter Kerr*

"He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire" *Winton Churchill*

I never killed a man but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure"
Clarence Darrow

"He has never been known to use a word that might send the reader to the dictionary"
William Faulkner about Ernest Hemingway

"Thank you for sending me a copy of your book: I'll waste not time reading it"
Moses Hadas.

"I didn't attend the funeral but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it"
Mark Twain

"He has no enemies but is intensely disliked by all his friends" *Oscar Wilde*

"I feel so miserable without you; it's almost like having you here." *Stephen Bishop*

"He is a self-made man who worships his creator" *John Bright*

"I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope it is nothing trivial" *Irvin S Cobb*

"He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others." *Samuel Johnson*

"He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up" *Paul Keating*

"Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without an address?" *Mark Twain*

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork" *Mae West*

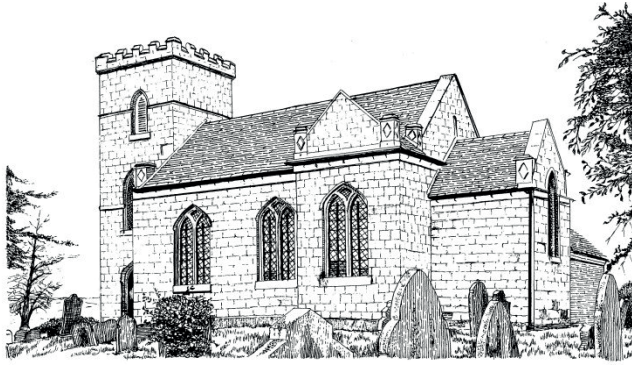
"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go" *Oscar Wilde*

"He has Van Gogh's ear for music" *Billy Wilder*

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening but I'm afraid this wasn't it" *Groucho Marx*

"I cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second...if there is one"
Winston Churchill

Margaret Vertigen



RUSHOCK NEWS

Rushock Crib Service

The church was full to the seams for the first Crib Service that we have been able to hold for three years and what a joyful celebration it was. All generations gathered together to celebrate that wonderful birthday. The congregation were welcomed in by Archie Morris playing Christmas music on the organ and then, having exchanged a private joke with Ellie, Reverend Stephen Winter gave us his blessing before dashing over to Hartlebury for the Christingle service there.



The congregation sang the carols with gusto accompanied by Nick Wright and then it was the turn of the children, all 30 of them, to take us back to that wonderful night in Bethlehem.



This year the older children read a nativity poem by Bob Hartman, who produces material for the Open the Book teams across the country. The younger children, and some were very young, acted out our story and the joy was that we had a real baby, Bertie, to star as Jesus. Dylan, had come all the way from Australia to carry the star to guide the wise men and every single child played their part to perfection.



As is traditional, the children finished the service by singing “Jingle Bells” which heralded a surprise visit by Father Christmas who gave each child in the congregation a small gift.



The crib service is a joyful way to begin the real celebration of Christmas and my thanks to all who helped to make it possible, especially the children.



Dee Cutler

MAUREEN HAZEL TAYLOR

(known as Hazel)

1932 - 2022

Hazel died peacefully at home, "Little Gains", early last year.

She had lived in Clattercut Lane in Rushock since 1957 where she and her husband Geoff (who died in 2018) brought up their family - David, Michael and Peter.

She maintained a keen interest in many things both at home and abroad. She was knowledgeable about the local wildlife and took a lot of pleasure in, and care of, her garden and her animals.

She had a great interest in horses - many people will recall seeing her riding around the lanes over the years - and she was particularly proud of the role that her mother had in the formation of the Riding for the Disabled Association in this country.

Her body had been letting her down for some time but not her very lively mind and she coped admirably with the physical difficulties that she had to endure.

Jennie Lawrenson

RUSHOCK ADVENT DINNER

Rushock PCC organised a very successful Advent Dinner in November at Cutnall Green Village Hall in aid of the Organ Loft Restoration Fund, which saw a beautifully decorated Hall with not a spare seat to be found. Lord Lee Morton generously provided a two course meal with wine and Broomfields supplied a selection of cheese and biscuits so a very big thank you from us all. We all enjoyed some wonderful singing and music from Cassie so thanks to her also.

We had some excellent prizes for the Raffle so thanks to all those who generously donated and the event raised a total of £2,000 towards the Restoration Fund.





Christmas Tree for School



Tony Lloyd kindly donated one of his Christmas Trees to Cutnall Green School. Giles Palmer and Charlie Morris from Rushock are seen here with Tony after digging it up!

Chaddesley Corbett Local History Society

Wednesday February 15th 7.30pm

'Discover the *House of Secrets*'

By Phil Downing

Hall and Programmes Manager Harvington Hall



Harvington Hall is within 2 miles of Chaddesley Corbett but is an altogether different story. It is hidden from view; it physically keeps you at a distance with the moat that surrounds its ancient island but emotionally it draws you in with its intriguing history. There is an air of untouched beauty and a rich history from before Henry VII's wrench from Rome right up to the modern discoveries and the restoration of the house in the present day.

The devotion that created this house is intertwined with the Catholic persecution that must at times have nearly destroyed it. The devotion still exists – a magic formula yet to be understood. The priest hides, for which it is famous, is only a small part of the whole tale. The rare wall paintings and historical stories will bewitch you and encourage you to visit or re visit this unique and loved local treasure. No other parish has a home like Harvington within its boundary. Let Phil Downing introduce you to the Hall and take your imagination on a journey of stories from Harvington Hall history. It is the sort of place that has new perspectives and unexpected discoveries for every generation.

<https://thetudortravelguide.com/2020/10/18/harvington-hall/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06vD-FZ3vbs>

<https://www.harvingtonhall.co.uk/>

Talks held in Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall, DY10 4QA

Enquiries to Freda Griffith – 07747618487 Email – freda@fredagriffith.co.uk

Visitors are always welcome@£5 paid on the door.

FEBRUARY 2023

THE FOUR SQUARE PARISHES

Service schedule

*Elmley Lovett, Hampton Lovett
Elmbridge, Rushock*

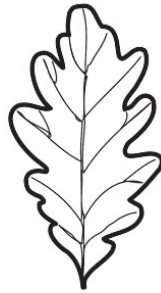
DATE	LITURGICAL COLOURS	TIME	CHURCH	FESTIVAL/ SUNDAY	SERVICE/ LEADER	SIDESMAN	READER	FLOWERS	LESSONS
Feb 5th	GREEN	9.00am	Hampton Lovett	3rd Sunday before Lent	HC-CW <i>Stephen Winter</i>	Margaret Vertigen & Homer	James	Margaret Vertigen	Isaiah 58:1-9a 1 Cor 2:1-12 Matthew 5:13-20
		10.30am	Elmbridge		HC-CW <i>Stephen Winter</i>	Ann & Michael Cooper		Hazel Ferguson	
Feb 12th	GREEN	9.00am	Rushock	2nd Sunday before Lent	HC-CW <i>Stephen Winter</i>	C.Jennings	C Jennings & B. Vale	Judy Weaver Ruth Hopcroft	Gen 1:1-2:3 Rom 8:18-25 Matthew 6:25-end
		10.30am	Elmley Lovett		MP-BCP <i>James Homer</i>	Tim Goss	Judy Bromage	Ann Needham	
Feb 19th	GREEN	9.00am	Elmbridge	The Sunday next before Lent	HC-CW <i>Stephen Winter</i>	Carol & Tony Lloyd		Jane Wylie	Exodus 24:12-end 2 Pet 1:16-end Matthew 17:1-9
		6.00pm	Hampton Lovett		ES-BCP	Trish & Jerry Hartley		Rachel Wyatt	
Feb 22nd	PURPLE	7.30pm	Hampton Lovett	Ash Wednesday	HC-BCP <i>Stephen Winter</i>	Churchwardens		No Flowers	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12;2 Cor 5:20b-6:10 Matt 6:1-6, 16-21 or John 8:1-11;
Feb 26th	PURPLE	9.00am	Elmley Lovett	1st Sunday of Lent	HC-BCP <i>Stephen Winter</i>	Guy Cartridge	Ellie Cartwright	No Flowers	Gen 2:15-17, 3:1-7 Rom 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11
Mar 3rd	PURPLE	2.00pm	Elmley Lovett	World Day of Prayer				No Flowers	

KEY : **BCP** - Book of Common Prayer, **CW** - Common Worship, **HC** - Holy Communion, **MP** - Morning Prayer, **ES** - Morning Prayer

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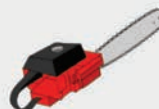
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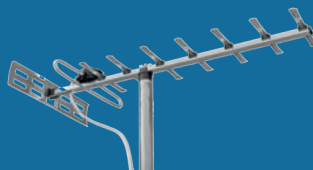
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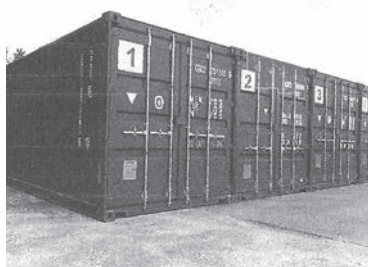
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