

CHURCH NEWS AND VIEWS

Remembrance Sunday 2013

Our annual Remembrance Service this year took place in autumnal sunshine. Kevin Downham, Reader in the benefice, lead the service and spoke about the power of silence.

Those of us who walked from church were joined by quite a few others at the War Memorial, including the group of cyclists from Nuneaton who cycled over here to join us for the third year running (or should it be cycling!). Horses and cars had to stop and wait as the large group of people gathered around the War Memorial. It was great that Bill Cowley was able to fulfil his customary role, reading loud and clear the names of those from Birdingbury who died in the two World Wars. Matt

Markham read the traditional exhortation, 'They shall grow not old, as those that are left grow old ...'. Our special thoughts were of Simon Davy, who is at present on active service in Afghanistan.



The presence of the Nuneaton cyclists has become a feature of Remembrance Sunday. They have promised to come again next year when we hope to get to know them a little better over refreshments after the service.

Photos: Karen Armbrister

Dick Withington



A letter from Rev Barbara

The church season of Advent begins on Sunday 1st December and brings with it a time of preparation for the birth of the Christ Child on Christmas Day. This time can so often be overlooked in all the activity of preparing for Christmas.

This year both for myself and the Draycote Benefice, Advent is also a time of planning for an interregnum as I prepare to retire from my service in the Benefice. Needless to say, I will miss the parishes and all my friends here immensely but I do know that God has led me to this decision to retire from my parish work.

As your churchwardens and Readers take on the responsibility for planning and organising services until a new vicar is appointed, I am sure that they will continue to have your support and prayer.

Before then, we look forward to celebrating the wonderful season of Christmas, and I include here a special invitation for each one of us to enjoy the birth of that special baby in the stable over 2,000 years ago:

*Come to the storytelling God,
Listen to the tale
That takes us from a rural village
To a bustling, crowded town,
That takes us from a rough hillside
To the exotic reaches of distant lands
That takes us from a home in Nazareth
To a rough-hewn stable.
Come to the storytelling God
Listen to the tale
That takes us from the familiar
To the surprise of a new birth.*

I look forward to welcoming you into any of our Christmas services.

Please do contact me directly or one of your churchwardens if you need any help in getting to any of the services.

May God give each of you and your families a blessed and peaceful Christmas.

With love at this special time,

Barbara

Please feel free to contact Barbara anytime if you would like to talk to her. Friday is her day off, however, so if you need help on this day, please contact Dick or Karen. Our details are on p.8 of Church News.

St. Leonard's news and updates from Dick and Karen

Reverend Barbara's last service will be on Sunday 26th January, 10.00am at All Saint's Stretton followed by coffee and cake in the Village Hall. It would be really good to see lots of Birdingbury people there, so please note it in your diary and try to come. Lifts and car sharing will be available, leaving the Club forecourt at 9 30am.

Barbara's last service at St Leonard's will be on Sunday 12th January at 9.15am.

She is retiring from her parish work but will retain her role as Diocesan Rural Life Officer and Agricultural Chaplain, so will be keeping herself occupied supporting rural activities across the Diocese. She will leave us with our grateful thanks for everything she has brought to these parishes including her deep faith and spirituality, wise counsel and calm, unflappable approach, all of which we will miss very much.

During the interregnum, Dick and I will be managing daily activities and working very much as a team with our Church Warden colleagues from the other parishes. Our service pattern will remain unchanged, with the exception of some special benefice services. We may try some new ideas, so your support and encouragement would be welcomed. Communion services will mostly be covered by visiting clergy, which affords us the opportunity to experience different styles and speakers.

Dick and I will ensure you are kept up to date on progress towards the appointment of a new Priest-in-Charge of our benefice. It is quite a long process, which we will be fully involved in at all stages. We expect to be in an interregnum for about a year. In the next issue we will outline the process and you'll see perhaps why it will take such a long time! There will be updates on the church notice boards and in each edition of Church News.

As we pray for Reverend Barbara in this period of change, we also pray that we may continue to serve this village with love and compassion, and for growth in our mission and church community.

Karen

Jean Jones

Sadly, Jean Jones of Leam Cottage, Main Street died peacefully on 21st November aged 91 in the company of her family. Her funeral is at St Leonard's at 12 noon on Monday 2nd December followed by burial in the churchyard. Her wish to stay in her own home was almost granted: she died in hospital 5 days after falling ill at home. She and Idwal, her husband, came to Leam Cottage early in 1980.

DECEMBER and JANUARY SERVICES in Draycote Benefice Churches and ROTA DUTIES for St. Leonard's, Birdingbury

Date	Place	Time	Service	Readings	Prayers	Server	Sidesperson	Refreshments	Cleaning	Flowers
Sun 1 Dec	Frankton Bourton Stretton	9.15am 11.00am 6.00pm	Holy Communion BCP Morning Praise Holy Communion						Lyn Tipton	Eira Owen (Advent Candle)
Sun 8 Dec	Birdingbury Stretton Bourton	9.15 am 11.00 am 3.00 pm	Holy Communion Morning Praise Carol Service	Liz Ellis <i>Romans ch15 vv4-13,</i> <i>Matthew ch3 vv1-12</i>	Eira Owen	Andrew Armbrister	Gaynor Davy and Daphne Chippendale	Peter and Sue Law	Xenia Munro	No flowers
Sun 15 Dec	Bourton Frankton Birdingbury Stretton	9.15 am 11.00 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Morning Praise Holy Communion Evening Worship	Aileen Withington <i>James ch5 vv7-10,</i> <i>Matthew ch11 vv2-11</i>	Dick Withington	Jenny Hawes	Josie and John Price		Xenia Munro	No flowers
Sun 22 Dec	Frankton Princethorpe Birdingbury Stretton	11.00 am 2.30.pm 4.30 pm 6.00 pm	Holy Communion + Carols Carol Service Carols, Candles and Crib Nine Lessons and Carols	Rev Barbara <i>Romans ch1 vv1-7,</i> <i>Matthew ch1 vv18-end</i>				Mel Palmer and Gaynor Davy	Ros Murray	Ann Carroll + helpers please
Tues 24 Dec Christmas Eve	Stretton Frankton Birdingbury	4.00 pm 9.30 pm 11.00 pm	Christingle Service Bethlehem at Midnight Holy Communion	Rev Barbara	Karen Armbrister	Andrew Armbrister + Jenny Hawes	Ian and Mel Palmer			
Wed 25 Dec Christmas Day	Princethorpe Stretton Birdingbury Bourton	8.00 am 9.15 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion BCP Holy Communion Morning Praise Holy Communion	Wendy Lloyd <i>Hebrews ch1 vv1-12,</i> <i>John ch1 vv1-14</i>			Wendy and Brian Lloyd			
Sun 29 Dec	Stretton	10.00 am	Benefice Holy Communion						Ros Murray	Ann Carroll
Sun 5 Jan	Frankton Bourton Stretton	9.15 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion BCP Morning Praise Holy Communion						Pauline Meade	Ann Carroll
Sun 12 Jan	Birdingbury Stretton Bourton	9.15 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Morning Praise Holy Communion	Dick Withington <i>Isaiah ch42 vv1-9</i> <i>Matthew ch3 vv13-end</i>	Eira Owen	Dick Withington	Sue and Peter Law	Gaynor Davy and Daphne Chippendale	Pauline Meade	Karen Armbrister
Sun 19 Jan	Bourton Birdingbury Frankton Stretton	9.15 am 11.00 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion Morning Praise Evening Worship	Liz Ellis <i>1 Corinthians ch1 vv1-9,</i> <i>John ch1 vv29-42</i>	Karen Armbrister	Jenny Hawes	Josie and John Price		Wendy Bringloe	Karen Armbrister
Sun 26 Jan	Stretton	10.00 am	Benefice Holy Communion Rev Barbara's Farewell						Wendy Bringloe	Jackie Morton

Christmas Events

The Draycote Benefice CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY WORKSHOP
Saturday 14th Dec 2013 2pm – 5pm at the Village Hall in Bourton

Christmas crafts, cooking, stories, games and music suitable for families and children of all ages. Please note that children under 5 require parent/guardian supervision. We have a maximum of 30 places, so book early!

Contact Karen Armbrister on 632030 or karen.armbrister@btinternet.com

CAROL SINGING REMINDER Friday December 20th, meet outside The Birbury/Club at 6.30pm to raise much needed money for Save The Children Fund.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED to tell the story of Christmas

In the last couple of years children and adults have helped with a creative telling of the Christmas story at our 'Carols, Crib and Candles' service. We will be doing something similar this year on **Sunday 22nd December at 4.30 pm**. If you and/or your children would like to take part, please let me know. We need volunteers of all ages! I hope to arrange a couple of SHORT rehearsals beforehand. If you can help in any other way, either with some music or making (VERY!) simple costumes, then I'd be really grateful to hear from you.

Karen Armbrister

Other Benefice events for December and January

Thurs 5rd Dec	2.30pm	Service and Tea at Bourton, F and D Village Hall
Wed 11th Dec	10.30am	Home Communion at Jacky Westcott's, Loen, Main Street
Thurs 12th Dec	10.30 am	Coffee Morning for Carers in The Birbury (details elsewhere)
Thurs 19th Dec	9.30 am	Knightlow School Communion at Stretton Church
Thurs 2nd Jan	2.30pm	Service and Tea at Bourton, F and D Village Hall
Wed 8th Jan	10.30 am	Home Communion at Rev. Barbara's, Grandborough

A tribute to Reverend Beth Smith

Many of you will remember Beth with fondness from her time in Birdingbury. She died peacefully on 20th September at St. Giles Hospice, Whittington near Lichfield aged 73, having been diagnosed with bone cancer six months previously.

Following many years as an RE teacher, Beth was ordained in 1994. She was a curate in Fletchamstead in Coventry before becoming Priest in Charge of Leamington Hastings, Birdingbury, Grandborough, Willoughby and Flecknoe from 1997 until 2005. After her retirement from full time ministry, she was an Associate Minister in the Revel Group of Churches.

In 2010 Beth moved to Tamworth to be near one of her two sons, Chris, his wife Hayley and their triplet daughters, Esme, Olivia and Martha. She was a devoted and loved Grandma and spent much of her time helping to care for her granddaughters.

Beth will be fondly remembered in the Leam Valley Group for her pastoral care, her musical ability and her many and varied services in our village communities.

Beth's funeral, taken by her local vicar and myself, was held at St. Editha's Church, Amington, Tamworth on 11th October. Many clergy and parish friends from Coventry Diocese including several people from Birdingbury and Leamington Hastings attended her funeral in Tamworth.

Barbara Clutton

The Newcombe 1615 Ringing Bell at Birdingbury

"The bell retains its canons but has not been quarter turned." "Is there a campanologist out there who understands this?" (Church News and Views Oct/Nov 2013)

They get everywhere you know, these campanologists. At one time there were estimated to be 90,000 people who could ring. At the time it was exactly the same number as there were chartered accountants – make of that what you will. Lesley and I met through ringing at St Nicholas in Kenilworth and at one time we were quite keen, even competent change ringers.

However, Aileen's question was about the canons and quarter turning. The canons were loops of metal, on top of the bell and cast as part of it. They were used to hang the bell from the beam (headstock) which was attached to the ringing mechanism. I have no idea of the origins of the word but if you imagine four robed priests standing closely together bowing their heads in prayer, it might resemble the shape. As engineering became more sophisticated the canons were often cut off and the bells affixed using bolts, often to metal headstocks. In the old days there were few bearings and the bells were hard to ring. Nowadays metal headstocks mounted on

modern bearings have replaced the old wooden beams. They are also typically shaped like arches thus bringing the heavy bit of the bell (the sound bow) closer to the fulcrum, and using the top part of the bell, and the headstock, as a counterweight, making them much easier to ring.

Quarter turning was simply a realignment of the bell so that the clapper struck a different part of the sound bow, so spreading the wear. Quarter turning was the only thing possible with canons. Nowadays, if a bell is worn they can be eighth turned if necessary, thus prolonging its useful life.

I'm always fascinated by the sheer age of bells – in 1615 casting and hanging 6cwt of metal must have been quite an undertaking. I grew up in Berkswell and learned to ring there, on the bell simply known as the fourth. It was cast in around 1380 and weighs 7 cwt. 633 years later it is rung every week without comment! There's a wonderful connection to our forebears though, because if you get under it you can still feel the chisel marks where it was tuned by hand all those years ago.

Anyway, the fact that our bell still has its canons, and has not been quarter turned simply means that it has not been used as much as many bells of its age. Rather than being a comment on the religious condition of our village, it reflects the widespread growth of change ringing in the 1700's which must have increased the wear generally. With only one bell this wasn't an option at Birdingbury.

I wish I could remember who told me the little rhyme when we came here. Whoever it was, thank you. Imagine a bright sunny winters morning – the sound Leamington Hastings five bells rolls across the fields, each in turn tintinnabulating the words: “Who's got the best bells?”

To which Birdingbury's bell responds with sonorous gravity: “Us!”

John Starley

St. Leonard's contact information

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