

Christ Church Hilderstone

PARISH MAGAZINE



A celebration of village life

Christmas Edition 2024

WHAT'S ON:

NOVEMBER:

Saturday 30 th	Christmas Market & Café	10am – 1pm	Village Hall
	Pop-Up Pub	6pm – 10.30pm	Village Hall
	With food by Laprishas Ltd Caribbean Catering		

DECEMBER:

Sunday 1 st	Blue Christmas Service	6pm – 7pm	Christ Church
Saturday 7 th	Christmas Tree Festival	10am – 2pm	Christ Church
Sunday 8 th	Christmas Tree Festival	2pm – 4pm	Christ Church
	Carol Service	4pm – 5pm	Christ Church
Tuesday 10 th	W.I.	12.30pm – 3pm	Village Hall
Saturday 21 st	Hilderstone Christmas Concert		
	Matinee	3pm – 4pm	Village Hall
	Evening performance, with bar	7pm – 10pm	Village Hall
Tuesday 24 th	Family Crib Service	4pm – 5pm	Christ Church
	Midnight Mass	9.45pm	Christ Church
Sunday 29 th	United Benefice Service	9.30am – 10.30am	St Nicholas Fulford

JANUARY 2025

Tuesday 14 th	W.I.	12.30pm - 3pm	Village Hall
Saturday 18 th	Burns' Night Supper	7.30pm – 10pm	Village Hall
Saturday 25 th	Community Hub Café	10am – 1pm	Village Hall

NOTE: THERE IS NO POP-UP PUB IN JANUARY.

COVER and BACK COVER photographs courtesy of Charlie Hughes.

FEBRUARY:

Tuesday 11 th	W.I.	12.30pm - 3pm	Village Hall
Saturday 22 nd	Community Hub Café	10am – 1pm	Village Hall
	Live Theatre – Life's Little VicToms	7.30pm – 10pm	Village Hall

NOTE: THERE IS NO POP-UP PUB IN FEBRUARY.

Dates & Times may change. Please check in advance of an event.



Helping you Keep in Touch with Events:

Christ Church, Hilderstone:

Vicar	Rev'd Lucinda Wray-Wear	Tel: 01782 397073
Churchwarden	Audrey Stringer	Tel: 01889 505638

Parish Council:

Parish Clerk	Nikola Evans	Tel: 07971 226170
	Email: clerk@hilderstone.staffsc.gov.uk	
	Website: www.hilderstone.org.uk	

Hilderstone W. I.:	<i>12.30pm- 3pm 2nd Tuesday of the month, Village Hall.</i>
President	Mrs Gill Slater Tel: 07935 999424 Email: hilderstonewipresident@gmail.com

Hilderstone Village Hall:

Bookings:	Hallmaster booking service (on web site) Tel: 07810 332559
	Email: hilderstonevhbookings@gmail.com



Facebook @HVH60, Twitter @hvh50,
Instagram [hilderstone_village_hall](https://www.instagram.com/hilderstone_village_hall)
Web Site www.hilderstonevillagehall.com.

Staffs. County Councillor:

Ian Parry

Tel: 07831 510381 Email: ian.parry@staffordshire.gov.uk

Stafford Borough Councillor:

Karine Aspin

Tel: 07498 325374

Email: Kaspin@staffordbc.gov.uk

V.I.N. (Village Information Network):

This email service notifies those on the mailing list of events, news, etc in the village or affecting those living here. Contact: richard.pilcher1@btinternet.com.



What's going on locally?

As we have had several new families coming into the village in recent weeks, we have decided to run this short article again. We hope our new villagers are settling in well and are keen to get involved with this lovely village of ours.

How do you keep abreast of what's going on locally? We don't have a local paper. Local radio isn't what it was. This Parish Magazine only comes out quarterly. So where do you find things out?

Hilderstone Village Hall has a Facebook page, so does Fradswell (Fradswell Community Hub) and Fulford Parish Council. There are plenty of others, including the excellent 'A Little Bit of Stone'. And if your focus is on Hilderstone past and present, you might like to look at Hilderstone Heritage, which is run by 'local lad' Martin Philips

You might not know about **Hilderstone News and Forum**. This is a local group aiming to reach people in and around Hilderstone. You can join by answering the three admission questions and then you can find out about local businesses and events.

There are changes coming soon so join the group and let's see how we can keep ourselves and each other informed about local matters.

From Your Parish Council

Community Feedback Needed: How Should We Spend Our Funds?

As a community, we have a fantastic opportunity to make decisions that can benefit everyone, but we need your input! We're in the process of planning the budget for the coming year and we want to hear directly from you on how to prioritise spending. Whether it's about improving existing services, starting new initiatives, or building something entirely unique, your voice matters. Here are some ideas but feel free to think outside the box:

1. Community Spaces and Facilities

- Would you like to see upgrades in the play area (e.g. a new shelter)?
- Are there specific facilities you think would bring people together?

2. Cleanliness

- Should more funds be allocated toward cleaning up public spaces, maintaining pavements?

Unfortunately, we are unable to accept anything highways related.

How You Can Participate

Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts. You can respond by contacting our clerk (see overleaf) or attending Parish Council meetings. Let us know what's most important to you and how you believe it could improve our shared space.

Why Your Opinion Matters

Every voice in our community is valuable. By taking part, you're helping ensure that the budget reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of all community members. We're excited to hear from you and look forward to shaping our community's future together!

Parish Council Vacancy

We have one available seat on the Parish Council.

Being a Councillor is all about giving back to your community by bringing your energy, passion, and hard-working attitude. You can make a real difference to the local community and wider society in many ways as a councillor. For example, you could be representing the views of local people to ensure the community gets the right services, supporting a resident with an issue, or helping to shape the community by driving new ideas.

Being a Councillor is a varied and highly fulfilling role. You don't need any experience or special qualifications, and you'll gain lots of new skills, experience, knowledge, and confidence. Councillors are paid an allowance and can work flexibly.

If you want to find out more about becoming a Parish Councillor, or have a specific query, please get in touch with our clerk:

clerk@hilderstone.staffslc.gov.uk – 07971226170 – Nikola Evans.

VILLAGE HALL LOTTERY DRAW WINNERS:

September:

Ball:	51	£100
	18	£ 50
	38	£ 25
	21	£ 10
	84	£ 10

October:

Ball:	29	£100
	24	£ 75
	39	£ 50
	47	£ 40
	70	£ 30

Get your winnings quicker by giving us account details for where you would like them transferred. Email: hilderstonevillagehall@gmail.com.

Confidentiality assured!

*The NOVEMBER draw will take place at the
Pop-up Pub on 30th November at the Village Hall.*

From Your Village Hall

Village Dinner - Saturday 19th October



If inflatable mobile phones, dubious wigs and questionable taste in fashion is anything to go by, our annual Village Dinner was a resounding success.

The theme for this year was Choose a Decade: we had a lavish display of tables celebrating the elegance of the 1920s (with all its finery and feathers), the fabulous 80's (although I am biased in this regard), the '70's and the swinging

60's (where original hotpants were on display – most impressive).

Joni Talks provided the excellent live entertainment with a selection of music covering the decades chosen by each table. As



ABOVE LEFT: Steed and Emma Peel (The Avengers) made an appearance, whilst Steven Bane had to split his time between Wendy Pugh-Hill (ABOVE) and taking to the dance floor with Annie Britton (OVERLEAF). LEFT: a motley crew from back in the good old 1980's.

with previous years, the dance floor was a hive of activity once meals had been consumed, and the Prosecco drunk.



It was an evening of celebrations: Roy and Christine Clark celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary; Lilley Moore was sweet 21 (again); Iain Britton also celebrated a birthday; and Oliver & Emily Masterson (nee Webb) marked one week as a married couple. So, we were certainly all in the mood to celebrate.



ABOVE LEFT: Roy and Christine Clark, who were celebrating their 62nd wedding anniversary at the dinner.

LEFT: Apologies for the slightly blurred photograph but trying to get Steven Bane and Annie Britton to stand still long enough to take a picture proved very difficult indeed! But they were clearly having a wonderful time and they were quite something to watch.

We hope you can join us next year for this great village event. Look out for details on our Facebook page or the Hilderstone News & Forum.

Hilderstone Christmas Market & Café – Saturday 30th November from 10am – 1pm.

As part of our monthly Café & Community Hub, we will be hosting a number of stalls for a little Christmas shopping and craft events, including Hazel Woodward's Christmas Wreath-making workshop (see our Facebook page for details). There will be something for everyone, so please come along and support your village at our Christmas market.

The Hilderstone Christmas Show: Saturday 21st December

Yes, Christmas is coming to Hilderstone, with our annual Christmas performance. There will be a matinee performance, 3pm – 4pm, followed by an evening performance from 7pm – 10pm (with bar). Tickets are available via the Village Hall Website and Facebook page, or through members of the show and are priced at £5.50 for adults, £3 for under 16's and there is no charge for young children sitting on an adult's knee.



Burns' Night Supper, Saturday 18th January 7.30pm.

Dust off your tartan scarf and plaid shirt to spend an evening eating, drinking and dancing to all things Scottish. Poetry and The Proclaimers, it doesn't get much better than that!

Tickets are £30 per person, including a traditional Burns supper, a dram of whisky and glass of fizz on arrival. *(Vegetarian and gluten free haggis to be requested when booking tickets).*

To book tickets, please email hilderstonevhbookings@gmail.com and for further details please check out the village hall website at www.hilderstonevillagehall.com.

Live Theatre! Saturday 22nd February 2025, 7.30pm.

Page2Stage Creatives presents 'Life's Little VicToms'.

We've booked a live theatre company who will present 'Life's Little VicToms', a comedy by Stephen Powell. Follow married couple Vicky and Tom as they navigate life together.



Directed by Kelly-Marie Singleton, this show received rapturous welcomes at Tittensor and Oulton Village Halls. Please join us to give this comic duo a real, genuine, Hilderstone welcome!

Tickets are £12 each. Save the date! More details to come.

The Community Hub continues to take place from 10am – 1pm on the last Saturday of the month, offering cooked breakfast from local suppliers. This community event offers a

great opportunity for people from in and around our village to meet up and to sit and chat with friends – old and new, whilst also supporting local producers.

The Pop-Up Pubs will also be running from the new time of 6pm – 10.30pm on the last Saturday of the month (see the What's On section for a list of food vendors each month or visit our Facebook page).

Please note there will be NO pop-up pub during January or February, but it will return in March!

If you are interested in holding an event in the village hall, please go to our website (www.hilderstonevillagehall.com) and click on Contacts & Bookings to see availability and place a booking.

Hilderstone Village Hall 100 Club

Prizes up to and including £100 every 4 weeks!

£5 a month (per hall)



Scan QR Code for details

or go to

<https://bit.ly/HVH100ClubForm>

The Hilderstone Village Hall 100 Club.

If you enjoy a 'flutter' and would also like to support your village hall, why not join our 100 Club, the proceeds of which help maintain, and improve, our facilities for our hirers and village events?

Simply scan the QR code above or visit our Facebook page or website.

Thank you. We are somewhat late in saying a public 'thank you' to the Hammonds at the garage for all the various pieces of equipment they have kindly made for us in the Village Hall. Not only did they produce a barbeque during lockdown, so we could provide a safe environment for villagers to eat and meet up, but they designed and build the mobile chair trolleys, which allows multiple chairs to be easily moved about without the need for heavy lifting.

The Hammonds have also produced the bar table risers – this means that we have been able to raise the height of the bar tables, which takes the strain off our backs when we are serving drinks (and allows our customers to lean on the bar in a casual manner whilst having a good old chat!).

Hilderstone WI: Looking Fabulous at 90!

For many of us, reaching the grand old age of 90 seems like a long, long time away, but not for the indomitable Hilderstone branch of the W.I., which celebrated this momentous milestone on 8th October.



Not surprisingly, everyone was on excellent form. The birthday cake was, to say the least, impressive (but would you expect anything less from the ladies of the WI?), the catering was delicious, and the entertainment was all you could ask for.



There were, of course, a few 'stand out' moments: who would have thought that ex-Chairman Pat Saul could, in her youth, fit an entire Wagon Wheel into her mouth – and remember, this was the Wagon Wheel of old, not the much smaller version we see today! I will never see Pat Saul in quite the same light again. Pat also entertained us with her rendition of the poem 'Madam President's Prerogative', much to the delight of all present. We were also treated to a superb poem by Judy Shurmer which was accompanied by much laughter from her appreciative audience.

As is their custom, the WI had a guest speaker at their meeting, with Kath Reynolds taking to the proverbial stage with her superb presentation on Food Glorious Food, which took us all back through the many decades of food in this country, and the brands we have all loved (or loathed) over the years. It was at this point in the proceedings that Pat Saul enlightened us all with regards to her childhood 'habits'! I am sure many of you will still be

able to give a rendition (however untuneful it may prove to be) of 'She flies like a bird in the sky' from the Nimble advert – the bread was awful, but the music fabulous. Or how about 'For Mash get Smash' with those quirky aliens? Marmite, as you would expect, divided the room, whilst many had fond memories of that poor Hovis boy pushing that blessed bicycle up the steep cobbled street – rather him than me!



Helen Mancey, Chairman of Stafford Federation of Women's Institute presented WI Chairman, Gill Slater, with a certificate to mark their special birthday (*SEE BELOW*) and was one of the guests at the lunch, along with Rev'd Lucinda Wray-Wear our Associate Minister at Christ Church Hilderstone, Charlotte Almond, CEO of Staffordshire Women's Refuge with whom the WI works closely, and myself.



Of course, at the end of a fun-filled afternoon, I was left realising that (a) I had probably (almost certainly) watched too much television as a child, as I was able to easily remember all the songs and advertisements from my childhood days, and (b) that I am perhaps not quite as young as I would like to think, as I managed to go back several decades during the talk, from Fray Bentos (yes it is still going strong), Bisto (ahh) and back still further. Oh fond memories indeed.

Ladies, it was, as you would expect, a fabulous celebration and we look forward to your next milestone event.

Eleanor Bane

Madam President's Prerogative

Read by Pat Saul at the WI Birthday Party

We herewith introduce to you
Our Presidents, we've had a few;
And if proved not to be much cop
We put them in our old swop shop

Madam President.

With urgent speed she'd ring the bell,
Breathing deeply her chest would swell;
Her patriotism burned red hot,
To pitch Jerusalem, she could not!

Madam President.

In organising she'd strut her stuff,
Until we said enough's enough,
If only she had been able to cope,
Her future might have held some hope!

Madam President.

Her sandwiches she bolts with glee,
Then see the rate she drinks her tea,
Our Birthday Party she'll celebrate,
Her female tonsils to lubricate.

Madam President.

We've had them now for 90 years,
Where would we be without our peers,
They still keep reigning, how peculiar!
All we can say is "Halleluiah".

Madam President.

Anonymous

Birthday Reflections

Birthday cake and candles
It's so good to be alive.
It's a really special birthday,
The day that you are five.

How time goes by so quickly,
The teen age years were fun.
But then before you know it
You're a grown up twenty-one!

Then you are newly married
With a growing family.
You love being a mother
But all too soon you're thirty.

You've got a lovely busy life
But take time for a cup of tea
And reflect on all the things you've done
'cause now you're reaching forty.

Now the kids are all grown up
There's no more need to be thrifty
So take some time to enjoy yourself,
Who can believe you're fifty!

You're so proud to be a grandma
It makes your eyes go misty
To see a new generation growing up.
And now, of course, you're sixty.

Your sixties, they are swinging.

Just like they were back then,
Filled with love, laughter and friendship,
But wait, your three score years and ten!

Now the years go racing by
But don't ever be too hasty
There are lots of things to enjoy in life
Even when you're eighty!

Now the time has come to celebrate
So burn the candles brightly.
So raise your glasses everyone
Hilderstone WI is ninety!

As I look forward to the coming years
I have often wondered
If I will be lucky enough
And manage to live to a hundred.

Judy Shurmer

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

All are welcome. If you would like to join this group of fabulous ladies, you are assured of a very warm welcome. The Hilderstone WI meets in Hilderstone Village Hall on the second Tuesday of the month, between 12.30 – 3pm. There are lots of opportunities for ladies who enjoy crafts to use their skills, or just make the most of the time to meet new friends and enjoy a wide range of talks.

Contact hilderstonewi@gmail.com.



Cook's Tips: Chocolate Shortbread Treats

This is a lovely tea-time treat which is easy for children to make at Christmas.

Ingredients:

- 4oz Caster Sugar
- 8 oz Butter
- 10 oz Plain flour
- 2 oz Rice Flour

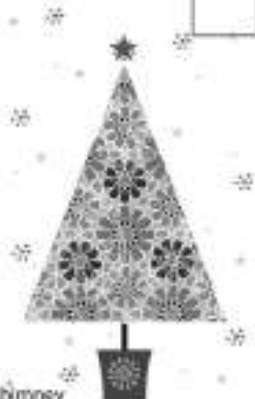
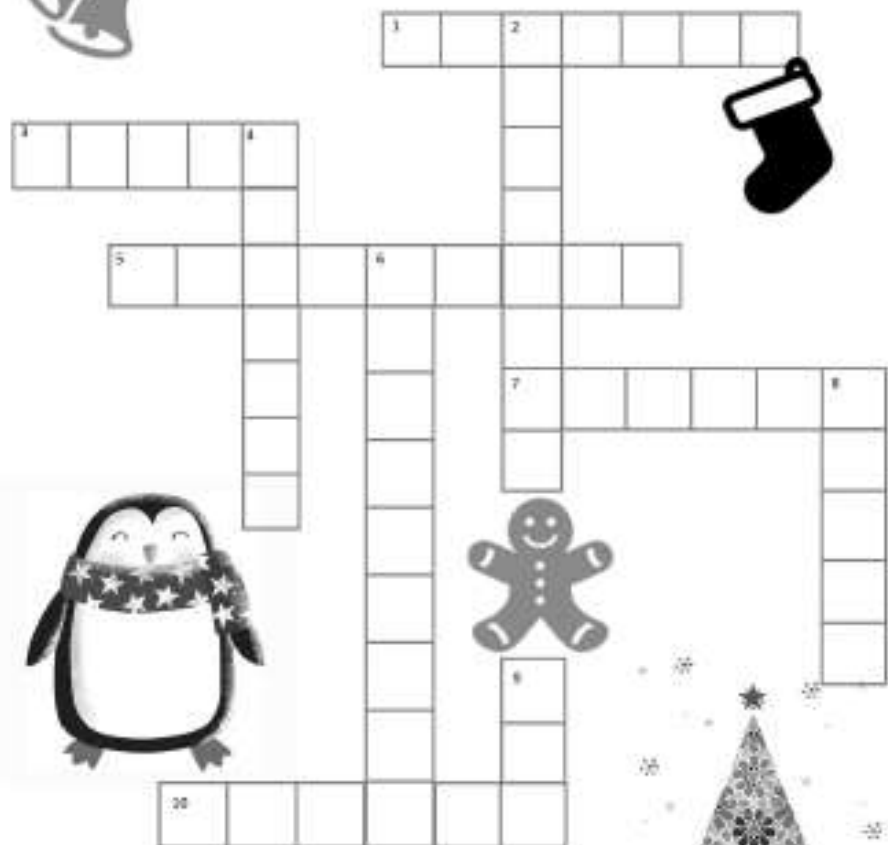
Method:

- Soften the butter and cream together with the sugar. Mix in the flour and *rice flour to form a dough. Wrap in cling film and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.
- Roll out on a floured surface. The thickness is a personal choice depending on how thick you like your biscuits.
- Cut into lovely Christmas trees, etc and place on a baking tray. They will spread out a little so space them out.
- Cook on Gas 3 (150°C) for approx. 30 minutes and transfer onto a cooling wire.
- When cool, melt some chocolate and spread on the biscuits with a knife or pastry brush, then add sprinkles or your own choice of topping. If they are to hang on a tree, remember to make a hole in the top of each one when still soft after they come out of the oven.

*(*The rice flour makes the biscuits crunchier).* **Happy baking!**



Christmas Crossword Puzzle

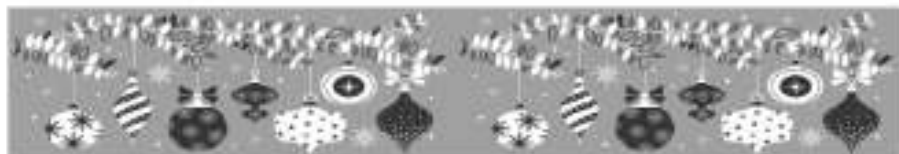


ACROSS:

1. One of Santa's Reindeer
3. Santa's Helpers
5. December 25th is
7. Christmas drink
10. The name of a popular snowman

DOWN:

2. Christmas Month
4. He hates Christmas
6. You hang them by the chimney
8. On Christmas morning we unwrap them
9. to the world!



Hilderstone's It's Christmas!

Festive Family Show

**Hilderstone Village Hall
Saturday 21 December**

3pm and 7pm

**£5.50 Adults £3 Children (U16's)
Young children on knees free!**

**Carol Singing, Music, Christmas Jokes,
Meet Dick and his Cat in the mini pantomime!
Join in the fun!**

**The 3pm performance is more suitable
for young children**

**The 7pm performance will have a bar,
and live music following the show**

**Tickets on sale via Village Hall
Website and Facebook Page
or cast members**

Casting the Nativity Play

When we think of childhood Christmastimes, we often include memories of Nativity plays. How rarely do we consider the casting of one? Here is a story against myself!

It will surprise those who know me, to discover that as a child I was lissom light and very pretty. But, despite a pretty face and balletic movement, I was never cast as a fairy, a Princess or any part requiring beauty and, at Christmas time, never an Angel. Because I had a bigger voice than anyone else in the school (including, I'm told, some teachers), I was always stuffed with cushions and given a false nose to play (I recall) the Caliph of Bagdad or (with cushions in a different place) the Wicked Witch from the Wildwood.

Many years later I'm walking home from school with my daughter Jenny. She is lissom light and very pretty and had the bonus of a three-inch halo of white-blond curls. She is excited and telling me that "Monday is a very important day. Sister Callister is holding auditions for the Nativity Play." Well, I remembered my disappointment as a child when I didn't get the Angel role ... I looked at Jenny and thought "you, my darling, will be the Angel Gabriel". We learned the lines during the weekend and on Monday morning Jenny is skipping to school, pointing to every tree en route: "Behold I bring you tidings of great joy" ... and I think to



myself "she'll get the part. The other children won't be able to read the script, let alone know the words".

I joined all of the other mothers at the school playground at 3.15 that afternoon. Majella's mother is saying "I don't mind what part Magella gets, she loved being in the Angel Choir last year" and I think "I wonder what she was buying those yards of blue fabric for at Rochester Market?" Tristian's mother is claiming that Tristan would love to be a shepherd again. I think to myself "well if Tristian isn't Joseph this year, Father Monaghan will have a flea in his ear tomorrow morning". But I say nothing. I know what part Jenny's got.

The school bell rings and children tumble out of class and I see Jenny at the top of the steps. I do the unforgivable ... I shout out "Jenny what part have you got?" Jenny shouts back: "Mummy, Mummy I'm so excited, I'm going to be The Spider!". I had to admit that it was a Nativity play I had not read!

My beautiful Jenny was to be stuffed with cushions (memories of the Caliph and witches) and dressed in an eight-legged spider costume. Her beautiful curls would be hidden under a black balaclava. The Spider was a pivotal role, however. Spider was the Narrator and had the task of persuading Grannies and Grandpas, Mummies and Daddies, and others to follow Spider, who would scuttle (not dance) through the audience and take them onto the stage to sing to Baby Jesus with the Angel choir!

Worse was to follow. Sister Callista sent home the pattern for the spider costume!



Marian Baldwin

Helping your Community

There is a saying that it takes a whole community to raise a child – well it takes a whole community to MAKE a community. All too often it is sadly down to just a small nucleus of individuals who are committed to, and work very hard to, support their community, be it a small village (such as our own), town or even city. Wherever you go, you all too often find the same pattern. However, this only works as long as those volunteers have the time, energy and good health to continue to do this work. We owe such people a huge debt for it is they who keep villages alive and so very vibrant.

Since the magazine began, we have been asking for people to get involved and help wherever they can and, given that we have had several new friends move into the village, we thought it would be a good time to just highlight how you can all do your 'bit' for the village you call home. So whatever your circumstances (busy young family, retired, believer or non-believer), I am sure you will find something below which will appeal to you and the busy life you lead:

CHRIST CHURCH: We are so fortunate to have this beautiful Georgian church in the centre of our village but, like so many historically significant buildings, its maintenance is both time-consuming and, unfortunately, costly. So how can you help this friendly group of people (not all of whom are church-goers)?

- Churchyard tidy-up – just two hours (which includes coffee & biscuits and the all-important chatting time) where we tend the paths, cut back hedges and generally keep the churchyard looking its very best for visitors. The Churchyard tidy-up team meets once a month from March to October and does not require any gardening experience. Enthusiasm and a willingness to help are all the qualifications you need.
- Maintenance skills – painters, electricians, carpenters – whatever you can bring to the church to help us keep on top of the busy maintenance schedule of works we have each year.

- Parish Magazine – we need volunteers to help distribute the Parish Magazine in the village. There are four issues a year, so not too much work involved!

VILLAGE HALL: Our lovely village hall is quite literally at the very centre of our community and hosts so many activities, from the Pop-up Pub and Community Café once a month, to Quiz Nights, the Village Dinner and Burns' Night Supper. Like the church, however, it needs regular maintenance, which comes at a cost.

- Can you do an hour or two as bar staff at our monthly pub? On-site training required before you start, but it is a great way to meet the locals (you are always popular as you are serving the drinks!).
- Would you like to help us at the Community Café one a month for an hour or two (it starts at 10am and finishes at 1pm).
- Handymen/women are always very welcome for the upkeep of the building and the surrounding grounds.
- Maybe you have administrative or finance experience and would be willing to support our village hall committee? There would be no requirement to join the committee or attend the meetings – you would have the flexibility to work around your busy schedule.

VILLAGE-WIDE:

- Become a Parish Councillor (see Parish Council page).
- Litter picking – there is always litter to be picked up!
- Adopt a planter – these help the village look well-tended and attractive

By getting involved with village volunteering you really do get more out of it than you put in: meeting friends – old and new - and knowing that your work is making a real difference to your community. This is a lovely, friendly village – help us to keep it looking its very best and offering a wide range of activities for everyone, from Christ Church to the village Hall.

See the 'Keeping in Touch' section at the front of the magazine for contact details for all the groups listed.

Thank you.

Loneliness

Upon the table a snowy cloth was laid,
A cluster of holly was brightly displayed,
A red candle flickered high on the 'cill;
The rom offered welcome and festive goodwill.

The room offered welcome, but no one was there,
The frail old woman's meal to share.
Were her children too busy even to care
That Christmas had come, there were presents to share?

She felt the warm tears on her tired face
As she silently bent her head for the Grace.
She had a fire, a home and food on the table,
All He had known was a manger in a stable.

When she lifted her eyes a light shone above,
It seemed to flow down and embrace her with love.
Her sadness and loneliness were no longer there
When kind friends arrived and answered her prayer.

Marian Baldwin



**BLUE
CHRISTMAS**

*A short, quiet service for those who
will find this Christmas difficult*

6pm
Sunday 1st December
Christ Church

The banner features a dark background with a glowing, starry trail on the right side, suggesting a comet or a path of light.

*JOY AT CHRIST'S
BIRTH*



Christ Church Hilderstone

***Joy to the world,
the Lord has come!***



Loving Jesus,
you were born in a stable
but worshipped by the angels.
Be with all who are lonely,
and with all who feel distant from celebrations.
Be for us a living hope that lightens their hearts.

Amen.

*The PCC and
all the Congregation
at Christ Church*



*wish you a
Happy Christmas
and a
Joyful New Year
2025.*

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

1st December

6pm Blue Christmas



8th December

4pm Carols Service

24th December

4pm Family Crib Service

9.45pm Early Midnight Mass

11.45pm Midnight Mass - St Nicholas, Fulford

25th December

*10am Family Service for Christmas
at St Nicholas, Fulford*

29th December

*9.15am United Benefice Service
at St Nicholas, Fulford*

*We welcome you all to join us in our
celebrations at this joyous time of year.*

Church Matters: Services & Readings

Date	Service	Old Testament	New Testament/Epistle	Gospel
1 st Dec	Advent	Jeremiah 33: 14-16	1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13	Luke 21: 25-36
		BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE: Hilderstone, 6pm		
8 th Dec	Advent	Baruch 5: 1-9 or Malachi 3: 1-4	Philippians 1: 3-11	Luke 3: 1-6
		CAROL SERVICE: Hilderstone, 6pm		
15 th Dec	Advent	Zephaniah 3: 14-20	Philippians 4: 4-7	Luke 3: 7-18
22 nd Dec	Advent	Micah 5: 2-5a	Hebrews 10: 5-10	Luke 1: 39-45 (46-55)
24 th Dec	Christmas Eve	CRIB SERVICE: 4pm		
		MIDNIGHT MASS: 9.45pm		
		Isaiah 52: 7-10	Hebrews 1: 1-4 (5-12)	John 1: 1-14
29 th Dec	1st Sunday Christmas	UNITED BENEFICE SERVICE: Fulford, 9.15am		
		1 Samuel: 1 8-20, 26	Colossians 3: 12-17	Luke 2: 41-52
5 th Jan		Jeremiah 31: 7-14	Ephesians 1: 3-14	John 1: (1-9), 10-18
12 th Jan	Epiphany	Isaiah 43: 1-7	Acts 8: 14-17	Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22
19 th Jan	Epiphany	Isaiah 62: 1-5	1 Corinthians 12: 1-11	John 2: 1-11
26 th Jan	Epiphany	Nehemiah 8: 1-3 5-6 8-10	1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a	Luke 4: 14-21
2 nd Feb	Candlemas	Jeremiah 1: 4-10	1 Corinthians 13: 1-13	Luke 4: 21-30
9 th Feb		Isaiah 6: 1-8 (9-13)	1 Corinthians 15: 1-11	Luke 5: 1-11
16 th Feb		Jeremiah 17: 5-10	1 Corinthians 15: 12-20	Luke 6: 17-26
23 rd Feb		Genesis 45: 3-11, 15	1 Corinthians 15: 35-38, 42-50	Luke 6: 27-38

Kindly note: unless stated otherwise, our morning service begins at 11.15am every Sunday.

Church Matters: Reflections from the Vicar



I have recently returned from a three-day break with some friends on their canal boat. It was glorious, with life slowing down to a mere 4 mph. I came back feeling far more refreshed and rested than I have done for a long while; the simplicity of life, watching the wonders of our wild-life close-up and having the space and time to “just be”.

But “just being” is not something we find ourselves doing much of, as we try to fit more and more into our daily lives including, and on top of, work. And whenever we find a spare moment, social media fills the gap. There is even less precious quality time for our families and friends, let alone for God.

Whilst “just being” might mean different things to different people, at different times, it is about the moment in which **we are**, rather than wanting to be elsewhere; it is about taking a break from whatever we are doing (the to-do-list can wait a bit); it is about enjoying what we have, rather than what we don't have; it is about taking time every day to listen.

This may mean meditation, prayer or simply sitting and silencing the mind, becoming conscious of our thoughts, for it is in this quietness that we are more easily able to discern God.

*“After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire.
And after the fire came a gentle whisper.” (1 Kings 19:12-13)*

As we approach the season of Advent, and all the busyness that this may mean, take time to stop awhile and “just be”, for it is a time of waiting as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and of his second coming. As Jesus said:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

Services & Events:

Whilst Advent is certainly our most busy period at Christ Church, it does not mean that the remainder of the year is 'quiet' - quite the contrary. Since our Autumn edition of the magazine, Christ Church has played host to numerous important services and events as you will see below.



Harvest Festival & Supper 2024.

As a farming community, this remains an important service for Christ Church, in which we celebrate the bringing in of the harvest, the valuable work of our farmers and the value of food in our lives. As always, the church was beautifully decorated with flowers, fruit and vegetables.

Thank you also to everyone who came to this year's Harvest Supper. The auction raised £222, and this money will be divided equally between:

- Air Ambulance
- British Heart Foundation
- Church Mission Society



Our special thanks to our fabulous (and very patient) Auctioneer, Hazel Woodward, and to everyone to attended the event.

Look out for the date for next years' supper in the Spring issue of the magazine.



Benefice Pet Service at St Nicholas Fulford:

What, you ask, could possibly go wrong when you invite a whole lot of animals (and their owners) to a church service? Well, in this instance, nothing went

wrong – and everything was just perfect. Not surprisingly, most pets in attendance were dogs, although one brave little kitten did make an appearance, but remained firmly encased in her cat basket! All of our pets were very well-behaved, as were their owners. It was one of the most delightful family services we have had for quite some time.



This is definitely a service for all the family and their beloved pets.

Celebrating Rev'd Lucinda Wray-Wear's first anniversary.

Despite the image some may have of the Church, joy and laughter are never far away and this was most certainly the case when the congregation of Christ Church celebrated **Lucinda's first year as Associate Minister**. Out came the sherry, a cake was produced and Lucinda was toasted in style.

We greatly look forward to our journey together in the coming years. This past year has certainly been a huge success and we are so very grateful to Lucinda for her hard work and dedication over these past 12 months.



We would also like to thank Lundi, her dog, who has made several appearances over the year and been a major attraction to young and old alike.

All Souls' Service at St Nicholas Fulford:

As we approach Christmas, with its strong emphasis on family, it is natural for many of us to think of those who have passed on and so, at this gentle Benefice service, we remembered those who we miss, with their names being read out during the service.

Remembrance Day Service: Always a deeply moving service, our Remembrance Service this year was no exception. For the second year in a row, the Hilderstone W.I. did a superb job of decorating the church with their knitted poppies, army boots (*below left*), service personnel etc. The church was beautifully decorated in honour of our Fallen and the service was very well attended. We are honoured to have several ex-service personnel living in our village and we would like to



ABOVE: Rev'd Lucinda Wray-Wear lighting a candle at the Roll of Honour, alongside representatives from the W.I, Hilderstone Parish Council and ex-service personnel.

extend our thanks to Dee Harvey, Iain Britton and Steven Bane for their participation in this act of remembrance.



LEFT: Iain Britton, Dee Harvey, Charlie Hughes and Steven Bane processing with the poppy wreaths from the Parish Council, Women's Institute, Christ Church PCC and Ex-Service Personnel, to the War Memorial, following the Remembrance Service.

BELOW: The laying of the poppy wreaths at the War Memorial with members of the congregation.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

**Blue Christmas -
6pm, Sunday 1st December at
Christ Church.**

Whilst most of us are blessed with family and friends to share in the joy of Christmas, there are those for whom Christmas is a deeply lonely time of year; they have lost loved ones, are isolated, facing financial hardship, ill health or many other reasons. This is 'somewhere to come' if, despite all the decorations, the cards, the music playing in the shops and the parties, you don't really feel very much like celebrating. 'Somewhere to come' if the idea that a 'Merry Little Christmas is all you need for your troubles to be miles away' has a decidedly *hollow* ring to it.

This will be the first Blue Christmas service we have held in our Benefice and it is open to all who just want to come along – and, when you look around the church during this service, you will see that you are not alone.



Christmas Tree Festival

Saturday & Sunday, 7 & 8 December.

You will see details on timings etc in the Christmas Tree Festival advert. This is the third year we have run this festive event, with our beautiful Georgian church providing the perfect backdrop for the rich array of decorated Christmas trees. It is a wonderful start to Christmas for many of us, and it is definitely worth a visit. There are refreshments available throughout the event in our Christmas Café at the church and the festival draws to a close with our Carol Service.

Carol Service

4pm, Sunday 8th December.

We decided this year to offer a Carol Service in Christ Church, in addition to the ever-popular Crib Service and Midnight Mass (both on 24th December). For many of us, it seems such a shame to only sing all our favourite Carols once a year, and we thought it would be a lovely opportunity to extend our celebration of this joyful time of year with this new addition. With the Christmas Trees adorning the Aisles and Baptistry, the church will look truly beautiful as we pick up our carols sheets and the organ starts to play.

Crib Service

4pm, Tuesday 24th December.

A family service which requires no introduction. Always very popular with families, young and old, it is a firm favourite within our community. Candles are lit, the church is decorated, and Christmas is just a few hours away. As always, members of the congregation (especially the children) will be invited to participate in the story of the Nativity, bringing up sheep, cows, Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus and, of course, the Wise Men and Shepherds.

Midnight Mass

9.45pm, Tuesday 24th December.

Whilst not actually being held at midnight, this is a more reflective service, where we celebrate the coming of the Lord Jesus. For those, however, who want to attend a later service, our sister church, St Nicholas in Fulford, will be holding its 11.45pm service which will 'see in' Christmas Day.

We remember in our prayers the family and friends of Steven Poole and Tom Deaville.

Bonnie Constance Lawton was welcomed into our church through Baptism on 27th October. Our congratulations to Bonnie and her family.

The Hilderstone

Christmas Tree Festival



7th- 8th December 2024



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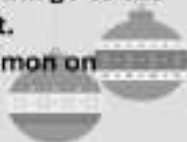
Come and see the beautiful trees in all their festive glory, in our beautiful historic church, and maybe indulge in a glass of Mulled Wine or tea/coffee and a Mince Pie or Two (it is Christmas after all)!

Any business, organisation, or group (whether that be friends or family) are welcome to participate in designing and decorating a tree.

Costing just £30 to sponsor a tree, each tree comes complete with lights. Sponsors to decorate w/c Monday 2nd December.

All proceeds from the Christmas Tree Festival will go to the Christ Church Access for All Project.

For further information please contact Simon on sa.shaw@rocketmail.com



Churchyard Tidy-Up:

As we come to the end of the Church Yard Tidy Up sessions for this year, a very big THANK YOU to everyone who has come regularly each month. It is always good to meet up each month and what an impact everyone's efforts have made again this season. It's amazing to see the difference in the church yard now that the hedges have been cut down to a more manageable height, and some have been professionally re-laid. Trees have been trimmed and ivy taken down away from the trees to let in more air and light, together with all the usual tidying.

The view from the East End of the Church looks really nice and very rural with the sheep grazing and, if you are lucky, you may see the horses from Green Farm galloping about!

Although we have had some wet Saturday mornings, we have now caught up with all the work, and a special thank you to those who tend the Garden of Remembrance. A very special place for many and it always looks tended and cared for.



We shall start again in March 2025 and Happy Christmas to all who gave up their time to keep the Church Yard looking so nice.



Our thanks also to Margaret at Mount Nurseries, who continues to look after the tubs at the front doors of the church.

Christine Clark (01889 505656).

*ABOVE: Roy Clark, Mary-Jane Campbell, James Campbell, Audrey Stringer & Sue Pilcher.
RIGHT: Louise Hughes, Susan Evans, Clive Hughes & Charlie Hughes.*

Hilderstone Heritage: Part 47

Firstly, further to the last article, I said that oral tradition has it that a Roman 'pavement' was discovered under the old school playground in times gone by. We do know that a Roman road did pass through the village. Thanks to my 'cousin' Peter for providing feedback to the last article: "in Roman times the pavement was the construction of the carriageway. The pedestrian part of the route was called the footway". So, that would fit with a pavement being found under the school playground.

I recently visited Sir Edward Elgar's birthplace, the Firs, in Worcestershire and was able to verify the link between Sir Edward Elgar and Hilderstone.

William Meath Baker (*BELOW LEFT*) was born in Hilderstone on 1st November 1835, the son of the Revd. Ralph Bourne Baker and his wife Francis Crofton Singer. He was educated at Eton College and Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1875, at the age of 18, he succeeded his father to the family pottery works of William Baker and Co in Fenton, and the country house of Hasfield Court in Gloucestershire. William Meath Baker established himself as a country squire at Hasfield. However, he funded the construction of Fenton Town Hall in the late 1880s. He was a close friend and patron of the



composer Edward Elgar and is the "W.M.B." on whom Variation No IV of his *Enigma Variations*, composed in 1899, was based. The Variation reflected Baker's impetuous and volatile nature.

William Meath Baker died on 15th January 1935. He had married twice - to Hannah Corbet in 1884 (who died in 1906), with whom he had three sons, and secondly to Sybill Wyrley-Birch in 1909.

The Revd. Ralph Bourne Baker (1803-1875) was the first vicar of Christ Church - between 1829 and 1860. He was the nephew of Ralph Bourne of Hilderstone Hall, founder of the church. His mother, Mary, was Ralph Bourne's sister. The photograph (RIGHT), taken by Camille Silvy in 1861, was purchased by the National Portrait Gallery in 1904.



In Part Forty-Six we revisited a newspaper article that appeared in The Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel in 1973. The article continues:

Another shop in Sandon Road is the combined grocery and newsagency business run by Tom and Nancy Ball. Tom, now on the 57 mark, has been in the area for 40 years and hails from Normacot, where he lived as the son of a modeller and manager. "I worked in a furniture warehouse for a time, but hankered after the fresh air of the country, and came this way", said Tom, whose ruddy cheeks give the impression that he has 'sniffed' a few million cubic feet of that free commodity in the ensuing years.

Tom and Nancy have no family, but do plenty of "visiting". They are their own paper deliverers and this takes up quite a considerable amount of time, "I started on foot and with a cycle, then I had a motorcycle", said Tom - he has progressed to a van these days. His deliveries take him to Colton, Milwich, Fulford and Smallrise in all sorts of weather, and Tom rarely, if ever, has let anyone down.

At the post office, set a little bit back from the main road and close to the Roebuck Inn, I met appropriately-named Mrs Joy Mildred Philips, a woman with a built-in-smile and as pleasant a sub-postmistress as you will find anywhere. Joy has been running the post for about nine years at her home, Hillrise. Joy Philips originated from Trent Vale, and moved to Hilderstone in the mid-forties, at the end of the Second World War. She met and married Mr Robert Henry Philips, whose parents and grandparents lived in Hilderstone and Smallrise respectively.

Mr Philips, who is on the staff of Meaford Power Station, was a Lance-Corporal in the Wiltshire Regiment during the Second World War. He has been a member of Sandon and District British Legion for the past 25 years and is the current Chairman, as well as being a member of the Parish Council. Mr Philips' interest in the village and its various organisations is matched by that of his wife, who is a member of the Parochial Church Council, press officer for the local branch of the Women's Institute, and the village's newspaper correspondent. They have a 16-years-old daughter, Julia, a pupil at Alleyne's Grammar School, Stone, and a 10-years-old son, Martin, a pupil at the village school.

The post office doorbell rang, another customer was welcomed by his Christian name, another piece of business was transacted – and it was time to move on.

The present Methodist Church at Hilderstone stands alongside the main Sandon Road and immediately opposite Eastholme, a group of council houses. The Minister is the Rev B A Dent. Two other chapels, I was informed by Mr and Mrs Jim Bosson, of Home Farm, were worshiped in not many yards away from the present building. Mrs Bosson, daughter of a Grindley farmer, is a Trustee there and a local preacher in the Stafford and Stone Circuit. Mrs Bosson met her husband to be when she cycled to the village a quarter of a century or more ago to conduct a service. Mr Bosson fastened

the bike on to his car and drove her home again."

To be continued....



(LEFT) This photograph accompanied the article. David Rausch (left) and Martin Philips when it was safe to be photographed in the road!

Note: George Spencer's van in the background.

HONESTY

It was our second Christmas together. We had been engaged for eighteen months and wedding plans were in the air. We were determined to make this 1959 Christmas our best ever. The years following WW2 had seen a slow improvement in the quality of people's lives and the late 1950's was a period when families still enjoyed sitting round the table together, sharing good food, good conversation and good humour.

Ann's Mum had been making preparations for weeks. The mincemeat was maturing in the Kilner jars. At least twelve puddings had been mixed, placed in beige, earthenware basins, wrapped in white linen cloths and steamed for hours in her old, zinc gas boiler. Instead of its mundane weekly chore of boiling the whites, it had bubbled and chuckled away as if it too was making a contribution to Christmas. And so it was.

We had spent the dark, December days making our lists for cards and gifts, and on Christmas Eve we made our way up to Hanley to do our shopping. The city was alive. There was a large tree in the Market Square ablaze with twinkling lights. The Salvation Army, swathed in scarves and fingerless gloves, red-cheeked and dripping noses, were blasting out their entire repertoire of carols. Two of their bonneted 'Sallies' were rattling their collection boxes discreetly to onlookers and passers by alike.

We just soaked up the air of excitement, the jostling crowds, the banter and the seasonal music. Everything was wonderful, that is until Ann discovered she had lost her purse, and, in it, her entire month's earnings of twelve pounds two shillings and sixpence. She saw all of her family's presents go sailing out of the window. I did everything to console her, eventually convincing her to report it to the police station as it may even have been found.

No, nothing that answered to the description had been handed in. The Policeman took all the necessary information and told Ann she would be contacted if it turned up. Ann was devastated. Her Christmas was finished. However, I cheered her up and we shared my money. Before long, as often happens with carefree youth, her enthusiasm and excitement returned,

lifted by the goodwill and light heartedness of the season. We wound our way back to town and bought our gifts with far less appetite than when we had started out.

We agreed not to say anything to Ann's Mum. It would have been unfair to do so. She had worked so diligently to give us all a good Christmas and was still at it when we returned. As was Ann's Dad, adding the last few finishing touches to the tree, polishing the fruit and backing up the fire before retiring to the Parlour and calling us all to gather round his piano and join in a few carols.

Christmas morning dawned with its unique blend of activity, energy, noise and excitement that marks it out from all the other three hundred and sixty-four days of the year. Ann's Mum had been up for hours, making the fire, heating the oven for the turkey, preparing the vegetables and steaming the pudding. The radiogram was already filling the house with the strains of Nat King Cole's Christmas Collection and the rafts of gift paper, sticky tape and packaging had been bundled into the coal house for future kindling. I arrived around eleven, flushed by the cold morning air and flakes of snow.

Somehow, amongst all the chaos, the entire family managed to come together in one room and wish each other a Merry Christmas over a glass of sherry. The Christmas Dinner, as always, was a huge success. Crackers had been pulled. Each joke having been read out to varying degrees of applause depending on its humour, subtlety or banality. The wine, spirits and bottles of beer were being consumed, and, by degrees, everyone was merrier and sillier as the day demands. Even Ann's Mum, whose laugh infected all of us to join in regardless, was relaxed now that the dinner was cooked and eaten with such relish and appetites replete.

Three loud raps on the front door interrupted all the jollity and high spirits. Filling the doorway with his considerable bulk and his helmet dripping with sleet, was the local 'bobby' wishing to speak to Ann. He told her that her purse had been handed in and could be collected from Hanley Police Station. She thanked him and we watched him mount his bike that he'd left propped up by the garden gate and pedal it away through a cloud of snow.

Ann was ecstatic. The whole unhappy saga was related to her Mum before taking ourselves to the Police Station. The same policeman was on the desk. Ann gave him a detailed description of everything that was in the purse, down to the last penny and her Cornish Pixie and lucky pebble. He returned the purse to Ann having given us directions to the lady who had found it. With his index finger waving at Ann he said: "A thank you might be in order."

We found her home in the middle of a row of terraced houses at the poorest end of town. It took a while to make ourselves heard. The door partially opened, and a small white-haired elderly lady appeared. Her forehead was deeply furrowed with worry lines, and there was a hint of anxiety in her deep set eyes. Ann explained the reason we'd called, and she nervously let us in. The chequered quarry floor was scrubbed clean. Most of it was covered in newspapers. The range radiated black leading and elbow grease. Her home was spotless, but with austerity, furnished to the point of inadequacy.

There was no-one else in the house, although it was clear from the photographs on the mantelpiece that she was a mother and a grandmother, but no-one was there to share Christmas with her. She was all alone.

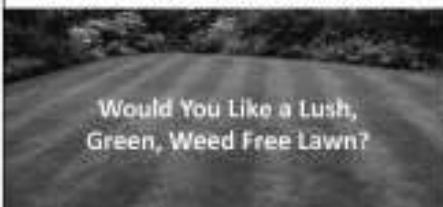


She accepted the ten bob note of thanks reluctantly and a great deal of humility. It was probably more than she'd had to spend on her entire Christmas. We left her there sitting in an old, dilapidated armchair clutching the note and staring into the fire with only a stone vase in the hearth containing two sprigs of Holly and a single stem of Honesty to keep her company, and to remind her that it was Christmas Day. It seemed appropriate somehow.

Christmas of 1959 was very special to us. One we shall never forget. We were married nine months later and, although our Christmases continued to be 'family-shared', this one became the foundation of many more in the future and impressed upon both of us the importance of integrity, morality and, most of all, **HONESTY**.



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