

# Ruby Country Benefice

The parishes of Ashwater, Beaworthy, Black Torrington,  
Clawton, Halwill, Highampton & Tetcott

## Bulletin

### February 2024



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*May the glory of the LORD endure forever;  
May the LORD rejoice in his works*

***Psalm 104:31***

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# FEBRUARY

Christmas seems such a long time ago, but this is the first chance to share our successes of the season.

All the Benefice's Carol Services (of which there were a fair few!) were well-attended and well received, a sure sign that our churches still hold a very valuable place at the heart of our communities.

Our Crib Service at Ashwater attracted adults and children alike and many took home a copy of the Scripture Union's book *The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas*, a take on the story of the nativity, told and acted out by attendees. In addition, the Christmas Tree festival brought many people into the church and allowed the church and community to share the season together.

A Christmas Craft evening at Halwill was poorly attended but greatly enjoyed with many pomanders made and a few sherries enjoyed!

And the candlelit Epiphany service at Luffincott was as wonderful as ever – with folk music and representation from the Churches Conservation Trust in attendance, it was a magical evening which packed out the church.

The Benefice Calendar (for those who have/had access) has run into some hiccups along the way but going forward we will be using the Google Calendar (not the outlook one) – Val is in the process of sorting this out.

Looking ahead, Sophie West, the Diocesan Pastoral organiser will be visiting us on **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30pm at Halwill Baptist Hall** in Halwill Junction. This is to look at possible options for simplifying our organisational working and to look at our options in terms of Mission Community structure as well. The meeting is open to all who wish to attend but it is hoped that there will be at least one representative from each church (except those where this has already been addressed).

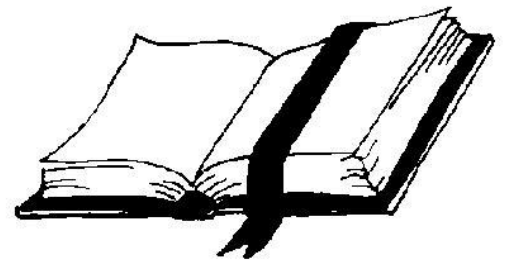
# PHOTOS FROM OUR SERVICES AND EVENTS



Top: decorated font and pomanders made at the craft evening, Halwill.  
Middle: crib scene as placed by the children at Ashwater during the crib service.  
Bottom: Epiphany service at Luffincott.



# Lectionary Readings for February 2024



<p><b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b> (Second Sunday before Lent)</p> <p>Proverbs 8: 1, 22 – 31 Psalm 104: 26 – end Colossians 1: 15 – 20 John 1: 1 – 14</p> <p><b>Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill, Tetcott</b></p>	<p><b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b> (Sunday next before Lent)</p> <p>2 Kings 2: 1 – 12 Psalm 50: 1 – 6 2 Corinthians 4: 3 – 6 Mark 9: 2 – 9</p> <p><b>Services at Beaworthy, Black Torrington, Clawton</b></p>	<p><b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b> (First Sunday of Lent)</p> <p>Genesis 9: 8 – 17 Psalm 25: 1 – 9 1 Peter 3: 18 – end Mark 1: 9 – 15</p> <p><b>Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup></b> (Second Sunday of Lent)</p> <p>Genesis 17: 1 – 7, 15 – 16 Psalm 22: 23 – end Romans 4: 13 – end Mark 8: 31 – end</p> <p><b>Services at Beaworthy, Clawton</b></p>		

*To help you prepare for one of our services or to  
read at home*

## Ruby Country Benefice Services for February 2024

<b>Friday 2<sup>nd</sup></b> Candlemas	6:30pm	Beaworthy	Taize with candles
<b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	9:30am	Ashwater	Morning Service
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent	11am	Black Torrington	Holy Communion
	11am	Halwill	Morning Service
	5:30pm 6pm	Tetcott	Tea Evening Service
<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	11am	Black Torrington	Café Church
Sunday before Lent	11am	Clawton	Holy Communion
	5pm	Beaworthy	BCP Evening Prayer
<b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup></b> Ash Wednesday	10am	Black Torrington	Holy Communion with Ashes
	6:30pm	Beaworthy	Holy Communion with Ashes
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	9:30am	Ashwater	Holy Communion
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent	11am	Black Torrington	Morning Prayer
	11am	Halwill	Holy Communion
<b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	11am	Beaworthy	Holy Communion
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent	11am	Clawton	United Service

Weekly – all welcome from the benefice

<b>Wednesday</b>	10am	Black Torrington	Morning Prayer
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# Jemima Mary NILES

## 6<sup>th</sup> June 1860 – 6<sup>th</sup> February 1910

This month's grave is in the graveyard at St Peter Ad Vincula at Ashwater and – spoiler alert – it's a bit of an Ashwater graves two-for-one.



It caught my eye, firstly as the only “NILES” grave in Ashwater (which made me think ‘how did she come to be here?’ and secondly the somewhat striking inscription:

IN  
AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE  
OF  
JEMIMA MARY NILES  
OF HIGHER LARKWORTHY IN THIS  
PARISH  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
FEBRUARY 6<sup>TH</sup> 1910  
AGED 48 YEARS.

--  
DEATH TO ME SHORT WARNING GAVE  
THEREFORE BE CAREFUL HOW YOU LIVE

--  
So, naturally, I wanted to find out more about her!

Jemima NILES was born to William NILES and Ann GILLARD on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1860 at Treclero in the parish of Advent, near Camelford, Cornwall. Her parents had married in 1847, some 13 years before her birth but she was their

only child.

Her father William was from Blisland on Bodmin Moor, and he was baptised 11<sup>th</sup> June 1809, the son of George NILES and Catherine (nee JEWELL).

Jemima spent most of her life in the parish of Advent. She was baptised at St. Adwenna's church, Advent on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1860, the same church as her mother was baptised in.

Her mother Ann GILLARD was a native of Advent parish. Baptised in 1816, Ann was one of several children of George and Mary GILLARD (nee PETHICK).

In the 1871 Census, Jemima NILES is listed as a 10-year-old scholar, living at Advent, Cornwall.

She is living with her father William, aged 60 who is a farmer and miller, her mother Ann (55) and their miller/servant Thomas Harris, (19) from Tintagel.

The 1881 census is much the same – they are living at Advent. Jemima is listed as 'farmers daughter' alongside her father as a farmer of 15 acres, and Ann, her mother. By this time, they do not have a servant.

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1883, William Niles dies and is buried at St. Adwenna. So by the 1891 census, 30 year old Jemima is living with her widowed 74 year old mother at Tresinney, the hamlet near Advent. Her uncle William GILLARD (aged 70) is also living with them, perhaps due to his ill health, or to help financially.

William GILLARD dies 13<sup>th</sup> July 1894 and is buried at St. Adwenna, so by the time of the 1901 census, it is just Jemima and her 84 year old mother, who is listed as "living on her own means." In this census, instead of being referred to as "Jemima", she is going by her middle name, Mary. They are also living at Lanteglos by Camelford. This is about the same distance from Camelford as Tresinney, but – in modern day standards – the other side of the A39. This is the last census we find either of the women in. Ann NILES dies just over seven months later on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1901 and is buried alongside her husband and family at St. Adwenna.



At some time between 1901 and 1910 we know Jemima moves to Higher Larkworthy in Ashwater and is buried at St Peter's. Jemima's death certificate reveals that she had a brain tumour and paralysis of her right side for three months prior to her death – a very short illness indeed.

Her death was registered by Thomas STEPHENS, who also lived at Higher Larkworthy. Stranger still, Thomas and his wife Elizabeth were named as executors or beneficiaries in Jemima's will. So, who were Elizabeth and Thomas to Jemima?



The grave of William and Ann NILES at St. Adwenna, Advent photo by [Cass](#) on Findagrave

Jemima was an only child who never married and spent all except the last eight years of her life living with her mother. What made her move from Advent where she had extended family and very deep roots to Ashwater?

Jemima Mary Niles	Female 74 <sup>1/2</sup>	48 Years	Spinster, of Independent means. 37 <sup>0</sup> Daughter of William Niles, Farmer, deceased.	Cerebral tumour 3 months with right hemiplegia. Certified by Charles G. Gibson M.B.C.M.	Thomas Stephens Occupier, Present at the death Higher Larkworthy Ashwater
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From the death certificate of Jemima Mary NILES, 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 1910 at Higher Larkworthy, Ashwater  
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**Elizabeth STEPHENS**  
**(nee HAYNE)**  
**1849 – 19<sup>th</sup> November 1915**



Above is a photo of Elizabeth (and her husband Thomas) STEPHENS' grave at St Peter ad Vincula, Ashwater.

Elizabeth HAYNE was born in 1848 at Davidstow, Cornwall where she lived until sometime between 1901 and 1911. She married her husband Thomas STEPHENS of Tregonetha, St Wenn, Cornwall at Davidstow on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1885.

Elizabeth was the daughter of Gerrance HAYNE (born 1812 at Egloskerry)

And his wife Betsy GILLARD of Advent. Betsy was the younger sister of Jemima's mother Ann; the child in between Ann and William who were living together in 1891.

Therefore, Elizabeth STEPHENS is the older cousin of Jemima NILES.

Thomas STEPHENS, however, was Elizabeth's second marriage. Previously, she was married to William HAM, who was born at St. Breward, Cornwall. They married in on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1864 at Davidstow and had seven children; Lionel Hayne (1865), William Gerrance (1865), Mary Elizabeth (1869), Kate Ellen (1870), Laura Annie (1872), Philip (1874) and Emily Grace (1876). When they lived at Davidstow, he was a farmer of 80 Acres and an Innkeeper. Her children of this marriage were Lionel HAM 1865, Laura Annie HAM 1872, Philip HAM 1874 and Emily Grace HAM 1876.

William died on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1882, aged 42, and he is buried at Davidstow. She married Thomas three years later.

We will look a little more at Elizabeth's life as part of the STEPHENS family a little later, but we will focus on her life at Ashwater the year after her cousin's death first.

One cannot be sure of how exactly Jemima came to be in the STEPHENS household but the 1911 census can provide a potential insight.

In 1911, at Higher Larkworthy, Ashwater, Thomas STEPHENS (52) is living with his wife Elizabeth (62). Thomas is listed as a farmer.

They are living alongside their son Frederick (23) and Vernon (21) (a further son, Frank was born in 1893 but died a year later).

Alongside them are Georgina STEPHENS, an 18-year-old niece whose occupation is "Dairy work", and two nephews – Frank and William JENKIN (aged 27 and 17) who are listed as carpenters.

It seems the STEPHENS family took in other family members, and going by the stone they gave Jemima, regarded their family very highly too.

Elizabeth died only a few short years after her cousin, on 19<sup>th</sup> November

1915 at Higher Larkworthy. Her cause of death was stomach cancer (8 months) – another relatively short illness.

Elizabeth was buried at Ashwater, and her parents lie in the graveyard at the church of St. David, Davidstow.

<i>Nineteenth November 1915 Higher Larkworthy Ashwater RD.</i>	<i>Elizabeth Stephens</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>64 Years</i>	<i>Wife of Thomas Brenton Stephens, Farmer</i>	<i>(1) Cancer of stomach 8 months. Certified by Charles G. Gibson M.D. M.B.C.M.</i>
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From the death certificate of Elizabeth STEPHENS  
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## Thomas Brenton STEPHENS 1858 – 23 June 1938

Elizabeth's husband Thomas was born in the Cornish village of Tregonetha in the parish of St. Wenn.

He was the second (and youngest) son of William STEPHENS and Mary BRENTON, both natives of St. Wenn, and the fourth of their eight children.

In the 1881 census he is living at Treneglos (roughly between Launceston and Davidstow) as a carpenter's apprentice – presumably to his brother-in-law George JENKIN who he is living in the household of. George married Thomas's older sister Sarah. Sarah and George JENKIN are the parents of Frank and William who Thomas and his wife would go on to take in by the time of the 1911 census.

In 1885, he marries Elizabeth HAM (previously HAYNE) and they are next seen in the 1891 census living at Davidstow with their sons Vernon and Thomas STEPHENS, and three children from Elizabeth's first marriage; Laura, Philip and Emily. At the time of the 1901 census, they are still at Davidstow with Thomas and William, but only Emily remains with them.

By 1911, all of the children from Elizabeth's first marriage have gone their own way.

According to Thomas's obituary in the West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser (Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July 1938), the STEPHENS family arrived at Larkworthy in about 1905 and from this time to 1912 he was a sidesperson at the church. From 1912 until his death, he held the position of "nominated rector's warden" or churchwarden, and was such a churchgoing man that he was at the service on the Sunday before his death.

The newspaper goes on to state how his death was a loss not just to the Church but to the community, as he was chairman of the Ashwater branch of the Conservative and Unionist Association, chairman of the Market Committee, was a keen follower of the South Tetcott Hounds and served a term on Holsworthy Urban District Council.

Such was the loss to the community that a week after his funeral, a memorial service was held the following Sunday where the organist (Mr. L MAY) played the "Dead March" and muffled peals were rung.

In the list of mourners are many cousins and sisters, but Mrs. Emily WICKETT and Mrs. Laura KNEEBONE are listed as daughters in attendance. Step-children who became full daughters to him.

His bearers were Richard MOON, Robert CLIFTON, John BURNETT, Richard SPRY, William COLE and John HART – all six of these men are now interred at St. Peter's, Ashwater, too.

One cannot be sure exactly how or why the STEPHENS or NILES family came to reside this side of the Tamar, but the love and respect of their family can be seen once again, over one hundred years after the cousins passed.

Kay Napier  
January 2024

Sources:

<https://www.familysearch.org>

<https://www.findagrave.com>

<https://www.camelallenchurches.org.uk/st-adwenna/>

[https://st-issey-folk.co.uk/opc/getperson.php?personID=I24610&tree=St\\_Issey\\_Folk](https://st-issey-folk.co.uk/opc/getperson.php?personID=I24610&tree=St_Issey_Folk)

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000349/19380721/003/0003?browse%20=%20false>



**DEADLINE**



Please get your posters, news, pictures, articles, details of services, fundraisers or any other submissions in **by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month** to feature in the next month's Bulletin

email [rubbybulletin@gmail.com](mailto:rubbybulletin@gmail.com) or call 01409 221 321



## Morning Prayer

Every Wednesday

St Mary's Church, Black Torrington

10am

*All welcome*



**Find us on Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/rubybenefice](http://www.facebook.com/rubybenefice)

## Beaworthy Church



Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> February <b>Candlemas</b>		Beaworthy	6.30pm Taize with Candles
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St Albans Beaworthy is celebrating Candlemas on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 6.30pm. This Festival marks the return of light, a symbol of protection and prosperity and commemorates the presentation of Jesus at the Temple of Jerusalem, referring to him as the light of the people of Israel.

We thought that a simple and reflective service led by Richard Prior would be appropriate. Taizé Prayer is evening prayer for all Christian faiths. It is a simple, meditative form of worship, calling us to dwell deeply on Christ's presence around and within us. Mantra songs (like "Jesus, Remember Me"), prayerful silence, and short readings guide the focus of the prayer in a candle-lit environment.

It's a first for Beaworthy and we invite you to join us in the reflection and music. Everyone is welcome.

Sandra Ward  
PCC Secretary

# Black Torrington Church

## USED POSTAGE STAMPS

St Mary's Church have a basket in the back of the Church to collect used postage stamps which go to the charity Leukemia Research.

Please do save your stamps.



### 'Handbells like dogs aren't just for Christmas'

St.Mary's Ruby Ringers were busy before Christmas, practising in readiness for visits being made out into the local community; to Burdon Grange, West Heanton, The Macular Group lunch at Bideford and Fairfield Country Rest Home. At St Mary's we played for November café Church, for our carol service and Highampton's.

Like the title of this report, handbells aren't just for Christmas and we are always pleased to hear from people who would like us to deliver joy and fun to their group.

We have a lot of joy, fun and laughter in our weekly practice sessions, with plenty to do in the New Year including help with church fund raising [we play St Mary's bells].

Why not come and join us, New Year, new hobby, give it a try. Contact Shirley for a chat. We start our practices on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January, in church, at the new time of 11.00- 12.30.





## Black Torrington Tower Bell Ringers

Update from Historical Bell Ringers of Black Torrington.

We ring at Inwardleigh on a Monday evening, but will be visiting Black Torrington on the following dates, Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January, Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February, Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February, Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March. All skills welcome.

Please contact Sharn Kent for further information 07341832401 or come along to the Church on one of the dates above.

**Tetcott Church**



# Big Breakfast

Saturday 10th February

from 9am till 11am

in the Arscott hall Tetcott

adults £10 children £5

In aid of Tetcott Church

**Senior Clergy Reflection from Rev'd Claire Reynolds,**  
**Curate in Brixham Mission Community and Diocesan Advisor for**  
**Disabilities and Additional Needs**

February is the month when it's all about love!

The shops will be full of cards for Valentines Day - we get to celebrate, thank, and declare our love to someone we know. There'll be boxes of chocolates and bunches of flowers, 'date nights' and meals out.

However, St Valentine's story isn't about romantic love. A Saint in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Valentine's story comes to prominence when, under house arrest of Judge Asterius he prays for healing for the Judge's daughter. She is healed, and the Judge, his family and 44 members of his household are baptised. Then under Claudius II he is again arrested for preaching the Gospel and martyred in 269AD.

It's only an anecdote of a letter written to Judge Asterius' daughter shortly before his death, that gives his story any link with romantic love. Far more prominent in his story is his love of the good news that Jesus had come to seek and save the lost. God expresses his unconditional love for us through the life death and resurrection of Jesus. Valentine's commitment was to tell of this sacrificial '*agape*' love of God as far and as wide as he could, no matter the cost.

1 Corinthians 13 is all about love. The word for love used here is also '*agape*' (in the original Greek). It's an active love, not just a feeling. The passage reminds us that without this love, life loses its meaning and shine; we become simply a resounding gong or clanging cymbal. This love is our response to God's saving work in Jesus. '*Agape*' love is expressed in our lives through loving God and loving our neighbours as ourselves.

The life of St Valentine challenges us that a life of love is the way of the cross. But his impact on Judge Asterius and his family encourages us that a life of love means that others can come to know God's love for them. "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." (*John 15:13*)

Many people haven't yet heard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and of God's love for them. Where are we, as churches and as individuals, being called to express God's love today?

**Rev'd Claire Reynolds**

## Worried about a Child or Vulnerable Adult?

Please speak to your Parish Safeguarding Representative if you have any concerns for the well-being of a child or adult, or about the behaviour of someone towards a child or adult.

Your Parish Safeguarding Representative is:

**Val Letheren** – [rubycountry.beneficeadmin@btinternet.com](mailto:rubbycountry.beneficeadmin@btinternet.com) – 07484 880 770

If you cannot reach your Parish Safeguarding Representative, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team:

**Costa Nassaris** - Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – 01392 294969 – 07809 339502  
[costa.nassaris@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:costa.nassaris@exeter.anglican.org)

**James May** – Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – 01392 345910 – 07889 543646  
[james.may@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:james.may@exeter.anglican.org)

**Rebecca Lane** – Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser- 01392 294975 - 07889542640  
[Rebecca.lane@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:Rebecca.lane@exeter.anglican.org)

For general enquiries – [SafeguardingEnquiry@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:SafeguardingEnquiry@exeter.anglican.org)

### IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM

If you believe someone is at immediate risk of harm or that a crime has been committed, dial **999**

If you have serious concerns about an individual's well-being, you should contact the relevant agencies:

#### Concerns about Children

Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): **0345 155 1071**

#### Concerns about Adults

Devon – Care Direct: **0345 155 1007**

#### Domestic Abuse

Devon Help Line for professionals and individuals: **0345 155 1074**

#### Rape Crisis

National: **0808 802 9999** Devon and Torbay: **01392 204174**

Please notify your safeguarding Representative and/or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team after contacting any of these agencies.

# Ruby Country Benefice

RUBY PEOPLE WORSHIPPING IN GOD'S COUNTRY

St. Peter Ad Vincula, Ashwater EX21 5EY

St. Alban, Beaworthy EX21 5AB

St. Mary's, Black Torrington EX21 5PU

St. Leonard, Clawton EX22 6PS

St. Peter & St. James, Halwill EX21 5UH

Holy Cross, Highampton EX21 5LE

Holy Cross, Tetcott EX22 6QZ



**Revd. Dr. Paul Fitzpatrick, Rector**

[vicar-rubycountry@outlook.com](mailto:vicar-rubycountry@outlook.com)