

Ruby Country Benefice

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

Bulletin March 2026



*"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope"*

Psalm 131:5 (ESV)



February 2026

23rd

Funeral of Brenda CHANTLER
(St. Leonard's, Clawton)

CONTACTS

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Ashwater safeguarding@ashwaterparishchurch.com

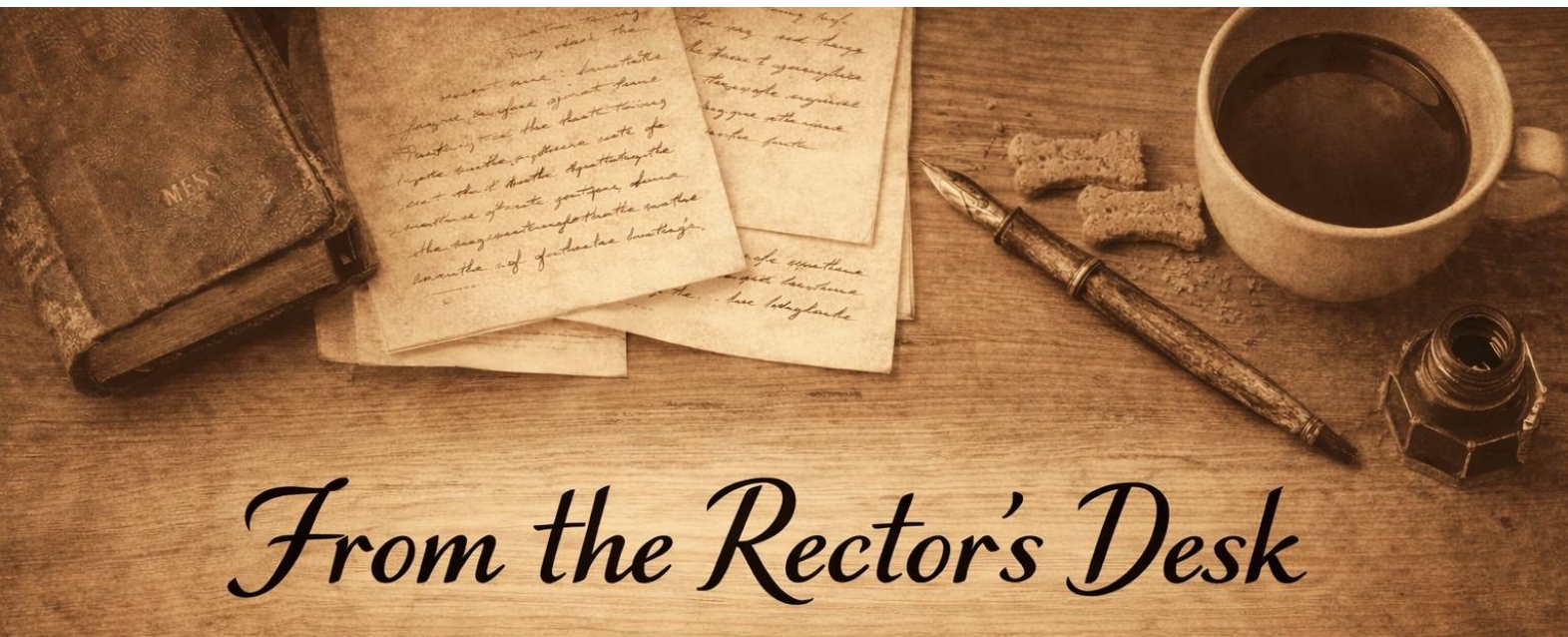
Beaworthy

Tetcott Sharon Wonnacott 07980 989 262

Holywell Joint Council Val Letheren 07484 880 770

From the Parish Registers image (pg. 2) © Parish Pump,
Cover image: Interior of St. Lawrence, Sheepwash © Kay Napier 21/2/26
Pg. 8, Hut image generated using ChatGPT
WYLLIE images © Kay Napier unless specified otherwise.
Thanks to Revd. Dr. Paul Fitzpatrick, Val Letheren and Sandra Ward
for their contributions.





From the Rector's Desk

March

Still raining, Henry sulking in his bed because he was disobedient. Steaming coffee sits as I watch the world slowly changing.

I am writing this in advance as I am shortly off to study Christian Ethics contextualised across the UK. A very close friend said to me that I might be the only Priest he was ever known who actually used a sabbatical to study; I have always been a bit 'old school'.

I will be visiting the Dean of Bristol Cathedral, an Oxford Professor, Bath Abbey and a few days in London looking at Lambeth Palace library and (if they ever reply to my emails), Westminster Abbey. Lots of reading and reflecting and preparing myself for the year ahead and some big decisions.

There is a lot happening in the benefice as well, with Mission Action Plans, Deanery discussions, Community Chaplaincy, Benefice management, building projects, massive amounts of weddings to

plan, an overfull diary and the burning desire to grow God's people in this place.

Lent approaches and with it a purple time to slow down, reflect and pray deeply. Lent is not a time to give things up (except bad habits), it is hollow time, a hallowed time, a time to empty and a time to find and fill again; less doing, more being, a holy time.

Before you all think that I have gone all airy-fairy (as my dad used to say) I want to ground this a little. I have noticed recently how tired people seem, the long January-February drain (and rain) is telling, a little more grumpiness sometimes perhaps? Lent is perfectly timed for the eruption of spring, the return of swallows and cuckoos and the emergence of daffodils. Easter eggs and the resurrection still to come, but first we have six weeks to step back, open ourselves to God's love and presence and rest – if only a little.

In thirty years of ministry, I have not known a more generous, hardworking, no nonsense, God centred set of people. We don't wave our arms in the air and shout about our achievements but our Benefice is growing, the work gets done and Christ lives in this place. **You** did that, all of it. With the hustle and bustle and job lists all ticked, let's not forget (as Val preached this morning), to take some down time, some space to reflect and relax. Jesus did, and does, and so did his disciples, and if its good enough for them....

Thank you all- for **ALL** you do.

Paul.

March Services 2026

1ST

ASHWATER MORNING WORSHIP
BLACK TORRINGTON HOLY COMMUNION
HALWILL MORNING WORSHIP
TETCOTT SERVICE

8TH

BLACK TORRINGTON CAFE CHURCH
CLAWTON HOLY COMMUNION
4:30PM BEAWORTHY EVENSONG

15TH

ASHWATER HOLY COMMUNION
BLACK TORRINGTON MORNING PRAYER
HALWILL HOLY COMMUNION

MOTHERING SUNDAY

22ND

BEAWORTHY HOLY COMMUNION
CLAWTON UNITED SERVICE
6PM BENEFICE INFORMAL BIBLE STUDY AT
BLACK TORRINGTON

29TH

PALM SUNDAY

BENEFICE SERVICE AT
BLACK TORRINGTON



Unless specified otherwise,

Services at

Ashwater begin 9:30am

Black Torrington.

Beaworthy, Clawton and

Halwill start at 11am

and Tetcott 5:30pm tea for
a 6pm Service.

Benefice Morning Prayer is

10am every WEDNESDAY

at St. Mary's Church,

Black Torrington

For more information on regular and occasional services,
contact the benefice administrator on 07484 880 770
or email: rubycountry.beneficeadmin@btinternet.com



TAKE WHAT YOU NEED



LOVE
HOPE
FAITH
UNDERSTANDING
ENCOURAGEMENT
PATIENCE
COURAGE
PEACE
PASSION
HEALING
STRENGTH
BEAUTY
FREEDOM

Ruby Country Benefice

Lectionary Readings

March 2026

Sun 1st

2nd Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 121

**Romans 4:1-5,
13-17**

John 3:1-17

Services at:

Ashwater, Black
Torrington, Halwill,
Tetcott

Sun 8th

3rd Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

**Romans 5:1-11
John 4:5-42**

Services at:

Beaworthy Black
Torrington, Clawton

Sun 15th

Mothering Sunday

**Readings to be
confirmed**

Services at:

Ashwater, Black
Torrington, Halwill,

Sun 22nd

5th Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

Services at:

Beaworthy Black
Torrington, Clawton

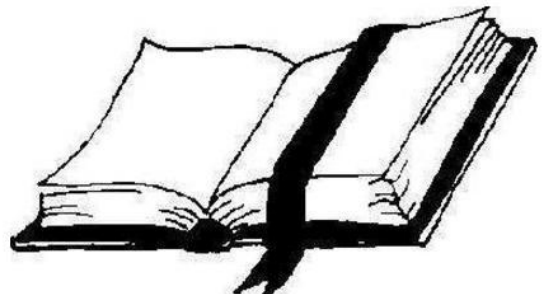
Sun 29th

Palm Sunday

**Readings to be
confirmed**

Benefice service at

Black Torrington





From the Bulletin Editor.

Firstly, thank you for your contributions, which always shape our Bulletin. Please make sure you send submissions to rubycbulletin@gmail.com

Or if you are not in email contact, please you're your submission onto your churchwarden in good time for passing along. Anything not sent to the above email **will not** get into the publication.

Work begins on the bulletin on the 15th of each month, so please get submissions in BY THE FIFTEENTH.

This month you might notice a stylistic change in, among other things, the service list and lectionary. Having moved to a different version of Microsoft Word, things weren't working well due to the transfer. With February being a shorter month, I had less time to work around it and it was quicker to "produce fresh". I am open to feedback though and if the old version was preferred, I can take time in the next couple of months to recreate the format. Please do let me know your thoughts.

Thank you.

20
26

MARCH

RUBY BENEFICE

MARCH

16

HOLYWELL JOINT
COUNCIL
@ HALWILL CHURCH

MARCH

17

ASHWATER
@ CHURCH

MARCH

17

BEAWORTHY
@ CHURCH

MARCH

18

TETCOTT
@ CHURCH

For times and more information
contact your churchwarden or see
info posted to your church door

11AM
SUNDAY 8TH MARCH 2026

ST MARYS, BLACK TORRINGTON



Cafe Church

Theme: Jacob's Well

St Marys Black Torrington is part of the Ruby, Holywell
Joint Council, Charity No. 1216130

St Alban's entry for March Bulletin

APCM: Like all our Benefice churches, we are gearing up to consider any refreshment needed to our Electoral Roll; ensuring our Accounts are approved and preparing all the reports needed for the Annual Parish Church Meeting. Ours is being held in the church on Tuesday, 17th March at 7.30pm.

On **refurbishment**, the skirting around the altar area has been completed. All that remains now is some making good and touching up of the adjacent plaster/paintwork. And the final design of the universal frontal should be confirmed by the end of March.

Grants for repair and restoration: Disturbing news on Government grants for restoration / refurbishment have just been shared in the National Churches Trust Newsletter. The scheme has been a lifeline for historic churches, saving them 20 percent on repair costs by allowing them to claim back VAT. On the 22 January 2026, the UK Government confirmed the end of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. This will be replaced by a new capital funding scheme for listed places of worship called the Places of Worship Renewal Fund. The fund will have an allowance of £92m to cover 4 years for all churches in England. This will work out at £23 million per year. In 2025/2026 the budget for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme was £23 million per year. The scheme will still be a fund for all listed places of worship, so churches, chapels, meeting houses and cathedrals as well as synagogues, temples and mosques. The funding will be a drop in real terms, as it will not rise with inflation. (Note that in 2024/2025 the budget was £42 million.). From 1 April 2026, all repairs and maintenance that take place now at any listed place of worship will be subject to the full VAT costs at 20% The National Churches Trust are unsure if VAT costs will be able to be claimed back from the scheme

The mechanism, for applications is still to be clarified. It will be interesting to see any guidance from the Diocese but this can't be expected for some considerable time.

Future events: At the time of writing, we're looking forward to Archdeacon Verena celebrating Holy Communion with us on 22nd February, the 1st Sunday in Lent and we're exploring the possibility of a summer Plantsman talk. Watch this space! **Sandra Ward**,
PCC secretary , St Alban's Beaworthy

ST. MARY'S RUBY PUZZLERS

Meet fellow puzzlers, puzzle,
chat, donate, loan and borrow!

EVERY 3RD WEDNESDAY

11AM-12:30PM



Tea and  coffee available

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BLACK TORRINGTON

Parson Jack Russell

Art, Craft & Photography Exhibition



**June 12th -15th
2026**

**St Mary's Church,
Black Torrington**

For more details:

PJR Exhibition

Little Acorns, Burdon Lane,
Highampton, Beaworthy EX21 5LX
Phone: 07484880770

val.letheren@btinternet.com





GDPR

General Data Protection Regulation.

This came in to effect in the UK back in May 2018. It replaced the law on data protection (The Data Protection Act 1998) and it gives individuals more rights and protection in how their personal data is used by organisations. Our Churches must comply with its requirements, just like any other charity or organisation.

Underlying Principles.

- Will be **processed** lawfully, fairly and transparently.
- Is only used for a specific processing purpose that the **data subject** has been made aware of and no other, without further consent.
- Collected on a data subject should be “adequate, relevant and limited”. i.e only the minimum amount of data should be kept for specific processing.

- Must be “accurate and where necessary kept up to date”.
- Should not be stored for longer than is necessary, and that storage is safe and secure.

What does this mean for YOU!

- If you receive the Grapevine and the Bulletin, only two people have your email address and they are not permitted to use it for any other purpose. You may from time to time receive other items with the weekly Grapevine

If you are reading this as a hard copy and would like to receive it by email, please send your email to rubycountry.beneficeadmin@btinternet.com

- If you are on the Joint Council/PCC of your church, then we hold more information and it is shared with other in the same position as you. It is not permitted to be passed on to anyone outside of the Joint Council/PCC without your permission. It is only held for “Church” purposes.
- If you are a member of the congregation of your church and give your data for the purpose of an activity within that church. It can not to be passed on without your permission.

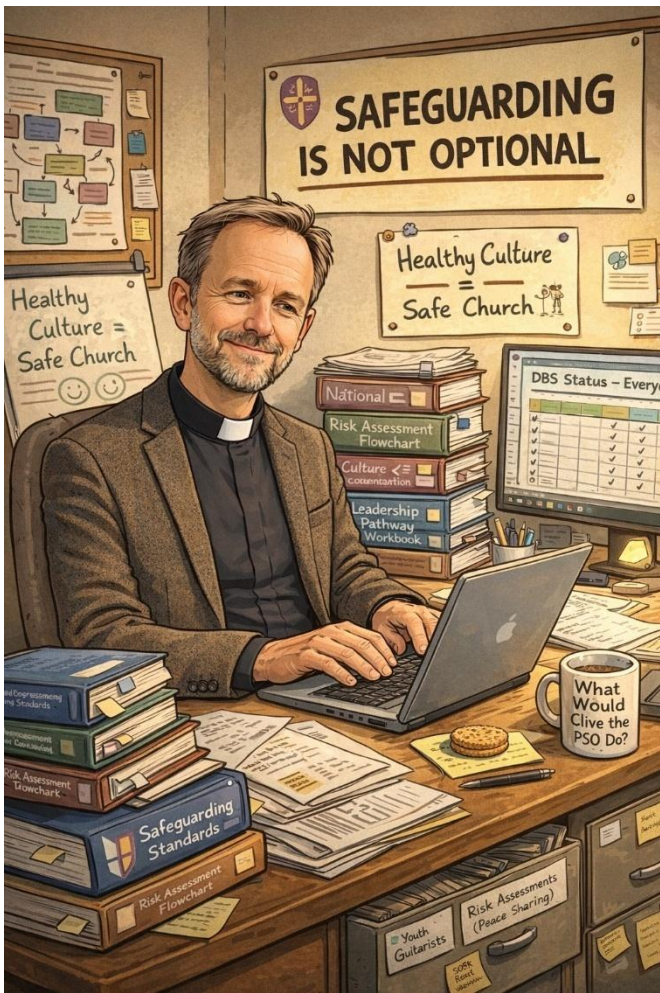
What does this look like in Practice?

- If you wish not to receive either the Bulletin or grapevine any longer, just email the person who sent it out to you and they will delete your details from the list and inform the other holder of the list.
- If you are to withdraw from the Joint Council/ PCC, upon point of resignation, communication will cease and your information as a member will be removed from the data base for that role and personal information deleted as soon as practicably possible.
- No one who holds your data for a church purpose is permitted to pass it on to anyone else without your permission, unless it is for an immediate and necessary church purpose (e.g. putting a secretary in touch with another benefice parishes secretary for assistance or information sharing).
- If you send a notice/poster for the Bulletin with your data on it, you are giving permission for it to go out in print.

Please remember that both the Bulletin and the Grapevine go onto the website “A Church near You,” and are available freely online.

You go nowhere by accident.
Wherever you go, God is sending you there.
Wherever you are, God has put you there.
He has a purpose in your being there.
Christ, who indwells in you, has something He
wants to do through you, wherever you are.
Believe this, and go in His grace, and love and
power.

Rev. Dr. Richard C. Halverson's Benediction
U.S. Senate Chaplain from 1981 to 1994
Photo by [Francisco Delgado](#) on [Unsplash](#)



St Faithful's Havnot is a fictional parish, imagined by a real-life Church of England priest. It reflects familiar church cultures, observed with affection and humour, in the belief that theology still has something to say.

SAFEGUARDING IS NOT OPTIONAL (BUT BISCUITS HELP)

From the Study (With Biscuits)
by Rev Dr Tim Keen

I have today attended Safeguarding Leadership Training.

Four hours. Two flipcharts. One PowerPoint presentation in a shade of diocesan mauve that can only be described as penitential.

Now, before I say anything else, let me be absolutely clear: safeguarding MATTERS. It matters more than almost anything else we do. It matters more than vestment colours, more than the correct deployment of incense, more even than the Great Coffee Rota Dispute of 2019. If the Church cannot be safe for the vulnerable – children, survivors of abuse, those at risk, those who carry scars invisible and visible – then we deserve to close the doors and turn St Faithful's into a particularly draughty museum.

So yes. We go. We attend. We listen. We learn again what we already know. But my word.

The day began with introductions. “Share your name, your role, and one word that describes how you feel about safeguarding.”

There were offerings such as “important”, “essential”, “complex”, and one slightly alarming “bewildered”. I offered “non-negotiable”, which sounded suitably leadership-adjacent while concealing the fact that I was calculating how many biscuits one is morally permitted before appearing greedy.

We spent a good portion of the morning discussing “parish safeguarding culture”. This is, apparently, the atmosphere in which safeguarding either flourishes or withers. It was compared (with admirable persistence) to gardening. You cannot simply plant a policy and expect roses. You must water, weed, prune, and occasionally remove something deeply embedded that has been there since 1973 and insists on being called “tradition”.

There was much talk of “healthy challenge”. I found myself nodding vigorously, because I have discovered over the years that the most dangerous sentence in church life is not “We’ve run out of hymn books,” but “We’ve always done it this way.” Safeguarding thrives in sunlight. It does not do well in cupboards.

We then arrived at the mysteriously titled “Saving Graces”. I confess I braced myself for a brief theological diversion involving sacramental metaphors. Alas, it was a framework. There are always frameworks. This one involved virtues, behaviours, and the sort of laminated card that makes you feel you are about to board a particularly serious aeroplane.

Around me sat newly appointed churchwardens and Parish Safeguarding Officers, for whom safeguarding is less a garden and

more an undiscovered continent populated by acronyms. One gentleman, retired some years ago from what I suspect was an engineering background, approached each discussion point with the expression of a man attempting to bump-start a lawnmower that has not been used since the Millennium. His contributions were earnest, slightly delayed, and always began with “In my day...”

And yet – and this is important – he was trying. They all were.

Risk management followed. We examined scenarios. We asked what we would do if X happened during Y, involving Z and a cup of tea. Much of this is bread-and-butter for incumbents. We live in the land of risk assessments. We dream in flowcharts. Somewhere in my filing cabinet is a document assessing the theological hazards of the Advent candle near the curtain.

But what struck me – between the second and third chocolate hobnob – was that for some in the room this was not repetitive. It was revelatory. The realisation that safeguarding is not merely about responding to disaster, certainly not about saving the church's (rightly tarnished) reputation, but about shaping positive, caring culture. That it is not suspicion, but care. Not paranoia, but love with its sleeves rolled up.

There was a moment – and I record this without irony – when a newly minted churchwarden said quietly, “I hadn’t realised how much responsibility we carry.” The room shifted slightly. Less irksome. More human.

Because here is the thing. We may find the repetition tiresome. We may feel that four hours is a long time to rehearse what many of us could recite backwards. We may even harbour the occasional uncharitable thought about diocesan stationery choices.

But the repetition is the point.

Culture is not built in a single inspiring sermon. It is built in policies revisited, in training attended, in questions asked again. It is built when someone new to office discovers that this is not optional. That safeguarding is not an administrative hoop but a moral commitment.

If we are bored, so be it. Better boredom than complacency. Better a roomful of clergy suppressing sighs than a parish where no one knows what to do, or how to care well, when someone discloses something horrific.

By the end, we were invited to write down one action we would take back to our parish. I resisted the temptation to write, “Re-stock biscuit tin.” Instead, I wrote: “Keep talking about culture.”

Because policies sit in folders. Culture lives in people. And the Church – for all its quirks, committees, and occasionally struggling cognitive engines – must be a place where the vulnerable are not managed, but cherished.

So yes. I will go again in three years. I will smile sweetly at diocesan PowerPoints. I will discuss frameworks. I will smile kindly at the retired engineer.

And I will remember that safeguarding is not a bureaucratic imposition. It is what love looks like when it is properly organised.

Tim

Revd Dr Tim Keen - Vicar

Any resemblance in this article to the training session attended today by Canon Tom Kennar is purely co-incidental.

www.facebook.com/stfaithfulshavnot



St Mary's, Black Torrington

Morning Prayer

Every Wednesday

10am

ST MARY'S RUBY RINGERS



Weekly Handbell Ringing
Tuesday afternoons at St.
Mary's, Black Torrington
2:15pm setup
2:30pm – 4:30pm



Church Tower Bell Ringing
Wednesday evenings
6:30pm – 8:30pm
1st Wednesday – Langtree
2nd Wed. – Black Torrington
3rd Wed. – Shebbear
4th Wed. – Black Torrington
5th Wed. – Roaming!



Arthur Moore WYLLIE

1862 – 1936

This past month while Paul has been away on sabbatical, I've been bestowed with a responsible job; checking the health and safety of Highampton Churchyard (with special permission and everything), in line with the insurance requirements.

I must preface this article with the fact that parts of the churchyard (surrounding the church building itself) are very dangerous, so please heed the keep out signs. I was here with Diocesan permission, and knew the risks.

While poking trees and wobbling gravestones (my most hated of jobs), I had the absolute delight of getting to know some long-term residents, stopping to read the names, trace the letters with my fingers and honour the memories (the best bit of the job).

I passed this stone two weeks running, wondering who was beneath the large cross and tufted grass mound. On my third visit, I pulled the turf aside and read the name:



**“IN MEMORY OF / ARTHUR MOORE WYLLIE / VICAR OF SHEEPWASH
1914-1936 / RIP”**

(picture colour corrected for visibility)

So, I not only discovered Revd. WYLLIE in the churchyard, but I partially had to dig him out. So I just had to discover for a third time!

Arthur was the third and final son born to James Shaw WYLLIE and his wife, Marion (nee MOORE). The family lived in St. Cuthberts in Edinburgh, Scotland. James worked for the General Post Office as a clerk in the accounts office and later as an examiner, serving over 40 years in the postal service.

His older brothers were John Alfred, six years his senior, and the middle brother was Frederick, four years his senior.

Their mother Marion died in 1865, leaving James a widower, and his sons – aged 9, 7 and 3 motherless.

The family were not without wealth – both in terms of money and family – as the 1871 census shows. Widower James and his sons John, Frederick and Arthur (all scholars) are living at Viewforth Place, St. Cuthbert, Edinburgh with Anna MOORE, the sister of Marion who is governess to the children, Emily EDWARDS, a 29-year-old domestic servant, and John RUSSELL, a 13-year-old scholar who is living with them for no immediately apparent discernible reason!

Moving ahead to the 1881 census, the family are still at Viewforth Place but the older sons have moved out, leaving James – still in the employ of the postal service, and Arthur, who is now a Bank Clerk apprentice. No longer needed as a governess, Anna MOORE is now sister-in-law and general domestic servant, aided by 25-year-old Jane SHAND.

Between 1881 and the 1901 census, they have moved to 21 Barnton Terrace and all three children have left home. Anna MOORE died at Barnton Terrace on 17th February 1899.

The 1901 census shows James living with his widowed sister Jane BENNET and Mary CAMPBELL, their 20-year-old servant.

James died at Barnton Terrace on the 27th December 1909 and was buried at Comely Bank Cemetery three days later.

Both of Arthur's brothers went into military service, serving in the Indian Army and ranking highly. John was an author and a diplomat, and Frederick served in the Boer War.

From reading the obituaries of the brothers, the WYLLIE family seem to be a military family, citing several high-ranking officers and Sirs amongst their relatives. However, it seems they are a little conservative with the truth, and their “close cousins” and “nieces”

seem at best two or three times removed. Such “close” family are listed in an obituary as being Sir Curzon WYLLIE, private secretary to the acting governor of India, assassinated by Madan Lal Dhingra at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, and Col. Robert WYLLIE, undersecretary for India.

John, the oldest brother appears to have had an illegitimate son, Louis Rodrigues WYLLIE who was later disinherited – the descendants of which live in Brazil to this day. But his “main relationship” was with Amy MUNRO, daughter of Sir Charles MUNRO, 10th Baronet of Foulis and Chief of the Clan. The marriage, in 1889, was described at the time as being fashionable, and it was clear that the MUNRO family were the focal point of any print article; in fact, in *The Morning Advertiser* (23rd Jan 1889), there was more mention given to the dress and the decoration of the church than the groom himself, saying no more than he being the son of James and in the Madras Staff Corps! The union produced no children.

Upon retiring from the army, he took up diplomatic posts during the First World War, working for the British Foreign office for over 20 years, and lived in Spain and Portugal.

His obituary in *The Scotsman* (28th April 1939) said he was a chivalrous and self-sacrificing man, valued for his knowledge of colonial matters, a personal friend of two successive Kings of Portugal and holder of many Portuguese honours and decorations including the Order of San Bento Daviz.

Frederick WYLLIE retired from his time as Colonel in the Indian Army to Steeple Aston in Oxfordshire.

There is evidence of Frederick traveling to and from Spain to visit his brother in the way of ships records – the same cannot be said for Arthur who perhaps distanced himself from his military brothers.

Frederick retired to “The Beeches”, settling into a quieter life with housekeepers and servants for the upkeep of his property and his convenience. He never married.

In 1927, Frederick had an altercation with a neighbour that ended up in court and *The Banbury Advertiser* (24th Jan 1929); During the summer and autumn, Frederick had planted a year’s supply of vegetables in his land, including 600 cabbage plants. He went away abroad and, on his return, 425 cabbages were destroyed.

He spoke to his neighbour, Thomas STALLARD about this, saying his cattle had damaged the crops to the value of £3 (approx. worth £247 in 2026). STALLARD offered some manure as compensation but WYLLIE refused this.

The fence was broken and there were hoof marks all over the garden. STALLARD maintained it was not his responsibility as he said WYLLIE’s gate was open, but was told “it is every man’s legal duty to keep his cattle on his own land”. WYLLIE was awarded 30s (approx. £125 in 2026) in damages.

While these rural pursuits were coming to court, John was having a tougher time. His 74-year-old wife Amy, accepting her old age, had decided to embark on a sort of farewell tour of friends and family in England and Scotland before returning home to Spain. In September 1929 she became unwell and her medical adviser diagnosed her with pleurisy and told her to leave her hotel and transfer into a nursing home in Edinburgh which she did. (*Ross-shire Journal* 25th October 1929).

She was joined in Edinburgh by husband John WYLLIE, and her condition began to improve and she was thought to be out of danger. On 17th October, John and her sister Maud visited her and she appeared to be in normal health. She had a severe seizure later that day and died. John and Frederick WYLLIE were at the funeral. It does not appear that Arthur was.

Frederick WYLLIE died at his home in Steeple Aston on 7th December 1932. He is buried at St. Peter and St. Paul's Churchyard, Steeple Aston.

John Alfred WYLLIE died at his home in Pontevedia in Spain on 23rd April 1939. His burial location is unknown (or I just haven't researched hard enough!)

But our interest isn't in the siblings; It's in Arthur himself, so let's have a look now we have the context.

We already know Arthur WYLLIE was initially a bank clerk. He must have felt this wasn't the right occupation for him, as he makes his way to South Africa where he becomes a missionary priest and rescuing the wounded on the battlefield during the Boer War – perhaps this is where his distancing from his brothers began; two were the cause of the bloodshed, and he was in the middle of it, seeing the people as humans rather than winners and losers in the fight.



Grave of Frederick WYLLIE
© Wertypop, Findagrave

He was educated at St. Bees in Cumbria, and made a deacon in 1896 while in South Africa. He worked in Kaffirland, and worked as a priest in Grahamsland. He held curacies in St. Saviour's, Claremont in the diocese of Cape Town, 1897-98 at Grahamstown Cathedral, 1899 in Alexandra, Bedford 1900, Molteno 1900-1902 and St. Joseph and St. Stephen, East London Cape Town 1902-05.

After this, he left South Africa and returned to Scotland. He served for 9 months at All Saints Church, Buckie (up further than Inverness!) and St. Marys Church, Cullen (a little farther east than Buckie).

Bishop ELLIS then appointed him Priest in Charge of St. Mary's Mission, Stromness on the Mainland of Orkney.

In 1911, wanting a less boisterous climate, Arthur accepted the curacy of Marlborough with South Huish in the Diocese of Exeter. Two and a half years later, having ministered in the far north and the far south, he took up his final post as Vicar of Sheepwash in May 1914.

Revd. WYLLIE was well respected in Marlborough and they were apparently very sad to see him go.

Within a year, he was doing good things at St. Lawrence, Sheepwash; the late Major Gustavius Wheatley Berry COLLIS of Dawlish had spent a lot of money in decorating and furnishing the church during his lifetime and it was felt by the parochial council and vicar that the harmonium they had was "inadequate for the help of the choir but entirely out of keeping with the lovely church" (*Western Times*, 30 July 1915). The plan was to raise some money and buy a new pipe organ with a brass plaque dedicating it in memory of Major COLLIS. A fund was started but, with the war breaking out, the scheme for a new organ was expensive and not

felt to be right.

Revd. WYLLIE heard of a second-hand organ for sale in Glasgow, likely by all his Scottish connections.

The organist of Glasgow Cathedral inspected the organ and found it to be in fantastic condition and an absolute bargain, so WYLLIE resumed the collecting operations and two months later, they had enough for the organ.

Friends of the late major were the big contributors to the fund, including 2nd Viscount HAMBLEDEN Frederick Smith, grandson and heir of W.H. Smith (yes, *that* one) and Sir John Ward SPEAR MP for Tavistock among others. This left just £7 to be found to buy the brass plate and pay the



sundry expenses for putting the organ in situ. Sharing an understanding of other countries the care of souls in a rural Devon patch, I can see Revd. WYLLIE and Revd. Ellice PAINE of Highampton striking up a good friendship.

Arthur never married, and – in keeping with the time – a housekeeper would be necessary. The housekeeper at

the vicarage was the unmarried Rosalie ESSERY, a Sheepwash girl whose links to the village go back to the early 1700s. The daughter of a boot and shoemaker who lived on the Square, Rosalie had, in her youth, been a silk glove maker and machinist before presumably becoming too old or pained to continue, when she assisted her grocer sister Eliza at the shop. She was approx. two years Arthur's senior, and much of her family are buried in the churchyard at St. Lawrence, Sheepwash.

In the 1921 census, Arthur and Rosalie are living together at the Vicarage and Rosalie spent the rest of Arthur's life helping out.

Arthur didn't take part in village life due to a retiring disposition but this didn't stop him being popular with the villagers.

He would walk to his services at church and then return home to the rectory afterward.

On Sunday 5th April 1936, Revd. WYLLIE celebrated choral eucharist as normal with no complaints or discomfort. He began his walk home to the vicarage as usual. However, he collapsed.

He was carried to the Half Moon Hotel (now the Half Moon Inn) in Sheepwash, and Dr. GWYNNE of Black Torrington was called but Arthur died almost immediately, before the doctor could get there. His cause of death was reported as 1a) Acute Cardiac Failure, b) Myocardial degeneration and, c) Senility. He was 74 years old.

Arthur Moore Wyllie	Male	74 years	Vicar	1/a Acute Cardiac Failure & Myocardial Degeneration c Senility No P.M. Certified by R. Gordon Gwynne M.R.C.S.
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From the death record of Arthur Moore WYLLIE 1936

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The death was registered by a “R. E. VENTON” of Luke’s Farm, Sheepwash, present at the death. This was likely Bertram E. VENTON, the churchwarden and server at St. Lawrence, Sheepwash, aged 36 at the time and buried at Sheepwash as recently as 1993.

Arthur had requested to be buried at Highampton rather than Sheepwash and he was laid to rest on Wednesday 8th April 1936. He had no family at the service, the only surviving family being his older brother John, then aged 80 and living in Spain.

The opening sentences were recited by Revd. Henry POLLOCK, rector of Little Torrington, Revd. Ellice PAINE of Highampton led the church service. Bertram VENTON read the lesson and the Committal Sentences were said by Revd. Bernard HALLOWS, Rural Dean of Torrington.

The Vicars and Rectors of Beaworthy, St. Giles, Frithelstock, Meeth, Petrockstowe and Peters Marland, Dowland, Merton, Shebbear, Exbourne with Jacobstowe, Clawton and Black Torrington were all present.

The hymns were *On the Resurrection Morning* and *Abide with Me*, and the Nunc Dimittis was chanted at the graveside. Arthur Moore WYLLIE was laid to rest; his travels over.

Revd. PAINE, rector of Highampton and Bertram VENTON, churchwarden of Sheepwash, were the executors of his will. He had left £5,303, 13s, 9d (approx. £327,117 in 2026 money).

PAINE and VENTON would have instructed for the simple inscription in his grave, and would see to his final wishes:

Among the bequests, £100 was to be given to St. Lawrence, Sheepwash (£6,167 in 2026) and £200 (£12,334 in 2026) to be given to his housekeeper Rosalie ESSERY, alongside all flowers, pots and contents and anything in the house that cannot bring a price at the sale (*Western Times* 12 June 1936).

This man had an extraordinary life and shouldn't be forgotten by time, location or even huge tufts of grass. We might not see him, nor his grave, but we remember him – like we remember Highampton church itself. Neither have lost their light, their importance nor their resonance and their seeds and love and thoughts present in so many walking about our benefice today.

Kay Napier
February 2026

Sources:

<https://findagrave.com>

<https://familysearch.org>

<https://findmypast.com>

General Records Office births and deaths

North Devon Gazette, 28th April 1914

Banffshire Advertiser, 7th May 1914

Western Times, 30th July 1915

Leominster News, 20th July 1917

Banbury Advertiser, 24th January 1929

Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 9th April 1936

Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 17th April 1936

Western Times, 12th June 1936

Western Times, 17th October 1936

The Scotsman, 28th April 1939

<https://wyllie.org.nz/stories/story2>

Bank of England inflation calculator



CHRISTENINGS



WEDDINGS



FUNERALS

*For all life's
big moments*
**YOUR
CHURCH IS
HERE FOR YOU**

Worried about a Child or Vulnerable Adult?

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

Your Parish Safeguarding Representative is:

ASHWATER: Not Known.

BEAWORTHY: Not Known.

TETCOTT: Sharon Wonnacott Sharonwonnacott@hotmail.co.uk 07980 989 262

HOLYWELL JOINT COUNCIL (Black Torrington with Highampton, Clawton and Halwill)

Val Letheren rubycountry.beneficeadmin@btinternet.com 07484 880 770

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

Costa Nassaris Head of Safeguarding and Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
01392 294 969 costa.nassaris@exeter.anglican.org 07809 339 501

James May Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
01392 345 910 james.may@exeter.anglican.org 07889 542 646

Rebecca Lane Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
01392 294 975 rebecca.lane@exeter.anglican.org 07889 542640

David Cross Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
david.cross@exeter.anglican.org 07572 923 242

General Enquiries: safeguardingenquiry@exeter.anglican.org
01392 294 929

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 wellbeing, you should contact the relevant agencies:

Concerns about Children	0345 155 1071	Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Concerns about Adults	0345 155 1007	Devon Care Direct
Domestic Abuse	0345 155 1074	Devon Helpline for professionals & Individuals
Rape Crisis	0808 802 9999	

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

All information in this bulletin correct at time of publication

Ruby Country Benefice

RUBY PEOPLE WORSHIPPING IN GOD'S COUNTRY

St. Peter Ad Vincula, Ashwater EX21 5EY
St. Alban, Beaworthy EX21 5AB
Holy Cross, Tetcott EX22 6QZ

Ruby Holywell

Charity Number: 1216130

St. Mary's, Black Torrington EX21 5PU
St. Leonard, Clawton EX22 6PS
St. Peter & St. James, Halwill EX21 5UH