Devizes St John & St Mary



Parish Magazine

50p



"AN INSIGHT TO ART AND THE HISTORY OF ART".

SPEAKER: DAVID EVANS MA.

TOPIC: HOGARTH - THE MOST ENGLISH OF PAINTERS.

WHERE: ST. JOHNS CHURCH DEVIZES

WHEN: TUESDAY 3RD NOVEMBER 2026

PRICE £10 16'S AND UNDER FREE WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.

TIME: 7.30PM DOORS OPEN 7.00PM

WILL
Wessex Inspirational Learning Limited

Reflection

November in the churches' year is very much a time for remembering, with it's three special days and services : All Soul's, All Saints, and Remembrance Day where we join the rest of the nation as we remember those lost in war.

All soul's day has had a more individual, personal element for us as we remember those we have loved and lost. This is the second All soul's day for me since my father's death. My mother died in 1992 so there is a lot more distance from her death, and Ive been reflecting on the All soul's services Ive been to and taken over the years.

We all come to these services with our own personal experience of loss and grief. For some of us it's very raw, and for some of us our sense of loss has been tempered by the passage of time. They are services with a huge range of emotions that are very near the service. For me last year the grief was very raw and as I reflect on that experience, I think I got the balance wrong as I participated in the service.

My uncle George to whom I was quite close, died about 15 years ago now. He was a "Character." He left strict instructions in his will that nobody, not his family and friends, the vicar the undertaker, his solicitor or anyone else were to refer to him as dead, deceased, or any other way of referring to him as no longer alive!! I think everyone concerned was a bit startled, especially the vicar! knowing Uncle George as I did, I could see why he said it. With his unshakable christian faith he went on to explain, that as we attended his funeral we must remember that he was not dead, he was alive with Christ in heaven!

It gave the funeral a completely different atmosphere to any other I've attended. I'm not denying our grief, it is very real and at times it can feel overwhelming, as Queen Elizabeth II said "Grief is the price we pay for love." Love would be very cheap if we didn't grieve the loss from this world of someone who is precious to us.

As you come to All Soul's day this year try to remember the glory as well as the loss. The Bible tells us that through the death of Jesus and his resurrection "death is swallowed up in victory" we and our loved ones will live on in God's kingdom. Paul in 1 Thessalonians tells us "Not to mourn as those who have no hope." He doesn't say don't mourn! He says remember to look to the glory and as well as the loss.

Helen Begley

~~~~~~

We, at St John's, are now collecting every week for the

DEVIZES and District Foodbank

Please put your donations in the basket in the cross aisle.

The shortages each week are displayed in the Pew Sheet

Devizes & District Foodbank
Together with Trussell


~~~~~~

Advent Course 2026 — They Sang

As we prepare to enter the season of Advent, we warmly invite you to join us for this year's Advent Course, based on the thought-provoking book, They Sang by Amy Scott Robinson.

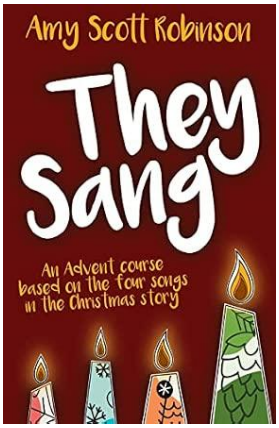
At the heart of the Christmas story are four extraordinary songs, Zechariah's song of prophecy, Mary's Magnificat, the angels' song of glory, and Simeon's song of farewell and fulfilment. These ancient poems of praise have been sung and prayed across two thousand years, and yet they still have the power to surprise us, to challenge us, and to draw us more deeply into the mystery of what Christmas is really about. They Sang will be our guide as we explore them together.

The course will run on four Thursday lunchtimes, from 12 noon to 1.30pm, beginning on Thursday 26th November and continuing on 3rd, 10th and 17th December bringing us right to the threshold of Christmas itself.

Each session will begin with a simple shared lunch of soup and bread, followed by tea or coffee and a sweet treat, before we settle into discussion together. Good food, good company and good conversation, the perfect way to spend an Advent lunchtime.

If you would like to join us, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the cross aisle so that we can ensure we have enough books for everyone and, equally importantly, enough soup!

We very much hope to see you there.



‘The Weight of Glory’

It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter.

It is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbour. The load, of weight, or burden of my neighbour’s glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the back of the proud will be broken.

It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long, we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations.

It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people . . .

C.S. Lewis

from ‘Screwtape proposes a toast and Other Pieces’

We are having a good clean up of St John's prior to Remembrance, Advent and Christmas

- if you would like to come along and help –
Saturday 7th November
from 9.00am -12 Noon



St John's Parish Lunch
"Winter Warmers
Sunday 15th November
St John's Parish Rooms
Sign up sheet in the cross aisle



~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

St John's
Christmas Bazaar
Saturday 28th November
10am – 12 noon
St John's Parish Rooms



I’M FINE THANK YOU

There is nothing the matter with me,
I’m as healthy as I can be,
I have arthritis in both my knees
And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze
But I’m awfully well for the shape I’m in.

Arch supports I have for my feet,
Or I wouldn’t be able to be on the street,
Sleep is denied me night after night,
But every morning I find I’m all right.
My memory is failing, my head’s in a spin
But I’m awfully well for the shape I’m in.

The moral is this as my tale I unfold,
That for you and me who are growing old
It’s better to say ‘I’m fine’ with a grin,
Than to let folks know the shape we are in.

How do I know that my youth is all spent?
Well, my ‘Get up and go’ has got up and went.
But I really don’t mind when I think with a grin,
Of all the grand places my ‘Get up’ has bin.

Old age is golden I’ve heard it said
But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed.
With my ears in the drawer, my teeth in a cup,
My eyes on the table until I wake up.
Ere sleep overtakes me, I say to myself,
‘Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf?

When I was young my slipper were red,
I could kick my heels over my head,
When I was older my slipper were blue,
But still I could dance the whole night through.
Now I am old my slipper are black,
I walk to the store and puff my way back.

I get up each morning and dust off my wits
And pick up the paper and read the ‘Obits’,
If my name is still missing, I know I’m not dead,
So I have a good breakfast and go back to bed.

St John's Church Christmas Tree Festival 2026



This popular Christmas Tree Festival held at St John's Church has become a major part of the Devizes Christmas Festival. **It will run after judging from Saturday 5th December to 6th January** during which time the Church will be open for viewing.

The trees arrive in the church on 30th November and are set up on stands. This is the hard part and when we need a lot of help. Just a couple of hours would be great.

Decorating will be over three days from **Wednesday December 2nd (1-5pm) Thursday 3rd (9am-5pm) and Friday 4th(9am-5pm).**

This is the fun part when the decorators come in, particularly the little ones, as they are so excited to see their trees take shape with their special handmade decorations.

We invite local schools, nurseries, pre-schools, nursing and care homes, charities and youth organisations, local clubs, as well as local businesses to decorate the trees or to sponsor, or both. Many have been supporting us for the whole time we've been doing this even

We need many helpers to set up the trees, put lights on, and help on the decorating days, or you can just sponsor a tree if you wish. Trees are costing more this year so any donation, however small, is most welcome.

We also need a continual coffee and biscuit rota to provide much needed sustenance to the workers from 30th November to 4th December.

There will be 40 trees in the church plus our own church Christmas tree decorated nearer Christmas and a community larger tree which has decorations from each tree. We have larger trees lit outside.

We also have memorial trees lining the path to the church if you would like to remember a relative or friend in this way. Each tree will display your personal dedication. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss this.

If you would like to support this popular Festival, please contact the Parish Office in Long Street or email either Kate or Marjie

Kate Walling walling_kj@hotmail.com

Marjie Pook marjiepook@gmail.com

If you would like to know more please give Kate a ring on 01380 724450 or 07970 114812

ST JOHN'S CHURCH · DEVIZES

12TH DECEMBER · 6:30PM



An Evening of

Classical Music

BAROQUE & ROMANTIC CHAMBER WORKS





An evening of classical music performed by local players.

REFRESHMENTS SERVED BEFORE THE CONCERT AND DURING THE INTERVAL

6:30pm

DOORS OPEN 6PM

St John's Church, St John's Street
Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1BN

TICKETS £15 FROM DEVIZES BOOKSHOP OR TICKETSOURCE

ALL PROCEEDS TO ST JOHN'S CHURCH.

There is a Beauty in Silence

Chris Cox LLM (Licensed Lay Minister)

In September, we held the first of our now regular monthly contemplative services. As silence is an integral aspect of the service, I thought it might be helpful to reflect on the nature of silence.

I think it was Emily Dickinson who said…

'There is a beauty in the silence,
a peace that cannot be found,
in the hustle and the bustle of the noisy world around'.

In the world we inhabit today, it often seems that time spent in silence is a luxury we cannot afford, that any time we might devote to silence and stillness is considered wasteful and unproductive. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I couldn't disagree more. I think that, from pretty much every perspective, physically, emotionally, psychologically and of course, spiritually, embracing silence and stillness seems to me to be absolutely essential.

But what is silence? Well, on a superficial level we all know that silence is the absence of noise, specifically the absence of external noise. In our modern world, we seem to have accepted the ubiquitous nature of noise. The constant drone of traffic, the jackhammer accompaniment to the latest roadworks, the whirr and buzz of lawnmowers and hedge trimmers, notifications continually pinging on our phones, music, television…I could go on! Noise it seems permeates our lives, indeed I sometimes think many people have become oblivious to the omnipresence of sound, to the constant clatter, din, and babble of 21st century life.

So, yes, silence can be the absence of external noise. But it is something more, because we also have to contend with internal noise, our own internal dialogue, those incessant thoughts and imagined conversations that seem to occupy our every waking moment.

Indeed, a recent study suggests that the average person has approximately 6,000 – 7,000 thoughts each day. It's not surprising therefore, that with all the external commotion and the unremitting internal chatter, 'peace', to quote W.B. Yates, 'comes dropping slow'.

But, yet again, I think silence is something more. Silence is something more than the absence of external noise and a still mind; something more than our yearning for peace and quiet; our longing for tranquillity. It feels to me as if silence has a material nature of its own, a presence. Silence becomes the medium through which we can intimately connect with the sacred, the material inner sanctuary that nurtures connection, communion, and ultimately union. It enfolds the hum of the universe, the vibration of the divine. When we think of silence in this way, we can begin to understand why engaging with silence has been such an important spiritual practice throughout history, one that transcends the boundaries of culture and tradition.

The practice of silence becomes a way of orienting ourselves, a returning, a way of being present to the presence, a way of grounding ourselves within the ground of being. Silence is a way of being within what already 'is' but what is habitually obscured by the clamour and commotion of life. It is a catalyst for encounter, insight, and transformation. By embracing silence, as an act of faith and trust, we embark on the path of self-discovery.

Our Christian tradition has, from its earliest beginnings, embraced silence. From it have emerged contemplative practices that acknowledge the sacredness of silence, that focus on silence as a way to align ourselves with the natural rhythms of life, to connect with God, to open our hearts to God's peace, and the spaciousness of love.

There is a beauty in silence. I invite you to choose it, to consciously offer yourself the gift of silence each day, for within the quiet within, you will find peace from 'the hustle and the bustle of the noisy world around' and connect with the eternal.

May your path be blessed with quietness, stillness, and peace

Contemplative Service



Make Room to Breathe, take time to...

Pause, breathe, reflect

Experience shared silence and stillness

Connect with the sacred...

At our Contemplative Service

(Monthly on the 2nd Sunday at 4.30 p.m. in St Johns)



The Gunpowder plot…..

Guy Fawkes may have been the first to attempt to blow up Parliament on 5th November 1605 but he was not the last! In September 1940 a bomb fell into the Old Palace Yard causing severe damage to St Stephen's Porch and to the west front of The Palace of Westminster. Further damage was caused by a German bomb in December 1940 ,while in May 1941 incendiary bombs caused the greatest of all the war damage to Westminster. The Commons chamber was entirely destroyed and the roof of the magnificent Westminster Hall was set on fire.



James V1 of Scotland 1st of England

During the war years defending London – and elsewhere – was a complex and challenging task due to the extensive bombing campaigns by the German Luftwaffe. Despite the devastation, London's resilience and determination played a significant role ın maintaining morale spirit. The spirit of members of parliament was similarly maintained; despite war damage to the Commons, the house simply moved to the intact House of Lords! Members of the Lords agreed, as did the King, as ultimately it was his chamber!

Thankfully, *Guy Fawkes and his co-conspirators were not so successful. An anonymous letter to the palace authorities, received in late October, revealed that the King (James V1 of Scotland and 1st of England) his family and his Protestant ministers * *'shall receive a terrible blow this parliament and yet they shall not see who hurts them.'* Overnight and on the morning of 5th November a search of the House of Lords was conducted by the Royal guards. In the early hours Guy Fawkes was discovered with a lamp, a fuse and 36 poorly hidden barrels of Gunpowder. Game up! November 5th 1605 was the day of the State opening of Parliament.

Of course Fawkes was not alone. He was just one of thirteen English Catholic co-conspirators, led by Robert Catesby who planned to assassinate the Protestant King James V1th of Scotland and 1st of England. Despite his mother Mary, Queen of Scots being a resolute Catholic, James was raised a Protestant and succeeded his cousin

Elizabeth to the English throne in 1903. Catesby and his colleagues wanted to blow up parliament and kill the King, because he refused to grant religious tolerance to Catholics. Catesby asked his cousin Robert Winter to round up support to help repeal the Penal Laws which, in effect, criminalised Roman Catholicism. He attempted to do so in Flanders by endeavouring to gain the support of the constable of Castille who was conducting negotiations for a peace between England and Spain. Winter returned to England with nothing more than a promise from the constable but his companion, upon returning, was none other than Guido Fawkes. Fawkes was known to be a man devoted to the Roman Catholic cause and recommended to Winter as someone who would undertake perilous adventures!



Robert Catesby

Although the plot to blow up Parliament and the King had been conceived by Catesby as early as 1603 it was not until the spring of 1604 that the scheme began to move apace, with Catesby, Winter and Fawkes and now Thomas Percy (formally Constable of Alnwick Castle, Northumberland). The group swore an oath of secrecy, heard mass, took communion and set about recruiting others to their cause. In May 1604 Percy hired a house adjoining the House of Lords. from which the group set about digging through to beneath the Lord's chamber. As they did so they discovered a vault immediately beneath the chamber, which as their luck would have it, was available for Percy to rent.

Within a year – by May 1605 some 36 barrels of gunpowder had been brought to the vault and hidden beneath piles of coal and firewood. The group dispersed with *Sir Edmond Baynham going to Rome (to gain support from the Pope) and Fawkes returning to Flanders. Here Fawkes could gain support from English Catholic exiles and to where, |Fawkes intended to travel once the *'deed was done'*.



A 1605 engraving of members off the Gunpowder Plot including Guido Fawkes

Clearly, up to this time the secret of the plotting and the concealing of gunpowder, had been well and truly kept.

However someone, somewhere had a different idea and set about revealing to the authorities the notion of the carnage which was to destroy, not only the House of Lords, but also the King and Peers, many of whom were Roman Catholics themselves – some were friends or even relations of the

conspirators! The conspirators had a dilemma – or at least one conspirator had both a dilemma and a conscience. The *letter, received on October 29th1605, delivered to Lord Monteagle by an unknown messenger gave the game away. The author remains unknown. However Catesby's cousin Francis Tresham and brother in law of Lord Monteagle remains, in the dark annules of Jacobean history as the probable turncoat! The truth has never been disclosed or proved.

The rest as they say, is history. A search was conducted; Fawkes was caught and arrested a little after midnight on 5th November 1605. He confessed that his intention was to blow *'you Scotch beggars back to your native mountains'*. Fawkes was tortured - he confessed and revealed the names of the plotters. The plotters had left London on 4th November, for the Midlands to prepare for a Catholic uprising. They were found by some 200 soldiers and militia at Holbeche House in Staffordshire, where through an armed siege, Catesby and several others were killed; eight others including Guy Fawkes were found guilty of high treason and sentenced to be executed.

Alan Martin



Guido Fawkes- image taken from the illustrated group of conspirators

Guido Fawkes (1570 – 1606) - or Guy Fawkes, as he became to be known, was born in York to Protenant parents but during his childhood converted to Catholicism. Aged 21 he left England to join the Catholic Spanish army. It was during this time when he fought in the 'Eighty Years War', between the Dutch and the Spanish, he adopted the Italian version of his name, Guido.

***The Letter in full –** *'My lord, out of the love I bear to some of your friends, I have a care of your preservation, therefore I would advise you as you tender your life to devise some excuse to shift your attendance at this parliament, for God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of this time, and think not slightly of this advertisement, but retire yourself into your country, where you may expect the event in safety, for though there be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow this parliament and yet they shall not see who hurts them, this counsel is not to be condemned because it may do you good and can do you no harm, for the danger is past as soon as you have burnt the letter and I hope God will give you the grace to make good use of it, to whose holy protection I commend you'.*

Sir Edmond Baynham (1577 – 1642) Baynham's wish towards self-destruction urged him to make *'some desperate speeches against'* James. During Elizabeth's last illness he was committed to the Marshalsea on 7th March 1603. He was released before 30th March by which time James had succeeded to the English throne. He identified himself as a Catholic, became implicated in the Gunpowder plot, and went to Rome. At Fawkes' trial, the attorney-general called him *'a fit messenger for the devil'* clearly escaping capture he spent the remainder of his life roaming Europe. (The Marshalsea (1373–1842) was a notorious prison in Southwark)

Sources

Discover History tools
BBC News – Politics/Bitesize
Historic Royal Palaces
The Sun Newspaper
Britannica
The History of Parliament

November Services

Sun 01-Nov All Saints
8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.30am Parish Eucharist
6.30pm All Souls

Mon 02-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Tues 03-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Wed 04-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Thurs 05-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
10.00am Midweek Eucharist

Sun 08-Nov Remembrance Sunday
8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.00am Service of Remembrance



Mon 09-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Tue 10-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Wed 11-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Thurs 12-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
10.00am Midweek Eucharist

Sun 15-Nov Second before Advent
8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.30am Parish Eucharist

Mon 16-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Tue 17-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Wed 18-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer

Thurs 19-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
10.00am Midweek Eucharist

Sat 21-Nov
4.30pm Choral Evensong

Sun 22-Nov Christ the King
8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.30am Parish Eucharist

Mon 23-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Tue 24-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Wed 25-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
Thurs 26-Nov
8.30am Morning Prayer
10.00am Midweek Eucharist

Sun 29-Nov Advent Sunday
8.00am BCP Holy Communion
10.30am Parish Eucharist
6.30pm Deanery Evensong @ SMV

Mon 30-Nov St Andrew
8.30am Morning Prayer



Contacts

Rector	The Revd Heidi Merrett	07706058676
Parish Administrator	Catherine Brown	724389
Licensed Lay Ministers	Chris Cox	728716
Churchwarden	Vacant	
Hon. Treasurer	Catherine Brown	739253
PCC Secretary	Vacant	
Electoral Roll Officer	Catherine Brown	724389
Director of Music	Joe Scarffe	music@stjohnwithstmary.org.uk
Bell Ringers	St John's: David Powell	07790 299018
	St Mary's: John New	726203
Flower Guild	Heather Blyth	724347
Parish Magazine Distribution	Catherine Brown	724389
Parish Magazine Editor	Catherine Brown	724389
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Jerry King	723830
Health and Safety Officer	Simon Fisher	simon.fisher26@gmail.com

Representatives on Churches Together in Devizes

David Evans 721527

Catherine Brown 724389

Parish Rooms: hire and information 724389

admin@stjohnwithstmary.org.uk