



St. Edmund's Church

£1.00

News from the Parish

February 2026



www.stedmundsallestreeandstmatthewsdarleyabbey.co.uk

www.facebook.com/stedmundsallestree

St. Edmund's - February 2026

While COVID has diminished in terms of its impact on us as a nation, we recognise that there will be some people who have still to be careful because they are vulnerable. If you feel you need to wear a mask, we encourage you to do so. We also gently request that if you are unwell, especially if you have COVID, you stay away to avoid infecting anyone who might be vulnerable.

For communion, normal practice has resumed regarding going to and from the rail. Please follow any directions given by the day's welcomers. At the rail you will be given three options regarding bread and wine. You may either indicate - by nodding your head - that you wish the wafer to be intincted for you by the person carrying the special intincting chalice, or you may accept the wafer only and then drink from the chalice brought after by the server. Or you may choose to just have the wafer.

There are halved grapes available for children at the rail so they join in this special feast, they will be given a prayer of blessing as normal. And if you do not feel communion is appropriate for you we encourage you to come to the rail, leaving your hands by your sides, so that we may pray a prayer of blessing over you.

Please stay for coffee or tea in the Church Hall after the service, it's a great opportunity to get to know new friends and to catch up with old ones.

FOOD BANK - The first Sunday of the month, 1st February 2026.

Please leave your donations in St Edmund's Church or St Matthew's Fellowship Room by Tuesday 3rd February.

FRONT COVER: Revd Rachael enjoying a coffee with some of the congregation who had attended the Wednesday 10.30am Holy Communion Service on 28th January 2026.

BACK COVER: Top Photo: The St Edmund's Handbell Ringers raising funds at Park Farm Centre. Bottom Photo: Margaret Pearson celebrating 50 years as an Avon representative.

If you would like to sponsor a month's colour cover please contact one of the editorial team or a Churchwarden. The cost is £35.00.

Open All Year: St Ed's and St Matt's are open regularly throughout the spring and summer months. Do pop in for some peace and space, and invite others to do the same. If you are there and people come in, please make them welcome.

Safeguarding Initiative

We have a strong Safeguarding Initiative here at St Edmund's Church. Full details can be found on the Church noticeboards and on our website - key into your browser 'stedmundsallestreeandstmatthewsdarleyabbey.co.uk' to find us.

The Revd Rachael Writes



Start the year with weddings...

We have several weddings booked in across our four parishes in 2026. Each one is a wonderful opportunity to walk with those couples who want to say their vows before God.

Church weddings follow a pattern that invites us to reflect on what marriage is for and what it entails, before the couple make profound commitments to

one another: committing to love one another through the darkest times as well as the most joyous – "for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health" etc "til death do us part", before exchanging rings. At their conclusion I wrap my stole around their clasped hands – tying the knot – and declare 'Those whom God has joined let no one put asunder'. It's a dramatic moment, actions adding weight to the words, emotions running high, everyone present erupting in celebration.

All this ceremony and drama, for what? It all starts with love; our desire to love and be loved. I wonder how many of you gave or received Valentine's Day cards at school? How many longed for the person you had a crush on to send you a card? How many were brave enough to send one?! The agony and the ecstasy of those days seem so innocent and simple compared with today when so much happens online. We're so connected and yet studies seem to show that younger people are lonelier than ever and struggle to find their special someone IRL (in real life).

Humans are hardwired for connection and for being in relationship with others. There is an African word, ubuntu, which captures this perfectly, it means 'I am because we are'. It means that an individual's existence and well-being are tied to the community, promoting compassion, respect, and interconnectedness over individualism.

Relationship is at the heart of the Gospel too. We believe in God who is somehow Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God's plan for humanity is to take us from the estrangement of Eden, lost to reconciliation between created and loving creator. The imagery of marriage mirrors what God intends for us, the final book of the Bible, Revelation, telling us that we are the bride, Jesus is our bridegroom. I think what God is saying to us is he wants to share with each of us a close personal relationship, that oneness of heart and mind that underpins a good marriage.

Revd Rachael Brooks

Associate Minister, St Edmund's & St Matthew's



Churchwardens' View

A Regular Update by Ann Miller and Paul Smith

Looking Back

A big thank you to everyone who helped make our Christmas services such a success. Whether it was the Christingle service, the Carols in the Churchyard, the Toddler service, Nine Lessons and Carols or the three separate services on Christmas Eve, it was wonderful to see so many people involved. Then there was Christmas day itself, and just over a week later on 4 January, a lovely celebration of Epiphany in carols and readings in the hall, followed by tasty refreshments served by Michèle. A joint service on 28 December was well attended by people from all four parishes, signaling our ever closer links with our sister churches.

We normally find that the Christmas services are some of the best-attended in the whole year. This time, more than 200 attended the 4pm crib service on Christmas Eve, and over 400 heard the Christmas Story at our church over the two days of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day itself. So, a huge thank you to all who attended, brought friends/family, or helped in any way.

Guard Against Being Conned

Sadly, **the New Year has begun with a scam** – a reminder of the dark times in which we live, and of the need for caution when unexpected messages arrive. Several people received an email purporting to be from Rachael and asking for money to be donated to a (fictitious) good cause by means of a gift card.

This is the third time we have been hit by one of these scams, and it's worth reminding people how they can keep themselves safe. **Often the scam follows a particular sequence, so if you see this pattern, be on your guard.** What happens is:

- You get an initial email or other message which seems to be from someone you know (but it's not really them).
- It asks you to do something innocent, like contact them back (this is to draw you in).
- You then get told that they can't speak to you just at the minute (this is to steer you away from trying to check the message by phoning them direct).
- They then spin a yarn, perhaps about someone in need, and suggest you buy a gift card to support this person or cause. (They may also ask for cash or a bank transfer.)
- If you buy the gift card, you'll be asked to reveal the security number, which then allows the scammer to steal whatever value there is on the card. You'll never see that money again, and you'll feel furious that you let yourself be scammed.

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Churchwardens' View continued

Scam Warning continued:

Just to be clear: no one in this church will ever contact you by email, text or WhatsApp message to ask for money, and if there were an appeal for funds, perhaps from our treasurer, it would never ask you to use a gift card by way of payment.

Please do take great care in responding to requests for support: as churchgoers, our natural inclination is to reach out to those in need, and for this reason we may be specifically targeted by cheats. These scammers are unbelievably clever (and know how to play on our feelings): please don't fall for it!

Looking Forward

On a happier note, we are now gearing up for a very busy year with all sorts of wonderful events being planned, and several projects underway to maintain or improve the church and its surroundings. Here's just a sample of the latter:

- The new more-efficient gas boiler in the hall is up and running; it replaces two earlier boilers that were approaching the end of their life.
- Our heating group continues to look at how we can use our existing church heating more efficiently, and what our replacement heating system should look like.
- We've set up a vestry group with a view to building an additional (wheelchair-accessible) toilet within the vestry, complete with baby-change facility.
- We are also looking at other ways to improve facilities and access for those with restricted mobility.
- Our architects are currently seeking tenders for the large amount of lime-mortar repointing recommended by the last Quinquennial inspection.
- The plan for our replacement churchyard/hall noticeboards has been approved by the Diocese, and the new boards are being manufactured now.
- We are looking at new equipment to get the church clock striking the hours again.
- We also have approval and funding to set up a new Wi-Fi system in the church. This will make accessing the internet easier, and also make it easier to live-stream special services should we wish to do so.

Date for your diary: Shrove Tuesday is 17th February this year.

Please do come to the hall for your special treat. We'll be serving from 5.00pm until 6.30pm as per previous years. There will be a choice of fillings, drinks and a raffle with wonderful prizes!

Ann & Paul
Churchwardens

From the Registers of St Edmund's Church

BURIAL OF ASHES

10th December 2025 - Burial of ashes of Alison Bellamy

10th December 2025 - Burial of ashes of Marion Carnell

21st December 2025 - Burial of ashes of Margaret and Edward Emmans

Allestree History Group Meetings February 2026

The group meet twice a month at 7.00pm on the first and third Wednesdays in the Choir Vestry at St Nicholas' Church, Allestree Lane, Allestree, Derby DE22 2DS.

4th February: "The artists, musicians and politicians of the textile Arkwright family" by Cliff Lea.

18th February: "The night the Zeppelins came to the Midlands" by Mark Barnard

If you would like to know more about the Allestree History Group you can telephone Sylvia on 01332 556441 or visit www.allestreelocalhistorygroup.org.uk

Visiting Rita!



During our visit to Rita Harvey in her new surroundings in the care home, she and Richard shared a joke about old times! What fun recalling events more than 50 years old ...

Gill Flatman

Dates for your Diary - February 2026

Wednesday 28th January - Please note the new time of 10.30am
10.30am - St Edmund's - Holy Communion, led by Revd Rachael

Thursday 29th January

10.00am - St Edmund's Church Hall - Baby & Toddler Group

Saturday 31st January

9.30am - St Matthew's - Churchyard Working Party

Sunday 1st February - *Presentation of Christ*

Food Bank Sunday: *Please leave your donations in St Edmund's Church or St Matthew's Fellowship Room by Tuesday 3rd February. Thank you.*

10.00am - St Edmund's - All Age, led by Revd Rachael & the team

10.00am - St Matthews - Choral Holy Communion, led by John Rice

2.00pm - St Matthew's Fellowship Room - Bible Course

6.00pm - St Matthew's - Evensong, led by Melonie Hambly

Monday 2nd 9.30am - 12 noon - St Matthew's - Refills on the Road

Tuesday 3rd

2.00-3.30 pm - St Matthew's Fellowship Room - FOSM: 'My Mum had one of those',
by Janet & Paul Barrass

12 noon - St Edmund's Church Hall - Luncheon Club

Wednesday 4th

10.30am - St Edmund's - Holy Communion - led by John Rice

Thursday 5th 10.00am - St Edmund's Church Hall - Baby & Toddler Group

Saturday 7th 9.30am - St Edmund's - Groundforce

Sunday 8th - *Second Sunday before Lent*

10.00am - St Edmund's - Holy Communion, led by Revd Rachael Brooks

10.00am - St Matthews - Morning Prayer, led by Clive Lemmon

2.00pm - St Matthew's Fellowship Room - Bible Course

6.00pm - St Edmund's - Choral Evensong, led by David Anderson

Monday 9th

2.00pm - St Edmund's Choir Vestry - Bookworms: 'Hamnet' by Maggie O'Farrell

7.30pm - Community Room, Catherine McAuley House - Ascension Prayer Group

Wednesday 11th

10.30am - St Edmund's - Holy Communion - led by Phyllis Bainbridge

Thursday 12th

10.00am - Allestree Park - Nature Tots

Dates for your Diary - February 2026 continued

Sunday 15th - *Next before Lent*

10.00am - St Edmund's - Morning Prayer, led by Phyllis Bainbridge

10.00am - St Matthews - Choral Holy Communion, led by Revd Rachael Brooks and
Colette Desborough preaching

2.00pm - St Matthew's Fellowship Room - Bible Course

6.00pm - St Matthew's - Choral Evensong, led by Clive Lemmon

Monday 16th 9.30am - 12 noon - St Matthew's - Refills on the Road

Tuesday 17th - *Shrove Tuesday*

12 noon - St Edmund's Church Hall - Luncheon Club

5.00 - 7.00pm - St Edmund's Church Hall - Shrove Tuesday Pancakes

Wednesday 18th - *Ash Wednesday*

10.30am - St Edmund's - Holy Communion - led by Revd Rachael Brooks

7.30pm, St Matthew's - Choral Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes

Sunday 22nd - *First Sunday of Lent*

10.00 am - St Edmund's - Choral Holy Communion, led by Adrian Thorp

10.00am - St Matthews - All Age - led by Revd Rachael & the team

2.00pm - St Matthew's Fellowship Room - Bible Course

6.00pm - St Edmund's - Choral Evensong, led by Paul Smith

Wednesday 25th

10.30am - St Edmund's - Holy Communion - led by John Rice

Thursday 26th 10.00am - St Edmund's Church Hall - Baby & Toddler Group

Friday 27th

8.30am - 10.30am - St Matthew's Fellowship Room - Community Café

Saturday 28th

9.30am - St Matthew's - Churchyard Working Party

Parish Office Hours & Contact Details

The Parish Administrator is Caroline Audley who can be contacted by email:
Steds.stmatts@outlook.com or telephone her on 552031. Office opening hours:-

Monday & Wednesday

9.30am - 3.00pm

Tuesday

Closed

Thursday

11.30am - 3.00pm
(after Baby & Toddler
Group)

Friday

9.30am - 1.00pm

If out of hours please leave a message; the answer phone is checked daily.



Chance, a mother in a displacement camp in DRC, carrying water while a group of boys look on.

Thank you to all who donated to the Christmas Appeal at our Services on Christmas Eve. **The total given was £605.58** from the three services, including gifts made using the QR codes available at the Services. This is up about £200 on the previous year when we held only the two crib services. It will fund Christian Aid's ongoing work around the world and is especially appreciated by an organisation that has suffered sharp reductions in institutional funding and has therefore continued to reduce staffing levels and consequently the ongoing support it can give to the world's poorest people.

For your diary, this year Christian Aid Week is being held on 10th to 16th May.

With thanks for your continuing support,

Geoff Bailey

Bookworms Meeting is on 9th February

Bookworms meet in St Edmund's choir vestry once a month on a Monday afternoon at 2.00pm. Our next meeting is on Monday 9th February and we will be discussing "Hamnet" by Maggie O'Farrell. When we prepared our book list last year, who could have predicted the film made from this book would have been in the headlines when the month came round for us to read it.

For the following months the reading list is as follows:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 9th March | Kristin Hannah – The Women |
| 13th April | Alexander McCall Smith - 44 Scotland Street |
| 11th May | Laurie Lee – Cider with Rosie |
| 8th June | John Wyndham – The Day of the Triffids |

For further details please ring or text Cyra Buxton on 07719 776501 or email her on cyrabuxton@gmail.com.



Vacancy: St Edmund's Church Warden

IMPORTANT: Paul Smith will stand down as a churchwarden at the 2026 Annual Meeting after four years in-post. Please pray with us that someone suitable will feel called to take on this vital and fulfilling role. If anyone would like to find out more about what it involves, please speak to Ann Miller or Paul Smith on a no-obligation basis.

Wardens are PCC members and church trustees ex-officio (= by virtue of their role). Our main functions are to support the clergy's ministry, represent the church members, and to be responsible for the church's buildings and property.

Allestree W.I. Meeting on 17th February 2026

The Allestree W.I. will meet Tuesday, 17th February, 2026 at 2.00pm at Woodlands Church, Blenheim Drive, Allestree, Derby. DE22 2GP.

The Talk is 'The Fascinating History of the Weather Forecast' by Ms. Vanessa Tissington. The Competition is a picture of the Weather. Visitors welcome £5.00.pp

Enquiries can be made to Mavis on 01332 556012.

Allestree Flower Group 17th February 2026

Our second meeting of the year is on Tuesday 17 February with a Workshop given by Marie Bradley

Time: 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

Venue: The Evergreen Hall, Cornhill, Allestree, DE22 2FT.

Admission: Members £5.00 Non-Members £9.00

For further details telephone 07968 237457



Remember the 10.30am new time for the Wednesday Holy Communion Service

From 3rd December 2025 the Wednesday Holy Communion service at St Edmund's has moved to the later start time of 10.30am. The experiment is running for a trial period to the end of March 2026 and we hope that this slightly later time may help more people to attend which would be lovely. Certainly a lovely lady from St Nick's has been able to take Communion with us at our midweek service if she has missed the St Nick's Sunday Communion

Revd. Rachael Brooks



ST EDMUND'S



All Age Worship, 10am



1st February at St Edmund's

The theme will be 'Leah & Rachel:
when life sends you lemons'

22nd February at St Edmund's

The theme will be 'Four resourceful
women who outwitted Pharaoh'

Both services will be informal, interactive
and suitable for all ages.

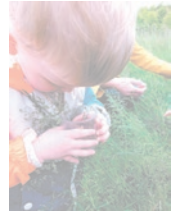
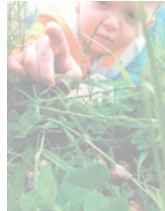
ALL WELCOME



Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

Nature Tots

St Edmund's Baby & Toddler Group in partnership
with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust



A pre-school playgroup with a difference,
connecting children with nature;
encouraging them to learn, play and have
fun outdoors

**Thursday 12 Feb, 10-11.30am,
Allestree Park**

Park in the main carpark off the A6, DE22 2EU, walk towards the hall, a
member of the team will direct you.

Please wear suitable clothing and footwear as we are outside. Bring a
lidded travel cup as hot drinks are available.

£2 suggested donation per child.

All welcome



ST EDMUND'S



Shrove Tuesday

17 February, 5 - 7 pm

St Edmund's Church Hall



Join us for delicious
pancakes with sweet
toppings & cheese.

All Welcome



**ST EDMUND'S
ST MATTHEW'S
ST NICK'S**



Ash Wednesday

18 February



Holy Communion

10.30 am, St Edmund's

11.30 am, St Nick's

7.30 pm, St Matthew's

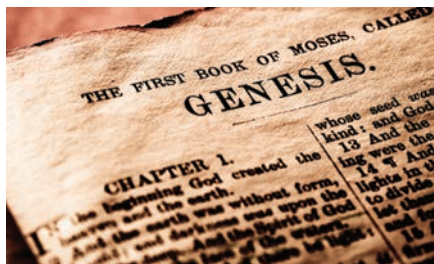
All welcome

Bible Course starting Sunday 1st February

Do you find the Bible intimidating, confusing, or hard to stick with? Our Bible Course is here to help! It is a free, 8-week resource designed to help you understand the "big picture," gain confidence in reading and discover the Bible's practical relevance for today. If you have to miss one or two, don't worry, you'll still benefit from going to as many as you can.

Revd Sarah and Revd Rachael have planned an eight week course to run through Lent, and it will involve all of our four churches. It is a video-based course which presents an overview of the themes and content of the Bible, with discussion built into each session. Each session will be approximately 75 minutes long and will take place on Sunday afternoons at 2.00pm. The course starts on Sunday 1st February, will avoid Mothering Sunday, and finish on March 29th (Palm Sunday).

If you are interested or would like to get more information, please see Revd Sarah, Revd Rachael, Andrew Brooks, Diana Mellor or enquire via the Church office (see page 8 for telephone number or email).



PANCAKES on Shrove Tuesday Early Evening

Please do come and join us on 17th February in St. Edmund's Church Hall for our annual pancake feast. We will be serving savoury and sweet pancakes from 5.00pm to 7.00pm and there will be hot and cold drinks available and a raffle.

This is always a lovely enjoyable evening so bring your family and friends along, make it a half term treat!

Table Top & Craft Sale, Saturday 28th February

Last chance for you to book a table for our sale in St. Edmund's Church Hall on Saturday February 28th from 10.00am - 1.00pm.

There are two sizes of table available: LARGE which is 6ft long at a cost of £15 or SMALL which is 4ft long at a cost of £10. If you are interested please contact marypollett@hotmail.com or telephone 07773 138285 to book.

ALSO there will be a cake stall and we shall be very grateful for donations of cakes to sell.....If you have any bric-a-brac we can sell for church funds please bring it to the Church Hall preferably between 6.00 and 7.00pm on the Friday evening (27th) or phone 07831 506978.



ST EDMUND'S



Sunday services at St Edmund's in February



- Sunday 1** 10 am All Age service
- Sunday 8** 10 am Holy Communion
6 pm Choral Evensong
- Sunday 15** 10 am Morning Prayer
- Sunday 22** 10 am Holy Communion
6 pm Choral Evensong

All welcome



ST EDMUND'S



Join us for Holy Communion



Wednesday
4th, 11th, 18th & 25th Feb
St Edmund's
10.30am

All welcome



ST MATTHEW'S



Sunday services at St Matthew's in February



- Sunday 1** 10 am Holy Communion
6 pm Evensong
- Sunday 8** 10 am Morning Prayer
- Sunday 15** 10 am Holy Communion
6 pm Choral Evensong
- Sunday 22** 10 am All Age service

All welcome

The Bible Course
NEW EDITION

ST EDMUND'S & ST MATTHEW'S

Want to feel more connected to God's word?



Time - 2-3.15 pm
When - Sundays in Feb & Mar (except 15th Mar)
Where - St Matthew's Fellowship Room, DE22 1EY
Enquire - steds.stmatts@outlook.com or stnickallestree@outlook.com

biblesociety.org.uk/thebiblecourse

OPEN HOUSE COFFEE AT ST. EDMUND'S

Join us for coffee - everyone welcome.
We'd love to see you!

We serve coffee and biscuits on Sunday mornings
between 11.00am and 11.45am in St Edmund's Church Hall.
Please come and join us for a chat.

On Wednesday mornings
there's coffee inside the
church at 11.15am - again,
do pop along.



St Edmund's Church
St Edmund's Close
Allestree, DE22 2DZ



St Matthew
DARLEY ABBEY

ST EDMUND'S



We collect for the Hope
Centre on the **first**
Sunday of **every** month.
Donations can be left in
St Edmund's Church.
Thank you.

*Community
Pop-in Café*

*Coffee
Tea
Toast*

Fellowship Room
St Matthew's Church
Darley Abbey
Friday 27th February 2026
8.30 - 10.30am

All welcome
Share time with friends

St Edmund's Handbell Ringers Support Blood Bikes



Is it windy or is it raining? These are two questions we usually ask ourselves before ringing our Handbells at Park Farm Centre. Fortunately, on Saturday, 13th December last year, the weather was calm and dry.

Initially, in the early years, we collected for local children's charities and then for the last 4 years in support of Blood Bikes, as we did this time. St Edmund's Handbell Ringers played a selection of Christmas carols for more than an hour, while the bikers and their Blood Bike remained there for some time after we had left. As usual, it was a fun occasion!

We were delighted to hear how generous the shoppers had been, realising a total of £700+, which included the next day's Sunday coffee donations. from St Edmund's.

Sadly this is likely to be the last time we perform at Park Farm Centre as the new management is now charging us for being there! (£30+vat).

Gill Flatman



Some Good Walks Revisited: Canal Towpaths (6)

The Rambler's Walks continue with The Canal Towpaths series:

MOIRA FURNACE AND ASHBY CANAL

The old coalfield area of the Ashby Wolds has been regenerated by the National Forest scheme and the once-defunct Ashby Canal has had a new lease of life, enhanced by adjacent sites such as the historical Moira Furnace and the popular Conkers activity centre. Lying just within NW Leicestershire, a walk of 5¾ miles is outlined linking these sites and returning via Albert Lake, with mainly well-surfaced and level paths throughout.



Moira Furnace

The Ashby Wolds area lies some 3 miles W of Ashby de la Zouch and 3 miles S of Swadlincote, forming part of the former Leicestershire & S. Derbyshire Coalfield, which was one of the smallest in the country. As well as coal seam exploitation, a band of fireclay to the south of Swadlincote (Derbyshire's southernmost town) formed the basis of its successful sanitary ware industry. The last working colliery was at Donisthorpe which closed in 1990, a fate also of the many associated limeyards, claypits and brickworks. The whole is now part of the National Forest project, in which most of the old workings and railways have been well landscaped as a recreation area, with trees planted and footpaths created, many of which are hard surfaced. Two long distance walking routes pass through the area: the National Forest Way linking the forests of Needwood and Charnwood across three counties; and The Ivanhoe Way, a 36 mile circuit round NW Leicestershire. There is

Continued on page 17

Some Good Walks Revisited: Canal Towpaths (6)



Ashby Canal & Marquis Bridge

also the National Forest's Millenium Discovery Centre, named Conkers, situated on the site of Moira's old Rawdon Colliery, covering some 120 acres of woodland, lakes and gardens with interactive exhibits, adventure playground, sculpture trail, climbing wall and activity for all ages. It comprises the Waterside Centre at the northern canal basin and the Discovery Centre ¼ mile beyond, connected by trail and site railway.

The Ashby Canal was completed in 1804, to connect the Ashby Wolds coalfields to the

Coventry Canal near Bedworth 30 miles away. It never reached Ashby de la Zouch, but served further afield using tramways from its northern basin: eg to Swadlincote and the limeyards at Ticknall and Breedon. The canal was taken over by the Midland Railway in 1846 with the intention of converting the route to rail, but the canal survived initially when the Ashby – Nuneaton line was built on an adjacent route (opened 1873, last goods train 1981) which is used on the walk. However, the canal's days were numbered, especially as its northern section suffered from subsidence due to mine shaft proximity; thus closure came progressively in the period 1944-66. The restored northern section of 1½ miles was reopened in 2005; it forms the start of Ashby Canal Trust's grand scheme to reconnect with the rest of the canal (to the south) and the national canal network.



Conkers Waterside & North Basin

Moira Furnace is the remnant of an iron-making blast furnace, built in 1804 by the Marquis of Hastings, a descendant of the former owners of Ashby de la Zouch castle. As principal landowner at the time, his plan was to take advantage of the abundant iron ore and coal in the Ashby Wolds area and the timely arrival of the Ashby Canal. (He was also landowner of Moira in Ireland – hence the name given to this colliery village). However, the furnace was not a commercial success, often operating intermittently and falling into disuse after 1844. The foundry and engine house were demolished but the furnace and

integral bridge house survived, with the latter temporarily converted to a private dwelling. Never having been repaired or modernized probably helped its survival, which led to the ruin's purchase by the local Leicestershire Council in 1981 and restoration of both the furnace and adjacent lime pits. These, together with the bridge house museum and nearby craft centre, now form a scheduled Industrial Monument.

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Some Good Walks Revisited: Canal Towpaths (6)

The Route begins at Albert Lake & Woodland Car Park* (OS ref.299173). Follow the surfaced track out of the c/p, curving L & R to a junction with yellow post and turn R. Follow the trail to a quarry road, cross and turn L on a parallel f/p, heading SE to Spring Cottage (305164). Turn R at the road, over a railway bridge and immediately L on the Ashby Wolds Heritage Trail towards Measham. Continue for about a mile into the Donisthorpe Woodlands Park, briefly joining the Ivanhoe Way. About 300yds after crossing a stream bridge (with houses on R) the track forks (315143) at an Orienteering post (no.16) with route markings; turn L, bearing E across a stream and pass the Donisthorpe Woodlands Centre to a canal basin. Follow the towpath L for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to Moira Furnace and nearby Craft Centre (with cafe) and continue for another $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (past locks, over a road, under Marquis Bridge) to the northern basin at Conkers Waterside. Continue N, under a rail bridge to the Discovery Centre; cross its c/p to a Conkers Circuit track alongside the entrance drive and which then bears L parallel to the Woodville road. At the track exit bear R&L to rejoin the road and bear L at the next junction for Albert Village. After about 200 yards turn L on a track which loops down to Albert Lake (good birdwatching & superb gorse display in Spring). Follow the track around the S bank, then fork L away from the lake and turn R at the yellow post back to the c/p.



Albert Lake

The Rambler

* Albert Village lies just over the county border, reached from Swadlincote via Church Gresley; or from Burton upon Trent via the A444 and L on Park Road for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile; c/p is on R, which also serves the adjacent Memorial Woodland to Diana Princess of Wales.



Conkers Discovery Centre

If you have young children, you may be interested in ... St Edmund's Baby & Toddler Group

WHAT? St Edmund's Baby & Toddler Group is a small friendly group where parents & carers can enjoy a tea or coffee with a biscuit whilst their little people (up to pre-school age) can play with a variety of toys or head to the craft table. There is



Here is a picture the children made on the craft table for Valentine's Day last year.

squash and fruit for them to enjoy too. We always wrap up the session with a story and some songs including the Hokey Cokey.

WHERE? St Edmund's Church Hall, Allestree (DE22 2FN).

WHEN? Every Thursday (term time) 10-11.30am (other than the 2nd or 3rd Thursday of the month when we meet for Nature Tots).

COST? We suggest a £1 donation per child.

PLEASE PRAY? For a session filled with fun and laughter.

And there's

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WHAT? Nature Tots is a pre-school playgroup with a difference, connecting children with nature; encouraging them to learn, play and have fun outdoors. Parents and carers are welcome to bring their travel cup and enjoy a tea, coffee and a biscuit. There is also squash and fruit to enjoy. We end the session with a story and singing including the Hokey Cokey which is a firm favourite.



'Cooking' in the mud kitchen

WHERE? Allestree Park. Park in the main carpark off the A6 (DE22 2EU) and a member of the team will meet you.

WHEN? Either the 2nd or 3rd (if we've just had a holiday) Thursday of the month.

COST? We suggest a £2 donation per child.

PLEASE PRAY? For fine weather for our next Nature Tots session.

For more details on both groups, please check the diary on pages 7 and 8 or visit the St Edmund's website: stedmundsallestreeandstmatthewsdarleyabbey.co.uk

Book Review

“The Making of Another Major Motion Picture Masterpiece”, by Tom Hanks

Pub hardback by Penguin Random House, 2023
ISBN: 9781787336001

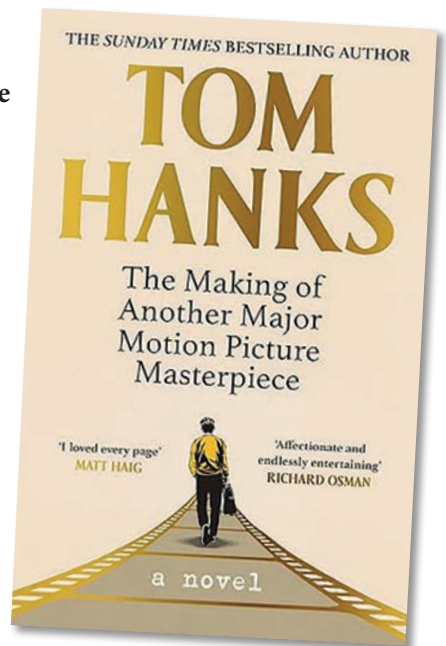
Millionaire star actor is well known for many film roles – “The Green Mile”, “Saving Private Ryan”, “Apollo 13”, and the voice of Woody in the apparently endless animated series, “Toy Story”. Millionaire actor writes a short, rather niche and moderately interesting book on the history of typewriters, of which he has quite a large collection. Book is politely received. So far, so good.

Millionaire actor then decides to launch himself on the novel-reading world with a story about film-making, a much heavier volume of 417 pages. How does he fare ?

First of all, in this book “star of the film” doesn’t mean “hero of this story” (more on that shortly). Secondly, and true to the process of making a film, the tale is divided into phases; to take a few, “Backstory”, “Development Hell”, “Prep”, “The Shoot” (the longest), and finally “Post [-Production]”. The film itself is the latest in a WW2-set series, derived from a US comic-book strip and titled “The Lathe of Firefall” – ie, the star has to be in military uniform, on the front line, and use his flamethrower a lot, or at least brandish it. Our Director is one Bill Johnson, and he chooses a down-at-heel town not far from Hollywood called Lone Butte for the main film set, with an office base in its now-disused Almond Growers’ Building. To cut it very short, the film is made and finds success – more or less.

The heroes of “MAMMPM” are really two women. One, Ynez, is hired as a fixer by Bill, and usually has to juggle this role with care of her toddler nephew Francisco. The other, Allicia (known as “Al”), arrives on Bill’s team not long before, and proves to be a potential producer, but if anything has to learn the ropes even faster than Ynez. For both, the job is an unexpected financial boon, and life in general is immensely complicated.

Hanks clearly enjoys the film-making process, and the writing is pretty accessible; the advice to “write about what you know” is usually a sound beginning. However, it took me over 3 months to plough through this novel, mainly because the plot is so unfollowable. Most of the twists and turns are about the many characters’ personal



Continued on page 21

Book Review continued

lives, and I kept having to re-read whole swathes and be reminded, “Oh, they split up three pages back”, or “I forgot, she’s with him now, are we in California, or back at his place in Reno ?”

There are some isolated passages which stand out because they are so well done (though they are few). Two of these are the description of how a logistics crew (“Teamsters”) and their Hair & Makeup trailer (“H/MU”) are essential to the start of a shoot (pp 253-255), and Bill’s teach-in for AI about how filming progress may not match numbers of pages covered per day in the Screenplay (pp 141-142). These are fascinating insights, and while I disagree with most of the Reviewer comments on the back of the dust-cover, I have to say that the snippet from Richard Osman on its front gets it right; Osman says that the writer’s “affection” for this industry shines out, and that is true.

What is not true is that this read fared well for this reader. Hanks has not learned the arts of tightening a plot, controlling the numbers of twists to below exasperation-point, or (as Gustave Flaubert famously did) writing “until it’s short enough to be ready”. Maybe he should stick to the acting, at which he’s so much better. Only recommended for the endlessly patient !

Kate Smith

Late Feb 2024



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Don't forget that we can only take cash for donations and refreshments. Full details can be found on the Repair Café Facebook page.

Film Review

“OPAL DREAM” directed by Peter Cattaneo

Made by several groups including South Australian Film Corporation. RELEASED BY BBC FILMS/UK FILM COUNCIL, 2006

Australia has become quietly and interestingly more productive of films in the last couple of decades. This one is dominated by landscape: we are in a hot South Australian small town in the 1980s, and the lengthy vistas around are pale, flat, dotted with attempts at opal mining (productive or otherwise) and the slagheaps they produce, and above all dusty and extremely arid.



The story centres on the Williamson family, Rex and Annie and their two children Ashmol, aged around 11, and his sister Kellyanne who is 9. Rex is an opal-miner and short on luck at the moment; Annie works part-time in a small local supermarket. The action is seen from Ashmol's point of view, and he is also narrator where needed; this includes an intriguing kid's-eye view of what dreams and make-believe can mean at the beginning, which sets the scene. A key word we learn is “claim”, which in this Aussie context means a piece of territory that a local miner has either leased or bought, and has legal permission to work for opals.

Kellyanne, who is naturally happy enough but not particularly sociable, makes up for lack of contemporary company by having two imaginary friends, Pobby and Dingan. She is able to describe them in great detail (Pobby, for instance, is male, shy and has a wooden leg). She has the family well-trained; places for them are added to the table for each meal, and all help to maintain the make-believe. But one day, they go missing; it's Dad's fault since he was “looking after them”, and this causes Kellyanne real distress.

Rex is persuaded to search for the friends who are so real to Kellyanne, and ends up straying onto a neighbour's “claim”. The middle stages of the film show the nine-year-old unable to keep food down, restless, weakening and desperately miserable, while the family fortunes are dealt another blow by Rex being shunned, spat at and called a “ratter” by the townspeople (ie he's accused of trying to make money from someone else's “claim”). The last straws come when the aggrieved neighbour issues a lawsuit against Rex, and the manageress at the supermarket asks Annie to leave her job because of the effect strong public feelings against her family are having on trade.

Ash asks the owner of the local opal shop, Humph, who “has a Law degree from England”, to represent Rex for free in the case. This truculent but canny character is

Continued on page 23

Film Review continued

on the edge of society, a loner, but reluctantly agrees to help. Meanwhile Jack the Quack (we're never sure if paramedic or doctor, but he's clearly good), having tested Kellyanne for everything he can with no result, says that she should really be in hospital so she can at least stabilise her weight loss and be seen by experts. We see her lifted gently into Jack's Landrover outside the family home early one morning, with the rest of the Williamsons waving goodbye and deeply anxious for her.

The Magistrate comes all the way up from Port Pirie to take the case in a local school hall. Jack is asked if Kellyanne's rapidly deteriorating health can be attributed to grief at the loss of her friends, and says this is not in doubt. Her teacher testifies that she is a "lovely child with a vivid imagination".

Thanks to Humph's questioning, Rex has to make explicit that his daughter's friends are totally real to her, that he was merely helping her state of mind by looking for them, and that he never intended to trespass on the neighbour's "claim". This turns the mood of the room, and the Magistrate declares that there is no case to answer.

Ash realises that the only way that Kellyanne can get better is if a funeral is held for Pobby and Dingan, and persuades the local funeral director to hold one "with coffins and flowers and everything". The moment when the family are waiting at the cemetery ready for the burial to begin, and realise gradually that the whole town is on the way, carrying posies and dressed to attend the solemnities, is extremely moving. Kellyanne, back from hospital, is very pale and too weak to stand, but is in a chair and covered with a blanket. Speeches of support follow and various reconciliations – including with the aggrieved neighbour – either seen or implied.

Ashmol's closing narrative says that Kellyanne was much happier and got better after that day. The rest of the film is suddenly sad (I won't give the ending away). But the whole piece says a great deal about community and how belief and reality can collide.

All of the acting is credible, but the children (Christian Byers and Sapphire Bryce) are particularly good – very natural. The Children's Acting Coach deserves special praise on this point. Vince Colosimo and Jacqueline McKenzie, who play the parents, come across as authentic, and Robert Menzies (Humph) must also have a mention. The screenwriting was done by the Director, together with two others, Phil Trill and Ben Rice.

If you can find this short (80 minutes or so) piece, I would recommend it. Unfortunately I can't find a DVD of it, but it was on iPlayer, having been shown by the BBC several weeks before. If you can't find "Opal Dream", just ask and I can send a link. A moving and enjoyable film with really valuable insights into Australian, and all, society.

Kate Smith

Late November 2024, revised May 2025

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February 2026

Archdeacon Nicky writes...



This month sees the beginning of Lent. A traditional time of prayer and fasting where Christians are attentive to their individual discipleship and walk with God. We seek to draw near and deepen our relationship with God through prayer. To co-operate with the Spirit's transformative work within us through self-discipline and self-giving. To learn more about our faith and how to live well within the kingdom of God. To give sacrificially blessing others.

Churches across our diocese will host Bible studies, Lent courses, soup lunches, quiet days and all manner of missional activities. Many church members will read a Lent book, join a study group, give something up, or take on a new challenge through this season.

Lent can be a time for great personal growth in our own walk with God. But, is also a time when we recognise we journey with others. During the coming weeks, we can encourage and inspire one another by sharing what we learn and how God is at work in our lives. We can practice the skill and build the habit of sharing our faith with others by.

As we journey together through Lent we will see God at work amongst us - in acts of service, in kind deeds, in teaching and learning, in self-giving and self-sacrifice, in community and togetherness. We will have many opportunities to look around us and recognise the kingdom of God in our midst. To encourage and build each other up and to sow seeds of faith amongst our families and friends who haven't yet found their own faith in God.

As we grow in faith through prayer, learning, self-denial and service, let's encourage, inspire and 'provoke one another to love and good deeds' (Hebrews 10:24). Ideas for doing that might be - recommending a book, sharing an insight, telling a story, letting someone know you are praying for them, acts of kindness, words of encouragement, being gracious in difficult situations etc...

A challenge for Lent is to encourage a different person in their walk with God every day. We could inspire and encourage 47 different people each, if we are willing to take on the challenge. If we share some of the stories of our Lenten acts through our church newsletters and with our diocesan Comms team then we could encourage even more people in their walk with God this Lent.

Nicky Fenton

The Venerable Nicky Fenton
Archdeacon of Derbyshire Peaks and Dales

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Office opening hours:- Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 9.30am – 3.00pm
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If out of hours please leave a message; the answer phone is checked daily.

In an emergency, please contact one of the churchwardens.

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St. Edmund's Parish Magazine Editorial Team: Chris Willis, Claire Pegg and Fiona Fraser.

Please EMAIL magazine articles and photos to both fiona.fraser@burnsgraphics.co.uk and Chris Willis at c.willis246@btinternet.com

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Our Parish magazines are available as printed copies in Church and as a PDF on the website:- stedmundsallestreeandstmatthewsdarleyabbey.co.uk.

Christmas Carols at Park Farm Centre

Go to Page 15 for the full story.



Margaret reaches an Avon landmark



Margaret Pearson has recently retired from being an Avon representative after 50 years of continuous service, a quite remarkable achievement. There can't be many others (if any) that have reached this "golden" landmark.

In recognition of her service, Avon sent Margaret a nice bouquet of flowers and a 'thank you' note in appreciation.

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