ST DENYS BULLETIN

December 26 and January 27



Directory:

Vicar of Sleaford
The Rev'd Philip Johnson
vicar.sleafordparishchurch.co.uk

The Parish Office
Parish Administrator
Paula Ireland
Market Place, Sleaford,
NG34 7SH
admin@sleafordparishchurch.co.uk
01529 413607
Mon, Weds, Fri 9-11am

Churchwardens
Richard Clash
07714 565678

Sarah Stentiford
07707 513225

Safeguarding Officer
Angela Clash 01529 410065
or 0303 003 1111

Director of Music
Lee Mitton-Rooke
lee.rooke@googlemail.com

St Denys Bellringers
sylvia.bird860@gmail.com

PCC Treasurer
Brenda Hitchcock
01529 302775

FROM THE VICARAGE

In 1987 The Pogues duet (Kirsty MacColl & Shane MacGowan) – The Fairytale of New York – reached no.2 in the UK Christmas charts. It is the most played Christmas song of the 21st century in the UK and has sold millions of copies. I was saddened to discover that the song has been re-written this year – a sanitised version for a different generation, but no recording artist is likely to achieve the late Kirsty MacColl's subtle balance of femineity and viciousness, which is a hall mark of the song.

The song is an antidote to festive cheer. It is Christmas eve and we have a choir (albeit the New York Police department choir) and bells ringing in Christmas Day, but these are peripheral to the duet conversation between Shane and Kirsty. The choir and bells are heard from the drunk-tank – the communal cell for the drunk and disorderly – in a New York police station. In that cell is and old drunkard who believes he will not see another Christmas while Shane can see a better time when dreams will come true. Kirsty picks up the idea with a litany of all the good things that New York offered – the promises of Broadway – but has come to realise that although she could have been someone her dreams had been stolen and she hopes this Christmas will be there last.

The song is an example of the tension of hopes and dreams versus disappointment and dejection. But the peripheral choir and bells run like a golden thread through the song. The lyrics are never explicit about the Christian message of Christmas (the choir sing Galway Bay rather than a carol) but the choir and bells ring out the Christmas message in a way that penetrates even into the depths of the drunk-tank.

In the darkest of months, in the darkest of places, when all hope seems lost, the Christmas bells echo through the darkness with a message of hope. In that dark and lonely stable the light of life was born to bring love and hope to all peoples. Those Christmas bells remind us that even when we are in our darkest place God is with us, and with him there is light and hope.

Fr Philip

The Antiphon for Vespers (Evensong) on the 23rd December

O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Saviour:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Isaiah 7. 14 (KJV)

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel – God with us.

Funerals and Memorial Services

Please remember in your prayers

Elizabeth Joy Keitch
Aged 91 years
Frank Lesley Copeland
Aged 91 years



FROM THE SLEAFORD VESTRY BOOK, 1654

'It is agreed by the parties aforesaid that if by reason of souldiers or the like occasion any extraordinary losse of the windowes or leades above mentioned that then the towne shall bear the cost occasioned thereby.'

CWs: William Borrowdaile and Gabriel Rollinson.

CGS Master: Revd. Thomas Gibson, sometime vicar of Horncastle who was jailed for being a Royalist, but was reinstated at the Restoration.

Vicar: Revd. Henry Teonge

Two Henry Teoges are known. One was famous, studied at Christ's, Cambridge and compiled a diary of exploits as a Royal Naval chaplain. The other was vicar of Sleaford 1648-1655 and studied at Trinity, Cambridge. Alas, the list of Cambridge graduates has confused them! About **our** Henry, we know very little!

St Denys's and Carre's are still here!

Douglas Hoare

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

Sunday, 20th December at 5pm

Traditional service with mulled wine and mince pies

FAMILY NATIVITY

Christmas Eve at 4pm

An interactive service with carols and animals

SLEAFORD KESWICK BIBLE MINISTRY

Riverside Church 7.30pm

Friday, 4th December
Deirdre Brower
Principal of Nazarene Theological College, Manchester

Friday, 8th January
Ian Paul
Associate Minister of St Nic's, Nottingham

COMMUNICANTS' GUILD

The Guild's Christmas meeting on **Tuesday 15th December at 2 pm** in the Church Room will take its traditional form of carols and readings. This is always a most enjoyable occasion to which everyone is welcome. Do come along and join us.

FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS

FUND RAISING & EVENTS

Quiz Night: The Quiz Night held in November was yet again a huge success, but there is still room for improvement. However, a good evening was had by all and it was wonderful to see unfamiliar faces attending, ie, tennis club members, town council representatives and local rotary club members, plus a few outliners.

Sleaford Town Council Christmas Market: As we write this report the annual Christmas Market and Christingle Service will be taking place in a few days time. The Christingle Service is being held in the church, following a two-year absence, by popular demand. We are expecting more of the general public to visit our church and, hopefully, realise what a welcoming, friendly and safe environment it is.

Carol Service: This is being held on 20th December, 5pm, whereby mulled wine and mince pies will be served. Last year's Carol Service was an immense success and we are hoping to raise the bar even higher.

Nativity Service: 24th of December (Christmas Eve), 4pm, there is to be a Nativity Service which will include live animals. These will include four goats. Due to a certain Churchwarden's persistence and equally mad ideas it may be possible to secure a donkey as well. Please make every effort to support the extravaganza. This event may warrant contacting Look North for extra publicity. Rest assured the church will be back to normal for the Midnight Communion and Christmas Day communion services.

LOOKING TO THE NEW YEAR

In 2026 we wanted to hold a Churchwarden's Lunch during January but due to unforeseen circumstances this lunch had to be held in February. This presented us with the opportunity to hold a "Pancake Tossing" competition. This proved to be a huge success and so it is planned to hold a Churchwarden's Lunch during February 2027. This will also include a pancake tossing game and we look forward to presenting next year's "Tosser Of The Year" winner!

FABRIC

Church heating: During the summer months we had some bad news regarding the church boiler and initially there was a risk the boiler was inoperable. Fortunately the problem was not so serious as first thought and following a fair amount of servicing and replacing of bits and bobs the boiler is now fully functional. There are still a few issues regarding the efficiency of most of the radiators within the church building but this problem is in hand - it's just going to take a little while to get resolved.

Compost heap in churchyard: In order to manage the many brambles and overgrown weeds that are cluttering large areas of the churchyard we have created a compost heap in the north-east corner of the churchyard. Many thanks go to Turnbull Building Supplies who have donated several wooden pallets which have been used to create a multi-bay compost heap. It is our hope that within 12 months the churchyard will be free of most of the overgrown vegetation. This improvement also includes allowing easier access to the "lock-up" entrance and greater visibility of the original west-end tracery.

Church Services

(Morning prayer is usually at 8.45am on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday)
Said Communion every Wednesday at 10am (1st Weds of the month is BCP)

DECEMBER
Sunday, 29th November
10am Advent I
3.30pm Christingle
Wednesday, 2nd December
10am BCP
Sunday, 6th December
10am Advent II
Wednesday, 8th December
10am Said Communion
Sunday, 13th December
10am Advent III
Wednesday, 16th December
10am Said Communion
Sunday, 20th December
10am Advent IV
5pm Carol Service
Wednesday, 23rd December
10am Said Communion

Christmas Eve
4pm Family Nativity
11pm Midnight Mass
Christmas Day
10am Sung Communion
Sunday, 27th December
10am St John
Wednesday, 30th December
No service

JANUARY
Sunday, 3rd January
10am Epiphany
Wednesday, 6th January
10am BCP
7pm Epiphany
Sunday, 10th January
10am Baptism of Christ

Wednesday, 13th January
10am Said Communion
Sunday, 17th January
10am Epiphany II
Wednesday, 20th January
10am Said Communion
Sunday, 24th January
10am Epiphany III
Wednesday, 27th January
10am Said Communion
Sunday, 31st January
10am Epiphany IV
Wednesday, 3rd February
10am BCP



