

Great Gaddesden Parish Newsletter

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THE 13-14C. CHURCH OF STJOHN THE BAPTIST, GT. GADDESSEN

Delivered to the villages of Great Gaddesden and Gaddesden Row and the hamlets of Bridens Camp, Water End, Noake Mill and St Margarets

www.greatgaddesdenparishnews.co.uk

Number 329

February 2025

From the Glamorous Assistant

It's seems like years ago when we had the last magazine. A lot has happened since then, Christmas, New Year, new American president, Chinese New Year and more recently Burns night. Actually, I'm off to a joint Chinese New Year and Burns night party with some friends tonight. It's called a Chinese Burns night. I didn't want to go, but they twisted my arm. (I like that one) I hope Christmas was good for you. I know it's a tough time for some people, stay strong. Lets hope for a fantastic 2025. Lets hope the weather is better this year. So much rain recently. We had a leak in the roof. I only found out when I finished my soup three times

The Tesco blue disc thingy has finished for us and has moved onto other fine groups. We won't know the results of the disc count for quite a while yet though. I went to the Tesco Christmas staff party this year. I'd used the self-service tills so much to get blue discs, I thought I was entitled. Good news though. The Gaddesden Place RDA is the next choice for the Tesco blue disc scheme. So rush to Jarman Park and put your disc in the correct pot. Watch out though. I bought some counterfeit Mr Kiplings there! I must say, they're exceedingly good fakes.

More bad news.... Not only do we want your money, the Red Lion has stopped giving us 20% off the food bill. 😞 They have a new manager there called Charlie. Nice bloke, but doesn't want to give discount. Fair enough.

Family history. I like researching local and family history. Check out page 14 for one of my efforts. (although I nicked most of it from someone else) I'm a complete beginner and still fumbling my way through certain websites looking for Gaddesden past. I discovered a few other folk with similar interests, so were getting together and hopefully learn together. Very informal and involves some booze and honey roast nuts in the pub. Interested? Contact me on johnlowrie62@gmail.com and I'll tell you more.

I'm off to carry on clearing the needles from our non drop Christmas tree. Estimated completion time, Summer 2026. Chat soon

Don't fill your life with days. Fill your days with life.

Stay Great Gaddesden

John

Great Gaddesden Parish Newsletter is read by over 1000 people in and around the parish. Funded by the parish council, the church, advertising, and voluntary contributions from our readers.

To contribute search online for "Just Giving" then Great Gaddesden newsletter or scan the QR code.

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The opinions expressed in the publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions of the publishers.

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Great Gaddesden Parish Newsletter

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Glamorous assistant: John Lowrie
johnlowrie62@gmail.com 07702880534

Deadline for the next issue:

March 2025 -

21st February 2025



It's that time of year again when we start begging for money.

What comes in

We're funded mainly by the Parish Council and advertising. Plus we get contributions from the church, FOGGS (I hope) and from our lovely readers and members of the Great Gaddesden Community. We apply for grants when we can and things like Tesco blue disc schemes.

What goes out

The magazine costs just under £1 each to print and goes free to 450 homes in the community 10 times a year. That's £10 a year for each house. We also need extra copies for pubs, church, advertisers and people who have moved away but still want to stay in touch. So that's about 5,000 magazines printed at £1 each.

What comes in v What goes out...

We want is for this to be a community lead magazine. What we don't want is lots of adverts with a few sponsored stories in between. We don't want to make loads of money, breaking even is the goal. Please bear in mind we're just two blokes in a shed and the magazine takes quite a bit of our time. We'd rather be putting the magazine together than fundraising.

We would love to get at least £10 from each house.

So, Inspired by Bob Geldof...



GIVE US YOUR MONEY

How to help...

Just giving. Cocktail Craig set up a Just Giving page for us. Search Great Gaddesden and go from there. The Qr code and our bank details for a Bank Transfer are on the opposite page

Cash/cheque email us and we'll come running to collect with a big cheesy grin.

Thank you!

Richard and John

From the Vicar

Dear Friends,

How generous are you?

The season of Epiphany in the church calendar, will be concluding, as you read this. In our Sunday worship, we have been reading about the events following Jesus's birth – notably the coming of the wise men from the East bearing gifts for the Christ child, as well as looking at the ways in which Jesus revealed himself in the early days of his earthly ministry some 30 years after his birth.

Firstly, his baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist and then the wedding at Canaan in Galilee when he famously turned water into wine to save the embarrassment of the bridegroom.

The wedding in Canaan, in St John's Gospel, is my favourite, of the so-called 'signs', (those moments of revelation), when the people close to Jesus, have their eyes opened. In Canaan, Jesus turning water into wine, makes the ordinary, extraordinary, in an act of overwhelming generosity.

Our God is God who gives in abundance and calls people to join in the work of bringing about the Kingdom here on earth, to be as The Lord's Prayer puts it, '*as it is in heaven*'....

Our world though, can feel a long way from God's Kingdom, I suggest never more so than at this uncertain time.

At one point in his writing the prophet Isaiah speaks of God having a new vision for his people, (62:1-5). At that time, the people of Israel had returned from exile and rather than excited and jubilant at being back home, they were bowed down and exhausted. They'd rather run out of energy and were not quite sure what to do next.

Who hasn't felt like that?

The prophet calls out to them; he is so filled with excitement at the message he brings that he can't keep it in: '*I will not keep silent*', he shouts, rushing around the place, telling everyone, '*I will not rest*'. For me, there's nothing worse than someone filled with energy and excitement

when you feel exhausted! But Isaiah was determined to be heard, because God had promised to vindicate the people. They were to be God's beautiful crown, '*a royal diadem*', His crowning glory. They will be held in God's hand and given a new name. God wanted to renew his covenant relationship with the people, telling them again, that they are loved no matter what. There is an example of God's overwhelming generosity.

In that famous wedding, heaven and earth meet and a miracle happens; plain ordinary water becomes the very best kind of wine. God again is more than generous; six hundred litres of wine are provided (that's a lot of wine!). St John wants us to understand that it is equal to the amount expected in the heavenly banquet at the end of time, effectively and everlasting unending supply of generosity and love.

The wedding is transformed, and God's glory is revealed, but I wonder whether the analogy is a little lost on our world today. Alcohol is freely available and if you so choose, in unimaginable quantities. I wonder what Jesus might use these days, to illustrate what the Kingdom of God really looks like?

These days, something much more spectacular in our eyes would be required to awaken people from their apathy and world-weariness...

Everyone one of us has God-given gifts, everyone! And we are called to use our gifts to build up one another, to be generous with our gifts, because that's what God's Kingdom will surely look like. Like Jesus at the wedding, when God wants us to do something new in his name, we might feel it's the wrong time, but that's when we have to trust in him, because when we feel inadequate, the Holy Spirit is always there to comfort and encourage us, filling the gaps in our inadequacy, and giving us confidence and the ability to undertake the task at hand.

Our God-given gifts, to be used not squandered or hidden away; something to think about and. consider:

New Year is traditionally a time when we

talk about new beginnings. It's an opportunity to turn over a new leaf and start again. It's a time to embrace new things and welcome change into our lives. The Greek word *neos*, describes things that are so new, they didn't exist before, so they're unprecedented.

In his writings the prophet Isaiah, sometimes uses the word *neos* to prophesy, saying that the new things of God, that he will pour upon his people, will be things that have never been seen before.

I hope and pray that 2025 will turn out to be like that for us. So I encourage you to consider:

Are you ready to receive the *neos*, the new things of God?

Are you ready to be generous to God as he is to you?

Are you ready to be generous to others and to yourself?

I hope and pray so.

Happy New year!

I am yours in Christ,

John.



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Great Gaddesden

Parish Church Contacts

Our parishes have a Prayer Group and if you would like to be prayed for or know of someone who would appreciate a pastoral visit, please contact any of the Ministry Team:

Rev'd. John Russell (Vicar) 01442 214898

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Associate Priest: Rev'd Miranda Seldon 07761 165871
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Jo Connell (Churchwarden)

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Peter King (Churchwarden)

01442 256556

peter_king@btinternet.com

100+ Club

Congratulations to Mike Hannaby winner of the December draw with his no. 44 and Susan Beale, the winner of the January draw with her no. 2.

Join
RICHARD & John

Come and murder a pint while discussing the mysteries of the world at the Crown & Sceptre first Thursday of the month
6th February 8pm
- ITS JUST A DRINK!

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Thank you to everyone for supporting the 100 Club in 2024. We sold 104 tickets, our highest number yet and with several monthly winners generously donating their prize back to the church we were able to contribute over £1000 to the PCC account which pays for things like heating and lighting in church.

Here's wishing you all Good Luck!

A table of 2024 winners is printed below.

January	Jane Senior No.62	July	John Moore Snr No.41
February	Debbie Harland No. 53	August	Val Mills No. 103
March	Anna Barnard No. 67	September	Vicky Waites No.33
April	Susan Beale No.2	October	John Lowrie No. 88
May	John Russell No. 92	November	Kate Hannaby No. 73
June	Anne Wong No.85	December	Mike Hannaby No. 44

Thanks too, to those who continue to support the 100 Club. 102 tickets sold this year.

Congratulations to our first winner of 2025, Susan Beale with her ticket No. 2!

Val Mills

Christmas Flowers

Very many thanks to those who generously contributed to our Christmas flower decorations in church. The flowers, beautifully arranged by members of the flower team, together with our 'real' tree adorned with decorations made by the pupils at Great Gaddesden School and wreaths created by the older pupils, all played their part in making the church look so beautiful.

Just in case you weren't able to see them here are photos of one of the arrangements and one of the wreaths.

Val Mills





February is the month when we celebrate Pancake Day and Valentine's Day. Both celebrations go back a very long time in history. In this issue of our local magazine I hope to share some facts about the history of Valentine's Day.

We all assume that Valentine's Day is named after St. Valentine but, did you know there are actually two St. Valentine. Nobody really knows for sure if the holiday originally celebrated St. Valentine of Rome or St. Valentine of Terni. Both were martyred and legends say that St. Valentine of Rome was a priest who defied the Emperor Claudius II's ban on soldiers getting married and he continued to marry couples in secret.

Valentine's Day also has pagan roots, it may have originated in Lupercalia a festival of fertility celebrated on February 15 in ancient Rome. Lupercalia was dedicated to the Roman god of agriculture, Faunus and the founders of Rome (Romulus and Remus). It was celebrated with animal sacrifices. The ritual of gently slapping women and crop fields with goat hides dipped in blood thank goodness is no longer performed.

The origin of Valentine's Day is somewhat murky. In the fifth century it was declared as annual holiday when Pope Gelasius outlawed the celebration of Lupercalia. Quite some time later Valentine became associated with romance. In the Middle Ages it was believed that February 14 was the beginning of the mating season for birds. Chaucer cemented the connection between Valentine's Day, birds and romance. Chaucer wrote the poem in 1375 "Parliament of Foules".

Cupid with his arrow can be traced back to 700 B.C. also plays his role for Valentine

due to that over time he was adopted as symbol of love by the Romans from Greek mythology. According to history the oldest Valentine message has been recorded in 1415 and was sent by Charles Duke of Orleans to his beloved wife while he had been imprisoned in the Tower of London for political reasons. One line of the poem to his wife reads : "I am already sick of love my very gentle Valentine" .

In the 17th century people started to exchange cards and letters to their lovers and in the 1840's mass-production of Valentine card's began. Not only cards but also red roses and chocolates were sent as love tokens. According to Hallmark a whopping 145 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged every February 14 and that doesn't include all the ones children send to their classmates and friends. This makes Valentine's Day the second biggest holiday for exchanging cards after Christmas.

Valentine's Day is one of the most popular days for marriage proposals and I would like to finish this article with William Shakespeare's love poem from 1601

*"To-morrow is Saint Valentine's Day,
All in the morning bedtime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.
Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,
And dupp'd the chamber-door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more."*

(Hamlet, Act IV, Scene5)

Gerti Evans

Gaddesden Row Church

Love and more

Time for a February article already? The frost is still staying on the ground even at noon and the idea of the first hints of flowers that may come in late Feb seems impossible. And yet I trust that the Spring will come. The nights are drawing out and love is in the air – well the day of flowers costing twice as much is mid Feb.

When I was in the prison (yep that got your attention – sorry the story not as juicy as that) – I had a particularly memorable Valentines Day. I was training to be a minister and for that year I was on a weekly attachment with the prison chaplain. I was planned to preach at the prison chapel that week and Sunday was on the 14th. Having discussed it I opted to speak on the subject of love in all its ways, watching out for our mates etc.

This chaplain allowed 'passing the peace' after the sermon in chapel, not moving all over but a less formal moment. And immediately after my talk about love one guy charges across the room and punched another one! No alarm sounded that I could hear but extra officers appeared seemingly from thin air and took that both away whilst the chaplain called order and we moved onto communion. (Apparently it was nothing to do with chapel – the system should had flagged that new guy knew the other and history – so should have been in different chapel shifts to avoid meeting.)

As a preacher I don't expect that everyone is listening, if it is your time to nap that's fine. Nor expect people to agree with me – it is good to provoke debate and conversation. But that was the only occasion that I have had someone immediately do the exact opposite of what I was preaching !

That placement taught me a lot – not least that there is a level of raw honesty despite expectations. Less of the polite social tact. That tact has a place; but sometimes it can be a barrier to expressing what we may need to. Now I am totally against that involving any punches etc. But maybe there are times when being blunt is important in our communication (even with ourselves). I came to Herts from 8 years in Yorkshire – I was told when there that people wouldn't talk behind my back; they would have already told me to my face. Not fully true, but yet...

There is a balance to be found between the cute greeting card rhymes and the blunt reality – may we each find what is right in each situation we face.

Rev Helen Roberts

Revhelen2015@gmail.com



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Tower Report

A new year always brings with it a sense of anticipation - turning the page on 2024 and looking forward to 2025 - and I have found a new enthusiasm for the wonderful past-time / exercise / skill / torture of bell ringing, and a new determination to get fitter and to ring the methods I am learning with greater accuracy..... and to make sure that these intentions will not join the pile of my previous discarded New Year Resolutions!!

In our tower we number only 7 ringers, so theoretically have enough ringers for our 6 bells. But it's not as easy as that - while all our ringers are now competent and safe when pulling the rope, and are learning methods - it all takes time, we can only ring for 75 minutes on practice night and 30 minutes for Sunday services - and we are human so illness, holidays families and other commitments intervene.

We have 12 towers in our Western District and probably fewer than half can be described as having sufficient ringers to cover all eventualities. Fortunately our District has a thriving co-operative approach between and among the towers, so more experienced ringers are very generous in their willingness to help out towers such as ours, and less experienced ringers are welcomed to other local towers to boost their numbers, gain experience of ringing on lighter or heavier bells, or to ring more advanced methods and just to gain more time on the end of a rope.

Like many other musical instruments, Ringing tower bells has its own language and disciplines - we start each piece of ringing when the ringer of the treble bell (the smallest bell in the tower) says loudly and clearly "Look to.... Treble's goingShe's gone" - this is the tower ringing

equivalent of a conductor tapping his baton on the lectern and raising it, looks expectantly at the orchestra as he commands their playing. In response to "She's Gone", the treble ringer will pull the rope and the remaining 5 bells will follow one after the other, smallest to biggest.

Each piece of bell ringing also has a conductor. This can be just a call to begin a simple piece ("Go plain hunt on 5") or to end it ("That's all"), or an indication for 2 bells to change places "2 to 3" "4 to 5" etc. On a more complex piece of ringing, the conductor will call out when a particular change in the pattern of ringing is required. The more complicated the method, the more skilled the conductor (and the ringers!) need to be. A Quarter Peal is a piece of ringing which on 6 bells lasts about 40 minutes and has 1260 changes. A Full Peal lasts around 3 hours and has 5040 changes and requires great skill, fitness and concentration. (Don't even begin to think about how people manage their bladders for that length of time!). During our District Quarter Peal weekend in November, both Daphne and Steve successfully rang quarter peals. Our tower captain Val rang 37 quarter peals all over the place last year and our local District Secretary rang 100!

I'm feeling tired just thinking about it.

Sue Collyer

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Gaddesden Row
JMI School

Gaddesden Row JMI School

Happy New Year!
Here at Gaddesden Row, January not only signalled the new year but also the start of a new Headteacher.

Hannah Smith has taken up the post, having previously been the Deputy Headteacher. The children have adapted to the new normal brilliantly.

We have started our whole school swimming lessons and the children are enjoying getting to know their instructors and the opportunity to develop their skills in the water.

Our new topics have been a great success in all classes and have provided an excellent opportunity to explore fantastic texts. Reception and Year One are learning about Superheroes and have thoroughly enjoyed designing their own evil vegetable based on Evil pea from the Supertato series. Year 2 and 3 have been exploring and describing their favourite places having explored the meadow in *The Lion and the Meadow*. Year 4, 5 and 6 created their own dragon to train having met Toothless from the *How to Train Your*



Dragon Series.
The week beginning the 3rd of February is Children's Mental Health Week. This year we're exploring the theme Know Yourself, Grow Yourself in partnership with Here4You, supported by The Walt Disney

Company and the Inside Out 2 characters. The children will take part in and complete activities across the week to encourage them to express their emotions.

Safer Internet Day 2025 will take place on the 11th of February 2025, with

celebrations and learning based around the theme 'Too good to be true? Protecting yourself and others from scams online.

Our activities will be focusing on the issue of scams online and for young people, how to protect themselves and others, as well as what support is available to them.

For any more information or to discuss spaces within the school, visit our website <https://www.gaddesdenrow.herts.sch.uk> or call the School on 01582 840376. Miss Smith, the headteacher, and her team will be delighted to help.

*Miriam Barrow - Co-Chair Governor,
Gaddesden Row JMI School*



BIRTHDAY

February

We try to keep an up to date list of birthdays.

If anyone wants to add names to our list or knows of people who have moved away and could perhaps have their names removed please contact The Editor.

richard@richardcollis.com

Names are normally removed when the person becomes 18, but we can include 'special' birthdays for any age.

Nora Velentzas	1 st	6
Blue Kempster	3 rd	15
Darcy Sealey	4 th	9
Aaron Timlett	6 th	17
Mia Pugh	6 th	6
Curtis Florido	10 th	18
Eva Bevan	11 th	2
Owen Chappell	12 th	17
Harrison Oliver	16 th	16
Harrison Osborne	17 th	15
John Hill	20 th	90!
Kian Bolton	21 st	13
Andrew Cope	28 th	18

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Fatal Fire at Gaddesden Place 1st February 1905



The burnt-out house Gaddesden Place Fire permission granted by Gaddesden Estate

I think all residents of Great Gaddesden can recognise Gaddesden Place. This grand building overlooks the River Gade and the busy Leighton Buzzard Road. But, how many of you know of the death and disaster that happened 120 years ago in 1905?

I'm on the Dacorum Heritage Trust mailing list and some time ago they had a three part series about the fire which I've pinched and jazzed up a bit. Thing is, when you start looking into these things you find yourself disappearing down rabbit holes following interesting facts. For example, one occupier of Gaddesden Place played cricket for the MCC. Another rowed in the Boat Race. So my research took a bit of time.

Gaddesden Place was commissioned by Thomas Halsey. As is the family tradition, there are a few 'Thomas' Halsey's. This one is the 1731 -1788 edition. The grand building was built between 1768 and 1773 to a design by James Wyatt, who also designed Ashridge house and many other buildings. He's buried at Westminster Abbey. The Halsey's at the time were living in the Golden Parsonage and moved to Gaddesden Place and it remained the Halsey family home from then on.

In 1905, Sir Thomas Frederick Halsey, 1st Baronet. (1839-1927) was the head of the Halsey family. Sir Thomas had been Conservative MP for Hertfordshire and later Watford from 1874 to 1906. An interesting man and worthy of a Great

Gaddesden Magazine article all on his own. Fancy doing that, let me know. The family had now moved back into the Golden Parsonage while Gaddesden Place was being rented out to Sir John Kerr MP and his family. Sir John, who originally lived in East Lothian, became the conservative MP for Preston and made his fortune by building tram lines in Edinburgh and Preston. Sir John's daughter Margot had recently been married to the interesting character of Captain Henry Baird. (another article maybe?) The house was still full of the wedding presents. Captain Baird was a British Army officer who won the DSO, Queens medal and mentioned in Dispatches during the Second Boar War.

We now come to the fateful day on 1st Feb 1905, Margot was sleeping in a room on the second floor and was awoken by the presence of smoke. She immediately raised the alarm and by 4:05am the whole household was in a state of commotion. A fire had started near the main heating boiler and had quickly spread. All the occupants of the house grabbed some clothes and escaped as quickly as possible. Remember it was 1905, mobile phones didn't exist and the new fangled land line from service provider, the General Post Office, aka GPO, hadn't been installed yet. (there's evidence of WW1 telephone lines in Water End, but that's another story) Staff from Home Farm, quickly saddled a horse and galloped into Hemel Hempstead for the fire brigade. The Hemel Gazette reported that the 'electric communication from the fire engine station to the members was put into action at 4:23am and in a few minutes Captain Hancock with Lieutenant Williams and all the members of the brigade were on their way to the scene with driver Allison having horsed the engine very smartly.'

Despite the smart attendance, Hemel's small, ill-equipped volunteer fire brigade used horse-drawn engines with hand-operated pumps. Private fire brigades were usually much wealthier and could afford steam driven engines. Thankfully, The John Dickinson Paper Mill's own steamer

had arrived a little past 5am and took position at the River Gade, 700 yards away and commenced pumping operations from the river into a dam outside the carriage entrance. From here, the manuals were worked and jets were taken into the burning mansion. The steamer was described to work 'splendidly.' However, to pump water up the steep incline from the river to the house created high pressure. The hose ended up bursting and disconnecting in many places, which must have been frustrating. By 7am, other brigades arrived including Berkhamsted to help to put the fire out.


When the fire was at its height, the glow of the flames could be seen for miles around. It was said that the illumination from a two-mile distance was so bright, it was possible to read a newspaper. As the day wore on and the firemen battled the flames, the people of Hemel Hempstead and the surrounding villages gathered by the hundreds to witness the spectacle.

By the afternoon, the fire was diminishing. The main block of the building was now a



Crowds in front of the burnt-out house Gaddesden Place
permission granted by Gaddesden Estate

shell with just the bare walls left. The wings had been saved, and everyone from the household had escaped the fire. Firemen were still on site, to damp down the red-hot bricks and put out the smaller outbreaks of fire. It was still a dangerous building and could collapse anytime soon. Margot's wedding dress, her bridesmaid dresses, jewellery and presents were all destroyed by the blaze. Some of Sir Thomas's very rare books and valuable





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artworks, had been saved and the expensive contents of the wine cellar had been cleared out and was being guarded over by one of the local policemen.

The wine was causing concern for the butler William Paton. There were hundreds of people milling about. Where would the wine be safe? The wine cellar was directly under the carriage entrance, a substantial arch being the main support for water and debris which had been collected above.

At 2:30pm the butler asked James Cornes, the Halsey's bailiff if he could have some carts to transport the wine from the cellar. When the carts arrived, the butler seemed to have changed his mind about removing the wine. The butler approached Sir Kerr, and asked permission to put the wine back in the cellar. Sir Kerr replied 'Whatever you do, don't run the slightest risk, lose absolutely all the wine rather than a life.' The butler William Paton said he had been assured by the firemen that the cellar was safe from the fire. 'I am solely responsible for all the wine, and that's why I didn't like to move it out of my charge.' The butler and other men entered the cellar at 5:45pm.

They were still unsure. The Butler William Paton, the Footman James Smart were discussing whether it was a good idea to once again remove the wine to safety. The butler asked Sidney Clark, a Berkhamsted Brigade fire fighter. 'What do you think of this lot; do you consider it is safe?' Sidney Clark's reply was 'No, I don't think it is', and so the butler replied, 'Go upstairs and call some men; I will have the wine taken out again.' I can imagine the mutterings under the breath of 'make your mind up' but that's just me.

There were five men in the cellar at the time. The butler William Paton aged 45, the footman James Smart, PC Limbrick, Fireman Sidney Clark, and Alfred Dolt, an ex-postman who was helping out.

Sidney Clark heard the butler shout 'My God' and then an almighty crash as the ceiling collapsed bringing tons of debris on the men. Alfred, Sidney and P.C. Limbrick managed to scramble to safely through a broken window. But the butler and

footman were not so lucky. The butler was killed instantly when the falling masonry broke his neck. The footman was buried and burnt. From outside, they could hear the screams of the footman. People rushed to assist. When Sidney climbed back in, he saw that another fireman, was holding the footman's head. The men attempted to lift him from the debris, but he was too firmly fixed and the hot ashes kept falling down upon him. They managed to free him using pickaxes. He was covered with dust and his clothes burnt to his skin. He was conscious, asking for water. A carriage was called and he was sent to West Hertfordshire Infirmary. He died at 9am the following morning from the injuries he sustained in the cellar.

The body of footman, James Henry Jones Smart aged 21 was carried in a hearse to Boxmoor Station, and taken by train for Ketley, near Wellington, Salop, where his funeral took place.

Butler William Paton's brother, Mr Campbell, decided to spare his family further pain and expense by holding the funeral at Great Gaddesden and not his hometown of Dalry, Ayrshire, Scotland.



The scene inside the cellar once William and James had been recovered
taken by local photographer Culverhouse.
©The Dacorum Heritage Trust Ltd

John Lowrie

14 Tips for your February Fitness Plan...

As Valentine's day approaches, the usual New Year Resolutions tend to have dropped by the wayside, with fitness training being one of them. So as the 14th February arrives, why not make a pact with your someone special or pal and try out these 14 top tips to stay consistent and make your fitness regime enjoyable and one that you can stick to.

1. Visualise your goals – When you see a list in front of you, its far easier to stick to your goals for the day. Write them down and stick them on the fridge or better still write them in your diary!! This will ensure you are reminded of that promise to yourself.
2. Stop the excuses! – It's so easy to make excuses NOT to exercise, trust me, as a Fitness Coach I have heard them all. Don't let one bad day or other life aspects get in the way and sabotage your health goals. That's why training with your partner or friend is a good tactic as it's harder to let someone else down and make excuses to duck out. Or you could book into a Training session with me and the FitHut fam to keep you on track and motivated.
3. Treat yourself – Modern life can be very stressful so it's a good idea to reward yourself at least once per month. This could be anything from going to the Cinema to planning a nice meal with your friends or loved one. Enjoy all aspects of your life and this in turn will help you maintain a happy balance and keep you looking forwards.
4. Sign up for an event – By signing up to an event like a walk or race. Or the Feb intake of Lift Lean, our small friendly group training programme at The Fit Hut (wink wink). All of these are a great way of keeping you motivated to train, having something to aim for keeps you motivated and it's also something you can do with others!!
5. Take up a challenge – set yourself (or you and your partner/friend) a challenge. This could be hitting your 10,000 steps everyday for a month, to how many gym sessions you plan to make each week. Setting realistic goals up front helps you plan ahead and work towards something. This is a tool I use with my clients all the time.
6. Keep a record of your activity – Its important to keep a record of your progress each week and see where you've made improvements. This is a great motivational tool to keep you on track.
7. Drink loads of water! – You should always drink plenty of water to keep hydrated. Think of water like Fuel for your car. You wouldn't drive your car on empty it would just damage the engine. Well, this is the same for your body, your muscles, joints and ligaments all need fuel to avoid injury, plus it also helps keep your energy levels up!
8. Invest in some new fitness clothing – Just like a new outfit for going out, buying some new gym wear can not only boost your confidence but make you feel good too!
9. Focus on your Meal Preparation – Although this takes a bit more time up front, you will reap the rewards later. Batch cooking some of your fav meals and freezing them is not only more cost effective, but it will stop you wasting time over thinking each meal which is one of the main reasons why people fall off their diets and just end up on the grab and go cycle.
10. Be realistic!! – It's so demotivating if you set goals which are impossible to achieve right away. Be mindful of yourself and daily commitments. You are more likely to get better results long term, by consistently training x1 per week than you are if you set yourself a goal of x3 per week and thus feeling too overwhelmed and not make any. Set yourself a doable minimum then anything else is a bonus!!

11. Don't focus on the Scales! – Your success isn't about what that number says on the scale. It's about how much better, fitter, stronger and happier you feel over a period. If you struggle with staying motivated or not sure how to goal set. Drop me an email or give me a call and I will be more than happy to help you get on the right track!

12. Mix up your training! – It's always important to mix up your training by trying a new workout or programme like our group training sessions. This will take you out of your comfort zone and you may make some new good friends too!

13. Keep chipping away – We all fall by the wayside at times. We're just six weeks into 2024 and there are 46 more to go. Keep chipping away one week at a time, don't be in a rush. Fitness is meant to be a lifelong goal so be patient and enjoy getting healthy and feeling your best!!

14. Don't do it alone!! – As mentioned above you are more likely to succeed if you get your partner or friend on board with you. And if you want some extra accountability and friendly encouragement, come talk to me and I'll introduce you to some amazing people at The Fit Hut. Come join our next intake for the Feb 6 week Fitness Challenge starting W/c 10th February 2025!!

Get in touch today email me: info@regardsoe-fitness.co.uk Tel: 07786 156653 or visit www.fit-hut.co.uk

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New Year Runners Top Tips

Based on the increased numbers of fellow runners & joggers I have witnessed exercising on the numerous highways of this fine parish, there must have been multiple fitness-related New Year resolutions set, so I thought I would share my top tips that I've picked up since I started my own post-retirement fitness journey nearly 2-years ago....



First up, think about a running schedule or even a coaching plan, i.e. choose how far & how often you want to train, what is it you want to achieve, a target time or distance achievement for example, or have you entered an event? I'm looking forward to the Berko Half Marathon on 02-Mar-25. No doubt you may feel on top of the world after a run, but the effect can be short-lived, unless you commit to regular training then your efforts can quickly be undone. Gyms, fitness & running clubs can help here, but the beauty of running is such that you can usually just go out into the fresh air & without paying membership fees.

Next have a think about where you want to run, there are plenty of footpaths & bridleways to choose around Gt Gaddesden, do be mindful that especially at this time of year they can be quite wet/muddy/icy, it's also tricky to use them without having to also use the roads, many of which don't always have a footpath, in these circumstances you will want to be very mindful of traffic & other road users who will often be surprised to see you running towards them, so think about how visible you are – bright colour & reflective gear is your essential friend when running in poor light or moist conditions.

When using roads, think about the best time for your activity, I often run the length of Gaddesden Row, but certainly not

during morning or evening rush hour when the traffic volume can seemingly rival the M1 - where possible, avoid being next to the kerb with your back to the traffic. Where there is no footpath or pavement, keep to the right-hand side of the road so that you can see oncoming traffic. It may be safer to cross

the road well before a sharp right-hand bend so that oncoming traffic has a better chance of seeing you. Cross back after the bend (Highway Code Rules 1&2).

Running can provide you with the opportunity of time to listen to music or podcasts using headphones, be careful if you are running on roads though as you really do need to listen out for traffic, so bone-conducting headphones rather than in/over-the-ear headphones can work well here.

Continuing with the staying safe theme, share your location with a mobile phone, there are many fitness apps that can do this such as Garmin, Strava, etc, but equally you can share your location using WhatsApp or other tracking apps. Fitness apps will also provide additional benefit to track your physical progress (plus numerous other geeky metrics that I never knew I needed to know) & compare with your running buddies (or rivals) especially if you want some healthy competition.

Now to the important stuff – running shoes, those old comfy trainers you've had for yonks won't provide much support & you need to look after your feet & knees for this activity so a decent pair of running shoes is a sound investment. They come in all makes, shapes, sizes & colours to all budgets & whilst some running shops will give you an assessment of your type of running gait to match the shoe, essentially a bit like car tyres - you want a trail type shoe with more grip & traction for runs

that involve mud or a more cushioned shoe for road-running. You can spend far too much on these (as my pension fund knows), so I would recommend buying an outgoing model in the sales, expect to get at least 1000-km out of each pair.

Otherwise, remember to stay safe & rotate your training runs to vary the tempo (not always running flat out), so that over time you will see a sustained improvement to

achieve your goals. Oh yes, do also remember to wave to other fellow runners you encounter, even if they are wearing a Swindon Town FC shirt, I was almost smiling here because I somehow achieved my highest finish, second place at this flat but frosty New Year 5-k London parkrun!

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Healthy Bones

Healthy bones are essential for a happy and healthy future.

From our mid-thirties bones gradually naturally lose their density. 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over the age of 50 in the UK will break a bone, mainly due to osteoporosis, as between 1 and 3% of bone mass is lost each year over the age of 50. Osteoporosis literally means “porous bones” and occurs when the mesh-like structure within the bones becomes fragile, and breaks occur with minor falls and injuries

The influence of the loss of oestrogen in the Menopause means that women are affected earlier than men. However, Osteoporosis in later life is not just a “female” disease.

So what can we do to help ourselves?

1. Healthy diet – eat a varied diet rich in calcium: dairy products (low fat varieties are just as good), tofu and spinach are all good.
2. Calcium absorption can be affected by caffeine and salt and avoid excessive amounts of meat and cheese as this can increase the acidity in your body.
3. Vitamin D – we get 90% from the sun but good sources include oily fish, cereals and margarine.
4. Stop smoking – you are more likely to develop osteoporosis.
5. Be active – bones are stronger when you do weight bearing exercise such as, running, golf or tennis for at least 30 minutes, 5 times a week.
6. Building our bone bank occurs in our teens, so the more you lay down then, the less the impact of bone loss later in life. So, encouraging our children/grandchildren to get involved in sports or activities that get them up and moving is SO VERY important

7. Maintain a healthy weight – carrying too much weight puts a strain on your joints. Crash dieting can also increase the risk of osteoporosis.

Pilates can help with weight bearing exercise and teach you how to strengthen your core and improve your balance, thus helping to prevent falls and possible fractures.

In my Pilates training with the APPI, I have done a separate course on teaching clients with Osteoporosis how to exercise safely and have now seen many clients in my classes and 1:1 sessions with this condition.

If you would like to know more about exercising safely with Pilates, email me. Or check out my website details below.
moira@stjudesclinic.com
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Great Gaddesden Parish

Hall: *Fridays, 10 am – 11 am*

NEW! – 11am – 12

noon

Cultivating with Clive

There is not a lot that can be done in the garden this time of year so I have produced a gardening terminology list. I hope this helps everyone.

ANNUAL

A plant that germinates, sprouts, flowers and produces seeds all in one season. A good example of annuals are bedding plants.

BIENNIAL

A plant that lives for two years. Germinates and grows a good root system in the first year then goes on to grow and flower and go to seed in the second year. Good example of biennials are foxgloves, forget-me-nots and hollyhocks.



PERENNIAL

A plant that lives for more than two years. Usually grows in cold climates. Dies back each winter and regrows each spring. Good example of perennials are lupins, pansies and hardy geraniums.



DECIDUOUS

This is normally a tree that sheds its leaves each autumn. Most trees in the UK are deciduous.



BRASSICAS

These are vegetables that are members of the cabbage family. They are generally known as cool season crops, although many varieties can be heat tolerant and can be grown through the summer. Examples of brassicas are broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, bok choy, radish and brussels sprouts.



Clive Hill

THINGS TO DO IN THE GARDEN IN FEBRUARY

- Keep off the lawn when wet or frosty
- Keep bird feeders topped up
- Clean garden tools
- Service lawn mowers.
- Prune summer shrubs like buddleja
- Plant bare root shrubs and trees



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Upper Gade Valley Conservation Society

Since the Upper Gade Conservation Society was reestablished last autumn, I've been enjoying learning about our local river. My most exciting discovery has been the cased caddis fly, these amazing creatures are a bit like hermit crabs, however instead of stealing old shells they build their shell out of whatever is nearby. It turns out that the Gade is home to a huge amount of tiny caddis flies, whose shells are made from the fine gravel on the chalk stream...so it's very easy to miss them.

I was lucky enough to be able to join the chalk stream workshop, mentioned by Robin from Hatch's Barn. It was interesting to learn that abstraction in the Upper Gade has been reduced in recent years, helping protect the Gade from drying out during the dry summers. Although, currently the Gade, like many chalk streams in Britain, is suffering from sewerage pollution due to the abundance of water. The heavy rain we've had of late has resulted in higher groundwater levels (also known as the water table). Chalk stream valleys are particularly prone to groundwater flooding. The chalk acts as a sponge soaking up water, but once it is saturated, the groundwater level can rise. This higher water level puts pressure on sewers resulting in water entering the system via cracks in the pipes and chambers. Unfortunately, our sewers were not designed to cope with the impacts of the more extreme rainfall we are experiencing as our climate warms.

To stop the sewerage potentially coming back up the pipes into our homes (no one wants that!) water companies are allowed to discharge untreated sewage into rivers under extreme rainfall conditions. However environmental groups have accused water companies of abusing this allowance by discharging raw sewage into rivers under normal conditions.

Some sewage treatment works have monitors fitted registering how long they are discharging for. In my efforts to find out more about the extent to which sewerage pollution is affecting our stretch



Allen Beechy showing local farmers the river fly in the Gade on a chilly, but sunny, January day



My new friend, the cased caddis

of the Gade, I came across a fascinating website called sewagemap.co.uk. If you enter your postcode it

will tell you information from sewage monitors in your area. There is a treatment works at Hudnall Common which discharges into ground water. As anticipated it has been discharging a fair bit and has already discharged twice this year.

You are no doubt wondering about the treatment works in the village, opposite the garden centre. It doesn't feature on sewerage map as it doesn't currently have a monitor. However, one has been requested. I'll keep you posted on this.

Apart from poop, our group has been discussing plans for the year ahead. We're lucky to have a group of such knowledgeable people with a keen interest in protecting our local environment. In addition to the river flying monitoring we're doing, we're looking to get more information about the habitat and wildlife along the Gade. If anyone is interested in helping us do this, for example getting involved in butterfly counts or has knowledge of aquatic plants please do get in touch!

Fionnuala Walravens
(finstaag99@gmail.com)

Birds of Great Gaddesden

January the 1st. It was mid-morning and the rain and wind had been relentless since I woke up. Hardly ideal weather for getting out and starting my year list! There was only so long I could gaze out the window watching some rather disheveled sparrows hop around in the ever-increasing puddles. As my boredom intensified and itching to do some proper birding, I decided to stick on my coat and brave the weather.

My first stop was the sewage works at Great Gaddesden, not the most picturesque birding spot but a reliable spot for wagtails. A quick scan of the tanks revealed a very bedraggled Grey Wagtail and an equally as wet Pied Wagtail.

As I approached the village the usual flurry of tits were undeterred by the weather, busy attending the feeders by the school. Great tits, Blue tits, Coals tits and a pair of Chaffinch were noted before I headed to the water meadows.

The rain was getting heavier now, the wind driving it viciously into my face. Despite such dire conditions a flash of blue caught my eye, a Kingfisher! I'd given up using my Binoculars, it was a losing battle trying to keep them dry enough to see anything. I still managed to see Water Rail, Snipe, Little Egrets, Teal as I wandered the meadows questioning my sanity.

I gave up having clocked up about 40 species, not a bad start for the year list! I planned to return as soon as the weather was better, or maybe even one evening...

Bird watching at night might seem like an odd idea, but in the right place



Cygnet at Water End

extremely wet and boggy, the perfect habitat for Snipe! As I made my way around the meadows, I counted at least 30 of these intriguing wading birds. I kept a close eye out for their smaller relative, the Jack Snipe but had no success. I did however spot a group of Meadow Pipits sleeping in the grass. I could walk right past them without them flying off, something that would be impossible during the day.

The cold snap in the second week of January prompted the arrival of Lapwing to the Parish, the freezing temperatures

forcing them to evacuate their traditional winter grounds. Inclement weather also meant that the local Barn owls were being forced to hunt in daylight, Alan King shared some fantastic footage on the WhatsApp group that he recorded in Gaddesden Row.

Nikki took a fantastic photo of a female Sparrowhawk that has been terrorizing the smaller gardens



Greenfinch

birds. Her Mother-in-law in Great Gaddesden was shocked when she spotted a smart male Brambling on her bird feeders! These colourful finches arrive in the winter from Scandinavia, they normally associate with their close relative, the Chaffinch. There are also at least 2 Brambling in the weedy field opposite Beechwood school this winter, although they can be hard to pick out among the 100 + Chaffinch.

The number of species of birds recorded within the Parish last year was a respectable 102. The final record for the year was on the 9th of December when a cygnet was spotted at Water End. Swans used to residents along the Gade but have absent for a couple of years, so this one was a welcome sight. The Swan remained for a couple of weeks but had departed by the new year.

As always please send any photos, questions or sightings, or request to join the WhatsApp group to georgemoretton92@gmail.com

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Boilded Frog

We will all be well into 2025 when you read this. There is lots of activity here at the Barn, even though it is still alternating between cold, frozen wet, and muddy. Winter feeding for the wild birds is continuing with them consuming around 60 lbs of seed per week. The sheep are also loudly demanding extra dry food that comprises a mixture of oats, ewe nuts and sugar beet most days. We are hoping to see some growth in the grass over the next month leading to less grumbling from the flock.

In December we visited the Allerton Project near Leicester and were given a great insight into possible farming futures with many pilot programmes on soil carbon management, the use of cover crops, 'light touch' farming, and wildlife conservation.

Last week we joined a group hosted by Guy Halsey and led by Allen Beechey on the challenges of restoring and improving the chalk streams in the Chiltern are, with a particular focus on the Gade and its valley. Allen leads a project created in 1997 for the Chilterns Conservation Board to raise awareness of the nature and state of our chalk streams and engage a wide range of people in practical preservation and conservation activities. We learned a great deal about chalk streams in general and the Gade in particular. We heard about the rarity of these features – only about 330 have been identified world-wide and of these approx. 283 are in England, with many in a poor state and threatened by urbanisation, water extraction and sewerage, road and farming runoff. Only 12 streams substantially protected. The Gade is one of the more vulnerable streams and is reliant on local interest, commitment and energy for its survival.

The special nature of chalk streams is very important, they are an important part of our local landscape, they are severely threatened, and we still have a very limited understanding of the part they play in our ecosystem. The streams have very particular characteristics that make them

both important and vulnerable :-

- Crystal clear water, flowing in narrow and shallow beds
- They are fed from groundwater held within the chalk
- Maintain a very stable water temperature which is around 11°C -crucial for some fish
- Clean gravel beds with lush soft margins

We learnt also about the special nature of winterbournes, the streams that change their source depending on the level of the water table and the resultant flows. The Gade is very significant, as the source can vary from near Hudnall Corner, when there are high flows, to near Gt Gaddesden when conditions are drier. Why is the special nature of a winterbourne important? The answer is that as the source changes regularly from wet to soft to dry, it provides a unique habitat for many species of insects and plants.

So, is the Gade under threat? The stream is around 15 miles long and joins the Colne at Croxley. It flows through country and town, in and out of the canal, although mostly alongside it in our area. It has been shifted into ornamental lakes, held by weirs and placed into artificial channels. It has water extraction and sewerage outlets throughout its length and so the natural flows have been changed radically over many years. Why does this matter? If the water is not allowed to flow naturally, the speed of the flow is limited and the ability of the stream to maintain a clear bed become impossible. It gets muddy and slow and the creatures that need the clear water and beds diminish. The levels of pollution have been increasing recently, and the result is a dirty, muddy ditch with little or no life.

There is a picture in an excellent book A Hertfordshire Valley by Hastie and Spain, of the north bridge in Water End in 1928 with the Gade flowing fully through all 3 arches of the bridge. The Stream is much diminished since then. I do recommend this book. It was published in 1996 and

provides a brilliant means of exploring the story of our place. There are currently copies on Amazon and eBay! The book also shows pictures of some of the 13 mills and watercress beds along the valley.

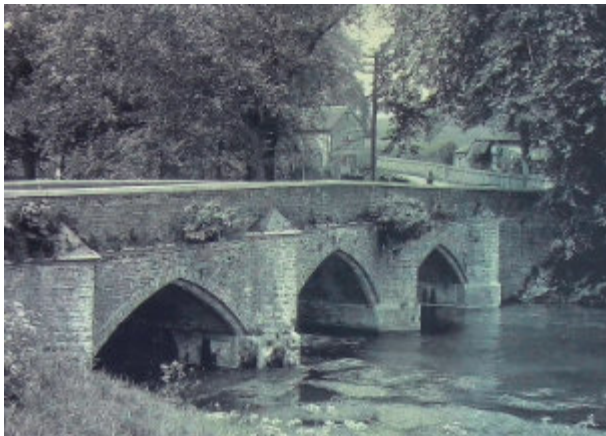
Back to our day on Chalk Streams. After presentation on the chalk streams in general and nature and current state of the Gade, we then spent some time down with the stream where we sampled an area for creatures and water quality. Perhaps

surprisingly, there were an amazing number of larvae and small critters in the sampling tray. It all looked pretty good.

Boiled for an apologue or story used many times in history to describe the need to be aware of even gradual change. If such change is unmanaged or unchecked, it can lead eventually to undesirable consequences. A frog dropped in boiling water will scramble desperately to escape. But a frog placed in a pot of tepid water will float quite placidly as the heat is slowly turned up and unresistingly can allow itself to be boiled.

I believe that this metaphor works very well for our dilemma with the chalk streams, and the Gade in particular. The slowly increasing extraction of water, increase in polluting runoffs, the past drive

to 'neaten up the stream', allied to climate changes and increased urbanisation, all add to the increase in temperature for the frog. We may find the Gade is boiled before we notice it.



North Bridge at Water End, 1928

On a more positive note, the recent re-winding of the stream and the plans to diminish or remove weirs all look as if things are going in the right direction, but we must also recognise that systemic action requires wider thinking. How can farmers help reduce pollutants

reaching the stream? How can local people help to keep an eye what going on in the water? And while things are perhaps improving here, what's happening downstream, and can we help?

All questions to keep us busy for the year to come.

Robin Douglas @ The Barn

Ps. Just read that the boiled frog story is not supported by recent studies in the real world! Apparently, frogs are unlikely to sit still in warming water as they 'don't sit still for you'. But I still think the message carries a useful warning about cumulative, unnoticed incremental change.



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Gaddesden Diary

Weekly Events

Mondays

7:45pm

Tuesdays

9:00am

Wednesdays

9:30am

8:00pm

Thursdays

10:00am

Fridays

9:00am

10:00am

Saturdays

2:00pm

Sundays

10:30am

11:00am

Chip Van

Holy Communion

Toddler and Baby Group / Coffee Morning
Bellringing

Baby Sensory

Walk and Talk
Pilates Moira's Medicine in Movement

Meditation Workshop in Temple

Christian Spiritualists Church Group
Parish Communion (9th February Cafe
Church)

Gaddesden Row Green

Great Gaddesden Church

Gaddesden Row Village Hall
Great Gaddesden Church

Great Gaddesden Parish Hall

Great Gaddesden Churchyard
Great Gaddesden Parish Hall

Amaravati Buddhist Monastery

Great Gaddesden Parish Hall

Great Gaddesden Church

February Events / Save the Date

Thursday 6th

8:00pm

Saturday 15th

3:00pm

Saturday 29th March

Saturday 5th April

Thursday Murder a Pint Club

"The Heavenly Path" Radio Play

TJ's Dixieland Five

Quiz Night

Crown & Sceptre

Little Gaddesden Village Hall

Great Gaddesden Church

Gaddesden Row Village Hall



The Dixieland Five is made up of some of the UK's top Jazz Musicians. All stars in their own right. TJ Johnson is

widely considered to be one of the UK's most charismatic highly revered jazz and blues singers, a swinging piano player and respected bandleader.

Peter Rudelforth – Trumpet

He is a mainstay of the London jazz scene, playing with the Pasadena Roof Orchestra, Palm Court Theatre Orchestra, Temperance Seven, Charleston Chasers and the Piccadilly Dance Orchestra at London's Savoy Hotel. He was a member of Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen for twelve years and played many times with Mr. Acker Bilk and his Paramount Jazz Band and Chris Barber.

Ewan Bleach – Tenor Sax / Clarinet

Ewan Bleach is a clarinetist, saxophonist, pianist, singer, bandleader, composer, teacher

and session musician based in London and specialising in the early styles of jazz, ragtime,

blues and swing. Ewan leads the Cable Street Rag Band and The Fleeting Paradise Orchestra.

Wesley Gibbens – Drums

Always in high demand on the UK jazz Scene, Wesley has toured with TJ for almost 15 years

now and is known as one of the most swinging drummers around. He also plays all over the world with the Darius Brubeck Quartet.

Graham Hughes – Double Bass

Graham Hughes is a freelance jazz musician living in North London, playing the trombone,

sousaphone, double bass, singing and on occasions also chromatic harmonica.

He has built a reputation internationally, most notably as a performer of the many styles of

jazz that come under the umbrella of "Traditional Jazz" - the early New Orleans music of

Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton and Duke Ellington.

TJ's Dixieland Five

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Gaddesden Row Village Hall

The Village Hall certainly got into the festive spirit . We hosted a Christmas Craft Fair which offered many gifting ideas along with minced pies and mulled wine . For the children it was the excitement of coming together to enjoy some crafting fun and of course the visit from Father Christmas himself.

Thank you to everyone who came along and supported our events.



HALL FOR HIRE



If you are looking for a venue to host a party, a regular club or something else, the Gaddesden Row Village Hall is a great space available for hire. The cost is only £15 per hour and has the capacity to stand 70 people and with the use of the fully fitted kitchen, garden and side room with quick Wi Fi too. Full terms & conditions can be found on our website or alternatively call Chris Hurt on 07738 106344.

<https://gaddesdenrow.square.site>

From Terry Douris - your County Councillor

Herts Lynx service

At the last Potten End Parish Council meeting some residents expressed concern regarding the operation of the service. I have arranged for the Manager of the HertsLynx service to attend the Potten End Parish Council meeting on 20th March when she can explain the service and answer any questions. The meeting starts at 7.30 and there is an open invitation to Great Gaddesden residents if you have any comments about the service.

All change in local government

You are likely to have read that HMGovt has decreed that the whole structure of Local Government Authorities political structure will change, and this will be done with the minimum of delay. If Councils wanted to submit an expression of interest for a fast-track change, they would need to submit that request by 10th January and as a consequence the county elections scheduled for May 2025 would be delayed. Initially, HCC had been open to such an option however it became clear that the leaders of the 9 local councils (including Dacorum) did not support the concept of a single upper tier of Local Government for Hertfordshire. Leader of HCC Cllr Richard Roberts has said "I have been open about my view that a single council delivering services for everyone would best serve the interests of Hertfordshire's residents and businesses.

"However, I recognise there are a range of views and believe that we need more time to jointly explore all the options with our district and borough council partners which is why I do not intend to formally respond to the minister's letter which invited requests to fast-track the process of devolution and postpone forthcoming county council elections." However, he has added that "keeping the status quo is not an option. It is the responsibility of all local leaders to prioritise working together to develop an evidence-based way forward that will ensure local government in Hertfordshire can provide the best possible public services to our residents and support our businesses to grow".

We know that the Government is committed to these changes, but we will want to consider and consult before coming to a position. The county has a number of very different areas and many of the districts operate in individual ways; for example, only Dacorum and one other district owns its council housing stock whilst the others have sold their council housing to housing associations. Dacorum also operates its own refuse service whereas some other contract it out. It also brings into focus the potential for

roles and operations for Town and Parish Councils. Town councils such as Berkhamsted, Tring and Harpenden may find opportunities to expand their delivery role but could that extend to Parishes. So there is much to do but watch this space because I suspect that things will move at pace.

Historic Rights of way.

On 26th December, Boxing Day, the Govt announced that it was removing the 2031 cut-off date for recording historic rights of way. Under the changes, local authorities will now have the required time to assess whether paths meet the requirements to be added to the "definitive map" which is a legal record of public rights of way. This has been welcomed by Natural England and the Ramblers but the views of the National Trust remains to be seen. It is interesting that the cut-off date will be repealed by the Govt when parliamentary time allows.

The County Budget.

The total budget that HCC has including the education and schools budget is £2.3bn of which approx. £1.2bn goes straight to schools and education. The remainder funds the many services which the County Council provides including almost £500m per annum caring for adults. Managing the budget and the services is a challenge but the draft proposed budget which was released on 7th January is the result of intense scrutiny of every line right down to a matter of some low thousands of pounds. Please do look at the draft; simply search on Google for Hertfordshire County Council Budget 2025/26.

The New Chief Constable

Andy Prophet, who was previously Deputy in Essex has been installed as the new Chief Constable for Hertfordshire.

Do you have a project?

I am pleased to report that I have sufficient applications for my budget so any new request will fall into next financial year.

Staying in Touch

I normally hold a 'surgery' on the second Saturday of the month normally accompanied by a Dacorum Councillor, Jane or Ed but please do look out for my alerts on Social Media In the meanwhile if you want to raise any aspect of Hertfordshire County Council, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07818 580087 or by email at terry.douris@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Update from your Borough Councillors

Dacorum Borough Council's Surveys

You may have noticed that Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) have been running a number of surveys (Have your Say) on different subjects to involve constituents and get their views. Recent ones include: Affordable Housing and The Budget (what you would chose to cut). Those have both closed now but keep a look out on the DBC website for any others.

The Council Budget for 2025/26

There are some changes that will be implemented in Dacorum in the new financial year.

The Council has significant financial pressures, which need to be addressed in order to be able to deliver a sustainable financial strategy for the future medium term. The costs of everything from petrol/ electricity, repairs, staff costs and the increase in National Insurance contributions have risen, as has the demand for social care and children's services. In addition there is uncertainty as to whether the Government will keep up the same funding grants to the Council this year. As a result (you guessed it) there will be some increases in the new financial year, such as the Council Tax which is currently a £5 increase. Some other increases yet to be formally approved are: Green Bin collection (up from £50 to £55) garage rents, parking and planning costs.

Benefit from DBC Green Community Grants

Our Green Community Grants have been helping communities across Dacorum bring their environmental projects to life for the past few years, and we're excited to continue supporting positive change into 2025!

Here are just a few examples of initiatives that have benefitted from the Green Community Grants in previous years:

- ✓ Community garden restorations
- ✓ Insulation installations
- ✓ Allotment projects
- ✓ Pond creation
- ✓ Thermal imaging cameras for community use
- ✓ Bike repair workshops

- ✓ Clothes swap events
- ✓ Re-wilding projects
- ✓ Wildlife monitoring
- ✓ Community fridges

If you have a community-led environmental project in mind, we encourage you to apply for funding. Grants of £3,000, £5,000, and £10,000 are available, and the deadline for applications is 14 February 2025.

Clean Safe and Green

In case you need a reminder about what goes in which bin, Dacorum have published a Recycling page on their website, full of advice about reducing, reusing and recycling our waste.

The Great British Spring Clean

is the nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign. In 2024, Litter Heroes from up and down the country pledged to pick more than 400,000 bags of litter.

The Great British Spring Clean and Great Big School Clean 2025 return from 21 March - 6 April 2025. Why not get the dates in your diary and consider what you could do during this year's campaign.

Policing – we now have a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Parisa Peiro, assigned to our villages as well as a Police Constable (PC).

If you need to contact Parisa, you can email: parisa.peiro@herts.police.uk

Please keep a look out for the monthly 'surgeries' with Terry Douris (County Councillor), when you can come and see us too. These are held at the Garden Cent at 9.15 am usually on the third Saturday of the month. Alternatively, you can contact either of us on the numbers/emails below.

Questions about planning applications, bins, parking, council housing etc, ask us. We will do our best to help you.

Jane Timmis – 07712 050363 Email: jane.timmis@dacorum.gov.uk

Ed Barradell – 07928 692862 Email: edward.barradell@dacorum.gov.uk

Parish Council News

The Parish Council submitted comments on Dacorum's Local Plan which can be seen on the council website. There are two meetings this month which might result in a little more information about the proposed 'North Hemel' development of 5,000 houses in the south of the parish, and in particular the plans for transport; look for an update next month.

The appeal by Fairfax Homes against the decision by Dacorum to refuse permission for a development of 390 houses west of Leighton Buzzard Road and north of Galley Hill starts in February. If you want to see more information about the proposal go to the Dacorum planning portal and search for 21/04508/MOA. This is the sort of speculative development which doesn't appear in

In smaller planning applications, the Parish Council objected to a proposed change of use and construction of a stable block on land southeast of Woodlands, Noake Mill Lane (24/02625/FUL), and had no objection to proposals for work to trees at Oak Cottage, Leighton Buzzard Rd (24/02721/TCA), Troutbeck Cottage, Leighton Buzzard Rd (24/02826/TCA) [ED: a thank you from Richard and John] and The Moor, 3 Water End Moor (25/00020/TCA).

The government has published a white paper on Local Government Devolution. Basically it likes elected mayors and what are called Unitary Authorities (bigger than boroughs, but certainly in Hertfordshire smaller than the current county), and doesn't much like District/Borough Councils like Dacorum. Parish and Town Councils don't get a mention, although when unitary authorities have been implemented elsewhere it's tended to result in parish/town councils picking up more responsibilities. Hertfordshire aren't rushing into this and so we'll just have to see how it pans out.

Dacorum have launched a scheme called "Solar Together Hertfordshire" which brings Hertfordshire households together to get solar panels and battery storage at a competitive price. The scheme opened on 27 January and closes on 4 April. It's the second time they've run the scheme and I had some good feedback from people who participated first time round – although obviously that shouldn't be taken as a personal endorsement and if you're interested you should undertake your own due diligence! Look for details on the Dacorum website.

If you're struggling to cope or need advice about care and carers, living healthier, transport, home services and equipment and cost of living support look at the HertsHelp website or ring 0300 123 4044.

If you want to report a problem, whether it's fly-tipping, flooding, anti-social behaviour, public footpaths, highways or anything else, search for Dacorum Report It.

Dates for your diary:

17 February – Great Gaddesden Parish Council at Great Gaddesden Village Hall

18 March – Great Gaddesden Parish Council at Gaddesden Row Village Hall

20 March – there will be a presentation from the HertsLynx team about their experience with the service to date at the Church Room, Potten End as part of the Potten End Parish Council meeting.

Andrew Farrow
Parish Clerk

Dacorum Borough Councillors

Hertfordshire County Councillor

Terry Douris

Jane Timmis – 07712 050363
Email: jane.timmis@dacorum.gov.uk

01442 402273
email terry.douris@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Ed Barradell – 07928 692862
Email: Edward.barradell@dacorum.gov.uk

Harpenden and Berkhamsted MP
Victoria Collins MP
victoria.collins.mp@parliament.uk

Great Gaddesden Parish Council

Next Parish Council Meeting 17th February 2025
at Great Gaddesden Parish Hall, 7:30 pm

Chair:	Ben Cosbie Ross	07813 842 229		
Members:	Corran Griffin	07368 201 866	William Ristoff	07801 042 594
	Rosie Hamilton	07786 651696	Guy Halsey	07811 317 177
	Chris Turner	07905 742 178	Mark Griffin	07931 900 000
Clerk:	Andrew Farrow	07512 192 188	clerk@greatgaddesden-pc.gov.uk	

The Parish Council's website is available at
greatgaddesden-pc.gov.uk

Local Community Social Media - search facebook for:

"Great Gaddesden Parish Council", "Great Gaddesden Community Group"
"Gaddesden Row the Village"

If you're worried about anything from dog-fouling, fly-tipping, litter, issues with pavements, pot holes etc.
please contact one of the Parish Councillors or report it online. Search online for:

"Dacorum report it" and look for the Dacorum website,
or for highways issues search for:
"Herts report it" and look for the Hertfordshire website.

Defibrillator Sites

Bridens Camp: The cricket club pavilion

Gaddesden Row: In the old phone box at junction of Bradden Lane

Great Gaddesden: In the old phone box next to the school

St Margaret's: Within the Monastery grounds

Water End: The Red Lion Pub, on the perimeter wall by the front entrance

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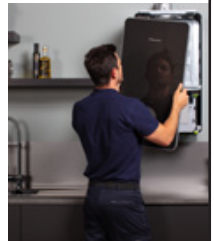


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A Pocket Full of Happiness - It's been a while

Hello lovely readers,
Well here we are in 2025.

You may have noticed the absence of my article in the second half of 2024. In August I suddenly and sadly found myself in the depths of grief. Life felt empty, cruel and desperately painful. I had no words to say or to write, so I didn't....I hope you understand.

I have spent some time re-reading all the articles I have written so far for this lovely little magazine and it reminded me of the purpose to which I enjoy writing my piece. Re-affirming how lucky I am to be where I am, and who I am with so much love and support around me, including some of those who will be reading this. My aim this year is to get back to being myself, to find joy, to live simply and to breathe.

This picture was taken on New Years Day in the beautiful surroundings of Ashridge House. One of my very favourite places where history and nature meet, where there is an air of mystery weaving through the old and dense trees and a feeling of freedom and release when you stand on the hill side looking down into the valley toward Little Gaddesden being guarded by the majestic structure of the house itself.



This is a place I go to often, and notably when 'life things' happen. A place where I can feel small in a big enveloping space. A place I can think clearer and breathe easier. I get the same feeling when standing under the stars on a clear night, although this is harder to get a picture of! Do you have a place that makes you feel like this? Some talk of the beach, or the top of a mountain being the place for them to feel held and safe, but for

me it's here amongst the ferns and trees.

There are things to look forward to this year. Some travel, some new projects, some milestones and a commitment to myself to be present and ever thankful for small pleasures, after all this is what this article is about. I will be sure to keep you all informed but for now I will be grateful for the opportunity to wander in the rolling hills of beautiful Ashridge, bask in the winter sun, and make shadows with the ones I love whilst looking ahead to a year of new things.

I hope you all have new things to come too.

Sian Turner

Great Gaddesden Cricket Club



Winter indoor net practice sessions are now running every Sunday until the start of the season (in mid-April). Anyone interested in joining a friendly village team is welcome to join the session and meet the players!

More details at: www.greatgaddesdenccricket.club

Hopefully the weather will be kind, so that we can start the necessary pre-season rolling of the outfield any playing square during February and March – fingers crossed!

Gaddesden Estate News



Farming

Having missed the Christmas edition, much has happened since I last wrote.

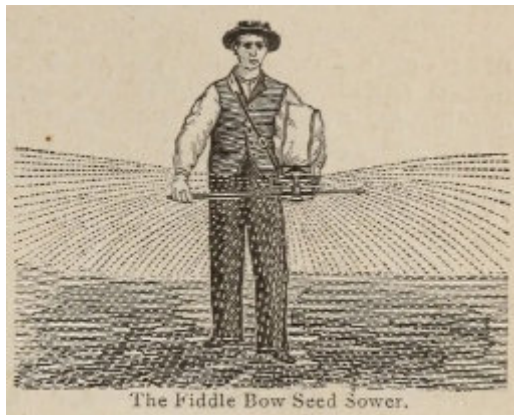
Biblical downpours from 21st September followed by very unsettled weather in October made planting the winter wheat a protracted exercise. Until early November brought a dry fortnight, we had not gone into a single field and been able to plant it entirely. There were wet bits that we could not travel on, where machines would be bogged down, and the situation was particularly bad around the headlands (the ends of the fields), particularly near the woods, which simply refused to dry.

We ended up with a combination of approaches. The dryer parts of fields we managed to plant with our normal seed drill. This has heavy tines (basically a sprung metal stick) with a boot-shaped end, each of which digs a shallow trench in the soil, lays down two rows of seed in each trench, puts soil back on top, and then presses it in. It is a reliable and relatively simple system, but the issue in the wet weather comes with the pressing element, which can bung up with wet soil, as well as smearing and pressing too hard in wet conditions such that the seed will not be able to grow.

For the wetter parts of the fields -and in some cases for whole fields - we did a combination of spreading some of the seed on the surface with the fertiliser spreader, and then harrowing (a glorified rake) it in, whilst also adding more seed through a mechanism designed for sprinkling small seeds (eg grass seeds) on or near the surface. This has the advantage of not blocking up the machine, but offers nothing in the way of consolidation of the soil, thus reducing seed to soil contact and also leaving the seed more exposed to slug damage.

This approach is the one people used before Jethro Tull invented the seed drill in 1701. He was one of the forefathers of the 18th century agricultural revolution, and much of what he said then remains true today. However, when conditions allow,

broadcasting and harrowing allows for relatively cheap and effective planting, where conditions are not appropriate for conventional methods. Albeit tractor powered, its not so different to the “seed fiddles” of days gone by, which were followed by a boy on the harrows:



This year, even the smallest machine on the farm got stuck...



In the end, both approaches have worked reasonably well, but it did mean that the process seemed to take for ever. As in previous years, our wheat is a mixture of conventional wheat, likely destined for Weetabix, and Wildfarmed, which this year will be bi-cropped – ie- sown together in the same field - with spring-sown linseed. With the latter we are also carrying out

some experiments to attempt to increase the protein content of the wheat. Protein is a vital component for baking quality in today's marketplace, and it is often very hard to achieve sufficient (industry demanded) protein levels with low, or no-input crops (eg organic) in our climate. This year, for example, many winter crops had very low protein levels, principally due to lack of sunshine, meaning that they were downgraded to feed uses rather than milling.

With a relatively small area of winter wheat sown this year, we therefore have a busy spring ahead of us:

The land around Upperwood farm, and along the north side of Gaddesden Row is currently in a cover crop to keep living roots in the soil over the winter. This is all due to be planted with conventional spring oats, which we hope will be milled into porridge. We will be aiming for a gluten free market, though the requirements for this are very strict. Volunteer wheat from last years shed seed can contaminate the crop such that it doesn't meet specifications, so this will require very careful management.

Our organic ground this year will be growing barley for beer, and will be undersown with a grass and clover mixture, as these fields will be going back into clover "leys" for two years, to allow the fertility to build back up before being cropped again.

The oilseed rape, which was planted in early September (about a month later than optimal due to harvest delays after the wet and chilly summer) has not come through the winter well, and I have decided to write it off. Thankfully it is a relatively small area (30ha / 75acres) and we haven't incurred much cost on it. Unfortunately, though, the grass weed burden is reasonably high, probably as a result of it being on our early wildfamed fields where weed control was difficult. As a result, I think we will be ploughing it, to bury the weed seeds in the top layers of the soil and reduce herbicide use, before planting linseed in April. The fields need a non-cereal break, and linseed is probably the best option.

We are also planning to plant 30 ha of

organic grass and clover to the west of Ledgemore Lane, opposite the garden centre and behind Gade Valley cottages, as these fields start their conversion to organic status. We are waiting on confirmation of this, but as things stand, this is the plan!

Back at the yard, the majority of our crops from harvest have moved on to their next destination, though the Wildfarmed crops and some wheat remain in the sheds. As always over winter, much time has been spent on servicing and preparing machinery ahead of the coming season.

In the office, I have had a succession of audits for the various schemes that we are part of: Red Tractor, Wildfarmed, and Organic. Whilst there is much duplication between them, they are nevertheless a time-consuming exercise, involving a combination of record checking and physical inspection. Red Tractor covers everything from site risk assessments for rodent bait to records of calibration of grain testing and drying equipment, as well as physical inspection of grainstores and equipment. Organic involves much of the same, but includes sending grain sample for lab analysis, checking grazing records, whether machinery washing records are up to date and so on, and Wildfarmed has a combination of both. None of it is very productive, but of course certification is generally a requirement for market access, so a necessary part of the job.

North Chilterns Farmer Cluster

We have had a relatively busy time with the North Chilterns Farmer Cluster, visiting an experimental arable farming site called the Allerton Project in Leicestershire to learn about regenerative techniques. Earlier this month we hosted a meeting along with the Upper Gade Conservation Society where an expert from the Chilterns Chalk Stream project discussed the River Gade, its history, current condition, how to improve it, and followed by a session in the river sampling river-fly larvae to measure biodiversity and health of the river. Next month we have a session on soil management and cover cropping, which again we are hosting.

Funded by the Farmer Cluster, or more specifically the Chilterns Conservation

Board, we are about to embark on a hedge planting exercise, which will see the replacement of two hedges which show on the 19th century title map of the parish, and one additional hedge. In total there will be 1100m of new hedging, and we plan to start in the next fortnight.

Open Farm Sunday – 8th June 2025.

For the last few years we have been discussing opening the farm to the public for Open Farm Sunday, a LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) initiative. This year - which also corresponds with the 505th birthday of the Gaddesden Estate - we've decided to take the plunge and will be hosting an open day on Sunday 8th June (approx 10am - 4pm). Ticketing details to follow (entrance will be free but on a first come, first served basis) but in the meantime we would be interested to hear what our local community might most like to know about our work here, or about farming in general. Please do email any thoughts to: susannah@gaddesdenestate.co.uk

GFJH

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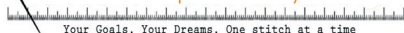


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School of Soft Furnishing

Hello 2025

We have been busy here with our students working on a variety of projects from headboards to chairs to blinds. These projects are sometimes new pieces, sometimes family heirlooms that are precious enough for them to give the time to get them back to use.

When I talk to the students, they say they not only come to learn the skills but to make friends with the same interests, feel comfortable in the space and have that 'me' time. It takes them away from the job, the washing, the cleaning and all those day to day chores and gives them the opportunity to explore a media they have been wanting to do for possibly years.

It doesn't matter what the art is, art can be an escape where you are the engineer, the designer, the artist

Working with your hands gives you the time to create one of pieces that will never be repeated. Splashed in your own colour and style the piece immediately is personal and precious. Creating is great for peace of mind and reflection.

Some pieces here take a year, some a month but all of them are – valuable to the maker, priceless in fact.

Some of us would say we don't have time, life is too busy but we should follow our interests and hobbies and give them some of that precious time. Us oldies will tell you; time slips by before we realise, and you need to pursue those interests now

They say (whoever they are) that although new year resolutions are mostly forgotten by now, this is the time of the month when we are thinking of those things we would like to do.

Whatever skill we embark on its always very exciting to find out how things are done. Like the piping on a cushion, how is that created? The dovetails on a drawer or painting a great scenery with depth

This chair is near completion – our student Abbie is here for a short while from Majorca and she hopes to pick up enough skills to get her business started in the sun

This chair was covered in a drab pink dralon that was reminiscent of the 70's. It was 'nanas' chair and Abbie didn't want to throw it away.

She has stripped it to the frame and made it her own modern style, learning the deep buttoning skills along the way .

Look at this flamboyant headboard! A definite focal piece in any bedroom. A quick project with instant results



Finally, this traditional chair that has been ongoing now for some time. David has loved hand stitching this piece and it is amazing so far. Such a shame we have to cover up all the work!

So, while you are out and about keeping fit, walk or run by a studio that can get your creative juices going and start a class and open up a new friendship ring



Maggi Loughran

Gadebridge Park River Restoration Project

Hello all

After a slightly slow start due to wet ground conditions, I'm pleased to say that construction is now happening at pace on the new river channel in Gadebridge Park. Here's an update on progress:

Our contractor, BAM Nuttall Ltd (BAM), has finished digging the length of the new channel and have finished the work on the channel's profile i.e. the shape and gradient of the riverbanks. Natural chalk streams typically have more gentle sloping banks and we're recreating this wherever we can (sometimes this is restricted due to adjacent tree roots).

I know it's not looking its best at the moment, but once complete and full of plants typical of chalk streams, it will be a valuable habitat for wildlife.

Clean gravel beds are another feature of chalk streams and vital for invertebrates and fish spawning. We've carefully chosen the gravel type for the new channel based on both its suitability to chalk streams and on examples of healthy gravels we've found in the River Gade nearby.

Fish capture and relocation

We've now finished the clearance of vegetation from within the old channel to deter fish from spawning here. Earlier this month, our specialist contractors, Five Rivers, caught and safely relocated 120 fish between the White Bridge and the Queensway Bridge, including trout, perch and bullhead. The biggest was a 50cm long



brown trout which was safely returned to the river further upstream. Two nets have been placed in the channel to help prevent any fish movement back into the work area over the next few months. If the Environment Agency needs to issue any local flood warnings, these nets will be lifted and replaced once flows have subsided. Additional fish capture and relocations will then take place as and when necessary. We also plan to carry out surveys to check for any redds in the old channel (gravel 'nests' that trout build to lay their eggs in).

Footbridges, gauging station and dipping platforms

BAM has started work on the foundations of the new bridge that will cross the re-aligned channel through the centre of the park. It was important to us and Dacorum Borough Council that the river could be enjoyed by everyone, and the bridge and adjoining footpaths have been designed to be fully accessible. This is also the case for the new bridge that will provide a link between the Queensway carpark and the Bowls Club/Splash park footpath.

Bridge foundations

We've started work on the foundations and the stilling well (used to measure the water level) of our new gauging station. Our existing gauging station plays an important role in monitoring river flows and helps us to issue local flood warnings.

Unfortunately, however, it acts as a barrier to fish and its concrete flume lacks any suitable wildlife habitats. Our new gauging station will have a significantly reduced





impact on the river. It will consist of a small weir that is passable to fish, plus a ramp for mammals. It will measure flows in the channel using ultrasonic sound waves.

We're also working on the final designs for our 2 dipping platforms – wooden platforms that will allow safe access to the edges of the riverbank (particularly popular with children for 'pond dipping'). We expect one to be placed just south of the adventure playground and the other south of the splash park.

And finally, those of you who have recently visited the park may have spotted a new defined area of gravel adjacent to the new channel and opposite the adventure playground. This area is a designated access point for people and dogs to enter the river.

We want to protect this rare chalk stream and its wildlife, but we also want to help people get closer to the river and enjoy nature. It's a careful balance. Access to the existing river is uncontrolled and is causing significant localised damage. By having a designated area, we hope that the rest of the river will remain relatively undisturbed, protecting its wildlife.

The naturally larger sizes of sediment in this feature and the faster flow of water should prevent the movement of finer sediments in the water. This will reduce the impact of people and dogs entering here. The area will also be less susceptible to erosion of the banks. In other areas, a planted 'buffer zone', between 5 and 10 metres from the riverbank, will help protect the river's wildlife.

Buffer zones must remain undisturbed by development, with no fencing, footpaths, lighting, formal landscaping or other development. They provide multiple benefits, including the protection of water vole burrows up to 5 metres within the bank, natural flood management, a link for habitats to benefit local biodiversity, and a more attractive river for the enjoyment of the park's visitors.

You can contact us at gadebridgepark@environment-agency.gov.uk
*Kelly Standbrook Project Manager
 Environment Programme Team.*

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Our monthly meeting in December was a purely social event. We were entertained by both the Folk Singing Group and the

Ukulele group and enjoyed singing along to some well loved carols and Christmas favourites.

January's speaker explained the history and some of the uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI). He explained how easy it is to download an app onto a smart phone which can then be used to search the entire World Wide Web for information. He also demonstrated some of the pitfalls which might be encountered. An interesting and informative morning which left many of us with perhaps more questions than answers.

As I write this I am looking forward with anticipation to February's meeting entitled 'The Beatles'. I hope we hear some of the music I enjoyed back in the days of my youth.

Although some groups decided to take a break during December many carried on.

Craft groups worked on Christmas themed cards and several 'Out and About' groups shared an early Christmas lunch.

The Astronomy Group heard from a guest lecturer on 'Hidden Secrets of Starlight'. This described the development of spectroscopy and the characters whose painstaking work we benefit from today

We are now back into our usual busy routine. Swimming Group have managed a couple of extra sessions, hopefully counteracting the effect of all the mince pies that were consumed at most December meetings.

Badminton group are meeting on a regular basis and Bus Trippers ventured to Hitchin using the 304 route from St Albans which passes through several interesting villages and some attractive countryside. The museum in Hitchin is well laid out and has an excellent cafe on site.

Industrial History are looking forward to a talk describing the journey from Northampton to Paddington on the canal. This is a talk from one of our members who travels the canals on his narrow boat.

With around 80 groups there is certainly something for everyone to enjoy.

If you would like to find out more check our website <u3adacorum.org> or come along to one of our monthly meetings, details on the website

Jane Campbell

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Great Gaddesden Bake Boff



As it's the middle of winter what better than a bowl of Soup to warm you up after a walk, a spell of gardening or a skinny dip in the river Gade?

When it comes to catering, I'm a great believer in experimentation. The more you do it the better the results. OK sometimes the dish is fit for the dog but 9 times out of ten it turns out ok. In this issue I have gone for a soup.

My mother who is a keen gardener was given some pink Squash seeds last year. You may be wondering what is a pink Squash. I must admit I had never heard of it. Is a large Gourd and is easy to grow. It has a yellow flesh and can be baked, Made into soup or even used in deserts.

The recipe below includes Butter nut Squash as these are easier to get hold of. But why not have a go at growing some - I'm going to.

Please note the ingredients listed here should not be taken to literally. The recipe calls for a slow cooker but could be done in a saucepan.

Ivan

Baked Butternut / Pink Squash Soup

1 Butter nut Squash or equivalent Squash
1/2 onion

1 large potato

2 large carrots

Tea spoon Curry powder

Tomato paste -Squirt

Veg stock cube

Tin coconut milk

Cup of Water

Cut the Squash into chunks after removing pips skin etc

Chop the onion, carrots, potato. (you can add to the flavour by roasting these lightly first)

Add the whole lot into a Slow cooker with the rest of the ingredient's

Season with salt and pepper

Leave to stew for about 4 hours or longer if you have time.

Once it has finished cooking - blitz the whole lot with a blender.

Season to taste. A dash of cream added is nice but not good if you're trying to lose weight.

Val's Ramblings

Since I last wrote I have not travelled very far but have been busy ringing, entertaining, being entertained and enjoying traditional festive activities!

Some of you will recall that early in December HRH the Princess of Wales hosted another "Together at



Christmas" Carol Service at Westminster Abbey, but what you might not know is that Hertfordshire was one of only fifteen counties invited to hold one of the Community Carol Services as part of this "Together at Christmas" celebration. I attended the Hertfordshire service which was held at the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban, known to us as St Alban's Abbey. The theme of the service was "empathy" and was specially dedicated to those who have been there for others during life's challenging times, in whatever form. The service brought to life the healing role played by the link between nature and empathy and provided an opportunity to show support for those in our communities who may have experienced a difficult year. It was a beautiful service and the Cathedral was filled with people from across the county who have, in their own special way, supported others. In his address HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Voss CBE CSTJ, delivered a heartfelt thank you to them all.

Early in December the Walk and Talk group enjoyed a traditional 'Christmas Walk' once again on the Gaddesden Estate by kind invitation of Guy and Susannah Halsey. This is always very special as mulled wine, mince pies and cheese scones enjoyed by the roaring fire in the Orchard Barn create a truly festive atmosphere. Our additional walks during the holiday period saw a mixture of weather conditions but on our first 'back to normal Friday' the

cold, clear skies and bright sunshine gave us hope for more fair-weather walks in 2025.

Also during December I enjoyed four Christmas lunches! Thankfully, unlike the Vicar of Dibley, they were not all on the same day. I also enjoyed a special meal to

celebrate my birthday on Holy Innocents Day, a 'Neighbours' Nibbles and Natter' the following day to welcome four sets of new neighbours to our Victorian Terrace. and the final one of 2024 before 'Ringing out the old' and 'Ringing in the new' at St. Mary's Hemel on New Year's Eve. This is a great tradition amongst bellringers and is carried out in a variety of ways. When we had sufficient ringers to welcome the New Year at Great Gaddesden we would ring the bells half-muffled until 23.55 then remove the muffles in time to strike the twelve blows of midnight before all joining in to welcome the New Year with all the bells open. As it isn't possible to use this method at Hemel the ringing before and after midnight is all 'open' (no muffles) but to welcome the New Year the bells are 'fired' which entails getting all eight bells to sound at exactly the same time, quite a difficult skill considering we spend the rest of the year aiming to hear each bell individually in an even rhythm!

Things didn't slow down on the eating front in January and by the time you read this I will have enjoyed a further five special meals! However, to counter the potential effects of the excess food I joined a 'Strictly Dance' class in an attempt to burn up those extra calories! Fear not, I won't be appearing on the BBC!

And so, a new year, a new diary, - already filling up with exciting adventures to report in future editions of this amazing newsletter.

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Cheers!

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a great time. Now that we are in the midst of 'Dry' January it is time to prepare for Valentines Day, and what better way to mark the occasion that with a fruity cocktail. So raise your glass to the...

Dagnall Daiquiri



A Daiquiri is a classic rum cocktail named after the small mining village in Cuba where it originated. It is widely believed to have been created by American Engineer Jennings Cox at the end of the 19th century. The Navy, and medical officer Lucius Johnson, are to thank for bringing the recipe to the US. The rest is history.

While the traditional recipe is concocted with rum, lime juice, sugar, and ice, the Strawberry Daiquiri adds fresh strawberries for a sweet, fruity twist.

Our Daiquiri is made with Henley Distillery's Temple Island White Rum. This classic white rum has been distilled with Tonka bean and vanilla, then infused with even more vanilla for an exceptionally buttery smooth finish. You can get your bottle from <https://thehenleydistillery.co.uk> On to the mix...

This one needs a blender. I find it is best to crush some ice first. Check your blender is able to crush ice - if not a cloth bag and a rolling pin works wonders! Next, throw in 60ml of Henley Distillery Temple Island White Rum, 30ml sugar syrup, 30ml lime juice, 6 roughly chopped strawberries, and a cup measure of crushed ice. Blend gently until slushy and serve in a coupe or similar upright glass. Decorate your drink with a fresh strawberry and a lime wheel. Voila!

Shopping List:

Strawberries
Henley Distillery Temple Island White Rum
Lime
Sugar syrup
Ice



Please drink responsibly. I hope you enjoy!

Craig ❤️

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