

# Great Gaddesden Parish Newsletter

*Supported by  
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Contributions*



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](http://www.greatgaddesdenparishnews.co.uk)

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December 2024 / January 2025

# From the Glamorous Assistant

The last issue of our community magazine for 2024. Notice I use the words 'OUR' and 'COMMUNITY' because it does belong to the community. Richard looks after the magazine, but it's the community that does the contributions and does the distribution. THANK YOU for everyone that is involved.

From the feedback we get, I know people read the articles and join in. The newish articles from the U3A (page 51) have resulted in new members for them. I showed the magazine to some U3A people, who then rushed out and bought tickets to the church Jazz Night (details P42) It all helps build community togetherness. Our Tesco community begging bowl is going OK. But only OK. Check out page 9 for details. I was watching a program on the telly with Nadiya Hussain, she said something like 'This community doesn't live side by side, they live together' She wasn't talking about Great Gaddesden, and Nadiya isn't a philosopher, she's just a nice lady. It made me think and I hope that our magazine brings our community together.

I asked one nice person to write for us and they replied 'I would absolutely love to!!!'. I wonder how many other folk out in Great Gaddesdenland are just waiting to be asked. Don't wait to be asked, just say hello and as long as it's fun, it's in. I can give you ideas for subjects if you want.

Robin came up with the idea to get the contributors to send in festive photos. Ha Ha. It worked with some, but I'm not sure how festive some of our friends are though! I had a photo of me with half my face painted as a clown. Not everyone saw the funny side. We have some photos from the RDA's busy year, (page 27) the CPR training and Halloween too (Page 32) They



Editor Richard and Glamorous Assistant John

all made me smile. Halloween has been imported from the USA as is the Black Friday sale. But I was confused to hear adverts promoting Black Friday sale all this week starting Thursday. Isn't the clue in the name?

I've been tasked to put the Christmas lights up again this year. I'm hoping that we get some spectacular shows again to give Blackpool a run for it's money. I hate to say this but St Maggie's is normally disappointing on the Christmas Lights front. Come on you lot, show some cheer.

Dad joke for you... 3 golf clubs walk into a bar. The putter orders a beer, the wedge orders a wine and the third one says "Just a coke for me, I'm the driver"

From Richard and I, have a fantastic festive time and we'll see you next year. Thank You for your continued support. Lets see if 2025 brings better jokes.

*John Lowrie & Richard Collis*

Dear Friends,

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...*

*The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory. the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.'*

At this time of year in church, we expect to hear the nativity stories from a mixture of St Matthew and St Luke's Gospels, but for many people the significance of the words which mark the opening of St John's Gospel carry by the far the most complete and far-reaching meaning of Christmas. Those are the words which get to the heart of the Incarnation – the coming of God to earth in human form - which is what Christmas is really all about when you remove all that humanity has added to the Christmas celebration.

These first words of St John's Gospel in their simplicity, bring depth which continues to challenge us 2000 years later; they are amazing! They try to get to the heart of the meaning or meanings of The Word.

St John tells us that God wants to communicate with us and from the history of religion, we can see that it is not the story of our search for God, but of God's search for us which is what is at the heart of Christmas. John tells us of God's love for us, first through the words of the Bible, but more importantly, through the words and life of Jesus Christ. The desire to communicate is creative and so, at the beginning of the biblical story of our universe, in the opening of the Book of Genesis, '*God spoke and it was done.*' St John links up with that through his opening words

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

He continues,

*He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.*

The Greek word for 'word' is *logos*, which gives us our word 'logic'. So through the biblical writers, God uses reason to create the world, and uses his words to help us to the truth, to explain ideas that we cannot yet grasp. God speaks to us, to explain that all we see and are, is here because he intended it so.

When you find it hard to believe what somebody says, they may say, '*I give you my word; my word is my bond.*' The word of God is his guarantee to us, that we can depend on him; above all that we can trust his promise to give us eternal life. That promise is found in the Bible, which we also call 'the word of God'. The overarching message for us is that God created everything out of love, which is reflected in his love for us as part of his creation.

As we know In our own lives, by our words and actions we gradually reveal aspects of our character to other people and in the same way, we can learn more about the character of God; through the life of Jesus, his passion for truth, his healings, his compassion for the needy, his willingness to forgive those who repent, his encouragement of those who were lonely or depressed.

God is not a remote stern tyrant; no, he and Jesus are one and the same. So, at last, we can begin to grasp for ourselves that Jesus is the Word of God and he is



Cont'd on page 5

## 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. John Russell (Vicar)** 01442 214898

St. Johns 's Vicarage, Pipers Hill, Great Gaddesden HP1 3BY john\_russell@live.co.uk

**Associate Priest: Rev'd Miranda Seldon** 07761 165871  
revmseldon@outlook.com

**Heather Tisbury (Reader)** 01582 842807

20 West Dene, Gaddesden Row HP2 6HU  
tisbury@btinternet.com

**Anthony Archer (Reader)** 01442 842397

aw.archer@btinternet.com

**Parish Administrator: Helene Hockings** 01442 842493

a\_dmin-church@outlook.com

**Jo Connell (Churchwarden)**  
01442 842981

jo@mpconnell.co.uk

**Peter King (Churchwarden)**  
01442 256556

peter\_king@btinternet.com


## 100+ Club

Congratulations to Kate Hannaby  
winner of November draw with her no.  
73

Join  
**RICHARD  
& John**

Come and murder a pint while discussing  
the mysteries of the world at the Crown  
& Sceptre first Thursday of the month  
5<sup>th</sup> December 8pm  
- ITS JUST A DRINK!

*The*  
**Thursday**  
**MURDER**  
*Club*



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God's means of communication, his means of creation of the universe and of a society of loving people, he is God's logic, the reasoning through which he explains his promises.

The Bible contains the Word of God; Jesus is the Word of God, he is one aspect of the God we worship at Christmas, through which God reveals his character. So when St John writes, *'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.'* we realise we have found the real meaning of Christmas.

We could never form a close, intimate

relationship with God if he were to remain remote in another dimension, so one aspect of God's personality became incarnate, as a human being at Christmas time, enabling us to become children of God, adopted by him through faith, to live with him in eternity.

And that, as I say my friends, is the true meaning of Christmas – God gives you his word.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year!

*I am yours in Christ, John.*

## Just A Cappella Choir

We are Just A Cappella, a mixed voice choir singing popular songs in close harmony, and are based in Hemel Hempstead. We recently had the opportunity of singing at St John The Baptist Church, at their charity supper, and have now been given the opportunity to tell you a bit about ourselves.



We started as a small group of 9 people back in 2003 and we now have over 30 singers, nearly half of whom are men (which is very unusual for most mixed choirs). We have a varied repertoire with early classics like *Blue Moon* and *Java Jive* up to more recent numbers such as *We Will Rock You*, *Thinking Out Loud* and *Let It Go*. We do a number of performances throughout the year, in and around Hemel, both paid and charitable. We take our music seriously and love to sing, but we have a lot of fun in the process during rehearsals, as well as at the pub, out for the occasional meal, or a whole day / weekend workshop.

We compete every year at the Watford Musical Festival and have been winners

many times, and in 2025 we will be competing in the Manchester Choral Competition which features choirs from all over the UK. Competitions are a good way to meet other choirs and to get feedback and constructive criticism from judges, to improve our skills and our confidence.

We are based in Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, and rehearse on a Monday evening from 7.45 to 9.45, and we are always on the lookout for new singers to join us. Singing is a great way to relax and it's good for your mental and physical health. Joining our group will improve your vocal skills and give you the opportunity to sing in harmony with us. It is not necessary to be able to read music as teach tapes are provided. If you fancy coming along to one of our rehearsals to give it a try, you will be given a very warm welcome, just get in touch at [info@justacappella.org](mailto:info@justacappella.org) or visit our website [www.justacappella.org](http://www.justacappella.org) You can also follow us on Facebook.

## CHURCH FLOWERS

Our Carol Service this year will be on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.

If you would like to contribute to this years Christmas flowers, perhaps in memory of a loved one, there are three ways to do it:

1. Send your donation (cheques payable to Great Gaddesden PCC) to me, at 13 Christchurch Rd, Hemel Hempsted HP2 5BX,

2. place it in the basket at the back of the church or,

3. make a Bank Transfer to:

Great Gaddesden PCC, Ac No. 00126780  
Sort Code 30-94-08 and use the reference Christmas Flowers.

Please sign our Flower Remembrance Book, to be found alongside the basket, and use a Gift Aid envelope if appropriate.

If you would like to join our Flower Team please contact me for details – no previous experience necessary!

Thank you for your continued support.

*Val Mills*



## CHRISTMAS WALK AND TALK

13<sup>th</sup> December 2024

at

THE ORCHARD BARN  
GOLDEN PARSONAGE

*Guy and Susannah Halsey have kindly invited us to the Orchard Barn again for a walk on the estate followed by traditional refreshments in the Barn.*

**Do come and meet old and new friends...**

**9am meet for the walk**

**10.15am for refreshments**

**St. John the Baptist, Great Gaddesden 100 Club**

### Thank you for supporting the 100 Club in 2024

Your support for the 100 Club in 2024 has been invaluable. For the first time we sold more than 100 tickets, and many winners donated their winnings straight back to the fund enabling us to raise well in excess of £1000 towards the regular upkeep of the church.

### Will you continue to help us in 2025?

The **subscription for one ticket**, to be entered in the 12 monthly draws from January to December 2025, **costs £15**

There is one cash prize of **£35** to be won every month and the **first draw in the 2025 season** will be at the **beginning of January 2025**

If you would like to help us raise money in this way please use the form below

**St. John the Baptist, Great Gaddesden  
100 Club**

I would like to buy.....ticket/s (£15 per ticket)

Name.....

Address.....

Tel:..... email: .....

I enclose cash/cheque for £.....

Cheques payable to: Great Gaddesden PCC (Please write 100 Club on the back)

**OR**

I have made a Bank Transfer for £..... Please use the reference '100 Club'

**Bank Transfer** details: Ac Name: Great Gaddesden PCC Ac No: 00126780 Sort Code:30-94-08

Please return completed form by December 31<sup>st</sup>, to:

Val Mills, 13, Christchurch Rd, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 5BX

Any queries please contact Val on: Mob. 07929 650664 or email: [regalreval@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:regalreval@yahoo.co.uk)

# Gaddesden Row Church

## The Countdown?

The clocks have fallen back to regular time; the nights are drawing in, and even as I write at Remembrance I have spotted my first domestic Christmas tree (having already given in to the Christmas specials in the shops – where your mince pies will be out of date before Dec).

This article is to be for the December magazine, so expected to focused on Christmas, and as a church minister expected to be about the manger, peace on earth good will to all humankind. But life is more complicated.

Christmas is a time for families gathering together – assuming you are in good relations with them

Christmas is a time for presents and fancy foods – assuming you can afford them

Christmas is a time for faith and hope – if your experience allows you to trust in them.

The problem with community celebrations, festivals, is what do you do when you don't connect with the message sent out. Maybe you are in a family situation that doesn't feel safe; maybe you have actively been excluded from the family circle for who you are, who you love, or daring to challenge assumptions.

Maybe you are the host with the most – expected to perform the impossible; feeding the multitude; finding enough chairs to seat everyone; coping with the awkward relative's comments; stressed all through the celebration days.

Maybe you follow another faith and find your Diwali; Hanukkah; other winter festival lost in the Santa overload.

Maybe you have always been a Christmas person with all the family traditions – but this is the first (or more) year since someone precious is no longer going to have a seat at the table; regardless how complicated that voice may be.

Or maybe you are among those susceptible to the changes of the season; where depression gets worse in the darker nights (noting that some affected by Seasonal Affective Disorder can struggle more in the summer).

Yes the story of Christmas is about light in the darkness; of peace and hope – but for all who find it tough, I see you. And you are not alone; you are never alone. I could do the churchy thing that God is with you in all that; but frankly regardless of that, you will still not be alone in your situation and your range of emotions.

Having had feedback on my November article - I would say that it would be very rare that you are the only one feeling the way you do; hold that reality though all the events of each year. Life is always more complex then any of the boxes we try to put it in.

Rev Helen Roberts

Methodist Minister

revhelen2015@gmail.com

# DID YOU KNOW?

Christmas is on its way and many kitchens will have been busy with cooking our traditional Christmas pudding but have you ever wondered since when we have been enjoying this delicious and special treat?

The Christmas pudding originated in Medieval England as a savoury dish called

“frumenty” and was nothing like the pudding we know today. Going back through centuries we can see the changes our Christmas pudding of today has gone through.

\*In the 14th century Christmas pudding was a kind of pottage (this is a kind of broth) made with beef and mutton, currants, prunes, wine and spices. Similar to the filling of an old medieval mincepie.

\*In the 16th century the dish became richer when eggs were added, dried breadcrumbs, dried fruit, beer and spirits. It would have been served at the start of the meal rather than at the end as we do today.

\*In the 17th century it took on a more solid appearance and would be served like porridge or even cooked inside a skin, like a sausage. Even then it was more likely to have been sliced and cooked under a roasting joint and served alongside the main meal or as starter, not as dessert.

\*Then in the 18th century the Christmas pudding became known as plum porridge and started to be associated with

Christmas. In the Victorian era the Victorians raised the prominence of Christmas pudding at the festive table. They believed Christmas should be celebrated and it was the Victorians who established the tradition of making Christmas pudding on what was known as “Stir Up Sunday” the fifth Sunday before Christmas.

The name of our Christmas pudding has evolved over centuries from frumenty to

pottage, plum pudding, figgy pudding and today we know it as Christmas pudding. Also over time other traditions associated with Christmas pudding developed. A sprig of holly is often placed on top of the pudding, it symbolises fertility and good luck for pagan households and for Christian’s it represents the crown of thorns.

We also douse the pudding in brandy and set it alight. The flaming brandy is

sad to represent the passion of Christ. Even a silver coin is hidden in the pudding it is to bring wealth and good luck to the finder for the oncoming year.

A children's game we would not promote today is when children use to play “snap dragons”. Celtic Druids children competed in plucking raisins from the flaming brandy I do hope no child will engage in such a dangerous game today.

I wish you all a very safe, peaceful and lovely Christmas! 😊



*Gerti Evans*



# Tesco update!



Olympic star and all round nice person, Jessica Ennis is supporting our magazine blue disc appeal. Check out what she says on this short video by scanning this QR code.

Not so good news.

I was in Jarman Park Tesco buying carrots for Rudolf the other day and noticed a young budding Beckham feeding blue discs into the kids football team holder!! Obviously I asked what was going on and he said his mum told him to keep putting blue discs in here while she did the shopping. Bloomin flip. FOUL. Where is VAR when you need it. Surely that's offside



referee. We've fuzzed out his face in case anyone decides to slip him a hospital pass while he's not wearing his shin pads.

***So, Please Please Please... put some discs into our pot.*** We need every disc.

Along with Jarman Park there are Tesco Express stores at :-

- Grove Hill HP2 6BJ
- Marlows HP1 1BD
- Warners End HP1 2QF
- Maylands Plaza HP2 4XH
- Fletcher Way HP2 5SE
- Bovingdon High St HP3 oHG
- Barnacres HP3 8AP

But unfortunately **not** Berkhamsted as it's in a different region.





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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.

### December

Hannah Bennett	20 <sup>th</sup>	17
Jack Green	16 <sup>th</sup>	17
Loxley Lowrie	30 <sup>th</sup>	1

### January

Lilly Blake	1 <sup>st</sup>	16
Lucy Bolton	5 <sup>th</sup>	19
Lewis Manning	7 <sup>th</sup>	10
George Hollick	17 <sup>th</sup>	12
Alice Impey	19 <sup>th</sup>	18
Polly-Jane Body	25 <sup>th</sup>	18

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Billington Village Hall:

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Wednesdays, 7 pm – 8 pm & 8.05 pm – 9.05 pm

Beverley Gilder 1956-2024

It is with sadness that we record the death of Beverley Gilder who died on 29 September

Beverley moved to Gaddesden Row with her husband Jasper and infant son Marcus in January 1991 from Redbourn and they immediately changed the name of their property to Airlie Lodge in memory of Airlie Hall at the University of Dundee where they had met in 1976. Beverley, or Bev as she liked to be known, worked as a liability insurance underwriter at the time but when the early 1990's recession hit she swapped career to join Jasper in his training and management development business and she continued to work in that business and latterly for West Herts College until her retirement in 2023. She was hard working, an indulgent mum, a great cook, an avid reader and a good debater. She was taken too early.



Gaddesden Row  
JMI School

# Gaddesden Row JMI School

Here at Gaddesden Row, we ended our first half term with our annual pumpkin competition! All children produced amazingly creative

pumpkins.



We started the new half term by Remembering our heroes in the armed forces, past and present. The children wore their poppies with pride and were taught about the history of World War 1 and the significance of the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month. A special Remembrance Assembly was held on Monday the 11th of November and children in Year 6 made speeches to the rest of the school.

The children in Year 2 and Year 3 took part in a Victorian Enrichment Day on Tuesday the 19th of November. The children went back in time, dressed-up and were given an insight as to what life was like during the Victorian Era. The children took part in 'drill' activities, stood to attention when the headmaster entered the classroom and followed very strict rules. A fantastic time was had by all!

The week beginning the 3rd of December the whole-school will be taking part in our



'TAKE ONE BOOK' Week. A focus text is taught to every child from Reception to Year 6 and a range of activities take place over the course of the week.

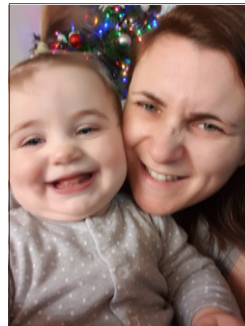
Our PTA have organised our annual Christmas Fayre for Friday the 6th of December. There will be lots of different stalls, a bottle and chocolate tombola and the children can visit Santa's Grotto. All of the Gaddesden Village are welcome to attend!

The festive season is almost upon us and the children in Reception and Year 1 have been busy learning their lines, knowing where to stand on stage, and signing along to the songs.

Applications are now open for new reception children in September 2024 and we welcome visits to our wonderful school. Please contact the school directly on 01582 840376 or email at [admin@gaddesdenrow.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@gaddesdenrow.herts.sch.uk) to arrange a visit. We are pleased to offer one-to-one school visits so that we can fully answer all your questions. We look forward to seeing you!

As we write this article, we have Ofsted visiting our school. We will hopefully have our report back in time to share with you at the next issue.

Miriam Barrow



Governor at  
Gaddesden Row JMI

Miriam and Luna



# Great Gaddesden C of E (V.A.) Nursery + Primary School

Winter is Coming. With December comes the

countdown to Christmas, and the giving way of the westerly winds to the icy polar northerlies running up to the winter solstice (21 December, 9:19 AM). Accompanied already by the first snowflakes and crisp, fresh days at the school!

By the time ink dries on this great gazette, our children will be starting preparation for Christmas and marking the start of



advent by decorating our tree (kindly donated by the Garden Centre).

The 19th December brings our Nativity day, and we warmly welcome parents, families and friends to join us. Early Years in the morning, Years 1 & 2 in the afternoon, and we have Candlelight at 4.30PM at the church.

This year, we are also delighted to be supporting the Rotary Shoe Box Appeal. Together, we'll fill shoeboxes with as many small toys and gifts as fit in a box, and hand them over for collection by the local Rotary Club to send to children-in-need in Romania, Ukraine and Moldova. Rotary Club of the UK have delivered over a million boxes of happiness to children, many of the boxes filled by children at schools like ours all over the country. It's a great cause to support.

Also upcoming in December, we have a whole school trip (17th) to the wonders of Beauty and the Beast pantomime, followed immediately the day after by Christmas Dinner & Jumper day! (The word *pantomime* first appeared on posters around London and Hertfordshire in 1717 as a performance of danced drama, mostly by one or two players, adapted from Italian *commedia dell'arte*—the now



quintessential British tradition of putting a twist on telling classic fairy tales came later, complete with the cheering and jeering from the audience that we all know and love!)

Over November at the school, we gathered for Remembrance, laying a poppy wreath made by Years 3 and 4, and sharing poems and prayers ahead of our two minutes silence around the war memorial. Amidst the crisp, cold days it is heart-warming to see our children recognising remembrance and reflection.

Beautiful, frosty mornings now provide the backdrop to Forest School, with our Years 5 & 6 transforming the woods into a rich theatre of creative collaboration. Tremendous times!

In a month in which so much happened at the school, one colourful highlight was seeing the children and staff supporting Children in



Need in a bright array of yellows and spotty dotty outfits. It is great to see our children understanding the many children around the world in need of support and help in difficult times.

And now, all that remains, on behalf of all the wonderful staff, governors, and the school, is to wish a very festive December all round, and when the term draws to a close on the 20th December, a wonderful Christmas to one and to all.

*"Of all the months of the year there is not a month one half so welcome to the young, or so full of happy associations, as the last month of the year." — Dickens*

John Bevan



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# Little Gaddesden Preschool & Forest School 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday

On 4th November we celebrated our 10th birthday. On this date in 2014 the adventure began when we took over the running of Little Gaddesden Preschool. It started as a small, mornings only, village preschool that has grown from strength to strength. Over the years we have developed the environment and curriculum to enable us to offer a nurturing, child centred approach to child development. It now operates 5 days a week, all day. We added a breakfast club facility for the children attending preschool and the local primary school as well as a holiday fun club.



Our most proud addition to the Preschool curriculum was that of Forest School. Forest School and outdoor education underpin and are interwoven in our values and ethos as a company and so it was only natural for this to be integrated into the Preschool early on. The children attend our woodland site in the heart of Ashridge once a week for a Forest School session. When they aren't at our woodland site, the principals of Forest School run throughout the Preschools environment and routine enabling all children to benefit from this style of curriculum and learning.

For our 10th birthday celebrations, we

welcomed families and children into Preschool for a fun birthday party. There were lots of fun activities available for everyone to enjoy.



Biscuit decorating, creating sculptures using clay, wood cookie creations, sparkly potion making and lots more. It was so nice to share in the celebrations with everyone and enable families to get a taste of life at Preschool.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the families who have come and gone over the last 10 years and those who are still with us for all your support. It truly is a privilege to welcome your children to our Preschool, be



a part of their journey and work closely with you through their Early Years.

With the addition of 2 other Preschools, now a wider part of our group, it has enabled more families to access our rich and unique provision. We look forward to welcoming many more families through our doors in the years to come.

*'From small seeds mighty trees grow.'*

If you are interested in finding out more about our Preschools and other outdoor education opportunities that we offer, please visit our website [www.natureforkids.co.uk](http://www.natureforkids.co.uk) or get in touch.

*Jenny Ivory*

## Desert Island Discs Christmas Special

**GGPN....** Welcome Father Christmas to Desert Island Discs

**Father Christmas...** Ho Ho Ho. It's a pleasure to be here in Great Gaddesden. Have you all been good boys and girls this year? Actually, I know who has been good and not so good. We won't mention Dacorum planning for wanting to build SO many houses down the road. More chimneys for me to squeeze down. But they may get an orange in their stocking

**GGPN...** You mention squeezing down chimneys. I can't help but notice that you've not been following Jo's keep fit or Moira's palates classes.

**FC...** Sadly, I'm more interested in Ivans mince pies and Craig's cocktails. Or as I call him, 'Cocky Craig' They keep me Ho Ho Ho cheerful.

**GGPN...** That brings me to your first choice of music. *Monty Python Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life*

**FC...** Ah yes. One of my favourites. I like the lines, If life seems jolly rotten, There's something you've forgotten. And that's to laugh and smile and dance and sing. But that's easy in Great Gaddesden, read the parish magazine for a laugh and smile, or go to a jazz night for a dance and sing song.

**GGPN..** You've chosen the *Tom Jones and Cerys Matthews version of "Baby it's Cold Outside"*. There are many versions but this is not unusual. I believe this is how you met your wife.

**FC...** Ho Ho Ho yes. I caught a nasty bout of man flu and had to go to hospital. It met the lovely Mary Christmas as she worked in the National Elf Service and she looked after me.

**GGPN..** Do you ever get spotted?

**FC..** Ho Ho Ho. No. Well I didn't until the pesky George the bird man got everyone looking up into the sky. I became his 97<sup>th</sup> species. I go as fast as I can and play *Chuck*



*Berry, Run Rudolph Run* to gee them up a bit. Perhaps it's Chuck Berry's duck walk that gives me away

**GGPN...** You've picked *Greg Lake I Believe In Father Christmas*. Tell me why

**FC...** Ho Ho Ho. It reminds me of how I became Santa. As you grow up, you believe in Father Christmas. Then you don't believe in Father Christmas. Then you become Farther Christmas.

**GGPN...** Tell me Father Christmas, how do you relax?

**FC..** Ho Ho Ho, that's easy. I look at Maggi's page which inspired me to do some extreme embroidery while I listen to the crooning tones of *Bing Crosby's White Christmas*.

**GGPN..** You must do quite a few miles on the sleigh Santa.

**FC...** Yes, but not as much as Val with her ramblings. I have a try with my sleigh bells, but I can't compete with Val and Sue ringing bells all over the place. *Do they know it's Christmas* has helped nearly as many places that Val has been to.

**GGPN...** You've picked *Wham, Last Christmas*. Can you tell me why.

**FC..** Ho Ho Ho. I can't help but giggle when I think of Wham. The children leave drinks out for me, Rum in Jamaica, Vodka in Russia. In Great Gaddesden I get Sherry.



I can't stand the stuff, but I don't want to upset anyone and I drink it. Sadly, I had a bit too much and lost control of the sleigh and WHAM! I hit the bridge at Water End. Apparently, I'm not the first. Luckily, someone was passing by and I asked for help. He said, 'I'm a chiropodist, not a mechanic' So I asked for a tow.

**GGPN..** And finally. What are you looking forward to in 2025

**FC...** Ho Ho Ho. I'm hoping that Liverpool win the Premier League and all the boys and girls in Great Gaddesden are good and put little blue discs in the pot at Tesco or ask their mums and dads to make a contribution and the magazine survives another year. World wide. I'm hoping Trump keeps his promise and ends the wars in a day. My last song is *John Lennon Happy Christmas War is Over.*

*HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE from  
Richard and John*



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# I am the Ghost of your Christmas Future.....

Hi, Jo Regardsoe here again and I've spent the last 16+ years coaching people to get fitter, stronger, lose weight, change shape and work around life's ups and downs.

This year in particular, I personally have been thrown more downs than ups that have really tested me both physically and mentally. I sadly faced not one parent, but both, nearly taken from me far too soon. But to cut a long stressful story short, the moral of this story is.....The more healthy you are right now, the stronger your future self will be and armed with the defences it needs to live a longer and happier life. The focus on health is often lost in the fitness world. It has for far too long focussed on fads and quick fixes that are mostly just aimed at losing the most weight in the quickest time. But I want to change that, and I want everyone reading this right now to start changing your mindset and approach when it comes to your exercise and nutrition because it might one day save your life!!!

Now I really want everyone to have a great December and fab start to 2025, not fretting about how big your bum and tum look and panicking about dropping a few pounds. I want you to start thinking about the small things that you enjoy, and how you can incorporate them "consistently" into each day. Because it really is the smaller things that matter most and the easiest way for you, to not only live your best life, but also be your best self for you and everyone who loves you!!

## So here is your future plan starting today....

1. It's more about mindset than counting calories. Workouts, exercise, meal plans, calorie targets etc that's about 5% of what really matters - the important part is far less sexy but I think much more fun!..
2. It's the support, belief, reassurance, accountability, the feeling of having someone on your team, and a fabulous friendly community backing you to reach your goals. Knowing what to do is 5%. Getting someone from knowing to doing is the other 95% of success. And that's what I coach. And I am here to tell you that you can achieve whatever you want no matter what your current fitness level is, how old you are or what time of year it is.

## Everyone is capable of improving their fitness and health throughout December!!!

It's certainly harder for some more than others. But everyone is capable with the right support! And yes you can still enjoy a vino or two and all the yummy stuff.

Well I am the friendly ghost of your Christmas yet to come, and I predict two things for your future....

1. If you keep putting things off – You will be no further forward and those results you want will take even longer.
2. If you start today, even with just a 10 minute walk or bodyweight home workout, your future self and health will thank you (Did you know that you can add 5 years to your life expectancy just doing a minimum of a x2 30 minute workouts per week?!!)

## What you do everyday matters more than what you do today.

One of the key things I get my parents and clients to work on is "imperfect actions" – It's far greater being consistently average over time, than it is trying to be "perfect" for a short time.

Don't make this December another "All Or Nothing Cycle". Start chipping away a little today and everyday so when 2025 comes around you won't be starting over, but already 10 steps ahead of those who do put things off till January!!

**Need help with your future self?** If you have a question or enquiry about how we can work together now or in the future, then please do not hesitate to get in touch today!

email me: [info@regardsoe-fitness.co.uk](mailto:info@regardsoe-fitness.co.uk) Tel: 07786 156653 or visit [www.fit-hut.co.uk](http://www.fit-hut.co.uk)

Wishing you a Merry Fitmas and Fab Start to 2025!

*Your Local Friendly Fitness Coach Jo Regardsoe x*

## 🎄👤 Festive parkrun 🎄👤

The power of this magazine is most impressive, in my last update I mentioned a knee injury & now it is better, I also briefly mentioned some flooding in Ledgemore Lane & less than two weeks after publication, whilst out testing my newly recovered knee on one of my local runs, I emerged from a footpath on to Ledgemore Lane, I passed Hoo Cottages & came head-to-head with a roadworks resurfacing truck & crew, fixing the road! I can't believe both these fixes were coincidental...

Anyway, having recommenced running, I thought I would share my findings on parkrun with you, parkrun is the weekly Saturday 0900-hrs 5-km run shared by thousands of like-minded walkers, joggers, runners & volunteers. Our nearest event is in Gadebridge Park, here's the course: [www.parkrun.org.uk/gadebridge/course/](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/gadebridge/course/) this is just one of over 1200 locations in the UK, there are also plenty of other events abroad too. They take place in almost all weathers & with a variety of different terrain, that said they all follow a set routine starting with not forgetting your barcode, then getting to the event briefing on time, listening to the Run Director's briefing, completing the course, staying in order at the finishing funnel, taking your token & getting your barcode & token scanned, handing in your token, then chatting with other parkrunners, usually at a local coffee shop or cafe, whilst awaiting your text message/email to get your results to see what challenges you might have completed on the 5K parkrunner app



(other apps are also available).

So having now completed 75 different parkrun locations, I am considered a 'parkrun tourist'. As an example, I recently completed the Castle Park event in Bishop's Stortford – this was my last event to complete all the current parkruns in Herts, Beds & Bucks. Whilst Gadebridge is a challenging course, with plenty of mud & hills, you probably won't break any 5-km records at this one, but the Old Town has plenty of coffee shops to debrief. Nearby we also have the Dunstable Downs event with fabulous (weather-dependent) views on an undulating grass trail course. If you are looking for your '5-km Personal Best' time, then head to Watford's Cassiobury Park or Rickmansworth Aquadrome, both are tarmac flat & fast courses although a little busier. Jersey Farm in St Albans is a mix of grass & bridleway, gently undulating & very popular with tourists seeking their J. Leavesden Country Park is a smaller trail event, including three clockwise laps of the Woodland Walk as well as a football pitch & some obligatory undulations.



As well as the Saturday events, each parkrun country can nominate two special days for additional events & in the UK

these are Christmas Day & New Year's Day, if you are seriously committed, you can complete four events in eleven days this year. In 2023 my Christmas morning routine was adjusted to include the Milton Keynes parkrun where along with another 804 merry parkrunners, I ran round the Willen Lake in a festive hat. Thankfully there are no photos from my New Year's Day event at Oak Hill in East Barnet, let's just say that their hill was not really all that compatible with the excesses of New Year's Eve!



There are tons of other challenges to complete, for example 'Pirates' (attend seven Cs & an R), Staying Alive (attend three Bees & three Gees), the Alphabet Challenge, etc, as a tourist I will even check my holiday destinations have local parkrun events to complete!

parkrun is positive, welcoming & inclusive, there is no time limit & no one finishes last. Everyone is welcome to come along & parkrun recently celebrated its 20th birthday. Events are timed, so as well as your finish position, you'll receive a finish time as well as an age-grading (if you're into that sort of thing), so that if you want

then you can challenge yourself to improve, I've managed to take almost seven minutes of my first time back at Gadebridge 18-months ago & a couple of weeks ago I finished the Lordship Recreation Ground event in 19-minutes 46-seconds, so having completed my #sub20 mins running goal, I can now either retire, or set myself a new goal & I think you know which option I've taken - I just need to decide which event to attend on Crimbo morning!

*Retired Runner*

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# Birds of Great Gaddesden

2024 has proven to be one of my most successful years for local birding, I've managed to see a record-breaking 96 species of birds within the Parish, several of which were rather unexpected! With plenty still to play for in December, maybe just maybe I'll be able to hit 100. There must be a Jack Snipe lurking somewhere? Or perhaps a Little Owl hiding away? A species that although once common has recently vanished from the Parish. I haven't even managed to see a Swan this year, another bird we have recently lost locally.

To record such a number of birds has involved hundreds of miles of walking and many hours staring up at the sky, often with very little reward!

I've spent considerable time over the last month attempting to track down Hawfinch around the Parish. I finally managed to locate one at their usual haunt, Great Gaddesden Church, on the 21st of November. They are best looked for early morning when they arrive at the Churchyard to feast on the Yew berries. Its best to keep still and stand with your back to the church as this elusive bird is very easily spooked.

It's not often I manage to add a bird to my Gaddesden list these days, I'm lucky if I add one or two a year. On the morning of the 10th November however I struck gold and stumbled upon my 111th species for the Parish! I was on my routine checks of

the water meadows early morning; it had been relatively quiet apart from a pair of Stonechat and few Redwings.

I always like to check the Trout fishing pools in winter; they can often attract a range of waterfowl. Over the years birds such as Tufted duck, Teal, Mandarin, Shoveller, Pintail, Little grebe and Egyptian goose have been observed here.

I headed to the gate just north of the foot bridge and glanced across the first pool. Despite approaching slowly my presence alerted a few moorhens who quickly dashed for cover but one bird remained floating in the middle of the pool. I lifted my bins, low and behold it was a drake Wigeon!



George Christmas



Drake Wigeon

Wigeon are a type of duck that arrive in the UK in the winter from Iceland, Scandinavia and Russia. The Male has a yellow forehead, contrasting chestnut head, a pink breast and a mainly grey body. The only previous record of

this species in the Parish is of a pair present for 6 days in February 2012.

Alan King has been keeping an eye on the local Red Kite roost at Gaddesden Row, he's counted over 20 birds arriving in the evening, a number which should increase over the winter months.

The shorter days of winter are also the perfect time to look for owls, I've been seeing both Tawny and Barn owls regularly lately whilst driving to and from work.

Micky Bell of Bunkers House had a very close encounter with an owl recently when one became stuck in his chicken coop! After much commotion and a slight struggle, the owl freed itself much to Micky's relief, who didn't fancy trying to catch it with those sharp talons!

Local wildlife artist Richard from Bridens Camp has also heard Teal flying over in recent evenings, another type of duck that can be found in the Parish during winter. He would also like to share this fantastic painting he recently completed of a Goshawk flying through Gorse wood. He has many paintings of local landscapes and wildlife that can be viewed at his studio by appointment which can be arranged by emailing him at



dixmith308@gmail.com

Hopefully 2025 will be as productive for birds as this year, although it is unfortunately unlikely. Many of our birds are still in serious decline and every year it becomes harder and harder to find birds locally, many of which were once common species. Much of our local green spaces are under threat by development and our government seems to have little interest in helping our native wildlife.

I wish you all the best for 2025 and thanks to everyone who has contributed with sightings and photos this year.

Happy Christmas and happy birding!

*George Moreton*

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## BIRDS OF GREAT GADDESSEN WHATSAPP GROUP

The group has been busy spotting wildlife around the parish including a Tawny Owl in Micky Bell's chicken coup.

To join, email your mobile number to George at [georgemoretton92@gmail.com](mailto:georgemoretton92@gmail.com)



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.

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Here are a few highlights of **Golden year:**

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- **Golden May Ball**
- **Crown & Sceptre Fundraiser**
- **Hobby Horse Challenge**
- **Open Day**
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We would like to thank everyone who has joined in and supported us this year, we are so grateful for the wider community support we receive which, as a self funding charity, is vital to our fundraising targets.

For more information on the work that we do please go to our website

[www.gaddesdenplacerda.org.uk](http://www.gaddesdenplacerda.org.uk)



There is still time to support our 50th celebrations by donating online using the QR code or link below.

We are also looking for new Trustees....

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*Karen & Ann*



# Darker Days and Brighter Times?

As we head towards the end of the year, nights are getting longer, a real chill is setting in, gloves and scarves have been found, and heavier coats brought out of summer storage.

Winter has been quite a while in joining us this year. To date we have only had one proper frost, and that was weeks ago. It has been unseasonably warm and after the soaking we received in the early part of the Autumn, and quite dry for the last two weeks. Threats are appearing on social media that there will be a 'massive snow bomb' before Christmas, but that just seems like unwishful thinking.

I have also been wondering when it is officially winter. Apparently, there are three rather different answers-

- The first is based on the meteorological calendar, used by most weather forecasters where winter always begins on the 1st December and lasts for 3 months. These are identified as the 3 coldest months of the year

- The second relies on the astronomical calendar where winter starts on the winter solstice or the shortest day. This year it will start on the 21st December and end on the 20th March

- There is also a third definition still used in some parts of the UK, particularly in Northern Ireland that uses an ancient Celtic calendar where winter begins on the 1st November and ends 3 months later.

I hadn't heard of the third version before I looked it up, no wonder I am confused!

Over that last few weeks, we have done a great deal of sorting and tidying up in the garden, the raised beds are clear...although I've still got to bring the manure from the

home field to spread on them, citrus trees now in the greenhouse to overwinter along with geraniums that we hope will come through. Vines, roses and bays are all pruned and cut back, and some serious weeding done. Along with many others we have shifted lots of leaves. This has been a good year for leaves!



On leaf collecting, I have just come across another area of contention. Those with the 'tidy gene'...I'm one, find it hard to let leaves lie, but the current views are that many, most or even all leaves can be left alone. RHS comments are very clear, leave

the leaves on borders, rake off lawns and save for mulch/compost. However, I have just seen a note from Joe Swift, one of the Gardeners' World team, where he says 'having spent weeks, if not months, of my life raking leaves up, I just wish I had changed my ways years ago'. Yes, do remove them from paths where they become slippery and dangerous, but leave the rest alone and only clear lawns with a mower set on high acting as a hoover.



BUT, another commentator from the Gardeners' World magazine says 'they are called leaves for a good reason – leave them alone'. Alys Fowler is very clear that the most natural course is to allow the worms to work on the leaves in situ, and

comments that the 'soil can hold up to 30% more carbon if the leaves are left alone, both on beds and on lawns'. The Lawn Association disagrees and is very clear that leaves left alone can 'suffocate and kill grass'.

So where does that leave us (sorry). The debate will continue and is likely to be much more complex than the brief overview that I have given here. There is a whole separate discussion on the biological effects of leaves carrying disease ...think of ash dieback, should they be left, recycled or disposed of? And the ways in which trees use their leaves to limit and control competition for other species...seeing the areas beneath beech trees where little else grows. For us here at the Barn, it seems like we will still be clearing lots of leaves falling on hard surfaces, leaving the beds with a natural covering and deciding when we can't bear the lawn looking scruffy for too long. But whatever we decide, we will be mulching as much as we can for use next year.

The sheep are looking quite fat and

relaxed, I hope it is not just their winter coats that are making them look good. They have noticed that our winter feed has arrived and are beginning to mob us when we walk with them in the field and complain that the grass isn't as tasty as it was a few weeks ago. As soon as the weather turns we will have them back in the home field where we can keep an eye on them over the worst months. We've just fed the bees, rather earlier than usual, fingers crossed that they get through the winter OK.

Its now only a few weeks until the Festive period, it's a great time for families and children, but also a time of sadness for many. Let's hope we have a brighter year ahead. From us all at the Barn we wish you the very best for Christmas and the Year End and an excellent and healthy 2025.

*Robin Douglas @ Hatches Barn.*

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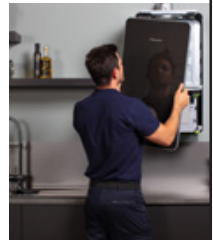
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And to start the New Year, the CPC Spiritualist Church are holding their annual Psychic Fayre at the hall between Midday and 4pm on Saturday 4 January 2025.

Entry is £2.50.

You also have the opportunity to book a One-2-One Reading with a Medium.

Further details are available from Elaine [c.p.c.spiritualist@gmail.com](mailto:c.p.c.spiritualist@gmail.com).

**Anne: 07954 600234**

[GGHallHire@gmail.com](mailto:GGHallHire@gmail.com)

**Sam, Dan, Jim, Sue**

[GreatGaddesdenparishhall@gmail.com](mailto:GreatGaddesdenparishhall@gmail.com)

GG Parish Hall, Dagnall Road (part of Leighton Buzzard Rd), Great Gaddesden, HP1 3BW



# Gaddesden Row Village Hall

This month The Gaddesden Row Village Hall has been rather busy . We have had our regular Wednesday morning mother and toddler group , monthly coffee and cake morning, the Halloween party, hall hire and also a very useful CPR and defibrillator training.

This was organised by the Heartbeat Trust in liaison with the parish council who have funded the training . A very useful and potential life saving skill to learn and understand . There was the opportunity to practise CPR on the manikins as well as learning how to use a defibrillator machine which can be found in the telephone box on the Village Green . A special thanks to Alex who delivered the session and also to Julie Kuzel for coordinating it.





# 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 (see below)

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

## December Events

### **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>**

8:00pm

### **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm

### **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>**

11:00am

### **Friday 13<sup>th</sup>**

9:00am

### **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>**

10:50pm

Thursday Murder a Pint Club

Oh La La ! Quartet

Gift Service for DENS

Christmas Walk & Talk

Christmas Carol Service

Crib Service

Family Communion

Crown & Sceptre

Great Gaddesden Church

Great Gaddesden Church

Golden Parsonage

Great Gaddesden Church

Great Gaddesden Church

Great Gaddesden Church

## January Events

### **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>**

8:00pm

Thursday Murder a Pint Club

Crown & Sceptre



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**In fact any job in the garden!**

# From Terry Douris - your County Councillor

## **Cllr Nick Tiley RIP**

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Nick Tiley who was my predecessor as the Dacorum Borough Councillor for Ashridge. I worked with him when he was the Portfolio Holder for Finance and I was the Chair of Audit. He was a good friend with a keen eye to ensure the finances and assets of the Borough were in good shape.

## **Hertfordshire's Annual Report**

This annual review puts into sharp focus the extent that the County Council provides people with some of the services they need for everyday life. For example:

- An estimated 1.6 million visitors to Hertfordshire's recycling centres
- Over 115,000 trees and 4.25 kilometres of hedgerows were planted
- Nearly 16,000 residents accessed Health Hubs
- Hertfordshire Fire Service carried out nearly 10,000 safe and well visits.
- 38,700 children with special educational needs and disabilities were supported
- £91m was spent on new school buildings and modifications
- The council's carbon footprint continues to reduce and it is estimated to have fallen 27 per cent since 2019
- 80,501 households were supported via the Household Support Fund
- 2.7 million people visited Hertfordshire libraries
- 47,000 adults were supported via adult social care services

## **Chief Constable retires.**

Charlie Hall is the longest serving Chief Constable in England having been in that role for Hertfordshire for 8 years. He retires on 31<sup>st</sup> December, and I wish him every happiness in his retirement coupled with our grateful thanks for making Hertfordshire the safe place that it is.

## **The process for applying to primary, junior and middle schools in Hertfordshire is now open.**

If your child is due to start primary school or move on to a junior or middle school next year, make sure you apply for a place in good time.

The easiest way to apply for a school place for September 2025 is to visit [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions) and complete the online application form. Online applications can be amended at any time before the closing date, and you can access your school offer before



allocation letters are received and accept your school allocation online.

Last year, 99 per cent of parents applied this way and found the system quick, easy and secure. Please remember to use all the preferences as choosing just one can disadvantage you. The closing date for application is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

## **Reqs the famous fire dog**

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has paid tribute to fire investigation dog Reqs, following his recent death.

Reqs, who retired in July 2023, was believed to have been one of Britain's longest serving fire investigation dogs. The black labrador passed away on Thursday, 14 November, and will be remembered as a dedicated and hard-working member of the team.

In November last year he became 42<sup>nd</sup> recipient of the PDSA Order of Merit, in recognition of his lifetime of dedication and hard work.

## **Herts Lynx**

I make no apology for reminding about this service. It is popular and sometimes there can be a wait to book a service. Sadly the service can be interrupted by external incidents as happened recently when another vehicle hit the Lynx vehicle. Do not be put off, give it a go and if you have a bus pass you can travel for free or at a reduced rate. Especially useful if you live in Gaddesden Row.

## **Winter Reads Challenge**

The County Council's Libraries Service are running their 'Winter Reads' challenge across the county from 1 November 2024 to 31 January 2025. Following the success of last year's challenge which saw 3,600 residents of all ages

sign up, a new set of challenges have been devised to encourage reading for pleasure and attendance at a series of exciting events that are taking place across the county's libraries.

All those taking part are asked to complete six challenges. There is a choice of challenges available so those taking part can choose how tricky they would like their challenge to be. Challenges for adults can be found on a Winter Reads bookmark while children have a collector card. It's super easy to take part and all you have to do is pick up a bookmark or challenge card from any library in the county from 1<sup>st</sup> November.

Some examples of a challenge for adults include borrowing and reading a book from a library display or reading a page a day throughout the period the challenge is on. Examples of challenges that children can take part in include 'time travellers' (reading a book set in a different time period) or 'fact finder' (discovering a new information book). Once the challenges have been completed those taking part will be entered into a prize draw to win an iPad or other book related prizes.

### Water Works

There is a lot happening about water in the area. The works between Red Lion Lane and the Water End Bridge are part of a project to improve the water flow and drainage in the area by removing the weir which forms part of the bridge close to the Red Lion Restaurant. Although not connected the environment Agency is undertaking major works to re-route the Gade back to its original position in Gadebridge Park.

### Simulated plane crash in Kings Langley.

This was a training exercise involving all the emergency and resilience services to ensure that all our processes and procedures are current and appropriate. I am sure that there will always lessons to be learnt from these types of training exercises.

### Do you have a project?

It is a little frustrating that I don't get more enquiries from local groups so if you have a project which could do with a little financial help, I may be able to help from my Members Locality budget. There are some simple requirements so the best first step is to drop me an email outlining your project.

I have just given £350 to the Gaddesden Row Toddlers Group for a new storage cupboard for their play and learning materials.

### Staying in Touch

I normally hold a 'surgery' on the second Saturday of the month normally accompanied by Dacorum Councillor, Jane or Ed. but please do look out for my alerts in Grapevine and 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](mailto:terry.douris@hertfordshire.gov.uk).

*I wish you a very happy  
and joyful Christmas.*

## ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A RECEPTION SCHOOL PLACE FOR SEPTEMBER 2025?

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# Update from your Borough Councillors

**We wish you all a very Happy Christmas!**

**Although Gt Gaddesden is now part of the new Constituency of Harpenden and Berkhamsted, it will still be part of Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) for local Council matters.**

**There are a number of changes that will be implemented in Dacorum in the new year.**

**Parking Charges.** DBC have been consulting on increased parking charges in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring, as well as Kings Langley, where there is free High St parking. This has now been passed, despite opposition, as the Council needs to raise more money.

**The New Local Plan Consultation** - is online at [letstalk.dacorum.gov.uk](http://letstalk.dacorum.gov.uk) from Monday 4 November – Tuesday 17 December. There has been an increase in the number of houses that DBC have to build each year to over 1,000 homes, taking into account predictions by the Office for National Statistics of an increase in the population. This has meant that some planned developments have been resurrected, such as Marsh Farm in Tring. Gt Gaddesden is designated as a 'small village' which means that there will not be any substantial development in the village;

however, the impact of other large developments such as Hemel Garden Communities (4,500 houses, initially) to the North of Hemel, will put pressure on the infrastructure, roads and schools etc. So, if you can, please do add your voice to the Consultation.

**Policing** – I understand that we now have a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) assigned to our villages as well as a Police Constable (PC). I hope they will become a regular sight in the area and attend the Parish Council from time to time.

**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 Hemel Garden Centre at 9.15am 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*



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## 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](mailto: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](mailto:victoria.collins.mp@parliament.uk)

# Great Gaddesden Parish Council

Next Parish Council Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 at  
Gaddesden Row Village 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	<a href="mailto:clerk@greatgaddesden-pc.gov.uk">clerk@greatgaddesden-pc.gov.uk</a>	

The Parish Council's website is available at  
[greatgaddesden-pc.gov.uk](http://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

# Parish Council News

Officers from Dacorum attended a public session before the Nettleden with Potten End Parish Council on 21 November to explain what action had been taken as a result of the event at **Highridge Farm** over the weekend of 13-15 September.

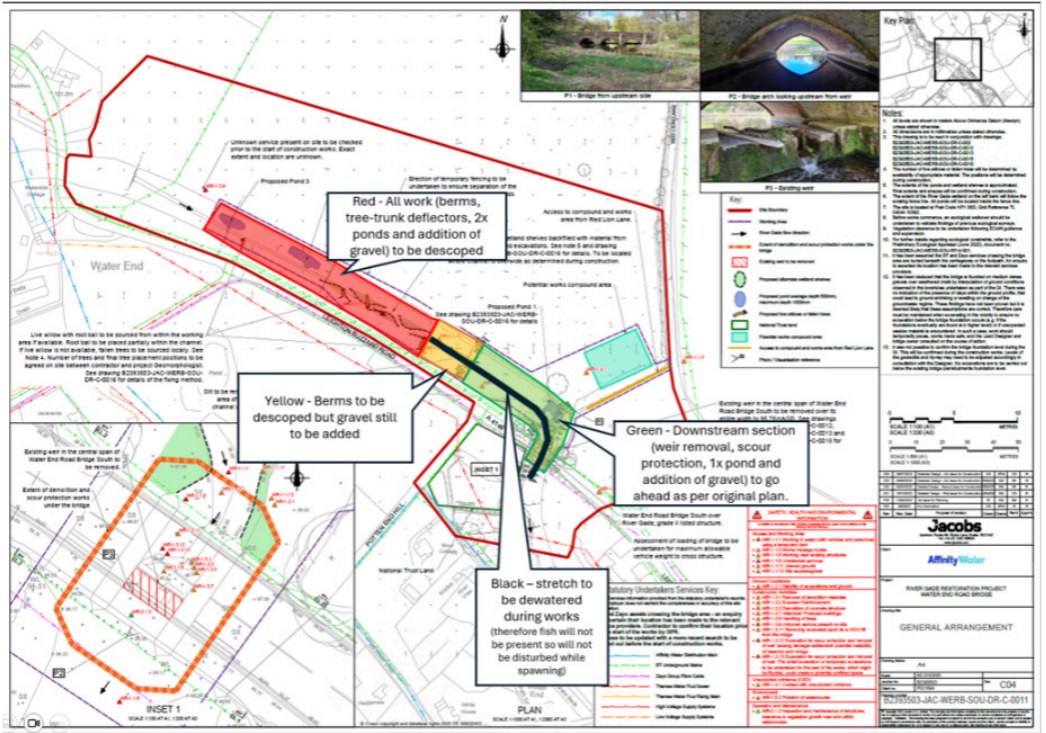
The Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space or **SANG proposed for the land between Nettleden Rd and Potten End Hill** was rejected by Dacorum because of the impact of the proposed car park, the proposed subdivision of the land, the intensification of the use of the site and insufficient protection, in particular the impact of free running dogs, and the impact of the ancient woodland of Heizdin's Wood.

If you want to comment on the most recent draft of **Dacorum's Local Plan** you have until midday on the 17 December to do so. I strongly

recommend that you read the document called "Supporting Information and Frequently Asked Questions" on the main Local Plan page on the Dacorum website which explains the bases on which you can object.

The Parish Council is considering challenging the following elements of the plan:

- The lack of information about the sustainability of the proposed development of 5,000 houses in north Hemel (also known as Hemel Garden Communities).
- The lack of information about the



impact of increased traffic from the 15,300 houses being built across the borough on rural areas.

- The weakness of the measures to protect the Gade.
- (Possibly) Dacorum's strategy regarding SANGs.

All of this requires sifting through a huge amount of paperwork!

Anyone travelling along the Leighton Buzzard Road between Potten End Hill and Nettleden Rd can't help but see the **huge pipes and pumps along the river**. This is all to do with the removal of the weir under the bridge at Red Lion Lane and remodelling of the river upstream toward the Water End bridge. The main objectives of the scheme are to reinstate chalk stream characteristics and remove obstructions to fish passage. More information can be found on the Dacorum Planning portal under 22/02836/MFA.

Other planning applications this month include the refurbishment of a brick bungalow at Honeybrook, St Margarets (24/02274/FHA) and work to and the felling of trees on the opposite bank of the river to the work described above (24/02564/TCA). Anthony Betts have appealed against Dacorum's decision not to approve its application for the retention of hardstanding (24/00801/RET).

And that's it from Parish Council land for 2024. On behalf of the Parish Council I wish everyone a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

*Andrew Farrow*  
Parish Clerk



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Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) 6126 Parisa Peiro suggests some safeguards to bolster security measures.

### 1. Review Your Security.

Review your security systems or consider a new system if you do not have one installed. This is always the number one deterrent to a would-be burglar. They have no desire to be caught on camera or lit up like a Christmas Tree!

### 2. Install Outdoor Lighting.

Automatic lighting at the front and back of your property can deter burglars. These lights are timed to come off and on automatically and can link to sensors as additional lighting.

### 3. Use Indoor Light Timers.

Make it look as though you are at home. You can also leave some music or radio playing.

### 4. Keep Valuables Out Of Sight.

Having a large, lavishly decorated Christmas Tree with mountains of presents sitting under it in plain sight through your windows is a very tempting sight to a burglar!

### 5. Protect Your Parcels

Don't leave parcels visible from the road – ask your delivery company to put them somewhere out of sight. Deliver them to a neighbour if you

know you're going to be out.

### 6. Think About Packaging Disposal

Don't leave empty packaging of your new gifts out for the rubbish collection, as you may be advertising the fact that there's valuable new jewellery, a large new TV or the latest PlayStation in your home. Either take them to a local recycling centre or break them up and hide with other rubbish.

### 7. Take Care with Social Media

Finally, thieves are becoming more and more sophisticated, especially in high-value housing areas. Don't post on social media your new expensive gifts or the fact that you are going out or away and leaving the house empty.

By taking the above precautions you will go a long way to avoiding an unwelcome guest this Christmas.

I kindly ask all residents to scan the QR code below to sign up to Herts Connected and report any concerns online.

*PCSO 6126 Parisa Peiro*



**Prevention First**

You can select to receive information and updates about crimes in your area, local police events and initiatives.

Signing up is quick and easy, either scan the QR code above or visit:

[www.hertsconnected.co.uk](http://www.hertsconnected.co.uk)

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Herts Connected is a free interactive messaging service from Hertfordshire Constabulary.





# T J Johnson Presents A Festive Treat

## Oh La La !

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**With Guest T J Johnson**

**An evening of Jazz, Swing and Mulled Wine  
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**December 7th at 7:30**

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20's upbeat to 50's smooth jazz, film noir/nouvelle vague film music and the occasional rearranged cool 60's French pop tune as well as original material.

The dulcet tones of Parisian born Fifi la Mer's voice and the evocative sound of her accordion blended with the talents of Alex Garnett on clarinet will take you straight back to that little café by the Eiffel tower then with his exuberance and beautiful saxophone playing they will transport you to that buzzy jazz club by Pigalle with the cool feel of Simon Picton on guitar and the groove of Julian Bury on double bass.

Oh la la! have been performing over 1200

concerts over the past 10 years in venues up and down the countries including Ronnie Scott's jazz club. They have also played on the Orient Express, on boats including the Belle Vallee on the river Seine.

Our line-up includes musicians from the Pasadena Roof Orchestra, The Casablanca Steps, Ronnies Scott's All Stars.

The response to the last few Jazz at St John's gigs has been great and this promises to be another fun affair at the 800 year old Great Gaddesden Church which has great acoustics and space for dancing along with a bar for refreshments. So, don't delay in getting your tickets @ £20 either by calling 01442 246513 or online at [www.wegotickets.com/event/634361](http://www.wegotickets.com/event/634361) where booking fees apply.

*John Watts*

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# School of Soft Furnishing

With Christmas fast approaching we usually find ourselves scratching our heads wondering where the last year went and asking each other 'how did the festive season sneak up on us so fast?'. It also gets us reminiscing about Christmases past.

For me, I remember attending primary school and being armed with my first needle – ok a bodkin - or a blunt needle to those not in the know

We were given two pieces of circled felt and taught how to hand sew around the edges to form a pocket. I chose two different coloured pieces, pink and blue. What decisions we had to make back then.

It took me a while to get the hang of this mind-boggling phenomenon that I had never tried before called hand sewing and even today, I remember the struggle.

During the process I hit disaster!

Somehow, I had managed to stitch an incorrect stitch! It didn't look the same as the others and I burst into tears. Of course, at that ripe old age of 5 making a mistake like this was like Costa

running out of coffee to me now. I had no confidence at all

It must have been hell for the teacher, no teaching assistants back in those black and white days, she had to scurry around each broken-hearted child to remedy the situations.

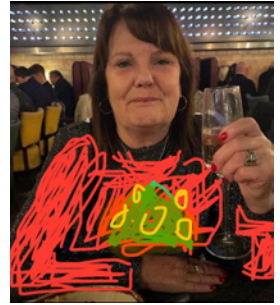
Once rectified I continued on until I completed two thirds of the circle then folded down once side to create a useable pocket.

Trimmed with a white frill at the top and blue ric-rac across the pocket and if that

wasn't enough I cut out a yellow daffodil in felt and placed that on too.

Decoration completed.

Although I remember all too well creating this masterpiece and how hard I found it to be, I have no recollection of how long it took me. I am near certain it brought the teacher to the brink though.



That wasn't the end of this monumental task though. I had to go home and beg for sixpence (again, two and a half pence to those not in the know) so that I could purchase two embroidered handkerchiefs from the teacher to slip into the pocket and complete the project. Sixpence back then was a big deal, especially when there were seven other kids in the house. But I

won and came home able to give my mum her Christmas present albeit she had bought it herself

I was over the moon with my achievement and who would have thought that here I would be here today 60 years on, full of confidence and running my own business creating bespoke pieces with a needle and thread and passing those stitches onto my students.

Hope everyone has a joyous Christmas with family and friends and has time to reminisce about the 'good ol days' like I do x

# Cultivating with Clive

So, Christmas is nearly upon us. If you are thinking of buying a poinsettia for some floral Christmas cheer, think where you buy your plant from. Poinsettias are obviously from warmer climes, they are very sensitive to chilly draughts and the cold. I would not recommend buying your plant from an outdoor market. If you buy yours from a garden centre or a supermarket don't leave it in the car for too long. I would recommend you take them straight home and place them away from cold draughts or even above a radiator, as this will make them wilt and might even kill them off.



Spare a thought for the garden birds in the winter : leave out plenty of food for them to help them get through the cold months. I have made my own fat ball this year.



I bought some lard, mashed it up and mixed it with bird seed, peanuts, dried fruit, grated cheese and sunflower seed, which I saved from the summer. This is a cheaper option than buying them from the shops. I put on some latex gloves to stop my hands getting greasy and then rolled them into ball shapes.



Clive's dad John and grandson Jacob

If we get snow, I tend to brush off the snow from my shrubs with a broom to stop them getting damaged. Remember to keep off the lawn when it is frosty and wet as this will damage it.

*Clive Hill*

## THINGS TO DO IN THE GARDEN IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS

- Plant rhubarb
- Prune acers and birches
- Dead head winter flowering plants
- Replenish bird baths
- Stop ponds freezing over by floating a ball or an empty water or juice container on the surface
- Look Forward to the spring!

## **PETER D. HANNABY** **Painter and Decorator**

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# Fairy Woods



I have been lucky to have lived in our beautiful little village for almost 10 years now. I can often be found walking in the woods and surrounding areas, more so by myself now that my children are that little bit older.

Back a few years ago me and my family were walking in the woods and we took a picture by a tree, when home it looked like a little blue fairy was in the background, since then, the name "fairy woods" has firmly stuck for us.

Some of you may remember back in 2020 myself and my children placed some small fairy doors around the village, in the meadow and in the woods for our "wellbeing Wednesday" home learning lesson, in the hopes that we could make someone smile in what was a really scary and isolating time for many.

Shortly after, on one of our walks, we noticed more and more beautiful fairy doors, hanging ornaments and all sorts had

been placed over the woods and it made our walks that bit more exciting, we never knew what we were going to see next and of course the children had no idea where they were coming from which made the experience even more magical for them... and me 😊

Over the years those items have gradually vanished, every now and then a few bits would re surface or a random new door would appear (and always put a smile on my face) and then recently on a walk with my youngest we discovered that the fairy woods have once again come alive and been filled with items made with absolute love, the smiles and magic being created by those crafty little fairies is something that I am very thankful for.

If you haven't done so already, go get your walking boots on and have a walk around the beautiful fairy woods.

*Lucianne Oldham*



# St Margarets Turkeys

At St Margarets Turkeys, we are passionate about rearing high quality, free range turkeys. Christmas happens only once a year and we believe it is important the centre piece of such a special meal is delicious and of a quality that our regular customers have come to expect.

Our turkeys arrive at St Margarets at 3-4 weeks of age in early August. They are reared in a warm barn with plenty of fresh straw, which is produced on the farm. They are fed a high quality, nutritious diet which includes grains and leafy greens. Once our birds have settled into their new environment, and are old enough, they are allowed to venture out into their secure



play pen where they spend the sunny and (rainy!) days of the summer and autumn. Here they are able to graze

through the grass. At night our birds are housed in the barn with perches for them to roost on. The welfare of our turkeys is of the utmost importance to us. All our birds are processed on farm. Unlike most of those which are for sale in the supermarkets, all our turkeys are dry, hand plucked. This gives a superior finish to the bird. They are then hung for 7-10 days in a chilled environment which allows the meat to develop a fuller flavour - the perfect centre piece for your Christmas dinner.

*Josh Matterson*



# St Margarets Turkeys

FARM FRESH, FREE RANGE CHRISTMAS TURKEYS

Based in Great Gaddesden, our turkeys arrive on the farm in early August. They are bedded on fresh straw, fed high quality grains and are free to roam during the day. For their safety, at night they are housed in a cosy barn.

For more information call: **Josh 07891 305578**

 **St Margarets Turkeys**

[www.stmargaretsfarm.co.uk](http://www.stmargaretsfarm.co.uk)



# Great Gaddesden Bake Boff



## Homemade Mince Pies

It's been a few months since the last of my recipes my apologies if anyone really missed them 😊

I have just spent the last 5 weeks in New Zealand trying out the food down under. One was called a mousetrap. This is a slice of bread covered in cheese with peppers and ham and various other ingredients. Its then grilled and looks like a pizza slice. Makes a great snack.

I know these days most folks will purchase Mince Pies from the local supermarket however if you make them yourselves you can freeze them and use them later. If you have a food allergy or a vegetarian preference they can be tweaked accordingly.

This is an old school recipe. If you don't fancy using lard baking spread will suffice.

- Short Pastry
- 400g Flour
- 75g margarine
- 25g Lard
- 6-6 tbsps Water

- Jar Mincemeat- This will do 12 deep filled pies-24 small
- 1 egg-Dash milk for egg wash
- Teaspoon sugar

Sieve the flour then rub the fat into it until you get a sandy texture

Add enough water to make a firm paste. Don't over handle it

Roll out the pastry till its 2mm thick

With a fluted cutter cut out your rings for the base and press into baking tray. These come in shallow or deep dish so how many pies you get depends on your baking tray.

With a spoon add your Mincemeat.

With the remaining pastry you can cut out lids using a smaller cutter or if you have them a star or festive shaped cutter.

Prick each with a knife

Brush with Egg wash -Sprinkle with sugar and bake 200-230 for approx. 20 min

Have a great Christmas.

*Ivan*

# A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christmas Story

In Caernarfon in North Wales a young couple were having a heated discussion. After a particularly vivid dream about angels **Mary** had recently realised that she was pregnant, her fiancée was upset as they had been waiting until after their wedding before becoming intimate. However he decided to stand by her saying 'everyone will think it's mine so I'll give it my name'. they decided to bring their wedding forward and **Jo** realised that his birth certificate was at his parent's home in Camarthenshire so they booked a week off in late December so that he could collect it and Mary could meet his parents.

Early one Thursday morning they packed enough for a few days and walked to the nearest bus stop to their home in **Nasareth** (*a hamlet in the Nantlle Valley in Gwynedd*) for the T2 which would take them two hours to reach Machynlleth. Both deep in thought they failed to notice the beautiful scenery as they travelled through Pothmadog (*situated just outside The Snowdonia National Park on the Afon Glaslyn estuary, which runs into Tremadog Bay. It is one of the largest towns in Snowdonia with a good selection of shops*) and Dolgellau (*a midpoint on Section B of the Mawddach Way and the start or finish of the Mawddach Trail. Bike Hire is available in the town.*) before arriving in Machynlleth (*a popular market town at the head of the beautiful Dyfi estuary in Mid Wales*) where they had time for a coffee before boarding the T12 to Newtown. The journey took an hour and were tired and hungry when they reached their destination. Once refreshed they boarded the T4 to Buillth Wells, once again driving through wonderful scenery and then through Llandridrod Wells (*a town and community in Powys, within the historic boundaries of Radnorshire, Wales which serves as the seat of Powys County Council and thus the administrative centre of Powys.*) before leaving the bus at Buillth Wells (*a market town and community in the county of Powys and historic county of Brecknockshire (Breconshire), mid Wales, lying at the*

*confluence of rivers Wye and Irfon, in the Welsh (or upper) part of the Wye Valley.*). The bus to Llandeilo, his parent's home town, ran weekly so they rested for the night in Buillth Wells and on Friday morning they boarded the X14 at 09.35 and arrived just over an hour later.

Although it was a busy time of year Jo's family had found them accommodation in a converted **stable** near the hamlet of **Bethlehem** and had made sure that the fridge was well stocked on their arrival. Both exhausted they settled down to sleep for a while but suddenly Mary woke with the realisation that her baby was to be born early. With no car to get them to a hospital and no help nearby luckily the child arrived easily and they **swaddled** him in sheeting and put him to sleep in a **box** once used to hold **animal food**.

Meanwhile in **The Angel** Inn in Llandoverly, Jo's father and several other **shepherds** were celebrating their success at the Llandoverly Sheep Festival when suddenly they heard **music** as all their mobile phones **lit up the room** at the same time. Jo had let his mum know about the baby and she, and all her friends were phoning their husbands with the **glad tidings**. They all climbed into a booked minibus (aware that none of them were fit to drive) they headed for **Bethlehem**, stopping on the way to collect Jo's youngest brother with his **pet lamb**. After a joyous meeting and quiet celebration they all headed home to give the new family some peace. Disturbed by all the activity, **cattle** in nearby fields **were lowing** and woke the child.

At about the same time, **far to the east** in Fornham All Saints near Bury St Edmunds a group of friends, **wise men** who worked in research in a Cambridge college, had met in their local, **The Three Kings**, to discuss plans for a trip in the near future. They had heard that Tom Jones was to perform in his home town and wanted to **follow the star**. They booked a coach to Cardiff, changing in Birmingham and found out that a friend's

son had just become a father so took the chance to meet the new baby. Not having had time to shop for baby gifts they turned out their pockets and found some pound coins (**gold**) and some joss sticks (from a festival attended years before) made from **incense and myrrh**. They gave these

gifts and ordered more appropriate '21st century' products on Amazon when they arrived home.

After resting for a while the family travelled to Camarthen to register the birth before travelling back to **Nasereth** where the child was brought up.



After a number of excursions during the summer the Railway Group has returned to our hall

meetings. The October talk was about the development of the railway through Hemel Hempstead and was very informative. Did you know that the rails were originally laid on stone sleepers many of which can be found reused elsewhere in the area - for example as part of the support for the white bridge in Gadebridge Park.

Novembers meeting will be looking into the history of some of the stations which have been once again repurposed, this time for the Elizabeth Line.

Novembers Monthly meetings speaker entertained us with pictures of some of the posters from the collection at the London Transport Museum. We saw the development of advertising as we explored the social history of the past 100 years.

In September Bus Trippers headed into London for a tour of the beautiful Hindu Temple near Neasden. The day included a video describing the construction of the building, a visit to the "history of Hinduism" exhibition, a tour of the Mandir and a delicious meal in the restaurant.

In October they used buses to reach Wardown House and Gardens in Luton. It is situated in a park with a lake which was in use by a group sailing their remote controlled boats. The museum is in a lovely old house and outlines much of the history of Luton using both static and hands on exhibits. The on site cafe served a sandwich lunch and a selection of cake to accompany coffee or tea

The newly formed Backgammon Group

## Learn, Laugh, Live

meets monthly and is proving popular whilst the well established Mahjong and 'Cribbage and Scrabble' groups continue to thrive.

There is also the opportunity for members interested in learning or improving their language skills with for example Latin groups at various levels, German Improvers and Italian all meeting monthly. Dacorum U3A welcomes new members to join our wide range of activities.

Visit our website [u3adacorum.org](http://u3adacorum.org).



# Val's Ramblings

My return from France was followed by a couple of days in Lincolnshire before travelling across country to Nant Mawr near Oswestry to stay with friends Chris and Jen. They had recently spent a day at the seaside, Llandudno, from where they had visited Bodnant Garden. They



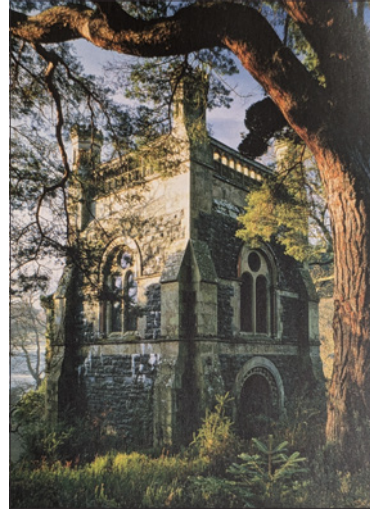
The manicured lawns, flower-filled terraces, buzzing wildflower meadows and pastoral glades drop dramatically from the house into an awe-inspiring dell famous for its rhododendrons, waterfalls and towering trees.

were so impressed that a second visit was called for and consequently I also had the pleasure of visiting this beautiful place.

Formerly known as Bodnod, Welsh for a dwelling in a prominent place, it reverted to its earlier, and more romantic name of Bodnant, a dwelling by a stream, when it was bought by Henry Davis Pochin in 1874.

Henry was a successful pharmaceutical chemist, industrialist and financier. He was also an aspiring politician with radical Liberal leanings and in 1852 married Agnes Heap who was at the forefront of the campaign for women's suffrage in Manchester. Together they achieved great things in their local community of Salford improving working conditions, living conditions and educational opportunities for all. Sadly, they also experienced personal tragedy losing four of their six children. By 1871 Henry was looking towards a country life in North Wales which led to his purchase of Bodnod. Their surviving son was disinherited

Overlooking the Dell, on a rocky outcrop is the POEM. Now a Grade II listed building created by Henry Pochin in 1882 as a final resting place for the children he and Agnes lost in infancy, for themselves and their descendants. It is



suggested that POEM is believed to stand for "place of eternal memory".

The garden has been in the care of the national Trust since 1949 and definitely worth a visit.

Walking, ringing and

'jobs' usually form part of my treats during any visit to Nant Mawr and this visit was no different! A festival to mark the 150th anniversary of the restoration of St Oswald's, Oswestry, was in full swing so a good excuse for extra ringing as well as the delights of a Balloon Festival centred on the park alongside the church. While strolling round I came across a wonderful statue of Wilfred Owen, MC, who was born in Oswestry in 1893- it's good to learn





something new every day.

My journey home from Nant Mawr took a slight detour, planned for once, to Powis Castle (another NT jewel) where I met an old teaching colleague who now

lives in Presteigne. The castle houses two of the greatest collections of any country house in the British Isles accumulated by generations of Herberts and Clives but unfortunately, we only had time to enjoy the celebrated terraced gardens and magnificent park.

After a month in Hertfordshire I was off again, this time on a ringing tour to the North West with our base near Chorley. Such trips are never 'holidays', with ringing being the focus, and consequently we had already visited three churches on our journey north leaving just nineteen more before arriving back in Hertfordshire!



Apart from the wonderful bells, situated in all types of surroundings from city to seaside, and excellent ringing, the camaraderie shared on these trips is



second to none. Two highlights for me, the first at Penwortham on the south bank of the River Ribble near Preston, where access to the ringing chamber was from a ladder through an elaborate trap door which had to be slid into place when everyone was in the ringing chamber. However, the level of the ringing chamber floor was about a meter higher than the floor at the top of the ladder! This necessitated the ringer of the treble standing on a box to achieve the same height, a challenge I was keen to accept! My second highlight was in fact on the same day. This time at Lytham where we rang at St Cuthberts late afternoon before attending a practice at another church. So, we needed something to eat and what better on a beautiful evening than fish and chips sitting on the quiet promenade, looking out to sea?

And that completes my Ramblings for 2024! Already plenty in the diary to look forward to in 2025 - watch this space!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Val

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Cheers!

Winter is coming and what could be better than a glass of warm cider. Mulled to be precise. So, as we welcome Winter will you join me in a mug of...



## Water End Wassail



A Wassail is an ancient English drink that is made from mulled apple cider and spices. To 'wassail' is to go from door to door to bring cheer, exchange salutations and good wishes, or to carry out an act of charity. It is an integral part of Yuletide and, for me, now marks the beginning of the season.

Our local ingredient is Black Lab Cider from the Chiltern Cider Company in Great Missenden (and purchased locally from Tring Brewery). This cider is named after the family's beloved Labrador who chases apples during the harvest. It is a medium dry cider with a flavoursome apple punch. You can buy yours from Tring Brewery <https://tringbrewery.co.uk>

On to the mix... to make around 10 cups of good cheer mix 2 litres of Black Lab cider in a large pan with 250ml

freshly squeezed orange juice. Add to the pan 2 sliced lemons, 1/2" of ginger (peeled), a tea bag, 2 cinnamon sticks, 6 cardamom pods, 5 whole cloves, 3 allspice berries (Waitrose was the only place I could find these), 2 whole star anise, and a pinch of freshly grated nutmeg. Cover and simmer over a low heat for around an hour until the spices have infused. Sweeten to taste (I used two teaspoons of sugar per serving). Strain and serve in mugs with a cinnamon stick and slice of lemon. Voila!



Please drink responsibly. I hope you enjoy!

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### Shopping List:

2L Black Lab Cider

250ml Freshly Squeezed Orange Juice

2 Lemons (sliced)

Spices - 1/2" of ginger, a tea bag, 2 cinnamon sticks, 6 cardamom pods, 5 whole cloves, 3 allspice berries, 2 whole star anise, nutmeg

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Craig 

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