



Challenge



The Parish Newsletter of Weston Colville and West Wrating
The views expressed herein are those of the contributors.
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Christmas Café Studio

Following on from the success of our July café studio we would like to welcome everyone to our Christmas event in West Wrating Village Hall on Saturday 2nd December, from 10.30 am until 1.30 pm.

The very talented stallholders from July and some equally gifted newcomers will be selling their lovely wares.

Our café helpers are making delicious homemade cakes, along with fresh coffee and tea. Over the lunchtime period homemade soup and bread will be available.



Do join us for this festive event, and perhaps find that perfect gift.

Sherry and Jan

Christmas Wreath Making

Saturday 2nd December, 10.30 am

Come and join us in St Mary's Church for a Christmas wreath workshop and demonstration. No experience needed.

Cost: £25, including demonstration, all materials, coffee and a homemade soup lunch. (If you can, bring your own secateurs.)



To book a place, please contact Gay.

Gay Redman (290807, redman.tessa@gmail.com)

West Wrating Church

All ages very welcome

Christingle

Sunday 10th December 4-5 pm

Children - come at 3.45 to make your own Christingles

Mulled Wine Tea Cake

Bonfire

Christingle

What is Christingle? What a strange word! It's a special child-friendly way to prepare for Christmas, remembering the message of Jesus coming as the Light of the World.



Come and join our celebration with songs, oranges, candles and lanterns to lighten the church on a dark December afternoon. Children, come early to prepare your oranges. Everything provided.

Mulled wine, tea, cakes and a bonfire afterwards. All ages VERY welcome.

Scilla Harvey (07769 655693)



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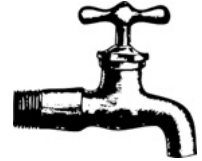
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Tea & Cakes

Thank you to everyone who came to our November session of Tea & Cakes. Our next date will be the Christmas one on Friday 15th December at 3.30 pm in the Reading Room as usual, when we will be serving tea with mince pies and other Christmas goodies.

All donations will go to our local Emmaus charity at Landbeach.

They do such amazing work for homeless people providing them with somewhere to live, as well as training and a job to help them rebuild their shattered lives.

We look forward to seeing you again.

Val and the Team



West Wrattling Village Hall AGM

The AGM of the Village Hall Management Committee is scheduled for Monday 11th December at 7.30 pm, when the report and accounts for the last financial year will be presented. All interested residents of our village are welcome to attend.

Mike Rowland (290788), Diana Edwards (290616)

West Wrattling Progressive Supper

The Progressive Supper will take place again on Saturday 27th January 2024. Please let me know if you would like to take part. Thank you.

Sherry (07468 696481)

West Wrattling Oil Syndicate

The Weston Colville oil cooperative has generously offered to include orders from West Wrattling residents. Ordering details will be shown in subsequent issues of *Challenge*. The contact is Peter Harris on 07897 444126.

Phil Tempest (westwrattlingoil@gmail.com)

Tech Clinics and Community Hub

The Weston Colville Community Hub has been running for a few weeks now, every Wednesday in the Reading Room, 11 am until 3 pm with soup served at 12.30. Please join us; everyone is welcome and there is no charge, thanks to support from Cambridgeshire ACRE, SCDC and the Reading Room Trust.

If you feel able to volunteer to either set up, clear away or make soup, we could still use a little more help. Please contact me (details below). We will be open until the end of March 2024 excluding the Christmas and New Year holidays.

In addition to enjoying excellent soup and convivial company, we are also bringing back the Tech Clinics where our friendly IT experts David and Simon will be delighted to assist in solving your IT issues or pointing you in the right direction if they can't be fixed at the time. The next Tech Clinics will also be on Wednesdays, 11 am until 3 pm on 13th December and 21st February 2024. We'll pause at 12.30 to allow everyone to have lunch.

Bob Coates (07785 361345, cheviotbob@me.com)

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We will not be selling Christmas trees from the yard at Burrough Green this year. Instead we will be taking orders for delivery.

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The Chestnut Tree

For those of you who don't already know, we will be leaving The Chestnut Tree on 4th December.

We are very sad to be leaving this wonderful village, and all the friends we have made, but we are also relieved and looking forward to taking life at an easier pace.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the pub over the years and also supported us as a family. We really can't think of anywhere better for Rebecca to have grown up and West Wrating will always have a special place in our hearts.

We will be having a farewell get-together on Saturday 2nd December at the Sports Pavilion (Football Club) from 8 pm, and it would be lovely if you could join us (please note, this is a change from the original BYOB we were going to do at the village hall). Nibbles will be provided and the bar will be open to purchase drinks.

Our team will be there too, and we would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to Charlotte, Lisa and Sophie. The last few months have been very challenging and without your hard work, love and support we don't know what we would have done.

You are all like family to us and we will never be able to thank you enough for the contribution you have made to making The Chestnut Tree such a great place to be, and also for the love you have shown to us personally – we are going to miss you!

Finally, we want to reassure you of the new owner's commitment to The Chestnut Tree continuing to trade successfully as a traditional village pub. Prescriptions will continue to be picked up three times a week for collection from the pub, and the lunch club will be continued, although we are not yet sure concerning the December lunch – the new owners will advise Suan who can let you all know their plans.

Harry, who some of you may have seen behind the bar recently, will be helping the new owners to get the pub up and running for the first month. Ownership of the Facebook page will be passed over, so please 'like' the page to keep up to date going forward.

So goodbye for now and thank you all again – we are off to get a life! Much love,

Peter, Rachel and Becca



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Please send us your contributions, events, notices, photos and comments.

From the Rectory

It's that time of year! Advent and the approach to Christmas, when there is so much to look forward to in our parishes: Christmas fairs; Christmas concerts and services; carol singing and more besides, all of which I really enjoy! Yet whilst Christmas decorations may arrive in the shops in early November, it can still be good to keep a balance between the waiting and preparation associated with Advent and the festive atmosphere throughout December.



Savouring the waiting and preparation can seem like a counter-cultural pursuit. Sometimes we may be encouraged to cut to the chase and get what we want straight away, as though there is nothing worth waiting for. Advent dares to defy this. Even something as simple as an Advent calendar or candle may remind us that Advent traditionally is a time of reflection and preparation for the joyful celebration of the birth of Christ.

The more hectic life may become, perhaps the more important it is to set aside time for stillness and reflection. This in turn may help us appreciate more deeply the good we may see in each other and the world around us, despite the trials and tribulations we may experience or hear about in the news. It may help us notice, name and celebrate gift, generosity and expressions of love.

Gift, joyful celebration and an instinct for seeing the good, also point towards the deeper reality of the Christmas message and the story of Jesus' birth. Beautifully strange news which offers hope, joy and new life. A child, born in humble circumstances, is the Christ child who is greeted, as Luke's gospel says,

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as "Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord". Good news conveyed by these simple words, which invite a lifetime's reflection: Jesus is "Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us'".

At this time of year then, we may be reminded that, however busy or testing our lives may become, the most important, life-changing good news we could ever hear is being proclaimed in the stillness and joy of our Advent and Christmas celebrations. Good news worth responding to, celebrating and sharing, and which can shape the way we live not only during

Advent and Christmas but in all the times and seasons of our lives.

Revd Iain McColl



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Weston Colville Circular Walk

The next walk will be our now-traditional one on New Year's Day, of approximately five miles. We'll meet at the Reading Room at 11 am to deal with those cobwebs. All welcome – come and join us?
Enquiries: jacquelinetheteacher@hotmail.com, 291475.

Jacqueline Douglas

West Wrating Book Club

Our book for November was 'My Name is Leon' by Kit de aal. The author writes from personal and professional experience. What could have been a depressing book in the end proves to be uplifting. It tells the story of a mixed-race child, Leon, put into foster care with his baby brother, from whom he is later separated. The story is set in Birmingham against the background of the 1981 riots and is told from Leon's point of view. It highlights how a young child can understand more than adults may think while picking up only partly on what is being said and drawing wrong conclusions, as well as how loss of precious objects and people affects us. At the same time adults, too, can misunderstand and draw wrong, sometimes dangerous, conclusions.

All said how they enjoyed/loved this book, with it being well-written. It is in turn sad, frustrating, upsetting, hopeful, and, ultimately, positive and satisfying, and easy to read (although it might need to be put aside when tension or emotion gets too much). Scores ranged from 8.5 to 9 out of 10.

Our next book is the classic 'A Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens, to be discussed on Wednesday 13th December at The Chestnut Tree at 7.30 pm.

Linda Gorman (290653)




Kate


Margaret & Wally


Charlie


Karen



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Flooding Returns to Weston Colville - Update and Reminders

The recent flooding in several parts of the UK, particularly in Eastern Scotland and the midland counties, caused by Storms Babet and Ciaran, also caused some problems in Weston Colville with Common Road severely affected and water running down Chapel Road. Fortunately, on this occasion no properties were inundated with water but this event serves as yet another reminder that parts of the village are at risk of flooding during periods of extended rainfall, as occurred on Friday 20th October and Thursday 2nd November. The ‘Flood’ signs – acquired for the village as part of drawing up the village Community Flood Plan – and ‘Road Closed’ signs were deployed on both occasions but, even so, vehicles entered the flood water and were stranded along Common Road.

The parish council (PC) has over the years, and especially since the serious flooding of June 2016 when several properties were badly affected, put pressure on the County Highways Department to resolve a number of flooding issues around the village and work has been done at Church End, the ford on Horseshoe Lane, grips along Chapel Road and several

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road drainage systems including on Mill Hill. The PC asked the County Highways Department for action to be taken in 2018 to help resolve the flooding along Common Road. Unfortunately, despite multiple follow-ups, nothing has happened, and vehicles continue to get stuck in flood water. The PC can only ask the relevant authorities to act since it has no powers of its own to make anything happen. Flooding is an ongoing item on the agenda of all PC meetings.

However, the PC has drawn up a Community Flood Plan which can be viewed on the PC website at www.westoncolville.org.uk The plan highlights areas of the village at most risk from flooding and provides information and contacts in the event of flooding incidents. There are five Flood Wardens in the village, identified in the Flood Plan, who are there to provide assistance during flooding events. The PC has acquired hydrosacs and hydrosnakes (modern replacements for sandbags) which are located in bins behind the bus shelter at Weston Green and by the red phone box at Church End. The bins have digilocks and the numbers can be obtained from the Flood Wardens and members of the PC.

Residents in the village can help to mitigate the risk from flooding. Landowners with property that backs on to drainage ditches or watercourses have Riparian Responsibilities which requires house or landowners to keep ditches and watercourses clear of obstructions to allow water to flow freely past their property. Village residents can also keep an eye out for blocked road drains (maybe just to remove leaves and other debris) or, if they are badly blocked, then make a note on the County Council website for recording faults on highways. Flood Wardens do this routinely, but parishioners can help with this task. If more water goes into the drainage systems there is less to threaten people’s homes. If work is carried out around or near to watercourses or ditches, including modifications to banks or erection of bridges, care should be taken to ensure that the flow of water into and along those water bodies is not restricted in any way.

Contact a Flood Warden or member of the PC for further information on flooding, via the parish clerk: clerk@westoncolville.org.uk

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Wildly Preserved Foods

On Tuesday 21st November, about 20 of us gathered in the Reading Room for an evening talk on fermented food with tastings. We started with a quiz to look at common cupboard foods and decide which had a stage of fermentation in their production, then I gave a short talk on what fermentation is, the history of fermentation, the gut microbiome and potential pros and cons of eating fermented food. However the majority of the evening was tasting about 15 different food ferments with accompanying drinks.

Those present kindly filled out tasting notes for me so I have an idea of which might be more popular and I should make in future. As some people couldn't make the evening but displayed interest I will repeat the evening or something similar in the New Year. Many thanks to all who came on Tuesday – I hope you enjoyed the evening.

Jackie Brearley

Peter & Ruth Lloyd Trust Award 2024

We are pleased to report that the Trust presented the 2023 award to Emily Jackson, from Weston Colville. Emily is now at Birmingham University undertaking a Masters Degree in Nursing. Very well done!

As always it was a pleasure for the trustees to meet such enthusiastic and interesting young people from our locality during the selection process.

We are now inviting applications for pupils starting university in September 2023.



Normally one scholarship is awarded each year to the amount of £1,000.

Broadly speaking the degree course should be from one of the following: Architecture, Engineering, Geography, History, Law, Mathematics, Sciences, Education, Medicine, Nursing, or Veterinary Medicine.

The applicant should be living in one of the parishes bordering the old RAF Wrattling Common airfield: Great & Little Thurlow, West Wickham, Carlton cum Willingham, West Wrattling, Weston Colville, and Withersfield. The award is intended to be of assistance in the purchase of books, materials, equipment etc. The final decision and award will be made immediately after 'A' Level results and university offers are confirmed.

For further information about the trust and award please contact Jonathan Drury. For an application form please apply via email to:

peter.ruthlloydtrust@sky.com The application form and supporting documents must be received at the latest by 2nd April 2024.

Jonathan Drury (01223 290087)



I would like to thank Peter and Ruth Lloyd's family for continuing to support this trust fund which has helped so many young adults attending university from our villages. I would also like to thank the three trustees who manage the award, for their support and encouragement.

Emily Jackson





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West Wrating Parish Council

A meeting was held on Monday 13th November. Full minutes are posted on the noticeboards and website.

Grass cutting by WWFC of the recreation ground was discussed. Colin McCall said he understood that several years ago it was agreed that the cost to the council for doing this should go up by 5% each year and this has not happened over the last few years. Cllr S Chandler said he would look into the matter. Colin Miller has cut down the conifers behind the pavilion.

Tim Bonfield and Martin Davey agreed to continue as PC representatives on the **Village Hall Management Committee**. They were thanked for doing this.

The **election of chairman** was postponed as three of the four councillors present were new, and would like to attend a training course before committing themselves to standing for chairman or vice chairman.

Councillors' Workload Management: email addresses have been set up for each councillor, with a general one for contacting all the councillors and clerk. The clerk explained that most planning applications were straightforward and needed no comments but any contentious ones usually required having a planning meeting to discuss and agree or not. A document setting out the policy for co-opting new councillors has been distributed.

Planning:

- a) 23/05596 – The Chestnut Tree – it is understood that exchange of contracts will be 14th November.
- b) 22/04689 – Boreham development: there is still concern about the polluted ground.
- c) Streetly Hall Farm proposed Anaerobic Biodigester – Cllr S Chandler will be attending a public meeting being held on 18th November.

Finance: the authorised payments and monies received are shown on the draft minutes.

Maintenance:

- a) Grass cutting & overhanging hedges: it was agreed that the verges should be cut an extra time. Also mentioned were two lots of overhanging hedging. Cobby McCall said he would have a word with the owners.
- b) Potholes & poor condition of Common Road: all the pot holes had now been mended on Common Road following complaints to Highways. The condition of Six Mile Bottom road is uncertain and Cllr S Chandler will check it up to the boundary.
- c) The kissing gate out of the church graveyard: the council has been asked if something can be done about removing this gate as it is very inaccessible for prams, push chairs or bikes. At present this gate is redundant but the sheds now used for horses could be used for keeping stock cattle and the gate would again be needed. An automatic slam gate is needed and the Footpath Officer at SCDC will be asked whether this was a possibility.

Correspondence: a request has been made by a resident for adult fitness equipment on the play area. This was discussed and it was agreed it would be very



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costly and there were other projects which had a higher priority.

Village Hall: the Land Registration office has said that putting just ‘the Parish Council’ as the owners rather than giving councillors’ names, which are soon out of date, is allowed.

The Land Registry document outlines in red the boundary between the village hall and the proposed Boreham development, but there is a query over whether or not this is correct and it will have to be checked.

Traffic Issues & Speed Restriction Equipment:

- Speed Indicator Signs re data collecting:* Martin Davey and Tim Bonfield, who look after the SIDs, had been told that their data was no longer being monitored by the Police. The clerk wrote to the Police Commission Office querying this and was told that it was due to lack of time. However since then Martin and Tim have been told that their data would be monitored.
- Update of *20 mph speed limit application:* this will be re-applied for next year. As the score was very close to that for the villages chosen it is hoped it will go through.

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- Re-submission of *LHI (Local Highways Initiative) application for gates:* this could either be for gates (£4,000) or another MVAS (Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign) (£7,000). The closing date for 2024/2025 is 14th January. The purchase of another MVAS would be helpful as it could be moved round the village.
- Footpath along Six Mile Bottom Road:* a footpath has been requested along the Six Mile Bottom Road continuing from the short length of path built when the newly built houses were put up. This has been discussed before but the cost was prohibitive. The Highways Officer should be contacted as he would know the requirements and who to contact. Paul McKenna suggested getting in touch with the Education Dept pointing out the fact that children have to walk along this busy dangerous road to catch the school bus.
- 30 mph rondels:* these need repainting.

The **next meeting** will be held on Monday 8th January at 7.30 pm. All are welcome to attend.

Jenny Richards, Parish Clerk

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Weston Colville Parish Council

A summary of items discussed at the meeting on Monday 6th November is below. For the full minutes please visit <http://www.westoncolville.org>

Flooding – Cllr Garrod gave a report following the two significant flooding incidents on two locations along Common Road on Friday 20th October and Thursday 2nd November, which led to a discussion of the various issues including a question from a parishioner about the stream behind the Reading Room car park. Notable points raised were the bridges behind 62A, 62 and 63 Common Road acting as an obstruction to flow in the Stour, and the pipe under the road outside The Old Orchard.

The following actions were agreed:

- a) to provide 63 The Green with some Hydrosacs and Hydrosnakes.
- b) to clear the ditch behind the Reading Room car park. A quote is to be obtained.
- c) Cllr Garrod, Cllr Harvey and a parishioner agreed to walk the length of the Stour behind the ‘council houses’ to determine what action is required.
- d) thanks were made to a flood warden who cleared some of the grips near the chapel on Chapel Road.
- e) two drains still need to be cleared on Mill Hill, reported on the relevant website. Two more drains have been identified as blocked and will be reported on the website.
- f) a letter would be sent to the Reading Room committee and the d’Abo estate about the ditch behind The Green.
- g) an article will be put in *Challenge* relating to the recent flooding.

Footpaths – footpath 21 had been reported to Peter Gaskin (CCC Footpaths Officer) as the footpath

needed to be reinstated. A question of ownership had been raised for Footpath 16; Cllr Durham had asked Peter Gaskin to investigate, as the route was impassible. Still awaiting a response.

LHI Bid 2024 – following a discussion regarding repairs required to the pavement on Horseshoe Lane and The Green it was decided that these were not suitable for a LHI bid but should be reported on the Highways website.

SID/MVAS – an alternative option about purchasing a Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign is to be investigated.

Emergency Plan – Cllr Durham is continuing to update the Emergency Plan. There was no response from the note in *Challenge* to the request to seek a Trained First Aider in the village.

Handyman – The clerk had only managed to get one response to her request for handyman quotes. It was agreed that benches would be removed from the quote and that it might be more expedient to get Brett Jones to quote to repair the play area fence.

Parish Nurse Scheme – the £500 returned from this now defunct scheme should be added to council funds.

Community Hub – the chairman of the Reading Room will be invited to the January council meeting to explain the request for £250.

Dates of meetings in 2024 – the following dates were agreed :- Wednesday 3rd January, Monday 4th March, Wednesday 1st May, Monday 1st July, Monday 2nd September, Monday 4th November.

Playground – one quote has been obtained for the potentially proposed work and others are being sought. An online questionnaire is to be set up to gather parishioners’ views on the scheme before a final proposal is drawn up. It is hoped to have the

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questionnaire 'live' in early December. It was also agreed that it would be better to make only one application for grant funding rather than do the scheme in two parts.

Jess Ashbridge, Parish Clerk

Responsible Dog Ownership

In recent weeks, it has become increasingly obvious that not all those who own dogs are acting in a responsible manner. Examples of dogs running loose, both on the roads and on private land, are becoming more frequent. There are two aspects to consider: public safety and public health. Having a loose dog run towards you can be distressing. Having one roaming a garden or field equally so, especially if the dog leaves a deposit that the handler, if indeed they are with their dog, fails to clear up.

Please bear in mind that not everyone is comfortable around dogs, even if your four-legged friend is a real softy. The law does state that your dog is considered dangerously out of control if it makes someone worried that it might injure them. They should either be on a lead, or under close control at all times. Check your boundaries, if your dog is out in your garden, and clear up your dog's mess. The parish has five bins specifically provided for foul waste. Please use them or take the deposits home. It is not acceptable to leave them anywhere – whether a pavement beside the road, the verge, or on the many public rights of way across the surrounding farmland.

Dog ownership can be one of the joys of life. Behaving with a little more consideration with your companion when out and about the parish would be appreciated.

Bridget Durham, Weston Colville Parish Council

Buttercups Pre school

Christmas Fair

Come and find the perfect Christmas gift from a variety of craft stalls or treat yourself to some delicious treats from the food stalls. All of which are local and small businesses.

Refreshments
Tombola
Children's craft activities
Raffle

More to be announced!

Sunday 3rd December 2023
11-3pm
Church Institute, Balsham
CB21 4DS

In support of Buttercups Preschool
Charity no: 1194906



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Lower Wood Update

The Wildlife Trust has been doing work around the wood over the summer, removing fallen trees and surveying the standing diseased trees to work out which ones need attention. They have also been spraying the hazel coppice stools with a substance called Trico which is made from sheep fat. Apparently the Muntjac don't like the taste and stay away from the treated coppice stools, so that regrowth can take place. This seems to be an ideal solution to preventing the Muntjac from stunting the hazels.

This year's coppice plot has started well and we have made good progress in opening up the plot, but there is a lot to do and all help will be much appreciated. I have been in the wood photographing insects, particularly the hoverflies and bees, to try and start building up a comprehensive species list. There is a good range of species and they are great fun to photograph when they are sitting on leaves or flower heads. The App called *obsidentify* which you can load on your phone is a very good way of getting an identification on species which you don't know. It sometimes gets things very wrong, but generally it's quite good, as long as it has a reasonable photo to work with.

We have been given permission to take root cuttings from suckers on an elm tree in the Botanic Gardens in order to plant a little elm grove in Lower Wood. This Chichester Elm is a magnificent tree and fairly resistant to the dreaded Dutch Elm disease, so it will be interesting to see how these elm trees fare in the wood. We are going to grow them up a bit before planting them out, so they have a good start. The cuttings will be taken this autumn after leaf fall. Any elm trees that were growing in Lower Wood were lost long ago during the two epidemics of the two strains of that disease in the 1970s.

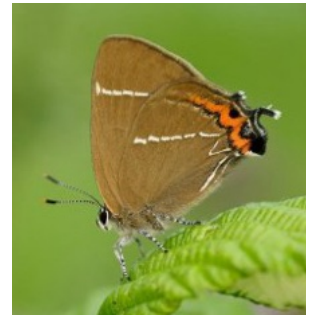
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Several insect species are dependent on elm and it is hoped we might be able to get these species back in the wood. One is a butterfly called the White Letter Hairstreak (pictured), which has a white 'W' on the underside of the wing. This declined massively after Dutch Elm disease. The other is the White Spotted Pinion, a moth that lays its eggs on elm. Again it has suffered a big decline, so the introduction of these elms may help that species to return.



I hope you will come along to the Lower Wood work party on the last Saturday of each month from September to February, starting 10 am. Biscuits, tea and coffee will be provided. Children are always welcome if accompanied by an adult. I will probably continue after lunch if you can't make the morning. Even if you only come for a cup of tea . . . it will be lovely to see you all. The dates for the rest of this season are 30th December, 27th January, and 24th February.

Duncan Mackay
(Voluntary Warden for The Wildlife Trust)

Family Thanks

Peter Job and family sincerely thank all the villagers who kindly supported them during a very difficult summer. Thank you for the condolences, and charitable donations in memory of William. Your kindness has been much appreciated.

Peter & Melinda Job

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Nature Notes

As a treat, watch out for Waxwings (*Bombycilla garrulus*) in our neighbourhood. These beautiful winter visitors have arrived on our shores – this photo was taken on Elgin golf course last month – and will have worked their way down to us for Christmas. Look for a flock of crested, Starling-sized birds styled by Ferrari, with a gentle trilling call . . . (hear Waxwings at <https://xeno-canto.org/763962>).



As you can see, Waxwings are very fond of the white berries of the Hupeh and Kashmir rowans (*Sorbus hupehensis* and *S. cashmiriana*, respectively). Either is well worth a place in any nature lover's garden.



Evidence for global warming is rife. I found a Honeywort (*Cerintho major*) in flower on 23rd October, a month late. Here's a frankly weird photo of a Medlar tree (*Mespilus germanica*) at Chippenham Park with

both flowers and ripe fruit on 15th October. They should flower in spring and fruit in autumn.

But not everything flowering out of season is a dire warning. Look at these Snowdrops in flower in mid-

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November, two months early. They're *Galanthus Barnes* ', famed as the earliest of Snowdrops. They always start well before Christmas!



One of my favourite local birds has returned. In late October, Joyce Oliver found an adult female Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*) visiting our camera feeder for Marsh Tits along Mill Hill. The 'Northern Chaffinch' comes every winter, and welcome it is too. It's a Chaffinch with too much black on it. The males also have a rusty-orange waistcoat that's far too short, barely covering half its breast.

If you see anything interesting, Marsh Tit or otherwise, let us know at cambsmarti@gmail.com or **Challenge**. Your find could feature in next month's newsletter . . .

Alex Inzani and the South Cambs Ringing Group

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The Meadow Primary School

On the playground, where laughter and noise usually echo through the air, stood a solemn and poignant sight this Remembrance Day. All children and adults at The Meadow came together in a touching tribute that showcased their reverence for those who sacrificed their lives in service.

In a tradition that has become a cherished part of the school's Remembrance Day celebrations, children gathered around a giant poppy clutching their pennies. After the two minutes' silence, children approached the poppy, respectfully placing their money upon it. They understood that these pennies were not just a collection of coins but a collective token of respect, a gesture of remembrance for those who had given their all.



Every week at The Meadow, our assembly hall transforms into a stage of recognition. These weekly gatherings are a celebration of the unique talents, progress, and endeavours that make our school community shine. Whether it's a child mastering a new skill, showing resilience in overcoming challenges, or simply displaying remarkable growth, every achievement is a star in our constellation. We are incredibly proud of all the achievements of the children in our school and this celebration reinforces our ethos that every child is respectful, caring, and passionate about learning and trying their best.

We invite individuals to become part of our school community. The role would involve spending just a few hours a week listening to students as they read aloud. Your presence and support can significantly impact their confidence, fluency, and enthusiasm for literature. No special qualifications are needed – just a willingness to listen, encourage, and engage with our young readers. If this is something you think you can commit to, please get in touch with our English Lead and Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Butcher, via our school office (office@meadowprimary.org, 894400).

Faye Facer, Assistant Head Teacher

Buttercups Community Pre-school

Never has it been so easy to raise money thanks to 'EASYFUNDRAISING' and who better to support than your local Buttercups community, charity pre-school?



Just download the easyfundraising app, and search under the cause section for us (Buttercups Community Pre-school). Then, every time you purchase something online, log into your easyfundraising account first, select the shop you want and order your goods as normal. Easyfundraising will automatically link your purchase and donate the money to Buttercups. We just see the donation amount on our account so all purchases are confidential and Buttercups pre-school will receive a percentage of your purchases.

Continuing on the festive note, don't forget our Christmas Fayre at the Church Institute in Balsham on Sunday 3rd December, 11.00 am - 3.00 pm. There will be a variety of stalls including crafts and gift ideas from local businesses, bottle tombola, children's craft activities and much more. We will also be selling raffle tickets – lots of local businesses have been extremely generous and we have some fantastic prizes including a champagne afternoon tea for four at Quay Mill Hotel, tickets for Audley End train, vouchers for Scotsdales and Mops hairdressers, and a £40 junior golf club voucher, to name just a few. We will also have a lovely selection of home-made cakes and savouries in our café. Please pop along and say hello and support your local pre-school in their big fundraiser of the year.

The children had great fun taking part in our sponsored bean bag challenge and we would like to thank the parents who supported their children by sponsoring them. We raised a grand total of £300.

Now the autumn term is well underway, the children have got into a great routine of seeing Coach Stav for their sports session each week. They are having immense fun learning all sorts of moves and exercises, which is seeing them bursting with a new found confidence. The smiles and pride when they receive their participation stickers say it all.

Charlotte Vallins

Marsh Mail

Sixty-nine Year 9 and 10 students from Linton Village College spent the Remembrance weekend on a battlefields trip in France and Belgium.

The trip gave students the opportunity to explore trench lines on the Western Front that had been preserved since the end of the First World War, whilst guides talked them through how disease, infestation, and poor sanitation was rife.



At 11 o'clock on Armistice Day, students had an incredibly special opportunity to mark the 105th anniversary of the end of the First World War at a graveyard in the Somme Valley dedicated to men in the 36th Ulster Division, many of whom died in the very first hours of the Battle of the Somme on 1st July 1916.



Pupils visited a number of other memorials, including the memorial for unknown soldiers at Thiepval and the Newfoundland Memorial Park.



Some students were fortunate to be able to visit the sites where some of their ancestors gave their lives during the fighting on the Western Front in the First World War, and whose graves we visited on the trip on personal pilgrimages. Lucy, in Year 9, visited the grave of her great great grandfather's brother who died in Ypres at the age of twenty seven. Meanwhile, Thomas in Year 10 discovered that one of the tour guides was an expert on his ancestor who was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest military honour in the British Army, for his gallantry and bravery in the First World War.

It was a very special and poignant extra-curricular event that staff and students gained a great deal from.

Laura Heard

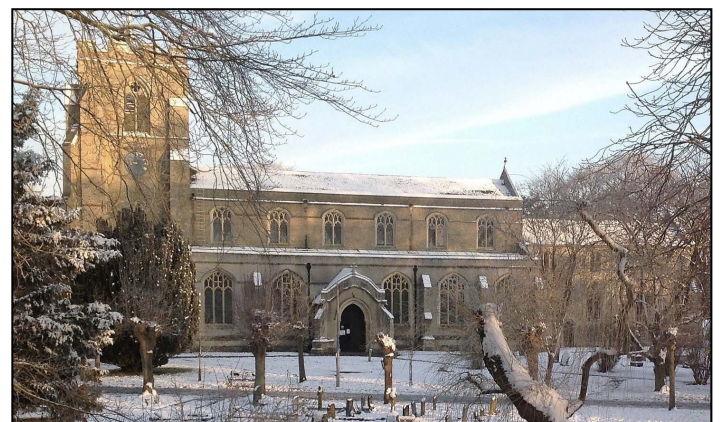
Balsham Singers

Balsham Singers will present their Christmas Concert this year on Saturday 16th December at 4 pm.

For the very first time we are holding the concert in the afternoon, in Holy Trinity Church, Balsham. It will be a joyous occasion – the music a delightful mix of traditional carols and modern Yuletide music, with all the expected bells, pipes, shepherds and angels .

Tickets will be available from the post offices of Balsham and Abington, and online from www.ticketsource.co.uk/balshamsingers, and will cost £12 (16 and under free).

Jo Stinton



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& Accompanied by RALPH WOODWARD

Holy Trinity Church Balsham
Saturday 16th December
at 4pm

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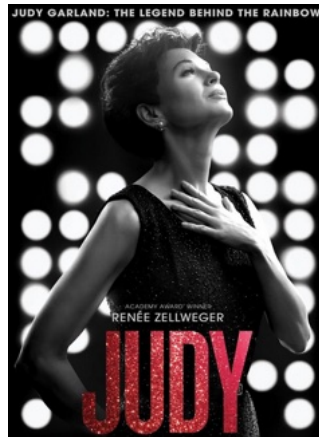
Tickets £12, Under 16s **FREE**, to include refreshments.
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Balsham Picture House

Mulled wine, mince pies and sausage rolls are on the house to celebrate our Christmas Evening so come along and enjoy! Saturday December 9th; doors open 7 pm and film at 7.30 in Balsham Church Institute.

‘Judy’ (12A) – thirty years after starring in 'The Wizard of Oz' (1939), beloved actress and singer Judy Garland (Renée Zellweger) arrives in London to perform sold-out shows at the Talk of the Town nightclub. While there, she reminisces with friends and fans and begins a whirlwind romance with musician Mickey Deans (Finn Wittrock), her soon-to-be fifth husband. Renee Zellweger won an Oscar for her performance.



January’s film is the newly released and much acclaimed film ‘The Great Escaper’ (12A) starring Michael Caine and, in sadly her last film role, Glenda Jackson. It is the true and beautiful story of the Normandy RN veteran, Bernard Jordan, breaking out of his care home on the south coast in 2014 and



getting over alone to the Normandy beaches to be present at the 70th Commemoration of the D-day landings in 1944.

The Picture House will be showing it on Saturday 6th January, so come along and see this inspiring feel-good film ! Dave’s bar will be open as usual before the film.

Balsham Picture House is now starting its eighth year of showing newly released films every month, and has built up a huge library of Blu-Rays which are available for a small donation for any member to borrow to show again at home. Please contact Nigel Clark or myself for details. Join the Picture House with annual membership of just £12 or come as a guest member at £3/film show.

Dick Paden

Balsham Gardening Club

The club met for its AGM on 1st November in the pavilion. After the formal part we thanked the committee for their hard work and presented Sue Lock and Hazel Leeson with flowers as they retired from the committee.

We were then entertained by Brian Thurlow with his funny and thoughtful ‘Evacuees’ Story’. Through the character of Billy Jackson, he gave us a colourful story of a young boy and his family, starting in 1930s Bethnal Green as war approached, capturing the excitement through a child’s eyes while showing the wider horror of war. The story continued with Billy’s evacuation to his aunt and uncle’s farm in rural Suffolk, where he and his sister enjoyed the freedom of the countryside with their cousins, as their father joined the army and their mother worked in a munitions factory. They returned to London shortly before the blitz, with the family sheltering at night in Bethnal Green underground station, emerging one morning to find their house destroyed by the bombing. After spending the rest of the war in Suffolk, and their father sadly being killed in action, they returned to London to live in a prefab, delighting in a brand new house with an inside loo and bathroom.

The club meets again on Wednesday 6th December in the pavilion for Christmas drinks and activities. Guests are very welcome.

Andy Mitchell

Balsham WI

The speakers at our November meeting were Linda Cook and her husband Tony, who told us about their business, Turn and Burn, which produces turned wood items made by Tony and decorated (including upcycled) items which Linda produces using pyrography. She told us a little about the history of



pyrography and about the machines she uses and showed us a wide range of items that they produce. Members were then invited to have a go and make themselves a Christmas bauble. Whilst waiting their turn for pyrography, members were also able to make a small Christmas

tree decoration using ribbon and beads – quite simple, although fiddly, and resulting in an attractive item to hang on the tree.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 12th December and is our annual Christmas celebration. The meeting on 9th January 2024 will feature a talk by Jason Middleton on ‘The History of Jewellery’.

We are a friendly bunch, and new members are always welcome. Our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the Pavilion, Balsham. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining us – balshamwi@gmail.com – or send a message on Facebook, [@Balsham WI](https://www.facebook.com/BalshamWI)

Debbie Mower

1st Horseheath Brownies

We have been concentrating on the ‘Make Change’ topic this term. We have made monsters out of recycled materials, we’ve listened to the noises made by nature and tried to recreate them, and we’ve also made an impact-o-meter where we showed how we are being environmentally friendly to the world but also being helpful at home, by not being wasteful with resources, eg turning off the lights when leaving the room.



At the beginning of half term several of our Brownies travelled down to Blackland Farm near East Grinstead for a residential (a large Brownie holiday) with other Brownies, Guides and Rangers from Linton district. The girls took part in crate stacking, climbing, bungee trampolines, pasta making, crafts and not sleeping! We all had a great time.

We are halfway through the ‘Brownies Go Explore’ challenge badge. The girls have made hedgehog cupcakes, paper plate elephants, paper aeroplanes and helicopters, plus we’ve played parachute games and will be learning how to tie a friendship knot in a neckerchief, a skill that could be used to tie any neckerchief or scarf in the future.

At the end of term we will be taking part in the Christmas Tree Festival at Horseheath church, making clay ornaments for our tree. The Brownies will be making extra so they can take them home to decorate their own trees.

Pauline, Katie & Gemma (horseheathbrownies@gmail.com)



Garden History with LALA

Linton Area Learning Alliance (LALA) starts a new 10-week course called ‘The History of Herbs & Herbals, Physic & Botanic Gardens’ on Tuesday mornings from 9th January 2024. We meet in Linton Village Hall, Coles Lane from 10.00 to 11.45 and we are pleased to welcome tutor Andrew Sankey once again.

Andrew describes the course as follows: “The course explores the history of herbs in relation to how they were grown in gardens in Britain. Beginning in the medieval period we’ll assess the importance of herbs and how a specific garden to grow and identify herbs became vital. We’ll look at famous herbals, eminent herbalists, and how the first physic gardens evolved into the botanic gardens of today. You’ll find out how to make a nosegay, whether ‘pilewort’ is effective, the truth about the screaming mandrake root, and which poisonous herbs enable you to fly a broomstick!”

Please contact me for more information or to register interest. Cost for the 10 weeks remains at £50 and includes a coffee break.

Sue Mudge (01223 892737,
mudges.linton@btinternet.com)

West Wickham & District Local History Club

The subject of the November meeting was ‘Sedley Taylor: Education, Philanthropy, Friendship and Family’, presented by Gabrielle Cliff Hodges.

When Gabrielle learnt that the Reading Room at Weston Colville was co-founded by Sedley Taylor, a Cambridge academic, she decided to find out more. The title of her talk summed up his achievements as well as his popularity throughout his lifetime, and made for a thoroughly interesting evening. Through his friendship with William Henry Hall, a local landowner, they decided to set up a village reading room, extremely popular during this period, thus enabling village men and boys (not usually women or girls) to meet up, play games and be provided with hot (non-alcoholic) drinks, and have access to books and newspapers. After his death the road in Cambridge named after him was built on land owned by Trinity College in the 1920s.

Margaret Creek

Linton & District Historical Society

George Brewster, a little-known child chimney sweep whose death would lead to Acts of Parliament being introduced to cease the use of child labour, was the topic of a well researched talk at the society’s November meeting. Joanna Hudson told the story of George who died whilst sweeping a chimney at the then-named Fulbourn Lunatic Asylum in 1875.

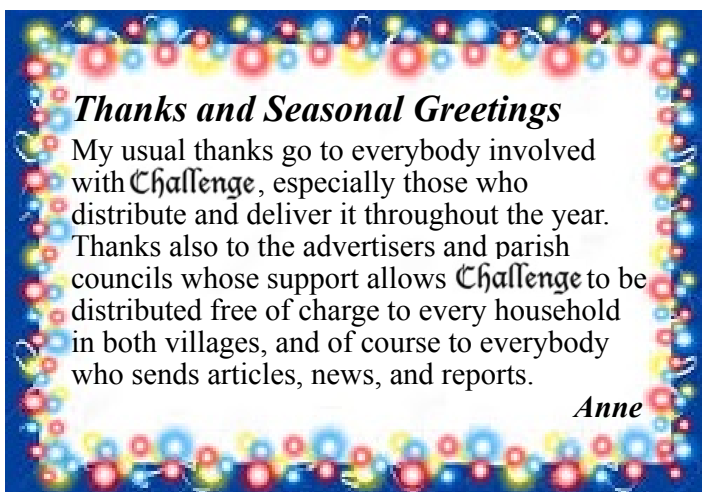
Using a wide range of records relating to his story, all those attending the meeting fully supported Joanna’s quest to have a Blue Plaque erected to highlight the plight of young George and his contemporaries. A well presented, informative and most interesting evening.

The December meeting will be on Tuesday 19th when we will welcome back David Caulfield with songs and stories of the 60s and 70s, starting 7.30 pm (see poster). David’s anecdotes during his time as a semi-pro in a 60s group proved very popular last year as many of us could relate to this era, so if you want to catch up with David or if you missed out last time, please come along and join us for our final talk of 2023!

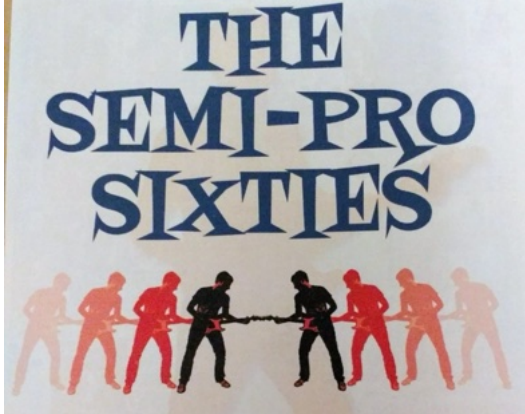
The first meeting of 2024 will be on Tuesday 16th January, when we hope Paige Pope can finally get to talk to us on ‘The Dogs’ Trust’. Covid restrictions and a pothole on her route last time meant she was unable to get here, so let’s hope it’s third time lucky.

For further details about our society please contact us either by email (ldhscamb@gmail.com) or telephone (01223 893915 or 01223 678835).

Margaret Creek



LINTON & DISTRICT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TUESDAY 19th DECEMBER



**Songs and Stories
of the 60s & 70s
with David Caulfield**

LINTON VILLAGE HALL, 7.30 pm
Visitors and new members always welcome

Donations Requested

The Meadow School in Balsham has requested donations of the following items. If anyone has anything suitable, I would be happy to collect them and drop them into the school. Thank you.

4th - 8th December

Sand toys – buckets, spades, vehicles, moulds, sieves.

Water toys – sea creature animals, water wheels, containers/jugs (not recycled bottles), boats, ducks, plastic cups and plates etc

11th - 15th December

Mud kitchen items – metal/plastic saucepans, baking tins, baking trays, camping food equipment (mess tins, metal mugs) etc

Craft materials – lollipop sticks, glitter, sequins, gems, googly eyes, haberdashery items, pipe cleaners, pom-poms, ribbon, any items that the children could create with. These can be partly used or opened.

18th - 20th December

Puzzles and games – jigsaw puzzles for children aged 4 - 7 years old, large floor puzzles, Orchard Toys puzzles and games. (Please double-check that all of the pieces are in the box.)

Rachel Greening-Stone (07908 128060)

GRANTA Medical Practices

Below are details of when our surgeries will be open over the Christmas and New Year break, and when you will be able to collect your prescriptions, depending on the date you place your order.

Please remember to order your repeat prescriptions in plenty of time so that you do not run out of your medication over the holidays.

Don't forget, there are Prescription Collection Points at Sawston, Linton and Shelford. Sign up today via cpicb.grantadispatching@nhs.net to pick up your medication at your convenience over the holidays.

Date	Opening hours	Repeat prescriptions
Friday 22.12.2023	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Fri 29.12.2023
Saturday 23.12.2023	Open for prebooked appointments only (Sawston)	Place order today, pick up Tues 02.01.2024
Sunday 24.12.2023	Closed	Place order today, pick up Tues 02.01.2024
Monday 25.12.2023	Closed	Place order today, pick up Tues 02.01.2024
Tuesday 26.12.2023	Closed	Place order today, pick up Tues 02.01.2024
Wednesday 27.12.2023	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Tues 02.01.2024
Thursday 28.12.2023	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Wed 03.01.2024
Friday 29.12.2023	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Thurs 04.01.2024
Saturday 30.12.2023	Open for prebooked appointments only (Sawston)	Place order today, pick up Fri 05.01.2024
Sunday 31.01.2023	Closed	Place order today, pick up Fri 05.01.2024
Monday 01.01.2024	Closed	Place order today, pick up Fri 05.01.2024
Tuesday 02.01.2024	Open as usual	Place order today, pick up Fri 05.01.2024

Be prepared for common health problems by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home. You can treat many minor illnesses such as colds and coughs, sore throats, and upset stomachs by having a supply of health care essentials such as pain relief (paracetamol or ibuprofen), cough and sore throat remedies, a first aid kit, upset stomach treatment, rehydration treatment and heartburn/indigestion treatment.

Having these essentials at home will not only save you time and help you feel better quicker, but will also help save the NHS much needed resources.

Local pharmacists can also offer advice and guidance on the best treatment for you. They are available on every high street and in supermarkets, with many open in the evening and at weekends.

Whilst we are closed, if you need urgent medical assistance please use the NHS 111 service. If you have an emergency that poses an immediate threat to life, please ring 999.

For further information on available healthcare services, please go to www.nhs.uk or our website www.grantamedicalpractices.co.uk

Sandra East, Head of Patient Services
(cpicb.grantapatientervices@nhs.net)

Steady on your Feet

Cambridgeshire County Council has launched an online fall risk checking tool, **Steady on your Feet**, aimed at those who haven't previously had a fall but would like to understand what they can do to prevent one happening.

It is easy to use, asking a short series of questions to help understand any individual risks you might have and providing an action plan to keep you active and independent while increasing your confidence and reducing the risk of falling. Suggested steps to prevent a fall might include arranging an eye or hearing test, increasing your activity levels, eating a balanced diet, or even looking after your feet and wearing supportive footwear with non-slip soles.

For more information and to use the risk checker, go to: www.steadyonyourfeet.org/cambridgeshire

Black bins:	Wed 13 th & Thurs 28th December, Wednesday 10 th & 24 th January
Blue bins:	Wednesday 6 th & 20 th December, Wednesday 3 rd , 17 th & 31 st January
Green bins:	Wednesday 6 th & 20 th December, Wednesday 17 th January

Mobile Post Office: Thursdays, Reading Room car park,
Weston Colville, 12.30 - 1.30 pm

Mobile library: fourth Thursday: 28th Dec, 25th Jan
High Street, West Wrattling 11.10 - 11.50 am
Reading Room, Weston Green 12.00 - 12.35 am
Mill Hill, Weston Colville 12.40 - 1.05 pm

DEC	9.30 am	11.00 am	Afternoon/Evening
3 rd		United Service of Holy Communion – Balsham, <i>Revd Iain McColl/Revd Ben Brady</i>	
10 th	Holy Communion – Weston Colville, <i>Revd Iain McColl/Alistair Collen</i> Holy Communion – West Wickham, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i>	Morning Worship & Christingle – Balsham, <i>Hannah Threlfall</i> Holy Communion – Great Abington, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i> Holy Communion – Hildersham, <i>Revd Iain McColl/Alistair Collen</i>	Christingle Service (4.00 pm) – West Wrating, <i>John & Scilla Harvey</i>
17 th	Holy Communion – West Wickham, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i>	Carol Service – West Wrating, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i>	Carol Services – Hildersham (3.00 pm), <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i> Balsham (4.00 pm), <i>Revd Iain McColl</i> Weston Colville (6.00 pm), <i>Steven Wheeler</i> Great Abington (6.30 pm), <i>Revd Ben Brady</i>
24 th	Holy Communion – Hildersham, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i>	Christmas Eve Crib Service (10.30 am) – Little Abington, <i>Rosemary Mead/Hannah Threlfall</i>	Christmas Eve Carol Services – West Wrating (4.00 pm), <i>Revd Iain McColl</i> – West Wickham (6.00 pm), <i>Hannah Threlfall</i> Carols & Christingle Service – Weston Colville (4.00 pm), <i>Steven Wheeler</i> Midnight Mass (11.30 pm) – Balsham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i> Little Abington, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i>
25 th Monday	Christmas Day Communion – West Wickham, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i> Hildersham, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i> West Wrating, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i>	Christmas Day Communion – Weston Colville, <i>Revd Kathy Bishop</i> Christmas Day Morning Worship – Balsham, <i>Hannah Threlfall</i> Great Abington, <i>Revd Iain McColl</i>	
31 st		United Service of Holy Communion – Balsham, <i>Revd Ben Brady</i>	

DIARY

DECEMBER 2023

- Sat 2 West Wrating Café Studio
Christmas Wreath Workshop, Weston Colville
The Chestnut Tree Farewell Get-together
- Sun 3 Buttercups Pre-School Christmas Fair, Balsham
- Wed 6 Balsham Gardening Club
- Sat 9 Balsham Picture House, 'Judy'
- Sun 10 Christingle, St Andrew's
- Mon 11 West Wrating Village Hall AGM
- Tues 12 Balsham WI
- Wed 13 Tech Clinic, Reading Room
West Wrating Book Club, The Chestnut Tree
- Fri 15 Tea & Cakes, Reading Room
- Sat 16 Balsham Singers' Christmas Concert
- Sun 17 Carols by Candlelight, St Mary's
- Tues 19 Linton & District Historical Society
- Sun 24 Candlelit Carols with Christingle, St Mary's
- Sat 30 Lower Wood Work Party

JANUARY 2024

- Mon 1 Circular Walk from Reading Room
- Wed 3 Weston Colville Parish Council meeting
- Sat 6 Balsham Picture House, 'The Great Escaper'
- Mon 8 West Wrating Parish Council meeting
- Tues 9 LALA Course begins
- Sat 27 Lower Wood Work Party
West Wrating Progressive Supper

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Thank you for all your articles, news, etc. If these are sent by email, they are always acknowledged; if you don't get a reply, your items haven't been received, so please resend. Some contributions may have to be edited, to fit the space available, and are published at the discretion of the editor.

Copy date for January issue:

Sunday 10th December

**PLEASE NOTE THE EARLIER DATE FOR
SUBMISSIONS FOR THE JANUARY ISSUE**