

A photograph of two children walking through a forest. The ground is covered in fallen brown leaves. The trees are mostly bare, suggesting autumn or winter. The children are wearing dark jackets and hats. One child is carrying a white bag. The text 'LITTLE HADHAM PARISH NEWS' is overlaid in a white box on the left side of the image.

LITTLE HADHAM PARISH NEWS

JANUARY 2025

Little Hadham Parish News is distributed free by St Cecilia's Church

Father Simon Our Assistant Area Dean writes:



It's that time of the year again; that moment, in the face of a brand-new year, when we try to reset ourselves. And the way many of us do that is by setting New Year resolutions.

I must admit: I rarely set myself one. After all these years, I've learned the hard way that I rarely stick to them beyond the third week of January.



There was that time at school when I promised myself that I'd be far

more diligent in my piano practice. There was that naïve moment in the early days of January when a friend and I took out a subscription to the company gym. By April, neither of us had been more than four times, and it wasn't for another two years before we finally summoned up the courage to face the receptionist together and cancel the monthly deduction from our salaries!

So, like so many other, I've begun diets, productivity initiatives, and made commitments to keep in contact with family and friends better in January. But each time, things have soon fallen by the wayside.



So - no - I don't really do New Year resolutions these days. Instead, I have a New Day resolution which frequently causes a

melody to float past in the back of my mind. It's from one of Jerome Kern's songs 'Pick Yourself Up', made famous by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in their 1936 movie 'Swing Time'. The line, which goes frequently through my head, is "Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, start all over again". It's a line which I try to enact day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, resolving to try again at being a better Christian.

And with God's gracious promise of forgiveness received for failure confessed, that action of picking yourself up, dusting yourself off through apology (to God and to others), and starting all over again is, I think, a good way to respond to the simple fact that, whether we like it or not, we will fail to be all that God has in mind for his world, for our neighbour, and for ourselves. That's because we're human. But at least the brief span of just a day allows me to wake up the following morning and get back on the horse.

And by committing to this every day, and by getting up each day with that goal waiting to be achieved, I hope and pray that there may at least be the occasional day in 2025 when I'll succeed in my resolution.

With my prayers for you all for a very peaceful and positive 2025,

Fr Simon



LITTLE HADHAM PARISH NEWS

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To find out more about the life of our Church, please visit our website:

www.riverashchurches.org.uk

EDITORIAL DEADLINE

All articles for inclusion and payment for advertising in the next issue **must** be received by the **15th** of the month.

(BACS preferred, email the editor for details.)

Editor reserves the right to edit copy received, and add or omit pictures where necessary.

View the Parish News Online including back issues: www.littlehadham-pc.gov.uk/parish_news.html



From the Registers of St. Cecilia's Church, Little Hadham

We welcome into the Church, Amalie Rennie who was baptised on Saturday 14th December.

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

If you would like to advertise in our magazine, please contact the editor at: littlehadhampn@gmail.com for more details.

The Parish News is funded and distributed freely by St Cecilia's Church. We really appreciate the support of all our advertisers to help cover our overheads and keep the Parish News in print. Please support them and shop local.

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You can also offer support by making a donation to the magazine, contact the editor for details.

The magazine is written by many contributors who report for themselves or for a club or organisation they represent. The church and production team does not necessarily agree with the opinions aired in any article printed here.

Do you want your Church to receive £130?

Karin Green

You will find enclosed, in this months Parish News, a leaflet from the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company, who not only insure the Church, but also provide home insurance. From personal experience I have found them very competitive in the home insurance market.

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Little Hadham Parish Council

Carole Page

www.littlehadham-pc.gov.uk

Little Hadham Parish Council meets the first Tuesday of each month in the Village Hall. There is no meeting in August or January. All residents and press are welcome to attend the meetings.

Meeting dates – all meetings commence at 7.30pm

			4th February	4th March
1st April	6th May	3rd June	1st July	2nd Sept
7th October	4th November	2nd December		

Agendas are posted on noticeboards and the Little Hadham Parish Council website.

Highways Update

Speed and Traffic Surveys

Survey team and surveys booked in Jan/Feb 2025.

Pedestrian crossing at the Smithy

Look at speed and volume and if necessary, add humps as part of phase 3.

Having a SID on the A120

Awaiting Speed and Volume data.

Traffic light phasing on the A120

Possible moving the traffic lights back towards the Village Hall. The traffic lights are phase 3. Which will start working on in the next financial year, once we have the results of the speed and volume survey.

War Memorial

Confirmed date for putting the reflection chevrons on the war memorial as the 30th January.

Little Hadham Ramblers

Our next walk is **8th January**. Should be the first Wednesday of the month, but New Years Day is probably a good day to rest!

Meet and Greet – Little Hadham Village Hall – Sunday 15th December

The Meet and Greet welcomed a new attraction in the village – a Snowman building competition. The Woodland Rangers entered their snowman and received a prize.

The event started at 3pm and finished at 5pm. There were stalls from the Parish Council, Village Hall, Church, Woodland Rangers, Gardening Club, and Brownies. There were activities for children, as well as plenty of mulled wine for the adults. The Village Hall Chair provided the splendid buffet helped by members of the Village Hall Management team.

It was good to be able to show the attendees what all the various groups had to offer, and many questions were asked. Offers of volunteering were very welcome.

The event culminated in a visit from Santa, who listened to the children's wishes for Christmas.



It is a very exciting time for the Parish Council. We have many projects in the pipeline but lack the councillors to help execute them. We need 2 new councillors. If you would like to join us, please contact the clerk on: clerklittlehadham@gmail.com

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Nikki & Louise
www.woodlandrangers.co.uk
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At Woodland Rangers, we concluded the year with a festive month full of joy and creativity.

Our children delved into the enchanting world of nocturnal animals, discovering the deer, foxes, owls, and rabbits that share the woods with us while we sleep.

December was a hive of activity with Christmassy woodland crafts. The children showcased their creativity using various tools and materials found in the forest, crafting beautiful baubles, wooden reindeers, and stick Christmas trees.

A highlight was the after-school club at Little Hadham Primary School, where the children constructed an impressive snowman from natural materials to proudly display at the Village Hall Meet and Greet afternoon. Their snowman won second place in the competition, much to their delight.

The year wrapped up with a special Christmas session brimming with fun, Christmas music, hot chocolate, and mince pies. The children enjoyed making reindeer food and icing gingerbread men.

As we look forward to 2025, we extend our warmest wishes for a happy new year and look forward to meeting lots of new families this year.



Introducing: Yvette Yarnold Yoga

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and wish you a Happy New Year. I'm Yvette and have lived in Little Hadham for 2 years. I grew up in Sawbridgeworth but moved to London in my early twenties. It was there that I discovered my love of yoga. Whilst working hard in a fast-paced, often stressful environment I found yoga was the calm I needed to balance this out. Wanting to pursue this further I completed my 200 hour Yoga Teacher Training in 2019. This was an incredible experience. I learnt so much and met a wonderful group of people, showing me how powerful and supportive a yoga community can be. I have since had two daughters, and as they get older I can spare more time for my yoga practice.



Yoga is for everyone, whether you have practiced for many years, or are a complete beginner. It offers amazing physical and mental benefits by introducing mindful movement, connecting us to our bodies and the present moment. Through my new local classes I hope to share this, and for people to benefit from yoga as I have done.

As well as regular Vinyasa style yoga classes I am also offering Mum & Baby classes. Having had two babies myself, I understand how making time and doing something for yourself is not easy when you have a baby. So much changes for new Mums and these classes give Mum time to reconnect with her body and relax whilst bonding with baby. It can also be a great opportunity to meet other Mums, share experiences and make friends.

It is around this time that we often reflect on the year that's past and start to focus on the year ahead.

It's a great time to try something new, create healthy habits or simply dedicate time in your busy schedule for you. Your body and brain will thank you for it!

I hope to see you on the mat soon!

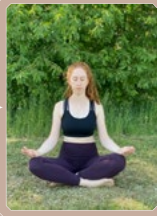
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Wednesdays 10am-11am
RoseYoga Studio, Standon
(starting Wednesday 8th Jan)
£15 per class - 4 classes for £48
Mum & Baby Yoga

January dates TBC
Little Hadham Village Hall
(watch this space!)

1-2-1 classes also available,
call for further details or
queries: 07795 117 138



Yoga Classes

All levels welcome.
Mondays 11am-12pm
Markwell Studio, Bishop's Stortford
(Starting Monday 11th November)
£12 per class - 4 classes for £40

Wednesdays 10am-11am
RoseYoga Studio, Standon
(Starting Wednesday 13th November)
£15 per class - 4 classes for £48

Mum & Baby Yoga


Yoga class designed for Mums.

- Reconnect with your body through gentle, mindful movement
- Bring baby along
- Meet other Mums and make new friends

Tuesdays 10am-11:30am
Little Hadham Village Hall
• 5 class block starting Tues 19th November
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CONTACT YVETTE YARNOLD
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It's the most wonderful time of the year!

As the year draws to a close, the halls of Little Hadham Primary School have been filled with laughter, song, and the warm glow of community spirit. We've had an incredible few weeks, and we're thrilled to share our recent highlights with you.

First and foremost, a huge thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas Bazaar.

THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING COMMUNITY

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our incredible local community for their generosity in donating such brilliant raffle prizes to support our school.

As the saying goes, "Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much." The collective efforts of our community help enrich the experiences we can offer to our children, and this generosity will directly benefit them in so many ways.

Here is a list of our amazing prizes

- The £150 was donated by 3 companies: Mokut Estate and Garden machinery, Architectural-coatings and Ruane Developments
- £100 - little Bee's Nursery
- Selfridges Hamper - F M Suckling
- Signs of the Times tickets- Ruane Developments
- Bottle of Moët - Laurelo Probate
- Pamper set, box of ales, Mr Tubs sauces - Emily Nunes
- Beauty Voucher - Protea Beauticians
- Meal Voucher - The Bull, Much Hadham

- Reflexology Voucher - Chloe Burrows
- Woodland Rangers Voucher - Louise Battle and Nikki Handley
- The Float Retreat Voucher - Irene Ruane
- 1:1 yoga Session - Yvette Yarnold
- Farmers Market Breakfast - Keith Hutt and Farmers Market Team
- Goodger Go Getters Voucher - Kelly Goodger

Thanks to your generosity, we raised a fantastic amount to support our school—what a way it was to start the season!

Back at school...

All the children in the school were treated to a truly magical trip to the South Mill Arts Centre to join in the Robin Hood pantomime. Let's just say, the cheers and laughter from the audience could probably be heard all the way back at school! And yes, the staff got caught up in the "Oh no, he didn't!" moments just as much as the children did.

Our Beech Class children dazzled us with their performance of A Busy, Busy Bethlehem. Their fabulous speaking and angelic singing transported us straight to the heart of the Nativity story. Parents, you should be bursting with pride—your little stars truly stole the show and our hearts. Personally, though, I think it was their version of The Twelve Days of Christmas that had everyone grinning from ear to ear. (Is it even Christmas until you've heard five gold rings sung with that much gusto?)

And let's not forget our youngest stars in Ash and Saplings, who put on a Winter Wonderland performance that melted every heart in the room. With their sweet voices ringing out



loud and proud, they reminded us all of the simple joy of coming together at this special time of year.

And for some very special news...

Little Hadham Primary School Celebrates a Maths-tastic Achievement!

We are bursting with pride and excitement to announce that our amazing Year 6 team clinched third place in the HFL Education Year 6 Mathematics Challenge Finals! Our of 320 talented participants from schools across the region, our team proved their brilliance, landing a top spot for the second year in a row—what a streak!

The competition wasn't just about crunching numbers. It was a high-energy, brain-bending event that tested their problem-solving skills, mathematical knowledge, and teamwork under the pressure of some seriously tricky questions. The journey to the finals alone was a massive accomplishment, but earning a spot on the podium? That's pure magic!

Mrs. Afenti-Sassis, our ever-enthusiastic Maths Coordinator, shared her joy:

"Watching the team's focus, resilience, and creativity throughout this challenge has been an inspiration.

They showed what Little Hadham pupils can achieve with determination and a love for learning. We couldn't be prouder—well done, superstars!"

A huge round of applause to our Year 6 Super Team for their extraordinary effort and for making us all beam with pride. Let's hear it for teamwork, perseverance, and a passion for problem-solving—proof that maths really can be this exciting!

As we wrap up the term, we want to thank everyone who has supported our school throughout the year. Your kindness, involvement, and encouragement mean the world to us and our children.

Wishing you all a joyful and peaceful holiday,

- Little Hadham Primary School Team



Little Hadham Gardening Club

Anne Willett



There is no meeting in January, but don't forget to put the **18th February 2025** in your diary when we will have our usual Ploughman's Lunch at 12.30pm followed by a speaker, George Lockwood, who will talk about 'Pruning and taking cuttings'.

The Christmas Wreath workshop was well attended and an enjoyable time was had by all. (See photo)

Winter care for house plants:-

For many house plants the decreasing light levels in late autumn are a cue to enter a dormant phase in preparation for making it through a potentially tough winter ahead. It is important to allow your plants to rest over winter. If you continue to water and feed them, this will encourage them to keep on growing, putting them under strain and leading to weak, spindly growth. However, if you follow the following tips for winter care, you will have healthy house plants that will be raring to go in the spring.

1. Reduce watering - for most house plants, reduce watering to once a fortnight. For succulents, only water every 2-3 weeks, and for cacti, stop watering completely. The exception is winter flowering plants, such as Christmas cacti and poinsettias,

which need watering whenever the compost feels dry.

2. Move into the light - it is important to maximise the amount of light reaching your plants. Move them on to a west or south facing windowsill.
3. Clean their leaves - indoor plants often accumulate a thick layer of dust on their leaves. This reduces the amount of light that can reach the leaf surface, making it harder for them to manufacture food. Wipe off dust regularly using a damp cloth.
4. Keep them warm - most house plants need a temperature of 12-18 degrees C. They dislike large temperature fluctuations, so position them away from cold draughts and open windows and doors. If they are on a windowsill, leave the curtains open at night if you can, as they trap cold air at night. Alternatively move plants off the windowsill at night.
5. Check for pests - a nice cosy house provides the perfect environment for many plant pests to thrive and breed over winter. Inspect all your plants thoroughly for pests now, and keep inspecting regularly throughout the winter.

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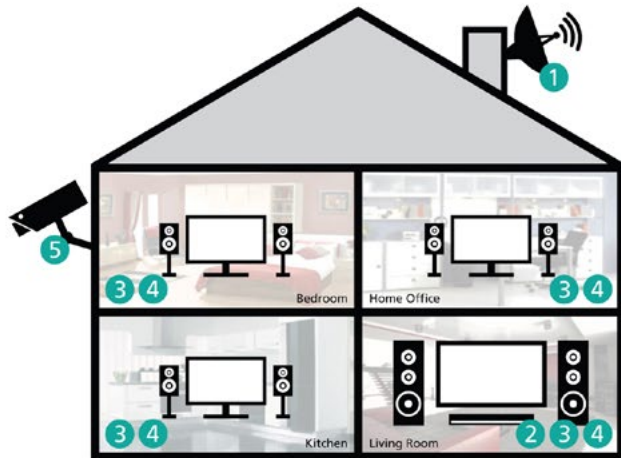


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Little Hadham Village Hall News

Joan McKinlay

www.littlehadhamvillagehall.com

This has been a very expensive year for the village hall and has created challenges for the volunteers who make up our village hall management committee. Heating issues plagued us over the autumn/winter period, but hopefully these will have been resolved by the time you read this in your January 2025 edition of the Parish News. The main hall floor was already in desperate need of refurbishment and new heating pipes chased into the main hall floor during recent works, make dealing with the refurbishment of the floor more pressing. As soon as practicable, we will book this work in, which is expected to cost around £5k. The exact cost of the heating repairs and identified improvements to the system will be reported in next month's issue.



Community Breakfast is back on **Thursday 9th January**. Please book online to secure your place via our village hall website. If you are making a group booking, please take care to ensure that members of your intended party have not booked themselves in separately. Duplicated bookings remove spaces that could have been offered to others. Please use the village hall website www.littlehadhamvillagehall.com choose What's On / Events from the menu bar to book online. Online bookings receive a confirmation email. Your generous donations fund this popular monthly event. Any queries, please email: vice-chair@littlehadhamvillagehall.com

December Meet & Greet Event

Little Hadham Village Hall representatives and Little Hadham Parish Councillors hosted a Meet and Greet event on Saturday 14th December. The event provided local people an opportunity to chat to local

themselves and chatted to guests. Carole, with the help of Gina, Jan and Brenda cooked and served up 59 breakfasts with seasonal illness keeping some of our regulars away. Thank you to our fabulous waiters, Mark, Dave, Denise, Janine and Yvonne who did a great job looking after everyone. We hope you enjoyed the event as much as we did.

Tea and Bingo Event – Tuesday 4th February 2025

We are delighted that Hertfordshire County Council has awarded us a Winter Celebration Event Grant, which allows part funding for us to host an afternoon Tea and Bingo Event on Tuesday 4th February. Cost will be £5 per person. Spaces are limited to 30. If you would like to attend, please book online through our website or email vice-chair@littlehadhamvillagehall.com.

Air Fryer Demonstration

Apologies for the delay of this popular event but it will resume on **February 10th @ 7pm**

Community Breakfast

A busy Christmas Community Breakfast in December was expected to cater for up to 70 attendees and included our local PCSO team who introduced



groups and their representatives and a chance for groups to network too. Children were able to take part in a Snowman Competition and activities put on by Woodland Rangers.

Father Christmas was in residence, leaving his musical light display sleigh in the car park, he retreated to the warmth of his Santas Grotto. Special thanks to Gina for creating Santas Grotto and to Hertford Shires Rotary Club for the loan of their sleigh and of course, to Father Christmas. Thank you to everyone who came along and to all the other volunteers who worked so hard, to make the event a success.

Congratulations to the winners of the Snowman Competition who were: Woodland Rangers, Little Hadham Brownies, a family from Bury Green and Marion Paternoster. Well done to you all!

Welcome Café

If you would like to volunteer at our Welcome Café on a Wednesday, or at any of our other events or activities, please get in touch. Email: vice-chair@littlehadhamvillagehall.com

We would be delighted to hear from you.



Little Hadham Ramblers Wednesday 8th January 2025 at 10am.

Turn up with your walking boots at the Welcome Café by 10am to take part in a relaxing and friendly walk around the local area of Little Hadham. Entrance to café left hand side of the village hall. If you would like lunch after the walk, please book this before you leave. Contact - Carole Page M: 07825 011 975

Afternoon Relaxed Cinema Screening – Monday 17th February

- Our next film showing is Barbie (2023). Doors open: 2.30pm. Film starts at 3.00pm.
- Entry £7 per person includes refreshments. (Pay on the Door - Carers free)

Please support the afternoon cinema or evening membership film club. Without your support, films will not be able to continue to be shown after July 2025.

Donate to Us

If you would like to help support the village hall, please visit the village hall website and find 'Donate to Us'. We have various ways you can help; direct donation, Easy Fundraising which allows you to purchase online using many well-known retailers or support us through East Herts Lottery. Thank you in anticipation.

Donations received in December 2024

We would like to say a massive thank you to David and Anne Willett who very kindly opened their garden to the public over the past 2 years. This has raised a staggering £3000 which they have generously donated to the

Village Hall. This is an amazing sum and we are extremely grateful to them.

Happy New Year!

And Finally - message from Jan Williamson

I would like to convey my huge thanks and appreciation to Little Hadham Village Hall Management Committee, especially Joan, who had to pick up the additional workload that I was unable to deal with due to my incapacitation. Rose Marie and Gina took over the cooking in the café and were absolutely brilliant. Rose Marie even cooked a Christmas dinner on the last Wednesday which I actually managed to get to as an attendee. Joan however has had to deal with some really tough weeks and decisions during my absence and I am really deeply in her debt for keeping everything running smoothly given the circumstances leading up to Christmas. I feel quite humbled by everyone's support and commitment to the Village Hall and hope that it is also recognised and appreciated by the Village.

I would also like to mention the hard work that Carole, Carolyn and Judy put in to the meet and greet on December 14. It took a great deal of planning and was really lovely to see the children getting involved.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Basic cooking small groups

I am now looking for a small group of 4 – 6 to come along on **7th January Tuesday morning @ 10.30am – 12 noon** please contact Jan (07710 325363) for booking your place in January.

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What's On in January @ LH Village Hall

See website www.littlehadhamvillagehall.com for latest details

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

MONDAY'S

Mum's Matter (Mother & Baby Group) 10 – 11:30am

TUESDAY'S

Brownies 5:45 – 7pm **Term Time Only**
 Bereavement Group Meeting Every THIRD Tuesday of the month (1-1 every other Tuesday from 10am - 12:15 **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY** ring Jan 01279 771 272 or Ron Bunce mob: 07903 194 991)

WEDNESDAY'S

Welcome Cafe (from 8th Jan) 10am – 2pm No need to book just drop in and enjoy!
 Druman Chair Yoga 11am – 11:45 Mark Cox 07368 293 062
 Digital Improvers (from 8th Jan) 2 – 3:30pm Jan 01279 771 272
 Fitsteps 6 – 7pm Jacqui: 07731 454 228
 Tai Chi & Qi Gong 7:30 – 8:30pm Sarah Baker 07740 701 102

THURSDAY'S

Mike's Bowls Club 2 – 4pm

FRIDAY'S

Friday Fitness Group 11am -12noon contact Daisy Osborne 07585 309 933 or email: daisy.af.osborne@gmail.com

Indoor Bowls 7:30 – 10pm **except 2nd Friday**

FORTNIGHTLY

Tuesday 14th & 28th 2 – 4pm Turn up & Play Scrabble (£3 per session) Annette: 07926 088 202

Wednesday 29th 1 – 2pm Virtual Cycle Studio to book your place contact Sarah Baker 07740 701 102

Wednesday 8th & 22nd 1 – 2pm Tai Chi (Sarah Baker 07740 701 102)

MONTHLY

9th 10 – 12 noon Community Breakfast morning
BOOKING ESSENTIAL on website: littlehadhamvillagehall.com or email vice-chair@littlehadhamvillagehall.com

NOTICEBOARD



Friday 10th January

7pm

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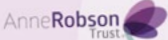
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Millennium Wood

Jon Kemmish

jk.landscapes@yahoo.co.uk

Hi everyone, I'm Jon Kemmish one of the people who has taken over the management of the Millennium Wood and I have been asked by Jono to write this month's article.

My first day spent in the wood involved felling 4 trees unfortunately, 2 Ash with Ash Die Back and 2 Limes also diseased. I really struggle with removing trees but also understand that it has to be done from time to time. It has opened up the area allowing more light to reach the ground which in turn will hopefully encourage new growth of various plants and trees.

Jono had arranged a work party for the 1st December that I attended with my middle daughter Poppy where we got to meet four fantastic volunteers who came to help with clearing bramble from an area that we're opening up to create a butterfly glade. Various native plants and seeds will be planted there in the spring.

After the couple storms we had Jono and myself had both taken a walk around to see if there was damage caused, the wood was pretty unscathed apart from a few trees that were diseased and already marked for removal.



We will be having another work party on **Sunday the 29th January** so if you fancy working off some of the Christmas pud it would be lovely to see you. Please email myself at jk.landscapes@yahoo.co.uk if you're at all interested in helping out.

We hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Please see a photo above of how autumnal the wood is looking at the moment.

History of the Millennium Wood

Ennis Rogers

Thank you Jono and Wendy for all of your involvement in the care of Millennium Wood. Without your knowledge and time it would have been lost.

Over the years our village community has changed and the history of the wood probably unknown.

In the late 1990's the then Parish Council asked for help towards celebrating the new century. A few residents agreed to arrange some celebrations and residents asked what they may like to do. Creating a nature reserve was mentioned? A number of fundraising events were organised and a letter sent to Glaxo, who still had property in the village. We were informed that they were creating a 3 acre wood, designed by Dale Holt, an employee. The woodland to be for the use of Little Hadham residents. The 'Millennium Wood' was officially opened in April, 2000. A number of residents and Little Hadham and Albury School children planted the last trees. At the entrance into the wood on Millfield Lane a noticeboard was erected and a 'Time Box' buried with a history of the wood, plus memorabilia of the community.

Then Glaxo moved to Ware, selling their land. Glaxo were prepared to donate the Wood to the Parish, but the then Parish Council felt they could

not afford to take on the responsibility of the expense of employing someone to maintain the Wood.

Jono and Wendy moved into Little Hadham, visited the Wood and became devoted to return it to a woodland status. Both of them have worked so hard within the wood and organising fund raising events. To have been able to find people to take over the responsibility of The Millennium Wood is a great achievement.

Very many thanks to Jono, Wendy, Dale and all who have supported The Wood and every best wish and thanks to Rachel and Jon for jointly taking over the responsibility.

The wonderful Village Sign, opposite The Nag Pub, was also a Millennium Gift, from the Little Hadham Women's Institute. It was designed and created by Brian Burton. He and his family lived in Albury Road and he taught at Hadham Hall School.

Stay safe, Ennis Rogers



Ed's note: Sending Jono and Wendy so much thanks also for all the brilliant content you have written for the magazine over the years (and all the afternoon tea's Wendy!) We wish you both all the best for your new life in Norfolk. You will be deeply missed by the village!

St Cecilia's Church Bells

Quasi

January has always been the month to spring clean and look at things with a new perspective. With this in mind this is what it means in bell towers all over the UK.

General maintenance involves sweeping up in bell towers, both on the ringing floor and up where the bells are. We look out for clusterflies, ladybirds and mouse, bird and bat faeces.

All the ropes need to be checked for damage along their whole length so not only where the ringer handles it but where it goes through the floor of the bell chamber - this is called the garter hole and sometimes the rope is protected by a leather sleeve which can move. The ropes are made of various materials - flax or hemp with a terralene top and the length of the rope expands and contracts by as much as 6" / 12 cm, depending on the weather. So the ropes have to be adjusted with the seasons so the ringers can reach the rope (when we have to stand on wooden boxes to extend our reach) or not have too much rope (when we have to put knots in to shorten it otherwise it becomes dangerous).

There are approximately 100 nuts and bolts to check in the bell tower and the metal components, such as the dingler and runner boards, need to be greased (minimally as grease attracts the dirt). The clappers in the bell need to be checked as they should only swing back and forth and not any other direction.

The wooden components need to be checked for damage and wear and tear. The wooden 'stays' which stop the bell from turning all the way over are made of ash which is a strong and brittle wood so it can withstand a bit of bumping but can break. There are different styles of stay - the majority in Little Hadham are called Hastings stays, a pyramid shaped batton, and our others are Taylor stays.

All this work is recommended to be completed quarterly and takes approximately 3 hours, it is often carried out by bell ringers. Additionally the church Architect checks may also flag up work that needs to be rectified in the bell tower. Often this is structural, expensive work.

If you wish to give bell ringing a try, the bells are waiting for you. Go to <https://riverashchurches.org.uk/river-ash-churches-bellringers/> for more information.

Quasi



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Nature Notes

Jono Forgham

jonoforgham@gmail.com

Penned on the 17th December, I sit in our house with all furniture in storage and just a couple of teacups and 2 wicker chairs. Today, we move from Little Hadham after 17 wonderful years.

We will eventually be moving to Norfolk, a small village between Diss and Norwich but that will not be until mid January. In the meantime we are staying with a friend in Bishop's Stortford.

With all the packing and preparation going on I haven't had too much time for wanders. However, a really successful trip to Abberton reservoir gave great views of Great Northern diver, Black necked grebe, Goosanders and Great white egrets.

A wander around Rye Meads Reserve just after one of the recent storms showed that the birds had left rather than arrived and only a Green sandpiper was of note.

Over the years we have been in Chapel Lane I have run a moth trap most nights in the garden and frequently placed a portable trap in local woods. My species total for the parish is 869, roughly 50% of all moth species for the county. A good record with several being new for county records as well as 3 species that had been declared extinct in 2006.

I am in the process of listing all my nature findings, including 105 bird species for the parish. Once complete I shall forward it to the local archivist for safe keeping and trust it proves an interesting document for future naturalists.

Finally, we shall be returning on occasions to visit friends and it is likely that I shall pop into Millennium Wood for a quick wander down memory lane.



The Hundred Parishes Society

Ken McDonald



This article was drafted by a member of The Hundred Parishes Society who has allowed us to adapt and publish it.

Like others, I have covered many miles through the patchwork of landscape in the Hundred Parishes and have often crossed intersecting footpaths, stopping to examine my map to understand why they exist and where they go.

Recently, I picked up local author Christopher Hadley's book, *The Road*, in which Hadley explores a spur of Ermine Street which connects former Roman towns at Braughing and Chesterford, carving a straight line for 13 miles through The Hundred Parishes. Hadley draws on years of archaeological and historical research. Tracing the route, he gathers lost names, locates burial mounds and tracks down archaeology in the hope of revealing two thousand years of history. Through his words, we gain a glimpse of the civilisation that sited and constructed the road, of the people who used and maintained it and, eventually, of what happens

when a road passes out of general use and the legacy it leaves behind. Much of this route can be walked still; the actual Roman road is most visible as Beards Lane where it defines straight parish boundaries, with Clavering and Arkesden to the south-east and Langley and Elmdon to the north-west.

In short, *The Road* is a lyrical, nostalgic, sometimes humorous and intriguing social history and travelogue which will enthral enthusiasts of cultural and local history. After finishing this book, I find myself re-examining parish churches, wondering if the red, small bricks in the tower are Tudor in origin or perhaps pillaged from a lost Roman storehouse.

The highway which is the focus of this book is one of several local routes with Roman origins. Many feature somewhere in the walks that can be downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk.



Elmdon – looking north from Rockell's Wood towards Elmdon



Shallow tumulus beside Langley - Elmdon - Clavering parish boundary intersection



Elmdon – looking south from B1039 towards Rockell's Wood



Beard's Lane - Elmdon - Clavering parish boundary along former Roman road

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News from the Venue Hub at Much Hadham Bowls Club

Much Hadham Bowling Club: Recreation Ground, Much Hadham SG10 6DL

Our Authentic ITALIAN Dining evening was not only fully booked but also a huge success! It broke new ground for us and any concerns we had about how well a 4 course meal, spread over a whole evening with breaks between for socialising would be received by us Brits, more used to 'in and out' in 90 minutes, were wholly unfounded. We were treated to an excellent meal which drew plaudits for the chef Tracey from all present.

Two weeks later we held our first CABARET event and that too was a sell-out. Jill Oxborrow was the artiste and with her fine voice put in a great performance with a wide selection of songs dating back to the '60s

That was supported with an excellent 2-course meal of Duck Confit, roast butternut squash etc, followed by blackberry and apple crumble with delicious home-made ice cream.

NEXT TWO EVENTS

Saturday, 11th January "ELVIS" in CABARET

From the interest shown so far, this tribute evening looks certainly be another sell-out. Get out those blue suede shoes - if you still have them.

The food this time will have a bias to Elvis's favourites. £15 pp

Saturday, 25th January BURNS NIGHT

Oozing tradition. The Selkirk Grace, followed by the traditional broth, the parade of the Chieftan Haggis, the reading of the address to the haggis, the carving and toasting the haggis and the eating (cottage pie alternative) with neeps and tatties followed by desert. The evening inevitable concludes with the joining together and singing Auld Lang Syne. £12.50pp

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THE GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

Jill Goldsmith
www.eastonlodge.co.uk



Happy New Year from all of us at the Gardens of Easton Lodge. We hope you had a lovely festive season and that you had your fingers crossed for a bright, sunny and cold January – like we had in 2023. We absolutely do not want a warm January, like we had in 2024, when some primroses and violets were already in flower and we had loads of rain, followed by a wash-out snowdrop season and so many slugs and snails that the spring was blighted.

After a busy autumn, in January we will be focused on pruning the apples and pears in the walled kitchen garden. The Easton Countess always needs big treatment as it grows very fast and makes a dense tunnel over the path, however hard we cut it back. We will also prune the late summer/autumn raspberries. They were incredibly productive this last year –

with huge fruit, perfect for immediate eating and contributing to our lovely jam tombola. The canes are taking over, so we will remove some and pot them up for sale. There will no doubt also be more clearing of fallen trees and branches and still some manure shifting to do. So we will have plenty of work to keep us warm, if we are lucky and have cold weather!

Our craft-minded volunteers will also be busy through the new year, making the lovely crochet elephants and other goods available for visitors; the winter season of talks about the Gardens will be in full swing; and our website will be refreshed with the planned events for 2025, starting with (hopefully) four snowdrop open days in February. For information about Group Visits or talks see the website www.eastonlodge.co.uk or contact us by email: enquiries@eastonlodge.co.uk

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Rural Ramblings

Cherry Mardell

The run-up to Christmas this year has been a mixture of organised fun along with a good dose of travel. As we get old – perhaps mature would be a kinder word – we tend to search out other ways to celebrate.

When your children have their own kids, you look forward to getting a glimpse, once again, of the sheer joy of anticipation. And then, suddenly, those kids are all grown up with lives which don't include us oldies.

So this year we decided we should anticipate the run up to Christmas on our own, with a small but different agenda. It started last week when we travelled to London on a coach full of other oldies all hell bent on having some 'me time'. Once there, we boarded a pleasure boat on the Thames and, for four hours we travelled up and back, viewing London from a different perspective... all the while eating and drinking.... and latterly dancing and singing !

We have two more outings to go, tomorrow we take off for a lovely performance at Thursford.. and more food... (and yes, this will be my third time of seeing this splendid Christmas show)... and the following day we are back to London to see something just about as opposite as can be...Only Fools and Horses!

Presuming we survive all this excitement, we can then settle down and stay home, eat turkey, pull crackers and stop up late to see in the New Year.

May I wish you a happy Christmas and a bright and healthy New Year. See you all again in 2025!



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St Cecilia's Little Hadham			9:15am Benefice Holy Communion <i>Tayo</i>	
St Mary's Albury	9:15am Benefice Holy Communion <i>Tayo</i>			9:15am Benefice Holy Communion <i>Tayo</i>

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