PARISH MAGAZINE



St. Mary's, Herriard



All Saints', Turworth



St. Mary's, Upton Grey



St Lawrence, Weston Patrick

January 2026

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BENEFICE MAGAZINE – January 2026
Edition for the Parishes of Herriard with Winslade, Tunworth, Upton Grey and Weston Patrick

Letter from the Benefice Ministry Team



As I write, Advent Sunday has just passed and now before we know it the "Strictly" final will have been and gone, and the watching and waiting of Advent will have turned into the excitement of Christmas and celebrating the birth of Emmanuel – God among us in Jesus Christ.

I always look forward to decorating the house and the smell of a Christmas tree ready for baubles and tinsel. Some adhere to the old Christian tradition of waiting until Christmas Eve to decorate the tree so that it's just ready in time for the 1st day of Christmas. I'm already wondering if my true love is preparing to send me a partridge in a pear tree.

New Year's Day will find me wondering what to do with eight maids-a-milking and pondering my new year's resolutions. All too often the commitments I make are around chocolate and calories, and in more recent years I've worked hard to find some more meaningful resolutions: resolutions not centred on me but centred on my commitment as a disciple of Jesus in my day to day living, and centred on how I can use my time and whatever talents God may have entrusted to me to play my part in making the transforming love of Jesus known to others.

By the time we get to the 12th day of Christmas and I'm delighting (maybe) in twelve drummers drumming, we've arrived at the eve of Epiphany preparing to celebrate the arrival of the three Wise Men in Bethlehem and through them the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles. How do we respond to the amazing love and generosity of the God who gave us Jesus? The Wise Men responded by offering precious gifts to the Christ-child. What precious thing do we have we to offer? The most precious thing we have to offer is ourselves and that's what God longs for us – that we give ourselves to him.

Epiphany may be just the time to bring to God the gift of a renewed commitment to our lives lived in Christ. At a special Methodist Covenant Service at the beginning of each year, a service which celebrates all that God has done for us through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we in turn affirm that we give our lives and choices to God. The prayer is a wonderful way to commit ourselves

afresh to the part we play in God's mission. It starts with "I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will".

I hope you all enjoyed a blessed Christmas and I wish you a very Happy New Year. May the Prince of Peace bring lasting peace where there is conflict in our world. May God bless us richly in 2026, and in turn may we be a blessing to others. **Reverend Linda Scard**

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptism: Percy Spicer at St Mary's Herriard on 23rd November
Funeral: Michael Barnes at St Mary's Upton Grey on 11th December

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 4th January
9.00am Tunworth – BCP Holy Communion
10.00am Herriard – BCP Holy Communion (said)
10.30am Upton Grey – CW Holy Communion
Thursday 8th January
10.00am Upton Grey – BCP Holy Communion (said)
Sunday 11th January
9.00am Tunworth – 1662 Morning Prayer
10.00am Weston Patrick – CW Holy Communion with Baptism
10.30am Upton Grey – Morning Worship
5.00pm Herriard – Evensong
Thursday 15th January
10.00am Herriard – BCP Holy Communion (said)
Sunday 18th January
10.00am Herriard – Morning Worship
10.30am Upton Grey – CW Holy Communion
5.00pm Tunworth – Evensong
Sunday 25th January
9.00am Tunworth – Family Service
10.00am Herriard – Family Service
10.30am Upton Grey – Informal Service
5.00pm Weston Patrick – Evensong

CHURCH NEWS

Message from the Clergy Team

As 2026 begins in earnest I'd like to say a huge thank you to the many people who both helped with and attended the Advent and Christmas Services across our churches. o all those who decorated and arranged flowers, played organs, served mince pies, read lessons, sung in choirs, handed round Christingles, dressed up as shepherds and more... thank you! We couldn't have done it without you!

To everyone who came along to sing carols, share friendship and fellowship, take some time to reflect, offer some prayers and break bread... thank you! It wouldn't have been the same without you.

My prayer for each and every one of us is that 2026 might be a year of blessing. For those facing difficulties, may God grant you grace. For anyone who feels a little uncertain or out of sorts, may God give you peace. And for all those who look to the year ahead with anticipation and excitement, may God give you wisdom and joy.

With love from Simon and the Clergy Team

Coffee & Cake

All Saints Tunworth, St Mary's Upton Grey and St Lawrence Weston Patrick are continuing with their regular coffee/cake sessions. The January events are:

- Coffee and cake in the church porch, **All Saints Tunworth**, at 10.30am on **Thursday 8th January.**
- Coffee and cake drop-in at **Upton Grey Village Hall**, 11.00am–1.00pm on **Monday 12th & 26th January.**
- Coffee morning at **Weston Patrick Village Hall**, 11.00am–12.30pm on **Wednesday 28th January.**

Tea or coffee, slice of cake, chat. Open to all, very informal, no need to book, just turn up. All ages welcome!

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Are you curious about faith?

The taster evening for our next Alpha course is on the 21st January at 7.30pm:

Join us in Odiham

Alpha is a series of interactive sessions to discuss the Christian faith in an informal, fun and friendly environment

Everyone is welcome, and it's free

Why not come along to the intro evening and see what you think

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more+
All Saints Church, Odiham

Alpha

KidsZone

'The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father. And the Word was full of grace and truth.' John 1:14

I love these words from the beginning of John's gospel. They are part of a longer prologue (chapter 1 verses 1-18) which are some of the most beautiful and searching words ever written about God and Jesus. These opening verses of John's gospel are particularly important this time of year as we journey through Christmas and Epiphany, which is all about God revealing his glory and truth to us through his Son, Jesus.

Why not take some time today to enjoy reading these wonderful verses together with family and friends. You could try one of the following as you read…

- Try to read it as a poem, taking note of the rhythm and pace of it.
- Do you notice words that are repeated? (That means they are important.)
- Do you notice lots of words that start with the same letter (W, G, B, L)? Emphasise these as you read the passage again by having different people join in with these words.

The Word (Jesus) became a human being. And the Word (Jesus) was full of truth. Jesus is the truth about God! As we read through each story and scene of the life of Jesus in the rest of John's gospel (and the other gospels), we see what is true about God! We see more clearly how God sees the world, and how God sees us.

It's tempting and too easy to see other people - especially those who are different to us - as threatening, bad, less important, or even as an enemy. Do you think this is how Jesus (and God) sees people? Learning to see other people as God sees them takes a lifetime. We need help from each other. And we definitely need help from God; the one who is showing us grace upon grace. This, to me, is what church is about. Learning alongside others (some of whom might be very different to me) to see the world more truthfully.

May you know more of God's grace and truth this new year!



Paul Dadd
Children & Youth Pastor
All Saints, Odiham
paul@moretolife.church

More4Kids Upton Grey

The Wednesday afternoon event in Upton Grey Village Hall, which has been running for several months as Messy Church, is now being renamed More4Kids Upton Grey. There are no huge changes to the arrangements, which are as follows.

- Upton Grey Village Hall
- Wednesdays January 21st, February 25th, March 18th (the February date a week later than usual because of half term)
- 3.30-5.00pm
- School Years R to 6
- Crafts, songs, tea, games



NEWS FROM THE VILLAGES

Farming News

Having experienced the sort of rainfall that has the animals lining up two by two in early December, we have now finally brought all our heifers into the barns from the fields. In the dark mornings before we fetched the last groups inside, I was paddling through the muddy gateways, nearly losing my wellies, carrying bags of feed on my shoulder out to the girls whilst listening to the Ashes cricket on my phone. If I was feeling sorry for myself trudging through the mud in the rain, I'm sure it was nothing compared with how Ben Stokes was feeling after the first two Test matches in the Australian sunshine!

We had some really lush autumn grass after the very dry summer which has allowed us to keep the heifers out up to Christmas, but the ground is now so waterlogged, if we kept them out longer, we'd start seriously damaging the pastures. We want to keep our grassland in good shape over winter so we can go into next spring with early growth and high yields. This will allow us to get the heifers and cows out of the barns early, weather permitting, and the fields we set aside for first cut grass silage off to an early growing start… providing we're not under a blanket of snow at Easter.

All the milking cows in the barns lying on their deep sand beds and looking clean and shiny coated, are very contented. They take themselves to the robots to be milked when they want and have a fresh smorgasbord of various feed stuffs delivered to them to munch on every morning. This is then pushed up throughout the day and night by little 'R2D2' type feed pushers to keep it fresh and palatable. Their backs and heads are scratched and massaged on rotating brushes hence we've dubbed the barns the Park Farm Spa. The rotating brushes also give our cows the best Elvis like quiffs. The cows even get specialist pedicures by Ric and Murray whenever required!

Their milk yields are slightly lower than our average which we think is down to our maize and grass silage not being quite as good as previous years, but the milk quality is slightly up. This is the fat and protein percentage content of our milk. We are not only paid on the litres we send to ARLA, our processor, but also on the quality of the milk. So, although our volumes are slightly down, that financial shortfall will hopefully be covered by the better quality. We need all the help we can get at the moment because our milk price has been cut by a whopping 9 pence/litre in just four months. The milk price we receive now takes us

back below the cost of production. I always try to have a positive outlook but there are some pretty fierce headwinds buffeting us from all directions.

The Central Association of Agricultural Valuers has as the title of their agricultural update at the Oxford Farming Conference in early January “Will you still need me, will you still feed me?”. As I’m approaching the titular age of that Beatles song, those questions have never been more important for British agriculture. All agricultural sectors (and many businesses in general) are going to have to face some tough decisions in 2026.

It’s a bit tricky to be upbeat looking forward at the moment but you always have to try, I feel, so here goes, let’s look on the bright side and hope that by the time you read this, Christmas dinner went without a hitch, the children ate all their sprouts, there is still some Baileys left in the bottle and no friends or relatives outstayed their welcome?! And of course, England have miraculously turned around the Ashes series and are now in a commanding position……. Howzat!

Happy New Year to you All. **Joe Ives**

UPTON GREY NEWS
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www.uptongreyparishcouncil.co.uk
facebook.com/uptongreyvillagecommunity

Upton Grey Village Hall December 100 Club winners
Congratulations to our December Upton Grey Village Hall 100 Club winners:
First Prize (£100) - Clare Overton
Second Prize (£40) - Peter and Annabet Chapman

Derek Paravicini Concert



Derek Paravicini returned to Upton Grey almost exactly a year after his first concert. Given the staggering success of his recital in 2024, it was astonishing that his 2025 visit was even more memorable. But it was.

Much was familiar from a year before: the virtuosic brilliance of his playing; the breadth of his repertoire; the astonishing ability to hear a piece for just 20 seconds and then improvise and riff on the melody; the touching warmth of his relationship with his long-term mentor, Adam Ockelford. However, there were differences, too. While the teenage Chapman once again mesmerised the audience with the beauty and maturity of his playing, this time he was joined by eight-year-old Evan and the effervescent 15-year-old Lily. Like Derek, the three children are blind and autistic; like Derek, they have monumental talent, expressed in their own individual styles.

Lily sang from her beloved musicals, accompanied either by Derek or by herself, and she captivated everyone with her boundless enthusiasm. Chapman played a magnificent piece of his own creation, while Evan gave expression to Mozart's Rondo alla Turca. In their different ways, each derived - and gave - immense pleasure from their performance.

One other development was the screening of *Key of Genius*, a short film depicting the beginnings of Adam and Derek's long relationship. Like everything in the hall that evening, it was a moving, humbling experience. And, just like in 2024, it was an honour to be present.

The Village Hall Committee are hugely grateful to all who attended, and thrilled that the evening raised more than £1,500 for both the Amber Trust (dedicated to the musical education of blind children) and the hall.

Hugh Chevallier

A Comic History of Upton Grey

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Village Hall, the Upton Grey Drama Group teamed up with Window on the Past to produce a terrific evening 'A Comic History', a mixture of historical fact, film, maps and photos, interspersed with inspired(!) drama.



It turned out to be instructive, erudite and highly entertaining, much appreciated by the villagers who packed the hall. Many congratulations to all concerned: narrator Patrick Symington had conducted the historical research; Drusilla Brodrick and Benjy Weeks wrote the various sketches, all performed with humour by the Drama Group - Alison, Drusilla, Georgina, Hugh and Tess, Adele, June Hunt, Mike Mendoza, Bernard Stone, Millie White and Benji. Alison Barker was the producer assisted by Gordon Hunt, Paul Gray, Peter Owen, Viv Raven and Ambrose Scott-Moncrieff who painted the amazing set. It must have taken a lot of hard work, not least from those who did the washing up at the end and the backstage crew - Rebecca, Brenda, Jan, Sue N and Rachel S.

Visit windowonthepast.co.uk to see the old photos of our village, including Max Bygraves on an elephant. Credit must also go to village historian, the late Trevor Hart. And indeed, to the late Sarah Gray who founded the Drama Group.

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- 3.30-5.00pm
- School Years R to 6
- Crafts, songs, tea, games

Coffee and Cake drop in

Upton Grey Village Hall

Monday
12th & 26th January
11.00-1.00

All welcome



St Mary's Upton Grey
www.moretolife.church

Save the Date!

- Upton Grey Reels Night Saturday 28th Feb 2026
- Saturday 14th March 2026: Upton Grey Safari Supper at 7.15pm.
- St Mary's Church Fete, Upton Grey, Sat 6th June 2026 2.00-5.00pm

HERRIARD AND WINSLADE NEWS
www.herriard-pc.gov.uk
www.herriardvillagehub.co.uk
Herriard Village Group on http://www.Facebook.com

Christmas 2025



At the time of writing we are putting together the final touches for our Christmas services - we are so grateful to everyone who plays a part in the preparations - and there are many, many people! So huge thanks go to the team who decorate the Church so beautifully, and particular thanks to The Herriard Hub for our Christmas Tree this year (always decorated magnificently by Claire and her boys), the bell ringers who welcome us into Church, our organists (Rose and Andrew), our readers, for the contributions of food and drink, and to everyone who comes along to join us and experience the wonder of the Christmas story.

Without the Clergy team none of this would happen of course - a particular thank you to Suzanne for all her hard work, and for the joy, thoughtfulness and care she puts into each and every service.

After a wonderful Advent Carol Service just gone - with the beautiful poems, Advent Hymns and Christmas Songs - we look ahead to our Christingle Service this coming Sunday and onwards to our Carol Singing and Barn Nativity, our Carol Service and then the family fun (and slight but joyful chaos!) of our Christmas Day service!

Adrian Spruce and Fiona Ives

Change of service pattern

The service pattern at St Mary's Herriard with Winslade is changing from January 2026, as follows:

- 1st Sunday 10.00am BCP Holy Communion (said)
- 2nd Sunday 5.00pm Evensong
- 3rd Sunday 10.00am Morning Worship
- 3rd Thursday 10.00am BCP Holy Communion (said)
- 4th Sunday 10.00am Family Service
- 5th Sunday Benefice Service

Prayers are said in the church every Thursday morning at 10.00am.

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See also under Gardens

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Good coffee and fresh baked cakes

Donations from £2.00 each to cover costs

Do come and join us – everyone welcome !

North Hampshire Downs Churches – Herriard Youth Hub
The Youth Hub meets from 6.00 to 8.00pm on the 1st & 3rd Sundays at The Herriard Hub. For more information, contact Helen Chatfield, youth@moretolife.church

Herriard Prayer Group
If you or anyone you know would like to be included in our prayers, please contact suzanne@moretolife.church or fiona@ashmeadow.co.uk.

Foodbank at St Mary's Herriard with Winslade
We have a box in the Church for any food donations you would like to contribute. If you can't make our Sunday service, you can always leave donations on a Saturday/Sunday at the vestry door at the back of the Church. If you would like to sign up for the Camrose Centre's newsletter, to keep up to date with the work the centre is doing and get an updated list of the many items they so desperately need, please visit www.thecamrosecentre.org. They also have an Amazon Wishlist – the list is regularly updated:
https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/printview/FY45O4AC8JKM?target=_blank&ref_=lv_pv&filter=persistent_all&sort=default

The Camrose Centre is a drop-in centre for anyone who is sleeping rough, homeless or vulnerably housed within Basingstoke and Deane.

TUNWORTH NEWS

Prayer Hour: Thursday 8th January 9.30am
The monthly Prayer Hour is usually on the first Thursday, but not on New Year's Day. We meet and pray in the church for everyone in the parish.

Coffee & Cake: Thursday 8th January 10.30am
On the first Thursday of the month (again, not New Year's Day), we meet for coffee and cake in the church porch. Please do join us if you are at home and fancy taking a break from online work.

Tunworth Home Group
The Tunworth Home Group usually meets once or twice a month on Wednesdays from 7.00 to 8.00pm at The Orangery, Hackwood Park, to study Bible passages and Biblical themes. In January there is one meeting, on **Wednesday 28th.** If you would like to know more about the group, or to join, please contact Gabrielle.

Change of service pattern
Please note that from January the service pattern is changing**: Evensong will now be on the third Sunday, and the second Sunday will be 9.00am 1662 Morning Prayer.**

WESTON PATRICK & WESTON CORBETT NEWS

The Christmas Festivities are now over but we are heading into the New Year with exciting prospects of a Mothering Day Service, Easter Sunday and a Pet Service again as well as our normal services on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

There will be a brilliant **Burns Night Supper in January** (see poster on the next page), the fun of another Quiz Night in March, the Village BBQ in June plus our usual Coffee Mornings on the 4th Wednesday of each month.

Reverend Linda Scard will be praying for our community in our church at 9.00am on the first Friday of every month and will be there on **Friday 2nd January**. All are very welcome to join her but if you are unable to attend personally and would like her to pray for someone specific, please contact her (details below).

St. Lawrence's next service will be **Holy Communion on Sunday 11th January** at 10.00am and then **Evensong on Sunday 25th January** at 5.00pm.

The **coffee morning in January is Wednesday 28th** at 11.00 in the Village Hall. Everybody (and your dog) is welcome to pop in.

In February there will be a Bible Course by the Bible Society running in Odiham. This is an 8-week journey covering the whole biblical story and is great for anyone at any stage of faith. Please contact Linda Scard (details below), if you are interested.

Weston Patrick and Weston Corbett's Women's Home Group welcomes any women who would like to come along. This is an informal fellowship group exploring faith and how faith relates to our daily lives. Please contact Linda Scard for further details on:
01256 703294/07801 039717 or linda@moretolife.church



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ALL WELCOME

BURNS NIGHT SUPPER

IN AID OF

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OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

HAMPSHIRE MEDICAL FUND
The charity buying tomorrow's equipment today

The Hampshire Medical Fund – Supporting Local Hospitals, Supporting Local Families

We all hope we will never need serious medical treatment, but when we do, we want to know that our hospitals have the very best equipment and technology available. The Hampshire Medical Fund is a local charity dedicated to ensuring our local NHS hospitals have exactly that.

It raises funds to purchase cutting-edge medical equipment for the hospitals in **Basingstoke, Winchester and Andover** — equipment that falls beyond what standard NHS budgets can cover, but which can make a life-changing difference to patients, helping to ensure that patients at our local hospitals receive world-class treatment close to home.

Each year, hospital staff put forward requests for equipment that would transform the way they diagnose or treat patients. The charity then creates an annual "Wish List" and funds raised go directly towards purchasing those specific items — meaning donations are turned into impact very quickly.

Over the last decade, the Hampshire Medical Fund has funded **more than 165 pieces of cutting-edge equipment worth over £5 million**, bringing faster diagnoses, less invasive treatments and better outcomes for local people of all ages.

This equipment doesn't just treat illness - it keeps families together, restores independence, and offers hope where there might otherwise be uncertainty. It also helps our local hospitals attract and retain the very best doctors and specialists, ensuring our community has access to outstanding care without needing to travel far afield

By supporting the Hampshire Medical Fund, you are supporting the hospitals that care for you, your neighbours, your family and future generations. It is a local charity making a local difference — and every contribution helps. You can become a 'Friend' of the charity by becoming a regular donor and will get invited to events to see the equipment funded by the charity as well as other benefits.

To learn more, get involved, or donate, visit www.hampshiremedicalfund.org

North Warnborough & District Garden Club
We look forward to welcoming Members and Visitors on Thursday 22nd January for our first meeting of 2026. Our talk this month will be 'The Harmonious Garden' by Patricia Elkington. Doors open at 2.10pm for the talk at 2. 30pm.Visitors are always welcome for the small fee of £3.00. We have an interesting programme planned for 2026. For further information visit our website at https://www.nwdgc.org.uk

Deer Management in the English Countryside
St Mary's Church, Lasham, is holding a fundraising event "Deer Management in the English Countryside" on **Saturday 17th January at 6.30pm**. Topics include: Deer species, Why herd management, Venison outlook, HAD police volunteer. Tickets £10.50, includes Venison Burger and tea/coffee/soft drink.
https://buytickets.at/stmaryschurchlasham/1940555

Affordable Counselling for all in Basingstoke
Cedar Tree Counselling offers adults affordable and accessible counselling support, either at their premises in central Basingstoke or on-line via a video call.

The volunteer team of professional counsellors is motivated by their Christian faith and work with people from all backgrounds, regardless of religion, race, age, gender or income. The counsellors work ethically and as such will not impose their beliefs on anyone, providing a safe, respectful, and confidential space for adults seeking emotional support.

Initially, a course of up to 12 sessions is available (with the possibility of extending this further). Clients contribute what they can afford, with a suggested donation of between £10 and £50 per session to cover the costs of rent, utilities and supervision.

Cedar Tree receives enquiries from those struggling with issues such as anxiety, loss and bereavement, relationship difficulties, unresolved anger, depression and life transitions. If you are considering counselling, please email cedartreecounselling@gmail.com and the service manager will contact you to discuss the first steps to arranging an appointment. Further details can be found on the website:
www.cedartreecounsellingbasingstoke.co.uk

Fresh Start



Do you want to break free from a **life-controlling habit** such as smoking, gambling, over-eating, internet or social media addiction, shopping compulsions, binge drinking, taking drugs, etc. – in fact any habit which once might have brought us comfort or fun, but is now spoiling our daily living?

Fresh Start is a 9-week course based on principles from the 12-steps-of-recovery process, backed by 1-to-1 coaching and a support group of others wanting to tackle their dependencies. It's **free** and completely confidential. See https://harvestchurch.uk/fresh-start

The next local course will start with an introductory session on **Thursday 29th January 10.30-12.00**, at Alton Maltings.

After previous local courses, a man tackling an internet addiction said: "I'd like to thank you…for putting on the Fresh Start course and helping me achieve my goals...I am very grateful for the work you did with us." Another, tackling a gambling addiction, said: "I was gambling to excess and constantly worried and anxious over money. I am now happier and am getting my priorities right... I can never say THANK YOU enough times as I never thought I could beat this addiction". A woman now in recovery from alcohol addiction said: "I wouldn't be where I am today, if I hadn't come on Fresh Start".

If you want to be free of a life-controlling habit, join the Fresh Start course. Or if you know someone who wants to tackle such a habit, recommend Fresh Start to them.

To enquire or register for the course, call Mark Rumsby on 07769 030913 or email freshstart@harvestchurch.uk

u3a learn, laugh, live Odiham District

Wishing you all a Happy New Year!

Christmas is over, time to think of what to do until spring arrives.

There was lots going on before Christmas for the u3a, from a tea dance at Robert Mays School (thanks to all the staff and students), a study day on Artificial Intelligence, a packed festive monthly meeting plus of course lots of mince pies at group meetings. Now the weather is turning a bit colder there are lots of things to keep us occupied indoors. Here are just a few examples that you might like to try out for yourselves.

Our bowls group meet indoors weekly on a Monday. Table Tennis meet weekly in Hook. The Craft and Chat group take along their own projects and meet fortnightly.









And don't forget our monthly speaker, February looks particularly interesting to the history buffs amongst you: **Kitchener, The Unheeded Prophet** by Major General John Drewienkiewicz CB CMG. Kitchener is best remembered today for the iconic recruiting poster. What is not remembered is his earlier career and his emergence as a hero of the Victorian Age. While his career was not 'rags to riches', his ascendancy and achievements were remarkable in an age where social mobility was very limited.

If you are not already a member, joining is only £20.00 for u3a membership for the year.

To see the full programme of our Monthly Meetings and group activities, please visit our website. www.odihamu3a.org.uk

North Hampshire Downs Mothers' Union

In 2026, Mothers' Union will be celebrating its 150th Anniversary, which is a tremendous milestone. We will have a number of celebrations during 2026, including a special evensong at Winchester Cathedral on Sunday 9th August 2026 when we will particularly remember the founder of Mothers' Union, Mary Sumner. We hope to continue for many more years working to end poverty, to end injustice and to end violence.

In our local branch we will start 2026 with a **Wave of Prayer service on Monday 5th January** at the RAF Chaplaincy Centre at 7:30pm. Mothers' Union divides the year into 3-day periods when we pray for the members and projects of a particular group of dioceses. Winchester diocese has its turn in January along with our Diocesan Links in Mauritius, Nandyal (South India), Kericho (Kenya), Katsina (Nigeria) and Kumasi (Ghana). We are very grateful to the RAF for allowing us to use their hall for our meetings.

If you would like to find out more about Mothers' Union or our branch, please contact Sue Murphy on 01252 845011 or suemurphymubranch@outlook.com.

Do you like to sing?

Do you know that singing is good for you? It can reduce stress, improve lung function, and boost mood by releasing feel-good chemicals like endorphins and dopamine. Singing in groups fosters social connections and promotes well-being. Recent research suggests that group singing can even reduce symptoms of postnatal depression, providing both emotional support and a sense of community.

Two members of Hampshire Harmony, Susan Booth and Margaret Allen, are proof that singing works for happiness friendship and health. When Susan and Margaret joined our choir in October 1970, like some of our current members, they were young mums looking for a weekly opportunity to leave cares and worries behind and have an evening of joy and of just being themselves. And 55 years later, they are still firm friends, singing well and taking on responsibilities.

Our fabulous MD, Clare Oliver, said, "Margaret and Susan are living proof of the benefits of singing. Their voices are amazing, and they still perform and learn new repertoire, all from memory. They are a

true inspiration to us all, and we are so proud to have them still singing with us, with their wealth of experience and knowledge."

If you're interested in finding out if singing is for you, book a place at our new year **Open Evening on January 5th** 2026 via our website hampshireharmony.org. There will be two opportunities to hear the choir before then, at the Costello School Basingstoke at 3.00pm 29th November - tickets via the website - and also at the Mayor's Carol Service 6.00pm on 6th December at St Michael's Church, Basingstoke. We look forward to meeting you.

The Ghost of the Fields

If you've ever caught a glimpse of a pale, silent shape drifting over a Hampshire meadow at dusk, you may have been lucky enough to witness one of the region's most captivating residents: the barn owl.

Barn owls are perfectly engineered for life as nocturnal hunters. Their feathers are soft and velvety, specially adapted to silence the sound of their wingbeats. This allows them to float through the air almost noiselessly as they quarter the fields in search of prey. Their hearing is so acute they can pinpoint a mouse rustling beneath vegetation in complete darkness, guided by the asymmetric placement of their ears and their iconic facial disk, which funnels sound like a satellite dish.

Across Hampshire's farmland, river valleys and downland edges, barn owls favour a mosaic of rough grassland where field voles, shrews and mice live. A single pair can consume thousands of small mammals each year, making them one of nature's most effective forms of pest control. They nest in tree cavities, old barns and quiet outbuildings - hence their name - and will often return to the same nesting site year after year. When conditions are good, they may raise two broods in a single season.

With their heart-shaped faces, ink-black eyes and ghost-white plumage, barn owls possess an almost supernatural beauty - one that has long inspired folklore across the countryside. Throughout history, barn owls have been known by many different nicknames, such as 'ghost owl', 'church owl' and 'screech owl'. But the name 'demon owl', in particular, illustrates how they were considered by some rural populations - something not so difficult to understand when you hear their piercing shrieks and hissing calls.

Despite their resilience, barn owls face mounting pressures. They have been impacted by loss of rough grass habitat where they hunt their prey, nesting sites, organochlorine pesticides such as DDT in the 1950s and 1960s and road collisions.

Nature reserves managed by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust offer great opportunities to observe barn owls in their natural habitat. Hockley Meadows in Winchester is a known hotspot for these beautiful birds, where visitors can watch them glide over the meadows and hunt in the early morning or late afternoon. Farlington Marshes near Portsmouth is a must-visit for birdwatchers, with the reserve attracting not barn and also short-eared owls.

For more information visit the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust website: hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/birds/

Helen Skelton-Smith
Communications Officer – PR & Media
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust



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North Hampshire National Trust Centre

Report of a talk given on 13th November to the NHNTC by Andrew Negus - Bishops, Buildings and Bones, Part 1. Winchester BC to 1100 AD

Andrew Negus gave us a highly entertaining, light-hearted and somewhat impious talk neatly illustrated by his diverting slides. He told us how and why the city grew from a collection of Iron Age huts into the splendid and artistic capital of England. He introduced us to a colourful cast of characters, including Saints Birinus and Swithun, kings Alfred, Canute and The Conqueror, and most exciting of all the irrepressible Queen Emma! And he told us about the rich and crafty bishops who created magnificent buildings, including two minsters, two abbeys and the longest cathedral in the world. The afternoon finished with tea, cakes and a fervent hope that Andrew will regale us with Part 2 in the near future.

The NHNTC organises monthly visits in the summer and monthly talks in the winter. New members are always welcomed – apply through the website: https://www.nhntc.co.uk

SMALL ADS

WANTED - Storage Space for 1937 valuable and rare vintage car for up to nine months while a buyer is being sought. The seller is in the Netherlands and wishes to sell it in the U.K. Secure and dry conditions are required with regular access available for viewing and road testing. If you do have space, please contact Athlone53@outlook.com or 07834 762330.

HALLS FOR HIRE

Upton Grey Village Hall can be hired at a basic rate of £14 per hour. Tables and chairs are also available to hire. There are kitchen facilities, including china, cutlery & glasses, central heating, sound system, stage and disabled access. If you don't know the hall, we would be happy to show you round. To book, or if you have any questions, please contact Jane Hanbury on 01256 862681
or email bookings@uptongreyvillagehall.co.uk
or visit our new website www.uptongreyvillagehall.co.uk.

The Herriard Village Hub, Herriard, available for hire: wedding receptions, functions, parties, meetings, and events. Fully licensed bar, full kitchen facilities, garden, tables, chairs, sound system, disabled access, central heating, pool table and darts. To reserve, please see booking form found at www.herriardvillagehub.co.uk or email bookings@herriardvillagehub.co.uk.

Disclaimer: Please note that the views expressed in this magazine are the contributors' personal opinions and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – JANUARY 2026

NB: All Church Services are listed under CHURCH NEWS near the front of the magazine

JANUARY DATES

21st Jan	Wed	More4Kids, Upton Grey Village Hall	3.30-5.00pm
24th Jan	Sat	Burns Night Supper, Old Barn, Manor Farm W Corbett	7.30pm

ADVANCE DATES

25th Feb	Wed	More4Kids, Upton Grey Village Hall	3.30-5.00pm
28th Feb	Sat	Upton Grey Reels Night	
14th Mar	Sat	Safari Supper, Upton Grey	7.15pm
18th Mar	Wed	More4Kids, Upton Grey Village Hall	3.30-5.00pm
6th June	Sat	St Mary's Church, UG Fete	2.00pm

REGULAR EVENTS

Each Mon/Thur	Odiham book exchange, Bridewell, Odiham	2.00pm
Each Sat	Odiham book exchange, Bridewell, Odiham	10.00am
Each Mon	Prayer group, 4 Little Hoddington	9.30–10.15am
Each Thur	Prayer group, 4 Little Hoddington	5.00–5.45pm
Each Thur	Coffee, Tea & Cake Morning, Hub, Herriard	10.00am
Every 1st Thur	Prayer Hour, All Saints Tunworth	9.30am
Every 1st Thur	Coffee & Cake, Tunworth church porch	10.30am
2nd & 4th Mon	Coffee Morning, Upton Grey Village Hall	11.00am
2nd & 4th Tues	Upton Grey 'Get OWT', UG Churchyard	10.00am
Every 4th Wed	Coffee Morning, Weston Patrick Village Hall	11.00am

PARISH MAGAZINE COPY DEADLINE

The copy deadline for the February issue is 15th January 2026.

Please send news and contributions to uptongreymagazine@gmail.com. Your editors for the January issue were Sheila Stranks and Nick Willmer. The editor for the February issue will be Tess Chevallier (with Nick Willmer - Church).

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