

SHALFORD

Village Magazine March 2026

*showcasing our community
Produced by the People for the People*



ENQUIRIES & ADVERTISING:
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Thank You So Much Mandy For
Your Generous Donation
IN REMEMBRANCE OF
DAVID FRENCH



(we remember David with great warmth and are thinking of you)



*Death leaves a heartache no one can heal
Love leaves a memory no one can steal*

Irish Proverb



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**KNOW WHERE
YOUR NEAREST
DEFIBRILLATOR
IS LOCATED**



Jaspers Green
CM7 5AU



Shalford Village
Hall Church End
CM7 5EZ



The George Inn The
Street CM7 5HH

FRONT COVER

**Codham Mill
Monday
16th February
2026**

Photo: Alice Cox

WHAT'S ON

TABLE TENNIS IN FINCHINGFIELD



The group comes to the village hall on Monday evenings to play table tennis 7.30 pm for 2 hours. If you would like to have a chat beforehand, please call me on 07775 531781 - Brian

SHALFORD ROADSIDE & CHURCH FISHING LAKES



are affiliated to Billericay & District Angling Club
The river Pant in Shalford is also covered by the Club
For further details contact:-
Fishery Officer: Derrick Marriott, or www.bdac.co.uk

**COFFEE
MORNING –
ST ANDREW'S
CHURCH**
**EVERY 2nd & 4th
THURSDAY OF
THE MONTH**
**10.00 a.m. to 12.00
p.m.**



SINGING 4 ALL – LORRAINE PATIENT

This new singing group, which is held every Tuesday at Cornish Hall End Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. has become very popular. If you would like to try out this special group or join, please call 07775 531 781

WALKING GROUPS

From SHALFORD The George Pub every Wednesday at 10 a.m.
From FINCHINGFIELD Green every Friday at 10 a.m.

SHALFORD CRAFT GROUP

Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

At 2pm onwards.

Please bring along any craft projects you are working on.

Share ideas and learn new crafts.

Chat and craft over tea/ coffee and cake.

For dates of when and where please contact.

Caroline Ottley
07734140478

Marianna Marriott
07450251525

JOIN OUR FRIENDLY GROUP OF BELL RINGERS

**EVERY
MONDAY at
Wethersfield
Church, 7 p.m.
&**

**FRIDAY at
Shalford
Church, 7 p.m.**

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JAMES
TEL: 07704
070498**



RE-ENGAGE (Formerly Contact the Elderly)

Arranging monthly get togethers over a cup of tea for the elderly



For more details:
Contact:
Sarah Cunningham
Sarah8750@hotmail.co.uk
Or

The Charity Website:
www.reengage.org.uk
Freephone: 0800 716543

WHAT'S ON

Shalford Village Hall Variety Night

Line dancing and karaoke

Saturday 14th March 2026

Doors 19:00 for 19:30 start



Wear your cowboy hats and boots and bring your singing voices!



Bar:
Wine
Beers
Soft drinks

Tickets from
Village Hall
Website



WHAT'S ON

SHALFORD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL COACH TRIP
TO
WISLEY GARDENS

On Wednesday 20th May

Leaving from Shalford Village Hall at 9:00am (prompt)

Returning to Shalford at approximately 6:30pm

£20 per person

Please contact Caroline Ottley on

07734140478

Limited availability—book now to secure your place!



WHAT'S ON

SHALFORD VILLAGE FETE

6TH JUNE 2026

SHALFORD VILLAGE HALL, CHURCH END, SHALFORD, ESSEX CM7 5ZE

STARTS 1PM - UNTIL LATE

FREE ENTRY FOR ALL!



TRADITIONAL STALLS & CRAFTS

FAIRGROUND GAMES & FOOD STALLS

REAL ALE & PIMMS TENT

ARENA EVENTS & D-DAY CELEBRATION

- ✓ **DOG SHOW & MORRIS DANCERS**
- ✓ **LINE DANCING & LOCAL CHOIR**
- ✓ **CHILDREN'S BOUNCY CASTLES & SOFT PLAY**
- ✓ **DOUBLE-DECKER PLAY BUS & TRACTOR PARADE & DISPLAYS**
- ✓ **CHARITY STALLS & MORE!**



JOIN US FOR A GREAT DAY OF FUN & CELEBRATION!

WHAT'S ON WETHERSFIELD

WETHERSFIELD CHAMBER CONCERTS

www.wethersfieldchamberconcerts.org.uk



Sunday 12 April 2026, 3pm

KAMMERPHILHARMONIE EUROPA

Corelli, Rachmaninov, Ponchielli, Bach, Faure, Mozart

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Sunday 26 April 2026, 4pm

MAXIM CALVER – cello

JAMS COLEMAN – piano

Debussy, Beethoven, Schumann, Boulanger, Shostakovich

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Sunday 10 May 2026, 4pm

JACKY ZHANG - piano (BBC Young Musician of the Year finalist)

Chopin, Ligeti, Brahms

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Ticket price: £20 (concessions £18)

Season ticket: £54 (concessions £48)

Children under 16: free

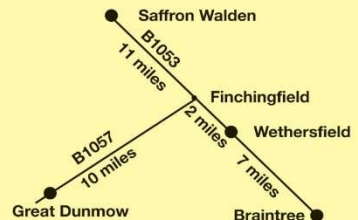
All seats unreserved

Complimentary refreshments during interval
and after concert

VENUE: WETHERSFIELD CHURCH

Further information:

www.wethersfieldchamberconcerts.org.uk



WHAT'S ON WETHERSFIELD

Plant Share

& Coffee Morning

Saturday 25th April 10.30am – 12.30pm

Wethersfield Parish Church



Want to pick up some new plants?

Want to share your love of gardening, and can spare some surplus plants, seedlings etc with our community?



Like a cuppa and a slice of cake?

Don't really want to drive to an overpriced garden centre?

Want to help our grade 1 listed church?



Then this event really is for YOU!!

Please bring any of the following:
Yourself, plants, donation money



Stand by your beds please:

Let's Sow Share

Spring will soon, I hope, be knocking. Our annual plant event in the church will take place on Saturday 25th April morning (10.30am-12.30pm). Flyer above.

For the uninitiated, this event is an opportunity for you to pick up a swathe of FREE plants, and likewise to bring along the stock of "buckshee" plants you may have to facilitate all of this. To get the idea, imagine the pews full of pots of tomato plant seedlings, herbaceous divisions, blackcurrant bush cuttings, herb plants, houseplants, strawberry runners etc and you simply help yourself to as much as you can carry. The quantity and breadth of plants is limited only by our imagination.

The church's donation plate and sum-up contactless payment machine will, as ever, be in **cat-like** readiness for you.

Hope to see you there and do, please, onward distribute both this message, and the seeds liberally as you see fit!!!!

With thanks

Ben Walmsley

WHAT'S ON WETHERSFIELD



SOUP AND CHAT



COME ALONG TO WETHERSFIELD'S
VILLAGE HALL FROM 12:00 TO 14:00 AND ENJOY
HOMEMADE SOUP WITH BREAD AND HOMEMADE CAKES

ON THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY DATES

24th March 2026

28th April 2026

This is a self-funding meeting relying on cash donations to cover costs. We rely on your generosity to ensure its continuity

This is an adult only event

WETHERSFIELD CLUB

OPEN MIC NIGHT



THURSDAY

19 MARCH 2026

FROM 7.30 PM

**PLAY, SING
OR JUST LISTEN
TO THOSE WHO
DO!!**

Thaxted Astronomical Society

A free 5 week course providing an
Introduction to Astronomy

Aimed at basic beginners who have a
wish to know more about the Night Sky

Mission Control
The Swan Public House, Thaxted
Wednesdays 1900H to 2000H
25 Feb, 04, 11, 18, 25 Mar 2026

To book your place
please send your contact details
by email to
ThaxtedAS@BTInternet.Com

Or call us on
07789 933 111

Or visit our Web Site
www.ThaxtedAS.Com



Summer Solstice Event

Join the village fun at the Pavilion, Wethersfield,
on Saturday 20th June from 1pm until late

Live music - food - stalls - cream teas - licenced bar - classic cars - games
bouncy castle - ice creams - fete games - fire engine - tractors - raffle

More details to come

If you would like a stall or get involved contact: broad.julia@yahoo.co.uk

Come and join us at Wethersfield Playing Field/Pavilion as we have a Summer Solstice Event on Saturday 20 June, from 1.00 pm until late.

We have a bar, food, stalls, games, bouncy castle, raffle and much more, including a classic car show, and hopefully a dog show too, so if you or anyone you know would like to get involved, have a stall, help out or just come and enjoy the day, then do please spread the word.

Please contact Julia at broad.julia@yahoo.co.uk for more details on the event, particularly if you would like to show a car or have a stall on the day.

We hope to see you there.

The Summer Solstice Team

Diary of Events planned for
Wethersfield Club up to July 2026

| | | |
|-----------|----------|---|
| Friday | 6 March | Ireland v Wales Six Nations, 8.00pm |
| Saturday | 7 March | Scotland v France Six Nations, 2.00 pm Italy v England Six Nations, 4.40 pm |
| Saturday | 14 March | Ireland v Scotland Six Nations, 2.00 pm Wales v Italy Six Nations, 4.40 pm France v England Six Nations 8.00 pm |
| Thursday | 19 March | Open Mic Night, 7.30 pm |
| Friday | 20 March | Private Party, snooker room not available |
| Saturday | 21 March | Private Party, live music, snooker room not available |
| Saturday | 28 March | Elvis is in the Building! Live Music from 7.30 pm |
| Saturday | 18 April | Private Party, live music with Take Cover |
| Saturday | 25 April | Charity Darts Marathon for Macmillan, details idc |
| Saturday | 2 May | Live Reggae/Ska music night, 8.00 pm |
| Saturday | 9 May or | |
| Saturday | 6 June | Country and Western Night, details tbc |
| Saturday | 16 May | Club AGM, 8.00 pm start, current members only |
| Thursday | 21 May | Open Mic Night, 7.30 pm |
| Thursday | 11 June | Opening Match of the World Cup, 8.00 pm |
| To Sunday | 19 July | World Cup matches will be shown where possible |
| Wednesday | 17 June | World Cup Match, England v Croatia, 9.00 pm |
| Tuesday | 23 June | World Cup Match, England v Ghana, 9.00 pm |
| Saturday | 27 June | World Cup Match, England v Panama, 10.00 pm |
| Saturday | 20 June | Summer Solstice Event at the Playing Field Arranged by the Village for the Village, and in support of this year's Christmas Switch On, from 1.00 pm till late Includes car show, dog show, raffle, stalls, BBQ, bar, live music, games and much more, contact broad.julia@yahoo.co.uk for more information |
| Tuesday | 14 July | World Cup semi-final |
| Wednesday | 15 July | World Cup semi-final |
| Thursday | 16 July | Open Mic Night, 7.30 pm |
| Sunday | 19 July | World Cup Final, 8.00 pm kick off |

OTHER THINGS TO COME INCLUDE QUIZ NIGHTS
MORE LIVE MUSIC, AND POTENTIALLY
A TWICE-MONTHLY BINGO NIGHT
WATCH FOR DETAILS
AS WE GO ALONG

WETHERSFIELD CLUB

(CAMRA North West Essex Club of the Year 2025
CAMRA East Anglia Regional Club of the Year 2024)

OPENING HOURS

| | |
|-----------|---|
| MONDAY | 5.00 - 11.00 PM |
| TUESDAY | 5.00 - 11.00 PM Ladies night (gents welcome too!) Scrabble, chess, cribbage |
| WEDNESDAY | 5.00 - 11.00 PM |
| THURSDAY | 5.00 - 10.00 PM Free pool available all night |
| FRIDAY | 5.00 - 12.00 PM |
| SATURDAY | 4.00 - 11.00 PM |
| SUNDAY | 4.00 - 8.00 PM |

Pool table, snooker table and dart boards
available every evening we are open (Event permitting)

WETHERSFIELD ANNUAL FINE & AFFORDABLE ART EXHIBITION

Saturday 9th May 5-7pm drinks

Sunday 10th May 10-3pm

Free entry St Mary's Church, CM7 4BY



PROUD SPONSOR

JACKSON-STOPS

We have 14 artists this time from the local area, some more detail on its new Instagram page: Wethersfield Art Exhibition. The artists span a range of all style & price-points, this year including a portrait & still-life artist.

For music-lovers, what may well interest you is we will dovetail with the final Wethersfield chamber concert. This is a very long-established series of concerts, quality of which as you will likely gather is of the very highest order, and the pianist Jacky Zhang is no exception. Timing: start 4pm, finish 6pm. Followed by ~ 20 mins drinks at the end at which the pianist stays for. Full info on the concert & tickets etc can be found on its website here.

www.wethersfieldchamberconcerts.org.uk



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Finchingfield and District Branch

Poppy Appeal 2025

Since my last article, we have been given another £250-25 which now brings our total to **£3171-46**. Well done and thank you all.

Upcoming Events

Beetle Drive

Saturday 21 March at 2.30 in Finchingfield Guildhall. Fun for all the family. See poster for more information.

60s 70s and 80s Dance on **18 April**. Music from Jack the Lad band. Tickets £10 each. More details next month.

Our Branch would always welcome new members. Membership is £22 and anyone can join. RBL Membership Line is 0800-307-7773.

The Crafty Community Group meets every Tuesday from 2 to 4 in Finchingfield Guildhall. Our present project is making knitted or crochet poppies to (hopefully) decorate our War Memorials in Finchingfield and Cornish Hall End. If you would like to help, please drop in on Tuesday afternoons, or work at home. Patterns and wool can be provided. Please get in touch with Janet.

Contacts: Ivan Fleming (Chairman): 07525 751179 isskhs@googlemail.com

Janet Ridgewell (Secretary): 01371 810051 janet.ridgewell510@btinternet.com

ESSEX BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

Membership is still only £15 and free for under 16 yrs. Save £5 on every ride entry by being a member.

Flu Vaccination Requirements for 2026. Our policy regarding the requirement for flu vaccinations for 2026 is that all horses attending our rides must be up-to-date with their annual flu injections (i.e. the last booster is no more than a year old). On top of this we will implement any extra stipulations that our host may request (i.e. passports check, 6-month booster etc.). We will not know what these extra requirements are (if any) until we open each ride for entries.

We will also be following the new rules which are now in place for horses having new or restarted vaccines from 01.01.24 and any equine must not attend our events within 7 days of receiving any vaccination including boosters. Please speak to your vet if you require any further information or clarification.

Rides

17TH MAY 2026. Highwood Fringrith Hall, Writtle Park Estate, Highwood. CM1 3QF.

Mandy French

JOB FAIR – BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL THURSDAY 12TH MARCH



Braintree District Council, in partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), has announced a spring job fair which will take place at Queen's Hall in Halstead this March.

The job fair will be free to attend and takes place on Thursday 12 March between 9.30am and 12.30pm at Queen's Hall, with nearby parking available at Butler Road and Chapel Street (behind Sainsbury's).

Anybody looking for local job opportunities, career development, training or qualifications is welcome to attend and speak to stall holders in sectors including engineering, local government, transport, financial and more.

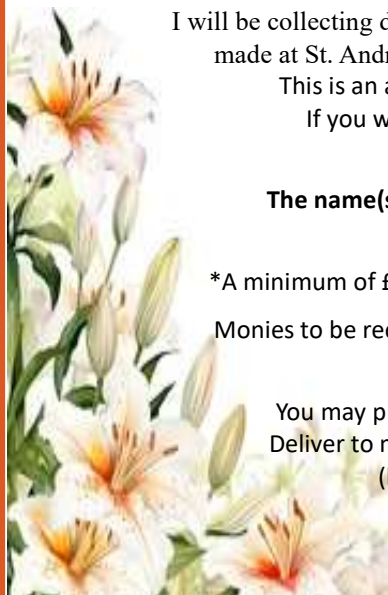
Local businesses are welcome to showcase their employment opportunities at the event for free. To enquire about a stall, they should email:-

economic.development@braintree.gov.uk

Cllr Frankie Ricci, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, said: "Following a series of successful job fair events across 2025, we are continuing this into 2026 beginning with this job fair in Halstead. It is an excellent opportunity for residents to find out about local employment opportunities and for businesses to showcase careers in their fields."

No booking is necessary and attendees are welcome to turn up on the day.

REMEMBRANCE EASTER LILIES 2026



I will be collecting donations for the Easter lily arrangements made at St. Andrew's Church, Shalford, in memory of loved ones. This is an annual event which anyone can participate. If you would like to participate please send me –

Your name and Contact Address
The name(s) of who you would like to be remembered
And your donation*.

*A minimum of £5 please, to cover the cost of a lily, or a donation.

Monies to be received by Monday 16th March 2026 latest please.

I am happy to collect **or**

You may phone me 01371 851378 **or** 07821494464 **or**

Deliver to my address Stag Lodge, Church End, Shalford
(between the school and the shop)

Heather Smith

(organiser of Church flowers)

EASTER LILY DISPLAY IN REMEMBRANCE OF LOVED ONES

The flower arrangers will be making arrangements with the sponsored “lilies in remembrance of loved ones lost” on Good Friday (3rd April).

At present, St. Andrew's Church is open for private prayer every day from 9-4.

In the light of the significance of the lilies, we are hopeful the people of Shalford will visit the Church during the Easter period, stay awhile to enjoy the display and have a moment of reflection.

The display will be on show for 2-3 weeks depending on the weather.



LOCAL ORGANISATIONS & CHARITIES

INDOOR CARPET BOWLS

**EVERY TUESDAY AT
SHALFORD VILLAGE
HALL**

FROM 7.30 p.m. to 9.15 p.m.



All ages are welcome to our friendly club. Come along and enjoy a game of bowls, a chat, plus tea, coffee and biscuits

Contact: Vic 07773 707404

SHALFORD LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION



Meetings take place monthly
For date and more information
contact: Sally
07785 235000
or visit
<https://shalford-essex-pc.gov.uk/history-society/>

SHALFORD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



For more information

<https://www.facebook.com/SHSEssex>

<https://shalford-essex-pc.gov.uk/horticultural-society/>

MEET & GREET 1ST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH



SHALFORD
VILLAGE HALL

11 am to 2 pm

*William Bendlowe Charity
People Working For People
It's good to talk!*

FOSTAC

Friends of St Andrew's
Church



Contact: www.fostac.co.uk
or
<https://shalford-essex-pc.gov.uk>



Photos by Del Holland



**FILTERED COFFEE
INTRODUCED TO
MEET & GREET'S
FIVE-STAR RATED
LUNCHEON**

A GREAT SUCCESS

**THANK YOU TO THE
TEAM & ATTENDEES**

**IT WAS A PLEASURE
TO SEE YOU ALL**

BENDLOWE'S CHRISTMAS MEAL – WEAVERS – 23.1.2026 – Alice Cox



Friday, January 23rd welcomed another group of Bendlowe's supporters to a Christmas Meal at Weavers. Bendlowe's first Christmas Meal was held in January 2018 and the only years missed were the "Covid" years. The three prizes won courtesy of our "free" raffle found excellent homes (note to self: more prizes needed next year!) with the bottle of whisky well on its way to a "Burns" evening.



BENDLOWE'S VALENTINE COUNTRY CELEBRATION – Alice Cox



Thank you Vic, Marion and James, for entertaining us on Friday evening, 13th February. Not only are you ***Bendlowe's number 1 fundraisers***, you are also great ambassadors for the Charity having provided engaging entertainment since December 2016, focusing on promoting a fantastic friendly, almost family-like, atmosphere.

Friday, 13th was no exception. Entertainment engulfed the audience in a warm atmosphere and captivated a memorable evening. Great singing, line dancing, dancing, super humour (well most of the jokes were funny!), raffle prizes, fantastic dressing of the hall with table lighting and table cloths. Nothing too much trouble! Nothing forgotten. Bendlowe's were so privileged when you walked into its life.

***Thank You For The Last ♥
10 Years & Years to come***



WE ARE LOOKING FOR NEW TRUSTEES & VOLUNTEERS!

Join a, historic, local charity that has been supporting people in Shalford and surrounding villages for over 450 years.

We are seeking community-minded volunteers to help guide our work, in supporting local residents to fight loneliness and isolation by meeting and socialising. It is our mission to carry forward the legacy of William Bendlowe, who founded the Charity in 1573, for many more years to come. Previous trustee experience an advantage but not essential - just time availability, enthusiasm and a passion for helping others.

We're looking for people who:

- ✓ care about their local community
- ✓ are willing to organise or help organise local events/coach trips etc
- ✓ bring relevant skills such as community work, social/life skills, organisational, communicative skills coupled to an empathy and understanding of the Charity's goals and objects
- ✓ Can help with decision-making and good governance

If you'd like to get involved or want an informal chat about the role, please contact:

👉 **Alice Cox: email alicecox53@btinternet.com**

🌟 **Join us and help continue a 450-year tradition of supporting local people.**

BENDLOWE'S – PEOPLE WORKING FOR PEOPLE – ENRICHING LIVES

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

**Summary of the past year's activities,
achievements, and challenges.**

Highlights of horticultural events, shows or projects

Following the last AGM with our steadfast committee remaining and three new members we swiftly moved on to organising our popular annual quiz with friends and supporters always keen to get out again to be sociable and competitive at the end of January.

Despite having to relocate to Great Saling whilst further repairs and redecoration took place in the Shalford hall the evening was successful.

Tim Barltrop, chairman of Essex & Suffolk Borders MG Club volunteered to run the quiz, and helped by his family he set up complete with his own public address system. It wasn't all based on general knowledge but on fun as well and made a very enjoyable evening.

There was a generous donated raffle and wine and lemons for the winners and losers.

We decided against organising a talk this year but a Summer trip is always popular; Caroline and Carol organised a trip in June to Hever Castle, which also boasts very beautiful gardens.

The very dry summer meant that flowers and vegetables were not all at their best for the September Show but fruit and cookery were exceptionally good.

As a team we worked so well together and pulled it off again, we stuck to our principles and turned away late entries even to family members. Mel as Secretary has put yet another appeal in the village magazine for more help, (one of our new members had already resigned by show day).

Caroline shopped for, and put together a delicious lunch for the judges and for the committee to take a break and enjoy. The FOSTAC team served refreshments once again sponsored by Angela in memory of past president Alex Tanner.

We were once again grateful to our current President Heather Smith who addressed the public on the quality of the show and thanked the committee and presented the prizes; there was much laughter as she had won quite a few of them.

In November we shopped and put together hampers and ran the raffle at the Parish Council's sociable evening and "Switch-On" of the tree lights .

Thank you all for coming out this evening and for all your support throughout the year.

Jane Mills

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Overview of administrative matters.

Dates for upcoming events in the next year.

I have been keeping on top of the many admin items; Agendas & Minutes for our meetings, booking meeting rooms, booking the Village Hall for the Show & the Quiz. I also create articles for our Facebook page and for the Shalford magazine. I do tend to be the official photographer as well at our events.

All documentation is kept updated including the show schedule which isn't the easiest even if hardly any changes are made. The Show points calculator is also a huge spreadsheet that really needs an overhaul to make it work a bit quicker and I thank Chris and Jane for their time on this.

If we get a chance this evening I would like a photo of the committee and/or the public in attendance. (We failed!)

The above is just a small part of what I do and it is a lot of work. I really would like to hand over a few of the jobs in the next year to anyone who feels they can help.

Currently we only have seven active members and really need this to increase.

2026 Events

Our Quiz is on Saturday 24th January and Jane is busy accepting the team entrants.

Shalford Fete has been organised for Saturday 6th June – There will be a Shalford Horticultural Tent to celebrate 80 years (July 1946 was the very first show) although there was a Shalford and Wethersfield combined one in July 26th 1924 so really over 100 years. We will work with Shalford Local History Association to see what other dates can be uncovered.

The other Villages have their own shows and I am putting together a list which also incorporates the Intervillage Competitions which we haven't been involved in for a couple of years. If anyone here is interested in creating Shalford entries please let me know and I will keep you posted with themes.

Whether we have a full show this year will be discussed in our first meeting following this AGM.

We are organising a coach trip to RHS Wisley - Wednesday 20th May is the proposed date. Carol can update us in our meeting later.

Pumpkin competition at the Macmillan coffee morning in September 2026

Mel Fray

Shalford Horticultural Society AGM Tuesday 13th January 2026

Election of Officers and Committee Members

Current committee agreed to remain on the committee

There is an open position for Chairperson

Election of the President, Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and general committee members will take place at the first 2026 committee meeting following this AGM. Nobody from the public were here to join the committee.

President's Address

Heather thanked the committee for all their hardwork which she understands and knows how much the village appreciates us. She enjoyed the quiz and we were all thankful to Saling Village Hall committee for allowing us to use their hall.

The outing was enjoyable and she looks forward to the next one. The September show was well attended despite the challenging growing weather. It is very much a sociable occasion as well as being a horticultural event.

Aware that 2026 is the 80th year since the first show and advised that all historical schedules have been passed to the Shalford Local History Association (SLHA)

A big thank you as very pleased that the current committee are continuing.

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Shalford Horticultural Society Quiz 24th January 2026



Photo By Del Holland

Once again, our small team hosted our annual January quiz evening with a lovely selection of raffle prizes. Our President Heather welcomed everyone at the start of a great evening enjoyed by many. The feedback has been really good and people enjoyed all aspects.

Our quiz master team Tim and Karen were fantastic with Tim walking around having friendly banter with the teams whilst asking the questions. It was a themed-quiz 'Cats and Dogs' which seemed to go down well as some of the questions weren't too difficult!

The victors were 'The Kitty Cats' Team who each received a bottle of wine whilst at the bottom 'The Collies' Team received a lemon each!

A couple of quotes received:-

"Can I say how much I enjoyed the evening, you all did really well. A great raffle selection. My team will be back next year. Well done"

"We all had a great evening. Good Fun"

Thank you all for coming and supporting us

SHALFORD PETANQUE – Mel Fray



Sunday 25th January 2026 Shalford pétanque team played at home to Bocking Bowlers on another very cold morning. Unfortunately a loss but at least we didn't have to play in shorts like those brave footballers in the background!

Shalford pétanque team came away the victors at home on 1st February against Billericay U3A Winning 2-1 Triples lost 13-6 Doubles won 13-9 Singles won 13-2

Photos: Mel Fray & Del Holland



Shalford Pétanque away game on 8th Feb at Great Baddow Unfortunately lost 3-0 but a closely fought contest in the beautiful sunshine. Triples 13-11 Doubles 13-9 Singles 13-6.



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Wethersfield, Little And Great Bardfield
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**Shalford
St Andrew's**

From the Vicarage...



**Wethersfield
St Mary
Magdalene**

A glance at the list of services for this month will tell you that things start to get busy towards the end of March. Every year, throughout December, people engaging me in conversation will mention how it's my 'busy time' as a Vicar. And while Advent and Christmas do tend to give me a full diary, Easter is, if anything, rather more all-consuming. With much of what goes on in church, packed into the narrow window of the week leading up to Easter, the services trace dramatically what happened to Jesus between his arrival in Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday and his subsequent crucifixion and the revealing of the empty tomb.



**Finchingfield
St John the
Baptist**

It's a sequence of events which has captivated artists of every kind throughout the ages, with music, drama and visual art all being produced to re-tell the story of Jesus' Passion. For me, it has always been music which has been at the forefront of how I have encountered the power of these events, the culmination of Jesus' earthly life. This Lent, I'm giving a couple of talks to share my thoughts on two very different musical portrayals of the Passion (possibly drawing on parts of a few others as well):



**Gt Bardfield
St Mary The
Virgin**

Thursday 16 March, 7.30pm at the Great Bardfield Quaker Meeting House: J.S. Bach's *St John Passion*

Thursday 26 March, 7.30pm at the Great Bardfield Quaker Meeting House: Andrew Lloyd Webber & Tim Rice's *Jesus Christ Superstar*



**Little
Bardfield
St Katharine**

Just as the composers and lyricists for these two works had different views on the religious significance of the events they were depicting in words and music, so these talks are intended for anyone, whatever your own personal views or faith convictions. I hope, though, that for everyone who comes, it will be a good opportunity to discover at a deeper level what it is that makes Easter so significant a celebration for Christians. The two talks will operate independently of one another, so that either can be enjoyed on its own, or both together. And if they give you something to think about, why not try some of the services which will be taking place in our churches during Holy Week – and if you're someone who tends to come to church on Easter anyway, it's good to discover how following the thread through Good Friday and all that comes before makes a difference to how significant that Easter morning feels.



**Cornish Hall
End
St John the
Evangelist**

Rev'd/Fr Alex

SERVICES FOR MARCH IN THE PANT VALLEY CHURCHES

Sunday 1 March – Second Sunday of Lent

9am Holy Communion (traditional language)
– Cornish Hall End

9.30am Morning Prayer – Shalford

10.30am Sung Communion Service – Great Bardfield

11am Prayer & Pilgrimage (Celtic Morning Prayer) – Wethersfield

4pm Sung Compline – Little Bardfield

Sunday 8 March – Third Sunday of Lent

8am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Shalford

9.30am Morning Worship – Finchingfield

10.30am Morning Prayer – Great Bardfield

11am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Wethersfield

4pm Sung Evensong – Shalford

Sunday 15 March – Fourth Sunday of Lent (Mothering Sunday)

9am Holy Communion (traditional language)
– Finchingfield

9.30am Mothering Sunday Service – Shalford

10.30am Mothering Sunday Communion Service – Great Bardfield

11am Mothering Sunday Family Service – Wethersfield

Sunday 22 March – Fifth Sunday of Lent

8am Holy Communion (traditional language)
– Great Bardfield

9.30am Parish Communion Service – Shalford

10.30am Morning Prayer – Great Bardfield

11am Family Communion Service – Wethersfield

Services for Holy Week

Sunday 29 March – Palm Sunday

Children's activities and breakfast refreshments in Wethersfield Church from 9am

9.45am Palm Procession sets off around the village – Wethersfield

10.30am Benefice Communion Service – Wethersfield

Monday 30, Tuesday 31 March & Wednesday 1 April

9am Eucharist – Finchingfield (Mon & Wed) / Great Bardfield (Tue)

8pm Compline – Shalford

Maundy Thursday (2 April)

6.30pm Communion Service commemorating the Last Supper – Wethersfield

8pm Sung Eucharist followed by Vigil – Little Bardfield

Good Friday (3 April)

2pm Meditations on the Cross – Shalford

2pm Solemn Service of the Lord's Passion – Little Bardfield

9pm Tenebrae – Cornish Hall End

Holy Saturday (4 April)

8pm Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter – Little Bardfield

Service times on Easter Day (5 April)

Cornish Hall End: 9am

Shalford: 9.30am

Finchingfield: 10am

Great Bardfield: 10.30am

Wethersfield: 11am

Regular Services and Events during the week

Monday

8.45am Morning Prayer – Finchingfield

1.30pm 'Faithful Fiction' book club (1st weeks) – Between the Lines, Great Bardfield

Tuesday

8.45am Morning Prayer – Great Bardfield

10am Baby & Toddler Group – Great Bardfield

'St Mary's Munchkins' story & song time with refreshments

Thursday

8.45am Morning Prayer – Wethersfield

10am Prayer Group (1st, 3rd & 5th weeks)

Coffee Morning (2nd & 4th weeks) – Shalford

Coffee Morning (3rd week) – Cornish Hall End

10.30am Eucharist – Little Bardfield

Friday

8.45am Morning Prayer – Shalford

Saturday

10.30am (3rd weeks) Coffee Morning – Wethersfield

SHALFORD CHURCH OF ST ANDREW'S
PANT VALLEY CHURCHES
CHURCH WARDEN'S REPORT



Shalford
St Andrew's



Wethersfield
St Mary
Magdalene



Finchingfield
St John the
Baptist



Gt Bardfield
St Mary The
Virgin



Little
Bardfield
St Katharine



Cornish Hall
End
St John the
Evangelist

When I sat down to write this report in February it was hard to know what to write about, apart from the rain, but more of that later...

The bells saga carries on. I had another email at the end of January from the Bat Conservation Trust person who appears to have “mislaidd” my November email but now promises to try to find some bat volunteers for this area and see if they could “pivot” (a new term on me!) their preliminary response and help us to stick to our original timeline. However, to date I have not heard of any pivoting and anyway, our original timeline is now ancient history and the bats will soon be waking up.

In February I spent five days in my old stamping ground, the diocese of Gloucester, and was reminded anew of how desperately vulnerable are some of the tiny village churches there. The west and south of the diocese, which also takes in small sections of almost all the surrounding counties, is at the mercy of two big rivers, the Severn and the Wye and, to a lesser extent, the Avon. On national television you may have seen aerial pictures of the floods that routinely drown the town of Tewkesbury that lies at the confluence of the Severn and the Avon; the whole town is waterlogged but the Abbey sits dry on its tiny patch of land a couple of metres, no more, above its surrounding water meadows. Those old builders knew what they were doing. However, some of the little village churches in Gloucestershire, either by accident or design are built dangerously close to, if not the Severn or the Wye then their smaller tributaries, and flood to a depth of up to two metres on a regular basis. How brave are their little congregations who have to move as much as they can to safety when a flood is threatened and repair some of the damage when it subsides.

We are so lucky at St Andrew's! The builders of the original church, probably pre-14th century, were wise enough to site it far enough away from our local River Pant so that ground water is not a problem, and the surrounding churchyard soaks up much of the rainfall. However, the roof of the church is another matter. Although a fair amount of patching was carried out last year and all the roof gutters are regularly cleared it seems that rainwater will always find a new way in, which explains the numerous buckets that are placed around the interior of the church! It seems likely that a full replacement of the nave and south aisle roofs is on the cards for the future – big expenditure – and can we schedule it to fit in with the needs of the resident bats? In the meantime I'm *almost* praying for a dry spring and summer (with apologies to all farmers) so that we can at least assess the options. I'll keep you posted.

Hilary Penney

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THAT HUMBLE VEGETABLE

THE POTATO

WHOOOPS!!

I managed to delete the last few paragraphs of this article in February and am therefore reprinting the whole article here (I hope)

I'm pleased to say The Theoretical Gardener has forgiven me as they have sent another article in

Phew!! With apologies - Alice

Despite the legends, it seems unlikely that Sir Walter Raleigh had much to do with the introduction of the potato to England although he may have planted some on his Cork estates in 1588, the year of the Armada. However, there is some evidence that the potato was brought to England some two years earlier in the holds of Sir Francis Drake's ships, from his raids in South America, where the potato originated. More than 150 years were to pass before the British regarded the potato as anything more than a novelty or cattle feed. Following the Irish and Scottish famines of the 18th century its true value was realised and it has become the second most important food crop in Britain.

Few gardeners have the space in their garden plots to be growing main crop potatoes, however, the excitement and flavour of growing a few rows of earlies is worth the effort. The frequent moving of the soil during their cultivation helps to clear the plot of annual weeds, and the ground from which early potatoes have been harvested can be used to plant late crops such as cabbages, leeks and late peas.

Potatoes grow best in an open position and reasonably well in most soils, but the best results are obtained when planted in well-manured land. Dig the ground in the autumn or winter, working in the compost or well-rotted manure at the rate of a bucketful per square metre.

“Chitting” is the process of encouraging seed potatoes to sprout before planting. Place the seed potatoes in a container with the “eyes” uppermost (egg cartons work well), and expose them to the light in a cool, frost-free place. This encourages knobbly, dark green or blue shoots which gives them a head start into growth when planted in warm, moist soil.

Chitted potatoes have done some of their growing in the chitting tray and will sprout, root and grow faster than non-chitted ones. It is the speed which counts rather than any resulting quality or quantity of the crop. Potatoes are tender so only grow in response to warmth. As a rule, first earlies will get away quicker and harvest sooner and better when chitted. Second earlies benefit as well, but not to the same extent, and it makes no difference to main crop types as they have more growing time.

First-early varieties such as Swift, Rocket and Duke of York mature approximately 90 days after planting. As early potatoes do not store well, leave them in the ground until required. Chit the tubers in January or February and plant in March or early April. Place

them in drills about 10 cm deep and 45 cm apart, with the sprouts facing upwards. Replace the soil over the drill and draw additional soil from between the rows to form a ridge. When the first shoots appear, use a hoe to pull soil over them, increasing the height of the ridge to protect the young foliage from late frosts. Continue earthing up until the foliage meets between the rows. Harvest in June or July.

Second-early varieties such as Charlotte, Kestrel and the disease-resistant Vivaldi mature in around 110 days. Chit in January or February and plant in early April, following the same method as for first earlies. Harvest from July to September.

Early potatoes also grow very successfully in large 40-litre pots with drainage holes. Recommended varieties include Rocket and Swift for first earlies, and Charlotte and Nicola for second earlies. Follow the same growing regime as above, ensuring that container-grown potatoes are watered regularly.

I cannot wait to taste the first new potatoes in June.

Happy Gardening

The Theoretical Gardener



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SUMMER-LONG SALADS

Even with a small vegetable patch, you can enjoy fresh salad all summer long with a little planning. The secret to a continuous harvest is to think two months ahead. As you plant out young lettuces, sow another batch of seed straight away. This ensures you have new plants ready to fill the gaps after picking your first crop.

Keeping a timetable of what you sow and when you harvest will help you coordinate the different salad varieties throughout the year.

The weekly planner (next page) is based on keeping three rows of salad going continuously: hearting lettuces, loose-leaf salads, and salad-leaf salads.

Your “row” may consist of only five plants of each variety, or perhaps a pot of each. Do not be tempted to sow too much at any one time. Decide whether you eat a dish of salad with each meal, each day, or each week, and sow accordingly.

Follow the weekly plan for a continuous supply of salads. It will guide you on when to sow, thin out, and pick your crops on a regular basis, helping you avoid both gluts and gaps.



HEARTING LETTUCE include Cos, Romaine, Butterhead and Iceberg varieties, where the whole plant is harvested such as Little Gem, Lobjoits Cos, All Year Round, Tom Thumb, Webb’s Wonderful and, my favourite, Times. Red varieties include Marvel of Four Seasons and Amaze.



LOOSE-LEAF LETTUCE include cut-and-come-again, where the outer leaves are harvested leaving the centre to keep growing or the whole plant may be harvested such as Oakleaf, Salad Bowl and Lollo Rossa, a red variety.



SALAD-LEAF refers to any leafy green used in a salad such as rocket, spinach, mizuna, bulls blood beet (a red variety) and lambs lettuce. Also available are the mix packs such as mixed oriental and mixed spicy. The whole plant is picked when small or left to grow bigger when individual leaves may be harvested.

Summer-Long Salad Planner

A Week-by-Week Guide for Continuous Harvests

Week 1

- Sow a **Hearting lettuce** variety directly where it is to grow.
- Broadcast-sow a batch of mixed **Salad-leaf** seeds.

Week 2

- Sow a different **Hearting lettuce** variety into modules.
- Direct-sow a **Loose-leaf lettuce** variety.

Week 3

- Thin **Hearting lettuce** seedlings from Week 1 to 15–20 cm apart.
- Broadcast-sow a second batch of **Salad-leaf** seeds, or sow in trays to fill future gaps.

Week 4

- Begin harvesting your first **Salad-leaf** sowing from Week 1.
- Thin **Loose-leaf** seedlings from Week 2 to 15–20 cm apart.
- Pot on **Hearting** seedlings from Week 2 into 8 cm compartment trays.

Week 5

- Start picking the first **Loose-leaf** leaves from Week 2.
- Sow a red **Loose-leaf** lettuce variety into modules, ready for planting out in a few weeks.

Week 6

- Cut the first **Hearting lettuces** from Week 1.
- Plant young Hearting seedlings from Week 2 into the spaces created as you harvest.
- Sow a third batch of **Salad-leaf** seeds just before your second sowing (Week 3) is ready.

Happy sowing
The Theoretical Gardener





Buzzing News from the Hives of Gill Powell



By the time you read this, hopefully the grey skies and rain clouds will have been blown away revealing some more Spring-like weather.

March is when the hives start to come back to life. Nothing dramatic - just small, reassuring signs that the bees have made it through the winter and are ready for the season ahead.

Inside the hive, the queen slowly increases her laying, and the colony begins to shift from survival mode into growth mode. It's not



sudden or dramatic more like a gentle warming up after winter.

This is when pollen becomes essential for the bees, early Spring pollen is their main source of protein and it's what allows them to raise new brood. We will soon see workers returning to the hive with yellow, orange or pale green pollen baskets on their legs – a small but reassuring sign that the countryside is waking up too.



Flowers in the garden are still few and far between, which makes the early ones incredibly important. Snowdrops, crocuses, hellebores, willow, hazel and early blossom all offer vital pollen when the colony need it most.

Because nectar is still limited, the bees must be careful. Cold, wet weather can keep them inside for days at a time, and the colony is still relying heavily





on stored honey. It can be a delicate balance – growing enough to prepare for the season ahead, without using up their resources too quickly.

While the honeybees are quietly building strength, it's often the bumblebees that steal the spotlight in early Spring. Their buzzing is one of the simplest signs that the season is changing. On a still March Day,



you'll probably hear them before you see them, their low hum drifting through the garden. These early bees are typically queen bumble bees, emerging after the winter to start new colonies of their own. With their fluffy bodies they are perfectly suited for cooler temperatures. For many of us that first sighting of a bumble bee is the moment we feel spring has sprung!

For me, March is about watching for small signs, pollen coming in, bumblebees on the crocuses on a mild day. The jobs will come soon enough, but for now it's about making plans and being ready for the new season ahead.

Honey Fact: You might be surprised to know that honey is excellent for dressing cuts and burns. It is a natural pain reliever, and its natural antibacterial properties keep the wound uninfected to speed the healing process.







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Nature Notes

My Birds Return

By: Mac Beanland



I should have trusted my instincts and not got myself into a state but I did miss my little friends; this is part of growing old! I find myself worrying about small things. To keep it in context with nature notes you could say making “mountains out of mole hills”.

Yes my birds are back but numbers are down and, as yet, I am not seeing such a variety as I usually see. The tits are the dominant species

Blue tits, Great tits, Coal tits, and Long Tail tits. They are very entertaining and in the main don't mind me working at the kitchen sink a few feet from the bird feeders.

All the time I have lived at Grey Roofs, I have had the pleasure of visits from two Woodpeckers the Greater Spotted feeding on the feeders and the Green Woodpecker which is a ground feeder but yesterday I had a very special treat, a Greater Spotted wood pecker was on the feeders eating nuts and not far away on the ground was a Lesser Spotted woodpecker. This is the first time in my life that I have had the pleasure of seeing one. The Lesser Spotted woodpecker is smaller than Greater Spotted and not a lot bigger than a Sparrow they don't have a red under carriage like the Greater Spotted but the male does have the same red cap. The one I saw was a female as no red at all. They are not normally ground feeders, their behaviour is much the same as the Greater Spotted, they can walk up and down trees with ease.

Feb and March sees the start of the “drumming” season, the rapid hammering of a branch to establish a territory. I do hope she comes back as a feeder and becomes a regular visitor. My books tell me they are quite elusive little characters, they are usually found in wooded gardens, old orchards, small spinneys, and park land. When Lesser Woodpeckers pair up for mating,



apparently it's a very odd sort of affair with both parties flitting from tree to tree like a pair of moths.

They have a long breeding season which can be any time from April to June. The male makes the nest by digging a hole in a dead rotten part of a tree a small entrance with nesting chamber inside. They usually lay four to six eggs, incubation takes eleven to fourteen days and both parents take it in turns to sit on the eggs and often it's the male sitting at night, then both parents feed the young which leave the nest at three weeks of age.

My family clubbed together and gave me money for my Christmas present as I had made it known I would like a wild-life camera, and I am pleased to say I have now been able to purchase one. I am looking forward to getting it set up and hopefully get some pictures to share with you.

How many of my readers took part in the RSPB garden bird count this year? I have taken part for the last few years. This year, I did exactly as one is supposed to; I set aside one hour just to sit and count the birds which visited my garden. I chose to do it from 11am until 12 mid-day which is a popular time for my birds to feed. They do like an early lunch so that they can have a nice afternoon nap.

The sum total of my vigil was one Great tit and, no, I didn't fall asleep! Normally I would expect to see 30 birds during that hour but they stayed away. Maybe they decided they didn't want to be a statistic or was it some sort of protest against the RSPB!



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Malachy (Mal) Hanley

1937-2025



An Appreciation



The death of Mal on 10 November 2025 robbed Shalford of one of its best-known and most-liked residents. He was born in 1937 in Hackney and evacuated in 1939 to Braintree. Later he moved to Bedford and beyond, before his family relocated to South Africa. On his return, he settled in Sonning and went to King Edward School, Witley, leaving, like many contemporaries, at the age of 16 and beginning a career with the Midland bank. This was interrupted by National Service in the RAF but, after being demobbed, he resumed his career with the bank and eventually, based in Ilford, he managed 9 branch banks.

He and Brenda married in 1956 with children Linda and Bruce arriving in 1957 and 1965. He retired in 1988 and after a long trip to Australia, he started driving for Farleigh Hospice and later became the Chairman of the Braintree Enterprise agency. He and Brenda had moved to Shalford in 1972 to 'The Victoria' and then to 'Millfields' in 1993, finally going over the border to Hereward Way, Wethersfield in 2015.

Cycling was a passion and some long-distance rides were undertaken including 'Pedal to Paris' for the British Legion, the 'Aylesford to the Ardennes ride' and a tour of Holland. On these epic rides he was accompanied by his son Bruce, son-in-law John and friends. He cycled most days until, unhappily, he had an accident in which he suffered serious injury. He made a good recovery, but, understandably did not ride again.

Inevitably only a bare-bones summary of a life can be given here but we all saw him as essentially a Shalfordian after his many decades here, and we highly valued his contribution to our village's life. He was a stalwart supporter of Brenda, particularly in the inception and operation of FOSTAC where he turned up to help manage events and, of course, to do the books. Many local clubs, societies etc. are indebted to him for auditing their accounts. He also helped in organising the Village fete. Beyond all this he had good interpersonal skills



and was to be seen at local parties and other social events and was a staunch member of the British Legion. He also became a temporary thespian and involved himself in village concerts at the village hall and elsewhere. He is seen in the photographs singing a solo and with Frank Easton and the late lamented Peter Morton taking a bow after performing ‘Carmen Rollers’ a short parody of Bizet’s ‘Carmen’ and singing Three Little Girls From School.

He enjoyed a pint and a joke and was always smiling; he was an all-rounder who contributed much to Shalford and will be missed by his many friends. People thought that Mal as a bank manager was supportive, considerate, helpful and interested in his clients. It would be fair to say that he extended these qualities to his wider group of friends and acquaintances.

He is survived by his wife Brenda, his children Linda and Bruce, their spouses John & Denise, grandchildren Matthew, James, his partner Louise, Elizabeth and Charles, and a great granddaughter Chloe.



Frank Easton





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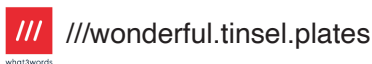
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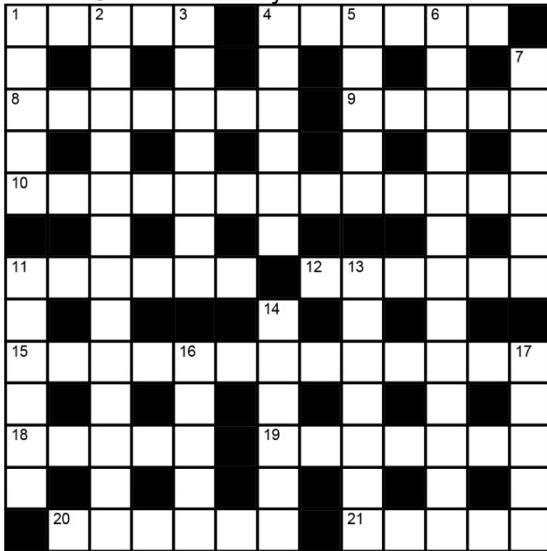
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Crossword 94 by Robert Burrows



10 Hamlet also known as prison? (8-5)

11 Hoi! Ram loose, spoilt goat hair (6)

12 Coal mine warner (6)

15 Damaged tyre, Gene, swell in hamlet (8-5)

18 Reported wet weather for royal rule (5)

19 Lend a hand (4-3)

20 Poor Serge's exit (6)

21 Make sure the language is correct (5)

Cryptic Down

1 Palindromic raise (3-2)

2 Terrifying cold feeling (5-8)

3 Sage's AI treatment using spear (7)

4 Cod Tom caught with on-line site (3-3)

5 Flat out and fibbing (5)

6 Ideal weather region (9,4)

7 Bean-shaped filter (6)

11 Tools and garden workers (6)

13 Perfectly good (7)

14 Disease linked to ruined spy hut (6)

16 Cines could be after then (5)

17 Cannot church find little mark? (5)

Across

1 Italian dish (5)

4 Weaken (6)

8 Matching outfit (7)

9 Grammatical term (5)

10 Essex Hamlet (8-5)

11 Goat hair (6)

12 Sweet Island wine (6)

15 Essex hamlet (8-5)

18 Royal power (5)

19 Assist (4-3)

20 Way out (6)

21 Slavonic language (5)

Down

1 lift (3-2)

2 Frightening (5-8)

3 Slender spear (7)

4 Internet business (3-3)

5 Not telling the truth (5)

6 Climate area (9-4)

7 Organ (6)

11 Garden equipment (6)

13 Utter benignity (7)

14 Rickettsial problem (6)

16 Afterwards (5)

17 Indentation (5)

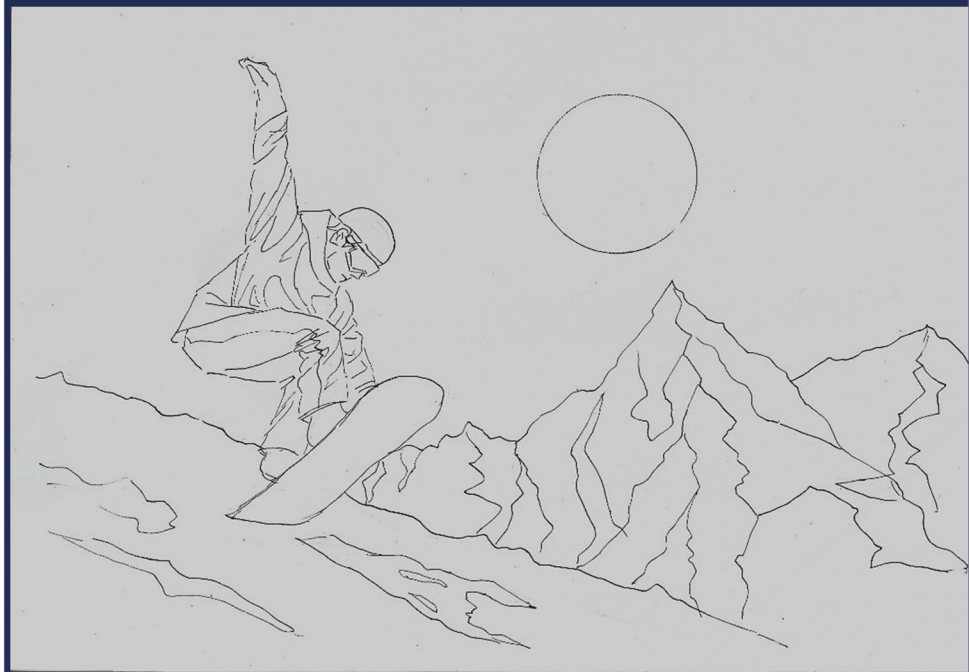
Cryptic Across

1 Some tapas take-away or Italian food (5)


4 Add water to lute, Di (6)

8 Garments for close siblings (7)


9 Poetic feet (5)



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|--|---|---|
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| JANUARY 2026 7 13 20 27 WED | FEBRUARY 2026 3 10 17 24 WED | MARCH 2026 3 10 17 24 31 WED |
| APRIL 2026 8 14 21 28 WED | MAY 2026 6 12 19 27 WED | |

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BY 7AM

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Fundraising for Children in Nepal

Written By: Susan Brunskill
in 2021 for Bendlowe's Bugle

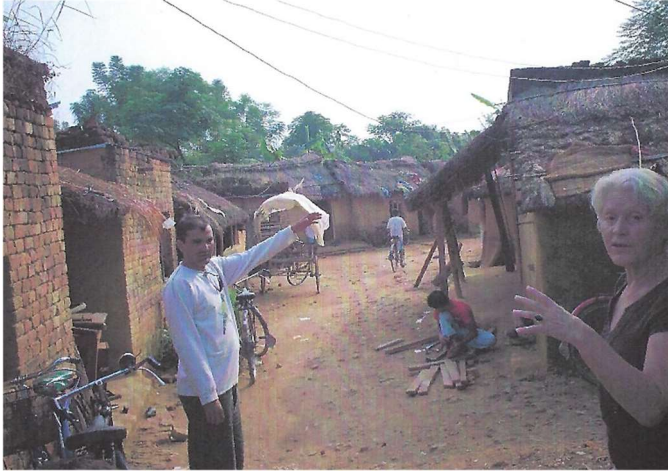


It was summer in the year 1999 and I decided if I didn't go trekking in Nepal NOW it would be too late and I would be too old. At the time I was 62. I found a small company who advertised in the Big Issue as I thought they would be decent to the porters, which sure enough they were.

It was a fabulous experience, trekking high in the Annarpurna with like- minded people and at the end of the trip we visited the Terrai, the lower National park in Chitwan. That too was an amazing experience, riding on an elephant into the jungle with white rhinos munching grass around the feet of the elephant on which three of us were riding. On the last day, before my flight home, the trek leader introduced me to Keshab Khanal a young man who was trying to make a living taking tourists for walks into the jungle to see things up close! A dangerous tour, as there are tigers about, but one that many enjoyed.

He, since the age of sixteen, had been educating street children with every rupee he did not need to feed himself and his new wife. Unusually he had insisted on meeting and explaining to his bride to be, that she had to understand that his mission was educating children to have

better opportunities. She had agreed to marry him, knowing their life would be very low key. They lived in one room at the back of his little shop which was the size of a garage in the village of Sauraha.



I volunteered to educate a girl, telling him I would send the money out each year. He was happy, but told me that if he picked a girl and then I stopped sending the money, she would have to come out of school, which would be dreadful for her future. He told me that frequently happened.

Well after the first few months, I decided I should do more, so I started doing boot sales, fetes and fairs,

with friends donating their unwanted goods to me, knowing all the money got there. Soon I was educating 10 children, 9 girls and one boy, whose parents had died when the local bus went over a cliff. That sort of thing happens a lot, and there are no back-up services to help, the way there are here. I was allowed to select my girls from several whose parents wanted to educate their daughters, but could not afford to. I insisted that I kept them in school until they were sixteen, as the normal thing is to marry the girls as soon as they menstruate. They are then slaves to their mothers-in-law until she dies, when the whole circle begins again.

Well, here I am twenty years later, educating the daughters of my first girls. They all made better marriages and realise the value of education. One of my girls is training at college to be a dentist. Unheard of for a girl.

I have so many stories I could tell, but for now I thought this would be enough to bore you with!

This year, the children have stopped school because of Covid19, so the money I have been sending out has been helping to buy food for a month for 1000 families, as it is more important to keep them alive, as with no work, the families starve.



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Dates: 16/3 27/4 18/5 8/6 29/6 20/7 10/8 21/9 12/10



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POST OFFICE

**EVERY THURSDAY
AFTERNOON**



**SHALFORD
Village Hall 14.30
The George 15.00 –
15.30**



Can dreams come true?

By: Mandy French

I have been a member of Essex Bridleways Association for many years and am currently the Braintree area rep. I have enjoyed the rides and can remember our founder Deirdre Graham handing out rosettes when we only held a couple of rides each year.

However there comes a time when life changes. I was advised not to continue riding but decided I still wanted to have horses in my life. I already knew Will Morton and both of us started to look for a horse for Will to compete for me. I had seen Pablo (Shanaghan Velvet) in Horse Quest, but felt it was too far away to look at one horse. Will disagreed and went to Emerald Irish Horses in Wysall, Nottingham. Will telephoned me on his way home and felt Pablo was the one. How right he was! Pablo is the first horse I have purchased which I had not ridden nor seen.

Pablo was rising 5 in 2024 and competed in a couple of Novice Working Hunter classes. Will moved to Justine Armstrong Small's yard in Epping and Justine encouraged us to enter light-weight hunter classes in 2025.

Pablo went to about 6 county shows and qualified for Horse of the Year Show. Although he was still rather green, we decided to take him for experience in an atmospheric indoor show with all the noise, spotlights and spectators. All I wanted was for him to behave and have a nice time. I was undecided whether to go and was persuaded by Alice, Lisa and Rebecca that I should. I am so glad I listened to them!

I have been in contact with Esther Scully of Shanaghan Horses in Ireland who breed Pablo. She was able to come over with family members and meet Pablo again, whom she had not seen since selling him at 6 months. It was lovely to meet them and hear about his early life.

Pablo was one of 20 horses to qualify and Will was competing against our top show riders.

Pablo loved the indoor arena, took no notice of the spotlights, noise or spectators. He was amazing and to our delight won the Light-Weight Show Hunter class on his first time at HOYS and in his first class. This allowed them to compete in the Show Hunter of the Year class. Pablo again was well behaved, gave a good show and won. All the winners of the various classes then go forward to the Horse of the Year class which was won by a lovely horse ridden by Jayne Ross.



WILL MORTON AND PABLO
(Show Name: Shanaghan Velvet)



Pablo was nominated for the British Show Horse Association, Show Horse of the year. 6 horses were short-listed, Pablo being one of them. The horse ridden by Jayne Ross won. We all had a great time enjoying a champagne reception, dinner, awards and live music at Stoneleigh Park.



I never thought I would enjoy being an owner so much. All the credit for Pablo's success is down to Will Morton who has produced him so well.

I am looking forward to the 2026 season and seeing them compete in both Working Hunter Classes and Show Hunter Classes.

Dreams can come true!



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By: Ken McDonald, Secretary

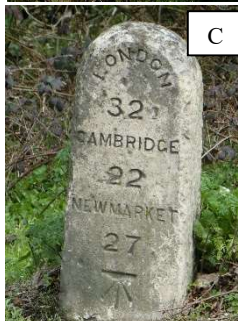
Now that Spring is on its way, the weather should encourage us to make more use of bridleways and footpaths. Around 150 walk descriptions are available to download free from our website, www.hundredparishes.org.uk. As well as saying when to turn left or right, our route descriptions aim to point out things of interest along the way. Some of these will be marked on the local Ordnance Survey map.

Ordnance Survey (“OS”) has been the UK’s official mapping body since 1791 AD, having originated for military purposes. Its activities have left various physical markers which may still be encountered, albeit that mapping techniques have moved forward in recent times with the satellite-based GPS (global positioning system).

The two historic OS markers that are most likely to be encountered are “triangulation pillars” and “benchmarks”. Several thousand triangulation pillars (also referred to as trig points) were installed all over the UK - solid concrete pillars about 4 feet tall, usually erected at a high point with a clear range of vision. Each has a place on top for positioning a map measurer’s tool, a theodolite. The pillar’s location and height above sea level have been precisely measured and recorded so that from here the map-maker can plot the surrounding landscape.

OS surveyors also left “benchmarks” in thousands of strategic locations. These are additional altitude reference points, a horizontal line indicating height above sea level - chiselled into a wall or milestone from around 1840 until the 1990s. The benchmark was sometimes indicated on a brass plaque attached at the appropriate height. On OS benchmarks, the horizontal line appears above an upward-pointing arrow.

Please look out for trig points and benchmarks. If they are on a Hundred Parishes walk route but not yet mentioned in the description, please let us know.



Photos

A - Triangulation Pillar on Newport - Wickon Bonhunt boundary at Grid Reference TL501348.

B - Triangulation pillar in Castle Camps at Grid Reference TL625416.

C - Incised benchmark on milestone 32 north of Stansted Mountfitchet.

D - Incised benchmark on milestone 40 south of Littlebury.

E - Metal benchmark plate on Clavering Church wall.

F - Incised benchmark in Barkway on wall of Clock House Cottage.

5 SURPRISING WAYS YOUR WILL COULD BECOME INVALID

If you haven't already made a will, then hopefully it's at the top of your new year "to-do" list. Having a will in place means you can name your chosen beneficiaries and make sure children and other dependants are looked after.

Carefully planning how your estate will be distributed when you die can also help avoid landing your loved ones with a large Inheritance Tax (IHT) bill. But even if you have a will in place, it's important to review it regularly. There are several ways a will can be rendered invalid, so it's important to check your circumstances haven't inadvertently caused this to happen. Read on to discover five surprising things that can invalidate a will, and how to make sure yours is kept up-to-date.

Shifting the conversation from having a will to having a will that's legitimate in the eyes of the law

It's fairly common knowledge that it's important to write a will. But often, the emphasis is simply placed on having one, rather than it being *valid*. According to Which, a third of the members they surveyed said they hadn't updated their will in the past five years. But for many of these people, circumstances may have changed. It can be understandable to assume that your will simply stands forever unless you actively change it. However, this isn't the case, and there are some surprising ways your will could be rendered invalid.

1. Marriage or remarriage

According to Will Aid, more than half of UK adults don't realise that getting married automatically revokes any existing will in England and Wales. This lack of understanding can often cause real upset, for example, by unwittingly removing children from a previous relationship as beneficiaries.

If you get married or remarried, you'll need to make a new will to state your wishes. The law is slightly different in Scotland. Your existing will remains valid, but your new spouse will have "legal rights" to part of your estate.

Ultimately, redrafting your will after marriage is the most sensible way to make sure your estate is distributed according to your wishes.



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2. Divorce or dissolution

Unlike marriage, divorce or civil partnership dissolution doesn't automatically revoke your will. However, there are other complications to be aware of. In these cases, once your divorce or dissolution is settled, your former spouse is treated as if they had died for the purposes of the will. If you've left part of your estate to them, it could end up going to other beneficiaries. But if you've left everything to your ex-partner, your estate is treated as if you had no will at all.

3. Not using the appropriate witnesses

Your will needs to be signed by two witnesses who can attest to your own signature on the document. This means you need to sign the will in their presence.

Your witnesses need to be:

- **Over 18**
- **Not blind, partially sighted, or visually impaired**
- **Not your spouse, civil partner, or beneficiary**
- **Considered mentally capable of witnessing your signature.**

In some cases, you can watch each other sign the will remotely, via video link. Failing to follow the proper witnessing process could invalidate your will, so this is important to get right.

4. Informal changes

Once your will has been signed and witnessed, the only way to change it is to:

- **Make a new will**
- **Add a codicil, which is an official alteration. The codicil also needs to be signed and witnessed.**

Adding extra elements by hand, crossing things out, or making your own unwitnessed alterations can render your will – or at least, the aspects of your will that were changed – invalid. If you want to update your will, you need to do so using the correct procedure.

5. Testamentary capacity

When you make your will, you must have what's known as "testamentary capacity", meaning that you have the mental capacity required by law.

There are four key elements to this. You must:

- **Understand the nature of making a will – principally, that it is a legally-binding document which disposes of your estate after you die**
- **Have a general understanding of the nature of your assets (such as property and investments) and their approximate value**
- **Be capable of rational decisions regarding who to include or exclude from your will, in terms of those who might reasonably expect to benefit or have a moral claim on your estate**
- **Not have a mental health condition that could prevent you from making a rational decision. The criteria used to measure this include mental illnesses, dementia, and other conditions which may impair your judgement. However, simply having a diagnosis doesn't preclude you from making a valid will. You can still retain legal capacity, as long as you can understand and make rational decisions about your will.**

In some cases, you may need approval from a medical practitioner if the solicitor drawing up your will deems it necessary.

Get in touch

Whether you'd like some advice on ways to help your children financially, or would like to involve them in future conversations, we'd be more than happy to help.

Email us at info@harperlees.co.uk or call 01277 350560 to find out more.

Please note

This article is for general information only and does not constitute advice. The information is aimed at individuals only.

All information is correct at the time of writing and is subject to change in the future. The Financial Conduct Authority does not regulate estate planning or will writing.



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