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EDITORIAL

By Tricia Horwood



As we approach the Christmas season and the end of another year, it feels like the perfect moment to pause, reflect, and extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to the parish magazine throughout 2025. Whether you submitted a single piece or sent something every month, your stories, memories, recipes, reports and photos are what keep this publication alive. It continues to be a source of connection for our community, and that is entirely thanks to you. And as always at this time of year, a gentle reminder: **annual subscriptions are now due.** This year, we also have a **new bank account**, so please do check the updated details listed in this edition before making payment.

After five years of monthly columns, we also say a warm and grateful thank you to John Swift, who is hanging up his pen. John's writing has kept us informed about all things green, from the various COP conferences around the world to our energy usage and carbon footprint. We look forward to receiving the occasional guest article in future when inspiration strikes!

Looking forward, 2026 promises exciting developments—not least the plans now underway to upgrade Thursley's cricket pavilion. A village meeting was recently convened (see p18), and there is growing enthusiasm to renovate the building so that it will not only support cricket but become a welcoming hub for the whole parish. More detailed updates will follow in future editions.

Finally, as Christmas approaches, whether you celebrate with family, friends, or in quiet reflection, I wish you peace, joy and hope for the year ahead.

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year to all!

PLEASE NOTE EARLY DEADLINE OF 12TH DECEMBER 2025 FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES TO THE JANUARY 2026 ISSUE OF THURSLEY PARISH MAGAZINE.
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Parishes of Elstead, Thursley, Shackleford & Peper Harow

Christmas Services

Sunday 7 December - Advent 2
9:15am Communion at St James Primary School, Elstead
9:45am Communion at St Michael & All Angels, Thursley
10:30am Modern Service with Communion at St James Primary School

Sunday 14 December - Advent 3
10am Communion at St James Primary School
5pm Carols at St Michael & All Angels, Thursley

Friday 19 December - Crib Service
4pm Elstead Village Hall

Sunday 21 December - Advent 4
9:45am Communion at St Michael & All Angels, Thursley
10:30am Modern Service at Elstead Village Hall
5pm Carols at St Nicholas Church, Peper Harow

Wednesday 24 December - Elstead Carols & Midnight Mass
7:30pm Carols at Elstead Village Hall
11:30pm Midnight Communion at St Nicholas, Peper Harow

Thursday 25 December - Christmas Day
9:45am at St Michael & All Angels, Thursley
10am Modern Family Service at Elstead Village Hall
11am at St Mary's Church, Shackleford

Sunday 28 December - Sunday after Christmas Day
9:15am at St Nicholas, Peper Harow

Sunday 4 January 2026 - Epiphany
9:15am Communion at St Michael & All Angels, Thursley

Church in the community, community in the church

VILLAGE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER

Tuesday 2nd	7.00pm	**Thursley Parish Council Meeting**. Village Hall. All welcome.
Sunday 14th	5.00pm	**Carol Service at St Michael & All Angels**
Wednesday 17th	7.30pm	**Ladies of Thursley Christmas Supper** Three Horseshoes Pub. See p 26.
Friday 19th	7.30pm	**Men of Thursley Christmas Supper.** Three Horseshoes Pub. See p 15.
Saturday 20th	10.00am	**Churchyard Working Party.** St Michael & All Angels Church. All help welcome.
Wednesday 24th	6.00pm	**3HS Christmas Carol Singing.** Outside Three Horseshoes Pub. See p27

DECEMBER

CHURCH CLEANING

(Please contact Sallie Roles if you can help)

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COFFEE ROTA

(Please contact Caroline Mendelssohn if you can help)

14th Sally PAGET-BROWN 21st Claire DAILY

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LOOKING FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS

By Revd Hannah Moore



The countdown has begun…the Christmas adverts hot on the heels of the Halloween ones remind us that Christmas is just around the corner. For many, these weeks leading up to 25 December are filled with anticipation—a time to plan festive meals, exchange gifts, and gather with loved ones. Yet, for many, Advent and Christmas hold a far deeper significance: they remind us of the extraordinary hope brought into the world through the birth of Jesus Christ.

The four weeks of Advent invite us to pause and reflect, to make space in our hearts for the coming of Christ. Advent is more than just a countdown to Christmas; it is a season of waiting, watching, and preparing. We journey together through darkness towards the promise of light, remembering how the people of Israel longed for a Messiah and how, today, we too yearn for God's peace, hope, and presence in our lives.

In the busyness of shopping lists, parties, and festive decorations, it can be easy to lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas. At its heart, Christmas is the celebration of God's immense love for us. The birth of Jesus in a humble stable reminds us that God chooses to enter our ordinary lives, meeting us not in grandeur but in simplicity, humility, and vulnerability. Emmanuel—God with us—brings light to our darkness, hope to our despair, and joy to our hearts.

As we look forward to Christmas, let us also remember that we are called to reflect Christ's love in all that we do. This season, may we reach out to those in need—whether it's a phone call to someone feeling lonely, a donation to our local food bank, or a prayer offered for those facing hardship. Small acts of kindness and generosity become expressions of the love that God first showed to us.

The coming weeks offer many opportunities to gather together —to sing carols (in all three parishes), celebrate the Christmas fair (at St Mary's), enjoy the Crib service (at Elstead Village Hall) and the Christmas Day services in all three parishes.. These moments draw to one another. We hope to see you at the many Christmas events that are available throughout the Parishes.

As we count down the days to Christmas, may we each find time for quiet reflection, gratitude, and joy. Let us open our hearts anew to the wonder of the Nativity, allowing the story of Christ's birth to inspire us with hope, courage, and compassion. May the light of Christ shine brightly in our lives and in our parishes, now and always.

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed Advent and a joyful, peaceful Christmas. Hannah

STATEMENT ON THE FUTURE OF OUR CHURCH BUILDING IN SHACKLEFORD & PEPER HAROW

The PCC of Shackleford and Peper Harow met on the 12th of November 2025 and voted to take the painful and difficult decision to begin the process to close St Mary's Shackleford. This difficult decision has not been made lightly and follows a thorough review of the parish's ongoing sustainability. We can no longer financially sustain two churches within a small parish.

We understand that this announcement will bring sadness and uncertainty, and we are committed to supporting all affected during this period of change. Pastoral support remains available to our communities of Shackleford and Peper Harow. Please contact the ministry team for ongoing pastoral and spiritual support.

Before recommending closure, there will be a period of consultation by the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC). It will consult with local interested parties, including planning authorities and obtain a report from the Church Buildings Council on the building's historic and architectural significance.

During this consultation period, services will continue to be held at St Mary's. There will be no change to our regular monthly service at St Nicholas, Peper Harow.

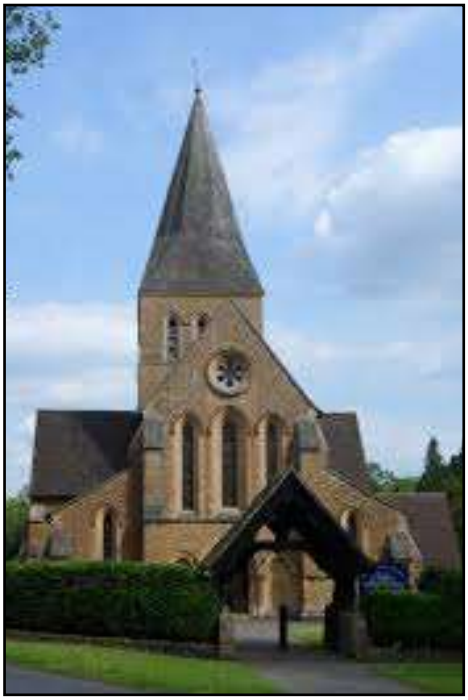
We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to the life and work of St Mary's over the years – clergy, staff, volunteers, and the entire congregation. The church has been a cherished place of worship, fellowship, and service for generations.

We give thanks for the many years of faithful witness at St Mary's Shackleford and look forward to journeying together as we embrace the next chapter for our community.

Should you need any further information, please contact:

office@parishesofetsph.org

The PCC of Shackleford & Peper Harow



THURSLEY PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

By Chairman James Mendelssohn



You will all be aware of the recent announcement that Surrey is going to be divided into two unitary authorities, with the goal of creating a simpler, more strategic structure for local decision-making. Thursley will be part of the West Surrey Unitary Authority, for which there will be elections in May 2026. The new authority will take over the provision of services in April 2027, after a 12-month handover period.

As a Parish Council, we will need to consider carefully how we respond to these changes and at our November meeting, it was very helpful to hear the views of our Waverley and Surrey Councillors. The consensus seems to be that, whilst we now know that Waverley will be part of West Surrey, there is still a huge amount of discussion to take place - and questions to be asked - before the detailed plans become clearer.

Having said that, we do know that the contacts that we as a parish council have developed with officers at both Waverley and Surrey, particularly in areas such as planning and highways, will change and it will therefore be critical for us to develop new relationships with officers at the new authority as and when they are appointed during the handover period. Although the driver for many of these changes is to devolve more responsibility to local town and parish councils, here in Thursley we do not anticipate significant changes, primarily because there are no public buildings such as libraries or leisure centres in our parish. Nevertheless, we will be keeping a close eye on developments and, with support from our Waverley and Surrey Councillors, we will make sure that we are ready for the changes as and when they occur.

At a more mundane level, we are coming to the time of year when potholes once again begin to rear their ugly heads. Last year, the situation was generally much better than in the previous winter, partly because of better weather and partly because of the efforts that Chris McClements made to ensure that the potholes in the village were reported at an early stage, before they became too severe. Whilst Chris and others on the parish council will continue to look out for and report potholes, could I please ask you all to be aware of any problems and report them as soon as possible. Better and more timely reporting plays a significant role in maintaining our roads to a reasonable standard over the winter.

The best way to report potholes is via the dedicated website **(www.fixmystreet.com).** This site has grown in popularity and effectiveness recently. Alternatively,

you can also log any pothole problems via the 'Pothole Patrol' on Facebook. You can find it using the hashtag **#PotholePatrol.**

This initiative was set up by our own Phoebe Sullivan who is not only a Parish Councillor here in Thursley but also a member of Waverley Borough Council. Potholes logged via the 'Pothole Patrol' will be managed by a team of volunteers who will report them to Surrey Highways and keep track of them to ensure that appropriate progress is being made.

The next Parish Council meeting will take place in the Village Hall on Tuesday 2 December at 7.00 pm. All are welcome.

Men of Thursley Christmas Supper

Thursday 18th December

The Three Horseshoes

7.30pm



Booking Essential

Contact: **peterrickenberg5@gmail.com**

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VICAR

By Revd Hannah Moore

The bible says in the story of creation, "Six days the Lord laboured and on the seventh day he rested. This is the model that has been used for clergy, I work a six day week but clergy are always encouraged to "not to look for work" on a Saturday and now with the levels of clergy burnout to try to have two consecutive days off a month. Stipendiary clergy are also entitled to six Sundays off a year, and these are fiercely guarded. As you will see, as I give you a window into my world, this is almost impossible. My job is definitely not nine–to–five and often involves meetings a couple of nights a week.

I could not function without my "To Do List". My week starts on a Sunday evening and I plan the week, listing all the upcoming events, meetings and tasks that need to be completed. There is no typical week in the life of a vicar, but there are some fixed events that I am able to plan the rest of my week around.

My day starts with a cup of tea in bed and morning prayer, I particularly like the Celtic Daily Prayer from the Nothumbian Community. I also read a chapter of a theological book. At the moment, I'm reading that Jesus Creed by Scott McKnight.

Mondays are normally my day of rest. This is true for three out of four Mondays in the month. On these Mondays, I refuel by doing my hobbies. This includes model building, jigsaw puzzles and catching up with family and friends. I love listening to audiobooks – often crime or history books, and also binge-watch television programmes like Shetland, or Blue Lights and of course cricket matches. One Monday a month, I have to prepare to attend the Bishops' Council meeting. This involves reading lots of papers before trying to take the rest of the day off.

On Tuesday, my focus turns to schoolwork. Every Tuesday, I conduct an assembly at St James School in Elstead. I love going into the school and engaging with the children. Visiting the school also allows me to care pastorally for the Headteacher and the staff. Sometimes I'm able to visit Little Ducks Nursery and share a bible story, with lots of actions, and sing some songs. After the assembly, I head off to the parish office to catch up with Nicole, our Group Parish Secretary. Normally, after a good catch-up and lots of laughter, we focus on the week ahead; checking the upcoming service booklets, creating any special service booklets, preparing the Church News, including my little reflection for each newsletter and updating the parish dashboard safeguarding portal. During busy times in the church calendar, such as Easter or Christmas, there are at least 12 books to prepare or, if the liturgy needs updating, to compile.

On Tuesday afternoon, I tried to sit in my "thinking chair." If I'm preaching on a Sunday, I read the Bible passages, listen to a selection of commentary



apps and podcasts and read the various Bible commentaries. This reflecting exercise continues throughout the week. I compare this process to percolating like a good coffee; ideas need to drip through the filter paper, as I try to formulate a sermon for Sunday.

Wednesday morning starts with morning prayer at Saint Nicholas, Peper Harow. Everyone is invited to attend morning prayer from across the parishes, but presently, about five of us meet to pray. After morning prayer, I try to keep Wednesdays as an "admin only day". This admin-only day often includes working on faculties, which are the permissions needed to put anything up in or change anything in the church building or churchyard. I have recently had to learn how to do planning applications as part of the St James project. I would also give some time to prepare special services such as the service for Hillary and Pat, or a wedding blessing, a wedding or baptism or a funeral.

One of the other roles I have in the diocese is as an Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands (ADDO). An ADDO is someone who journeys with people as they try to discern their vocational calling. I have been doing this for a number of years now. One of my candidates was recently ordained and has started a curacy in the diocese. Two others are in training, and I'm currently working with two other candidates. It's such a privilege to accompany people in their discernment journeys and to see how God is at work in their lives. I love this aspect of my ministry, seeing people grow and flourish into the God-intended them to be. Sometimes on a Wednesday, I also meet with members of the ministry team - having one-to-one sessions with Louisa, Wendy and Richelle.





We have been very lucky over the past few years to have vocational candidates. It's coming to do a placement in the parishes, and I put aside some time on a Wednesday to meet with them, too.

Thursday, I check in with Nicole in the office before anything goes to print. We have a monthly Service Leaders meeting to look at the upcoming services, running through the rota to make sure we have everything covered. Delia and I meet on a Thursday afternoon, normally to update each other on the life of the parishes and check in about the progress of the project at St James Church.

Within all this busyness, I need to take care of my own spiritual health and well -being. Every six weeks or so, I meet with my spiritual director. She is an independent listener outside the parishes, and she challenges me to see God at work in various situations and to hand them to God. She is a safe space to download and offload!

I try to keep Fridays a bit quieter. “Try” is the operative word. Fridays are often my catch-up day, responding to emails and issues that have arisen during the week and which I haven't managed to turn my attention to. By Friday evening, I am on strike and certainly don’t want to cook, so Mike and I toss a coin to cook a quick supper and then collapse in front of the telly.

We have been fortunate to have 14 weddings in the parishes this year, of which I have conducted 11. Each of these weddings requires at least three meetings, most of which take place on a Saturday morning. That means a possible 33 meetings that need to be squeezed into my calendar throughout the year. As a wedding approaches, there are services to prepare and rehearsals to attend. Weddings are joyous occasions, and it is so special to be part of a couple's day.

Community and Parish events often take place on a Saturday. As I write this, I know that in Thursley this Saturday, the tree is being decorated, an Advent



concert is taking place, and there is the light switch. All of these I will attend.

I recently joined the Tonic Community Choir in Elstead. This activity is something outside of my parish responsibilities. And of course, singing is tonic for the soul. I will be singing at various community events in the run-up to Christmas, many of which will happen on a Saturday.

Sunday comes around, and it is often an early start for me as the opportunity to put my thoughts down for the sermon had been squeezed out by other, more pressing responsibilities during the week. I am up at 5:00 am on a Sunday to write my sermon. Often, I have two services on a Sunday to dash between. This could be two services which are part of our scheduled services, or an additional baptism after a service. By the time I get home at Sunday lunchtime, I am exhausted, hungry, or in our house, "Hangry", which is not a good thing for everyone concerned.

All I really want to do on a Sunday afternoon is to eat and have some time to collapse in my "thinking chair", often with at least three spaniels sitting on me – one normally on my head. Like everyone, jobs still need to be done around the house, so after a rest, Mike and I potter around the garden or bond as we fold the washing!! We are great board gamers and card players in our house, so after dinner on a Sunday evening, when Mike has finished preparing for the coming week's teaching, we often play a game.

Other things that crop up during the week include preparing for governing body meetings, as I am a governor at St James; preparing for the Diocesan Board of Education Meetings as I am a member of the DBE; reading parish profiles for parishes in vacancy, in my capacity as Diocesan Advisor to Women's Ministry to make sure that the language included is not gender bias. I have to squeeze in trustee meetings for other charities that are part of my parish's role. I need to allocate time to prepare for PCC meetings, funerals, baptisms and pastoral visits.

This year has also had additional pressures with the building project at St James, which will hopefully come to an end in the coming few weeks. I also never know who might phone or what they might need. During my time in these parishes, I have had calls about paranormal activity, family history requests or difficult family relationships to navigate.

This is just a little window into my world; my week is never dull. Sometimes I might even be asked to bless a bulb planting project initiated by a certain local rock legend or even open up the church so that a music video can be recorded.

Alongside my role, I still need to walk for dogs, run the hoover around and support my own family. My life is busy but also satisfying. Years ago, when I had my call to ordination, I was reading the story of Samuel in the bible; this was a "light bulb" moment for me. Samuel responded to God, *"I here I, send me"*; I did too, and I am so glad that I did!

WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE FARM THIS MONTH?

By Jo Ranson

Well, we certainly got that rain we wanted, and it has got things growing well again. It is still warm, so much so that when you are in waterproofs you are just as wet on the inside from sweating as you are on the outside. The flies and midges are still about - too annoyingly for us but perfect for a research project that we are part of. A lady from Pirbright research centre has set several traps around the farm to collect midges for assessing blue tongue. We don't know what and how she does this, but we do know she is collecting plenty. Let's hope they aren't blue tongue ones and I am sure, when the project finishes, we will know her findings.

Now that the heifers and cows are fully housed, the grass is growing ahead of them out in the paddocks. We want a bit of grass out there for February time but not too much, so we have the beef cows and some empty dairy cows grazing them off before they move to a brassica and silage diet. We have got quite a few empty cows; this was done purposely. We have had some cell count issues over the last three years and have tried repeatedly to get these reduced, by drying off problem cows early or using a different antibiotic and it still rumbles on. So, we kept extra cows to calve so that, when they are testing high when in milk, we can decide to dry them off early and sell them. This approach has been working well and our whole herd cell count is well below the figure we are allowed. It is a shame to lose some of those cows, but we get fined for being over a certain amount.

Calving wise we have about 10 left to go; we would like to have finished by now but because we needed to keep the extra ones to solve the cell count problem we are still going - but we are winning – fingers crossed.

The heifers came in about three weeks ago and they have a steep learning curve. Firstly how to lie in a bed, so we did our usual job of filling the cubicle passageways with tyres, so when the heifers are shut away they find it too uncomfortable to stand and lie in the passageway but hop into a lovely clean bedded bed. We split them in two halves so whilst half are shut away the other half can roam around and learn to eat silage from the clamp - again another learning curve. They grasp eating under the wire quite well; it takes a little longer to learn to eat over it. We put the wire lower for them than we would do for the cows and sprinkle a few nuts on the top to tempt them over. To start with you get one or two that learn about the nuts very quickly and hoover them up long before the others twig and temptation is gone in a flash. We then swap the groups over two or three times a day; after three days we hope they all have the hang of things and have the delightful task of removing all the tyres which have had three days' worth of muck deposited on them. The next task for them to get to grips with is going through the crush so we can put in CowManager tags and worm them, this was very successful and didn't take long to do.

All the semen arrived this month, so we get the vet in to test it to make sure it is all swimming well. If any should be substandard, we send it back. To have low quality semen particularly with sexed semen could be disastrous for getting the cows in

calf. If we didn't test it and it was low quality, you wouldn't know until three or six weeks later when the cows didnt hold to it. When I record each serve on the computer, I always record which bull was used, not just because you need to know the sire but also it tallies them up to know which haven't performed as well as another. I also record who served them, again so we can see if anyone is struggling with serving and it also adds a bit of healthy competition too. Anyway, the results of the semen testing were that they all passed.

And serving has begun, and the whole process starts again. A couple of days pre-serving Matthew and I go through the cows to see who should be served to dairy and who to beef. The best performing cows go to dairy and the lower ones or ones who have had calving or health issues go to beef. But it's not that simple because not all will hold first time and if we want to have around 70 heifer calves born next year you have to allow for the fact that some won't hold and some won't come bulling in time to have them early on. We then put a tail tape on these cows, white for dairy, green for beef - this just makes it quicker for when she comes in to be served you don't want to look through reems of lists to find out which she is having. Our CowManager computer programme also gives us a report on cows which haven't come bulling since calving or have had irregular bullings, these we get out for the vet to check through as we want as many cows to serve as we can. He looked at 25 which out of 300 is good, some were actually ok but had just been very quiet and are about to come bulling, and some had a bit of an infection and although that doesn't make them sick it can fill the uterus with gunk so they had some antibiotics to get it cleared up.

Nick's inventive silage clamp alarm came into its own a couple of weeks ago. At 1am I got a phone call from the silage clamp, once it was a fox that got caught in the wire and pulled it out so I went to have a look, but no it was that they had broken the wire and had started making a right mess of the maize clamp. Everyone then got a phone call from me to get cows shut away, the spilt maize cleaned up, and a new wire put on. Thank goodness it rang as had they found that at 5am when they normally start, I don't think there would have been much of a clamp left and there would have been some sick cows from gorging. We also have an alarm on the heifers clamp and that rang me one afternoon, I rushed off to have a look and being it is a 1.5 mile drive was getting quite concerned that I would find all of them on the clamp, fortunately that wasn't the case. What had happened though was a heifer had pulled the power cable from behind the wall and broken it. I don't mind a panicked trip for that, and it was a simple fix too.

Now that everything is in it is fairly mundane rota of milking, scraping or bedding, however, there always seems to be something that gets thrown in the mix to keep us busy. Silly parlour breakdowns which we fix a lot ourselves (parlour engineers are non-existent in the southeast) and I spend a lot of time searching for parts, and then we all spend a lot of time fitting said parts. Then there will be a water leak or your overhead water pipe taken out by a lorry (yes that happened) nothing major but just jobs that take time when you have other things to do.

Hopefully this next month won't have many silly breakages. We will serve lots of cows and just keep milking, scraping and bedding.

THE THURSLEY PAVILLION

By Mike Spencer

On Sunday 23rd November around 60 villagers gathered for a well-attended and engaging meeting with standing room only, to discuss the future of the Thursley Cricket Pavilion and explore its potential development into a multi-use recreational centre. The strong turnout reflected the community's enthusiasm for ensuring that the pavilion continues to serve the village in meaningful and imaginative ways.

The meeting opened with a welcome from James Mendelssohn, Chairman of the Parish Council, who expressed his appreciation for the excellent attendance and emphasised the importance of community involvement at every stage of the project. He also welcomed our SCC Councillor, David Harmer, our WBC Waverley Borough Councillor, David Monro and the former Elstead Parish Council Chair and President of the I'Anson cricket league, whose support and interest in the initiative were warmly received.

A lively and positive discussion followed, with villagers offering a wide range of thoughtful suggestions for how the pavilion might be transformed to meet evolving community needs. Ideas included providing facilities for sport and fitness, community events, youth activities, arts and culture, education and training, health and wellbeing, and



a café. Many noted the potential of creating a space that supports a whole range of activities without impinging on the role and activities provided by the Village Hall.

Three invited speakers helped frame the opportunities and pathways ahead:
James Mendelssohn, speaking in his capacity as Parish Council Chairman, outlined the council's role in stewarding the project and ensuring governance, transparency, and alignment with village priorities. He reaffirmed the council's commitment to continue as the landlord of the pavilion and grant a long lease to the operator.

James Maclean then explained the proposal to establish a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to operate the building. He discussed how a CIO could provide a strong governance structure, unlock external funding opportunities, and ensure long-term, community-focused management. His presentation helped clarify how the organisation might function and how villagers could participate.

Mike Spencer presented early design thinking on how the pavilion could be reconfigured and improved, including potential changes to the internal layout, the appearance of the exterior, and ways to create a more welcoming, versatile space. He also outlined the project programme culminating in completion of the new pavilion in spring 2027 in time for that year's cricket season.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to recognise key contributions already made towards the project. Jane Hepburn was warmly thanked for her very generous donation, which has provided early momentum and encouragement. In addition, Matt Hepburn and Haat.Studio was acknowledged for being instrumental in shaping the initial architectural proposals, helping to set the foundation for the ideas now being explored.

Throughout the meeting, the atmosphere was constructive and forward-looking. Villagers expressed gratitude for the work already undertaken and a strong desire for ongoing involvement. Many offered time, expertise, and feedback to help guide the pavilion's next chapter.

The meeting closed with thanks to all contributors and an invitation for villagers to remain engaged and use the project email address;

thursleypavilion@gmail.com

for ongoing feedback, input and suggestions. The first of a programme of project updates will be published in early January.

THE KOHIMA EPITAPH & REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

By Jackie Rickenberg (taken from the archives of the History Society)

Before the madness, joviality and indulgence of Christmas hits us, I wanted to pause briefly and recall the beautifully poignant and moving Remembrance Service we had at St Michael's this last month. Sometimes you may know the sequence of words so well that their meaning gets almost forgotten or certainly become nebulous. This happened to me recently until I said the words out loud at the service, and without warning they got caught in my throat and the resultant emotional reaction took me completely by surprise.

This simple service is held annually, always outside, gathered around our war memorial and every year after the Last Post is sounded, a two-minute silence is observed, Reveille is sounded and then the Kohima Epitaph is recited by all. To explain. Kohima is a hill town on the India/Myanmar border, that between April and June 1944 saw some of the bitterest fighting of the Far East campaign, as British, Indian and Gurkha units, sustained by supplies dropped by the RAF, met and defeated a Japanese offensive intended to disrupt the planned Commonwealth advance into Myanmar and even enable a Japanese advance into India. The 2nd Division's war memorial in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Kohima bears the epitaph that has become synonymous with that battle. Although now commonly called the Kohima Epitaph, the words were not written to commemorate Kohima, but were composed at the end of the First World War by a Cambridge classicist turned wartime codebreaker, John Maxwell Edmonds.

Of course, we all know this epitaph, but perhaps not the explanation for its name:

"When you go home, tell them of us, and say,
For your to-morrows these gave their to-day".

It has, for the sake of our Remembrance Services today, evolved into:

"When you go home, tell them of us and say,
"For their tomorrow, we gave our today".

In February 1918, The Times published four epitaphs composed by Edmonds, including one titled:

"On Some who died early in the Day of Battle

Went the day well? We died and never knew,
But well or ill, England, we died for you".

It's so astonishing how both epitaphs, both merely two lines long, can convey the horror and futility of war and why we must endeavour to remember those that gave their lives for our freedom.



Kohima war memorial

If you look on our website **thursleyhistorysociety.org,** you will find a whole raft of information on WW2 and indeed our summertime exhibition marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day contained so much, that unless you had a whole day to spare, you would have missed a significant amount. This next excerpt was one thing I missed and it is exceptional in its detail and I'm sure would have brought some light relief and amusement to its recipients.

David Man's letter (father of Sukey Langdale), written when he was 24 yrs old.

BRITISH OVERSEAS AIRWAYS CORPORATION
At Carlton Hotel
Karachi
8th June

"My dearest Ma and Pa,

Well, I have arrived in India safe and sound. This is how it all happened.

Janet saw me off at Airways House, & she will have told you of our encounter with Superintendent Bograne. WRNS, one of Margy's superior officers who was on the same plane as me, but heading for Colombo. We travelled together on the train – excellent accommodation & a good dinner on board – as far as Poole. At Bournemouth we were transferred to a BOAC bus & taken to the Sandacres Hotel at Poole, which is a small and unimpressive place right on the seafront. Incidentally, what a lovely place Bournemouth is. I don't think that I had ever been there before. Not lovely – well laid out.

The Sandacres Hotel was my undoing. As I have said, it was a shocking place & I caught a cold there. Part of the reason may well be that the full blast of the healthy (don't believe it) sea breeze hit me like a straight left from Joe Loiuis, & before I had time to put up my guard, I was down. Be that as it may, I caught a cold & it made the rest of the trip less enjoyable as I shall relate. It has gone now.

At the crack of dawn on the 5th, we all breakfasted – some of us a little hesitantly, and two South American diplomats, not at all. I don't think I like South Americans. They attempted toasties, but failed: dabbled in kippers, but succumbed after a mouthful: cast side -whiskery glances at the marmalade & made brief passes at the toast. In short, they breakfasted on strong smelling cigarettes, which made the kippers much more venomous opponents for the rest of us. Mrs Bograne only achieved a cup of coffee & one piece of toast & butter: I, on the other hand, went straight through – porridge, kippers, toast, marmalade, butter & three cups of coffee. Experience has taught me that if I have got to be sick, it is much better to have something to bring up. But I don't think I was thinking of that – I was merely hungry. I felt no nerves about flying: after all, creatures whom I used to turn up my nose at at school are now Wing Commanders - so it would be shame indeed if I were to turn pale over a mere trip to India.

After the usual customs procedure, we embarked on a launch and chugged our way to the Sunderland, a four engined flying boat which was to hold us prisoner for the next two days. It was then, for the



A Sunderland flying boat

first time that I saw who my fellow voyagers were to be. We were carrying freight, so the passengers were few. We were, Mrs Bograne, going to Colombo to look into a Wren problem for a fortnight & then come back. She told me that she was going to look out for a job for Margy there. She was very nice about Margy, & I did what I could. I think she will get her wishes: - then there was Lieut. Colonel Grant, Royal Marines. He was a caricature of a man. Vast – with a tremendous moustache, mass of campaign medals & an OBE. – about 40. Completely bluff & brainless. He would be just the same whether bayonetting Japanese or drinking beer by the quart. I think those are his favourite relaxations from the tough life of soldiering. There was also Commander Gardener RNVR – oh: how dashing, he was really good looking: tall, blond, blue eyed & blue blooded. He was on his way to become Director of something to the East Indies Fleet, & was obviously bursting with charm and intelligence. When he changed into white ducks later on, one could feel the airship, being feminine, wobble with wonder. I was sorry for that.

The other interesting passenger was Mr Staniforth, of the Indian Office. A nice old boy, who swore he had seen my name on telegrams in the course of Whitehall business. He was middle aged, stiff collared, affable, frightened, respectful, perspiring, & a little doubtful whether he ought to be there at all. He was going to talk finance to the Government of India; he stuttered & was good at stating the obvious & not quite knowing why anything happened. I liked him."

To be continued next month



LIVE MUSIC WITH THE

ROCKIN' ROGERS

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF
CLASSIC 50'S & 60'S ROCK & ROLL
WITH ROBBIE GOLDFINCH & HIS BAND.

Saturday, 24 January 2026

4 PM - 6 PM

St. Michael & All Angels Church,
Thursley GU8 6QQ

For tickets email: thursleyevents@gmail.com



Ladies of Thursley

Christmas Supper

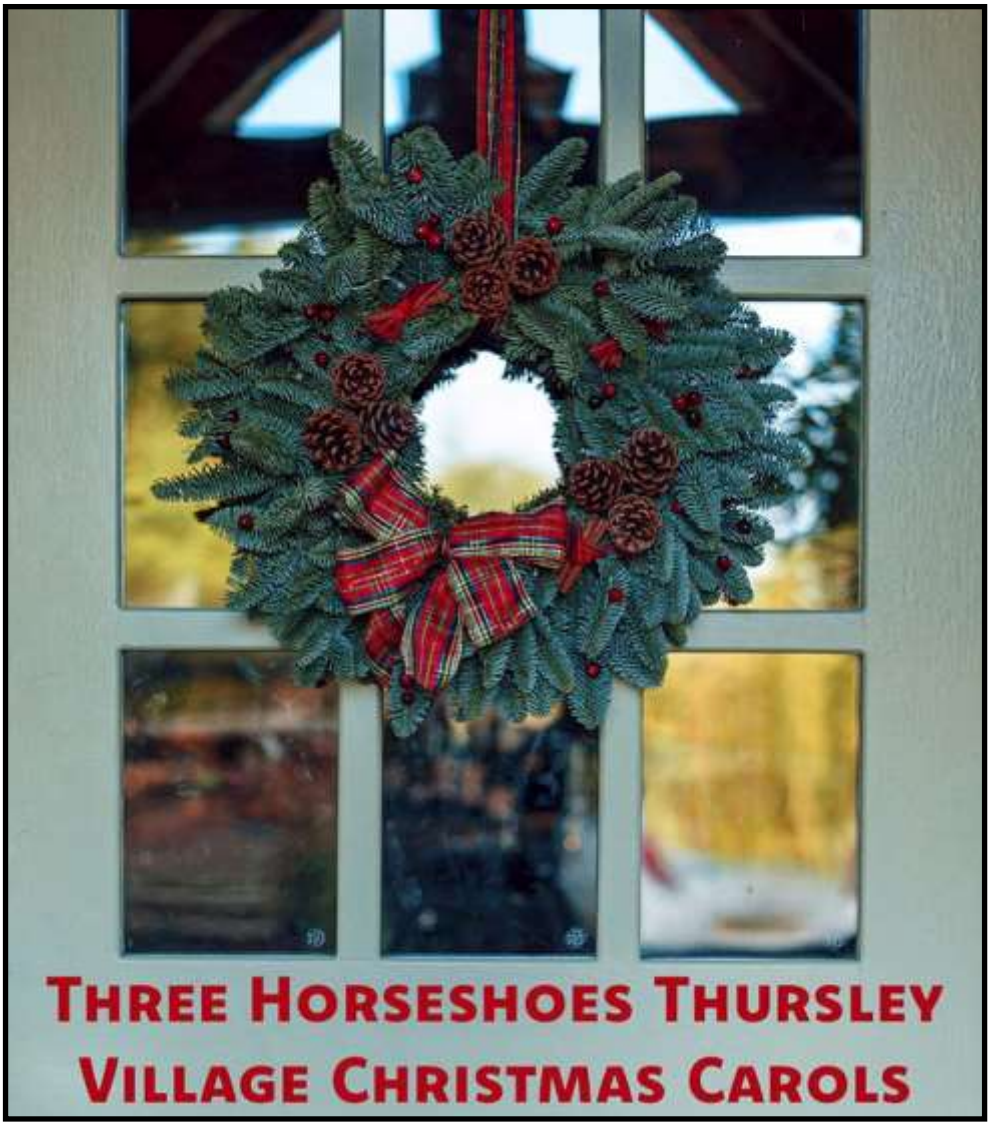
17 | Dec | 7:30pm

Please join us for an evening of good food, good neighbours & some festive cheer!

Venue - The Three Horseshoes

Tickets - £38 per person
Includes - welcome drink, canapés, 2-course meal & wine (1/2 btl)

RSVP - *thursleyevents@gmail.com*



Three Horseshoes Thursley
Village Christmas Carols

You are all invited to the pub on Christmas Eve for live music & carol singing at 6pm. Pub open from 5pm.

Minced pies & sausage rolls will be served as well as mulled wine (to purchase).

This is a wonderful Thursley tradition so we hope you can come along and enjoy a sing-song with friends, neighbours & special guests!

Coming in 2026

Refresh Cafe

Physical, emotional and spiritual refreshment for you and your little ones

Wednesday 10-11:30
(term time)
£3 per family, refreshments included

ST JAMES' CHURCH, ELSTEAD

Parishes of Elstead, Thursley, Shackleford and Peper Harow
Church in the Community, Community in the church

NEW REFRESH & YOUTH CAFE

By Richelle Smith, St James' Service Coordinator



Hello again! I wanted write to let you know about 2 very exciting activities that we will be launching early next year for families in the parishes of Elstead, Thursley, Shackleford, Peper Harow and beyond! Both activities will be on a Wednesday during term time and they will be held in St James' Church, Elstead. Here's some more information...

Refresh Cafe 10-11:30

Our Refresh Cafe is a toddler stay and play group with a difference. There will be plenty of fun for the little ones with toys, gluten free playdough, puzzles, craft and story time but the focus of our sessions will be to provide a space where parents and caregivers can come to experience physical, emotional and spiritual refreshment. Refresh physically: refresh with a coffee and slice of cake. Refresh emotionally: by connecting with friends and our volunteers who have a heart for supporting people at this stage of life. Refresh spiritually: during our 5 minute bible based thought for the day and by taking advantage of the offer of one of our volunteers to pray with you.

Youth Cafe (school years 5 and 6) 4:15-5:45

Our Youth Cafe is an afterschool club where children in years 5 and 6 can come to spend time with friends, have fun and decompress after their school day. There will be table tennis, a pool table, table football, a switch, board games, lego, craft and a chill out area as well as milkshakes and toast! All of our volunteers will be DBS checked and have training in safeguarding and how to open up conversations and listen well. We are very excited about this!!!

CAN YOU HELP?

We are currently raising money and collecting items for both the Refresh cafe and the Youth Cafe. If you would like to give a financial donation to help us with the set-up costs then please get in touch. If you would like to donate a good quality used item then please see below for the list of needed items.

Here's what we need:

folding pool table on wheels, 4 slot toaster, Blenders for milkshakes, Switch console, Junior Board games, Preschool puzzles, Dressing up clothes (ages 0-4), Children's clothes rail, Preschool children's books, Tuff tray with legs

I very much look forward to hearing from you or meeting you at one of these activities.

Church of England Children and Families Worker for the parishes of ETSP.

Richelle@parishesofetsph.org
T: 07721 645291

ECO-FRIENDLY LIVING - IT'S ECO-LOGICAL

By John Swift



It's December and a time to reflect on what has happened in the past year. There were records set with a dry and warm Spring, and a very dry and hot Summer. There was a fire on Hankley Common, but fortunately none on Thursley Common. The Autumn has been somewhat rainy, but not enough to offset the earlier drought. This variation in the usual weather has been challenging to nature as well as our gardens. These climate variations are happening worldwide too, providing evidence (if we needed it) of the need to make changes to our lifestyle and in protecting and improving the natural habitat.

One of the groups working on this biodiversity emergency is the Surrey Wildlife Trust. Thousands of hours of valuable work restoring nature have been carried out by volunteers in the reserves managed by SWT. They have also led important campaigns. Take a look at their Making a Difference for Nature Impact Report 2024/25 for the details (follow link below). There are other groups like the Woodland Trust and Forest Carbon who are supporting woodlands and peat bog remediation.

On climate change issues, it's been a mixed year. The Ukraine war is still impacting natural gas prices despite increased supply from USA and elsewhere, so electricity prices are higher than they were before 2022. Liquified natural gas is a more expensive option anyway, and only a transition fuel to a decarbonised energy system. The USA, under President Trump's leadership, has again

withdrawn from the UN's Paris Agreement on limiting greenhouse gases, and the broad consensus we once had in the UK on "net-zero" is fracturing. Despite all of these setbacks, the world is making progress because the economics of wind and solar renewables, supported by storage, are driving changes in how energy is generated and used.

In the UK, Battery EVs are expected to be 25% of new car registrations in 2025, and there is a growing market in second hand BEVs. The rollout of charging options has increased by 22% this year, the majority of which are fast charging hubs supporting long distance travel. The Govt introduced grants for BEV purchases which has encouraged uptake and also resulted in discounts from manufacturers. Overall the progress on the transition to EVs is encouraging.

For home heating, the take up rate of heat pumps is still relatively slow but increasing each year. The Boiler Upgrade Scheme (£7,500 grant) is helping to reduce the initial cost, but as well as the cost there is still a degree of scepticism that heat pumps work. The UK is lagging behind the EU in the number of heat pump installations so there is great potential for this to become the "norm" in coming years. For those interested in looking into the implications of changing to heat pump heating, two schemes may be of interest. Surrey Climate Commission are promoting a scheme called "Switch Together Heat Pump" which is a group buying scheme like their earlier Solar Together initiative. Use the **switchtogether** website link below to register your interest. PeCAN are also offering the opportunity to visit examples of successful installations with their Warm Open Homes initiative (see link below).

After 5 years of writing articles on Climate and Sustainability issues, I've decided that this will be my last one. I hope they have been of interest.

www.surreywildlifetrust.org/

switchtogether.co.uk/heat-pumps

petersfieldcan.org/projects/home-energy/warm-open-homes

LENTIL AND CARROT SOUP



This is a comforting, warming lunchtime soup, that is naturally gluten free, and if you use vegetable stock and a non dairy cheese then it becomes the perfect vegan recipe.

Ingredients

2 tbsp oil
3 onions chopped
5 garlic cloves chopped
750g carrots sliced
1 tbsp smoked paprika
1 tbsp ground coriander
1 tbsp oregano leaves
1 chopped chilli (optional)
300g red lentils
1.3l boiling chicken or vegetable stock
2 x 400g cans chickpeas
150g feta crumbled (or vegan alternative)

Method

1.Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and fry the onions for 10 mins, stirring until they starting to turn golden brown.

2. Add the garlic and carrots, and cook for a few minutes, before stirring in the spices, oregano, lentils and Chilli (the latter is optional but gives a nice kick).

3. Pour in the stock, then cover and simmer for 20 mins until the lentils are pulpy and tender.

4. Remove from the heat and roughly blitz using a hand blender – you don't want it to be completely smooth.

5. Stir in the chickpeas and all the liquid from the cans, and reheat the soup until thoroughly hot. Serve, topped with the crumbled feta (or vegan alternative).

THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

By Pat Clake

Thanks to all those who came to the AGM. We were able to report on a very enjoyable year with the particular highlights of the Rose Evening, talks from Catherine and David May of Seale Rose Nursery, from Tony Lack about Bee Keeping and from Ray Broughton entitled 'New Ideas in Horticulture'. We held Spring and Autumn Shows, the Rose Show and the popular Plant Sale. Tina Chant again organised a tasty cheese and wine spread- our thanks to her and to those who helped. The evening finished with Nicky Cornell talking about judging vegetables and flowers and Tina Chant explaining about the origins of the intricacies of cookery judging. Their tips for 'Show Entries made Easy' were very useful and will be put in the Parish Magazine before the next show to encourage entries from newcomers and existing entrants.

We are now working to put together an interesting programme for 2026, beginning on Wednesday 18th February with a talk and discussion with Jean Griffin, an expert who takes part in BBC Radio Surrey's gardening programmes. Come with your questions on any aspect of gardening! This will be followed on Wednesday March 18th by '500 Years of Gardening History at Hampton Court'. This Talk from Hampton Court's Head Gardener, Graham Dilmore, should prove to be fascinating and we are really looking forward to it. Members and non-members are welcome, as always.

Following an enthusiastic recommendation from some members, we have invited Cate from the organic Flower Farm in West End, Haslemere to talk to us about how she has developed the flower farm and runs her business. I hope that she will let us into her secrets of making beautiful bunches of flowers and bouquets for weddings. Our Rose and Rose Wine Evening, which has evolved into one of the social events of the Thursley calendar, is on Wednesday 3rd June.

A visit to The Manor, a beautiful large garden that is opened for the National garden Scheme, is being opened especially for Thursley Horticultural Society on Thursday 11th June from 2.30 – 4.00. Do put that date in your diary and join us to wander round the various contrasting areas in the garden and for Afternoon Tea on the lawn.

The society will have its own Afternoon Tea for members at Upper Ridgeway Farm in August. On October 7th Mark Saunders, Head gardener at Fittleworth House will give us his idea for 'Super Seasonal Displays'. There are more events in the pipeline! Please look in the Parish Magazine for details and emails from **thursleyhortsoc@hotmail.co.uk.**

We are looking forward 2026 as another busy and enjoyable year and hope to see you at the Horticultural Society Talks, Visits and Shows. Subscriptions of £7 are due now. Please pay by bank transfer or get in touch to arrange another method at **thursleyhortsoc@hotmail.co.uk.**

Membership cards and schedules will be delivered to you in the new year. Remember that your membership card entitles you to discounts at some local nurseries and at Lindsay Clarke Brothers in Churt. Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

THE LANGUAGE OF YOUNG

By Lizzie Young



We are the Young family. We have made up words. Surely everyone does, right?! It's not our own language, like elvish or moomin – we're not weird – it's just words.... A family lexicon, if you will. I hope you have one too.

It started with me, I think. As a four year old, I was exasperated at my mother's refusal to give in about something I obviously deemed crucially important, and declared, hands on indignant hips, that when my father came home, I would insperkiate with him, and he would let me. Insperkiate means negotiate, but with extra wheedling, and it's an excellent word, and everyone in my family uses it. Years ago a friend declared that she liked being my friend because I used big words (I hope that wasn't the only reason) and that she then used them to great effect at her office. 'Just last week, in a major meeting, for example,' she proudly declared... 'I used insperkiate, and you could just tell that no one else knew what it meant...'. I never let on. Unless there were actual blood relatives of mine in that meeting, they wouldn't.

I cannot understand why insperkiate hasn't made it into the OED, frankly. I just read a lovely novel called The Dictionary of Lost Words, which gave a fascinating insight into how that dictionary came into being – how useage and collecting words was an exhaustive, laborious, endless task. Here in bonkers 2025, dictionary.com's word of the year is 6 7. Am I the only person that still thinks that's numbers not words?? Can you define air jail, bed rotting, delulu, naked quitting or trad wife? Because they've all gone in to one dictionary or another this year. So I may start a petition in the New Year, for insperkiate...

We don't have naps, we have a Nixon. Because I once had a boyfriend who called them that, after the Kenyan long distance runner Nixon Kiprotich. I think it's the kip bit of Kiprotich. Utter nonsense, utterly imbedded in our vernacular.

When I met David, he had words too. In his house, overweight men have chumpies (use your imagination) and back fat is called clint. (Yes, they do sound like fat shamers). Someone who worked with him and his father once,

after the Christmas party, stood up and thanked him for the delightful respite he had just enjoyed when he meant repast, so that's what he calls it. His dad never said beautiful. He said booful. In this house, it's the highest compliment.

Some of our words are surely universal. I never ever see a mural. Thanks to Hilda Ogden, that's a Muriel, right? Some are provided by our children. Animals are amidals, ambulances are ambiances, Tallulah is not Tallulah so often as she's Nunu, which was all her little sister Ottilie, suffering a significant language delay, could manage. We are all the product of where we come from, so we have West Country burr words (my lover) from my side, and London ones from Dave's.

David had a colleague in the states called Ken who used so many malapropisms that they kept a record of them in a notebook with LEXI-KEN written on the front. This not entirely kind perhaps, but definitely funny. Ken once told a whole conference that he would bring a complex plan to frutation, not fruition. So we bring things to frutation too. Even though we know people look at us, and feel sorry that we've used a wrong word. We don't care.

Our time on the Upper West Side gave us a smattering of Yiddish, so we collect tchsotckes (instead of ornaments), love our mensch friends (really super people), and kvetch about almost anything and everyone else (incessantly moan, almost like a pastime, for fun). These are very excellent words, better than their non Yiddish equivalents by far.

Occasionally, now that they are in the world, our kids worry about what is and isn't a Young word or expression. To be fair, Ottilie teaches 7 year olds, who use the wrong word more often than they use the right one, so it isn't such an occupational hazard as it might be for our lawyer. Tallulah recently rang to clarify that rising at sparrow's fart was a universal, not a Young word, and said that her fiancé (ooh, just wrote that down for the first time – she and Max got engaged earlier this month, hurrah) had laughed at her because she'd said swinging from the rafters not the chandeliers, (which he rightly pointed out sounded less fun, more sort of deadly) and had had to explain to her that not everyone added a word to the front of 'crack of dawn' that made it quite inappropriate. She's learning De Tommaso family words now, and so it will go on, this lovely loving melting pot of language, and I like that.

I'm off to insperkiate with Dave about fairy lights – hoping he'll bring my vision for our first festive season in the cottage to frutation, without too much kvetching, and that it will look truly booful. I wish you all the very merriest Christmas, and happiest New Year. May it be healthy, peaceful and full of joy.

LIFE ON THE COMMON 113

By James Giles

Dear all,

The glorious weather has continued throughout October and hopefully into November, which has probably put a curse on it now. It has though been what is called a "Mast" year, with trees producing above average seed, fruits, and nuts. This occurs about every four years on average; the Oaks are full to bursting with acorns, Sweet Chestnuts are loaded with delicious edible chestnuts to roast over a warming fire (remind you of a song?), Horse Chestnuts are laden with that childhood favourite - conkers - and the hedge rows are heaving with fruits such as Sloes (the fruit of the blackthorn), Crab apples and Bullaces (a type of wild plum related to damsons). Connected but not related is the other seasonal harvest, that of fungi. In their infinite shapes and forms, they adorn the woodland and locally for us, the heathland floor, and are most visible and abundant in the autumnal months, although not exclusively as some do appear in the spring.

All this glut of edible food is not just for us – no it's vital to our wildlife's survival. That abundance is a vital source of high energy food to see many animals through the lean winter months, eaten, or stashed away in their larders for a later time. Many are just not good for human consumption, or indeed poisonous, a few are highly deadly to us, but many animals can eat them with incredulity. It is a weird quirk of fate, a chemical fluke, chemistry is at play – perhaps nature's way of ensuring we cannot or do not have them all to ourselves to feast upon.

Take the remarkably familiar Fly Agaric (amanita muscaria) toadstools, a familiar sight on many heathlands, so bright and colourful, so synonymous with toadstools in general. Of many a myth and legend, those warning colours of red and white. Stories of faeries, and magic abound in many northern European folk tales—think about if - you say toadstools which mushroom comes to mind firstly and foremostly. Eaten with impunity by many of our smaller mammals, and larger mammals to that point, but not for us.

Others on the heathland and woodland with wonderfully descriptive and pertinent names are deadly, such as the Destroying Angel, and Death Cap.

For us humans all is not lost as there are some wonderful and very tasty mushrooms to be found. The delicious Cep or Porcini, prized for its taste and texture. Some of the boletes are equally tasty, such as the Birch Boletes. Unfortunately, there is no golden rule as to what is edible or not, gills or spongy, it is all knowledge, and it is highly recommended to know a good expert before trying!!

Other species do abound such as Orange Birch Bolete (Leccinum Versipelle), Tawney Grisette (Amanita Fulva), the Deceiver, Earth Ball, Chanterelle, Amethyst Deceiver,



Fly Agaric (Amanita Muscaria)



Orange Birch Bolete (Leccinum Versipelle)



Earth Ball (Scleroderma Citrium)



Wood Wide Web

Witches' Butter and Coral Fungus to name but a few.

What you tend to see daily are but the fruiting part of the mushroom, but there is a hidden world beneath the ground; beneath the surface is the hidden world of fungal mycelium. A mass of fine threads which is the engine house of the visible fungi.

These threads go in search of water, nutrients, and food. They also work in many cases with other plants' root systems, reaching those nutrients the roots are unable to reach or make use of – these threads assist the fungi in breaking down available sugars and water that the trees or plants roots cannot synthesize alone. Known as the Wood Wide Web (WWW) they will chemically communicate with other fungal threads and indeed the hosts of them, those trees and plants. Alerting them to attacks, drought, sources of food and water. All done silently (to us) and right beneath our feet in many cases.

Work on the reserve

Out on the reserve. The winter habitat work is well under way now. We have made good progress on clearing invasive pine from the area east of Parish field and the line of gorse, pine and birch, opening up views, halting further spread into that area, and to stop the loss of open habitat to a sea of scrub, and indeed fire risk management by removing fuel loading.

The next project is to try and remove the mass of gorse from alongside the beloved boardwalk. Hopefully to remove the risk of fire spreading along the linear structure which functioned as such a conduit for fire back in that fateful weekend in May 2020.

Another job that will be taking place this autumn across the site is the annual heather mowing with a tractor, a cut-and-collect piece of machinery, primarily to increase the structural diversity in the heather sward, but again to lessen the fuel load to create fire and fuel breaks.

Volunteering at Thursley

As with so many organisations we rely heavily on volunteers, Over the past twenty years or so we have built a dedicated team of fine folk who turn up, every week on Thursdays to help me look after this very fine reserve (actually I think it's the cakes) working hard to control the scrub, trees and bushes that left unmanaged will take over the site. And as previously mentioned, will present a very real risk of fire spreading. It's not all demanding work though, occasionally we undertake surveys, such as the annual Nightjar surveys, Silver studded blue butterfly counts, reptiles, Heath tiger beetles, and much more besides. If this is something that grabs your interest and you would like to become an active participant and can offer some of your spare time, or occasional weekends then simply send me an email to:

james.giles@natualengland.org.uk

We are a very friendly group who welcome new members, no matter how experienced, all we ask is willingness to muck in and help to make a difference and look after a fantastic, local, and valuable Nature reserve for everyone's enjoyment, and for nature of course. We also thoroughly enjoy great cakes.

FRIENDS OF THURSLEY COMMON

By Janet Thomson



2025 has been another busy year at Thursley Common, with high visitor numbers, particularly following the designation by The Ramblers of the boardwalk as Britain's Favourite Path. Fortunately, this increased foot traffic has not led to any significant fires on the common, despite the dry spring and summer.

Friends of Thursley Common (FOTC) continues to be active, but the focus has changed as our pool of active volunteers has decreased. In order to use our time more effectively, we have significantly reduced the number of fire patrols and shifted towards informing and educating our visitors about how best to protect and preserve the wildlife on our fantastic reserve.

Our website continues to be heavily used. Our message about the fire risk, and what to do if a fire is seen, is prominent on every page, so a great way to put the message across. The website also showcases some of the fantastic wildlife we have at Thursley. It would be great to expand our online/social media activities, so please contact me if you feel you might be able to help.

If you have unwanted FOTC branded clothing, please let me know Janet Thomson and we will arrange to pick it up from you.

Our focus for next year is firmly on informing visitors so that they are more likely to care for the Common. Here are the activities that we plan to be involved in during 2026:

- Pop-up information events, teaming with other local conservation groups wherever possible.
- Guided walks to introduce visitors to the special flora and fauna of Thursley Common.
- Support James Giles with ongoing maintenance (signage, boardwalk, footpaths etc).
- Maintain and update our website, which is currently visited by about 500 people per week. It's an effective way to get across the message about the fire risk - and makes potential visitors aware that they are visiting an important nature reserve.

We will continue to wear our distinctive blue clothing when out and about on the Common. We'll aim, where possible, to have wardens on the Common at key times when the fire threat is highest. However, this will not always be possible now that our pool of active wardens has decreased.

If you would like to be involved in any of our activities, please contact Janet Thomson on **skethomson@gmail.com**

Elstead Foodbank

Helping villagers during times of crisis

Elstead foodbank has moved temporarily. As the building works move into St James Church the Foodbank has moved into the Youth Centre next to the Elstead Village Hall. We will be open for drop ins every Thursday morning from 10.00 am to 11.00 am.

We continue to support those in greatest need of food and household consumables on a regular basis. We are currently supporting 22 households, a mixture of families with children, single mums, couples, pensioners and singles. It is such a joy to see people who come to us in need and are gradually able to retake control and come off our regulars list. For that we are able to draw on a small grant from the Household Support Grant managed by Surrey County Council. We are also dependent upon the generosity of our donors both in finances and the many food gifts which often come to us anonymously as they simply appear in our collection boxes in the church porch.

If you are struggling to purchase sufficient food whilst paying all your other bills, do please get in touch and we will try to help you, either with an emergency food parcel or to work with you for longer. We have contacts to be able to signpost you to Citizens Advice and other agencies that might also be able to help.

The Elstead Foodbank is open every Thursday from 10am - 11am at Elstead Youth Centre GU8 6DG. We are here to help villagers through difficult times, and to make sure that no one ever goes hungry. If you need help call Revd Delia on 0735 9098 655 or visit us on Thursday morning and we will have a food parcel ready for you.

If you cannot come to the Foodbank but are in need of food, we can arrange a home delivery, subject to volunteer availability. We are very grateful for all your donations throughout the year. All food donations can be taken to St Michael and All Angels Thursley where there is a donation box in the porch for non-perishable food and toiletries. At this time of year we particularly would like donations of:

Tinned vegetables
Tinned meats and fish
Custard (packet or tinned)
Tea bags
Instant coffee jar or hot chocolate
Pot noodles
Tinned rice pudding
Jam or Honey or Peanut butter
Toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shower gel



If you would like to know more about the Foodbank and how you can help, please contact Rev Delia on 0735 9098 655 or

email: minister@parishesofetsph.org

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There is already lots going on - everyone is welcome, so get involved, join one of the village societies or start one of your own.

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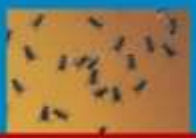
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