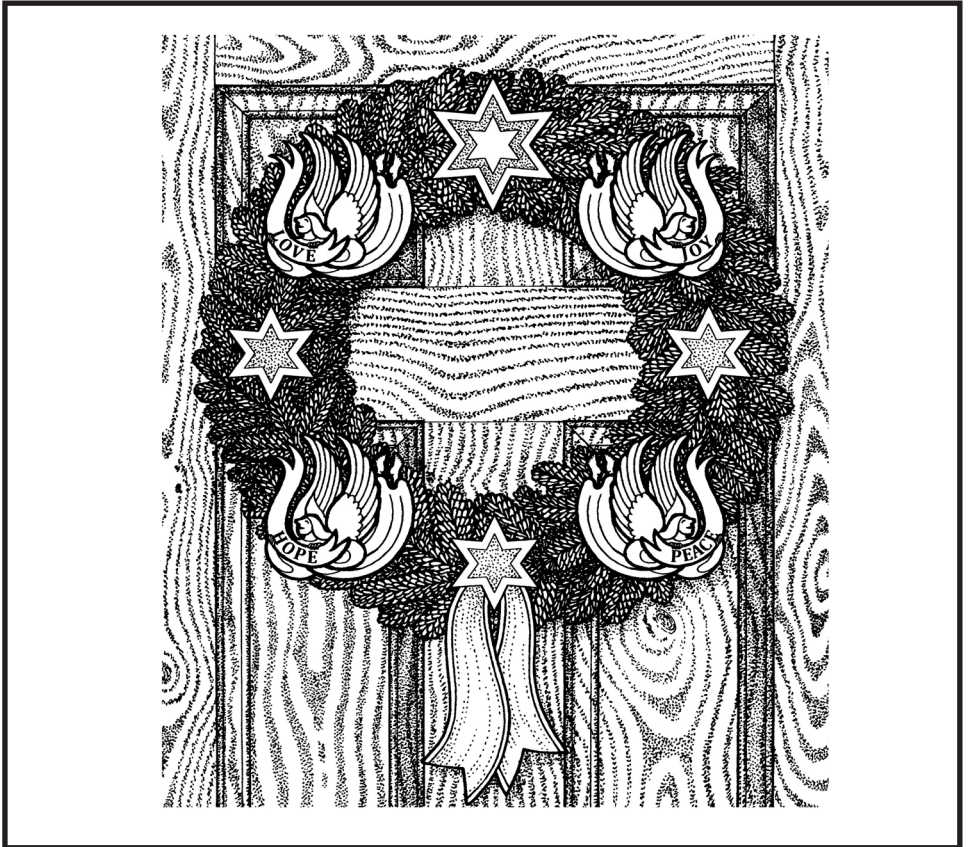


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**December/Christmas Edition 2023**



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## **From Ann Kaiser - Editor**

After some 30 years as Editor and with advancing years!.....this will be my last edition as editor of the Pulborough Parish magazine. We have tried to find someone to take on the editorship, but sadly no-one has come forward as yet. We will continue our endeavour to find someone in the new year.

My very grateful thanks go to a number of people who have supported me month by month and year by year. To our regular contributors, St. Mary's School, Pulborough Medical Group, The Auld Sage, Pulborough Parish Council, the local groups and societies in the Village and surrounding villages. To Nigel Frey who has worked his expertise on the advertising template. To Len and Pauline Adsett and Frances Wojewodzka who have bundled the magazines and put them ready for the distributors. Thanks go to those who deliver the magazines in the Village and to Tesco, Sainsbury's, Pulborough Stores and Dyke Farm, the retail outlets that sell the magazines.

This publication not only gives advertisers an opportunity to advertise their trades locally but it also provided vital revenue for the Parish Church.

I am very grateful for the support I have had over the years and very hopeful that we will find a new editor early in the New Year. If anyone would like further information of what is involved please contact me:

**ann.kaiser@live.co.uk. Tel:01798 872819**

I do hope you enjoy my final edition! Thank you all so very much for all your support over the years.

## **A few last smile lines...**

### **What would you like for Christmas?**

A little girl went to visit Father Christmas in the local garden centre grotto. He welcomed her with a smile and the question of what she would like for Christmas.

The little girl gasped and stared up at him in horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"

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email: ann.kaiser@live.co.uk

**Treasurer and Distribution**

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## **Fr Paul's Letter**

*Dear Friends,*

### **'O Little Town of Bethlehem'**

As Christmas approaches we hear once again of references to that 'little town' which was the setting for the first Christmas. We sing about this place in many seasonal songs and carols and recall the simple scene in that stable in that place where there was no room at the Inn!

Today that area of the world is in the midst of enormous turmoil and is the setting of a terrible ongoing conflict in which many lives have been lost and many people have been displaced from their homes. This is a far cry from the hopes and aspirations of the Christmas season and the message of the holy child of Bethlehem.

Yet we recall that at the time of Jesus' birth, the political climate at the time was far from stable and peaceful. The land was occupied by foreign forces and the whims of despotic rulers prevailed. The Christmas story involves the struggles of a poor family who are forced to flee from their homeland. It tells of the slaughter of innocent young children at the hands of a ruthless king whose desire to hold onto power was his motivation for much of what he did.

In so many ways the world hasn't changed, despite the great advances that human beings have made since that time. The motivations of the human heart are much the same as they always have been. Jesus warns his hearers that it is what emanates from within the human heart that are the root causes of our problems! He came to show us that there is a different and better way to live alongside each other. This entails the need to ensure that the desires of the heart are kept in check by surrendering ourselves to a higher authority. Jesus came to reveal what this 'authority' looks like as manifested in a human being.

At the heart of the Christmas story there is a small new-born child who comes to bless the world with His presence. So many of the true blessings of this season are in those small things that are offered and received in a spirit of love and gratitude.

*(continued overleaf.....)*

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In the midst of the complex and complicated challenges of our time, may we hold onto those small simple things that cut through to the essentials of life in which we should all rejoice at this time of the year.

May you capture something of the miracle of human life and love this Christmas season with a renewed sense of what really matters and with a greater desire to cherish those small reflections of the love which is at the heart of life itself.

A Happy and Blessed Christmas to you all.

**With my prayers and best wishes,  
Fr Paul Seaman ( Rector of Pulborough)**

## **Church Flag**

Please note that on Monday 25th December we shall be raising the St. Georges flag to mark "Christmastide and the period until the feast of the Epiphany". **Simon Banks - Flag master**

## **St Mary's Bells 100 Club – October Draw**

The October draw for the St Mary's Bells 100 Club was made on Monday 6th November in the Chequers Hotel, Pulborough and the results were as follows:

1st Prize : £100 - number 61 - Mrs E Eatwell  
2nd Prize: £50 - number 51 - Mrs J Adsett  
3rd Prize: £10 - number 73 - Mr I Maxwell  
4th Prize: £10 - number 5 - Mrs K Reid-Thomas  
5th Prize: £10 - number 89 - Mr G White  
6th Prize: £10 - number 81 - Miss E Cornford  
7th Prize: £10 – number 6 - Mrs S Smith

The November draw will take place on Monday 4th December 9.30 p.m. in The Chequers Hotel, Pulborough.

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## **Church Services in December**

### **3rd FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Common Worship Year B)**

8am The Holy Eucharist (Said)-Book of Common Prayer

10.30am: 'ALL ARE WELCOME'

Readings: 1 Corinthians 1. 3-9 and Mark 13. 24-end

12.30pm Holy Baptism of Nico Ruben Aisbitt

4pm CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

and Lighting of the Pulborough Star

### **10th THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

8am The Holy Eucharist (Said)

10. 30am THE PARISH EUCHARIST with HOLY BAPTISM

of Rory Benjamin Adam Feld

Readings: 2 Peter 3. 8-15a and Mark 1. 1-8

12noon St Mary's Handbells at The Anchorage

### **17th THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

8am The Holy Eucharist (Said)

10. 30am THE PARISH EUCHARIST

Readings: 1 Thessalonians 5. 16-24 and John 1. 6-8. 19-28

6pm Traditional Parish Carol Service

### **24th: THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (CHRISTMAS EVE)**

10. 00am THE PARISH EUCHARIST

Readings: Romans 16. 25-end and Luke 1. 26-38

4pm Crib Service

11pm Midnight Mass (please note earlier time)

Readings: Titus 2. 11-14 and Luke 2. 1-14

### **25th: CHRISTMAS DAY**

10. 00am THE PARISH EUCHARIST including Christmas music with choir and organ (please note time)

Readings: Hebrews 1. 1-4 and John 1: 1-14

### **31st SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS (Holy Family Sunday)**

8am The Holy Eucharist (Said)

10. 30am THE PARISH EUCHARIST

Galatians 4. 4-7 and Luke 2. 15-21



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## **From the Church Registers in October and November**

### **Holy Baptism**

*'May God who has received you by Baptism into his Church pour upon you the riches of this grace'*

4th October: Joan Eva Feltham at The Anchorage Care Home

### **Holy Matrimony**

*'Those whom God hath joined together, let not man divide'*

5th November: Timothy Martin and Maria Mihaela Nicolae

### **Funerals, Service of Thanksgiving and Burial of Ashes**

*'God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life'*

5th October : Roy Wilshaw R.I.P. Burial of Ashes

10th October: Patricia Jean Church R.I.P (Burial following funeral service in Romford) Fr Dominic Howarth officiated.

14th November: Pheobe Ann Godden R.I.P. Funeral followed by cremation

17th November: Mavis Cooper R.I.P. Funeral followed by cremation



**Smile line...**

### **Father Christmas**

Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy." Taking a deep breath, I asked him what that might be. "Easy," he said, "They are all nocturnal."



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## **No Room? On the Contrary**

This year one carol will be sung with particular poignancy. It retells the message of angels, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests" and continues:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife, the world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel strain have rolled, two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hears not the love song which they bring:  
O hush the noise, you men of strife, and hear the angels sing.*

The angels' goodwill message will persist despite our clamour, for it proclaims God's all-embracing and eternal welcome. Heaven's doors are ever open: it is home for everyone. The final biblical vision is of an all-encompassing city: "On no day will its gates ever be shut... the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it."

Jesus, for whom there had been no room at the inn, taught that God's kingdom is home for every race: "I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." He reassured those anxious about the future: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms..."

No room? Don't you believe it!

**The Venerable John Barton**

## **Downlands Ensemble**

The Downland Ensemble is a community orchestra for all ages and abilities, meeting twice a month on Saturday mornings in Pulborough Village Hall.

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## Nativity Quiz for families

- 1 Where did Mary and Joseph live before Jesus was born?  
a) Nazareth b) Bethlehem c) Jerusalem
- 2 What was the name of the angel who told Mary she would have a child?
- 3 What did Joseph do for a living?
- 4 Who was the Roman ruler when Jesus was born?
- 5 Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
- 6 How did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
- 7 Why couldn't Mary and Joseph find a place to stay?
- 8 Where does the Bible say Jesus was born?  
a) In a stable b) In hay c) In a manger
- 9 According to the Bible, which animals were specifically mentioned as being present in the stable when Jesus was born? a) sheep and a donkey b) cattle and a donkey c) donkey, sheep and cattle d) None
- 10 What does the angel say to the shepherds when they tell them to go to Bethlehem?
- 11 The wise men travelled ..... to Jerusalem. a) northward b) southward c) eastward d) westward
- 12 What did the Wise Men follow to find Jesus?
- 13 How many Wise Men visited baby Jesus?
- 14 What gifts did the wise men bring for Jesus?
- 15 Who spread the news about baby Jesus throughout Bethlehem?
- 16 What is the City of David also known as in the bible?
- 17 Which of the gospels tell the story of the Nativity?
- 18 What does Jesus' other name, "Immanuel", mean? a) God with us b) Son of God c) He who is God d) Chosen One
- 19 How many days after the birth of Christ did Joseph and Mary give him the name Jesus?
- 20 Jesus was born on the 25th of December. True or false?

**Canon Paul Hardingham**

(Answers on page 50)



## The Rectory St James the Least of All



### My dear Nephew Darren

Carol singing is not what it used to be. My fond memories of a group of choristers, muffled in scarves and overcoats, carrying lanterns, and walking from door to door in the snow, as they sang 'While shepherds watched ...' had to be suddenly revised when I saw your own music group, in T-shirts inscribed with 'Jesus loves You', singing 'Little donkey', in your shopping centre. I suspect any money you raised would just about have paid for the electricity used to power your banks of electronic equipment. Singing in the main square of the Centre next to the fountain may have looked good, but it seemed to mean that the choirmen were obliged to make constant trips to the lavatory.

Here at St James the Least of All, carol singing is regarded as a staff perk for the choir; the year when the Boys' Brigade tried to break their monopoly was suppressed with a ruthlessness that would have impressed Genghis Kahn.



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Those homes that contain several children are visited just after bedtime, so that parents will give generously simply to get the choir to go somewhere else. Veiled threats to stay and sing more carols (unless they give generously) are usually very effective. Getting whoever looks the most innocent and photogenic to ring the bell and ask for money is a far more subtle way of ensuring a donation than planting any number of mafia lookalikes (such as our church treasurer) on the doorstep.

The choir always finishes its evening at the local pub – but again, the timing must be carefully managed. Too early and there will only be the landlord, his wife, and their Labrador to listen; too late and people will be so full of Christmas cheer that any carols will be hi-jacked and become the equivalent of back-of-the bus rugby songs.

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**Eustace**



*Sara preferred to let people work  
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## **Pulborough Shedders Grand Opening**

Pulborough Shedders had their Grand Opening on Wednesday 29th November. This was attended by 50 people including members of the Parish Council, Fr Paul from St Mary's Church and Community Wardens, Ross and Louisa who have been a great support to this group and Carol Boniface who first got a few people together to talk about setting up a "sheds" group.



Local residents and other community groups were keen to find out more about this new group in Pulborough. Len Ellis-Brown Chairman of the Parish Council did the official opening ceremony, and everyone enjoyed chatting and eating the delicious refreshments. The Pulborough Shedders currently meet in a temporary base which is a room above a double garage.

Everyone is welcome to come and join, **they meet every Wednesday 9.30am to 12.30pm**. It is a place to pursue practical interests at leisure, to practice skills and enjoy making and mending. However, sheds are mainly about making social connections. They are about friendship building, sharing skills and knowledge and of course a lot of laughter. Check them out on Facebook or their website [www.pulboroughshedders.org](http://www.pulboroughshedders.org), which will also give you a map on how to find them.



## **News from Pulborough Parish Council**

### **Budget 24/25**

After a lot of discussion at both the Finance and Policy Committee and Full Council we have agreed (provided no additional information comes forward) our budget for 24/25. We have made a number of changes that will allow us to improve how the council operates and bring benefits to the community. We have managed to keep the increase in the precept to 10p per week (Band D property). More details on this will be available shortly.

### **Transport Working Group**

At the recent meeting of the Transport Working Group the priorities were updated and agreed. Unfortunately, invited representatives from West Sussex County Council Highways were unable to attend. Seeking a crossing outside St Mary's School remains a top priority for the Parish Council.

### **Recreation Ground**

The Parish Clerk and I visited a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Lewes, recently. We wanted to better understand the surface being proposed as a cost-effective solution for our MUGA. We have produced a business plan to support opportunities for funding and plan meetings with the Sussex FA (and other interested parties) to discuss further.

### **Sussex Wildlife Trust**

The Sussex Wildlife Trust event on 10th November was attended by over 100 people. There has been considerable positive feedback following our presentation and we are seeking to work more closely with the Trust, to progress our rewilding/environment objectives. Since the event we have visited Nutbourne Common, with local councillors and residents, to consider what could be done to improve it environmentally. We are arranging a visit on site by the Horsham Rewilding Initiative to advise on what could be done and working closely with the Nutbourne Residents Association on any Proposals.

### **Community Pantry**

Thanks to the Neighbourhood Wardens, Councillor Kevin Lee and Maria his wife, things are moving forward quickly with the Community Pantry. It is to be based in the Parish Office at the rear of the Sports and Social Club. Over the next few weeks, the office is being refurbished, including new windows. Further information will be available on its launch on the Parish Council Digital Presence.



**Facebook page.**

We agreed soon after the election that we should improve our social media presence. We are pleased to see that the engagement rate on our Facebook post averages a reach of 13,000 people. This is a substantial increase and very encouraging.

**Christmas Events & Merry Festive Christmas**

We hope to see as many as possible at the various Christmas events throughout the Parish including the Fair on 1st, market 9th and Christmas services at the Pulborough Churches. It has been a whirlwind of a year for all of us, but may I, on behalf of the Council, wish you the very best for the Festive Season. We're certainly looking forward to getting on with all the exciting projects in the pipeline, in 2024.

**Len Ellis-Brown**

**Chair of Pulborough Parish Council**

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					4	5		2
				8				3
	7		8			9		
		2				6		
		3			2		8	
4				5				
1		6	3					
				4			9	7

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An intermediate Sudoku with each square needing the number 1-9 and each horizontal line and vertical line 1-9 also.

## **News from Pulborough Medical Group**

Winter season is upon us again and thanks to those who were eligible for keeping up to date with covid and flu vaccines. Covid now joins a number of winter illnesses so important to look after ourselves and loved ones and keep ourselves healthy.

For some common winter illnesses and associated symptoms there are excellent online resources to guide you with symptom management and when to contact. Also our invaluable resource in local pharmacies who are well placed to guide with a number of over the counter treatments available and who we work closely with. 111 are also a useful resource if unsure of whether a symptom may be serious or not.

For general health and wellbeing advice regarding diet, exercise etc we have health and wellbeing advisor appointments. We also have our excellent social prescriber available to help with a number of issues from social isolation to guiding people with some issues regarding housing or return to work. Drop in citizens advice bureau service is available certain days.

MIND also are linked in with our local surgeries to provide mental health support which is so key this time of year to look after our mental wellbeing. We are also fortunate to have time to talk services run through West sussex providing talking therapies. Christmas time can be a very hard time for a number of people so do remember to check in with loved ones /colleagues or if you yourself are struggling do remember your local GP service and helplines available – Samaritans and West sussex mental healthline. To gain access to these services our care navigators can signpost and we have a new phone service to help ease the wait times on phones and e consult service available as well.

Some common winter ailments

### **Sore throat :**

Sore throats are very common and usually nothing to worry about. They normally get better by themselves within a week.

To help soothe a sore throat and shorten how long it lasts, you can:

- gargle with warm, salty water (children should not try this)
- drink plenty of water
- eat cool or soft foods
- avoid smoking or smoky places

- suck ice cubes, ice lollies or hard sweets – but do not give young children anything small and hard to suck because of the risk of choking
- rest  
You can ask a pharmacist about ways of relieving the pain and discomfort of a sore throat, such as:
- paracetamol or ibuprofen
- medicated lozenges containing a local anaesthetic, antiseptic, or anti-inflammatory medicine
- anaesthetic spray (although there's little proof they help)

You can buy these treatments from a supermarket or from a pharmacist without a prescription.

You do not normally need antibiotics for a sore throat because they will not usually relieve your symptoms or speed up your recovery. They'll only be prescribed if a GP thinks you could have a bacterial infection.

### **See your GP if**

- your sore throat does not improve after a week
- you often get sore throats
- if immune suppressed
- shivering/high temperature
- or if have general concerns

A severe or long-lasting sore throat could be something like strep throat (a bacterial throat infection)

### **Cough:**

-Rest, fluids and some evidence for honey and lemon and pharmacy teams can advise over the counter products

When to see a GP

- you've had a cough for more than 3 weeks (persistent cough)
- your cough is very bad or quickly gets worse – for example, you have a hacking cough or cannot stop coughing
- you feel very unwell
- you have chest pain
- you're losing weight for no reason
- the side of your neck feels swollen and painful (swollen glands)
- you find it hard to breathe
- you have a weakened immune system – for example, because of chemotherapy or diabetes

*(Continued overleaf....)*

## **See a GP urgently if you're coughing up blood.**

We hope that you remains well during this period but our team and local pharmacies along with online NHS resources and 111 are here if you need us.

And with on behalf of PMG team and our extended local health service providers we would like to wish you a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year and thank you for all your support to our team.

**Dr Eloise Scahill**

## **Volunteer drivers needed**

Pulborough Community Transport (registered charity) is looking for new drivers who are happy to be trained to drive the wheelchair assisted vehicle. You must have a current driving licence.

Full training will be given, taking approx 30 minutes, to learn how to attach and secure the belts to a wheelchair and you will be fully insured to drive the vehicle.

The Community Transport is also looking for voluntary drivers to drive their own cars taking people who are unable to use public transport to PMG appointments, hospital and dental appointments. If you are able to give an hour or so, just once in a while it really makes such a difference!

Please contact **Christine Lindsay on 0759 125 8409** for further information.



## **Pulborough Christmas Village Market**

Do come along to Pulborough Village Hall on **Saturday 9th December from 9am to 12noon** for a morning of festive fun. There will be carol singers, Christmas raffle, children's quiz and stalls selling ideal Christmas gifts. Start your morning off with a delicious cooked breakfast or breakfast bap, seasonal savoury and sweet items. It is definitely a morning not to be missed in Pulborough. Family Support Work, the local charity helping families in need have a special stall to receive Christmas food items or monetary donations. Look forward to seeing you there!!



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## **News from St. Mary's School**

Keeping the focus on teaching and learning has meant that the term is rushing by at St Mary's; energy and enthusiasm are the order of the day with lots of activities to hook the children in. Our actors and actresses in KS1 are already in rehearsal for their Christmas plays. This year's productions are 'A Midwife Crisis' and 'Twinkly Nativity'. The hall is already full of children singing and practising their parts. We will be spreading Christmas cheer at The Anchorage and Hillside Lodge when we take the choir to sing some of our favourite Christmas carols.

Our sports people have been enjoying performing in sports events and recently we have sent teams to participate in cross-country, badminton and football. We love seeing the children compete against other schools. It builds resilience and allows them to develop their sporting skills.

The Year 4 children have been performing and have showed off their clarinet skills, our celebration assemblies for parents have been so well attended and the children joined in with SPLASH! as they came to lead our worship and to talk about love at Christmas.

This year's Fireworks Party was a great success – ably masterminded by the PTA. Apart from the amazing display, we had music, a barbecue and a mobile coffee van to enjoy! This event raised £2570 which will go to support the children's learning. 'Children In Need' day was marked by the wearing of spots, pyjamas and onesies - here at St Mary's we do love a dress up day!

We always look forward to welcoming Fr Paul and Mr Holloway to school – this week we will be celebrating the beginning of Advent with a Christingle celebration, we will make our own and will be shining our light up at St Mary's Church on Sunday 3rd December at 4pm. Christmas is coming ....

**Sam Copus - Headteacher**

**Smile line**

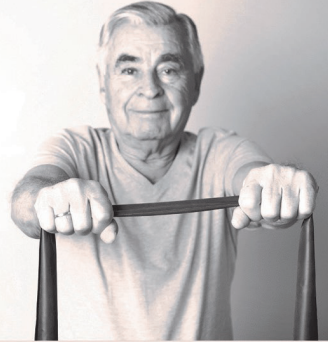
### **Christmas gifts**

Grandfather was talking to his granddaughter, "When I was a child all we got for Christmas was an apple and an orange."

The little girl clapped her hands in joy. "Brilliant! I'd love a new computer and a mobile!"

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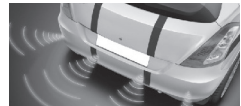
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## **The Pulborough Society**

“Did you know there’s another ‘Arun Valley’? It’s in Nepal, not too far from Mt. Everest!

But the Pulborough Society’s next meeting is all about the Church Archeology of ‘our’ Arun Valley.

The illustrated talk by local historian Bob Hutchinson will cover the evidence of human activity ‘on our doorstep’ over thousands of years. The date is **Wednesday 6th December at 2.30pm in the Village Hall** and non-members are very welcome for a visitors’ fee of £2.”

The first meeting of the Pulborough Society’s 2024 Programme is on **Wednesday 3rd January at 2.30pm** in the Village Hall when John Dixon and Lynn Richards will talk about the work of the Pulborough & District Community Care Association which has been providing a variety of services for local residents since 1966”.

**Ian Ellis**



### **Come and Sing for Christmas Pleasure**

Why not have a break from the hustle and bustle of Christmas preparations and come and sing from festival songs on **Tuesday 19th December in the Rother Hall at Pulborough Village Hall.**

There are no auditions, it is not a choir just an enjoyment of singing. The session is from **2pm to 3.30pm** with an interval for tea, coffee and seasonal refreshments. Michael Pioli leads the light-hearted afternoon and the cost is just £3 for the session. Do come along you will be made most welcome.

### **Smile line**

#### **Christmas shopping**

It was Christmas and the judge was in a benign mood as he asked the prisoner what he was charged with. “Doing my Christmas shopping early,” replied the man.

“Why, that’s no offence,” said the judge. “How early were you doing it?”  
“Before the store opened,” replied the defendant.



# The Pulborough Exchange

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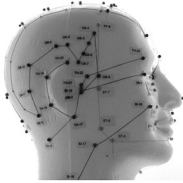
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## **December in the Garden by The Auld Sage**

Winter has arrived with the first few frosts, which have finished off the lingering leaves on the deciduous trees and finally did in the dahlias which were continuing to flower out of season.

So, now that most of the herbaceous plants have died back it's time to remove the decaying stems and leaves leaving any that may have an architectural interest (like the grasses with their lovely seedheads). If your clumps of herbaceous plants are spreading out of control, dig around the outside of the clump and reduce the size of them with your spade. The unending chasing of leaves has been continuing but will shortly come to an end, so gather up the natural manure provided by nature to enrich your soil after they have been composted down.

Now that the deciduous plants have been stripped of their leaves the colourful barks of dogwood, silver birch and acers have come to the fore with their stunning hues. And likewise, the evergreen shrubs that have been overshadowed and dulled into the background of your garden display are now shining through.

Don't neglect your pond which may have become a trap for leaves during the leaf deluge as the leaves break down in the water, they can turn the water quite toxic. So, give the pond a good clean out and reduce any of the marginal plants which are too large or encroaching on the surface area of your pond.

As the heating has been turned on/up in your house the water is being sucked out of the compost in which your house plants are residing so don't forget to water them regularly.

So, happy gardening and season's greetings!

P.S. Don't relax too much over the winter. Keep the garden patrolled to keep an eye on what needs to be done and to contemplate on what you require from your garden in the year to come.





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## **The first-ever nativity scene**

This Christmas, thousands of Nativity plays will be held around the UK. Ever wonder who staged the very first one?

It was St Francis of Assisi, and it was 800 years ago, in Greccio, Italy, on 25th December 1223.

Francis had been born into a wealthy family, but abandoned his noble inheritance when he became a Christian. Instead, he had turned to a life of great simplicity, in service to Christ's church.

Francis spent many hours meditating on the stories of the life of Christ, and even travelled to the Holy Land in 1219 and 1220, to see the various holy sites of Jesus's life. The sites deeply moved him, as they brought the Bible stories to vibrant life.

Back in Italy, in November of 1223, Francis was in Rome, and he had an idea. Why not share something of the inspiration of the Holy Land with his people here in Italy?

Barely 50 miles to the north, in Greccio, he knew many people to whom he had been ministering for years. He could at least show them something of the simplicity of the birth of Jesus. And so it was that, two weeks before Christmas, Francis asked his friend, the Lord of Greccio, Giovanni Velita, to prepare a nearby cave with live animals and a hay-filled manger.

That cave, beside some rocky crags, became the venue of the very first ever Nativity scene. On Christmas 1223, when the people of Greccio attended Christmas Mass as usual, they were invited to 'come and see' the simple scene.

According to his biographer, Brother Thomas of Celano, Francis wanted people to see what Jesus had "suffered for lack of the necessities of a new-born babe, and how He lay in the manger between the ox and ass."

According to eyewitness accounts of the moment, fires lit the dark scene while crowds arrived at the spot carrying candles and torches. There were also accounts of miracles happening that night. Some people had a vision of a real infant in the empty manger, and others reported miraculous healings.

All in all, the Nativity scene was an instant success, and soon other communities were staging their own.

Today, you can still visit the cave and rocks where the first Nativity was staged. It is now a Franciscan hermitage and sanctuary. Every year at Christmas, the people of Greccio stage a live, historical re-enactment of St Francis and the first Nativity scene.

Pope Francis has visited the spot two times: in 2016 and then in 2019, when he signed an apostolic letter on the importance of Nativity scenes.

You can read more on this story at:



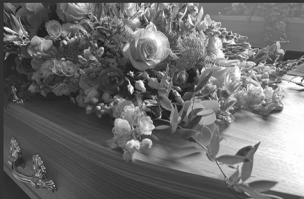
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## **Where did Christmas cards come from?**

Christmas cards have a history which may surprise you: their origins are not of the Church, but of the Post Office and railways.

Of course, very early 'Christmas cards' had been around for hundreds of years, in the form of a simple exchange of Christmas greetings in private letters. The earliest such letter on record was written in England in 1534. In 1611 a HUGE Christmas card made a one-off appearance. It measured a whopping 33" by 24", and was given to King James I of England (who was also King James VI of Scotland). It featured an illustration of a rose, four poems, a song, and a Christmas message for the king and his son.

Then in 1843 came the creation of Christmas cards as we know them today. One enterprising man was responsible for this: Sir Henry Cole, a senior civil servant who had helped launch the 'Public Record Office', now called the Post Office.

Sir Henry Cole helped to introduce the Penny Post, as it was called. Until then, only rich people could afford the Post, but with the building of the railways, which carried far more packages than a horse and cart (and went much faster), suddenly the Penny Post became possible.

Sir Henry wanted to encourage 'ordinary' people to use the new service. So he came up with the bright idea of a creating a simple card that people could send each other for Christmas. His friend, John Horsley, was an artist, who designed a three-panel card. Two panels depicted people caring for the poor, and the middle panel showed a family enjoying a large Christmas dinner.

They printed about 1000 cards that first year, and advertised under the slogan: 'Just published, a Christmas Congratulations Card; or picture emblematical of old English festivity to perpetuate kind recollections between dear friends!'

The cards sold for one shilling each and could be posted to friends and family for a Penny. There was an immediate, warm response from the public.

Printing methods improved, and by 1860 Christmas cards were produced in large quantities. By 1870 the cost of posting one had dropped to half a penny, and the custom was rapidly gaining popularity. By the early 1900s, the custom had spread across Europe.

*(Continued overleaf....)*



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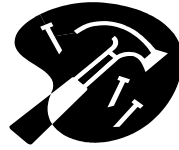
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The first cards usually included a Nativity scene, and in late Victorian times, robins and snow-scenes. Robins were chosen because the postmen in those days were nick-named 'Robin Postmen', because of their red uniforms.

Christmas cards appeared in the USA in the late 1840s. They were mass produced from 1875, and in 1915 John C Hall and two of his brothers created Hallmark Cards, which today offers 2,000 different designs of Christmas card.

Charity Christmas cards began in Denmark in the early 1900s. They spread to Sweden and Norway, and then on throughout Europe and America. Last year the Royal Mail estimated that it had delivered 150 million cards during the Christmas period.

## **Probus Club of Storrington & District**

Now meeting at the Random Hall Hotel, Slinfold, we are a social club for retired and semi-retired men.

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Beneath outgoing aircraft roar all eardrums to disjoint  
The old County of Sussex finds its northerly-most point

Consumed by crimson evening skies the day is closing down  
By inching darkness overwhelmed, in night time's grasp to drown  
Where all is hid' from sight amidst a gloomy disarray  
Till once again the county wakes to greet a brand new day

This tip of Sussex may be bleak industrial and cold  
But welcome to the real world if starkest truth be told  
Where business parks, a motorway and airport all converge  
A sudden rude awakening all pleasantness to purge

The airport's railway station was formerly Tinsley Green  
Until a swift rebranding process proved purely routine  
The small backwater stopping place upgraded at a stroke  
And from their slow lane lifestyles shocked locals soon awoke

The planes at Gatwick come and go, man's flying high again  
At one time grounded, all laid low by every Covid strain  
When birdlife ruled the Border skies with fervour at its heart  
But right of way relinquished now to mighty counterparts

Though once upon a time serene no chance such luck today  
The decibel meter's broken Gatwick Airport got its way  
Courageous Sussex villages 'came overwhelmed and lost  
All in the name of progress never mind the human cost

There will be those who dare to challenge Attenborough the wise  
That blinkered band of chancers who still don't believe their eyes  
But time's no longer on our side and action must be swift  
To bring about avoidance of far greater climate shift

**John Byrne**

## Storrington Film Night

Storrington Film Nights are organised by the Rotary Club of Storrington & Pulborough District.

The next film, on **Tuesday 12th December**, will be "Oppenheimer", *The award-winning story of American scientist, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and his role in the development of the atomic bomb.*

The showing commences at 7.00pm, at Sullington Hall, Thakeham Road, RH20 3PP.

The January film, on Wednesday 10th, will be "The Great Escaper", starring Michael Caine.

Tickets are £5, and are available from the Card Shop in Storrington. Any unsold tickets will be available on the door, on the night.

There is a Bar and a Raffle during the interval.

**Anyone requiring transport should contact John Ollerton 07523 322554**

**For further information please contact Ken Collins 01903 740745.**




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## **Little donkey, little donkey**

You are bound to sing about donkeys this Christmas, especially the little one that carried Mary to Bethlehem! But how much do you know about donkeys? They are really rather special.

Here are some fun facts:

There are more than 44 million donkeys in the world, of all shapes and sizes.

There are more than 186 breeds of donkey.

Donkeys have good memories. They can remember places and other donkeys even 25 years after they last saw them.

Donkeys are not stubborn, they are cautious. If they are fearful about something, they will do their best to avoid it.

Donkeys are naturally clean. Given the chance, they are always grooming themselves and each other.

Donkeys like to be warm and dry. They come from deserts and savannahs.

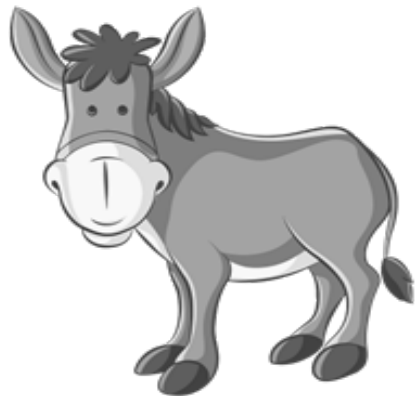
Donkeys are social. They make deep bonds with their family and herd and get very upset if someone they love is taken from them.

Donkeys have big ears for a good reason – it means they can hear each other at a great distance. They communicate by braying, grunting, whiffing, squealing and snorting.

Donkeys help the ecology of their desert homes by digging into the ground to access water. This provides little creatures such as birds and chipmunks with life-saving water.

Donkeys need your help. Millions round the world are being mistreated, and you can take action to help them.

**Local sanctuary: East Clayton Farm  
Georges Lane, Storrington Road  
Washington, West Sussex, RH20 4AG  
donkeywalking@lorica.org.uk**



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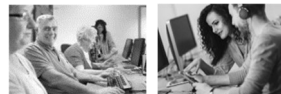
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## **Let Christmas Begin! - An invitation to the local community**

The Mary How Trust are back with their Community Christmas Carol Evening 'Let Christmas Begin' at St Marys Church Pulborough on **Wednesday 13th December**.

This is a chance for the whole community to get together and sing the sounds of the season whilst supporting well-loved local charity The Mary How Trust for Cancer Prevention. This year support is needed more than ever.

*"We have an ever-growing need for this life saving service. More and more people want to use our service but simply can't make a donation" says Jamie Clark, Head of Fundraising, Events and Marketing. "We are unique in working on a donate what you can afford. Cancer rates are on the rise and the current cost of living crisis means people are struggling more than ever. We want to carry on increasing our screening numbers. Early detection saves lives!"*

Doors open at 6.30pm with Carols from 7.00pm. It's a fantastic opportunity to start the Christmas celebrations early and sing favourite carols, led by the Chanctonbury Chorus, with solos by Sussex based soprano Lucy Mair.

"The evening includes warm mulled wine, and local bakery Truffles mince pies. It's **FREE** entry on the evening but you are welcome to book in advance. Your donations are of course appreciated, with all proceeds going to develop our health screening services. This is a special event and is not to be missed" added Jamie.

Adam Masters, Managing Director of Petributes, the events headline sponsor for the second year running, commented "We got to know the Mary How Trust and its commendable initiatives through our Chairman, Richard Bush. The Mary How Trust detected early symptoms of prostate cancer in Richard, leading to his successful recovery".

Tickets are FREE to the event; you do not need a ticket but can however be booked on the Mary How Trust Website. <https://maryhowtrust.org/events/>

If you would like to offer your support or to sponsor this event, please contact **Jamie Clark. [fundraising@maryhowtrust.org](mailto:fundraising@maryhowtrust.org)**

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## **Stop mist on your windscreen**

If you will be out in your car a lot this Christmas, here's an easy way to stop your windscreen from misting up:

Simply clean it with shaving foam. It provides a protective barrier which stops mist forming. Ice hockey players use it to stop their face masks from steaming up while they're on the ice.

It's easy to do. Put a good dollop of shaving foam onto a clean towel, and then wipe it all over the windscreen. Then take a second clean towel, and gently wipe off the shaving foam. This leaves a protective barrier, but it will need to be regularly reapplied, to continue to work.

This tip can be found on the RAC website: [www.rac.co.uk](http://www.rac.co.uk)

## **Drink tea or coffee each day – and keep old age weakness away!**

Recent research has found that drinking coffee or tea in midlife may help keep you stronger in later life.

A study at the National University of Singapore concluded that higher caffeine intake is associated with lower odds of physical frailty in old age, regardless of the source of the caffeine.

Physical frailty in old age was defined as having at least two of the following: weight loss, exhaustion, slowness and weakness. The scientists also measured handgrip strength and the time taken to complete a timed up-and-go (TUG) test.

In addition to caffeine, coffee and tea contain rich bioactive polyphenols, which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. These have been associated with reduced risk for diseases that increase frailty, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, obesity and neurodegenerative disease.

## **Just a thought...**

Old age, believe me, is a good and pleasant time. It is true that you are gently shouldered off the stage, but then you are given such a comfortable front stall as spectator, and, if you really have played your part, you are more content to sit down and watch. – Jane Harrison



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## **Pulborough Churches Christmas Services**

### **Pulborough United Reformed Church**

82 Lower Street, Pulborough, RH20 2DW  
Saturday 16th December at 4pm Carol service  
Christmas Day 10am Christmas Morning Worship

### **Pulborough Brooks Baptist Church**

Pulborough Village Hall, Swan View, Pulborough, RH20 2BF  
Saturday 23rd December 4pm Carol Service  
Christmas Day 10am Christmas Celebration

### **Parish Church of St. Mary, Pulborough**

Church Place, PULBOROUGH, RH20 2AF  
Sunday 17th December 6pm Village Carol Service  
Christmas Eve 4pm Crib Service  
11pm Midnight Mass  
Christmas Day  
10am The Parish Eucharist



### **Nativity Quiz answers**

- 1 Nazareth 2 Gabriel 3 Carpenter 4 Caesar Augustus
- 5 To register for the census 6 We are not told in the Bible
- 7 There was no room at the inn 8 c) In a manger 9 d) None
10. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to all people'
- 11 d) westward 12 A star 13 The Bible doesn't say
- 14 Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh 15 The shepherds
- 16 Bethlehem 17 Matthew and Luke 18 a) God with us
19. 8, according to the law 20 False; we don't know the date

## **Remembering The Holy Land and Ukraine**

As this year draws to a close we continue to remember all those caught up in the conflicts in the Holy Land and Ukraine We pray for all world leaders, diplomats and ambassadors and all working for the common good.

### **The Lord's Prayer in Ukrainian**

Отче наш, що єси на небесах,  
Нехай святиться Ім'я Твоє.  
Хай прийде Царство Твоє,  
нехай буде воля Твоя  
Як на небі, так і на землі  
Хліб наш насущний дай нам сьогодні.  
І прости нам провини наші,  
як і ми прощаємо винуватцям нашим.  
І не введи нас у спокусу,  
але визволи нас від лукавого.  
Бо Твоє є Царство, і сила, і слава  
навіки. Амінь

### **A Prayer for the Holy Land**

Loving God,  
Praying for the Holy Land and its people,  
praying for your deep peace,  
praying that swords are turned to ploughshares,  
we ask that your kingdom will come on earth as in heaven.  
May those in power seek your heart.  
May those suffering know your presence.  
May those mourning be comforted.  
May we, who watch at a distance,  
be open to seeing with your eyes of compassion and understanding  
and know how to pray and respond justly, mercifully and humbly.  
In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen

### **And a final thought...**

Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt,  
kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate. –

**Albert Schweitzer**

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