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50p February 2024



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## Editorial

*It's that time of year again* when we try to put into practice those resolutions we made at the New Year. Cynics would say that our aspirations at the turn of the Year often fade away in the stress of everyday life, by the time February is here. I've always been a bit of a daydreamer though, as shown many years ago, when I asked for a metal detector for Christmas. It was my New Year's resolution to take up a new hobby; I decided to become a detectorist. 'Who knows?' I thought, 'what lies before me? Perhaps another Staffordshire hoard? After all, East Woodhay has been inhabited since the Iron Age at least; there must be treasures galore buried in the woods and fields of the neighbourhood'.

Duly kitted out, I started in my garden in Woolton Hill, carefully waving the circular black disc across the lawn and gravel, while the high-pitched tone rose and fell in my ears. After a few minor finds – I had dug up a penny, a horseshoe, and an indistinct lump of rusted metal, then - bingo! The machine wailed, I dug and soon proudly held in my hand a copper ring about two inches in diameter, bent and slightly worn and dented in places. Clearly this was an extremely old artefact indeed. My mind raced with the possibilities. A hair-fastening belonging to an Anglo Saxon nobleman in the 8th century? An ornamental ring gifted by Jack of Newbury to one of his sheep drovers? Part of the Earl of Carnarvon's Tutankhamun treasure, accidentally dropped as he made his way to the Castle? Fortunately, my sister worked at the Hampshire Archives in Winchester and was happy to pass my find to the County Archaeologist for an expert view. I waited excitedly for weeks.



At last, my sister rang me. 'The archaeologist has carefully evaluated your find, subjected to several tests and come to a definite conclusion,' she announced. 'Come on tell me, what is it', I badgered her. 'Well,' she responded patiently, 'he asked me to thank you for your interest, and to tell you that he could say with certainty that your find is a copper curtain ring, probably from Woolworths, and dates from the 1970s'. I put the phone down disappointed and embarrassed. I had wasted the archaeologist's precious time. I had let my imagination run away with me and had made a fool of myself.

The metal detector went into the garage and languished there before being put in the small electrical items recycling bin. Bang went another New Year's resolution. But it was fun to have daydreams, and as Robert Louis Stevenson said 'an aspiration is a joy for ever, a possession as solid as a landed estate'. Isn't that really the point of resolutions at this time of year?

Happy daydreaming!

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## Diary of Events February 2024

Friday	2nd	Woodhay Walkers	WHCH	10.30am
		Community Cafe	St. Thomas' Church	10-11.30am
Saturday	3rd	Trivial Pursuits	WHCH	7.30pm
Monday	5th	Evergreens	HVH	2-4.15pm
		Beavers	EWHVH	5.30pm
Tuesday	6th	Cubs and Scouts	EWHVH	6.00pm, 7.30pm
Wednesday	7th	EW Short Mat Bowls	EWHVH	7.30pm
Friday	9th	Woodhay Walkers	Malverleys	10.30am
		Community Cafe	St. Thomas' Church	10-11.30am
Tuesday	13th	EW WI	EWHVH	2.30pm
Wednesday	14th	East Woodhay Short Mat Bowls	EVWH	7.30pm
Friday	16th	Woodhay Walkers	WHCH	10.30am
		Community Cafe	St Thomas' Church	10-11.30am
Saturday	17th	Aladdin's Cave	WHCH	10.30-1pm
Monday	19th	Beavers	EWHVH	5.30pm
		History Society	EWHVH	8.00pm
Tuesday	20th	Arbor Flora	HVH	2.00pm
		Cubs and Scouts	EWHVH	6.00pm, 7.30pm
Wednesday	21st	EW Short Mat Bowls	EWHVH	7.30pm
Thursday	22nd	Gardeners Club	WHCH	7.30pm
Friday	23rd	Woodhay Walkers	Carpenters Arms	10.30am
Saturday	24th	Village Market	Thorngrove School	10am-1pm
		Community Cafe	St. Thomas' Church	10-11.30am
Monday	26th	Beavers	EWHVH	5.30pm
		EW Parish Council	EWHVH	7.30pm
Tuesday	27th	Cubs and Scouts	EWHVH	6.00pm, 7.30pm
Wednesday	28th	EW Short Mat Bowls	EWHVH	7.30pm

### Editors for January, February & March 2024:

Denny & Denys Blakeway  
email [spectrumwh@outlook.com](mailto:spectrumwh@outlook.com)



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Reports on village activities and articles of local interest are welcomed for publication subject to the discretion of the editor. Copy should reach the editor by the seventh day of the month preceding publication and should be a maximum of 500 words. In the event of pressure for space, the editor reserves the right to reduce the length of the article while attempting to maintain the style of the writer and retaining as much content as possible.

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# East Woodhay Womens' Institute

Our December meeting was well attended. It was a celebration with friends and members from our local WIs, enjoying carol singing accompanied by East Woodhay Silver Band. There was a delicious tea followed by a quiz, a decorated bauble competition, a sale of homemade goods and a very good raffle and chat.

**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN

2024 started in January with a meeting looking at our 2024 Resolutions where we voted for the annual choice. Members enjoyed a lunch at Bowlers arms later in January.

Our speaker on February 14th will be from the Newbury Soup kitchen and our March speaker is a favourite who will entertain us with tales on the history of knitting.

*Do join us on the second Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm.*

*All visitors are welcome to pop in for any meeting, enjoy the speaker, tea and a chat.*

 Village ?  
**Quiz & Curry**  
Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Please arrive at 7.00pm

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## QUIZ EVENING

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024  
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# Christmas Tractor Run

**H**ow many Spectrum readers were able to enjoy the Christmas fun that was buzzing around some of our communities on Saturday 16th December?



The anticipation and excitement were building as people gathered to see lit-up tractors with Santa on his sleigh make their way around the villages in our area. The couple of thousand people lining the streets were not disappointed and the atmosphere was amazing as tractor after tractor went past with flashing lights and horns sounding. The delight on children's and adults' faces added to the magic of this new venture for 2023.

Starting in Hollington, the 'Woolton Hill Christmas Tractor Run' visited Highclere, Penwood, Burghclere and finished its tour with the 25 tractors weaving around the packed-out village of Woolton Hill, ending at Harwood Rise where a few hundred people were waiting

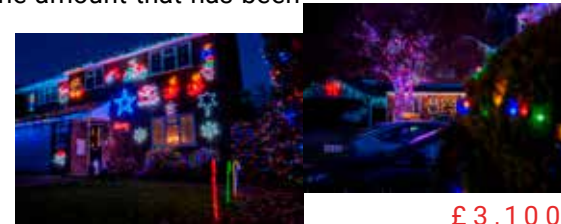
to welcome the finale of this spectacular sight!

The festive 'Harwood Rise Christmas Lights' event (now in its 3rd year) was in full swing, and the tractors were welcomed to top off the occasion.

Also on offer were festive refreshments, children's games and some brilliant prizes to be won in the raffle. Those enjoying the evening were able to tuck into a delicious supper provided by Cods & Rockers and were entertained by the fantastic Watership Brass Band. All of this in the amazing Christmassy setting of lit-up homes and a giant inflatable Santa and Snowman! This celebration of the Woolton Hill Christmas Tractor Run and Harwood Rise Christmas Lights truly brought out the best of community and Christmas spirit. Those who organised this incredible evening would like to say a massive thank you to all who turned up to support and enjoy the fun. There has certainly been enough talk around the villages that if you did not see it in 2023, you won't be wanting to miss it in 2024.

As well as helping to provide Christmas cheer and to bring the community

together, donations were collected for the Children's Ward and Charlie's Day Unit at Basingstoke & North Hampshire Hospital. These facilities serve those in our villages so very well and help provide medical attention and support through illness and crisis. There are many stories from families who have benefitted from the care given and the grateful thanks is reflected in the amount that has been raised. The organisers are pleased to announce that they will be using the



**£3,100**

raised to benefit the children and families that use these services at the hospital.

A huge thank you to everyone who generously gave their time to make this fun evening happen. This year the aim is to have a similar evening on Saturday 14th December. There will need to be more volunteers to help ensure it goes ahead - please, please consider offering to be part of something so special for our

community. There will be a wide variety of jobs and tasks so please volunteer!

**You can express your interest or find out more by emailing:**  
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*And if you know of any business that would like to sponsor the 2024 event, please get in touch.*



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## Are we Ready for Peat-Free Compost?

A gardening acquaintance of mine always begins sowing his seeds on 26<sup>th</sup> December. Admittedly this is only his onion seeds, but like many gardeners, he and I begin planning and preparing for this task as soon as possible in the New Year.

The allotment or garden plan is sketched out, seeds are ordered, pots cleaned and organised, and compost purchased.

This year our only choice of compost will be 'peat-free', and you may already have experimented with this type of compost and had mixed results. Here are a few tips:

- *Only buy fresh compost when you need it, checking the 'use-by' dates and storing it in the dark.*
- *Break up the fibres before using, removing any lumps and making sure the compost is moist before sowing seeds.*
- *Make sure your seeds do not dry out as they will not germinate successfully but be careful with watering as 'peat-free' compost tends to dry out on the surface while it is still wet further down.*
- *Adding perlite to your compost really helps with drainage and texture, opening up the mix which helps seeds and cuttings form roots quickly.*
- *Once your seedlings are growing well and need potting up, they will require good drainage. Adding some horticultural grit to the mix will help with this and is essential for most herbs, such as thyme and rosemary.*
- *Plants growing in peat-free compost can run out of nutrients quickly, so a routine, weekly feed for more established plants is a good idea. Alternatively, add your own garden compost and/or sieved garden soil to the mix for a longer-lasting mix of nutrients.*



If you are using peat-free compost for house plants or growing seeds indoors you may find that sciarid flies (tiny black flies) become a problem.

A top dressing of grit in the pot will help. Nematodes are available to deal with this problem or use a small piece of sticky fly paper placed next to the plant as this can also be effective.

Don't worry if you see little mushrooms beginning to grow on the surface of the compost. This is because spent mushroom compost is often one of the ingredients in peat-free compost. Just pick the mushrooms off and discard. Other ingredients are likely to be green waste, coir, wood fibre and bark.

Embracing alternative gardening practices can be quite enlightening and you might be interested to know that in Thailand, all plants are potted up in a 50/50 mix of coconut fibre (coir) and dried cow dung which is very fibrous and has virtually no smell. The resulting compost is very easy to work with and excellent for plant growth.

I'm sure you will all be very successful this spring and summer!

**Lorna Rains**

*Join us on 22nd February for 'You, Your Garden and Climate Change' by Pauline Weeks.*



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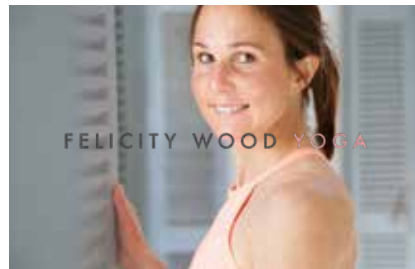
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On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February Dodie will be giving a talk about Mityana in Uganda and the most recent visit in October 2023, at St Mary's Church Rooms in Overton.

It will be from 12 noon with soup and bread and fruit for lunch, and a donation box to cover the cost of the food. But a quick email to let us know if you are coming would be helpful for catering purposes.

If anyone is interested there is also an opportunity to talk about 2024's October trip. There are some places available.

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# THE VILLAGE CAFÉ

Welcome to Spectrum's Virtual Café where friends and neighbours share their life experiences, passions, achievements and memories.

Another day at the Café and already some of the regulars were enjoying their coffee and chat. Woolton Hill residents Lee and Nicola Farmer were sitting by the fireside with their spaniels, Monty and Jasper, at their feet. Lee called me over.

He opened a folder full of photos and handed me a small poster. 'Any chance you could post this on the Café Notice Board?' It was a Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme leaflet, inviting youngsters to join the scheme. 'How are you involved with the D of E?' I asked. He pulled out a photo showing him in full mountaineering gear on a mountain summit. 'Is that Everest?' I enquired. Lee smiled, 'yes, and that was how my work with the D of E started - through my mountaineering.'



He explained that he had qualified as an International Team Mountain Leader. Training took several years and included week-long assignments leading teams in remote Scottish locations, learning how to find people buried in deep snow and deal with serious medical situations. These qualifications enabled him to lead groups abroad commercially: to date, he has led three teams to the South Pole. 'I am always very aware that their lives are literally in my hands!'

Lee has been involved with the Expedition Section of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme for the past 15 years. His International Team Leadership qualification enables him to inspire youngsters and equip them with the skills he has learnt - independence, commitment, team spirit, empathy, tolerance and acceptance.

I asked him how he became a mountaineer. 'Well, I played rugby at uni but had to stop due to injury, so took up hiking instead. I really enjoyed it and started to do challenging hikes around the UK.' In 1999 Lee attempted his first climb over 4,000 metres - Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Europe. I asked what was it like to face that first high mountain. 'Very much a steep learning curve!' He laughed, 'I quickly learnt that attitude, not aptitude determines your altitude.'



An avid reader of books on mountaineering and its history, one of Lee's greatest inspirations was 'Seven Summits: the quest to reach the highest point on every continent' edited by Steve Bell.




Inspired by the book, Lee decided to attempt to join the exclusive club of those who had climbed the Seven Summits and 2003 saw his first success as he reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

'Eight years later,' he remembers, 'as I climbed down from Mount Denali in Alaska, it hit me that I had completed the challenge: I had climbed the world's seven highest mountains.' He continues, 'what I did not realise then was that there are rankings for those who have climbed the Seven Summits: I am number 346 in the world and very proud of it!'

'Mallory and Tenzing Norgay are my heroes: the best climbers of their generations. Their Everest expeditions were the Apollo Space Missions of their times.' As part of the Seven Summits challenge, Lee himself climbed Everest in 2008. He was honoured to be invited on a private 'invitation only' expedition and explained, 'I had been chosen for the expedition as I had shown my self-reliance when climbing another mountain in Tibet: following an accident at 7,200 metres, I broke my toe and had to get back by climbing alone down ice walls, then walking 20 kms to base camp, on one foot.'

By this time, everyone in the Café was enthralled: a voice came from across the room, 'Lee, was there ever an incident when you were really scared?' Lee replied, 'very much so. All the time on Everest we were experiencing icefalls, ice movements of up to 3ft a day and then... the crevasses. The only way across is by crawling on a lightweight aluminium ladder, lain horizontally over the chasm. I was halfway across one such crevasse when I lost my hat and watched it fall, then vanish into the dark abyss. I literally could not move for 10 minutes.'



Normally, it takes a climber three attempts to make the summit. Lee succeeded unguided on his first attempt. He does admit though, 'at over 8,000 metres high and with temperatures as low as -44c, Everest was undoubtedly the toughest climb.' May 24th 2008, 5.37am is a date and time he will never forget. 'It was the exact time I reached the summit when I stood on top of the world... and saw the circumference of earth.'

I asked Lee how he actually felt at the top. 'On one hand,' he said, 'the height, scale, view, the achievement is completely overwhelming but, as with 'all things mountaineering', the practicalities kick in. I was the only one out of my team of eight to reach the summit: exhausted, suffering from lack of oxygen (we had spent eleven days above 4,000 metres) I had to think very quickly about making my way back. 80% of fatalities and accidents happen on the way down due to the tremendous effort to actually reach the summit. Luckily, we made it safely back.'



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We all raised our cups to Lee and Nicola for sharing this amazing story. I had one last question, 'Lee, what now?'

He thought before answering, 'my passion for mountain climbing is still there – it gives you a chance to discover who you are, what you can achieve in an amazing environment not everyone is privileged to experience. Climbing is still important to us both, indeed Nicola reached the summit of Mount Kenya in 2003 and has been to Everest Base Camp twice. Nowadays we take on lower mountains and enjoy challenging hikes. We won't ever forget those adventures though and, luckily, we have some great photos and films to remind us.'



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Benefice email address

**[coordinator.nwhb@outlook.com](mailto:coordinator.nwhb@outlook.com)**





# Letter from the Clergy

## Winter blues

I hope your New Year has got off to a good start. The grey skies of January and February aren't, I confess, my favourite! It's not that I need a SAD Lamp to survive a British winter, as some people do, it's just that I prefer bright, clear skies – even if it's very cold. Of course, extreme cold can be a bit of a menace – as we learned when we lived in the US in the late-80s and 90s – but a cold, crisp, English winter morning is hard to beat. At least, that is what I used to think unquestioningly, until Suzie and I began annual visits for me to teach in southern India in February. For most of the past 30 years, we have got on a plane under grey Heathrow skies and disembarked into the unmatched smells and sounds and refreshing warmth of a Bangalore morning. What bliss! For the first few years, we had to change during the night in steamy Mumbai and land in the old airport in Bangalore, but much has changed. Now we fly non-stop unless I have commitments en route. For some reason, a sense of 'call' to flee February and fly south has always been very clear!!

Experience and preference are, to most people, cousins. The attitude, 'I know what I like', drives many – perhaps too many – of our choices. New experiences can be disconcerting. They take us to places we haven't been before, for good and bad. They can rock the quiet confidence we have in our 'world view' and challenge the assumptions we have about life, our life. One of the greatest – and, unexpected – discoveries – and privileges – of my international work over the years, has been to experience other cultures 'up close and personal', and get to know people, from many different countries, as friends. It has made me very aware, the UK isn't the repository of all that's good and that other people and places have a quality of life that's richer than ours, even if not always materially. Yes, we can and should still enjoy all that's good in who we are and what we know and do, but to confuse my experience with excellence, and my preference with preeminence, makes for a very small mind and narrow outlook.

One of the things I value about being a Christian is it challenges my priorities and preferences day-in-day out. It doesn't let me settle comfortably and uncritically. It offers a large world to love and deep truth to engage. It asks and answers the biggest questions about life. I can still remember the surprise I felt when a long-standing, jet-setting, senior executive friend (who isn't a believer) wrote to me after a lunch we'd had when I was Vicar of a student church in Cambridge, 'You live in such a large world, Chris. Mine is so small. All I usually talk about with colleagues is work, the children's education and our next holiday.' It made me think – and be grateful. I hope you'll look at 'loosening the belt' on your preferences in 2024 and find that larger world that's out there waiting.

*Chris Hancock, Associate Priest*

# Church Services

<p><b>NORTH WEST HAMPSHIRE BENEFICE</b>          Ashmansworth + Crux Easton + East Woodhay + Highclere + Woolton Hill  <i>...making Christ known in our communities</i></p> <p><b>Church Services FEBRUARY 2024</b></p> <p><b>Welcome!</b> Service details are correct at time of publishing, any necessary changes will be posted on church noticeboards.</p>			
<p><b>SUN 4<sup>th</sup></b>  <i>2nd Sunday before Lent</i></p>	<p>All Together            Matins            Parish Communion            Evensong</p>	<p>Woolton Hill            Highclere            East Woodhay            Ashmansworth</p>	<p>9.30am            11.00am            11.00am            6.00pm</p>
<p><b>SUN 11<sup>h</sup></b>  <i>Sunday before Lent</i></p>	<p>Holy Communion            Parish Communion            Holy Communion (BCP)</p>	<p>East Woodhay            Woolton Hill            Highclere</p>	<p>8.00am            9.30am            11.00am</p>
<p><b>WED 14<sup>th</sup></b>  <i>Ash Wednesday</i></p>	<p>Holy Communion (<i>ashing</i>)            Holy Communion (<i>ashing</i>)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Both services to be confirmed</b></p>	<p>Woolton Hill            East Woodhay</p>	<p>10.00am            7.30pm</p>
<p><b>SUN 18<sup>th</sup></b>  <i>Lent 1</i></p>	<p>Morning Worship            Holy Communion            Parish Communion            Evensong</p>	<p>Woolton Hill            Ashmansworth            Highclere            East Woodhay</p>	<p>9.30am            9.30am            11.00am            6.00pm</p>
<p><b>SUN 25<sup>th</sup></b>  <i>Lent 2</i></p>	<p>Parish Communion            Morning Worship            Parish Communion</p>	<p>Woolton Hill            East Woodhay            Crux Easton</p>	<p>9.30am            9.30am            11.00am</p>
<p>WED 7<sup>th</sup> February    Prayer Group    Woolton Hill    10.00 am</p>			
<p><b>Contact number for church enquiries during the vacancy:</b>  <b>Benefice Office 07577 423715</b></p> <p><b>Rector:</b> Vacancy    <b>Associate Priest:</b> Revd Professor Chris Hancock 254718  <b>Reader:</b> Suki Coe 07990 755323    <b>Reader Emeritus:</b> Rosemary Cahill 253306</p>			



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# East Woodhay Parish Council



## Planning

Following the rejection of the Watermill Bridge (Wash Water) development by BDBC, the developer appealed the decision and the appeals process commenced in December. With the size of development being proposed, the appeal is a lengthy process and has involved submission of evidence from all parties, a public inquiry (held over a number of days in December) and there will finally be a decision by the Inspector chairing the appeal. The submission of evidence and the inquiry has involved significant cooperation between all three parish councils impacted (ourselves, Highclere and Enborne) with the sharing of resources and the costs for the planning consultant required. The final decision is expected in about 3 months time.

## Boardwalk

Some of you may have seen that the footpath from Trade St to Fullers Lane was closed for two weeks in December- this was because we had reported a number of boardwalk faults, and a tree came down over a section of the path, all of which meant that Hampshire County Council needed to close the path whilst our wonderful Hampshire Ranger organised volunteers to repair it. The first section of the boardwalk off Trade Street has been in place for about 10 years now and we are reporting more and more problems - the wooden struts are failing and causing the boards to fail and break.

One of our projects for 24/25 is to investigate replacing this whole first section with a more sustainable material.



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# Preparing for a Marathon

Since November last year, I have started my marathon training plan in earnest. It is a twenty week plan, which features weekly long runs up to 33 km and totals up to 65 km some weeks. Over the last few months, I have taken part in lots of park-runs including one on Christmas Day! I also ran my first 10 km run to get used to racing, finishing with a time of 47:53 placing me 6th in my age category of 18-39.

Running a marathon is definitely a bucket list experience for most people, and it certainly is for me. Running 26.2 miles is a huge physical and mental challenge, and trying to fit training within busy lives can sometimes feel overwhelming. I've entered the marathon in order to raise money for a great cause, as well as improve my mental and physical health. I'm currently in my final year at university and running ensures I get some exercise and fresh air every day, rather than being stuck in the library! I can't really say how the marathon has changed my life until I've completed it, but I can definitely say that running has given me a new sense of freedom and confidence, and I hope to set myself new running challenges after this one is completed.

The marathon takes place on the 21st April and I hope to report afterwards about the experience. Thank you to everyone who has donated so far support of Wessex Children's Hospice Trust (Naomi House & Jackspace), registered charity 1002832. If you would like to donate, this is the link to my page:

<https://2024tcslondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/beth-roch>

Beth Roch

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# East Woodhay Society



## Quiz and Curry Evening at The Rampant Cat – 17th February

Tickets are still available for the next EWS Quiz and Curry evening at the Rampant Cat in Woolton Hill, which will be held on Saturday 17th February at 7pm. There will be a choice of curries (Chicken Korma, Beef Madras) as well as a vegetarian option. Teams will be made up of six people. Please state if you already have a team or if you would like to be grouped with others. Tickets are available from Mark Rand; these are £17.50 pp and include the cost of the curry supper.

## Community Christmas Village Walk

Thank you to all involved, especially Nicola Meadows and Ali Mitchell, for organising the village walk on 27th December and raising over £500 for [Newbury Soup Kitchen](http://Newbury Soup Kitchen). 105 people joined the walk which was an excellent turn out considering the wet weather. There was a great article and photos in Newbury Weekly News. To read this article just go to the website [www.wooltonhill.com](http://www.wooltonhill.com) where there is a link from the home page.

## Christmas Tractor Run

Although not part of EWS I do want to say a big thanks to those involved in the Christmas Tractor Run and festivities in Harwood Rise. On the early evening of 16th December, a large fleet of 25 lit-up tractors started in Hollington and passed through Highclere, Penwood and Burghclere before finishing in Harwood Rise. There were hundreds lining the route and also at the finish. Go to [www.wooltonhill.com](http://www.wooltonhill.com) if you wish to read the Newbury Weekly News article or look at a video of the tractors. There are links available on the home page.

## Woodhay Walkers

Even though it's wintertime there are many local walks which are accessible and Woodhay Walkers is an enjoyable way to walk with others. Walking in the countryside is great for our wellbeing, both physical and mental. Do come along and join us at 10.30am on a Friday morning to enjoy the fresh air and a chat. Just remember to wear suitable footwear as it tends to be muddy at this time of year. Please go to [www.wooltonhill.com](http://www.wooltonhill.com) for more details. Our plans for February are as below but if you are intending to join us on a particular walk, please email [woodhaywalkers@gmail.com](mailto:woodhaywalkers@gmail.com) as weather conditions can lead to some last minute changes.

- Friday 26th Jan - a 4 mile walk from the Crown & Garter, Inkpen
- Friday 2nd Feb - a 3 mile walk from Woolton Hill Church Hall
- Friday 9th Feb - up to 4 miles from Malverleys, East End
- Friday 16th Feb - a 4 mile walk from Woolton Hill Church Hall
- Friday 23rd Feb - a 3.5 mile walk from Carpenters Arms Burghclere

Mark Rand, Chair EWS

Email: [eastwoodhaysociety@gmail.com](mailto:eastwoodhaysociety@gmail.com)

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These brave little plants pushing through the hard ground  
Form acres of white, as I look far around.

Each side of the paths, snowdrops grow everywhere.  
A wonderful sight – I just stand and stare.

Families follow the paths through the wood.  
Kids long to pick flowers, if only they could.

Kind parents explain that they must leave them there  
To ensure that there will be millions next year!

My visit each year is an uplifting treat;  
My small patch of snowdrops just cannot compete.  
But I'll buy some more bulbs, then by next year I know  
I'll be happy to see them as soon as they show.

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# North End New Year

## A Happy Start to the New Year!

It was the first working day of 2024 and after a very wet and windy night, the road down North End was pretending to be a river. This isn't too unusual as there is a direct route from the chalk downland to our hamlet and the ditch beside the road doesn't cope, especially when it enters pipes that are smaller than the full-to-the-brim ditch. We didn't worry as we are used to it and all the houses are raised from the lane, and we get by.



However, Tuesday January 2nd, held an extra treat for us. At 14:50 the wind brought down a large tree right on top of some power lines and then we were without electricity. As the day passed, we chatted whilst watching the light gradually fade. We knew there would be no lights or heating before the next morning at the earliest.

Unable to cook dinner, we set out to buy a take-away and to see how large an area was affected. Lights were on in Ball Hill and the surrounding area, so we were pleased to see no one else was in trouble. It was just North End and an early night followed. We have a lantern, candles and plenty of torches but they aren't any use for reading and don't power the television or radio.

We had a food delivery booked for the next day and no means of updating our order, which we had planned to do that evening. Never mind, we thought, we'll make do with what we get. The biggest worry was that the temperature in the freezers was rising, and we really didn't want to have to off-load defrosted food onto all our friends.

The next morning, we had a visit from two young men from the electricity company, making sure we were OK and telling us that they hoped to have the power back up by 16:00. They did better than that and everything was up and running by 14:10, nearly 24 hours after the power cut. Fortunately, the freezers had coped. Sorry, friends!

It was a great start to the year.

**Nutmeg**



# Women in Touch

Our theme of “What I dislike most in today’s world” started immediately with a list of dislikes that elicited nods and grunts from everyone. Our list included car parking apps, which led on to the small size of parking spaces. Other gripes were online surveys, and ‘woke’, a word with a complicated definition which we felt meant that we need to be cautious of everything we say. The grumbles continued, with phone calls which require so many choices before connection, grammatical errors both written and spoken, the volume on TV, and differences between speech/music/adverts adding to our lengthening list of gloom. Technology raised many dislikes, from facial recognition in banking, to demands to go paperless. Our very varied tirade against the modern world moved on to current issues: why, for example have shareholders and executives of the water companies been paid so much for such a sub-standard service? And surely new houses should have to include sufficient off-road car parking? And then what about Electric Vehicles with their multiple problems? These include having to queue to charge at motorway services, the problems of their breakdowns on the motorway, plus recycling of spent batteries and the increased demand for electricity to power them. Our list was by no means little! It went on to instruction manuals with tiny print, smart motorways, social media, lack of respect, not taking your rubbish home, lack of caring about others and so much more – as The Lord High Executioner in Gilbert and Sullivan’s Mikado might have said: ‘I’ve got a massive list’.



Later in November our topic was “Our favourite cities” where London brought back memories for one of being a 21 year-old from the North West, working in London, revelling in the swinging sixties vibe, and taking full advantage of nightclubs, theatres and art venues, as well as the wonderful architecture.



Also, at that time York was a place of many happy family holidays with something for everyone: the magnificent Minster, the Shambles (best preserved medieval lane), chocolate factories, the railway museum, Jorvic Viking centre, racecourse, food festivals and of

course, Betty’s tea shop.

Ely was another favourite, the highest point of the fens, that is dominated by a magnificent twelfth century cathedral known as ‘Ship of the Fens’ and sits on an island.



Prague brought back memories of a surprise romantic weekend which also gave time for glorious sightseeing including its castle, medieval clock in the central square, and the famous Charles Bridge. Bury St Edmunds was proposed with its wonderful market, individual shops, nice houses and stunning abbey gardens. Budapest was also nominated. The city was created in 1872 when Buda and Pest, divided by the Danube, were merged into one city. Buda is home to a castle and quaint buildings and Pest accommodates the Great Parliament Building and some very poignant memorials to the many residents who perished in the Holocaust. Our final city was Adelaide which has a colonial feel and gave a sense of freedom and happiness. It was home to many diverse faiths and First Nation commemorations.

In early December our Quiz Night, put together by a member’s husband, was a great success, and the last meeting of the year was our annual Christmas party with plenty of good food and company.

Angie

honesty  
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## The Nature Sketchbook

As we head into the final month of winter, the woodland and garden birds can offer welcome glimpses of colour in an otherwise still and often frozen landscape.

Birds like the nuthatch, mistle thrush, treecreeper, various tits, finches and even woodpeckers are resident here but we might be more aware of them when they are searching for food in our gardens in the winter without the canopy of leaves.

Treecreepers and nuthatches are not related but they appear somewhat similar in that they climb along trunks and branches in search of food. Indeed, I have seen both on the rowan tree in my garden. Their movements are distinctive though. Of the two tree climbers, the treecreeper is like the stalagmite, always heading up and certainly on my rowan tree in a cyclical motion. The nuthatch on the other hand is more of a stalactite for although it will climb upwards it is often seen working its way down the tree too.

Surprisingly, the two master climbers do not compete for food as the treecreeper eats insects exclusively whilst the nuthatch is a seed and nut specialist. As the rowan tree does not offer either nut or seed to the latter, I wonder whether my garden visitor has been stashing food behind the bark flakes or in little crevices as they are also known to store and remember food for as long as 30 days! As we head into the short month of February, then, I may not see my visitor again before the end of the month.

*Helen Grimbleby is a Woolton Hill based artist who is inspired by the natural world's changing seasons. After exploring outside, she enjoys writing and illustrating her Nature Sketchbook and painting larger landscapes at her home studio: (@burblearstudios)*



**Helen**



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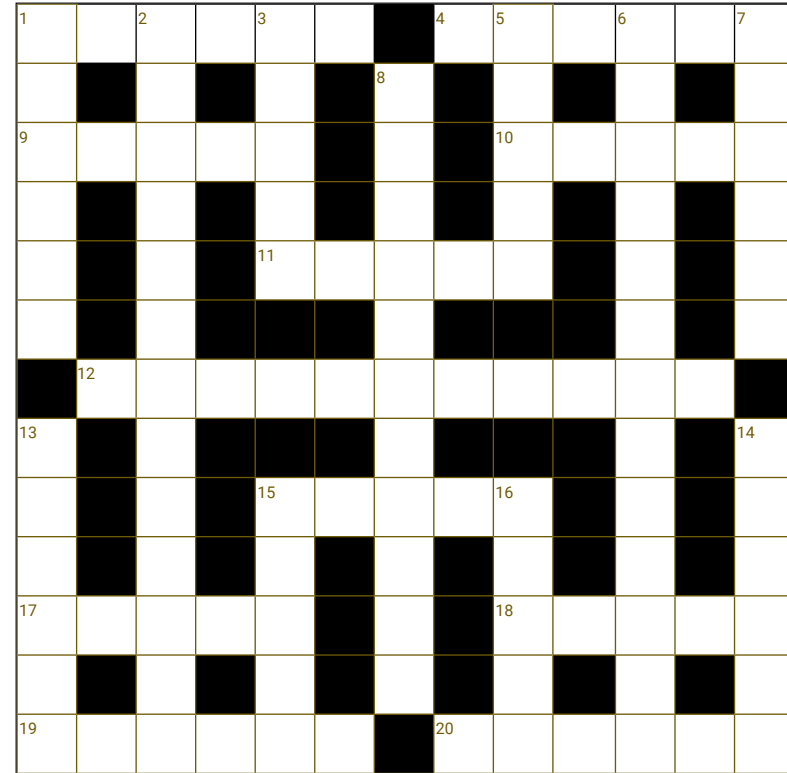
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### Across

1. Would cleric shop twice? (6)
4. Could be on bail in Great Britain (5)
9. Watch our Charles roam around looking for a good curry (5)
10. Arena chosen to serve tortilla chip with cheese in (5)
11. Ken is looking for a length of thread (5)
12. Her last doll was sold at the market (11)
15. A period which lacks activity (5)
17. Lad the French liked to serve soup with (5)
18. The empty night was stormy after nine (5)
19. Attempting to get into pantry inglenook (6)
20. Astute type ordered quiet, then drew around for clarity (6)

### Down

1. Need bar key to get into cake shop (6)
2. She does have rusty pan to cook pancakes for today (6,7)
3. So, friend has gemstones? (5)
5. Line attached to pole provides cloth (5)
6. Agreement to convene in nice venue did not suit everyone! (13)
7. Looking for pasta come across an old one (6)
8. Everyone was panicking in the water, but staying calm, Dave held eel so they could all leave safely (5-6)
13. Have six to ring to let for flower girl (6)
14. The mod had his own way of doing things (6)
15. Life was severe at the back of the boat (5)
16. Another boat, which the King's Counsel turns up in (5)

Answers crossword no 251

Across: 1 Icticle, 4 Buffet, 9 Delta, 10 Frail, 11 Audit, 12 Anniversary, 15 Flint, 17 Zloty, 18 Logic, 19 Nasser, 20 Depths

Down: 1 Indigo, 2 Illuminations, 3 Lama, 5 Unrfit, 6 Featherweight, 7 Talcum, 8 Candlelight, 13 Frozen, 14 Crocus, 15 Foyle, 16 Tulle

# Directory of Local Organisations

## 24hr Emergency Numbers

Thames Water . . . . . 0845 9200 888  
 Southern Water (water supply) . . . . . 01273 606766  
 Southern Electric . . . . . 105 or 08000727282

**Arbor Flora Group** . . . . . Secretary: Diana Durkin . . . . . 07980520044

**Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council** . . . . . 01256 844844  
 Member: Graham Falconer . . . . . ([cllr.graham.falconer@basingstoke.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.graham.falconer@basingstoke.gov.uk)) 253144

## Churches

East Woodhay, St Martin's . . . . . [www.stmartins.church](http://www.stmartins.church)  
 Churchwardens. . . . . Richard Twallin. . . . . 253354  
 . . . . . Andrew Colville . . . . . 254017  
 Woolton Hill, St Thomas . . . . . [www.wooltonhill.com/churches](http://www.wooltonhill.com/churches)  
 Churchwardens. . . . . Chris Vane. . . . . 253707  
 . . . . . Bridget Wheeler . . . . . 250729

## Defibrillators

There are 5 public access defibrillators in the Parish:  
 WH Church Hall, EW Village Hall, Rampant Cat, St Martin's School, WH Junior School.

**Doctors' Surgery Woolton Hill.** . . . . . 253324  
 Patient Participation: . . . . . Rosemary Cahill . . . . . 253306

**Ducklings.** . . . . . Fiona Morgan . . . . . 42080

**East Woodhay & Highclere Neighbourcare** . . . . . 01635 745600  
 For transport to medical appointments: . . . . . [www.ewhneighbourcare.org.uk](http://www.ewhneighbourcare.org.uk)

**East Woodhay Charities** . . . . . Secretary: Susan Wren . . . . . 254875

**East Woodhay Cricket Club** . . . . . Contact: Adrian Batchelor . . . . . 07803 519765

**East Woodhay Flower & Produce Show** . . . . . 254114  
[www.eastwoodhayflowershow.co.uk](http://www.eastwoodhayflowershow.co.uk)

**East Woodhay Football Club** . . . . . Chairman: Alan Jones. . . . . 254024

**East Woodhay Footnotes Mens Singing Group**  
 Organiser: Peter Stanley . . . . . 07467572341

**East Woodhay Local History Society** . . . . . Sec: Christine Dalton . . . 07880 628 114

**East Woodhay Parish Council Members:** . . . . . [www.eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](http://www.eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk)  
 Paul Hurst (CH) ([paul.hurst@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:paul.hurst@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk)) . . . . . 01635 254363  
 Susan Cooper ([susan.cooper@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:susan.cooper@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk)) . . . . . 01635 254149  
 Graham Dick ([graham.dick@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:graham.dick@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk)) . . . . . 01635 255372  
 Martin Hainge ([martin.hainge@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:martin.hainge@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk)) . . . . . 01635 255793  
 Mark Rand ([mark.rand@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:mark.rand@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk)) . . . . . 01635 250898  
 Simon Bowden ([simon.bowden@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:simon.bowden@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk))  
 Rose Donoghue ([rose.donoghue@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:rose.donoghue@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk))

# Directory of Local Organisations

## East Woodhay Parish Council (continued)

Karen Titcomb (VC) ([karen.titcomb@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:karen.titcomb@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk)) . . . . . 07974 011065  
 Amy White (Clerk) ([clerk@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk)) . . . . . 07855 275336  
 Carie Roots ([carie.roots@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:carie.roots@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk))

**EW Short Mat Bowls Club** . . . . . Contact: Cathy Neller. . . . . 01635 253467

**East Woodhay Silver Band.** . . . . . Contact: Rosemary Gittins. . . . . 07917 522180

**East Woodhay Society.** . . . . . Chairman, Mark Rand. . . . . 250898  
[eastwoodhaysociety@gmail.com](mailto:eastwoodhaysociety@gmail.com). . . . . [www.wooltonhill.com/ews](http://www.wooltonhill.com/ews)

**East Woodhay Twinning Association** . . . . .Helen Allen, Secretary . . 01635 250776

**East Woodhay Village Hall.** . . . . . [ewvillagehallbookings@gmail.com](mailto:ewvillagehallbookings@gmail.com)

**East Woodhay W.I.** . . . . . Secretary: Pat Gibbs . . . . . 07831 669 220

**Hampshire County Council** . . . . . Member: Tom Thacker . . . . . 01962 771863

**Highclere Film Club** . . . . . Secretary: Chris Martin. . . . . 253461

**Highclere Evergreens** . . . . . Leader: Mrs. V. Burge. . . . . 864584

**Litter warden.** . . . . . [litterwarden@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:litterwarden@eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk)

**MP - Kit Malthouse** . . . . . 01264 401401  
[kit.malthouse.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:kit.malthouse.mp@parliament.uk) . . . . . 2 Church Close, Andover, SP10 1DP

**Neighbourhood Watch**  
 Woolton Hill. . . . . vacant  
 North End . . . . . Jack Castle . . . . . 253537

**Newbury Chamber Choir.** . . . . . [info@newburychamberchoir.co.uk](mailto:info@newburychamberchoir.co.uk)

**Nwby. Wkly. News WH Correspondent** . . . . .Nicole Bentham . . . . . 255582

**Police.** . . . . . Hampshire Constabulary . . . . . 101  
 Kieron Venn . . . . . [kieron.venn@hampshire.police.uk](mailto:kieron.venn@hampshire.police.uk)

**The Samaritans** . . . . . Freephone 116 123

**Schools**  
 The Clere. . . . . 278372  
 The Clere. . . . . Community Office. . . . . 278129  
 St Martin's CE, East Woodhay . . . [www.st-martins.hants.sch.uk](http://www.st-martins.hants.sch.uk) . . . . . 597796  
 The Schools of Woolton Hill . . . [www.schoolsofwooltonhill.co.uk](http://www.schoolsofwooltonhill.co.uk)  
 Juniors (WHJS) . . . . . 253364  
 Infants (St. Thomas). . . . . 253431

**St Martin's Guild.** . . . . . Secretary:Sarah Leventhorpe. . . . . 255293  
[info@eastwoodhayfete.org.uk](mailto:info@eastwoodhayfete.org.uk) . . . . . [www.eastwoodhayfete.org.uk](http://www.eastwoodhayfete.org.uk)

# Directory of Local Organisations

**Spectrum** . . . . . [www.wooltonhill.com/Spectrum.html](http://www.wooltonhill.com/Spectrum.html)  
 Chairman . . . . . Bob King . . . . . 253378  
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 (Oct-) Avril Cole . . . . . [spectrumwh@outlook.com](mailto:spectrumwh@outlook.com)

**St Thomas' Handbell Ringers** . . Nicole Bentham . . . . . 255582

**Women in Touch** . . . . . Angie Maxwell . . . . . 253233

**1st Woolton Hill Scout Group** . . Group Leader . . . . . [mo.osborne@btinternet.com](mailto:mo.osborne@btinternet.com)  
 Beavers . . . . . Alison Sellar . . . . . [wooltonhillbeavers@gmail.com](mailto:wooltonhillbeavers@gmail.com)  
 Cubs . . . . . Stuart Ashby . . . . . [wooltonhillcubs@gmail.com](mailto:wooltonhillcubs@gmail.com)  
 Scouts . . . . . Adam Davies . . . . . [wooltonhillscouts@gmail.com](mailto:wooltonhillscouts@gmail.com)

**Woolton Hill & District Gardeners' Club** . . Nick Harcourt . . . . . 253546

**Woolton Hill Argyle FC** . . . . . Jon Dennis . . . . . [money.whafc@gmail.com](mailto:money.whafc@gmail.com)

**Woolton Hill Church Hall** . . . . . [wooltonhillhallbookings@gmail.com](mailto:wooltonhillhallbookings@gmail.com)  
 . . . . . Clifton, Tile Barn Lodge, Tile Barn, Woolton Hill

**Woolton Hill Pre-School** . . . . . Nicola Logan . . . . . 254721

**Woolton Hill Sports Club** . . . . . Alison Whitehorn . . . . . 254391

**Woolton Hill Village Market** . . [whvm.co](http://whvm.co) . . . . . [whvmarket@gmail.com](mailto:whvmarket@gmail.com)

**Woolton Hill Website** . . . . . Contact: Mark Rand . . . . . 250898  
[www.wooltonhill.com](http://www.wooltonhill.com) . . . . . [eastwoodhaysociety@gmail.com](mailto:eastwoodhaysociety@gmail.com)

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