



The Three Villages Magazine

COVERING GREAT AMWELL, ST MARGARETS AND STANSTEAD ABBOTTS

Building Community in Print and Online
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Issue 19

September 2026

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Find out about local business, Good Companions Veterinary Clinic
- Glimpse into the past of local school, St Andrew's Primary School
- Read how to win a FREE signed copy of Annette Hannah's new novel

FREE

Bike 'n' Hike 2026

Saturday 12th September
9am to 5pm



Bike 'n' Hike is a fun day out where you get sponsored to visit beautiful historic churches by cycling, walking, or any mode of transport on a route of your choice.



- ⇒ Have fun visiting churches in your area
- ⇒ Raise funds for your local church
- ⇒ Help save other churches in Beds and Herts too

Take part and help your church – half of what you raise goes to your local church!

Bike 'n' Hike Family Map

Sign up & collect or print a specially designed Family Map for a circular route between our three churches. Route starts at any of the churches and can be done on foot or bike.

Our three churches will be open for pit stops along the way!

Email admin@3churches.net for next steps

HARVEST FESTIVAL SUNDAY 4TH OCTOBER

HARVEST THANKSGIVING SERVICE

11am at St James' Church, Roydon Road, Stanstead Abbots

HARVEST LUNCH

12.30pm in the Haybarn at Stanstead Bury Farm,
Stanstead Abbots

SCAN THE QR CODE TO BOOK YOUR LUNCH PLACE



*Enjoy the beautiful historic church of St James
and celebrate locally produced food in all its variety.*



The Three Villages Magazine

COVERING GREAT AMWELL, ST MARGARETS AND STANSTEAD ABBOTTS

Issue 19

September 2026

From the Editor...



Cover: 'In the mist'
© Eric Skilton

Welcome to the September issue! The Three Villages Magazine is a joint venture between the three Parish Councils of Great Amwell, St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots, and The 3 Churches Benefice. It is intended as a community resource that is accessible to everyone. The online and print formats provide a platform to share local news and information, showcase local talent and support local businesses.

In this issue, find out how to win a FREE signed copy of local author Annette Hannah's new novel; discover the history of St Andrew's Primary School in the 'Glimpses into our Past' series; hear from our local MP Lewis Cocking; meet local keen angler, Chris Bite; read about Good Companions Veterinary Clinic in our Business Spotlight; and lots more!

This issue features a lovely autumnal photograph of Great Amwell in the mist. It was taken by Eric Skilton, resident of St Margarets who moved here from Cheshunt over 15 years ago. If you would like to enter a photograph for the next cover, please send your images to threevillagesmagazine@gmail.com. We are looking for seasonal images of the local area.

Do you have an interesting story or an upcoming event to promote? We would love to hear from you! Looking ahead, the next approximate deadline for submissions is 3rd October (December Issue). Alternatively, we can also promote your upcoming event/share your news on our News & Events blog. Please do get in touch!

Continued thanks are offered to B&M Care Homes, our generous sponsors. We are also grateful for the support received from French & Jupps, Stanstead Abbots Parish Council, Great Amwell Parish Council and St Margarets Parish Council.

Please do check out our website, subscribe to our News & Events blog for all live events and important up-to-date news, and follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

Thank you for your continued support.

Anna Bond

Editor

THE THREE VILLAGES TEAM

Anna Bond
Julia Davies
Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest
Rosemary Imroth

Clare Maynard
Mandy McCarthy
Lyn Paddon

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The Three Villages Magazine

FROM THE VICAR



This has been the longest, hottest summer in our memory and in our records. Heatwave after heatwave and everywhere is dry and parched. The Vicarage garden is really struggling and I think I might lose the rhododendron bush, which is looking really sad and droopy. We lost its neighbour two years ago in that long hot summer.

The other plant that's looking at risk is my Ludlow's tree peony. Before you start thinking that I'm a serious horticulturalist; I looked it up. It's amazing what phones and apps can do these days. It's also amazing what seeing something at risk can do. Most of the time I look around the garden and spot all the jobs that need doing, but I don't spend too much time wondering about the Latin names for what I'm tending. But the risk of losing it changes your perspective; suddenly it seems important that I know what it is.

The closer inspection of my sad and drooping tree peony reveals something unexpected: big fat seedpods all over it. It's never done that before. And suddenly the resilience of nature comes through, as I realise that the additional stress of this long hot summer has produced fruit and a hope for the future.



Change is one of the hardest things that we deal with as human beings. And yet God has built into us the same resilience that he's built into much of creation. And he has given us creativity and imagination so that we can deal with change and move forward. Most of all, God has given us hope even in loss, faith even in times of drought, and love enough to reach out to our neighbours and to care for our world. It's funny how a stroll around the garden looking at the visible things can prompt a search for the invisible.

Time to go and pray for rain!



Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest
Vicar of The 3 Churches Benefice



The 3 Churches Benefice

GLIMPSES INTO OUR PAST: ST ANDREW'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our villages are blessed with four churches and three schools. We plan to feature at least two of them in our series. We'll start with St Andrew's Primary School on Roydon Road, making use of a unique and far-sighted survey carried out by the school in 1949.

The school first opened its doors in 1869, having been built to a design by the famous Victorian architect Alfred Waterhouse. He had, a year earlier, just completed the building of Easneye Mansion for Mr Thomas Buxton, who within a year of becoming the Lord of the Manor very generously provided the land and the bulk of the funds to erect the school. The original school had three large rooms; two smaller ones were added in 1891 and 1895. The school was used on Sundays for church services until 1881 when the new church of St Andrew's opened in Cappell Lane.



From its earliest days the building was considered a model school and within the first year 29 visitors plus companions, including a Bishop and seven clergy, most probably managers of other schools, came to see how it was done! With the vicar coming in every day, a total of 208 visitors came to the school in that first year, frequently disturbing the work of the school. Worryingly the first inspection of the school in 1869 noted that 'The children are very backward', not surprising perhaps as they had probably not received any education at all before attending the school. Plus, girls were constantly taken out of school to either care for siblings or do seasonal work in the nearby fields.

From 1869 until 1872 only girls were taught at the school, but from 1892 boys from the nearby Baeshe Charity Grammar School began to seek admission. In 1879 the Grammar School at the Clock House was closed and St Andrew's officially became a mixed school. During the first 10 years, 1869–79, seven headteachers (all women without formal training) came and went, but from 1879 to the Survey Year of 1949 only three headmasters were appointed, and all were qualified with experience. Among them, in 1936, was the legendary Ernie Pearce. He was appointed as head teacher at the age of 26 and held the post for 34 years. He was regarded as a stern but fair character and was also prominent in local sports, captaining the village football and cricket teams, and was prominent in the village community.

The 1949 village survey recorded the following facts about the school:

- It was noted that in 1938 the school was connected to the brand new village water mains, saving the caretaker from hand pumping water up from underground for 1 hour each day.
- Early in WWII, 152 boys and girls, evacuees from London, attended the school and two years later 119 more came from Hastings. These were accommodated by using the Parish Hall, Parish Room and the Chapel Room, which allowed over 300 extra pupils to be found classroom space. It was thought that the more quick-minded city children had a big impact on the slower, more relaxed rural village children!
- In 1943 a school canteen had been added to the school, which provided over 100 meals on school days mainly needed for the evacuees staying locally.
- In 1940 the school building had been condemned and a new building suggested. At war's end, remedial action was completed with patch repairs to the roof tiles, redecoration of all rooms and floors repaired. Limited funds and restrictions on materials post-war prevented all but essential work. Not long afterwards the Parish Councillors asked the Hertfordshire County Council to take over the school, which officially occurred in 1947. Not surprisingly, in the 1960s, the building of new school buildings to supplement the older buildings took place with both remaining in use today.
- In 1949 there were 48 Infants, 73 Juniors and 62 Seniors, with teaching staff of a Head plus two men and two women.
- In the 1970s arts teacher, Carol Morris, designed the school badge – which is still in use. It depicts the fish captured by St Andrew in obedience to Jesus's command to go out and catch fish!

Rev'd Dr Bob Hunt and Stuart Moye

The full 1949 village survey is to be found on the SALHS website media section, which includes a feature on St Andrew's Village School (www.SALHS.org.uk). Stanstead Abbots Local History Society (SALHS) meets in the Parish Hall, Roydon Road on the 2nd Friday of each month.

The Three Villages Magazine

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Great Amwell Parish Council

Work on the restoration project for the War Memorial, funded by the Parish Council, has been partially completed. Work to repair the surrounding paving has been halted due to the possible presence of Great Crested Newts. Specialist advice is being sought.

East Herts District Council's review of its Local Plan has commenced. Great Amwell Parish Council remains steadfast in its approach that the Green Belt in its area and in surrounding parishes should be protected to prevent settlement coalescence and unsustainable (speculative) development.



There is a vacant seat on the Parish Council arising from the resignation of former Parish Councillor R. Imroth. The Parish Council can co-opt someone to fill the vacancy. The deadline for contacting the Parish Clerk for those who wanted to be considered as a candidate was 28 August 2026.

As part of the Local Government Review of Hertfordshire, the Government will determine future election arrangements. Three options had been identified:

1. Extend current town and parish councillors' term of office to 2028 (to mirror elections for the new principal authorities);
2. Continue with town and parish council elections scheduled for 2027 (with elected members serving a five-year term to 2032);
3. Retain the existing four-year cycle (do nothing option).

Great Amwell Parish Council supports the second option listed above.

Great Amwell Parish Council meets every second Thursday in each month (except in August) in the Parish Hall, Hillside Lane at 8.00pm.

Jeff Hughes

St Margarets Parish Council

St Margarets' Parish Council are in the process of replacing the broken concrete planters on Hoddesdon Road and will plant new flowers. One of the residents, Margaret, regularly maintains the area and the Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to thank her for helping to keep our Parish clean and tidy.

The results of the poll for the flagpole showed that most people favoured the idea which would replace the cheap flags that had been unofficially positioned on lampposts, and the Parish Council are looking at costs. It is hoped that the location will be on the corner of Lawrence Avenue by the station subject to planning permission being granted, and we are even considering flying the Parish Standard! You can see the results of the poll on the website: www.stansteadstmargaretsparishcouncil.gov.uk

There are plans to introduce an additional bench on the Wildflower Meadow that is located by the Lawrence Avenue estate so that walkers can rest, and residents can sit and look over the river. We consulted with residents who were in close proximity and as a result altered our plans so that no one is impacted. In addition, we are consulting with East Herts District Council as it is their land.

Other projects the Parish Council are considering are to host a community skip day where residents can deposit any rubbish they have on one particular day along with a litter pick event, having parcel lockers somewhere in the Parish, and holding a Christmas market community event with the police.

If you have an idea, then please let us know at clerk@stansteadstmargaretsparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Christina Whellams

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council

Parish Council Grants Available



Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council has a limited budget to make grants on a discretionary basis to voluntary organisations and community groups that provide services that benefit the economic, environmental and/or social wellbeing of residents of the Parish of Stanstead Abbotts.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- * Capital grants for equipment
- * Revenue grants to pay running costs and salaries for one year
- * Funding for events
- * Funding for projects

In deciding on the allocation of grants, the Parish Council will consider the Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council Grant Application Policy, the financial status of the organisation/group and who in the community will benefit from the grant.

To enable the Parish Council to make this assessment, please ensure that you provide all the required information to support your application. The deadline for submission of applications for the financial year 2026–27 will be 25th September 2026. All applications will be considered at the November Council meeting.

You can view the Grant Application Form and Policy on our website: www.stansteadabbottsparishcouncil.gov.uk/grant-applications/.

Email your completed form to clerk@stansteadabbottsparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Sarah Neighbour

A MESSAGE FROM MP LEWIS COCKING

I am now in my second year as your Member of Parliament, and it continues to be a great honour to represent the three villages as part of the Broxbourne constituency. In the last 12 months, I have brought your concerns directly to the Prime Minister on four occasions, challenging him on the size of the benefits bill, defence spending, high taxes and the constant disruption on our roads.

I remain extremely concerned about the Government's plans to concrete over our green belt. I've backed amendments to protect our historic villages and encouraged residents to fight against unsuitable housing plans near them, including on the Car Boot Field between St Margarets and Great Amwell. I'm also totally opposed to plans for a quarry close to Stanstead Abbotts. The site is completely unsuitable for such a development and the impact it will have on the village is intolerable. I will be fighting this at every possible level.



On a more positive note, I've enjoyed getting out across the three villages in the last few months, including speaking to pupils at St Andrew's Primary School, touring The Maltings and meeting the Great Amwell Women's Club. I host regular drop-in surgeries in pubs, libraries and community centres, and I look forward to seeing even more residents in the coming year.

If you'd like my help with an issue or just want to share your views, you can get in touch with me:

Email: lewis.cocking.mp@parliament.uk | Phone: 019929845335 | Sign up to my newsletter: lewiscocking.uk/newsletter.

The Three Villages Magazine

TINY WORKS OF ART, BIG COMMUNITY SPIRIT



St Mary's Church, St Margarets was transformed into a gallery of tiny artworks this summer as we welcomed visitors to our first Summer Miniature Art Exhibition and Silent Auction.

Artists of all ages and experience levels responded to the invitation to create miniature artworks inspired by the theme of Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets. The result was a wonderful exhibition celebrating our local area through a wide variety of styles, subjects and techniques. From familiar landmarks and landscapes to moments of village life and imaginative interpretations of the theme, each piece reflected the creativity and talent within our community.

The exhibition featured 41 artworks created by 13 artists and welcomed a huge number of visitors over the weekend. Thanks to the incredible support of everyone who took part, the event raised over £600 to support the work and ministry of St Mary's Church.



People's Choice Award winning artwork by Indigo, announced by Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest



One of the highlights of the exhibition was our People's Choice Award, with visitors invited to vote for their favourite artwork. Congratulations go to Indigo, whose artwork entitled 'Reflections on Lea' received the most votes by some margin. The beautiful setting and masterful play of light on the water made this artwork a standout piece. At just 16, Indigo's eye for detail and skilled use of her chosen medium showed great talent.

The exhibition would not have been possible without the generosity of our artists, the enthusiasm of everyone who came along, and the hard work of our volunteers, who welcomed visitors and served refreshments throughout the weekend.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who helped make the exhibition such a success, celebrating local creativity while bringing people together in the beautiful setting of St Mary's Church.

The 3 Churches Benefice

OUR TALENTED ARTISTS

Preenisha Seeborun
Rachel Melrose
Linda Gifford
Rachel
Emily Wilsea
Jo Harwood
Diane Claydon
Gill Fowke
Corinne Raynham
Dawn Coulter
Indigo
Guy Dinwiddy
Gary Forrest

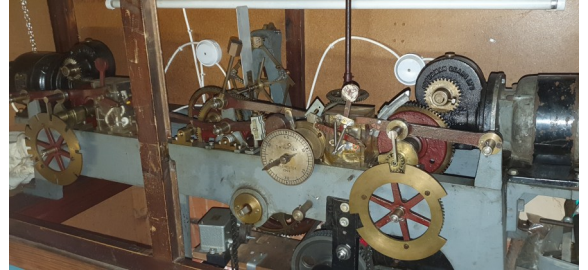


Thank you!

THE CLOCK AT ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

I responded to a request in the Parish Magazine in 2004 for a volunteer to assist Mr Brian Pearce who was suffering from arthritis in his fingers. Brian took on the task of maintaining the clock while still at school and provided a magnificent service in maintaining the clock for over 60 years before he had to step back and pass on the responsibility to me. During our time there have been a number of breakdowns that we have had to deal with and Mr Brian Thomas of Thomas Precision Engineers was particularly helpful on one occasion doing excellent work at less than cost price.

Working on the clock mechanism itself was a precarious job for many years being 5 feet up on a platform 4ft 6in by 1ft 7in, the outer 4in being inadequately supported. It was accessed by a seven-step section of step ladder and neither steps nor platform had any guard rails. Fortunately, 'elf & safety' never visited! Six or seven years ago I requested if I could install a stable and safe platform with handrail to work on, which I erected at cost.



Spiders and flies have always been a nuisance within the clock casing and one year a particular large number of ladybirds found their way in.

One day just before Christmas I was in the tower working on the clock and as I went to leave through the little door in the entrance porch, I found schoolchildren and Cubs etc. had gathered round the entrance with the vicar holding a service in front of the nativity scene. As I stuck my head round the door I was worried that some of the children would start screaming, so I quickly pulled back and had to sit on the stairs until the service had finished.

I would visit a little before 11:00 am every Armistice Day to ensure the clock was able to accurately chime on the hour, one year when the clock was not going I manually ensured the bells chimed at the required time. Normally, when the clock is working reliably, I would just need to visit on a Sunday morning to adjust the time as it would be either a little fast or slow and of course, twice a year to adjust for BST starting and finishing.

It has been an honour to serve the village for 22 years but, unfortunately, I have found over the past year or so that the clock has been taking up more and more of my time with problems causing it to stop and being very erratic in its timekeeping, and I have had to visit two or three times a week to keep it going or adjust the time. I feel it is time for the professionals to be called in.

Colin Barbour



DID YOU KNOW?

It is a flatbed turret clock built by TM Hartley of Silchester and installed in the church tower in 1949 (my birth year) dedicated by Bishop Gwynne on March 20th. It uses a double three-legged gravity escapement (later called the Grimthorpe escapement), invented by Edmund Beckett Denison in 1854 whose design components are the same as the Big Ben clock in Westminster Palace, London. It has electric winding, chiming and striking. With such a design the time keeping and reliability should be as good as Big Ben but it never has been. Time keeping will be good for a period and then it goes wrong and takes a lot of time and effort to get back, climate fluctuations have also been a problem.

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NEED A PROFESSIONAL SPACE FOR REMOTE WORK OR YOUR NEXT MEETING?

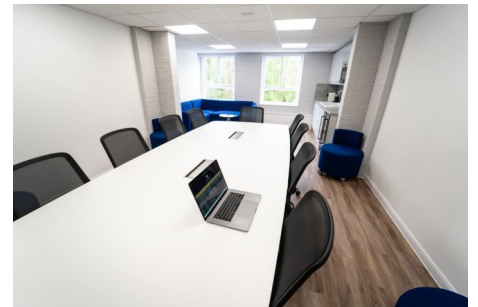
Discover The Boardroom at French & Jupps Maltings Business Centre

Whether you are looking for a fully air-conditioned space to set up for remote work, hosting an important presentation, launching a new product, or seeking a premium space for a team meeting or webinar, The Boardroom provides the ideal, fully equipped venue for our local residents in Stanstead Abbots and Business Centre tenants* alike.

Designed for productivity and comfort, our boardroom is available for half day or full day hire, Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm to support your day seamlessly.

French & Jupps Boardroom Features...

- Bespoke boardroom desk featuring integrated power points and presentation ports.
- Large 50" flat-screen digital display with full video conferencing functionality.
- High speed connectivity with complimentary Wi-Fi throughout.
- Private kitchen area equipped with a fridge, microwave, dishwasher and sink.
- Fully stocked with Nespresso® coffee and vegan friendly tea making facilities.
- Enjoy a refrigerated cold drink from one of our historic brewing customers.
- On-site catering is available with food and drink packages accessed directly from The Lounge, our on-site Coffee House.



Looking to Make a Booking?

If you have special requirements, or need to book outside of standard hours please contact our office team for a tailored package at: info@frenchandjupps.co.uk

To find out more, contact us by telephone on +44 (0) 1920 870015.

James Marinos, Marketing and Sales Manager at French & Jupps

* Tenants can simply log in to your account to access preferential rates online at : www.themaltingsbusinesscentre.com/the-boardroom/

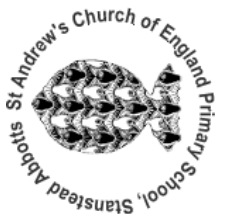
Looking for a place where your child can explore faith through movement, music, creativity and sensory play?

Make Church is a monthly gathering for children and families that's all about being together, having fun and growing in faith – with no need to sit still or be quiet (unless you want to)! Expect songs, movement, hands-on experiences and a warm welcome for parents and carers too.

Every 3rd Sunday of the month at 4pm in St Andrew's Church, Stanstead Abbots.

❤ Come as you are. Let's Make Church together. ❤





What an amazing summer term we had at St Andrew's! It was packed full with our children taking full advantage of the hot weather and summer sun. Our Nursery children had a fantastic day out at Shepreth Wildlife Park, where they enjoyed an exciting adventure discovering lots of amazing animals! We watched the adorable otters huddled together as they were fed, spotted a sleepy tiger keeping cool in the shade and even ventured into the bat cave, where the bats swooped low over our heads – there were lots of squeals and giggles! We also loved watching a family of capybaras playing follow the leader, along with many other fascinating creatures.



petals bright because of carotenoid pigments

thorns

leaf is photosynthesis

stem

Through all the summer excitement, Year 6 still found time to visit Essex Outdoors in Harlow to complete a number of outdoor and adventurous activities including crate stacking, high ropes adventures and mega stand-up paddle boarding. With the hot weather we think all the children enjoyed being able to cool down in the River Stort!



Email: admin@standrews323.herts.sch.uk

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- * Subscribe to our **News & Events Blog:** thethreevillages.com/news-events
- * Follow/like our **Facebook page:** [@TheThreeVillagesMagazine](https://www.facebook.com/TheThreeVillagesMagazine)
- * Find us on **Instagram:** [@thethreevillages](https://www.instagram.com/thethreevillages)

Online is the place to go for the latest news and information about up-coming events in the three villages of Great Amwell, St Margarets and Stanstead Abbotts.



The Three Villages Magazine

UPDATES FROM OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS



St John the Baptist CE VA Primary

At the time of writing this article we are coming to the end of what has been an incredibly packed academic year. We are enjoying end of year trips, preparing for transition and saying farewell to our Year 6 pupils as they move on to their new exciting adventures at secondary school.

Years 3 and 4 had a fantastic day visiting the Henry Moore Studios & Gardens. During their guided tour, they explored Henry Moore's impressive sculptures set within the beautiful gardens and learned about his life, artistic inspiration, and the materials and techniques he used to create his artwork. The visit inspired us to look closely at shape, form, texture and scale, and gave us lots of ideas to use in our own art back at school. It was a wonderful opportunity to bring our learning to life and experience the work of one of Britain's most celebrated sculptors.



Reception enjoyed their first coach trip, visiting Shepreth Wildlife Park: 'We really enjoyed seeing the animals and we had an interesting talk about mini-beasts to launch our topic. We discovered the differences between insects, mini-beasts and arachnids. Did you know mini-beasts do not have a backbone, insects have six legs and arachnids have eight legs?' Ever since their return, our Reception class have been eager mini-beast detectives on the school field at playtimes, ensuring the creatures habitats aren't disturbed.

In a break between heatwaves, we were able to hold our annual sports week, where children had the opportunity to learn a range of sports to encourage a healthy lifestyle and Year 5 went to Wodson Park to participate in the Wodson Games alongside other schools who are part of the Hertford and Ware School Sports Partnership. We were also thrilled to be once again awarded the Platinum School Games Mark, the highest government-led award recognising the school's top-tier commitment to physical education, sports participation and competitive pathways.

Our Year 4 pupils excelled themselves in the statutory Multiplication Tables Check, achieving an average score of 23.1 marks out of 25, above the national average score of 21, with 46% of pupils getting full marks compared with 37% nationally. 80% of our Year 1 pupils also passed the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.



Year 6 enjoyed a day at Walton on the Naze, part funded by money they had raised through their mini-enterprise project. When they went to buy their ice creams with the profits made from their businesses, the Ice Cream Kiosk owner was so impressed with their business acumen, that they gave the children a very impressive discount. The class celebrated their last morning at school with a fantastic water fight, enjoying the chance to soak their friends, teacher and head teacher. A fun way to mark the end of their time at St John's. I wish our Year 6 pupils well as they start in Year 7 and would like to thank them for their incredible contribution to our school community.

A particular highlight for staff in the summer term, is former pupils returning to complete their work experience with us. Seven students joined us over the course of the term, along with additional pupils from local secondary schools, and it was wonderful to find out how they have continued to progress since leaving us.

As the Autumn term begins, we start to plan ahead for Reception places for September 2027. If your child will start school in September 2027, or have just moved into the village, do contact us on 01920 870135 or email admin@sjbaptist.herts.sch.uk to book a tour and come and visit our friendly, inclusive and inspiring primary school, set in a beautiful location.

Lydia Hunt, Headteacher

UPDATES FROM OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS



Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College

Amwell View School celebrated its 63rd birthday on the 7th July 2026. The pupils enjoyed a picnic and an ice-cream from The Hatch. The school combines this celebration by inviting families in to the school to remember loved ones and spend time reflecting at the Butterfly Memorial Garden. The Headteacher, Neil Ward, said 'Some of our pupils have very complex medical conditions and sadly pass away far too early. We believe it is important to stay in touch with all of our families and remember their loved ones and keep their memories alive. This school event is very special to all of us. We combine this event alongside the celebrations of the school's birthday, so that we can laugh and cry together.'



Amwell View School celebrated Sports Day in a slightly different way, this year, they celebrated with 'Sports for All' events with a range of activities, which were held across three different locations: Wodson Park Sports and Leisure Centre in Ware, their main school site based in Stanstead Abbots and their satellite school in Tonwell.

The younger pupils took part in a 'Stay and Play' PE Lesson. The middle school pupils attended a 'Sports for All' Festival at the Tonwell satellite school and some of the older pupils participated in a 'Sports for All' morning at Wodson Park in Ware or enjoyed sporting activities alongside their peers. Parents and carers were invited to attend the events celebrating their children's achievements and cheering them along.

Head of PE, Lucy McFayden said 'The aim was to ensure that every pupil, parent and member of staff could celebrate sporting achievement in an environment that was inclusive, supportive and suited to individual needs. The 'Sport for All' celebrations were a great success. The pupils were fantastic and really enjoyed themselves. The holistic approach to this event enabled the sporting activities to be appropriate to each individual so that they could all participate, have fun and be active.'

Janet Warrington, School Business Manager



Community Hub Drop-in

FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE

📍 St Mary's Church, St Margarets
🕒 Every Wednesday, 10.30–11.30am

Are you struggling financially?
Are you worried about how you are coping?
Do you just need someone to listen and point you in the right direction?

Come and have a cuppa with us and we'll see how we can help.

The Three Villages Magazine

PUZZLES

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

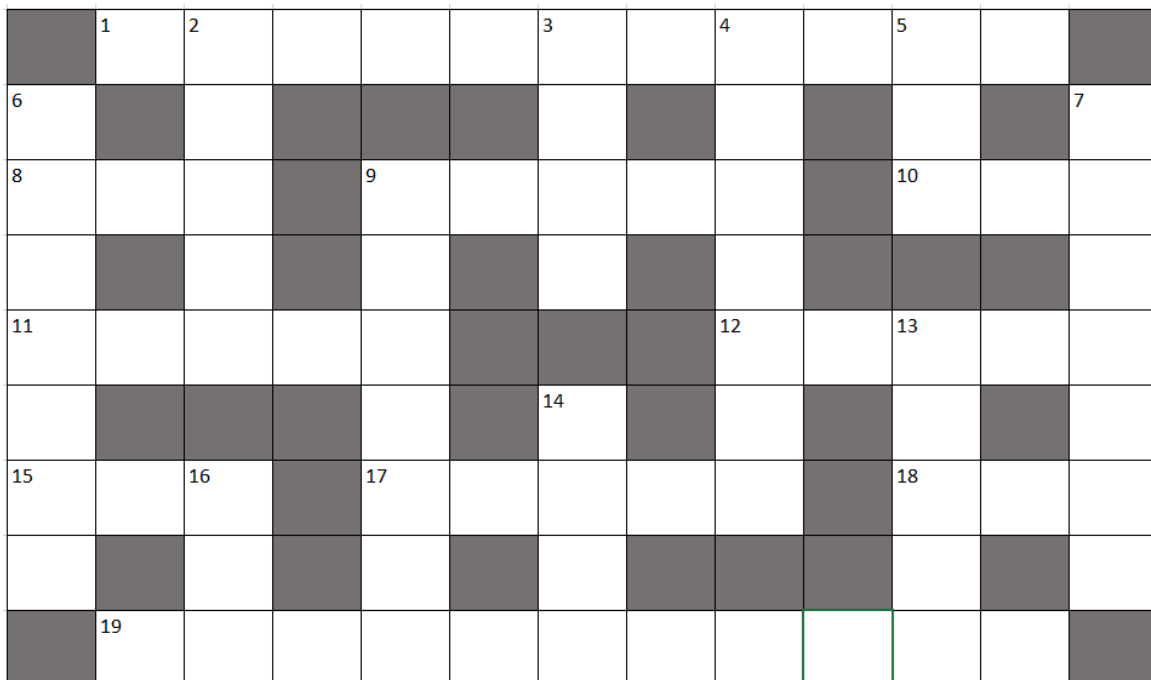
- 1 Absolute disaster (11)
8 Silly fuss (3)
9 Tarnish (5)
10 Get rid of, prohibit (3)
11 Female relative (5)
12 Less valuable parts of the carcass (5)
15 Newt (3)

- 17 Angry (5)
18 Fabled bird (3)
19 *Deal or No Deal* host (4, 7)

DOWN

- 2 Unaccompanied (5)
3 Follow closely (4)
4 Result, consequence (7)
5 Centre of a wheel (3)

- 6 Stroll in a casual manner (7)
7 Clear (7)
9 Popular police series (3, 4)
13 Dismissed (5)
14 Clock pointer (4)
16 Excessively (3)



WHO AM I?

Below are some clues. Can you guess who I am?



1. I was born in London in 1926.
2. I have spent much of my life travelling the world.
3. I've introduced millions of people to animals and the natural world.
4. I've worked for the BBC for many decades.
5. My voice is recognised around the world.
6. I had a big birthday this year!

SUDOKU

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MEET A LOCAL: CHRIS BITE



Chris was born in Hertford County Hospital and living in Hertford he grew up close to the River Lee. He started fishing at Hartham Common when he was 5. When he was 12, rods were tied to the cross bars of his bike and he ventured along the towpath to Ware, Stanstead Abbots and Dobbs Weir. At the age of 16 Chris joined the Stanstead Abbots Angling Club and was fishing the lakes down Marsh Lane, when the club rented them. Chris entered one or two open matches as a junior, one of

which had 200 anglers meeting at the Jolly Fisherman for a match along the towpath from Stanstead Abbots to Ware.

Chris then joined Hertford Angling Club where he competed in the club matches, was voted on the committee as match secretary and he then organised the club's matches mainly on the Lee and Ouse. Quite a few local anglers began to fish evening matches, for about 10 years they would meet by Stanstead Abbots bridge from the 16 June to the end of August, on a Monday evening and fish until dusk.

In 1980 Chris married Mary and they lived very happily at 70 the High Street in Stanstead Abbots, just a few yards from the river and a small tackle shop around back of the pharmacy. Sadly, the evening matches that used to attract up to 30 anglers dwindled as people's work commitments changed.

It was the mid 80s when the then British Waterways decided they could get an income from anglers on the Lee and put stretches out for tender, which up until then had always been free fishing. The LVACA, which represented angling clubs in the valley, called a meeting mainly to get clubs organised, so they did not start out bidding each other.

Chris suggested that the clubs that wanted to fish the Lee form a consortium, so that there would be no bidding war, as had been successful with the Lee Valley Parks waters. The consortium was formed with Chris on the committee, which ran the angling on the Lee from Hertford down to Bow until 2013 when the numbers of clubs wanting to fish the rivers had fallen, mainly due to commercial fisheries on lakes. Hertford and Ware clubs then took over the Hertford to Broxbourne stretch under the name of Towpath Fishery, both for its members and for day ticket anglers.

The bailiff was Martin until 2021 when he was part-time at Amwell Magna so Chris helped. This has now become most mornings covering the stretch from Broxbourne to Stanstead

Abbots bridge with another bailiff covering from Hertford down to the bridge at Stanstead Abbots.

Senior anglers pay £5 for a day's fishing and OAPs £2 and juniors are free. The day-ticket money goes to the two clubs into the Towpath fishery account. Both the bailiffs get a percentage of the ticket sales to cover expenses. The monies collected go towards the rent paid to the Canals and Rivers Trust and Lee Valley Parks – the two clubs make up the difference.

The majority of day ticket anglers are willing to pay, the odd one or two say fishing should be free. Chris travels by bike in the summer, it's 12 miles, which can take anything from 1 hour 45 minutes to 3 hours depending on the numbers of people there are along the bank.

Chris says, 'A lot of my fishing is match fishing which I do with another club I am in, their matches are more in the Cambridge area, but I still get down the Lee. Depending on the time of year this is either at Rye House or Stanstead Abbots. Only 2 seasons ago I had my best bag of Lee fish from Stanstead Abbots, 9 bream all around 6lb to 7lb, all in a short afternoon session up by the A414 bridge.'

The River Lee is not the easiest river to fish, but the Navigation and the old Lee have some of the largest fish in the country. Over the years they have produced the record chub and barbel from Broxbourne and Fishers Green, carp of 41lb 8oz, bream of over 10lb and recently last November a net of roach that weighed over 50lb, 33lb catfish plus the latest angling craze, large perch with fish of over 5lb from Stanstead Abbots.

'What has changed over the years is the way the fish migrate over the season, so no longer do you see the anglers lined up by the village bridge during the winter months. This is because the fish have found other places for their winter holidays but there are also too many boats.'

The Canals and Rivers Trust have not got the powers or money to deal with all of the problems some of the boat owners cause. Chris tells us, 'After 3 years going along the Towpath, I have got to know a number of characters who I share a good morning with. There is one gentleman who always tells me where he has seen people fishing, he must be in his 90s and he walks the towpath from Ware down to Cheshunt then gets the train back a couple of times a week.'

Useful phone numbers: The Environment Agency hotline 0800 80 70 60 for pollution, river levels. Canal and River Trust emergency 0800 47 999 47 for bank and boat problems.

Julia Davies

The Three Villages Magazine

REGULAR CLUBS, GROUPS AND MEETINGS IN THE THREE VILLAGES

1st Stanstead Abbotts Brownies: Mondays 5.45–7pm (The Wilshere Hall) for girls aged 7 to 10 years. Guider in charge: Helen Payne (01920 462676).

Great Amwell Scout Group: Squirrels: boys and girls aged 4–5 years, Beavers: boys and girls aged 6–8 years, Cubs: boys and girls aged 8–10½ years, Scouts: boys and girls aged 10½–14 years. All groups meet at Scout HQ on London Road, Ware. For details visit www.greatamwellscouts.org.uk or call 01920 320142.

1st Stanstead Abbotts & St Margarets Scout Group: Age groups as above. All groups meet at Scout HQ on Marsh Lane, Stanstead Abbotts. For details visit www.stansteadabbottsscouts.org.uk or follow on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

Community Hub Drop-in: Offers a safe space for anyone in the community who is in need of a listening ear or practical help. Meets every Wednesday, 10:30–11:30am at St Mary's Church, St Margarets.

Great Amwell Women's Club: Every 1st & 3rd Wednesday 7.30–10pm at the Parish Hall, Great Amwell. Club Secretary: Dulcie Fordham. Contact number for enquiries: 01920 466689 (Christine).

Herts Wheelers (Cycling Club): Weekly Sunday club rides for various abilities normally starting in Ware. Contact membership@herts-wheelers.org.uk.

The Amwell Society: Quarterly talks in the Parish Hall, Great Amwell, as well as trips, walks and activities locally. For details of membership contact William Brown on 01920 872450 (Chairman).

Stanstead Abbotts Local History Society: Chairman, Rosemary James. Regular meetings for both members and non-members. For details visit: www.salhs.org.uk. For membership details email: admin@salhs.org.uk.

St Margaretsbury Tennis Club: A friendly club with social sessions on Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturday and Sunday mornings, plus a junior section, coaching available, and opportunity to play match tennis in local leagues. For details contact: secretary@stmargaretsburytennis.co.uk or come along to a social morning.

'Armchair Singers' for everyone: A chance to eat, drink, sing and quiz all in one afternoon. Fun, fun, fun. Held in the Nigel Copping Community Centre every Monday 1.30–3.30pm. Singing for health and well-being. All ages welcome. For more details please contact Gabby Hanley (07875221543).

Hope in Action: a group concentrating on addiction in all forms, for concerned family members as well as addicts. Meeting in The Ashlea Room, Stanstead Abbotts Parish Hall, from 5–6.30pm.

St Margaretsbury Football Club: A Chartered Standard local football club for Youth, Ladies' and Men's football, with youth starting from 6 years upwards in non-competitive leagues, and more competitive as they move up into Under 18s', Ladies' and Men's Football. Contact stmargaretsbury@outlook.com/ 07958 636388.

Stanstead Abbotts Parish Hall Table Tennis Club: A friendly club meeting on Friday afternoons from 2pm, and Thursday evenings from 7.30pm with the opportunity to play in local leagues. Call 07841 583256 or email saphttc@yahoo.com – or just come along!

Carpet Bowls Club: Our Carpet Bowls club meets every Tuesday from 7pm in Stanstead Abbotts Parish Hall. We are an all-inclusive sport, suitable for all ages and abilities. Our members range in age from 9 to 90. No need to bring any equipment, everything is provided. First night is free. Come along and give it a try! Contact Pete (07429142525 or pmcook1@hotmail.co.uk).

St Andrew's Church Card-making Group: Meets in The Wilshere Hall at 1pm on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays every month. £4 per session covers materials used and two cards made each session. Refreshments are included. New members welcome. Contact Janet Dance on 07941096834.

Just Friends: a group for widows, widowers and divorced or separated people. We meet as friends to support each other, arrange activities and share names of trusted tradespeople. Meeting every 2nd Tuesday and 4th Thursday. Please contact Mary (maryhallett14@gmail.com / 07899 861297).

Bell Ringing at St John the Baptist, Great Amwell: Meeting every Thursday, 7.30–9.00pm. A new skill for all ages to stimulate the brain and keep you fit. Just come along or contact Frances Adams 07876496654/fmadams750@gmail.com.

Coffee and Coping Hertfordshire: A community support hub that aims to build community, curtail loneliness and help support our veterans. Meets every Wednesday at 12–1.30pm & 5–6.30pm, and Friday at 12–1.30pm in The Ashlea Room, Stanstead Abbotts Parish Hall.

Stanstead Abbotts & St Margarets Village Club: The perfect place to relax, socialise and have fun! Enjoy our Sports Bar with Snooker, Pool & Darts, a welcoming Family Bar, Live Music, Bingo, Community Events and a beautiful Riverside Garden. New members welcome. Contact 01920 870820/savc.comms@gmail.com.

St Margaretsbury Cricket Club: A friendly cricket club that welcomes all ages and abilities. Email info@stmcc.org.uk for more information.

All Sorts Dementia Group: Mondays & Thursdays at High Cross Village Hall and Wednesdays in Essendon Village Hall. Groups run for 4.5 hours with activities, entertainment and a hot lunch. Contact 01279 970474/allsortsdg@gmail.com.

1ST STANSTEAD ABBOTTS BROWNIES

It's been a busy summer term for the girls at 1st Stanstead Abbots Brownies!

The Brownies have enjoyed getting out and about in the local area, taking part in a history quiz around Ware before finishing with a visit to the park, and testing their navigation skills with an orienteering course around Hartham Park in Hertford.



Back in nature, they put their creativity to the test by building miniature furniture from sticks and string in the woods, while another highlight of the term was joining the procession at the Ware Carnival as part of the popular Bake Off float. To round off a fantastic term, the Brownies also had the opportunity to enjoy sailing on the lake.

Behind all these activities is a dedicated team of volunteers, but the group is now looking for some extra helping hands. Following the departure of two parent helpers, there is an urgent need for new volunteers to support the weekly meetings. If you could spare just over an hour on Monday evenings (5.45pm–7.00pm) at The Wilshere Hall, Stanstead Abbots, the Brownies would love to hear from you. No previous experience is necessary – just a willingness to get involved!



To find out more, please contact Helen Payne on 07887 419799 or email helen.mhjrpayne@btinternet.com.

Helen Payne, Leader



SCOUTING IN THE THREE VILLAGES: ADVENTURE, SKILLS AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT

There is always something happening at Scouts across Stanstead Abbots, St Margarets and the surrounding villages. Every week, more than 130 local young people take part in activities that help them develop confidence, resilience, teamwork and practical life skills, all while having a huge amount of fun.

From building dens and cooking on campfires to learning leadership skills, tackling challenges and exploring the outdoors, our Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts enjoy a varied programme that gives them opportunities they simply cannot get elsewhere. Whether it is a child's first experience of sleeping under canvas or leading a team challenge, Scouting is all about learning by doing.

The Group continues to see strong demand, with waiting lists across many sections demonstrating just how valued Scouting is within our community. We are also pleased to see increasing numbers progressing through the sections, developing their skills and confidence year after year.

Away from the weekly meetings, volunteers have been busy improving our headquarters and grounds to create an even better environment for young people, while several teenagers are now supporting younger sections as Young Leaders as they complete their Duke of Edinburgh Awards and leadership training.

Fundraising is also under way to help one of our local Scouts attend the next World Scout Jamboree, where they will represent Hertfordshire, meet young people from around the world and experience a truly life-changing adventure.

What makes all of this possible is an incredible team of volunteers. From section leaders and trustees to occasional helpers, parents and supporters, hundreds of hours are given freely to ensure local young people can enjoy the benefits of Scouting.

If you would like to learn more about joining as a young person or volunteering as an adult, we would love to hear from you at info@stansteadabbottsscouts.org.uk.

Will Drury



The Three Villages Magazine

THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

Over the last four years, the Society has been able to make financial contributions towards a number of worthwhile local initiatives. This has been possible because of the gradual increase in the number of Society members and their generosity. The Society is a registered charity and is able to recover Gift Aid in respect of subscriptions and donations received from people who are taxpayers. The Society incurs only modest costs so is left with funds that can be usefully employed, making a difference to local communities.

It has become our practice once a year to invite applications for grants. The invitation has been sent to all organisations who have been members of the Society for at least three years; most of these are parish councils. The latest round of applications was recently assessed by the Society's trustees and they awarded four grants with a total value of £7,000. In assessing each application, we seek to ensure that it satisfies our charitable objectives, gives public benefit, has been thoroughly considered, is realistic and represents value for money.

Often, our grant enables a worthwhile project that would otherwise simply not happen. On other occasions, our grant triggers some matching funding. Sometimes, the project is not straightforward and we don't see the outcome for some time; the Society retains sufficient funds to ensure the grants can be paid when appropriate. Where possible, we ask the beneficiary to acknowledge the Society's financial assistance.

Projects that have already been completed with our financial help include new and refurbished village signs and information panels, churchyard improvements, community gardens with seating, refurbishment of a war memorial, an instructive video on pargetting, and digitization of a photo archive. We look forward to adding to this list as other approved projects are completed.

Ken McDonald, Secretary
www.hundredparishes.org.uk



ANNETTE HANNAH RETURNS WITH A NEW NOVEL – AND A CHANCE TO WIN



We're delighted to share that local author Annette Hannah is celebrating the publication of her latest novel, *Dining at Davinci's*, which published in August.

Set across two timelines, the story follows 17-year-old Dolly Davinci in 1975 and Gracie Hart in 2018 as their lives become intertwined through friendship, art and the discovery of a canal boat filled with memories. As Gracie uncovers Dolly's past, she begins to rediscover her own future.

Annette, who lives in Stanstead Abbots, has become a familiar name to many of our readers. After a successful career in marketing, she fulfilled her lifelong ambition of becoming a novelist and has since published several romantic fiction titles, many inspired by the beautiful Hertfordshire countryside.

To celebrate the publication of *Dining at Davinci's*, Annette has kindly donated a signed paperback copy for one lucky The Three Villages reader.

Win a Signed Copy!

The novel's canal boat setting inspired our competition. Whether it's watching the narrowboats on the Lee Navigation or enjoying a peaceful walk beside the River Lea, tell us about your favourite local waterside spot. Keep your answer to 50 words or fewer. We'll choose our favourite entry, and the winner will receive a signed copy of *Dining at Davinci's*. Please send your entry, together with your name and contact details, to threevillagesmagazine@gmail.com by 1 October 2026.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: GOOD COMPANIONS VETERINARY CLINIC

In the heart of Stanstead Abbots sits a trusted cornerstone of local pet care: Good Companions Veterinary Practice. This independently owned veterinary surgery has been serving the community for many years, offering compassionate, high-quality care for pets of all kinds. Good Companions Veterinary Clinic began life as a modest first-floor surgery in The Maltings. Over time, thanks to dedication, thoughtful investment and strong community support, it has grown into a purpose-designed modern practice on the ground floor, designed with both animals and owners in mind.

The team at Good Companions Veterinary Clinic consists of experienced vets, qualified nurses and supportive reception staff who work together to provide a full range of services for small animal patients. The practice is accredited under the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Practice Standards Scheme as a Small Animal General Practice and also serves as an Approved Veterinary Nurse Training Practice, reflecting its commitment to professional excellence and to nurturing the next generation of animal care professionals.



Clients are welcomed Monday through Saturday, with flexible appointment options and the added convenience of Sunday morning appointments available at the affiliated hospital in Bishop's Stortford, which is ideal for fitting pet care around busy family and work schedules. A local emergency service for evenings and weekends is also based at the Bishop's Stortford facility, so that urgent needs can be addressed promptly.

Good Companions Veterinary Clinic takes pride in being rooted in the local community: many of its staff are from the surrounding area with a large portion of its loyal client base living within the three villages. At the same time, pet owners from further afield choose Good Companions Veterinary Clinic for the personalised service and continuity of care that can be harder to find in larger, corporate-owned practices.

The clinic offers free on-site parking and there are dedicated spaces opposite the practice specifically intended for clients with less mobile pets or owners who benefit from easy access (just give the team a call when you arrive to use these spaces).

One of the hallmarks of Good Companions Veterinary Clinic's approach is openness and flexibility in discussing treatment options. The practice welcomes new clients and is happy to explore different ways of managing health challenges to suit individual needs and budgets. For pets with insurance, the practice can handle direct insurance claims, easing the administrative load on owners during stressful times.

On site, there's a well-stocked veterinary pharmacy and the team is always happy to provide written prescriptions for clients who prefer to source medications elsewhere. To help spread the cost of preventative healthcare, the practice also offers a Pet Health Plan, which includes annual vaccinations, routine parasite control, six-monthly health checks, and exclusive member discounts on services and treatments.

Good Companions Veterinary Clinic enjoys an excellent reputation in the area with high praise from local pet owners, who consistently highlight the team's professionalism, kindness and attentive care.

Whether you're registering your first pet or looking to switch to a practice that puts personal relationships at the heart of care, Good Companions Veterinary Clinic in Stanstead Abbots offers friendly, comprehensive veterinary services rooted in compassion – all within easy reach of the local community.



📍 3 The Maltings, Stanstead Abbots, Hertfordshire, SG12 8HG

✉ info@goodcompanionsvets.co.uk ☎ 01920 877200 🌐 www.goodcompanionsvets.co.uk

The Three Villages Magazine

POEM BY GUY DINWIDDY

NATIONAL PASTIMES, SUNDAYS MORNINGS

The bells rings out
Across the town
Carried over the rooftops
By the breeze and call

The wind shakes the topmost branches
A leafy susurrus replies
As if in thanks
And brown noise once so restful
Soars overhead, taking people far away.

My coffee is cold
My eyes still sandy
Though the cooler day
Brings hope of cooler days to come.

The bells have quietened
But still rime
As power tool takes over
As national pastimes go
DIY is up there with the planes.

There will be more
But for now
Take this as a reminder
To slow
Even stop
Some time
Is for savouring
And none more than peace.

By Guy Dinwiddy



If you have a poem you would like to see published, email us at print.threevillagesmagazine@gmail.com.

RECIPE: 5-INGREDIENT BLUEBERRY CAKE

This is a really simple, 5-ingredient recipe that makes a lovely, moist cake. A great bake for little helpers!

INGREDIENTS

200g self-raising flour
150g soft brown sugar
2 eggs
120ml melted unsalted butter
150g blueberries

METHOD

1. Heat oven to 170°C fan and line a brownie tin with baking paper.
2. Whisk together the eggs, butter and soft brown sugar until well combined.
3. Gently fold in the self-raising flour until just combined then fold through the blueberries. You may need to add in 60ml water to loosen the batter a tad.
4. Pour into the prepared tin and smooth the top and bake for 25–35 minutes, checking from 25 minutes, until golden and a skewer comes out mostly clean.
5. Cool on a wire rack and then enjoy!
6. Store in an air-tight container for up to 3–5 days.



Source: *thehumblepescatarian*

CHARITY IN FOCUS: CARING FOR OUR CHURCHYARDS

Churchyards have complicated lives! They have more than one function and there are competing interests; because they are more than gardens around the church, they are sacred spaces in which we lay to rest our loved ones, but they also contribute to the community and the environment in which they sit. We have four churches in our villages and they each have churchyards or spaces around them. After a very long hot summer, they are not looking very green, but they do make up an important part of the green space in our community and, importantly, they are protected from development.

What many people don't realise is that our churchyards are managed by the Parochial Church Councils (PCCs). As well as supporting the worship and mission of each church, the PCCs are responsible for maintaining these special places for everyone in the community. Looking after churchyards is a significant and ongoing task, made possible through a combination of donations, fundraising, grants, volunteers and generously support from our Parish Councils. Part of the reason for this is that anyone who lives in the villages can request burial in their respective churchyard, and we welcome this. Whether loved ones have requested burial or cremation, their remains can be laid in the churchyard, close to home. Anyone who has had to arrange a funeral and seek out a burial space will know that the cost can be frightening, but our churchyards are governed by national fees, set by the Church of England, and they are a lot less than some other local options.



Perhaps this is a moment to point out that there are differences between a cemetery and a churchyard, particularly the way they look and the rules they have. Churchyards have a distinct and joint mission, because they are also part of God's creation. So, the management of them needs to be in tune with nature, supporting the biodiversity that God has given us to steward and care for. As such, churchyards are generally managed organically and there are rules about the use of plastic. We try to work with the indigenous flora, mow with the seasons and seek to protect the particular ecosystem of each churchyard. And none of the churchyards are the same! St James's Churchyard has wide meadow areas, interspersed with hundreds of ancient and modern headstones. St John the Baptist's Churchyard has 97 trees on a hillside, with a public footpath running through, so it has a complicated tree management plan for the whole site. St Mary's Churchyard is flat and neat, but it sits in an area where gardens are increasingly being paved over, and it's a home to frogs and dragonflies as it backs onto the New River.

I would like to say a huge thank you to our Churchwardens and Churchyard Teams. They work extremely hard in this volunteer role to make sure that our churchyards fulfil their roles as burial spaces, peaceful spaces for the community and protected green spaces. Whatever we do within the churchyards, we seem to

face criticism. The grass is too long and the cow parsley is obstructing the graves, or the grass is too short and it's not looking green under the trees. Some people feel we are not keeping things tidy enough, and others need us to be pastoral and caring as they journey through grief. We walk the tightrope and do our best, and I know that the teams involved put heart and soul into it. As I said, churchyards are complicated, but they are also very special, much loved and important places in which to seek peace in our busy world.

Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest

The Three Villages Magazine

THE RAILWAY, THE RIVER AND OUR VILLAGES



Living in the three villages, it is easy to take for granted just how fortunate we are. Surrounded by beautiful countryside, riverside paths and open spaces, we have some beautiful countryside, riverside paths and open spaces right on our doorstep.

One organisation helping to celebrate this connection between local communities, rail travel and the countryside is The New River Line Community Rail Partnership. Working with Greater Anglia, local authorities and community groups, the Partnership promotes the railway line that runs between Hertford East and Broxbourne, encouraging people to discover more of the area by train.

The line itself has a long history. The Hertford East branch line opened in 1843, originally connecting Hertford with Ware, St Margarets and Broxbourne. The railway has since developed into the route we know today, serving five stations: Hertford East, Ware, St Margarets, Rye House and Broxbourne. For more than 180 years it has followed the Lea Valley, carrying passengers through some of the most picturesque parts of East Hertfordshire. Today, it remains an important link between our local communities and the wider rail network.



What makes the route particularly special is how closely it follows two historic waterways: the River Lea and the New River.

The River Lea has shaped life in our area for centuries. Flowing through Hertfordshire before eventually reaching the Thames, it was an important transport route long before the arrival of the railway. Records show efforts to improve navigation on the river dating back hundreds of years, allowing goods such as grain and other supplies to be moved between Hertford and London.



Alongside the railway sits another remarkable piece of engineering: the New River. Despite its name, it is not really a river at all, but a man-made waterway completed in 1613 to bring fresh drinking water from Hertfordshire to London. More than 400 years later, it continues to perform that role. The New River Path now follows much of its route, providing a peaceful walking trail through the countryside.

For those who enjoy walking, this is where The New River Line comes into its own. The railway is fortunate to have both the River Lea Towpath and the New River Path running alongside sections of the route. Rather than simply taking a train from A to B, walkers can hop off at stations such as St Margarets, Ware or Hertford East and enjoy a riverside walk before rejoining the railway further along the line.

For railway enthusiasts, there is something rather satisfying about watching trains weave their way through the valley, following a route that has connected our communities since Victorian times.

The New River Line Community Rail Partnership also works with volunteers and local organisations to help keep stations welcoming and attractive, strengthening the connection between the railway and the communities it serves.

We often celebrate the people, groups and places that make our villages special. The New River Line, the River Lea and the New River Path are all part of that story, helping to connect our communities while offering countless opportunities to enjoy the countryside around us.

Information sourced from The New River Line Community Rail Partnership, and historical railway and waterway records.

DIRECTORY OF USEFUL NUMBERS

THE 3 CHURCHES BENEFICE

Vicar

Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 07488 914972

Lay Ministers

Mrs Lynne Griffiths 01920 460668

Mrs Rachel Melrose 01920 422092

Great Amwell with St Margarets

Churchwardens: Mr Richard and

Mrs Margaret Mellor 01920 460474

Assistant Churchwardens: Mr Martin and

Mrs Sue Vaughan 01920 877779

Mr Bryan Brace 01992 447845

Organists: Mrs Jill Hall 01279 842328

Mrs Lynda Harrington 01992 422398

PCC Secretary: Mr Richard Mellor 01920 460474

Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Lyn Paddon 01920 487717

St John the Baptist, Great Amwell

Treasurer: Mr Richard Mellor 01920 460474

Baptism enquiries: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 07488 914972

Wedding enquiries: Mrs Alex Richardson 01920 871391

St Mary the Virgin, St Margarets

Primary contact: Mrs Lyn Paddon 01920 487717

Treasurer: Mrs Lyn Paddon 01920 487717

Baptism enquiries: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 07488 914972

Wedding enquiries: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 07488 914972

Stanstead Abbots

Churchwardens: Mr Peter Melrose 01920 422092

Mr John Woodward 07942 674994

Organist: Mrs Lynne Griffiths 01920 460668

PCC Secretary: Mrs Michele Ross 07783 443332

Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Michele Ross 07783 443332

St Andrew, Stanstead Abbots

Treasurer: Mr Edward Trower 07919 003949

Baptism enquiries: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 07488 914972

Wedding enquiries: Mrs Lynne Griffiths 01920 460668

PARISH COUNCILS

Stanstead Abbots

Parish Council Clerk: Ms Sarah Neighbour 07943 602877

Great Amwell

Parish Council Clerk: Mr Jeff Hughes 07736 172533

Stanstead St Margarets

Parish Council Clerk: Ms Christina Whellams 07422 582172

SCHOOLS

Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College,

Stanstead Abbots 01920 870027

St Andrew's C of E (VC) Primary School,
Stanstead Abbots 01920 870097

St John the Baptist CE VA Primary School,
Great Amwell 01920 870135

CHURCH/PARISH HALLS

Great Amwell Parish Hall:

Mr Gerald King 07710 872218

Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall:

Mr Andrew Day 07588 016148

The Wilshere Hall, St Andrew's Church:

Ms Maureen Freeman 01920 870632

NATIONAL & LOCAL HELPLINES

Police non-emergency number 101

NHS Telephone Advice Service 111

24-hour National Domestic Abuse Hotline 0808 2000 247

Herts Domestic Abuse Hotline 08088 088 088

Samaritans (Freephone) 116 123

The Three Churches Foodbank Hub 07487 350918

East Herts Citizens Advice Service 03444 111 444

CAP (Christians Against Poverty) 0800 328 0006

Anne Robson Helpline: Time to Talk 0808 801 0688

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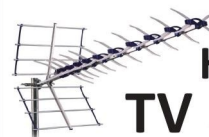
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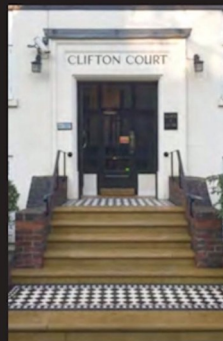
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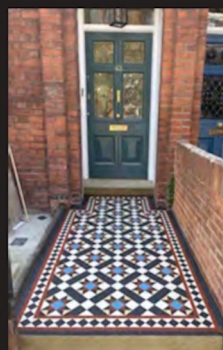
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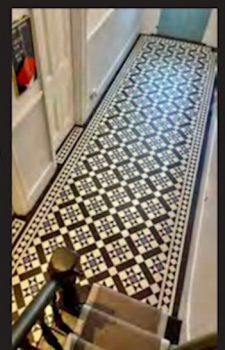


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PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS (from page 12)

SUDOKU

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

WHO AM I?

David Attenborough

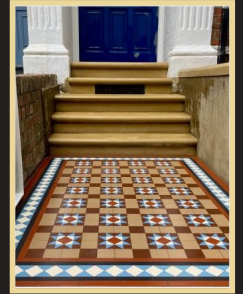
CROSSWORD

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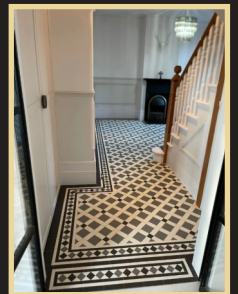
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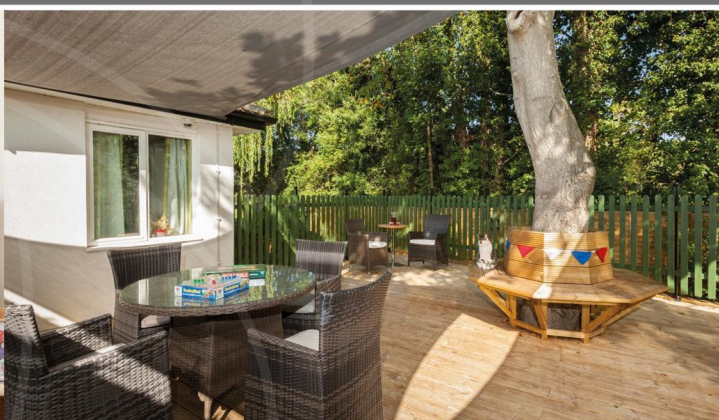
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