

Great Bentley Parish News

**Produced by the Community
for the Community**



December 2023

Village Information

St Mary's Church

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St Mary's Church, Great Bentley.

ST MARY'S CHURCH WEBSITE

stmaryschurchgreatbentley.co.uk

ST MARY'S SUNDAY CLUB

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In an emergency ring 999

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MEDICAL AIDS:

Richard Nowak - 01206 250204

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GT BENTLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL: - 01206 250331

COLNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL: - 01206 303511

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CLACTON & DISTRICT HOSPITAL: 01255 201717

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Sue and Faris Shimali 07973 534301

FOOTPATH REP.

melanie.sawers@nuffield.ox.ac.uk

EDITORIAL

I find it quite soothing watching the leaves gently fluttering down to earth, their nine months of work now over and the understudies tucked up in tight buds already heralding next spring. Not that I am wishing time to fly by. Another pastime coming to an end for now, has been watching the hedgehogs in the back garden. I still have two or three youngsters coming for meaty cat food every night....a sort of MacDonalds ready meal, you might say. Last night however at 11pm I spotted a really tiny hog which the "Hedgehog Lady" Demi, collected this morning and it only weighed 166 grammes which means it will be looked after all winter long as it is too small to hibernate this year. Special thanks to Emma and Demi for the monthly notes educating us all and for looking after all the hedgehogs who are sick.

As ever, lots going on this month and as you will receive this magazine at the end of November a quick reminder that the Christmas Lights Switch On will be at 5pm on Sunday 26th November. HOORAY! Thanks as ever to the Plummer family and their helpers for what I know will be a wonderful display. Then December heralds the Christmas Tree Festival, and if you can help by donating goods there is a list of what St Mary's would really appreciate on page 4. Also its your chance NOW to order your Christmas wreath, before 8th December please as that is when you can come and choose yours from 1pm in the church hall..

If you would like to write a message to a loved one who has passed away the Memory Tree, again at St Mary's, is the place to go. There are stars that you can write on and if you would like to make a donation to St Helena Hospice that would be wonderful.

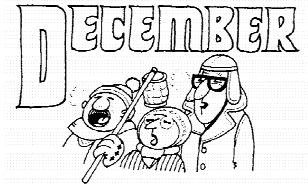
The Cricket and Football Clubs seem to be thriving which is a very good sign. The number of youngsters participating in training and matches seems to grow each week. I love to see them on Saturdays and Sundays working hard for their coaches and respective teams. On the subject of youngsters you will see that our Pre-School visited the Oaks Residential Home at Aingers Green. They had been practising songs that the residents would know and apparently it all went down so well. What a lovely thing to do.

Remembrance weekend went really well and was attended by so many people of all ages. Thanks to everyone who helped and a special thank you to Mick Dorling who does so much behind the scenes to make this so successful each year.

For many Christmas is not a time of plenty, joy, warmth and seasonal goodwill. It can be lonely, cold and desperate with little hope of a better future. If you can donate a few items to the Foodbank collection point at the back of St Mary's church it will help to spread some cheer. Just the smallest little luxury will help to brighten someone's day. Please keep an eye out for neighbours who may be on their own or struggling mentally or physically. Just a knock on the door and a cheery greeting or a quick phone call, just a small act of kindness can make such a huge difference to someone's life. Thanks to Jackie and Judy for all you do each month with sandwiches and clothing for Hope@Trinity. You will read how you can help in Judy's plea for items featured inside.

Magazine subs are now due £6 and £5 per annum. What a bargain! Please try and pay your "deliverer" quickly, it will help them so much. Really **EARLY DEADLINE for the January magazine** so get typing those lovely Christmas articles as it will be delivered before 25th December! Some advertising spaces still available so I would love to hear from you.

Happy Christmas everyone,
Mary Maskell



2023

CONTENTS

Editorial	1
Letter	2
Church services .. .	3
Pet Notes	9
Sesaw News	10
Cookery Notes	11
Cricket.. .. .	12
Police Report	14/15
Pre-school	17
School News	18
Parish Council Notes.. .. .	19
Deadline	20
Nature Notes	21
Youth Football	22
Football Notes	23
Children's Page	25
Surgery News	26/27
Quiz	28
Running Club	29
Clubs & Organisations	30
Wildlives	31
Tending Council Notes.. .. .	33/34

FRONT COVER

**Father Christmas
at the Christmas
Lights Switch-on
2022**

DISCLAIMER

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LETTER FOR DECEMBER

Dear Friends,

Through December and the Advent period we will be reflecting on the advent candles in the advent wreath and what they represent.

The first candle in Advent is purple which compliments both hope and faith as we spiritually prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas.

The second candle which is purple represents peace and we come together to pray for our world and for the peacemakers.

The third candle is pink and represents joy as we celebrate all peoples around the world irrespective of colour or creed.

The fourth candle is purple and represents joy and reminds us of playing, giving, learning and the love we should share with all.

On Christmas day we light the white centre candle in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Christmas is also a time of saying thank you. Can I say thank you for the gifts for the food bank which is a gift from us to those in need, people who supported Samaritans Purse and donated shoe boxes which will be distributed around the world bringing joy to all children in need. Also for all those who have helped over the year in whatever capacity that have kept our church running. We continue to pray for Rev. Sharon in her new endeavours. We also embrace our new venture of working together with our fellow churches, Weeley, Little Clacton and St Osyth.

John 1. v. 1

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

As we look to our new beginnings knowing that God is with us may I wish you a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

**Wendy King
Reader**

St. Mary's Church Facebook Page

St. Mary's Church has a facebook page!

Here we will be posting news of upcoming services, as well as any forthcoming events or fundraising. Please like and follow the page to keep up to date with our news, the page name is 'St. Mary's Church Great Bentley'.

facebook

Are you going to be booking your wedding at St Mary's Church?

If so, your first point of contact is

Wendy King
01206 250852





**GREAT BENTLEY
METHODIST
CHURCH**

Forge Lane CO7 8GD

Don't forget our
Facebook page.
Search for Gt Bentley
Methodist Church

Hire our warm, large or
small halls with fully
serviced kitchen.
Ring 250087

**Our Best wishes to all for a wonderful
Christmas Season**

We welcome you to worship our Lord at Church or on Zoom with us during December. If you would like to join our Zoom service by Computer, please ring 250087 for the connection link. Morning worship will be held at **10.30am** unless otherwise stated.

The leaders of worship are set out below: -
December 3rd Eirwen Grenfell-Essam

Gift Service for people at
Hope@Trinity thus Clothing etc

December 10th Rev Tom Osborne Holy Communion
December 17th Lyn Dickinson

December 24th Robert Taylor Carols for Christmas
with our musical family

December 25th Christmas day, Invitation to join with our
Tamil friends in our Church or at St Mary's at 10 am
December 31st Carol Service led by local leaders.

Events in December:

Next Coffee & Chat on the 1st December at 10am funds
raised for Hope@Trinity and Colchester Refuge.

Adventurers Family Christingle 8th December
6.30pm.

Prayer Meeting this month is on the 13th December.
at 9.45.

Sandwiches for Hope @ Trinity, 13th December

Each second Wednesday of the month at 9.30am we
collect Sandwiches and take them to our Trinity Church
in Clacton for those struggling to buy food for
themselves. Collection at our Church before we go to
Clacton at 9.30.

Family Christmas Quiz 17th December

Sunday
Afternoon at 2pm For Children and their Families. Book
a table. Email Di Bignell if you would like to join
in aidemlearning@gmail.com

Messy Church. This month on Tuesday the 5th
December after school.

Adventurers Club This club for juniors and lower
secondary school children meets on Fridays at 6.30
Except in school holidays. Fun and games with
Christian teaching.

**Each week the following events are normally held at
our Church.**

Ring these numbers for more information.

Messy Church once a month after school 250087
Parent & Toddlers Group Thursdays 9-15 a.m. 251537
The Adventurers Club. Fridays 6.30 p.m. Ring 250087

ST MARY'S SERVICES

Saturday 2nd December - 10am-4pm
Christmas Tree Festival

Sunday 3rd December - 1st Sunday of Advent

10am Joint Benefice service at St Osyth

11-4pm Christmas Tree Festival

Sunday 10th December - 2nd Sunday of Advent

9.30am Holy Communion - Rev Martin Wood

Sunday 17th December - 3rd Sunday of Advent

9.30am Holy Communion - Rev Sarah Batts-Neil

6pm Nine Lessons & Carols

Sunday 24th December - Christmas Eve

9.30am Messy Church Service & Making
Christingles, Church Hall

6.00pm Christingle Service

11.30pm Midnight Service - Archdeacon Ruth Patten

Monday 25th December - Christmas Day

10am Family Service - Wendy King

Sunday 31st December - Christmas 1

9.30am Café Church - Wendy King

**ROTAS FOR ST MARY'S CHURCH
FOR DECEMBER**

Sidespersons & Readers

3rd St Osyth
10th Richard Wainer
17th Lynn & Roger Carey-Smith
24th Jennie Moss
31st Vicky Rothwell (Café Church)

Prayer Rota

3rd St Osyth
10th George Wright
17th Carol Kerridge
24th David Branch
31st Lyn Gordon (Café Church)

Coffee Rota

3rd St Osyth
10th Mandy Miles
17th Annabel Stearn
24th David & Rosemary Branch
31st Lyn Gordon (Café Church)

Cleaning Rota

2nd Wendy Smith
9th Linda Hayes
16th Jennie Moss
23rd Carol Kerridge & Lee Howlett
30th Mandy Miles

MEMORY TREE

The Memory Tree will be in place on Saturday 2nd, 9th and 16th December.

On Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd it will be our Christmas Tree Festival and you can write your message on a star from 10am - 4pm

On Saturday 9th and 16th it will be manned from 10am - 12 noon.

Donations to St Helena Hospice welcome.

Please feel free to write your message on a star for a loved one and hang it on the tree.

If you think you can help please contact

Wendy Smith 01206 250098.

Friends of Great Bentley Churchyard 100 Club

The 100 club is run to financially support the upkeep of the churchyard, which is a benefit to the whole village, not just the church community.

A square numbered from 1 to 100 costs £12 for the year, with a chance of winning 1st prize £100 or 2nd prize £50, at each of the 2 draws in the year. You can buy as many squares as you like! The year runs from December, with the first draw at the Christmas Tree Festival, on 2nd and 3rd December this year.

Anyone who already has a square or two, will receive a renewal letter in the next few weeks; we thank you for your support this year, and hope this will continue.

If you are not yet a member, would you be interested in joining the 100 Club?

For more information, please email Annabel Stearn at wylieandsinger@talk21.com

or call 01206 251518

PASTORAL CARE AT ST MARY'S CHURCH GREAT BENTLEY

Three of us passed our Pastoral Care Course, Part 1 this year, Lyn Gordon, Mary Maskell and Mandy Miles.

Following on from this we hope we may be able to help you in some way eg. home communion, a visit to you personally or a telephone call. Also lifts to church are offered.

Please ring one of us if you feel we might be able to assist you in some way.

Lyn Gordon 681884: Mary Maskell 250524:
Mandy Miles 251382:

PLEASE CAN YOU HELP ST MARY'S CHURCH?

Our major winter fundraiser is our Christmas Tree Festival 2/3 December.

We need the following for our stalls;

Bottles for the Bottle Stall (**FULL ones please!**).
Tombola Prizes for adults and children.
New gifts and home made craft items, handmade cards etc
Homemade Christmas Fare, Jams, Cakes, Mincemeat, Mince Pies etc
Raffle Prizes

These can be left behind the curtain at the back of the church or in Mary Maskell's porch. Caldew Cottage, The Green. (Just open the door and walk in)



ST MARY'S CHURCH GREAT BENTLEY

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Theme - 'Christmas Songs'

SATURDAY 2nd DECEMBER
10.00am - 4.00pm

SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER
11am - 4.00pm

Christmas Food Stall: Bottle Tombola:
Christmas Gifts/Crafts:
Tombola & Raffle: Teddy Stall:
Light Lunches and Refreshments:
Christmas Music:
Pre-order your Christmas Wreath
ring Mary 01206 250524 or
Jackie 01206 250717

Entrance £1.00 Children free

CHRISTMAS WREATHS Pre-order please

So that your wreaths will stay fresh for the festive season we will be **TAKING ORDERS** and you will be able to come along to the church hall to choose/collect yours from **1pm on Friday 8th December**.

They will NOT be on sale at the Christmas Tree Festival.

As usual we will give a generous layer of moss and plenty of fresh greenery.

Please, when ordering tell us **what colour bow** you would like.

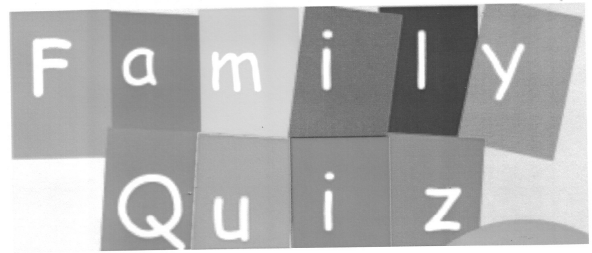
6 inch (suitable for grave or cremation area) **£ 12**

12 inch will be £20

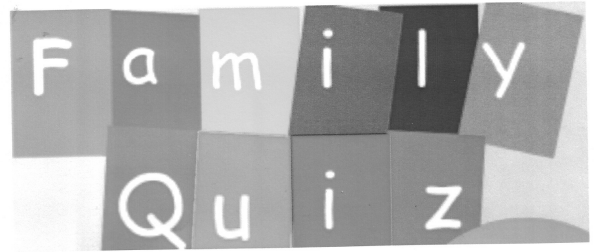
14 inch will be £25

16 inch will be £35

To order ring **Jackie Kilby 01206 250717**
Mary Maskell 01206 250524



At Great Bentley Methodist Church
Sunday afternoon 2pm
17th December £5 a team
Children bring your parents
make a team for this Christmas Quiz
Book a table with Di on
aidemlearning@gmail.com



hope@trinity

Thank you so much to everyone who has brought me donations of clothing for hope@trinity. I cannot tell you how much they are welcomed by the volunteers and the anticipation that spreads through the queue of men and women patiently waiting for the doors to open on a cold wet morning.

Believe me when I tell you that what seems to me to be a perfectly reasonable thing to do in folding items of clothing and putting them carefully into bags so they do not get too creased does not go unnoticed. It is such a simple thing but to someone who does not have much and has not experienced what it is to be thought about and cared for it means far more than we can imagine.

I'm always asking you for help and you do not let me down however.....as we fast approach the darkest, bleakest time of year bringing forth the most desperate need for more and more gents clothing hope@trinity is really, really struggling and the thought of the situation rests heavy on my shoulders. For anyone new to our Parish News Magazine I will list items of gents clothing so urgently required: warm coats, anoraks, waterproofs, joggers, jeans, cargo trousers, warm shirts, jumpers, fleeces, Hoodies, tee shirts for layering up, vests, thermal underwear, socks especially thick pairs, woolly hats, gloves, scarves, trainers, sturdy shoes or boots (they do a lot of walking) and last but not least BOXER SHORTS please, they do not need to be brand new but clean and still wearable. Life does not sink much lower than not even being in possession of a pair of second hand boxers let alone the luxury of a new pair.

Rucksacks are a treasured item, holdalls, sleeping bags, tents, carrier bags of any sort, basic toiletries, wet wipes, cream for chapped hands and dry lips.

Dog food for a faithful non judgemental companion that provides a reason to keep going when you are in the depths of despair.

I do not wish to give the impression that ladies items are not required they are but not in the quantities of men's. Warm winter clothing will always be needed as are skin creams and lip salves and feminine requisites. I apologise for pushing my luck but some chocolate bars and crisps always go down a treat!! I am always happy to receive donations.

Judy Bishop 5 Morella Close, Great Bentley. 01206 251702

Thank you for caring.

Great Bentley Primary School

DONATIONS NEEDED

PTA Christmas Present

Surprise Room

Any new or like-new unwanted items such as toys, games, books, chocolates, biscuits, toiletries, candles, jewellery, hats, scarves, gloves, craft sets, mugs, gift sets, etc, etc. Anything that could be bought as a gift for someone of any age.

Every year we run a Christmas Present Shop for the children to buy presents for their family and friends. It is run at school, children are taken in groups to choose gifts for loved ones. The presents are wrapped and labelled and ready for the children to take home and put under the tree. The children absolutely love being able to choose gifts that parents and carers haven't had to buy for them. Gifts normally range between 50p-£4. This year it will be run on the 18th and 19th December.

MERRY XMAS

Any donations will be gratefully received!
Donations box in School Foyer

ST MARY'S CHURCH

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

We are delighted to say that the choir from Great Bentley School will be singing at the Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church on Sunday 3rd December at 1.30pm.

Do come and join us to hear and support them.

SUBS

Subs are now due and are £6 and £5 concessions. With your December Magazine you will receive a note which tells you WHO delivers your magazine.

Please write YOUR name and address on an envelope and put your subs in and then put it through your DELIVERER'S door.

They will be so grateful if you help them in this way. Thank you so much, Mary 250524

PS If you are buying your magazine from the shops, why not have it delivered to your door? (So much cheaper than buying the loose copies £8.40!!).

AGEWELL EAST

Living happier and healthier

We welcome you to come to our

COFFEE MORNING
Dementia Friendly

Every 4th Thursday of the month
between 10.00am - 12 noon

United Church, Chapel Road,
Brightlingsea, Colchester, CO7 0HF

A chance to have company, chat and meet
others over tea, coffee and biscuits.

enquiries@agewelleast.org.uk
or phone 0300 37 33 333

Thursday 21st December

MAGAZINE COLLATING DAY FOR JANUARY MAGAZINE

(please note change of day and date due to Christmas)

Magazine collating will be on **Monday 18th DECEMBER**

in St Mary's Church Hall starting at 9.00am

Community Speedwatch Update

Speed monitoring took place around the village during October, bringing the total number of reports for Great Bentley so far this year to 501! A very dubious milestone. October's reports, as usual, covered a wide range of vehicle types and speeds, with a host of them recorded at 47-48mph in our 30mph zones!

Community Speedwatch reports continue to feed into the Police planning and they are more and more frequently in our village of late, with mention on social media of large numbers of drivers detected travelling at high speeds. It sounds like a fair number of drivers are finding that to be a very expensive / potentially licence-threatening experience. Please remember to keep within our 30mph limits before it happens to you!

We continue to do what we can to help and we're always happy to welcome new members to our team of volunteers, so if it's something you'd like to do for Great Bentley, please get in touch at greatbentleyspeedwatch@gmail.com"

CHRISTMAS EVE

9.30am

**MESSY CHURCH SERVICE
AND
THE MAKING OF CHRISTINGLES
in the Church Hall
FOR THE CHRISTINGLE SERVICE
WHICH WILL BE AT 6.00pm
in the Church**

ANNUAL DIARY

20th January	An evening with Bentley Green Players
4th February	Bentley Half Marathon
18th May	May Fair, St Mary's Church Gardening Club Plant Sale
31st August	Village Show
14th & 15th September	Flower Festival & Art Exhibition
7th & 8th December	Christmas Tree Festival St Mary's Church
13th December	A Christmas Carol with Antony Roberts

FOR SALE

Treadmill
Reebok ZR8
Hardly used, with instruction booklet
Price £300 ono

Also

Free paving slabs
17inch cream square, in need of a clean.
Approx 50 available.

Contact details 07855922146

Free

6' artificial green Christmas tree.
Good condition, in two sections with stand.

Contact 01205 252182

A LIVING CHRISTMAS '23

Music & arrangements by
contemporary composers

with

THE DEANERY CHOIR

and Peter Clayton (Organist)

**Saturday 16th December
7pm start**

*Burton - Sparkhall - McDowell
Briggs - Lumsden - McGlynn - Carter
Forrest - Porter - Chilcott*

**St Mary Magdalen Church
Clacton Road
Thorrington
CO7 8HA**

Retiring collection for Church funds

FOOD BANK

The main needs at the moment are for basic tinned and packeted foods, longlife milk, squash, biscuits, tinned fruit, vegetables and meat, teabags 40s or 80s, long life juice, coffee, sugar, shampoo, washing up liquid, and washing powder/pods/gel. (At the present time they have a good stock of pasta thanks).

Thank you for your continued support as donations have decreased recently.

Please leave any donations at the back of St Mary's church in the boxes provided.

The St. Osyth Witch Trials Part 2



The Witch Trails began in a cold winter of 1582. Europe had been experiencing a mini ice-age with temperatures in England 2 degrees cooler. Crops and livestock suffered and increasing rainfall ruined harvests. St. Osyth was a harsh marsh land to scrape a living. The accusations made during the witch trials show the depth of the poverty the community was experiencing with people accusing others over crimes for which the punishment was death over small things like some cheese or a cup of yeast. Although the village was poor the Priory was thriving. A huge aristocratic stately home, it was one of the largest in the country and hosted Royal visits from Queen Elizabeth I twice. When she visited in 1579 it is said that she called together the local magistrates and Justices of the Peace and berated them for not trying anyone under her Witchcraft Act passed in 1562. In the winter of 1581 the owner of the Priory, Lord John Darcy, passed away and his young son Thomas inherited the estate. The community would have felt this loss deeply and were perhaps anxious to have someone so inexperienced as Lord of the manor.

Many in the local community worked for the Darcy family in the big house or as tenant farmers. It was one of his members of staff who made the first accusations that started a spiral of events leading to 13 women and 1 man being tried for Witchcraft. Grace Thurlow had a son Davy who was stricken with a very unusual illness and wasn't getting better. She called in her friend Ursula Kemp to see if she could help. Ursula used traditional methods to remove the curse from Davy that was causing him to be so unwell. It worked and Ursula hoped to be able to get more work from the family as Grace was pregnant with her next child and would need a woman helper and wet nurse so she could return to work after the birth. Unfortunately she did not choose Ursula for this role which must have been a huge blow for this woman who was already living in poverty with the 8 year old son and caused the two women to fall out. Tragically, a few months later, Grace's baby fell from her crib and died. In her grief, looking for someone to blame, she accused Ursula of causing the death through witchcraft. As Grace worked for the Darcy's, and as local Lord, Thomas Darcy likely felt obligated to investigate. However, as he was young and inexperienced, he passed the case over to his cousin, Brian Darcy. Brian lived at St. Clere's Hall, an intimidating, moated property just a stones throw from the Priory. He had land across Essex but was not aristocratic like his cousins at the Priory. He took on the case with enthusiasm, perhaps hoping to make a name for himself in the area.

Helen Brown
Education Manager
Priory Education Centre

Thank You

My grateful warmest thank you to everyone who came along to my 'Remembering Irene Coffee Morning' on October 21st and to my dear friends who helped to make it a memorable and heart warming occasion. It was simply Great Bentley at it's best with all that is good in our community which Irene loved so much and was very happy, content and proud to be a part of. I felt something positive had to come out of our shock and sadness when we learnt she had passed away. I think Irene would be overwhelmed by the love and affection we have all shared up to this very day and beyond and as to how much she is missed. In total with The Coffee Morning plus donations I was able to send a cheque for £555-00 to The Essex and Herts Air Ambulance!

I will leave you with what I am sure Irene would say to each of us. " Thank you Lovey"

Judy Bishop



**Weeley
Veterinary
Centre**

Winner of Best Vet UK 2023

PET NOTES

Merry Christmas from everyone at Weeley Veterinary Centre following a wonderful year caring for your pets. To conclude 2023, here is a reminder of the dangers facing pets during the festive season.

Wishing everyone a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Poisonous plants:

Holly, ivy, mistletoe, poinsettia and Christmas trees should not be ingested

Savoury treats:

Onions, garlic, leeks, shallots and chives

Beware leftovers may contain toxic ingredients and carry the risk of mould producing lethal toxins

Items with the potential for injuries:

Candles and Christmas decorations



Sweet treats:

Mince pies, Eccles cakes, Christmas pudding and any other product containing raisins, sultanas and currants

Chocolate

Macadamia nuts

Artificial sweeteners, including xylitol, found in sweets and chewing gum

Miscellaneous items:

Silica gel and potpourri can also cause injury if ingested.

Care should be taken to ensure your pet cannot ingest alcohol or cigarettes

Dr April Young MRCVS

COMPETITION TIME

This year's Christmas colouring competition is "Design a Christmas Jumper".
Please visit www.facebook.com/weeleyvetcentre for all the details,
including the entry form.

Closing Date: Saturday 16th December

SESAW NEWS

Brrrr! I don't like these cold, dark days and nor does Ollie (the Black) Cat. He sprawls across the desk, swipes Mum if she tries to access her paperwork then walks over the keyboard which spues blank pages out of the printer!

One of my other housemates, Buttons, is a Norfolk Terrier, a good solid no nonsense member of the family. She was the ideal companion for Mum at a Thanksgiving Service for animals to celebrate the love and care between pets and their owners. They received a warm welcome at St. Mary's in Stoke by Nayland and the collection raised over £200 for SESAW.

It's been a difficult year for all animal charities with many people forced to give up their pets due to health or financial problems. Other animals are brought in, having being abandoned at the side of the road and often in need of urgent veterinary attention. Like most rescue centres, SESAW has been full to bursting and short of volunteers but we keep going, hoping the situation will ease up soon.

Now that winter has arrived, please check our website or Facebook pages before visiting us as our seasonal shutdown begins in December. Meanwhile, very best wishes for good health and happiness to all our friends and rehomed animals, from Ollie (the Black) Cat and me, Kenny (the Boss) Chihuahua.

Suffolk & Essex Small Animal Welfare, Registered Charity No.1124029, Stoke Road, Leavenheath, CO6 4PP. Tel: 01787 210888 www.sesaw.co.uk

CHRISTMAS POST

I will be doing the annual Village Christmas Post and will be collecting your cards on the following Saturdays throughout December 2nd, 9th and 16th between 9 and 12. I will take up my usual position by the village sign. I am happy to deliver throughout the village and Aingers Green. All monies raised will again be donated to the Foodbank.

30p per card please

If you are housebound and would like me to collect your cards please give me a ring on 07751455132 Likewise if anyone would like to assist with manning the post or delivering cards please give me a ring or text.

Neen Powell

CHRISTMAS TREE SHREDDING

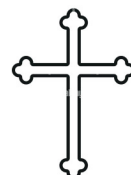
This will take place on Saturday 6th January
from 10am to 12 noon near the Cricket Club.

Donations please which will be divided between Brain Tumour UK and the
Air Ambulance.
(Subject to Parish Council permission).

MYRTLE CLAYTON

Myrtle died peacefully in St Mark's Care Home
on 3rd October.

The funeral will take place at St Mary's Church,
Great Bentley on November 29th at 2pm.



COOKERY CORNER

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS DESSERTS

My sister has invited us to share Christmas at her house this year and at least three of the company will be looking forward to ending the meal with the traditional fruity Christmas pudding. However, this is not always the dessert of choice for everyone, so here are a few alternative ideas, including some delicious ice cream from Annabel.

TIRAMISU (translated as ("pick me up"))

397g can condensed milk	500g Mascapone or full fat cream cheese	
3tbsp Marsala or brandy	100g sponge fingers	150g cold strong black coffee
15g cocoa powder		

In a large bowl whisk together the condensed milk and cream cheese until smooth. Mix the Marsala wine or brandy in a separate shallow bowl. Take one sponge finger at a time, dip it in the cold coffee and hold it for a few seconds taking care not to make the biscuits soggy. Line a trifle dish with a layer of dipped sponge fingers and spoon over half of the of the creamy mixture. Using a fine sieve, sift a generous dusting of cocoa powder over the top of the cream layer. Repeat and finish with a layer of cocoa powder and chill well before serving.

TARTE AU CITRON

375g sweet dessert pastry	4 large eggs	175g caster sugar	2 large lemons
160ml double cream	a little icing sugar		

Zest and juice the lemons. You could make your own pastry using 250g flour and 125g butter if preferred. Roll out the pastry on a well-floured surface and line a greased 20 – 24 cm flan tin. Prick the base lightly with a fork and chill for 20 minutes. Preheat the oven to 200C and bake blind for 12 minutes. Remove the foil and baking beans and bake for a further 5 minutes before removing and setting aside to cool. Turn the oven down to 150C. Lightly beat the eggs in a basin, mix in the sugar, lemon zest and juice and cream, then carefully pour the mixture into the cooled pastry case. Bake for 40 minutes. Remove and leave to cool completely. Sprinkle with sifted icing sugar and serve at room temperature.

WHITE CHOCOLATE AND ALMOND PIE

For the base.	425g plain flour	125g light brown sugar	¼ tsp almond extract
	75g butter		

For the filling.	50g brown sugar	125g butter melted	3 eggs beaten
½ tsp almond extract	175g white chocolate roughly chopped		275g flaked almonds

Preheat the oven to 200C. Using the ingredients for the base, mix the flour, brown sugar and almond extract, then add the butter and blend all together. Press the mixture into the bottom and up the sides of a 23cm oven proof dish and bake for about 10 minutes until just light brown. Remove the dish and reduce the temperature to 180C. Using the filling ingredients, put the sugar, melted butter, eggs and almond extract into a large bowl and beat until smooth. Mix in all the chocolate and 175g of the almonds then pour the mixture into the lined dish. Sprinkle the rest of the almonds around the outer edges of the pie. Bake for 40 minutes or until golden brown and the almonds are lightly toasted. Cool for 10 minutes before serving.

HONEY AND BRANDY ICE CREAM

This will make 2 litres.

2 large eggs 250g caster sugar 9 tbsp clear honey 850ml double cream 12 tbsp brandy
Separate the eggs into yolks and whites. Whisk the yolks, sugar and honey until pale and fluffy and put aside. Whisk the cream and brandy until it forms soft peaks. Put aside. Whisk the egg whites into soft peaks. Put aside. Into the yolks mix, fold ¼ of the cream mix, then ¼ of the whites mix and repeat until all is incorporated. Pour into a 2 litre plastic container and freeze overnight.

SALTED CARAMEL ICE CREAM

Whisk 300ml of double cream, 1tsp of grinding salt (pouring salt does not work) and a tin of Carnation condensed caramel (397g) until fully blended. Put in a plastic container and freeze. Simple!

M. E. with thanks to Annabel.



GREAT BENTLEY CRICKET CLUB

Playing cricket on The Green since 1771.

Website: greatbentleycc.co.uk Email: info@greatbentleycc.co.uk Instagram: [great_bentleycc](https://www.instagram.com/great_bentleycc)

This month we have three pieces of exciting and groundbreaking news for the club.

Firstly, from the colts, the Great Bentley U13 girls will be joining forces with the Brightlingsea girls to play league and friendly games next season -- the first fully girls team Bentley has ever had. Thanks to Michael Giles for being the driving force behind this fantastic expansion. GBCC are very committed to female cricket and is hoping to build on this great step forward with other female teams. If any mums or daughters are looking to get into cricket, please contact the club via info@greatbentleycc.co.uk

Secondly, you may notice some work on the Green over the winter -- the club will be installing a high-grade artificial wicket. Work is expected to start in the new year and be complete over two weekends in time for practice for the new season in late March and the season to begin in mid-April. There will be minimal disruption to the users of the Green with all works taking place within the roped off area. Due to the significant growth of the club, including a return to league cricket, the current wicket had a record number of matches played on it last season. Because of this wear and the very poor summer, despite the hard work of our head groundsperson and his team, the pitch was not in the best condition. The artificial strip will not only be significantly safer but will enable the colts to have a consistent wicket to play on which will directly lead to them being able to improve their skills with both bat and ball. The strip will also allow the colts and adults to practice earlier in the season as well as in the less than glorious summer weather. The club would like to offer our thanks to the Parish Council for seeing the huge benefit this will have for the village and the club, in particular the colts, and supporting this effort to move the club forward. The club is self-funding this project to a cost of over £5000. If there are any individuals or businesses who would be willing to help with this project with sponsorship or donations please contact the club via info@greatbentleycc.co.uk

Thirdly, GBCC now has a very active Instagram page thanks to the hard work of new committee member Dan Barker. You can see all the excitement going on at the club (although not much live action over the winter) by following [great_bentleycc](https://www.instagram.com/great_bentleycc)

The cricket does continue with the colts beginning their indoor league with some impressive performances in their first match against Totham. The match ended in a tight finish with GBCC falling just short of the required total losing by just 14 runs, 284 – 270.

In perhaps more subdued news, the AGM was held on Monday 13th November with the election of the club officers and committee members. If you'd like to get involved in the running of the club, then please contact GBCC via the email address listed at the top of this article.

Committee Officers and Members			
<i>President</i>	David Gibbon	<i>Club Captain</i>	Alex Youngs
<i>Chairperson</i>	Henry Fairbanks	<i>Club Vice Captain</i>	Dan Barker
<i>Vice Chairperson</i>	Alex Youngs	<i>Colts Head Coach</i>	Michael Giles
<i>Secretary</i>	Carol Kerridge	<i>Colts Administrator</i>	Vacant
<i>Assistant Secretary</i>	Mark Busby	<i>Adults Fixture Secretary</i>	Alex Youngs
<i>Financial Officer</i>	David Smith	<i>Colts Fixture Secretary</i>	Michael Giles
<i>Social Media/Website Administrator</i>	Dan Barker	<i>Bar Licensee</i>	Henry Fairbanks
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Richard Wainer	<i>Head Groundsperson</i>	Peter Giles
<i>Child Safety Officer</i>	Carol Kerridge	<i>Committee Member</i>	Sam Busby
<i>Assistant Child Safety Officer</i>	Vacant	<i>Committee Member</i>	Jon Hesketh
<i>Fundraising Secretary</i>	Russell Brown		

GBCC is an inclusive, volunteer run, family friendly club welcoming new playing and non-playing members at any time during the season. The bar is open every weekend, all summer, from 5pm Friday and 1pm Saturday and Sunday serving a wide variety of drinks and snacks. Please contact the club via the email address info@greatbentleycc.co.uk if you or your child would like to give cricket a try or with any questions.

Great Bentley Station

A working party gathered at the station armed with bin bags, a strimmer and very heavy-duty gloves. The achievement in only an hour and a half was phenomenal. I cannot express my gratitude to those who came and worked so hard.

The plan is to have a meeting to discuss the work needing to be done in the new year. Possibly some fund raising will be needed to achieve all that we would like to do.

Please if you have any pictures, paintings or photographs that you think would look good at the station, we would love to see them.

We are all looking forward to the New Year with excitement, waiting for the bulbs to appear and then planting the tubs for the spring.

Please contact Dawn Vinn
01206 481746

HAVE YOU HEARD US?

We are Tendring Talking Times and we produce a weekly audio recording of local news and other items of interest. We are looking for new listeners who are visually impaired or who have some temporary or permanent disability which makes reading a strain.

If you know someone who fits into one of the above categories yet does not have a subscription with ourselves then please see the contact details below and get in touch, provided you have that person's agreement.

This recording comes out each week via the Royal Mail and should arrive on a Saturday morning. This comes in the form of a memory stick that can either be played on a computer, laptop or even a tablet. However, the listener does not need to own one of these devices as we will lend the listener a play back device, free of charge, and demonstrate how the listener can use it.

The memory sticks are then returned in the wallet that it arrives in at no cost to the listener under the Royal Mail's concession for 'Articles for the Blind'. The wallet is then reused on another occasion.

If, for some reason, the listener does not wish to listen to a particular article, the listener can simply fast forward to the next article or rewind to listen again. The listener can stop their free subscription at any time simply by contacting us.

Tendring Talking Times is produced by the Tendring Talking Newspaper Association which is a registered charity established in 1976. We are members of the Talking Newspaper Federation which supports and represents the work of all local UK Talking News organisations.

You can contact us by email on:
tendringtalkingtimes1976@gmail.com

By post to: Tendring Talking Times, 29 Church Road, Clacton on Sea, CO15 6AS.

By leaving a Voicemail on: 01255 422307.

PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES FOR 2024



**ADULTS
FLOWER POWER
CELEBRATION!
CITY LIFE
HAND IN HAND
BLACK AND WHITE
EXPRESSIONS
OPEN**

**CHILDRENS
A WALK ON THE WILDSIDE
OPEN**

The Friends of Great Bentley Primary School**Tickets £1**

Christmas Raffle

Top prize £150 cash donated by Paveys Estate Agent, plus many more fabulous prizes all donated by lovely local businesses

The draw will take place at the school on Friday 8th December 2023



**Tickets can be collected from
Dani's Deli or the school office**

£150 CASH

OVERNIGHT STAYS
LUXURY HAMPERS
BEAUTY TREATMENT VOUCHERS
GYM PASSES DAYS OUT
PHOTOGRAPHY VOUCHER
BEAUTY PRODUCTS
CHRISTMAS WAX MELTS
TAKEAWAY FOOD VOUCHERS
WINE CHOCOLATES
PLUS MANY MORE!

All proceeds go towards funding extra resources and experiences for the children of Great Bentley Primary School. All stubs must be returned before 8th December to either the Deli or School.

POLICE REPORT

RECORDED CRIMES - 17

From 27/09/2023 - 29/10/2023

CRIME TYPES

ARSON NOT ENDANGERING LIFE X2 - ASSAULT ACTUAL BODILY HARM X3 - ASSAULT WITHOUT INJURY X2 - BLACKMAIL- BURGLARY BUSINESS - CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO MOTOR VEHICLE - DOMESTIC - HARASSMENT WITHOUT VIOLENCE - MALICIOUS COMMENTS - THEFT FROM SHOPS THREATS OF DAMAGE - OTHER X2

INCIDENTS REPORTED – 31

ABANDONED 999 - ARSON - ASST OTHER AGENCY- ATTENTION TO - CONCERN - DOMESTIC X4 FIREWORKS - INFORMATION - HIGHWAY DISRUPTION X6 - INFORMATION - NUISANCE- OTHER X2 PEDESTRIAN- ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION X4 - SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES X2 - THEFT X2 - THREATS

TRUCAM (SPEEDING)

4 Sessions of 1 hour each were deployed over the course of October.

Plough Road Aingers Green - 38 top speed **52mph**

Plough Road Aingers Green - 40 top speed **43mph**

Thorrington Road - 26 top speed **49mph**

Thorrington Road - 16 top speed **49mph**

A total of **120** vehicles were reported for the offence, with a top speed of **52mph** in the 30mph limits. The **30mph** signs were checked before and after deployment and **clearly visible**.

Please drive with due care and attention.

CONSIDERATE PARKING TICKETS (CPI,s)

6 considerate parking tickets were given out this month in the village. Vehicles are parking on **junctions** and **footpaths**, which causes obstruction and danger to the safety of others. These are both offences under the Highway Code. This can also damage pavements and kerb stones in time, which causes money to be spent to replace and dissatisfaction to residents for looking unsightly to the village.

Pavement parking may be done in a considerate mindset, however, this causes problems to pedestrians trying to pass, which leads them to walk on the road, which is not ideal for those with disabilities and children in buggies and poor visibility. Considerate Parking Incentive tickets are aimed to educate drivers of bad parking. offences and of the rules of the highway code. Parking Services have and will be attending the village on a regular basis and **fixed penalty notices** may be issued.

Theft of Tractor GPS units

There has been thefts of tractor GPS units in Harwich. Farmers be vigilant, if you were planning on extra security, now is a good time.

Theft of site tools and criminal damage.

Between the hours of 17.30 on 02/10/2023 and 07.00 on 03/10/2023 a metal fence has been knocked down at a site, causing criminal damage and stealing tools from within. 3 lasers, makita batteries, Bosh drill, Bosh SBS Drill, 2 Wacker plates, power float, generator, jumping jack and a disk cutter. If you have any information or have seen such items for sale, please contact police on 101

Or email Julia.brandon@essex.police.uk

Anti Social behaviour

If you are experiencing ASB please phone 101 and report it straight away.

If an officer is available to attend, this makes it easier identifying those concerned.

Police national mobile property register (NMPPR)

Register all your valuables on the police national register online www.immobilise.com

If stolen items are later retrieved by police, we will know who they belong to.

It is a good idea to take pictures of all valuables and write down serial numbers too.

If items get stolen or go missing, it helps identify them.

CHILD CAR SEATS

A child's car seat may be the most important safety device you ever provide for your child. Even in a minor collision an unrestrained child may be thrown about inside the vehicle, injuring themselves and others. They could also be thrown from the car through one of the windows.

In the United Kingdom it is estimated that approximately seventy five percent of all child car seats in use are incorrectly fitted, incompatible with the car or van or inappropriate for the child.

Information about the law for carrying children in cars and vans can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules>.

There is a huge variety of seats to choose from for different weights and ages; every seat has different installation instructions which need to be followed carefully. A series of short films giving information about car seat groupings and the most appropriate seat for your child can be found on the RoSPA website at:

<http://www.childcarseats.org.uk/films/>

Further information can be found at www.goodeggcarsafety.com. Good Egg also have a film showing the five most common faults regarding the fitting of child car seats. These include loose or twisted harnesses, padded or bulky clothing, 'buckle crunch' and incorrect seat belt routing. <https://youtu.be/nZKbzXF5YHA>

Remember to always buy a car seat from a reputable retailer who can demonstrate how the seat fits your car or van before you make a purchase. Check that the staff are trained and qualified to fit car seats.

Never buy a second hand child car seat and never use one once it has been involved in a collision.

Suspicious circumstances.

If you see anything that does not look right, report it.

Try and get as much information as you can, including registration numbers, which are key to a lot of activity. The more you have, the more chance we have of a positive investigation, with results.

Reporting incidents the correct way.

To report an incident please **ring 101 or for Emergency 999**

Or report it online

<https://www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online/report-a-crime/>

SCRATCH CHOIR

We will be forming a Scratch Choir to sing at the service of Nine Lessons and Carols at St Mary's church at 6pm on Sunday 17th December. It is hoped that the choir will also join together at St Osyth for their service at 4pm too. We will be practising our carols and also learning a new one to sing to the congregation.

There will be a practice at 10am on Saturday 16th December in the church hall.

Can you please ring Fiona Bodmer, who will be leading our choir, to confirm you will be joining us so that we have an idea of numbers on 01206 251321. Also can you tell Fiona if you have your own copy of the Green Carol Book.

Do join us.

We look forward to seeing you.

University of Essex Choir

A BAROQUE CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

A selection of festive music by Pergolesi, Charpentier, Purcell, Buxtehude and Chilcott

9th December 6.30pm

Ivor Crew Lecture Hall
University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park,
Colchester C04 3SQ

Conductor Ben Vonberg-Clark

Tickets £18 Students/Under 18s £6

Book <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking-dvpled>

01206 304551

NEWS FROM THE OAKS

Here at The Oaks we have had an eventful month!

We would first like to thank the staff and parents of Great Bentley Pre School who all took time out of their day to come to our home! The residents had an amazing time with the children and it was so heart warming to witness!

Also to Mary Maskell and her helpers who came to the home for a Church Service.

Words cannot do the justice of our appreciation of our absolutely wonderful community who bring such warmth, happiness and fun to our resident's lives.

We also had a Halloween Party with singer Keith, who got the residents singing along to 60's songs. To top it off, we had our fireworks which they always enjoy!

Thank you again for your unconditional support.

Love, peace and warmth not only to our lovely residents, but to all the people of the Great Bentley community,

December 3rd



The Deanery Choir will be supporting the Patronal service, with an Advent theme, at 3pm at: **St Nicholas Church, 67, Church Street, Harwich. CO12 3DR**

Supporting Church music in the Tendring area

The anthem that they will be singing will be 'A spotless rose' by Herbert Howells, a haunting melody that repeats throughout the anthem.

Herbert Howells was born in Lydney, Gloucester on 17 October 1892. He showed a keen interest in composition early in his life and, at the age of eighteen, became a pupil of Herbert Brewer, Organist of Gloucester Cathedral. In 1912 he was awarded a scholarship to the Royal College of Music and studied under Charles Villiers Stanford, Walter Parratt, Charles Wood and Hubert Parry.

December 10th

The Deanery choir will be singing at **St Georges Church, Great Bromley CO7 7HZ** at the 10.30am communion service. The anthem that they will be singing is 'Bethlehem Down' by Peter Warlock.

"Peter Warlock" was in fact the pseudonym under which the multi-talented Philip Heseltine released his compositions to the world. Heseltine was a gifted writer and music journalist, an editor of early music at a time when it was generally neglected, and a generous encourager of the efforts of other composers. But most importantly of all, he was a spontaneous and original composer (as Peter Warlock), chiefly of a large corpus of over 100 songs, written between the end of the First World War and his death in 1930.

December 16th

The Deanery Choir will be performing 'A living Christmas '23' at **St Mary Magdalen Church, Clacton Road, Thorrington. CO7 8HA** at 7pm. A concert of music by contemporary composers and arrangers, who are still alive, interspersed with readings reflecting the Christmas message. The talented Peter Clayton is our organist.

Graham Bell
Deanery Choir Organiser

BENTLEY GREEN PLAYERS

An evening of entertainment with Bentley Green Players in support of Dementia UK in Great Bentley Village Hall. A selection of Short Plays, Sketches, Monologues and a Quiz. Saturday 20th January 2024 at 7.30pm, Tickets £10 (cash or cheque) on the door. Further details contact Peter 07503 153960



Autism Coffee Afternoon

Our next coffee meeting is arranged for Thursday 7th December at 1:00.

You do not have to have a child attending the Pre-school to come along, if you know of anyone that might benefit from this then please spread the word and we will look forward to seeing you all.

Job Vacancy

We are looking to recruit and have two vacancies available. One is for a relief member of staff with immediate effect, and the other is potentially all-day Monday and Friday from January, this would be discussed with a successful candidate. A qualification in Early Years is not essential for this position, however this would be preferred. If you are interested, then please send your CV with covering letter via email and we will be in touch.

Christmas Tree Festival

We have been invited to take part in this event which takes place at St Mary's Church on Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd December, it would be lovely if as many of you as possible took the time to support this event.

The theme for decorating the trees this year is 'Christmas Songs', there will be a competition running for visitors to guess correctly all the entries so I can't disclose what ours will be yet. Take the family out for a little wander over there, it will be lovely to see all the different displays and start to get in the Christmas spirit.

Christmas Nativity

This year our Nativity performance will be taking place at the wonderful St Mary's Church again which is such a wonderful and perfect setting. We totally appreciate the use of the Church, and I would personally like to say a big 'thank you' to all the relevant members of the Church for allowing this to happen; it really does make it extra special.

Registers

Registers for the new term have now been completed and we are busy welcoming our new children along for their stay n play's, that are joining us in January. If you would like your child to join our Pre-school, then please let me know as soon possible so we can arrange to meet you before Christmas.

You can contact me via FB message, email – information@greatbentleypreschool.co.uk or phone – 07522 572303.

Finally on behalf of myself and the rest of the staff we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. Allison and I would also like to wish our staff a lovely and peaceful Christmas break. They are all a wonderful team who work very hard and the children within the local community all benefit from their dedication, enthusiasm, care, and support.

Thanks for reading and I hope you all enjoy the festive season.

Julie Wiles

Remembrance Weekend

Two days of Remembrance Services in Great Bentley again proved to be successful.

The official service on the 11th of the 11th was conducted by Wendy King and attended by approximately 140 people. The family service on the Sunday was attended by an estimated 400 plus – this service was conducted by the Methodist minister and was preceded by the procession from the Chapel to the memorial, led by Peter Harry. Both services were attended by John Roy and Rod, both accomplished bagpipe players. Thank you to Helen Ross for reading a poem and to everyone who attended and to all who took part in organising the two events.

Thanks to the Parish Council; the memorial base was in tip top condition, being pressure washed and sand spread in the brick joints and also during this year they had new posts installed to replace the old ones, which had been there for for approximately 25 years.

Michael Dorling

SCHOOL NEWS

Year 1

In PE Year 1 have been concentrating on balance and control, using canes and footballs. They've thought about which parts of their feet are best for dribbling with control and have been negotiating obstacles.

Year 2

Year 2 have been discussing the significance of remembering the past and what Remembrance Day is. Their poem theme in English has begun, with a concentration on riddles. The children have been having fun coming up with requirements for solving a challenging puzzle.

In maths, addition and subtraction are their main topics. The children need to practice this at home and it will be beneficial in class.

Year 3

Year 3 was fortunate enough to take part in a Stone Age Workshop. It was a great day where the children learnt lots about the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. The children participated in a range of activities and looked amazing in their costumes.

Year 4

Year 4 have been finding out about the Vikings this week - researching all about their life and who they were. They created posters to show their understanding. We have also been finding out about Georgia O'Keefe in art. They used paintings that she created to inspire them in their own sketches.

Children in Year 2 and Year 4 helped to create this Remembrance poster, which was on display on the Great Bentley railway platform in the run up to Remembrance Sunday.

Great Bentley Carnival and Fete Association Emergency AGM Thursday 7th December, Great Bentley Methodist Church, at 8p.m.

This meeting is open to anyone who has an interest in finding out more about Great Bentley Carnival and Fete. If you can offer help and support you will be warmly welcomed. We provide financial support to local children groups, so if your organisation would like to find out more about becoming one of our beneficiaries, come along to the meeting.

For this well known and loved annual event we urgently require volunteers to come forward to become members of the committee. This year we are specifically hoping people will come forward for the position of Programme Co-Ordinator and Carnival Court team.

Treasurer – bookkeeping, pay invoices, banking tasks, check income, apply for necessary licences (lottery and street collection) **Thankfully a volunteer has come forward.**

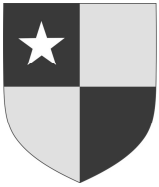
Programme co-ordinator – Collate information for programme, approach prospective advertisers, liaise with printers. **This is Urgent. Could be a shared role. The programme is delivered by volunteers and beneficiaries to almost every house in village for FREE.**

Carnival Court Team – Prepare Carnival Float, Support Great Bentley Carnival Court entrants and organise dress etc. **This should be shared between a team.** Great Bentley has not had a Carnival Court for several years, several regular visiting Courts come along to our Carnival.

The committee could also do with some extra help with the procession. This would involve inviting organisations along to make our procession fun and interesting. People and ideas would be warmly welcomed.

Contact Julie 07585558660

Thank You



GREAT BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

*Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the
Council: Jennifer Spear*

Tel: 01206 256410:

Email: clerk@greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk

I can't quite believe that I am writing an article for the Magazine for December, the past 12 months with the Parish Council have gone so quickly with lots of projects on the go and lots that we are still tackling.

This month we have a new member of the Parish Council team, a new assistant Clerk, Clare, who is looking forward to getting her teeth into the many aspects of village life that the Parish Council Support.

As part of the council there is an Environmental Working Group that specifically looks into projects and council activities that help support and enrich the environment in Great Bentley and we are always looking for new volunteers to bring fresh ideas and support! Please do contact us if you think this is something that you may be interested in.

For some of the newer members of the village the Parish Council Office is located at the back of the village hall, we are in there between Monday to Thursday 09:00 – 1:00. (Please note as there is only one member of staff in there at a time, sometimes the office is unmanned as we do have appointments and meetings that take us around the village, so it can be helpful to book an appointment with us!)

Please remember also that we are still accepting grant requests for the new financial year as detailed in last months parish magazine, if you require any help with this please contact me in the office or via email.

On behalf of all of the Parish Council we would like to thank you for your support over the last year and we wish you a merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2024.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 7th December at 07:00pm in the Village Hall, we hope to see you there!

Jennifer Spear – *Clerk to the Council*
clerk@greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk

Friends of the Green

At the AGM on the 8th November, another good fundraising year was reported. The main amounts coming from our attendance on the green on Wednesday nights and the Grand Garage Sale. Our thanks to everyone who supported our efforts and special thanks to the sponsors of the Garage Trail and the tractors and horses at the annual Village Show in September. These sponsors probably do not benefit financially from this except to say that their support enables us to raise money for village projects. The committee were also very pleased with the appearance of the two Suffolk Horses, organised by the Chairman, which again, proved to be very popular. The owners have expressed a wish to come again next year. The tractor display is also popular and two people with the 'right connections' have promised to help again.

One new project that we are pursuing this year is to address the overgrown and untidy state of the village pond. We would like to see a complete removal of all growth, including the roots, which will unfortunately result in some of the clay liner being removed at the same time. This would need to be replaced to reform the source of clay that holds water almost all of the time. The fish would of course, have to be removed by specialists before this operation.

This complete dig out and reforming of the pond, last took place around the year 2000 and was thought to last approximately 10 years. It is now over 20 years!! Any plants reintroduced would need to be contained to stop their spread i.e., inside a small concrete ring or similar. We have asked the Parish Council to put this onto their next agenda to start the ball rolling. I am sure that many residents will support this work judging by the amount of contact concerning the fish and the pond itself, made to several people. Many people have volunteered to get in the pond to help but today the Parish Council cannot allow anyone to do this (elf n safety). This work will of course be an expensive operation hence the reason to get this request in early in time for next year's budget.

Recently a tree was planted to mark the Coronation of our King and this was planted in the conservation area with funds donated by Taylor Wimpey Homes. We were glad to assist with this project and a photo session took place in early November.

Litter picking continues on a monthly basis and a regular dozen or so take part. It is open to all to attend so if anybody wants to help, please join us. Contact Ken Drew on 250177.

Final item, we are glad to say that we have one new member on the group who came forward at the AGM. Still room for more to help with the upkeep of the green and village projects.

Michael Dorling
Chairman

GREAT BENTLEY MILITARY VETERANS CLUB

They shall grow not old,
As we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
And in the morning,
We will remember them.

It is Monday morning after the event, and walking past the war memorial reminds me of yesterday's service. We all stood proud and witnessed a very moving occasion. Not just the military veterans but village families who turned out in great numbers. Let me remind you at this appropriate time, about one of our village veterans who only lives a few hundred yards from the memorial but couldn't make it across to the service. Our 99 year-old young Tony Rampling. I recently had the pleasure of visiting Tony and what a man and character! Long story cut short but I established he did his WW2 training at Barnard Castle in County Durham (coincidentally the area where my North East family now live). So, Tony had lots to tell me in words and pictures about the camp and area. Tony, a Second World War veteran was presented with the Légion d'Honneur, France's highest distinction, by the French Army Attache, in appreciation of his role in the liberation of France. Tony landed in Normandy with 61st Reconnaissance Regiment in June 1944. The unit's armoured cars were in the vanguard as German forces were pursued across northern France and into Belgium after the breakout from the invasion beaches. Tony, later participated in the ill-fated Arnhem campaign in September 1944, where stiff opposition prevented an armoured column linking up with airborne troops dropped in to capture bridges across the Rhine and into Germany. We have Tony and others with tales to tell or colleagues with experiences they wish to keep to themselves. One form of release is the monthly coming together of our Great Bentley Group for a breakfast and a bit of chat or friendly banter. Why not make contact with me if you are Royal British Legion, still serving, veteran, any age or length of Service.

David Flinn BEM
Tel: 0742 114 1131

BELLRINGING NEWS

Ringling has continued throughout November on our Monday practices and for Sunday services as usual. We continue to teach this ancient art on Monday evenings from 18.30. Please contact me if you would like to join our friendly, welcoming group.

You will have heard a single bell being rung slowly on the 11th and 13th of November. This is done to mark both the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice at 11.00 on the 11th November 1918. The single bell is partially muffled using a leather pad on one side of the clapper so that when it hits the bell it produces a type of echo effect. This is done as a mark of respect for the fallen from wars and other armed conflicts.

As we head into December, we approach the busiest time of year for us as we ring the bells to announce extra services for the Christmas season.

Roger Carey-Smith - Tower Captain
07422 880921

DEADLINE FOR JANUARY 2024 MAGAZINE

MONDAY 11th DECEMBER

(PLEASE NOTE EARLY DEADLINE)

Material to Mary Maskell, Caldew Cottage, The Green, 250524 **AND**
Carole Allington, Poplar House, Station Road, 251086.

Please mark all material - "Parish Magazine"

email: carole@pncallington.co.uk **AND** marymaskell@sys3internet.net

IMPORTANT - PLEASE SEND ALL INFORMATION TO BOTH OF US

Nature Notes

An interest in wildlife and its conservation in the modern era is often tinged with sadness and can lead to a depressive outlook, even fatalism. The UK has been cited in recent comparative studies as one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. Significant proportions of our native flora and fauna are deemed at risk of disappearing. Many laudable initiatives are driven by such considerations, but human pressures appear relentless and reversing declines in biodiversity a daunting prospect. Large landscape scale projects are indicated yet sometimes smaller provisions of suitable habitat can make a difference, that might seem just a drop in the ocean. Back garden hedgehogs or pondlife can undoubtedly if cherished be helped, with such wildlife often faring better in semi built-up areas than the heavily farmed countryside.

While the overall environmental picture must be of concern – with bird flu just the latest threat there are some positive aspects even from climate change. While the recent decline of small birds and biomass in general are worrying indicators, new birds and plants as well as some butterflies, dragonflies and other creatures are spreading their range. Recently among grazing cattle down the lane to Colne Point at St Osyth were several Cattle Egrets - a sight more reminiscent of the Mediterranean. They are the latest heron-like relative to colonise Essex following their now familiar Little Egret cousins and spectacular Spoonbills, that had been largely absent from our shores for centuries. Similarly, the spread of large raptors such as Buzzards that are now almost a daily sight in some places locally is remarkable. The Red Kite too is increasingly to be seen with local breeding probably imminent. Our local Tendring Wildflower Group during regular surveys have faced what is almost an audit of losses and gains in species' presence and quantity, measured against similar studies over thirty and fifty years ago. The grassy sides of even busy roads provide arteries for the plants to spread along with surprisingly Pyramidal Orchids beside A133 just one example. Unexpected survivals or new species amid the declines give hope and encouragement that Nature can fight back with half a chance if there is human consideration and will.

DRB

Bentley in Bloom

The summer plants have all been replaced by pansies and daffodil bulbs as we look now towards the coming winter. We have this year, replaced two displays: one at the corner of Birch Avenue and the other at the corner of De Vere Estate with dry plant gardens. This is experimental but at the moment, things are looking good. Well done to the usual willing workers who undertook these tasks.

We shall be discussing next years planting plans in the near future, including if we continue to supply the baskets. It depends on how much interest there is. We are looking to replace the old water cart at the village sign area in the centre of the village. I rescued the cart from a scrap heap at Eden's Farm in the early 90's, so it has done quite well. We shall be looking for ideas to put forward to the Parish Council over the coming months.

It is good to see that Aingers Green corners have been tidied up with small areas of flowers. Well done to whoever is responsible for this. The fir tree on Weeley Road corner seems to be doing well – this was planted in 2008 to replace the old one which was mistakenly cut down. With this replacement tree it still remains Fir Tree corner. Although many people don't seem to know it by that name. I think it should have a sign.

Michael Dorling
Chairman

DAVID DARLINGTON

David Darlington died peacefully of Congestive Heart Failure, in Colchester Hospital, on November 10th, with his wife Jean, of 57 years, and sons Paul and Howard at his bedside.

He had the privilege to be appointed Headteacher at Great Bentley School in 1977 and remained there for 20 years. He loved the families and children of Great Bentley and whilst in his post, the children won a National Competition "The Oak Tree Project " as a result of which they went to Disneyland in Florida for a week. Over many years he organised an annual field trip to Pembrokeshire, which many children, now adults, remember with great fondness. It has been a joy recently for him to have met so many past pupils and parents who have memories of a very "Happy School".

The funeral will take place at 2pm on Wednesday, 6th December at 2 pm St. Mary the Virgin Church, Great Bentley followed by a private committal at Weeley Crematorium.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

DOT AND REG RICHER

Congratulations on your
Platinum Wedding Anniversary
on Boxing Day
70 years

With love from
Chris, Phil, Laura, Dan, Nita, Ve,
Jules and Simon.

YOUTH FOOTBALL TEAM

It's still all hands to the pump at Great Bentley Youth FC and despite the wet weather, the fixtures for all age groups have been largely unaffected and the season continues unabated. In the middle of all that the club was able to organise a charity match between the parents and coaches, which saw the roles reversed and the children coach the adults! It was the first time anything like this had happened and the club raised £350 for the NSPCC. Thanks to everyone who made it happen and there's already talk of another match next season! Elsewhere, the under 13's continue to pit their wits against some of the best sides in the district, the highlight being a win at Tiptree Jobserve. A tough run of fixtures has seen the under 12's tested to the max but they've kept at it, battled hard and have really integrated into a better team. The under 12's would like to thank Cala Homes for their wonderful new training kits and jackets, your support is much appreciated! A run of impressive victories have seen the under 10's being promoted to the highest level and they are fast becoming one of the most feared teams in the borough. Hopefully they'll continue to go from strength to strength. The club is spoilt for choice in the under 9's age group with both teams continuing to learn and improve, whilst the under 7's and mini-kickers are rapidly progressing and we hope to keep both squads running right the way through the age groups. Just a reminder that we are still scoping for interest in setting up an all-girls team, so get in touch with us via Facebook or Instagram and if we get enough numbers, we'll do our utmost to get a team up and running in the new year. We are also always open to sponsorship opportunities and new coaches, we can offer plenty of support to any individuals who wish to get involved, just get in touch.

Thank you

Marion, Lynn and Steve of Greenside would like to thank everyone who showed their concern and offered help to them recently. From prayers to help calm the nerves, to a place to stay overnight; all kind thoughts were greatly appreciated. A reminder of the lovely, caring village we live in.

Michael Dorling

85th Birthday December 30th

Happy Birthday Dad, Grandad and Great
Grandad

With all our love, you are one in a million...

Bev, Michael, Ben, Jo, Charlie & Harvey
Roger, Dani, Louise, William, Thomas
and babies Archie and Ellis
xxxxxxx

FOOTBALL CLUB NOTES

ESSEX & SUFFOLK BORDER LEAGUE Div 1 KO 2 00pm unless stated

Sat Oct 14th White Notley Res (A) W 3 – 1 Essex Junior Cup
Sat Oct 21st Kings Park Rangers (A) W 3 – 2
Sat Oct 28th Tiptree Jobserve (H) L 2 – 0
Sat Nov 4th Dovercourt Rovers (A) Cancelled waterlogged pitch
Sat Nov 11th Wormingford Wanderers (A) L 1 - 0
Sat Nov 18th Alresford Colne Rangers Res (H) Essex Junior Cup 1 30pm
Sat Nov 25th CO4 Ultras (H)
Sat Dec 2nd Cressing Utd (H)
Sat Dec 9th Clacton Res (A)
Sat Dec 16th Tavern (A)
Sat Dec 23rd Mersea Island (A)
Sat Dec 30th Thorpe Athletic (A)

ESSEX & SUFFOLK BORDER LEAGUE Div 3

Sat Oct 14th Wormingford Wanderers (A) L 2 – 1 Essex Junior Cup
Sat Oct 21st Flitch Utd (H) L 3 - 0
Sat Oct 28th Barnston Res (A) W 4 - 3
Sat Nov 4th Gas Rec Res (A) Cancelled waterlogged pitch
Sat Nov 11th Little Oakley Res (H) W 3 - 1
Sat Nov 18th Prettygate (H)
Sat Nov 25th Brooklands Saturday (A) Tommy Thompson Cup
Sat Dec 2nd Dedham Old Boys (H)
Sat Dec 9th Flitch Utd (A)
Sat Dec 16th Gas Rec Res (H)
Sat Dec 23rd Silver End Res (H) Res KO Cup

ESSEX & SUFFOLK BORDER LEAGUE Div 5

Sat Oct 14th Elmstead Market (H) W 3 – 1
Sat Oct 21st Heddinghams Utd Res (A) L 1 – 0
Sat Oct 28th West Bergholt (A) L 4 - 1
Sat Nov 4th Kelvedon Social (A) W 3 - 1
Sat Nov 11th Brooklands Sat (H) W 1 - 0
Sat Nov 18th Roman Rovers Development (A)
Sat Nov 25th Bradfield Rovers Res (H)
Sat Dec 2nd Boxted Lodgers Res (A)
Sat Dec 9th Elmstead Market (A)
Sat Dec 16th Roman Rovers Development (H)
Sat Dec 23rd Kelvedon Social (H)

Kings Park Rangers are a new team into the Border League. They have risen from the ashes of the Coggeshall side that folded at the end of last season, dropping down from senior football. This season they are ground sharing with Earls Colne. Our game on Oct 21st was hastily re-arranged at considerable expense onto a 4g artificial pitch at Halstead Leisure Centre when the Earls Colne pitch suffered from the weather. Arriving pitch side we were amused to see that Kings Park have a small team of people that film and give live commentary on their games which are then posted onto their youtube channel. Various interviews were taking place and the Kings Park players and supporters were expecting to win about 4-0.

In what was a great game of football that flowed end to end GB came out 3-2 winners. GB scorers were. Rory Warin x 2 and Barney Morton. Special mention goes to Lee Barrett who came into the side at short notice and controlled the midfield superbly. Our only interview to make the final directors cut was that from Julian Jepson. Others remain on the cutting room floor!

After this result we were hoping it would kickstart our season but we seem unable to put the ball in the back of the net. We have been the better side in the last two games but cannot get the three points.

The reserves were unlucky to lose 2 – 1 to Div 1 side Wormingford Wanderers in the Essex Junior Cup and then 3 – 0 to Flitch Utd, who will be almost certainly in contention for league honours at the end of the season. However they have bounced back with wins at Barnston 4 – 3. Sam Winney x 2 and Elliot McMillan x 2, Little Oakley Res 3 – 1, Jammo Wright x 2 and Adam Morton.

GB 'A' team sit top of Div 5. Winning three and losing two of the five games played this month. Archie Smith and Oscar Herbert continue to score goals, assisted by Charlie Dobson and Isaac Woods. The 'A' team have shown great potential with the youngsters surely getting physically stronger as they mature. Aply assisted by the experience of Jim Smith, Tony Chatters and Matt Maunton. Many thanks to Trevor Kirk who was hoping to play out field this season and has been forced into playing in goal in recent weeks, for which we are grateful. He must be taking it seriously though because he has invested in a new pair of 'modern' goalkeeper gloves.

Follow Great Bentley Football Club on Facebook and X for all the up to date information.

Come on the Bulldogs

Reg and Dot RicherA Story of Enduring Love and Laughter

I recently spent one of the most delightful, laughter filled afternoons I have ever had the privilege to be a part of with Reg and Dot in their home in the heart of Great Bentley. I sat opposite them in their front room which has a bow window where Reg spends much of the day sitting reading the paper, on his computer or simply watching village life and kept busy by raising his hand to wave to all of us who know him as we go out and about. He has a mischievous sense of humour and a twinkle in his eyes to match, however when Dot walks in the room he has eyes for only her!

On Boxing Day Reg and Dot celebrate their Platinum Anniversary marking 70 years of marriage! They met at a birthday party in 1949 when Dot was 17 and Reg a year younger and after courting for four years they married in 1953.

Reflecting back over the years before that happy day, life was hard. Dot was born into a very 'basic' circumstances in East Hill Colchester, her dad suffered with epilepsy and it was nigh on impossible for him to keep a job so he just earned money if and when he was able. After a brief very unhappy six weeks with her mum and five sisters when they were evacuated to Stoke on Trent they returned to Colchester. At the age of ten and money being very scarce it was arranged by a Rev Martin who was kind to her family, for Dot to wash the feet of Lady Victor Seymour. So it was a young slip of a girl walked every Saturday from East Hill to Shrub End Road to spend three quarters of an hour kneeling down washing Lady Seymour's feet then clutching a precious two shillings and sixpence walked all the way home again! Dot did well at school and passed her 11+ went to Greyfriars and High School during which time, having become proficient at knitting, she put it to good use by making jumpers for her form teacher in order to earn some much needed extra money. After leaving school at sixteen Dot went to work at Rogers the Tailors in Pelhams Lane where she started as an apprentice making ladies skirts, it was a tough regime with a strict boss. During that time Dot met Reg and that is when, dear readers, writing my notes became increasingly difficult! So many were the tales of Reg's escapades as I shared their walk down memory lane that I just laid down my pencil and listened as the afternoon grew dark outside. I will try my best to capture the essence of their 70 years of marriage and 4 years of courtship.

Reg was an electrician by trade, did National Service in The RAF and Dot worked for M & S in Colchester and Clacton. Reg bought a house in Lexden then subsequently Mr and Mrs Richer moved to Great Bentley finally settling where they live now, which was a shop as well as their home. Dot had her Wool Shop which simply had D R Richer over the door, I never knew it but there will be those of you who do and indeed who worked there, dear Mary Beard for one! Dot's expertise with a pair of knitting needles is always evident and she has never lost it and is already knitting for The Village Show next year! Please note Dot says she has at least 70 jumpers!!!

When Reg retired in 1998 Dot surprised him and all their family with a flight on Concorde and in 2007 they attended a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

On his 80th birthday Reg and all the family abseiled (as you do!) down the outside of The Town Hall in Colchester, when it was Reg's turn he turned upside down and the members of The Stroke Association for whom they were raising money had to rescue him! The last person due to abseil down was The Mayor but by the time Reg was extricated everybody had gone home!!! All was not lost however as £1,500 was raised!!

Reg along with four other gentleman secured the land for The Scout Hut years ago and laid the foundations and all the electrics, Dot was responsible for raising the money.

Dot had a hip operation on her 90th birthday, the day before Reg collapsed. He was very ill and on end of life care, however as with so many of his generation he defied the odds.... I would not have expected anything else. He is not as mobile as he would like but the joy of being alive fills his very being. Reg and Dot Richer are as much in love as they were almost 70 years ago probably even more so in fact. Their love for each other is tangible and leaves a lasting impression on me. I do hope I have done their love story justice.

Judy Bishop

GREAT BENTLEY GOOD NEIGHBOURS

THANK YOU to everyone who supported our Quiz Night on 10th November, and we hope you enjoyed your evening. The sum of £195 was raised towards the printing of the annual information booklet and other expenses.

A special thanks to Richard (and Dorothy) for preparing and running the Quiz, and also to the committee for getting the Hall ready, as well as sorting out the refreshments and raffle.

Agnes Walters

Surgery Newsletter

Merry Christmas from all the Surgery Team

On behalf of the whole team at the Surgery, we would like to wish all our patients a very Happy Christmas.

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR SURGERY OPENING HOURS

The normal Surgery opening times are from 8.00 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday.

Over the Christmas/New Year period the Surgery will be closed on Monday, 25 December, Tuesday, 26 December 2023 and Monday, 1 January 2024

PRESCRIPTIONS

Please remember to order your December prescription in time for Christmas. You can order these up to 14 days before they are due, to ensure you don't run out over the Christmas period.

FLU VACCINE

We are still offering appointments for flu jabs. If you wish to book this, please contact reception on tel. 01206 250691.

DECEMBER IS BEREAVEMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Symptoms of bereavement, grief, and loss

- Bereavement, grief, and loss can cause many different symptoms and they affect people in different ways. There's no right or wrong way to feel.
- As well as bereavement, there are other types of loss such as the end of a relationship or losing a job or home.

Some of the most common symptoms include:

- Shock and numbness – this is usually the first reaction to loss, and people often talk about "being in a daze"
- Overwhelming sadness, with lots of crying
- Tiredness or exhaustion
- Anger – towards the person you've lost or the reason for your loss
- Guilt – for example, guilt about feeling angry, about something you said or did not say, or not being able to stop your loved one dying

These feelings may not be there all the time and powerful feelings may appear unexpectedly.

It's not always easy to recognise when bereavement, grief or loss are the reason you're acting or feeling differently.

Things you can try to help with bereavement, grief and loss

Do

- Try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor – you could also contact a support organisation such as Cruse Bereavement Care or call: **0808 808 1677**
- If you're struggling to sleep, get sleep tips from Every Mind Matters
- Consider peer support, where people use their experiences to help each other. **Find out more about peer support on the Mind website**
- Listen to **free mental wellbeing audio guides**
- Try the **6 ways to feel happier**, which are simple lifestyle changes to help you feel more in control and able to cope

Don't

- Do not try to do everything at once – set small targets that you can easily achieve
- Do not focus on the things you cannot change – focus your time and energy into helping yourself feel better
- Try not to tell yourself that you're alone – most people feel grief after a loss and support is available
- Try not to use alcohol, cigarettes, gambling or drugs to relieve grief – these can all contribute to poor mental health

You can find further information and support about:

- Bereavement support for adults and children at St Helena Hospice – www.sthelena.org.uk/bereavement
- Grief and bereavement on the Cruse Bereavement Care website
- Losing your partner or child in pregnancy
- Losing someone to suicide on the Mind website
- The GOV.UK website also has information about what to do after someone dies, such as registering the death and planning a funeral.
- If you have been struggling to cope with stress, anxiety or low mood for more the 2 weeks call your GP Surgery on **01206 250691**.

Please remember the Patient Participation Group does not meet in December.

Sue Mitson - Operations Manager

The Post Office is situated at the front of the Garage

GREAT BENTLEY POST OFFICE

OPENING HOURS

Monday	9am - 1pm
Tuesday	9am - 12 noon
Wednesday	CLOSED
Thursday	9am - 12 noon
Friday	9am - 12 noon

ADVERTISING IN GREAT BENTLEY PARISH NEWS 2024

We still have some spaces

Small	£60
Medium	£100
Quarter page	£170
Half a page (limited number)	£330

Please contact Mary Maskell 250524

email: marymaskell@sys3internet.net

Village Christmas Lights Switch On Near the War Memorial

Sunday 26th November at 5pm (approximately)

Refreshments from 4.30pm including mulled wine

+ a visit from Father Christmas



December's Pot Luck Quiz!

1. In which pantomime does Buttons appear?
2. Traditionally what does Santa give to naughty children?
3. What is the name for the shortest day of the year?
4. December 26th is which Saint's Day?
5. If you were born on Christmas Day what is your birth sign?
6. What is the common name for 'erithacus rubecula'?
7. Which of Santa's reindeer has a rather 'foxy' name?
8. In which tin of chocolates would you find the 'green triangle'?
9. In Japan which takeaway food is traditionally eaten at Christmas
10. In which film does Tom Hanks voice Santa?
11. How many ghosts appear in Charles Dicken's 'Christmas Carol'?
12. Who wrote 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas'?
13. Name Will Ferrell's character in the film 'Elf'?
14. Which Christmas themed ballet premiered in St Petersburg in 1892?
15. What is the chemical formula of snow?
16. Postmen in Victorian England were commonly called what?
17. What do Ukrainians put on or under their Christmas tree for good luck?
18. In which author's novel is it 'always winter but never Christmas'?
19. How many tips does a snowflake have?
20. Douglas, Fraser, and Noble are all types of what?

1.Cinderella 2.coal 3.winter solstice 4.St Stephen 5.Capricorn 6.robin 7.Vixen
8.Quality Street 9.KFC 10.Polar Express 11.4 12.Dr Seuss 13.Buddy 14.The Nutcracker

RUNNING CLUB

I suppose it has to be expected for October and November but we have certainly seen some variations in our weather. I started to plan this on Saturday morning, whilst I was still cold and wet after Highwoods Parkrun, and then when I came to save my draft, the sun had come out and it was like it had never been that wet and windy two hours earlier! That's running in British weather for you!

Many of us did brave the weather, or found Parkruns in other parts of the country which might have experienced better conditions at 9am! On Saturday 31st October Meera Rajoo-Oakley and Robin Oakley ran at Windy Nook Parkrun (Highwoods should have been renamed that!) The Cottons and the Harris' were in Poland seeking the Z in their alphabet of Parkruns. (Yes some runners try to cover the alphabet in Parkrun location start letters,) They were successful after running at Zamek w Malborku. Simon Leggett ran well to cross the finish line before anyone else at Mersea Island Parkrun. There were also tourism visits to York, South Woodham Ferrers and Brandon Country Park Parkruns for Bentley Blues.

Wix 5 mile race was held on Sunday 1st November and there was a good turnout of Bentley blue vests. We had some performances that gained access to the top ten all time race times, the last mile headwind obviously not causing too much havoc! Well done to Lisa Briggs, not only a top 10 time, but a personal best (PB) of 33:55, and a third lady prize, which has hopefully been awarded now after a category mistype. Jacob Horton finished second overall in an excellent time of 27:43 which puts him in our top 10 performance league. We had another male finisher in the top ten runners, Craig Slocombe crossed the line in 29:42 with a 4 second PB. Steve Bullen ran a PB in 31:51. Caroline Dyer bagged a PB in a time of 39:02, which is 40 seconds faster than her previous best. Andrea Markwick got a PB of 44:00 even with the swampy run in, a swift change from 4.9 miles of road running. Gary Cooper also ran a PB in a time of 54:48. Well done to all 20 of the team who raced.

The next running race distance after 5 miles is 10km and David Wright went to Southwold to run their 10km race. It had a repeated 20-30m stretch of floodwater that slowed everyone down, but David still managed a great time of 42:41.

Larina Marsh ran the self-navigated Elmstead Market trail marathon. With this route 90% off road, there was a lot of water and mud to navigate. Larina came across the finish line just after 6 hours, and this was off the back of completing another marathon distance a couple of week ago – well done Larina!

Fraser Lewis went slightly further afield to find a marathon to run as he took part in the 52nd New York City Marathon. The first New York City Marathon took place in 1970 and was held entirely in Central Park and had 127 entrants and 55 finishers, this year Fraser was one of 51,402 finishers. Despite a slip leading to injury at mile 17, Fraser still ran a great time of 4:18:27. It looked like the weather was kinder to this year's participants after last year's heatwave.

Great Bentley Show

We held the AGM on Wednesday 15th November in the Village Hall. Thanks were given to Roger and Bev Adams who have done a brilliant job as Presidents of the show for the last two years. Thanks also went to Rosemary Branch who stood down from organising the raffle after 21 years. Thanks were extended to Chris Aplin who has organised the tombola for many years although she will be remaining as a supporter of the show. Other members of the committee remain in place for the coming year.

It was lovely to welcome some new faces from the village to our AGM. I will be meeting with this group in the coming weeks to discuss what part they would like to play in the show in 2024.

We would be happy to hear from anyone who may be interested in becoming president of the show, taking over the raffle or organising the tombola. Any of these posts could be filled by more than one person. It may be that some of our new members may feel able to take on the raffle and/or tombola.

If you would like more information, please contact me in the next few weeks. chair@greatbentleyshow.co.uk

Vice-presidents are an integral part of the show providing donations that help with the running costs. We feel that the name vice-president does not truly reflect the role. We are hoping to change the name in the coming months and feel that patron, sponsor, or friend would be more appropriate. Please let me know if you think they sound more descriptive and which one you prefer.

Meetings will be held on:

7th February, 3rd April, 5th June, and 7th August with the AGM on the 13th November.

The scheduling meeting will be held on the 17th January when new classes for the exhibitors marquee are discussed.

Next year's show is taking place on the 31st August 2024. A date for your diary!

Many Thanks
Mary Barber

BENTLEY GREEN LADIES CLUB

Our members were spellbound and amazed as Mr Paul Clancy treated us to a top rate evening of magic. The evening passed in a flash as he delighted us with his sleight of hand and sheer variety of tricks ...you really had to be there to appreciate his skill, dexterity and humour.

He ended his show with some mind-boggling demonstrations of ESP, (Extra Sensory Perception) and then a trick with a chair, a book and our Chairlady Edna. No, he didn't make her disappear nor did he slice her in two...but the outcome could not have been more amazing!

"How on earth did he do that?" That was indeed the question on everybody's lips by the end of the evening. Thanks to the committee for preparing snacks, mince pies, chocolates and a brilliant festive raffle.

Dates for your diary....

- **Monday 4th December...Christmas Lunch** at The Court House, Great Bromley, 12 noon
- **No meeting in January**
- **Tuesday 6th February 2024 ... AGM** 7.30pm in the Village Hall

GREAT BENTLEY HISTORY SOCIETY

Thursday 14th December, 7.30pm Village Hall

A.G.M

Followed by a Christmas Social Evening with a quiz.

Please bring a small plate of goodies for a buffet and a drink of your choice, if wished, with a glass.

Please bring a raffle prize if you can. Visitors who might be interested in joining the History Society are welcome.

GREAT BENTLEY GARDENING CLUB

The speaker at our October meeting, Peter Miller of Kings Seeds, proved very popular. He gave us a fascinating insight into the seed industry and the changes he has seen over his 60 years of working at Kings. The meeting was very well attended. Thank you all for coming.

By the time you read this we will have welcomed to our November meeting Ken Crowther, former radio gardening programme presenter and author, which undoubtedly will have been another interesting and entertaining evening.

We have no meeting in December. Instead the Club Members will be going to The Barn for a Christmas Lunch. We already have several speakers booked for 2024. Watch this space for further information about events in our forthcoming Gardening Club year.

In the meantime we wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

ART CLUB

The Gt Bentley Art Club will not be meeting up as usual in the Village Hall during the months of December 2023 and January 2024. But after a short break, in February 2024 we will resume in the new year with a one day 'painting workshop'. Some details of this event have yet to be confirmed and all will be announced in the new year.

We will however be meeting up for our annual Christmas lunch on the 5th of December. The Gt. Bentley Art Club would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy new year for 2024.

On another note, during our AGM in early October, Nina Morters formally announced her retirement as our Chairperson, after a decade or so in the role. Later on in October, to mark this occasion, a presentation was made to Nina, in order to express our thanks for her long service. We would all like to thank Nina very much indeed for her hard work and dedication towards the continuation of our Art Club. In particular for her kindness and helpful leadership during some very challenging times in recent years, all of which has been very much appreciated by our members. We are also pleased to announce that Roy Parker has very kindly agreed to take on the role of Chairperson and we all welcome him into the GBAC Committee.



Wildlives

Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation Centre

'Catkins', Frating Road, Thorrington, Colchester CO7 8HT
www.wildlives.org.uk

Opening hours: n/a 07802 767016

Outside of Wildlives' hours, please call the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999 or log on to our website for advice on what to do with a sick animal until we are open again in the morning. **See the web site for extra pictures too!**

Don't delay before helping hedgehogs

December 2023

Hoglets continue to arrive in desperate straits, much smaller than we would normally expect at this time of year. One weighing only 200g arrived yesterday with severe hypothermia and dehydration. Once it has progressed this far it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reverse the outcome. A hog this size will be near death if left out in adverse weather FOR A FEW HOURS. If you see a tiny hedgehog at this time of year, even if it looks active, it desperately needs help. They are not big enough to survive hibernation, even if they make it that far which is next to impossible in current weather conditions. If you see one IMMEDIATELY bring it inside and put it in a box with a towel-wrapped hot water bottle before phoning Wildlives. If it wants to eat you can feed cat or dog food and clean water – NEVER milk. If it is collapsed, do NOT try to feed. Quick action will save lives. The mature female slow worm shown below left was brought in by the RSPCA. She had been caught by a cat; the lady who rescued her wanted to keep her, but it is illegal to keep wild-caught British reptiles as pets. Despite their name and appearance, slow worms are neither worms nor snakes, but legless lizards that normally hibernate around October. When she arrived she was freezing cold, so Steve warmed her up in his armpit, whereupon she recovered and became very lively, biting Steve for his trouble. We took her up to one of our huge log piles with compost at the bottom and released her. She shot off; as there are plenty of invertebrates in the log pile she will hopefully be able to have a good meal before hibernating successfully. Female adult slow worms are larger and darker than males, with a dark stripe down the back.

A buzzard was found collapsed, dehydrated and starving, with his lower mandible (beak) infested with canker, probably contracted by eating an infected pigeon, leaving him unable to eat. After treatment the canker is drying out, but there will be a long wait until it is completely cured before we will be able to see if there is enough beak tissue left to make the lower mandible viable.

A cygnet was brought in by the RSPCA unable to stand. We are unable to find any injuries, but he was very thin so we are hoping he just needs building up. The gull shown in the background was tangled in fishing line just above his knee. After treatment he is now putting weight on that leg and is doing well.

Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our supporters, staff, and everyone who is trying to help our beleaguered wildlife. We would not be here without you all, so once again thank you to everyone, and we hope for a better new year for everyone and for all the wildlife too.

Great Bentley Hedgehog Highways

A Facebook page set up by Demi Harvey and Emma Garrod both veterinary nurses from Kinfauns vets based in Little Clacton 01255 860555. We want to help people encourage hedgehogs into their garden by writing a monthly diary of a hedgehog's life.

December is here, I have mentioned before about the importance of hibernation. Hedgehogs like all animals, need energy to function normally. For hedgehogs their energy comes from beetles, slugs, worms and other small creatures. In the summer months their food is plentiful and they thrive. In the colder months their food becomes scarcer, this meaning hedgehogs are in danger of using up more energy in finding nourishment, than they gain from eating. This is why the hedgehog cuts down energy consumption as much as possible by hibernating until the warmer weather renews it's food supply.

Even though most hedgehogs should be in hibernation by now, some hedgehogs don't fully shut down, some continue to be active and search for food. Some may shut down for hibernation and get disturbed. If this is the case it is important for this hedgehog to have access to food and water. Waking up from hibernation can use up a lot of the hedgehogs reserves and energy.

December is when young hedgehogs out and about may need help. For hedgehogs to survive the winter hibernation they need to weigh 600g to 650g plus. A healthy young hedgehog can survive weighing 450g, if monitored and provided with a supply of food and fresh water.

Hopefully if you have followed the Great Bentley Hedgehog Highways diaries your garden already has :

*An over grown section in the garden that is like a wilderness, with fallen leaves and a wood pile. This provides a plentiful supply of food such as beetles, caterpillars, worms, slugs, snails and insects. It will also encourage hedgehogs to build their hibernaculum nest from the natural resources.

*Link gardens by cutting a hole in the fence, wall or gate 13x13cm(5x5inch) making a hedgehog highway. This is important as hedgehogs have set routes and set times.

*Make a hedgehog house – This can be purpose bought wooden house, home made wooden/brick built.

*Provide a feeding station – This can simply be a shallow bowl of water and food. A wooden bought or home made house or a plastic storage box with a small door way cut into it. What ever feeding station is provided think about other animals stealing the food. Small doorways or tunnels can prevent animals such as cats and foxes stealing the food.

During the winter months a practical food to offer would be dry hedgehog or crushed cat or dog biscuits. (Not fish based as hedgehogs can not digest fish.)

A good food to offer is Tesco's kitten dry food, as it is a small kibble, so no need to crush and it also contains no colourant or E numbers.

*The most important thing to provide is a shallow bowl of fresh water for hedgehogs and all wildlife. Never offer cows milk and bread as hedgehogs can not digest cows milk. It will cause diarrhoea, dehydration and will sadly cause death.

If you have a hedgehog that is struggling or you need advice please contact us at Kinfauns vets during work hours. Or join our Great Bentley Hedgehog Highways face book page for help and advice. Also to look back at top tips and advice of hedgehog care and hedgehog houses. Another good reason to join is to help Demi in her campaign to make people aware of the amount of hedgehog deaths on the road. Help us create a map of live and dead hedgehogs in Great Bentley.

Emma Garrod RVN, C&GCertVNES

Churchyard Clear up

Very many thanks to all those who joined us on Sat 11 November for the autumn clear up.

It was a cold, bright day, and many leaves were gathered, edges strimmed, and shrubs pruned; a great team effort. We enjoyed delicious sausage rolls with our coffee, and also attended the short service at the war memorial. We will have another session before Easter, so watch this space!

St. Mary's PCC

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

AMAZING YOUTH SPIRIT CHAMPIONED AT SEVENTH TENDRING YOUTH AWARDS

FANTASTIC young people and their successes in personal and community life were revealed at the presentation evening held at Clacton's Princes Theatre on 3rd October, with the judges praising all of those nominated. Celebrating their seventh year, the awards commemorate achievements by young people across a range of categories – along with a category now for adults who support young people in Tendring.

Harwich Haven Authority is the headline sponsor this year which is supported by Tendring District Council and Essex County Council. Other sponsors are Actual Radio, the Princes Theatre, Halterman Carless and Nova Training, along with the new sponsors Aquinas Provisions Ltd who introduced a new school Attendance Award category for 2023. To keep up-to-date with the Tendring Youth Awards, or for organisations interested in being a sponsor, visit <https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/community/young-people/tendring-youth-awards> or go to the awards' Facebook and Instagram pages.

WORK BEGINS ON TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FACILITY

Contractors have begun work to revamp a former sheltered housing block. Spendells House, in Walton-on-the-Naze, is being converted by Tendring District Council (TDC) into temporary accommodation to house people and families who find themselves homeless. Contractors Arc Group London Ltd has taken possession of the site in Naze Park Road and started the works, which are expected to be completed in Spring 2024.

The existing two-storey accommodation will be renovated and additional facilities added, to provide 32 flats, including one which will be wheelchair accessible – while there will be flexibility to connect some flats to accommodate larger families. Laundry and bathroom facilities will be added, and the adjoining bungalow on the site will be converted to provide office space for TDC staff and partner agencies supporting the families in the temporary housing. Two members of staff will be on site during office hours, with other provision outside those hours, to manage the building and support households.

UPDATED EMPLOYMENT POLICIES SUPPORT SPECIAL CONSTABLES AT COUNCIL

Council staff are being supported to volunteer with Essex Police as part of a new partnership. Tendring District Council (TDC) is working with the force to support those who volunteer as Special Constables through the national Employer Supported Policing scheme. Special Constables are volunteers who want to give something back to their local communities, making them safer places to live and work. They are fully warranted police officers with full police powers, the same uniform, equipment and responsibilities. Run by the Home Office the Employer Supported Policing scheme encourages employers to provide paid time off for Specials to volunteer.

TDC has recently adopted a new Employee Volunteer and Public Duties Policy, under which Special Constables employed by the authority can have a further 10 days paid leave for policing activities.

Les Hawkins, the Specials Supported Policing Coordinator at Essex Police added this is a positive partnership with TDC. "It will allow those who become Special Constables to develop even stronger ties with those communities that they serve, both in their day job and while on the beat."

To find out more about becoming a Special Constable visit <https://www.essex.police.uk/>

POSTAL VOTERS ADVISED OF CHANGES FOLLOWING NEW LEGISLATION

Postal voters in Tendring are being advised of changes to election processes following the introduction of new legislation. Changes being brought in by the Government through the Elections Act 2022 are being phased in over time, with the introduction of Voter ID at this year's elections in May being the first significant change. Now, from the end of October 2023, extra security measures around postal voting came into effect. Electors will now need to have their identity verified as part of the application to vote by post. Most voters will be able to do this online, through a new national portal, using their National Insurance number and a picture of their signature. Anyone can apply to vote by post.

Voters without a National Insurance number can use other approved forms of identification to support their application, while paper applications – using an updated form – will still be accepted for anyone not online. In addition, postal vote arrangements will now only be valid for three years – whereas previously postal vote arrangements were permanent, with a signature refresh every five years. In the future, people wanting to keep their arrangements for the long-term will need to re-apply for a postal vote every three years. These changes only apply immediately to new applications – electors currently registered for a postal vote can keep those arrangements until January 2026, provided their details do not change, for example by moving home. If you currently have a postal vote then you do not need to worry for now, but please bear in mind the new registration requirements are coming. Anyone looking to register for a postal vote now, or who changes their details, will need to go through this new process – so remember to have your National Insurance number handy.

Further changes coming from the Elections Act 2022 include removing the 15-year limit on eligibility for overseas British voters. TDC will communicate to registered voters about these changes as they are introduced or, otherwise, as and when they need to take action. Tending electors with questions or who is struggling with the online portal should contact the Tending District Council Elections team at elections@tendingdc.gov.uk or call [01255 686575](tel:01255686575).

BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW FOR SPECIAL PANTO PERFORMANCES

Tickets are selling fast for this year's pantomime at Clacton's Princes Theatre. Aladdin features a stellar cast including former Eastenders star 'Nasty Nick' John Altman, pop sensation Cleopatra Higgins, and Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist Graeme Matthews as Wishee Washee. Curtains go up on the show, presented by Anton Benson Productions, from Friday, 8 December, with performances running until 1 January 2024. Princes Theatre – run by Tending District Council (TDC) – will be holding a series of special performances. A relaxed performance – with minimal effects suitable for those with sensory issues – takes place at 2pm on 28 December, with only programmes and no flashing merchandise on sale. This show also signed by a BSL interpreter for the Deaf community. Meanwhile audience members can mingle with the cast at a Meet and Greet after the shows on Sunday 10 and Saturday 30 December. And for anyone watching the pantomime on Christmas Eve, there will be a special visit from Father Christmas afterwards before Santa gets ready to deliver presents.

Tickets are available from the Princes Theatre website at princetheatre.co.uk/ or by calling the Box Office on 01255 686633 (Option 1).

*I wish you all "A Very Merry Christmas"
Thank you all so much for your support*

Cllr Lynda McWilliams
Ward Councilor to the Parishes of
The Bentleys and Frating
email cldr.lmcwilliams@tendingdc.gov.uk
Mobile Phone Number 07564 613603

Holly and Ivy

The Lights

The lane is in darkness
And a winter-tight breeze
Moves inky-black shadows
Through hedgerows and trees.

At the top of the green
There's a tree on its own,
Wearing jewels, not yet seen
And a star for a crown

And then out of the darkness
A family appear
The child full of laughter
The parents – good cheer!

Guided by torchlight
A gathering surrounds
The solitary tree
Beneath its green boughs.

Someone starts counting
And then there's a shout
As the tree and the village
Are bathed in warm light

Each light, a candle
of hope and of prayer
and for all of humanity
To show them we care

Ivy lives alone in a council flat
The carer's visits her only contact
She's now ninety five
A widow since '45
Her new groom lost in the blink of an eye
A planned life of happiness now just a lie
Children denied, never mother or gran
But Ivy struggles on the best she can.

She's positive, strong and stubborn as well
But how much better would life be with a friend to tell
All her stories of being a Land Girl and more
If only there was a knock at the door.

Holly, a single mother
no significant other
When she said she was pregnant he left the same day
Met two more but they went the same way
Shes now 25
Feels hardly alive
Working Zero Hours provides no stability
Her pay all goes to the landlord, child care and utilities

She's a brilliant mum, strong and stubborn as well
But how much better would life be with a friend to tell
All her dreams for the future and more
If only there was a knock at the door.

Christmas is lonely for Holly and Ivy
No mistletoe kisses or friends round for dinners
Neither feels like one of life's winners

Elsewhere others eat well but still feel envy
With ne'er a thought for the likes of Holly and Ivy

So this Christmas think of them please
Just a knock on the door to see how they are
Will cost you nothing but you'll shine like a star.

JM

SW

THE WAY THINGS WERE

Reflections on childhood holidays in the 20th Century

Many people may not be aware of various private enclaves 'on-the-edge' of our estuaries and rivers. Usually small self-built chalets, although some have now become very grand. They are exposed to the wind and at the mercy of high tides and fierce storms. Ownership is frequently within families being handed down through successive generations. During my researches I was introduced to and spent several hours talking to a lady octogenarian 'M' who had perfect recall of the childhood holidays at one such enclave.

In the early 1900's one family from London was visiting relatives who lived in the nearby village. "We found the shore to be idyllic and fell in love with this remote place ruled by the forces of nature not man". They rented a plot and in 1926 were followed by other family members. Another family had seen the chalets when sailing by, came to stay with friends and of course built their own chalet. For health reasons another built a chalet as the "fresh air and sunshine" was therapeutic for a child with T.B. In 1920 a self-built chalet would cost around £10 and by 1936 a carpenter-built chalet was about £41. The current values rival those on the much-quoted Suffolk Coast.

Getting there by road was a serious endeavour. Several families drove up from London; the tiny underpowered cars were packed with adults, kids, pets and everything needed for the stay. In the days before there were fast roads, dual carriageways or town bypasses, it took several hours to reach their destination on the north Essex coast. The journey would entail passing through every town and village enroute following the old A12 and thence country roads and single-track lanes. Access to the site was hazardous. At the end of the lane, you drove over the low seawall and turned onto the mud, sand and shingle foreshore. This often resulted in cars becoming stuck needing 'all-hands' to get moving again before you got inundated by an incoming tide. Parked cars frequently had to be moved to avoid the high tides. Coming by train would involve alighting at 'the Halt' and then walking the last mile.

Basic survival: there was no mains electricity or a water main or a sewer system. Water was collected from the nearby villages or farms often some distance away. Lighting was by candles or various forms of 'Tilley' lamp and cooking was on Primus or Ripplingill stoves. Waste was stored in lidded buckets. These were carried carefully across the mud, gingerly loaded into boats and taken out into the river where very, very carefully the contents were tipped overboard into the ebbing tide. A mistake here would lead to great deal of hard scrubbing when once again ashore.

Shopping was arduous as it involved a lot of walking across fields to the village shop, returning with laden prams, accompanied by hot and sticky children. Eventually, years later, a mobile shop called at the site and an ice cream seller, riding a tricycle with an insulated box, arrived calling "stop me and buy one"

During WWII a five-mile exclusion zone was enforced inland from the coast. This was controlled by a picket on the main road. A, hard to obtain, permit was required that was only available to property owners. The permit usually restricted them to one day visits for maintenance. However, some stayed longer and the children watched the bombers aiming dummy, wooden, bombs at yellow targets moored in the river. The aim was sometimes a bit off and some dummy bombs crashed onshore narrowly missing the chalets. A few aircraft from the USA, Britain and Germany crashed-landed in the river the wrecks providing souvenirs. The greatest prize for the children were the spent 'ammo' gun belts. If they were lucky there might be a few 'live' shells remaining which were either flung onto a bonfire or dismantled and the explosive powder used to make fireworks or rockets.

Running free and wild: One visitor declared that "*the place is run by dogs and children*"

Near the chalets were sandy cliffs that were a favourite playground for the children. They dug deep into the soft sand searching for fossils and 'diamonds'. It is surprising that none of these caves collapsed trapping the children. The children ran free; they sailed and rowed all sorts of yachts and dinghies. Some vessels were very dangerous being the spent wing fuel tanks from aircraft. These were very unstable without any form of steering and, keelless, were prone to roll over plus, being metal, they immediately sank.

On these, knee deep, muddy shores flat bottom punts were useful and common as they slid easily over the surface. Punt Gun wildfowling was not a sport but an essential means of gathering food to feed the family. Children learned to steer the punts with a foot dangling over the stern. They spent many hours outdoors; they fished, swam, scoured rock-pools, bird watched, learned to tie knots, socialised, learned basic D.I.Y skills for boat repairs and rode. Horses were grazed on adjacent fields and a favourite past time among the children was 'bare-back riding'. 'M' enjoyed riding on an un-broken Suffolk Punch that, once a rider was aboard, would race away to a nearby Oak tree and try to sweep the rider off. 'M' also recalled that one day, whilst returning home, they stopped at a local farm where the gamekeeper was digging out and gassing fox cubs. Her dad managed to slip one into his pocket and the vixen became one of the family. The vixen's favourite activity was tooth grooming 'M's hair.

Arrival: unlock the door, open the curtains, hear the sea and smell the fresh air that cleared the musty scent. Lean over the veranda making sure that the river is still there; yellow sand, grey mud, on with the bathing suits, down to the foreshore, the freedom of bare sandy feet, paddling, feeling the squishy bright green seaweed between your toes, sand damp enough to build castles, the boys digging trenches and endless trips to the water to fill the moat.

My thanks to M for her memories of this long-gone era. Kevin Marsden

Farming Diaries

As the air temperatures start to tail off the soil temperatures will also start to fall (albeit at a slower rate to the air temperatures) it will result in the slowing down of crop growth at this stage of the cropping year. Crop growth will almost slow to a standstill through the cold winter months before kick starting its development when temperatures begin to rise again in the spring. You can relate this to your garden lawn in terms of when we move from summer to autumn the requirement to cut the grass reduces and then stops completely during the winter months as little or no growth occurs when the soil temperature is below 2 °C.

During this time the arable side of a farming business may slow down bar pre-winter ploughing. This is so that the frost can weather the soil to help with spring cultivations prior to drilling spring crops. The livestock side will still carry on its long hours rearing calves and fattening cows for market. Cattle which for many months of the year are outside on grassland are brought into sheds in farmyards so as to not cause poaching (poaching is the heavy use of land around a feeder which can result in compaction and waterlogging during the winter months) and soil erosion around feeders and water troughs when the land is wet. The new lambing season will also soon creep upon us.

Many farmers locally carry out and plan conservation work at this time of the year which can benefit a wide range of wildlife. An example of this work is the management of hedgerows in the form of rotational cutting and the planting of many metres of new hedges which can provide habitats for various birds such as thrushes, and turtle doves. Many people think that hedgerow removal is a big problem but in fact far more miles of hedges have been planted in recent years than have been removed previously. No one hedge can provide optimal requirements for all birds so you often see a variety of species in a hedgerow. Nearly all farmland birds that use hedges require dense cover for successful breeding as well as roosting, shelter, feeding and escape from predators. Plants such as dog-rose, blackthorn and hawthorn make ideal nesting places. The growth habit of these species make it much easier for birds to conceal their nests from predators and raise young successfully. At this time of year blackberries, haws, sloes and other berries are an important food source for many farmland birds including fattening summer migrants like warblers before their long flight south and wintering thrushes such as redwings and fieldfares. The farmland hedge does not just provide habitat for birds but field mice, voles and hedgehogs. The decline of the latter, in some recent articles, farmers are getting the blame for. There are a number of recent independent research projects that have been carried out showing that predation of hedgehogs by badgers (who also eat varying species of bees) have had a detrimental impact on hedgehogs numbers along with roads and habitat removal from people's gardens.

Some of the local farms have shoots on their land. The cover crops such as millet, sorghum, kale and mustard can provide food for many songbirds including finches as well as providing nesting, brood rearing cover and shelter for game birds such as partridges and pheasants. Many studies have shown that there is a far greater number and variety of farmland birds where there is a shoot.

Pollen and nectar mixes are also planted which benefit the many bee species we have in the UK. These mixes contain a variety of species such as phacelia, fescues, vetches, clovers and champions. These plants flower at different times to extend the overall flowering period of the area planted and therefore extending length of time pollen and nectar is available to the bees. You can also plant species in your own garden to provide food for bees including lavender, verbenas, scabious and buddleias.

Vicki Brooks

Minister's speech

Minister: Morning Smithers. What on earth have you been doing? You look dreadful.

Junior secretary, Smithers: Morning sir. I've been up all night writing your speech. I hope you will find it fitting.

Min: Thank you, I'm sure it will be fine. What's the matter with you, old boy? You look really down in the dumps. Come on, cheer up. Put my speech on speaker. (a few minutes elapse as they listen) Wow, what an opening line. Always a good idea, I suppose. But, 'obfuscation'? Why are you using all these big words?

Smithers: It's the modern modus operandi of political statement, sir; words chosen to confuse. It all started with that chap on the television using the adverb, 'exponentially'. Our current situation is one of near crisis, so I felt it appropriate to use the word 'existential' on several occasions.....sir.

Min: Existential? Yes, yes, Smithers, jolly impressive word. But what exactly does it mean?

Smithers: Basically, it means our existence, human existence. But we use it in a particular context, sir. As in a crisis.

Min: Very well. But I'm becoming a trifle jittery as to where are you going with this. But, carry on.

Smithers: Very good, sir. (the speech continues).

Min: Whoa, stop there! 'Apocalypse'? You want me to use that awful word in public? Are we really at the jumping off point, old boy? I can hear my audience jeering at me already. I do not want to become an alarmist, Smithers.

Smithers: Sorry, sir. But you must clarify our world's situation as you see it. If you listen further, you will hear that you are not predicting the end of the world - far from it - you are advocating a new beginning.....sir.

Min: Alright, alright. Give me a moment. Just explain to me how an apocalypse can herald that new beginning.

Smithers: (he pauses the tape) At this point, sir, you can mention the four horsemen of the apocalypse, but what you are really saying is that an apocalypse has already happened in the modern world today, perhaps not in the form of a prophetic revelation, but their representations are already happening among us.

Min: Among us, you say. It has already arrived, you mean? But we are still here, Smithers. The world has not ended. My speech is supposed to be positive, a calling to all to face a difficult future together. Where is the sense in talking about the apocalypse, for heaven's sake. Play the tape! (the reading continues for several minutes). Stop, stop the tape. 'Anthropogenic'? Another of your confounded big words. I want to talk about nice things, something that will raise my status. People are jumping ship and I feel that I am the one rat trying to get back on the bloody thing.

Smithers: That is the very point, sir. People must realize what has happened during the last decade, that the world has endured several of the predictions of the apocalypse. The major difference between the dreams and visions of the revelations back then is that the modern upheavals were anthropogenic.

Min: You are at it again Smithers. Anthropogenic? I'm not sure what you are getting at.

Smithers: The word originates from the Greek word, 'anthropo', meaning 'human', and 'genic' meaning 'born of', or 'produced by'. The word therefore means 'born of humans' - it's our fault, sir. The horsemen represented four visions - war, pestilence, famine and death. In the last decade the world has suffered covid, black lives matter, gender dysphoria and climate change, all of which ultimately plunged our everyday lives into a toxic cocktail of turmoil, opportunism, intimidation and dogmatism.

Min: No! We did not create covid, Smithers, nor did we create climate change.....

Smithers: No sir, we didn't create any of those crises, they were initially born of heartbreaking and tragic events, every one of them. The world rallied in support for those people hopelessly entangled in each of those appalling happenings. However, what humans did subsequently was to grasp any opportunity to financially or politically profit from those crises, acts of depravity which reflected all that is improper in our society; pride, greed, envy. All it needed was a vehicle by which to discharge this malignance. And there it was, right in front of their eyes; social media. With a weapon of such global efficacy at its disposal, what could be more menacingly persuasive than a corrupt mind hell bent on exploitation?

Min: Too risky. I can't do it. What is my motive for such an abrasive attack?

Smithers: Your objective is the need for honesty, sir. Your transparency would be regarded as inspirational; a lasting renunciation of sham altruism.

Min: What a perfect world you envisage, Smithers. Do you think I am blind? Do you think I'm not fully aware of all this? My heart aches that such catastrophic apocalyptic depictions were delivered by men on the backs of horses; such noble beasts. How depressing, Smithers. I love horses.

Smithers: Indeed sir, I know you do. But today, in our modern social and political order, such visions and dreams are no longer delivered by those on horseback. No sir, today, such chimes of phony benevolence are delivered by those sitting gleefully on the backs of bandwagons.

JE

DECEMBER DIARY

- Fri 1st **COFFEE & CHAT**, 10am, Methodist Church
- Sat 2nd **CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL**, St Mary's Church,
10am - 4pm
- Sun 3rd **CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL**, St Mary's Church
11am - 4pm
- Mon 4th **LADIES CLUB CHRISTMAS LUNCH**,
Courthouse, 12noon
- Thurs 7th **CARNIVAL EMERGENCY AGM**, Methodist Church, 8pm
- Thurs 7th **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**, 7pm, Village Hall
- Thurs 7th **AUTISM COFFEE MORNING**, Village Hall, 1.00pm
- Sat 9th **A BAROQUE CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR**,
University of Essex, 6.30pm
- Mon 11th MAGAZINE DEADLINE**
PLEASE NOTE EARLY
- Thurs 14th **HISTORY SOCIETY AGM**, 7.30pm, Village Hall
- Sat 16th **A LIVING CHRISTMAS '23**, Thorrington Church, 7pm
- Sat 16th **SCRATCH CHOIR PRACTICE**, 10am, St Mary's Church
Hall
- Sun 17th **CHRISTMAS QUIZ**, 2pm, Methodist Church
- Mon 18th MAGAZINE COLLATING, Church Hall, 9am**
- Tues 19th **GARDENING CLUB DINNER** at the Barn