

The Welwyn Magazine

with Woolmer Green



December 2022 / January 2023

60p

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December 2022/ January 2023

PUBLISHERS

St Mary's and St Michael's
Churchwardens

COVER

Santa at Singlers Marsh by
Stuart Carnegie

MAGAZINE ARTICLES

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Articles by the 1st of the month preceding publication, see details below.

We aim to publish reports and articles that will be of interest to our local community. If you would like to suggest a theme or article please email

magazine@welwyn.org.uk

The Editors reserve the right to shorten or omit articles or refuse advertisements.

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The Rector's Letter



Dear Friends

For the past two years I have sat down to write an article for the December magazine under the cloud of the COVID19 pandemic – and in both years the situation between the writing of the article and Christmas itself worsened significantly, so that we all had to content ourselves with much reduced festivities. So I hope that by writing something rather upbeat I won't be jinxing the situation in some way.

It is of course true that COVID19 is still with us, and indeed may well be for some time – I write this on the morning I go for my (over 50s – I know difficult to believe) booster. Care is still needed, especially with regard to those who are clinically vulnerable. However, day to day life is returning to something like normality, and I find myself stuck between two contrasting reactions: there is both a slight unreality to all that went on, all those changing restrictions we had to keep up with – and at the same time a residual memory that means we don't quite react with each other as we did prior to COVID. And sometimes when I think of all the things we used to do *before* 2020, that too has a sense of unreality. Did we really do all those things at Christmas?

Well, this year – fingers crossed – we will do most, if not all of those things. As I say there is still a need to be careful (perhaps there always was? Perhaps in the past we didn't take enough care of those who were vulnerable, and COVID just shone a light on that?), but there is also a need to recover what was lost in those two years.

Christmas is about God giving up the remote and the virtual, and coming in the flesh. Post COVID, writing that sentence feels a little uneasy – meeting 'in the flesh' harbours something of that residual memory of caution. And in one sense for God it is a risk, and one that you can say 'ends badly' – but nonetheless if love wins out, then love is about being real and being present, as God is in Jesus with us.

David

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Singlers Marsh Village Green Application

Singlers Marsh is a piece of the countryside in the heart of our village's life. Its distinctive shape, wedged between Fulling Mill Lane and Codicote Road, can be seen on maps going back over 250 years. It has been open to the public for fresh air and outdoor activities for at least sixty years, probably much longer, and nowadays is at the core of many of Welwyn's community events.



The ongoing search for new housing sites alerted us to the possibility that, no matter how precious it might be, Singlers Marsh is not protected from development. So, back in the mists of 2020, an application was made to register it as a Village Green. If successful, this will protect it in perpetuity from any development while preserving all its current activities.

The application is from the Welwyn Planning and Amenity Group (WPAG), your local 50-year-old charity that encourages and co-ordinates public interest in local development, environmental and heritage issues across our parish, campaigning on behalf of the community. We value the support of other local organisations, particularly Welwyn Parish Council. There is also an ad hoc Singlers Marsh Action Group that coordinates activities in support of the Village Green application, and for Singlers Marsh more widely.

Singlers Marsh is mostly owned by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC), who regrettably declined to collaborate with the application when it was made. In fact, they are actively opposing it, despite the clear and decisive support from the community for preserving the land shown over recent years.

Hertfordshire County Council opted to conduct a formal inquiry, appointing an

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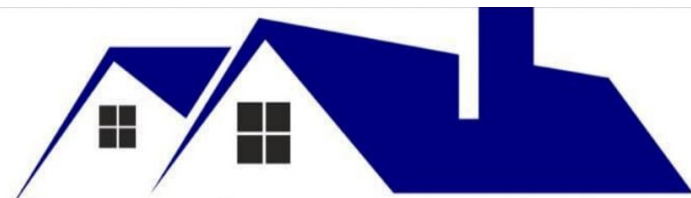
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Singlers Marsh Village Green Application

Inspector and initiating a legal process involving the applicants (WPAG) and opponents (WHBC and a hopeful property developer). The first hearing took place in early November and, by the time you read this, the next steps should have been announced. If things go well for us, a week-long inquiry will probably be held next Spring, with a decision towards the end of 2023.

The opponents to the application have engaged barristers to represent them, and WPAG has procured initial legal representation with the generous support of the Parish Council and the Parish Plan Group. The advice we have received tells us that we have a “very convincing case” that is well worth pursuing through the process. As we move towards an inquiry next spring, we will be looking to cover the more sizeable legal costs of putting our case forward then. We have been grateful for several pledges of financial support that have already been given, but we will need more funds to be committed before we can participate in the inquiry. Once we know the outcome of November’s hearing, we will share the details on the WPAG website (see below) and elsewhere.

If WHBC were to change its stance, the path towards success would be much easier. However, that seems unlikely to happen at present. Singlers Marsh remains a precious resource for our community, used even more during and after the lockdown. We are hopeful we can preserve it for future generations to enjoy as a beautiful and irreplaceable piece of the countryside at the heart of Welwyn, on behalf of the entire community.

You can find out more by visiting www.wpag.org.uk/singlers-marsh

Russell Haggar
Vice Chair, Welwyn Planning & Amenity Group

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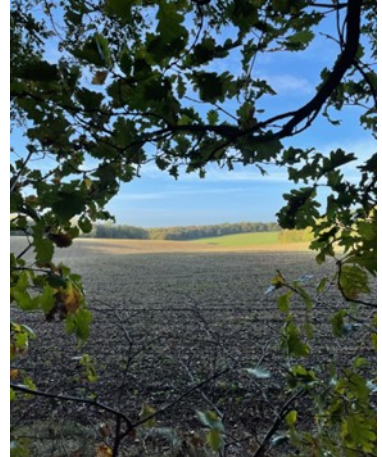
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Beyond the Farm Gate

Backing British Farming

Welcome back beyond the farm gate. Some say farming is a lifestyle choice, and I would have to agree. Much like anyone who runs their own business, there is always something else to be done, no matter the season. While the busy harvest season is behind us for the year, the winter provides time to sort out work which has been paused during the summer, such as heaps of paperwork, fencing and woodland maintenance.



Our farm has many beautiful woodlands, which we have carefully maintained for years. Managing woodlands can sometimes be counter intuitive to those who, like me, love trees. Sometimes we must coppice parts of the woodland, which involves trimming certain trees. But this is in fact of great importance to the eco systems which survive on the forest floor. With light streaming in from above, native shrubs and plants begin to re-establish, attracting bugs, insects, and other small mammals into the ground cover. We have seen first hand the impact of this management which has seen the return of numerous plants to the woods which have previously struggled under the darkness of the canopy.

Equally, we are careful to fill in areas where trees are weakening or diseased. Throughout the year I take great joy in collecting acorns and other tree seeds, nuts, and fruits, planting them, and growing a small nursery of 'future' trees which are then planted in the winter.

I believe our woodland management is a perfect example of managing old woodlands and the environments in and around them, alongside farming for food. Many farms practise as we do, creating a symbiotic relationship between environment and food production. To me this makes perfect sense, since our food comes from our environment and therefore the two are never mutually exclusive. As farmers, we are custodians of the countryside: part of our job as food producers is to protect the land around and on which we tend our crops

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Beyond the Farm Gate

and rear our animals. Protecting the environment alongside the growth of our crops, means the whole ecosystem is healthier which is the very thing farmers rely on to produce their food and drink products.

Apart from our woodland management, the winter is the perfect time for fencing. Usually, the animals go in for winter (depending on the breed), so we have the chance to make any repairs to secure the boundary for when they return in the spring. This year, we will also have the vineyard to keep an eye on. As the leaves have fallen away, the twig-like branches of the young vines have been left behind, ready to be pruned next spring.

As we head into a new year, farmers will be looking back on a year with many ups and downs. This year we experienced an extremely volatile political system which has put investment in many farm businesses on hold. Farmers have lost yet more subsidies, without any new subsidies offered in their place. With soaring costs on essentials such as fertiliser and diesel, and a drought which caused severe damage to many farms, I think many farmers will be pleased to see the back of 2022! But on the bright side, we were thankful for an excellent wheat harvest against all odds and hope, like everyone, for greater stability next year.

On the 2nd of November, we celebrated Back British Farming Day, which was a chance to say what British Farming means to us, not just as farmers, but as members of society. To me, British Farming is maintaining our beautiful countryside and protecting the environment, while growing high quality, local food to feed the nation. So, I finish this year with the same question to you, kind reader: What does British Farming mean to you?

Wishing you all the very best over this winter festive period and thank you for reading. Join me again next year as we venture beyond the farm gate.

Farmer Hannah

Farm information: www.lockleyfarm.co.uk

Vineyard information: www.lokkelebery.co.uk

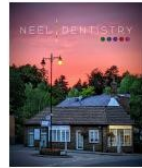
My website *Agri Unwrapped* for more on British farming: www.agriunwrapped.com

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Twelve Scams of Christmas



Just because it's Christmas, don't be off your guard!

Christmas parcels for example. It's easy to fall for scams that ask for an extra fee, or claim you've missed a delivery.

Hold fire on transferring your pension or investments without doing multiple checks. No reputable financial advisor cold-calls you. The Financial Conduct Authority is a good place to start www.fca.org.uk

Resist claims from a loved one they've lost or broken their phone and are using a friend's device. Ask a question to which only they can know the answer.

If you get a message from a friend asking you to do them a favour by transferring money or vouchers it means their contacts have been hacked.

Shun a call from "Microsoft support" offering to sort out a computer problem. It's a scam that will cost you time and money.

The police or bank staff never ask for your PIN number or password so that call about your bank account is a scam. Fraudsters usually ask you to transfer your money to a "safe" account.

Most Government initiatives to give grants or rebates are gold-mines for scammers. See the relevant official website to check the correct process for getting your award.

An unexpected opportunity to win a free shopping voucher is a scam designed to steal your personal details.

Stop thinking you're being pursued by HMRC or the National Crime Agency, no matter what they say.

Just check first with your bank or internet service provider, using their own website or phone number, about unusual activity on your accounts.

Oh, what large sums some people have lost in so-called "romance scams". Don't be embarrassed – the police have heard it all before. Or speak to someone else you trust.

You know not all scams are online – if someone calls at your house to tell you about a problem with your roof or an overhanging tree, that's a scam too.

Remember - never click on links in unexpected messages; keep your personal information private. We wish you a Merry Christmas and, if you're not an OWL member, why not join for your New Year resolution?

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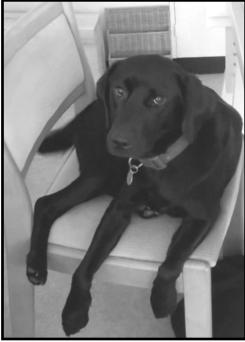
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Jessie the Rectory Dog



The Christmas present list for this year has a surprise item on it. Alongside the usual chews and toys and sparkly unicorn collars, I would quite like a Bertie. For four years now I have been a happy only child (as is Master) And a completely self-interested and demanding one at that (as is Master....) However, a few weeks ago I had a friend come to stay, a big boy Golden Retriever called Bertie. At first, I was a little put out. And to be fair Bertie had his shortcomings – he certainly didn't know the rules of how to play ball (the clue is in your name stupid: 'retrieving'

something involves bringing it back, not running off with it...) But over the week I grew rather fond of my new friend, so much so that I was a bit put out when he went back home. It helped that he was slightly stupid, and with his size not the most nimble of creatures – most of the time he just sort of 'lay there.' But he had a joyful loving soul, and I now rather miss him – everyone could do with a Bertie in their life.

Jess

Parish Registers



St Mary's Welwyn

Baptism

16th October

Charlie William McKay

St Michael's Woolmer Green

Funeral

24th October

Frederick (John) Allday

Also, a couple celebrated 50 years of marriage by renewing their vows.

St Mary's Welwyn

Renewal of Marriage Vows

15th October

Isabel and Richard Darcy



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Introducing Fellowship

One dictionary definition of Fellowship is "friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests, as in 'they valued fun and good fellowship as the cement of the Community'."

The first time I attended Church Women's Fellowship in Church House was to accompany my husband, Tariq, for his talk on Islam. Afterwards, Eve Allum invited me to join the group. I enjoyed helping at the meetings with refreshments as well as listening to a wide variety of speakers and topics, so I was asked to be on the Committee. I have recently taken over as Chair from Mavis Francis, after her 8 years of dedicated service.

Marjorie Lyon, who has written articles for the Welwyn Magazine for many years, told me that Muriel Taylor set up Church Women's Fellowship as a small "house group" for ladies from St Mary's Church. After Muriel's death, Sheila Edmondson took over and led the group single handedly for some years.

Under Mavis' leadership, the group has flourished and changed its name to "Fellowship" to reflect that it's open to the whole community, not just churchgoers or women.

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, usually at 2.30pm in Church House.

Our 13th December meeting will be a "Christmas Surprise". Mince pies and Stollen will accompany the tea/coffee and attendees are invited to reminisce about Christmases past, or to read a poem or short story on a festive theme.

On 10th January 2023, we are planning a lunch, but this does need to be booked in advance, due to catering.

Future talks include "Butterfly Volunteers" and "The History of Bread" and our AGM is in April.

There is no membership fee for Fellowship, but we do request a £2 contribution towards the cost of tea and cakes and the upkeep of Church House and this includes a fun Raffle. Our aim is to provide a warm, friendly place for people to meet and enjoy an interesting talk, chat and refreshments.

Paul Jiggins' recent talk about The History of Welwyn & its Shops was well attended (see Marjorie Lyon's report on p.42), and we hope to see some new faces again soon! Everyone is welcome. My contact details are on the back cover of the Welwyn Magazine and I look forward to hearing from you or seeing you soon!

Marcia Khan

Parkinson's UK

Welwyn Hatfield Hertford Branch

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A Visit to the Falklands

On 12th November to mark the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands war, the Saturday Big Breakfast invited Chris Pomroy, the founding partner of local accountants Pomroy Associates to give us his impression of the Falkland Islands following his visit to Port Stanley with his wife Carol and her 92-year-old father. It was a sentimental journey to visit relatives and to see the house where Carol's grandfather, a



Royal Marine in WW1 met and married her grandmother Mollie in Christ Church Cathedral in 1914.

The RAF flight from Brize Norton is 8,000 miles and is via Ascension Island - exactly half way. The Falklands comprise 776 islands of which only East and West Falklands are populated. They are about the size of Northern Ireland. There are currently about 3,000 inhabitants and about 1200 military personnel. The rugged terrain and cliff-lined coasts are home to half a million sheep and abundant birdlife. The islands were discovered by Captain John Strong in 1690. They never had any indigenous inhabitants and were unoccupied until the British navy claimed the territory in 1765. Over the following years immigrants from several countries settled in Port Stanley. In 1832 Argentina invaded and were repulsed the following year.

Forty years ago, on 2nd April 1982 Argentina invaded again, starting a ten-week war. The British task force was made up of 110 ships, 30,000 men, fighter jets and helicopters. The first the UK knew about the invasion was from a short-wave radio message from an islander Bob McCloud in Goose Green, 50 miles from Port Stanley. His was the only means of communication that was not picked up by



the Argentinians during the war. Chris's family were welcomed and entertained in the Goose Green village hall where the 100 villagers were imprisoned for four weeks with very little food.

A visit to the Falklands



Their guide was Nick Bonner who took them to the derelict house built by Samuel Bonner, Carol's Grandmother's family home. They saw the Cathedral designed by Sir Arthur Bloomfield built in 1890–1892 from the local stone. They toured the battlefields and coasts where 255 British servicemen were killed, 775 wounded and 115 captured. The losses included 2 destroyers; 2 frigates; 1 landing ship; 1 landing craft; 1 container

ship; 24 helicopters and 10 aircraft. 655 Argentinians were killed, half of whom perished in the sinking of the Belgrano. 11,400 were taken prisoner. 3 islanders were killed including Doreen Bonner, a distant cousin of Carol.



On the coastline are some naval guns, a reminder that the Falklands were threatened in WW1 during the battle of the Falklands and by Japan in WW2 though the islands were never invaded. The Argentinians laid 20,000 anti-personnel mines. They were still being cleared during their visit but all have now been removed.

Along the coast are many old wrecks, one or two of which are still visible. The birdlife and sunsets are extraordinarily beautiful and were illustrated by some stunning photographs taken during their visit. Copper mining and oil exploration have virtually ended but tourism, sheep farming and fishing sustain this small community today.



School Readers

Schoolreaders Needed to Spread the Joy of Reading in Hertfordshire Schools



Children's literacy charity **Schoolreaders** is looking for more volunteers who can help spread the joy of reading to children in Hertfordshire primary schools – especially around Welwyn and Woolmer Green.

A recent survey¹ of young people by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) revealed that reading enjoyment had reached a 15 year low, rallying slightly in the pandemic before declining again by 2022, especially amongst those from disadvantaged backgrounds and amongst boys.

Furthermore, the Annual Literacy survey found that fewer than 1 in 2 children aged 8 to 18 enjoyed reading with only 28% reading daily.

Schoolreaders is looking for volunteers of all ages – from students to retirees - who can listen to children read in a local primary school, especially at those schools where children require support the most.

Worryingly, one in four children leave primary school every summer unable to read to the expected standard² and the Schoolreaders scheme is now more in demand than ever, particularly to help those children most disadvantaged following the education disruption caused by Covid lockdowns.

Schoolreaders volunteers act as trusted role models in the classroom alongside the class teachers, not only helping children improve their reading but also by being a positive influence.

Schoolreaders volunteers are asked to listen to children read once a week during term time and to commit to an

Continued on p.22

School Readers

academic year. By applying now new volunteers will be matched as quickly as possible to a partner school and be ready to start once they have completed a mandatory DBS check and virtual safeguarding training.

Jane Whitbread, founder of Schoolreaders, adds, “Children who leave primary school unable to read well can’t access their secondary schooling fully which will disadvantage them for life. One in seven adults have poor literacy and cannot read instructions on a medicine label or a bus timetable or fill in a job application form. Working together we can change this.

“There is no substitute for face-to-face interaction and support when it comes to reading. Our volunteers provide a crucial supplement to classroom teaching and are welcomed by schools - and the children. 95% of children in our scheme improved their reading performance and over 90% their reading enjoyment after time with a Schoolreaders volunteer which is so valuable³. If more children gain pleasure from reading from an early age and their reading fluency and confidence improves too, communities and society will reap the benefits.”

To find out more or to apply today to be a Schoolreaders volunteer in primary schools with the greatest need in Hertfordshire, visit [Schoolreaders.org](https://www.schoolreaders.org)

Pru Murray

1. National Literacy Trust [Annual Literacy Survey](#) based on 70,403 responses from children 5-18 conducted in 2022.
2. [UK Government Statistics](#) at Key Stage 2. Revised 2020.
3. [Schoolreaders State of Primary School Reading Survey 2019](#) in partnership with the Institute of Research in Education at the University of Bedfordshire.

Schoolreaders
improving literacy • increasing life chances

Continued from p.21

Friends of Danesbury and QVM

The stockings are hung by the chimney with care, in the hope that we all have a wonderful Christmas wherever and with whoever you may be spending the holiday season.

The corridors and day rooms in Danesbury & QVM have been sprinkled with a flurry of Christmas magic. The Christmas decorations have been dusted off and hung up across the units. At Danesbury & QVM we are funding a Christmas party for the patients and their visitors, and we are hoping for ex members of the disbanded Welwyn Wailers will come to bring some festive cheer singing Christmas carols. Hopefully this will bring some much-needed festive cheer to what has been a rather tough year here.

We, the Friends, are pleased to have been able to support the units in a variety of ways over the past year and a lot more is in the pipeline. The QVM is midway through a major refurbishment. Danesbury is having the main therapy gym refurbished in the New Year. Throughout the year we have supplied the units with a variety of items, including weights, pegs for gripping, screwdriver board sets, hook and loop targets and balls to aid patients help with their rehabilitation. We have also provided kettles, radios, garden furniture, jubilee decorations and a tree to celebrate the occasion, a

book trolley, specialised wheelchairs.... the list goes on.

For me what has stood out most during my Wednesdays here in the office over the past year was to hear the laughter coming from the gym when group activities were taking place, it was so infectious. So, rehab can be fun if done in the right way! In the New Year Danesbury is hoping to revive the art therapy sessions, as always we are keen to get volunteers to come in and help with this. If you are interested in helping please contact us at info@danesburyqvm.co.uk.

Our shop on the High Street is still undergoing a bit of revamping as we are trying to modernise it and make sure we display as best as possible all the lovely items we receive. Again, over this festive period our window displays are one to be looked out for, so do pop in as we have many wonderful Christmas gift ideas on the shelves waiting for you. We also have a Christmas raffle again this year and your support in raising money for this would be greatly appreciated.

All at The Friends of Danesbury & QVM and the Danesbury shop wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Friends of Danesbury
& QVM



[This Photo](#) by

Gombards United Sparkles Art Space

Gombards is an 8 bed Residential Care Home, situated in the heart of Welwyn Village, which supports people with severe complex needs and learning disabilities. It is a community within our own village community, passionate about providing the best possible care and life choices for each of their amazing community members.

Launched in 2017, United Sparkles is an art project formed to support residents. Starting with hand-over finger printing, each person's unique work is developed into beautiful, individual works of art. These designs are then transferred onto cards, bags, mugs, and many other items. Imagine the sense of accomplishment to see your own artwork used in this way.



Gombards attends St Mary's coffee morning, with the people they support, to sell their products on Tuesdays in the village. They also work in partnership with Suzie's Florist who sell their products and they have a stall every year at the Welwyn Street Market.



Currently the "Art Space" in use is the kitchen table! Not so convenient.

Over this Christmas season the St Mary's Community is partnering with Gombards to raise as much funding as we can so that they can build an Art Studio (Summerhouse) as a dedicated art space. This will enable residents to leave the kitchen table and gain even more from the creative opportunities that art offers to all of us.



To donate please see the church website. www.welwyn.org.uk during December.

Autumn Quiz answers

Quiz appeared p. 25 in the November magazine

1. What was the date of the Autumn equinox in the Northern Hemisphere in 2022?
23rd September
2. What is Autumn frequently called in America? **Fall**
3. Why does it have that name? **Deciduous trees shed their leaves in Autumn**
4. What was the date of Canadian Thanksgiving in 2022? **10th October**
5. What is the origin of the word Halloween? **All Hallows Eve**
6. What are the three months of Autumn in the Southern Hemisphere? **March, April May**
7. What Autumn activity was once a British courting activity? **Apple bobbing**
8. Name the chemical which breaks down in leaves in the Autumn causing their colour to change. **Chlorophyll**
9. What is the generic name for trees which lose their leaves in Autumn? **Deciduous**
10. What happens in the UK at 2.00am on the last Sunday in October? (2 things)
British Summer time ends; the clocks go back one hour
11. When was British Summer Time (Daylight Savings Time) first introduced in the UK? **17th May 1916**
12. What and when was the British Standard Time Experiment? **A trial to keep British Summer Time all year; from 27th October 1968 to 31st October 1971**
13. Who first advocated Daylight Savings Time in the UK but died before he saw it come into effect? **William Willett**
14. Who was Prime Minister during the British Standard Time Experiment? **Harold Wilson**
15. Which King did Mr. Fawkes try to blow up? **James 1st of England**
16. Who were his co-conspirators? (4 points – one for each name) **Robert Catesby; Thomas Percy; Thomas Winter; John Wright**
17. Hedgehogs hibernate in Autumn/Winter. What are their spines made of? **Keratin**
18. In which sport do the Autumn Internationals take place in England? **Rugby Union**
19. Which English Romantic poet wrote “To Autumn” after a walk near Winchester?
John Keats
20. SAD is sometimes called Autumnal depression. What do the letters SAD stand for?
Seasonal Affective Disorder

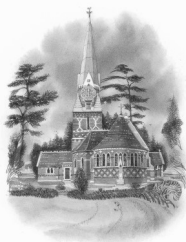
Possible 27 points:

23—27 You are an Autumn marvel

13—23 There were some tricky questions. You did well.

Below 13 Perhaps you need to brush up your Autumnal general knowledge

Arts and Crafts at Ayot St Peter



The Arts and Crafts movement was a reaction to what some saw as the uniformity of industrialisation in the Victorian era. The idea of the movement

was that beauty and functionality could co-exist, and craftsmanship and design were highly valued.

Our church is a relatively early example of Arts and Crafts design and was completed in 1875. We are often asked why the church was built in this style, and recent research has revealed a likely answer.

Philip Webb was known as the 'Father of the Arts and Crafts Movement' and was the brother of the Welwyn village doctor, Harry Webb. Philip was a regular visitor to the Welwyn home of his brother and sister, Caroline, who is thought to have kept house for the doctor. Philip designed a house for Harry - New Place in School Lane – which was completed in 1880.

Recent research into Philip Webb's correspondence has revealed a close friendship between the Webbs and the family of the rector of Ayot St Peter, Henry Jephson. The architect for our church was chosen by open competition, but it seems likely that the relationship with the Webbs influenced the decision. The winning

architect was John Pollard Seddon, another prominent member of the Arts and Crafts movement

When our church was completed, the design of the building would have been considered modern and unusual and records do not reveal whether the villagers approved. Possibly the fact that the churchyard remained unused until 1919 gives us a clue, although it may be that residents were simply used to the old Ayot churchyard.

Another Webb brother – Frank Speakman Webb - was buried there in 1899, his unusual headstone almost certainly designed by Philip.

Christmas is a good time to admire the interior of our beautiful and unusual church. It will be traditionally decorated with berries, foliage and many candles.

The festive services begin with our Carol Service on Sunday 11 December and continue with the traditional Crib Service the following Sunday, 18 December. On Christmas Day our service will be Holy Communion – why not walk to the church to work up an appetite for your lunch?

All these services will be led by the Team Rector, David Munchin, and begin at 11.15am.

We wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Valerie Richards

How to Make a Vicar



Often, when I tell people that I'm ordained, they ask 'what made you want to do that'? It isn't usually the case that you go and visit a

careers advisor and leave with a recommendation that you should be a vicar! So, when I answer questions about how I ended up where I am – now happily serving in the Welwyn team – I often talk about prayer and vocation, as well as encouragement and discernment from the church.

But after the discernment has been done, what happens? How to do 'make a vicar', or in my case a curate?

In the church of England there is a formal selection process which begins when you talk to your own vicar about your vocation. Usually, that person refers you on to someone in the diocese who is responsible for vocations, often called the Diocesan Director of Ordinands. When you meet with this person, a more formal process begins where you consider the selection criteria for the ministry. You and representatives of the Church of England meet and think about whether you meet the criteria, and indeed whether you want to meet them!

After a while, usually at least a year, you go to a panel which is the final stage of selection. For me, this happened six years

ago and I went on a three-day residential where I had various interviews and had to give a presentation. After two (very long) weeks, the Bishop wrote to me to say that the panel had recommended me to train, and so I went on my merry way to theological college.

I was lucky enough to train full time and residentially at Ridley Hall, so I moved to Cambridge and lived in college. Most people train for two to three years and complete a BA in theology. I managed to overstay my welcome and do all of my graduate work at Ridley, and so I stayed for 5 years. I also met my husband Ryan there, which was an unexpected but happy event!

At the end of your training your college principal writes to your Bishop, who has been updated on your progress throughout training, and recommends that you are ready to be ordained. All being well, that means you leave college and are ordained in the summer to begin your curacy.

I felt very lucky to have had the opportunities I did during training, and found the time to be a real gift. More than simply gaining skills and learning things, training is about forming you into the kind of person who can inhabit the role of a priest well. For me, that process is certainly ongoing, but I'm glad to have had the time and space that training provided me with.

Rev'd Christie Gilfeather

Christmas Services Around the Parishes

Christmas Services in the Welwyn Team Ministry 2022

*Services especially suitable for children

St Mary's, Welwyn

Sunday 4th December

Sunday 11th December

Sunday 18th December

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

Sunday 22 January 2023

Candlemas

3.30pm Christingle Service*

9.30am All Age Eucharist with
Nativity*

6.30pm Candlelit Carol Service

3.30pm Crib Service*

11pm Midnight Mass

8am Holy Communion

9.30am All Age Eucharist*

6.30pm Candlelit

Carol Service

St Michael's Woolmer Green

Sunday 4th December

Sunday 18th December

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

4pm Christingle Service*

4pm Carol Service

3.30pm Crib Service*

9.30am Parish Eucharist*

All Saints, Datchworth

Monday 19th December

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

7pm Carol Service

5pm Crib Service*

11pm Midnight Mass

10am Holy Communion

Continued on page 29

Christmas Services Around the Parishes

St Peter's, Tewin

Sunday 18th December
Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

6.30 Carol Service
3pm Crib Service*
11.30pm Midnight Mass
10am Holy Communion

St Peter's, Ayot

Sunday 11th December
Sunday 18th December
Christmas Day

11.15am Carol Service
11.15am Crib Service*
11.15am Holy Communion

St Giles', Codicote

Sunday 11th December
Sunday 18th December
Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

4pm Christingle service *
6pm Carols by Candlelight
4.00pm Crib Service
11pm Midnight Communion
9.30am All Age Communion



News from Woolmer Green Parish Council

The tennis court is ready for players

After many months of planning and waiting, it is great to see that the tennis court work is complete and is ready to use. It is available free of charge and anyone can use it without booking for now. We will see how that works and may introduce a booking system if needed. It has been good to see people making use of it already in the mild October weather.



Parish Noticeboard



Last month I reported that the Parish Noticeboard has been looking very sorry for itself and had been removed from London Road to be repaired. It is now back in place fully refurbished by Lee and Dave Castle. They have done an amazing job!

Christmas Eve Carols round the Tree

The Carols round the Tree event will take place in the Village Hall grounds again this year but will be moved into the Hall if the weather is wet. Please come and join in the festivities at 4.30pm.

Finally – reminders

Farmers Market – remaining date for 2022 - Christmas Market on 11th December (9am-2pm). There will be lots of stalls and live music so please come along!

The Village Hall is open to all as a Community Warm Space on Monday afternoons (1-4pm) from 31st October with hot drinks available. Thank you to Rev'd Christie Gilfeather and volunteers from St Michael's church for managing this for the community.

Sarah Hall
Woolmer Green Parish Council
sarah.hall@woolmergreenpc.org.uk



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Mardley Heath WI

From an autumn evening we stepped into the warmth and colour of our annual Produce Show. The judges - Margaret Barker and Lynda Martin - examined our entries while we gathered in another room to hear the speaker, Eric McLaughlin, tell us about his years in the Royal Household, part of a long and varied working life. His talk was so interesting we didn't want him to stop, urging him to tell us more and asking so many questions that the usual procedures of a WI meeting were bypassed, and there was no time left to hear the Show winners' names (see next month's report) or to draw the raffle.

At the age of 16, in eastern Canada, Eric was putting himself through university while working in a food shop that organised parties for visitors who came on holiday to his town (St Andrews-By-The-Sea). Some arrived by yacht. Among the famous he greeted was Eleanor Roosevelt. With his ballet-dancer wife he came to England in 1966. An early impression of our country was how 'rough' our pubs were. In Canada you sit down and wait to be served, don't drink standing up.

In 1970 someone told him about a job going in Buckingham Palace, and nine days later he was in his own office there as Clerk to Her Majesty the Queen. His duties took him to all the Royal residences and the Royal Yacht Britannia. He was at a meeting in Balmoral when the Queen called him - they had not yet met - and he actually bowed to the telephone on hearing her voice, causing those present to laugh so loudly they had to retreat to the corridor, where the police on guard heard about the bow and the news travelled around the building.

Eric described the huge kitchen at Buckingham Palace, with its masses of copper, china, glass, silver and gold. At Windsor Castle, in the days before mobile phones, he feared he would get lost, it was so large. His duties included checking garden party arrangements and making sure banqueting tables were correctly laid and guests' seating suitably arranged. If two tables had to be joined to make a longer one, the join covered by tablecloth, he would show the Queen, who sat in the centre, where to put her glass to avoid the 'crack'.

He said that Her Majesty had a great sense of humour, and nothing shocked her. On informal occasions she would do the washing-up, and at one event when extra guests suddenly appeared for dinner and the kitchen was short of milk, she remembered a store of 'Carnation' and they used that.

Answering questions about his career outside the Royal one, he revealed he had acted or produced in seven London theatres, including the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, the Royal Albert Hall and Sadlers Wells. Michael Douglas and Angela Rippon are among the many celebrities he met or worked with. He has also been a guide at Hatfield House. Asked how he would describe himself - 'factotum' came to my mind - he replied 'Educator'.

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Mindfulness—PPG

It can be easy to rush through life without stopping to notice much. This can be particularly true during busy times such as the Christmas season.

Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – can improve your mental wellbeing. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help us enjoy life more and understand ourselves better. You can take steps to develop it in your own life. When we become more aware of the present moment, we begin to experience afresh things that we have been taking for granted.

Mindfulness also allows us to become more aware of the stream of thoughts and feelings that we experience, and to see how we can become entangled in that stream in ways that are not helpful. Mindfulness can help us deal with issues more productively. We can ask: "Is trying to solve this by brooding about it helpful, or am I just getting caught up in my thoughts?"

How to be more mindful - Reminding yourself to take notice of your thoughts, feelings, body sensations and the world around you is the first step to mindfulness.

Notice the everyday - As we go about our daily lives, we can notice the sensations of things, the food we eat, the air moving past the body as we walk.

Keep it regular - It can be helpful to pick a regular time, such as a morning journey to work or a walk at lunchtime, during which you decide to be aware of the sensations created by the world around you.

Try something new - Trying new things, such as sitting in a different seat in meetings or going somewhere new for lunch, can also

help you notice the world in a new way.

Watch your thoughts - Some people find it very difficult to practise mindfulness. As soon as they stop what they're doing, lots of thoughts and worries crowd in. It might be useful to remember that mindfulness isn't about making these thoughts go away, but rather about seeing them as mental events that come and go. This can be very hard at first, but with gentle persistence it is possible.

Some people find that it is easier to cope with an over-busy mind if they are doing gentle yoga or walking.

Name thoughts and feelings - To develop an awareness of thoughts and feelings, some people find it helpful to silently name them: "Here's the thought that I might fail that exam" or: "This is anxiety".

Free yourself from the past and future - You can practise mindfulness anywhere, but it can be especially helpful to take a mindful approach if you realise that, for several minutes, you have been trapped in reliving past problems or pre-living future worries.

For further information on mindfulness and mindfulness practices visit www.nhs.uk
Information taken from www.nhs.uk



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Welwyn Parish Council



I hope you are all keeping well.

Welwyn Parish Councillors are delighted to welcome Alex Bardett as our new Councillor for Welwyn Village. Alex has lived in or around Welwyn for 54 years and is looking forward to representing the residents of the village. Alex's details will be on the Parish Council Website soon. Having co-opted David Cox in October we now have our permitted number of twelve

Councillors. All of the Councillors work hard for the residents of Welwyn Parish and I thank them for giving their time.

Russell Haggard attended our Full Council Meeting yesterday evening to talk to us about plans for the Heritage Trail. They are hoping to extend it to the Fernery and Singlers Marsh. For anyone who has not walked along the Trail it is a really interesting thing to do especially as an activity with children or if family and friends come to visit. Thank you to Russell for the work he has given to this. Russell has also been involved in the application to register land at Singlers Marsh as a Village Green. Many residents are regular users of Singlers Marsh and I know are very supportive of this application. At the Welwyn Parish Council Meeting last night it was agreed that the Council would add its support. We wish the applicants success.

Councillor Bill Morris has spent many hours on the Neighbourhood Plan. He has, with help from the Steering Group, organised two Open Evenings for residents. These have been very successful both for residents to hear about the Plan and for us to receive the welcome feedback. Bill is planning another evening for Parish Stakeholders in the near future.

As I write this article at the end of October, Bill Morris and his group of wonderful volunteers are preparing to light up the village with our Christmas Lights. When you read this the winner of our children's Christmas card design competition will have switched on the lights and we will have enjoyed the school choirs singing and the mulled wine and mince pies. This event takes a lot of work to organise and I thank everyone who has been involved.

The Welwyn Wildflower Meadow was recently used for a Field Trip for pupils of St Mary's School. They cleverly organised it to coincide with the apple harvesting season and were able to gather enough apples from the meadow's ten apple trees to take back and make apple juice. Well done to them, I'm sure they enjoyed the fruits of their labour. If you would be interested in helping the volunteer group enhance the Meadow please contact the Parish Council at office@welwynpc.org.uk or telephone 01438 716667.

The Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Planning Authority has to review their conservation areas periodically. A review of Welwyn Village Conservation Area has recently taken place and a Welwyn Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan in draft form must now go to a public consultation for a period of six

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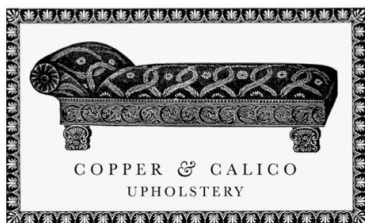
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Welwyn Parish Council (continued)

weeks. This will be from 9th November – 21st December 2022. The consultation will take place online using the Borough Council's consultation portal. The consultation will ask for views on any suggested changes to the Conservation Area by means of consultation questions. Welwyn Parish Council will be responding to the consultation. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council want to hear as many views as possible.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy, peaceful 2023.

Marj Otty

Chairman, Welwyn Parish Council

St Mary's Welwyn Open Food Table

Unfortunately, at the moment, many people are finding it extremely hard or even impossible to afford the basics of life and sometimes have to choose between food and warmth.

At St Mary's Welwyn, we have been collecting for the Codicote Food Bank for some time, and this will continue. However, we have decided to run a less formal scheme alongside our contributions to the food bank. There is a bench inside the porch at St Mary's Church. Anyone who can afford to leave donations to the food bank and St Mary's Open Food Table can put their items of non-perishable food there.



Anyone who is in need can help themselves to any of the items on the bench, whenever the Church is open. This will be known as St Mary's Open Food Table. Anyone who is struggling to buy food is welcome to take as much as they need, whenever they need it. Any surplus donations will be sent to the Codicote Food Bank on a weekly basis. Church House will also be open every day from 9.00am until 2.00pm as a safe, warm space, where people can get hot drinks, stay warm and stay as long as they want – there is even free wi-fi available!



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The Retired Bishop of Newcastle

The Right Reverend Christine Hardman gave a talk titled **“Reflections on my Time in the North of England, the House of Lords and on Retirement”** at the September Saturday Big Breakfast in Church House.



Christine has lived in Hertfordshire since she was one. After a career in accountancy and estate agency, she graduated with a Master of Theology Degree from Oxford University by training part-time in the St Albans Diocese. She was one of the first female clergy to be ordained in 1994.

She served as a Deaconess in Markyate, as the Vicar of Holy Trinity Stevenage, as Rural Dean and as a member of the General Synod. She became Archdeacon of Lewisham and Greenwich in 2001 until her retirement 2012. She came out of retirement in 2015 to be consecrated Bishop of Newcastle and be admitted to the House of Lords.

Christine’s talk was during the period of mourning after the death of the Queen. She spoke fondly about her meeting with the Queen after her installation as Bishop of Newcastle. They held hands and talked quietly for about twenty minutes. She found it intensely emotional. The second time that she met the Queen was when she was invited to preach at Sandringham Church and stay for the weekend. The Queen was a very kind host. A dinner with several interesting guests was held for her on the evening of her arrival. After the Sunday service she had an informal lunch and dinner and spent the rest of the day alone with the Queen and members of her family.

Her elevation to the house of Lords as the second Lady Bishop was fast tracked under the Lord’s Spiritual Act designed to improve the gender balance in the house. Her time there was an extraordinary experience. She has a very high opinion of the standard of debate and the knowledge and experience of those who contribute, especially the Crossbenchers. Yes, the Lords is an anomaly in this age but like many odd British institutions, it works.

Having lived her entire life in the south of England, she found moving to Newcastle a life changing experience. She loved her time there. Newcastle is a vibrant city with its many bridges, fine buildings, new museums and galleries and a lively student population of 70,000 students. The Diocese

Continued on page 42



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The Retired Bishop of Newcastle (Continued)

of 237 churches includes Northumberland, part of Cumbria, beautiful landed estates, the St Christopher Way and Holy Island.

The area has the largest gap between wealth and deprivation in England. The loss of traditional employment in mining, ship building and heavy engineering has destroyed the pride in the communities devastated by closures. Well paid jobs in these industries have been replaced by low paid unskilled jobs and there is anger about the lack of investment and prosperity compared with the South. The standard of education in the North lags behind the South in all the recent statistics. The Pandemic meant that many children received no proper education during the lockdowns because they had no access to facilities for learning online and little parental support. In 2021 average earnings in the North East were £547 compared with £728 in London and £660 in the South East.

Christine found retiring difficult but she has re-joined the St Albans Diocesan team. At the age of 19, she married Roger. They have two adult daughters and four grandchildren. Her hobbies including running and cycling; she has completed the London Marathon three times and the Great North Run. She was an inspirational speaker. The Rector David (a fellow cyclist) gave a heart warming and amusing vote of thanks.

Peter Lee

Fellowship—Paul Jiggins’ Talk on Welwyn Shops

Paul Jiggins came to talk to Fellowship in October. The location of Welwyn has always been important for travellers even in the time of the Romans, so the village has always been busy. The residents at the turn of the century needed local easy shopping - not many people had their own transport so it was very necessary to have some good suppliers.

The High Street had a good variety of shops at that time - butchers, bakers, grocers, greengrocers, newsagents, hardware stores, and more. Also, there was a post office and sorting office which have been demolished for the development of Mimram Place. The actual High Street hasn't changed very much over the years

except for refurbishment when properties changed ownership. During some of the developments interesting artefacts have been found for example the uncovering of the names of owners from long ago and printed wrapping paper .

Paul showed pictures of the village which were published in 1928. These photographs were taken by two sisters who owned a grocers shop and were interested, in photography. There was also a photograph of the Late Queen Mother when she attended the opening of the QVM.

Everyone enjoyed the talk and I am sure we will pay more attention to what we see in the High Street and its history when we visit and shop.

Marjorie Lyon

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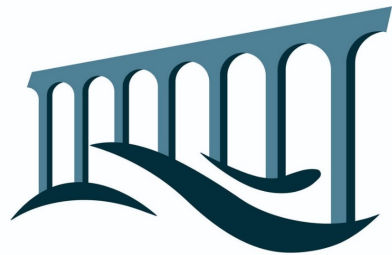


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Sunday	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Sunday	9.30 am	Parish Communion / Junior Church
Sunday	6.30 pm	Evensong (2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays)
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday	9.30 am	Holy Communion
Saturday	9.00 am	Parish Prayers

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ST MICHAEL'S - Woolmer Green www.stmichaels-wg.org.uk

Sunday	11.15 am
1st and 4th Sundays	Parish Eucharist:
2nd Sunday	Family Service
3rd Sunday	All Age Eucharist
5th Sunday	Morning Prayer

AYOT ST PETER www.ayotstpeter.com

1st Sunday	11.15 am	Matins: (<i>Book of Common Prayer, King James' Bible</i>)
2nd and 5th Sundays	11.15 am	Holy Communion: (<i>Book of Common Prayer, King James' Bible</i>)
3rd Sunday	11.15 am	Family Service: (<i>Common Worship, NRSV Bible</i>)
4th Sunday	11.15 am	Parish Communion: (<i>Common Worship, NRSV Bible</i>)

EVANGELICAL CHURCH - Welwyn www.welwyn-evangelical.org.uk

Sunday	9.45 am	Bible Classes (All ages 7+)
Sunday	11.00 am and 6.30 pm	(Facilities for young children)
Wednesday	8.00 pm	Bible Study (except 3rd Wednesday)

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The Greatest Story Ever Told—Meditation

This Christmas season we look forward more than ever to spending meaningful time with family, friends, and our local and social communities; sharing in village events, family meals, parties, wonderful traditions of music, school productions, carol services, etc. This time of year, we relish time spent together, even more so given the recent memory of separation and isolation over the last couple of years. But what does community really look like for me? Do I, like so many, surround myself with MY people? With those that share my mindset, my interests, my values, my belief systems, my political leanings, my financial privilege, my superior intellectual capacity? I hope and pray not!

Maiden mother, angels, shepherds, wise men, travellers and a child lying in the manger of a lowly cattle shed. How on earth did these guys get to hang out together? Shepherds, on the very edge of society visited by a whole host of heavenly beings. Rich wise men with their silk robes brushing the dusty floor as they fall on their knees before a young child and his teenage mother. Each so different from one another yet all brought together in “The Greatest Story Ever Told.” Each playing their vital role.

We belong together in richness of community where every member holds huge value, no matter that they are so different from one other. We belong together. Let us seek to set aside our differences and become active in changing how OUR community looks. Not seeking to receive but to give, our time, our energy, our love, to all - not just the one who thinks, feels, believes, looks like me.

As followers of The Christ Child, we must believe that every human being is created in the image of God. We are each so unique and so different from one other but we are not made in isolation. We are built for community, each playing their own vital role in “The Greatest Story Ever Told.”

Jo Fozzard