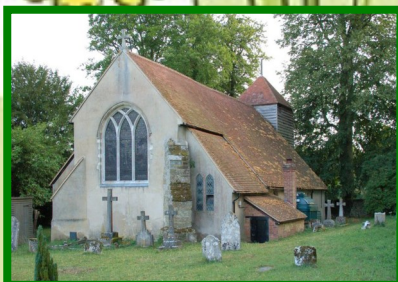
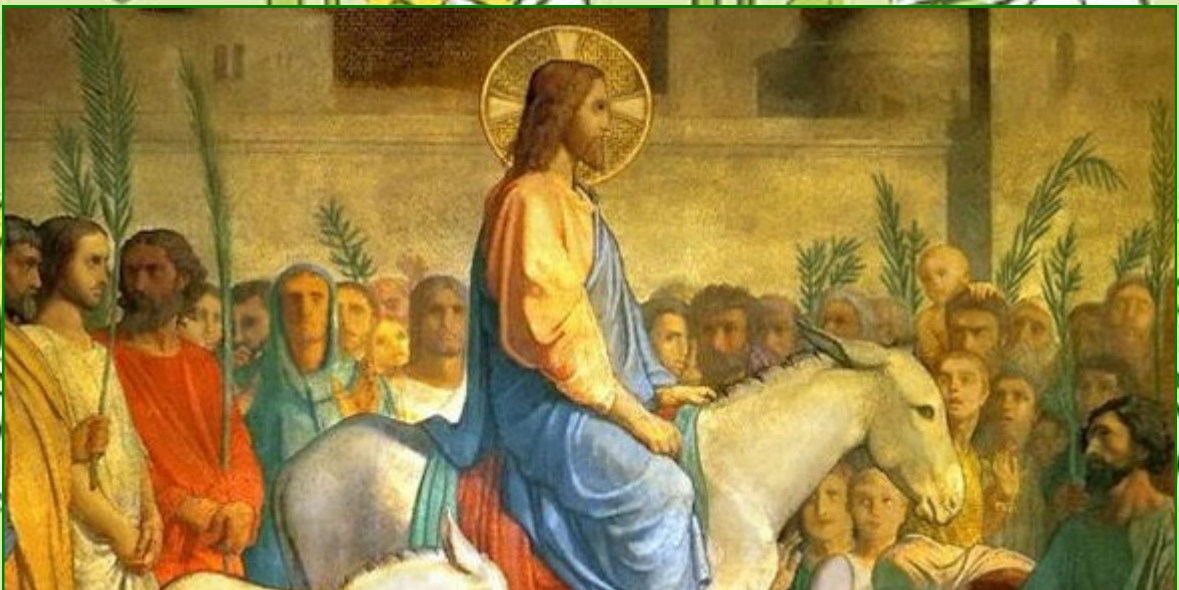


Arle Valley Voice

March 2026

£1.60

Church & Community Magazine





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Editorial

Lent is often seen as a dismal season but it shouldn't really be like that. I think of it more as a sort of spiritual spring clean—hard work but in the end satisfying. My Gran always had a party when the spring cleaning was done and so do we—Easter. And if, like me, you have already broken your lenten discipline never mind there is always tomorrow to have another go.

And though as I write this it is raining yet again, nevertheless there are hopeful signs of spring. The days are longer and we can see snowdrops and crocuses appearing.

It being Lent prayer is a theme in this issue so do join us in prayer for our broken world and closer to home prayer for a new rector for this Benefice.

Charlotte Ryton

This magazine only keeps going with the quality it has because people subscribe each year so please do consider that. Contact Caroline Hawkins chawkins826@sky.com
Each issue costs £1.60 but a year's subscription is an economic option at £15.00.

Please email contributions and comments to cstryton@gmail.com. The preferred format at the moment is Microsoft Publisher or Word otherwise a pdf. Please as plain as possible as formats do not transfer from one programme to another. Please copy in events@stjohnsalresford.org.uk for additional publicity on our Facebook page and inclusion in St John's online Events Diary. The deadline for each month is the 10th of the month before. And if you use some of the businesses advertising do tell them you saw them in this magazine. Please note that we do not endorse any advert

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Apologies for any mistakes. However we are all volunteers and not professional so, sorry, errors will happen.

March Church Services for the Arle Valley Benefice

NEW ALRESFORD St John the Baptist

Sunday 1 March: Second Sunday of Lent

09.30 Parish Communion

16.00 Families @ 4

Sunday 8 March : Third Sunday of Lent

09.30 Breakfast Church

18.00 Sunday @ 6

Sunday 15 March: Fourth Sunday of Lent:

Mothering Sunday

09.30 Mothering Sunday Communion

Sunday 22 March: Fifth Sunday of Lent

08.00 Holy Communion

09.30 Celtic Service of the Word

Sunday 29 March: Palm Sunday

09.30 Benefice Service at Ovington

Every Tuesday

09.00 Morning Prayer

Every Wednesday

10.00 Midweek Holy Communion / Service of the Word

OLD ALRESFORD

St Mary the Virgin

Sunday 1 March: Second Sunday of Lent

11.00 Village Family Praise

Sunday 8 March : Third Sunday of Lent

09.30 Morning Praise

Sunday 15 March: Fourth Sunday of Lent:

Mothering Sunday

11.00 Mothering Sunday Service

Sunday 22 March: Fifth Sunday of Lent

09.30 Holy Communion BCP

Sunday 29 March: Palm Sunday

09.30 Benefice Service at Ovington

Every Wednesday

09.00 Morning Prayer



OVINGTON St Peter's

Sunday 1 March: Second Sunday of Lent

11.00 *No service*

Sunday 8 March : Third Sunday of Lent

11.00 Parish Communion

Sunday 15 March: Fourth Sunday of Lent: Mothering Sunday

10.00 Mothering Sunday Service

Sunday 22 March: Fifth Sunday of Lent

11.00 *No service*

Sunday 29 March: Palm Sunday

09.30 Benefice Service

Every Thursday

09.00 Morning Prayer - paused until April (tbc)



BIGHTON All Saints

Sunday 1 March: Second Sunday of Lent

11.00 *No service*

Sunday 8 March : Third Sunday of Lent

11.00 Morning Prayer

Sunday 15 March: Fourth Sunday of Lent: Mothering Sunday

11.00 Mothering Sunday Service

Sunday 22 March: Fifth Sunday of Lent

11.00 Parish Communion

Sunday 29 March: Palm Sunday

09.30 Benefice Service at Ovington

Every Monday

09.00 Morning Prayer

Calendar

- ♦ Feb 27th 2.30pm Art Society Flowers & Foliage
- ♦ March 6th 2.00pm World Day of Prayer
- ♦ March 7th 9.00am New Alresford Community Litter Pick
- ♦ March 7th 10.00am Encounters in Israel—hope and despair
- ♦ March 8th 2pm Meet Bishop Kelly see below
- ♦ March 9th Start of big plastic count
- ♦ March 11th 7.30pm Horticultural Spring Show
- ♦ March 14th Quiet Day @ St John's
- ♦ March 15th 2.00pm Solos Sunday Tea
- ♦ March 18th 2.00pm St John's Book Group
- ♦ March 21st 9am Marie Curie Collection Day
- ♦ March 21st 9.30am Vocations Morning
- ♦ March 21st 6.30pm St Matthew Passion at Romsey Abbey
- ♦ March 22nd Mothering Sunday
- ♦ March 29th Palm Sunday
- ♦ March 29th 2.30pm Tale of Two Trees—come and take part
- ♦ April 1st 12.15 Lent Lunch @ John Pearson Hall, St John's
- ♦ April 3rd Good Friday
- ♦ April 5th Easter Day
- ♦ April 10th Charity Dog Walk
- ♦ April 13th Closing Day for Electoral Roll @ St John's
- ♦ April 25th Alresford Community Choir Spring Concert
- ♦ April 28th St John's APCM
- ♦ May 9th 10.00 Table Top Sale @ St John's
- ♦ May 17h Watercress Festival

FOR EVERYONE IN THE ARLE VALLEY BENEFICE:

You are invited to come and **meet Bishop Kelly on Sunday 8th March between 2 and 4pm in the John Pearson Hall followed by Sundays@4 service (normally Sundays @6)** with Bishop Kelly in St John's Church.

This will be an opportunity for an informal time with tea and cake for the parishioners of the Arle Valley Benefice to have time to chat together as well as with Bishop Kelly.

Please stagger the times you will be coming and plan to stay for approximately 30-40 minutes to ensure the hall doesn't get too crowded.



Currently of no fixed abode!

As many of you may be aware, St Mary's Church is closed at the moment. That is, St Mary's, the church building, rather than St Mary's, the church congregation.

When it opens again, all being well, at Easter, there will be a small kitchen servery and a disabled access toilet, both located (though spaced well apart!) at the back of the church. The builders are hard at work and making good progress. We very much hope that these additions will make the church more welcoming not only to those attending services but to the many visitors and pilgrims who call in to the church, throughout the year. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Mothers' Union and we're looking forward to welcoming groups from MU branches near and far later on in the year and being able to provide them with a cup of tea!

Meanwhile, the congregation is holding services each Sunday at Old Alresford Place. Many thanks to the Diocese for providing us with this temporary and comfortable home and thanks too to the many priests for taking our services so far, and to those others who will be coming in the next few months. Despite the buildings being only a very short distance away from each other (because of course OAP was the Rectory for St Mary's until 1908), I find the sense of dislocation quite profound.

I'm missing the building, with its feeling of prayerfulness and calm, its sense of peace solidity despite whatever is going on in the world, far and near. It is, as someone who is not a regular churchgoer said to me the other day, 'a spiritual home, my go-to place when I need to sit by myself'.

Now, it feels as if our congregation is on a long stay in a holiday home or, without being overly dramatic, we're homeless. It adds a layer of complexity, remembering to have everything ready (books, service sheets, elements for communion if needed, candles) either at home or in my car. Whatever one needs, it's not just to hand.

This experience has made me think about the terrible sense of burden and strain on people who are made homeless for whatever reason, whether in this country, or those who are coming to the UK as refugees. The strain of having to think what possessions you need to have with you, what you will or won't need at any one time, or where you will go when you can't just shut your own door and keep the world at bay must be totally exhausting. It must be so difficult to relax or feel truly at peace. Anyone who is homeless needs our prayers and our support. Of course, the church is not just its buildings. The people, the congregation, are the living church but, like everyone, they need a home, a secure base, from which to go forth to do God's will, feeling strengthened and sustained.

A place that is home which is why for so many people, their parish church, their local church, is so important for their sense of well being. Whether they come often or rarely, or maybe not at all, it is their church where they know prayers are said and have been said, where people are baptised, married and have their funerals. They are places that mark the most significant events in our lives, our beginning and our end. In most places, our parish churches have been there for centuries before us and it is to be fervently hoped and prayed for that they will still be there for centuries after we are no longer here.

I'm really looking forward to welcoming everyone back to St Mary's in April.

Sue Armstrong



Church News



St. Mary's Church, Old Alresford

CHURCH CLOSURE

The church will be **closed** from 1st January until Easter 2026

whilst toilet facilities are built into the West End of the church.

During this period the building will be closed to everyone.

Busby's Builders and the Parochial Church Council are sorry for any inconvenience this might cause.

During this period our normal Sunday services will take place in Old Alresford Place.

Roger Parsons
Churchwarden 07854 144023



NEW BENEFICE OFFICE HOURS!!

The church office will now be open Monday to Friday from 9am - 11am.

Children are welcome at all services here.

A hearing aid 'loop' system operates at St John's, St Peter's & St Mary's.

If moving is difficult and you wish to have communion brought to you, please ask the Churchwarden on duty.

If you require a gluten-free wafer, please inform us before the service begins.

Know of anyone who'd appreciate reading this notice sheet? Please feel free to forward it to them.

Live Streaming at St. John's

LIVE

The link for the live-streaming of services is:
www.youtube.com/@theearlevalleybenefice5720/streams
It will come up under a Live heading with a green oblong with a small round picture of St John's underneath.
Click on the oblong and it will open the live stream.

Church Notices

St John's Electoral Roll

St John's Electoral Roll: The Electoral Roll is revised every year prior to the APCM. In order to vote at the APCM, or to be elected to the PCC or any office, you must be on the Roll. If you are not on it yet and wish to be, please add your name now. Should you be unsure if you are already on the Roll, there is a copy in the Parish Office or you can ask our Electoral Roll Officer, Janet Pooley. The closing date for entry on the Roll is **Monday 13th April**, after which no names may be added until the APCM has been held on **Tuesday 28th April**. You can download a form from the Arle Valley Benefice web site (look under 'Our Churches – supporting our churches) or apply with a paper form available at the back of the church or direct from Janet. Completed forms should be left in the Parish Office or be sent to the address below.

Janet Pooley, 8 The Mulberries, Off Station Approach, Alresford SO24 9FL.
Tel 01962 732779.

Benefice Vacancy Update -

The Benefice Profile is now finished and approved. . The advert went out at the beginning of February with short-listing at the beginning of March and interviews at the end of March. Please continue to pray regularly for the process to be in line with God's plan and pray for all involved to be given wisdom and discernment. We will keep you updated if anything changes.

Arle Valley Benefice Churchwardens.

The Arle Valley Benefice takes its duty and obligation to protect everyone, extremely seriously. If you have any safeguarding concerns or issues of a safeguarding nature our Safeguarding Officers are: Sarah Wilding (St. John's) or Alison Mayne (St. Mary's/All Saints/St. Peter's) e-mail: arlevalleysafeguarding@gmail.com

24 Hour Prayer and Reflection Lent, Easter, the World and our Benefice

And for the interviews for the new Rector

Saturday 14th March.



Time	Reflection Type – Prayer/Praise	Led by
12am to 6am	AT HOME	
	IN ST.JOHN'S – Quiet Times	
6am – 7am	Individual prayer	
7am - 8am	Preparing for Easter - Desert Mothers and Fathers 1 – Anthony of the Desert – Reigniting my passion for Jesus	Video
8am – 9am	Morning praise and prayer	Lectio 365
9am – 10am	Desert Mothers and Fathers 2 - John Cassian – Intensifying hunger for holiness	Video
10am – 11am	Individual prayer	
11am – Noon	Martha and Blind Bartimaeus - music to listen to, a Bible reading, a reflection on the reading, silence.	Charlotte Ryton and Susan Roberts
Noon – 1pm	Individual prayer	
1pm – 2pm	Paul and Seeing Jesus in Everyone - music to listen to, a Bible reading, a reflection on the reading, silence.	Charlotte Ryton and Susan Roberts
2pm – 3pm	Individual prayer	
3pm – 4pm	Desert Mothers and Fathers 3 - Macarius of Egypt – Loving silence and solitude	Video
4pm – 5pm	Individual prayer	
5pm – 6pm	Desert Mothers and Fathers 4 - Syncletica of Alexandria – The freedom of renunciation	Video
6pm – 7pm	Individual prayer	
7pm – 8pm	Evening praise and prayer	Rosie Waring Green
8pm – 9pm	Individual prayer	
9pm – 10pm	Psalm 23 Reflection	Rosie Waring Green
10pm – 11pm	Individual prayer	
11pm - Mid-night	Night prayer	Lectio 365

Church Events and Activities

11:00am - 12:00pm,
1st March
St Mary's Church, SO24 9DX



A service of Morning Praise for the whole family.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH **NEW ALRESFORD**

IT'S TIME FOR BREAKFAST CHURCH



8th March

**2ND
SUNDAYS
@ 9.30AM**



**FAMILY FRIENDLY
WORSHIP + FUN**

AGES 0 - 100!

St. John's Church
Alresford

Celtic Service of the Word

This quiet, reflective service contains music, hymns, bible readings and periods of silence in the Celtic tradition.

You don't have to be "religious" to attend. Those with faith, those without faith and those who are searching, are all very welcome.

Fourth Sundays at 9.30am

Please join us for refreshments afterwards.



+

**WEDNESDAY
MIDWEEK
HOLY COMMUNION**

10am
St. John's, Alresford

An oasis of calm
during the busy week.

Coffee, cake and
fellowship following
the service.

Church Events and Activities



Prayer requests:

If you would like the Prayer team to pray for you, your family, friends or any other situation, please contact:

Rosie Waring Green
rosie@22rwg.co.uk
t. 01962 733237

We, of course, always respect the confidentiality of your requests

Prayer Meeting for the parish and our community - **every Friday at 10-11am** in church - feel free to drop in. And if you can't get down to the church then do join us in prayer wherever you are.



St John's Porch Prayer Tree and Prayer Cards

Please do spend some time praying the prayer requests on the Prayer tree as you go in or out of church or as you walk by. It is a privilege to support all those who have written these

Also there are prayer cards available in a display case which you are most welcome to take and use for yourself or friends and family.

Some of the titles are: Being Accepted, Looking for God, Worried about Someone, Finding Peace, Feeling alone, Grieving, Being thankful



Bible Study

If you are interested in exploring the Bible and having some help reading and understanding it do consider getting Bible notes. You can order notes from Pearl Page—her email is pearlpage@aol.com

Church

Table Talk in Lent

A chance to meet, eat and discuss issues raised by Wicked in an open, friendly and non-judgemental atmosphere.

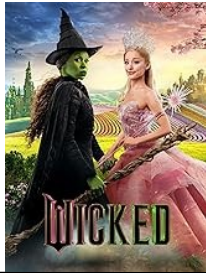
12pm in the John Pearson Hall

Bring and Share lunch

Every Friday

Starting Friday 20th February

All Welcome



Coffee, Cake & Chat @ St. John's

Come and join us on the second Tuesday of every month (10am—11.30am)

in the John Pearson Hall

for tea coffee and delicious homemade cakes!

This is for everyone across the local community

We'd love to see you

Feel free to invite family, friends and neighbours as well



For more information please contact

Angela Peel 01962 734 814

Solos Sunday Tea

A warm welcome.
sandwiches
homemade cakes and
conversation for those who
live alone.

Come and
join us

Every Third Sunday 2.30pm—4.30pm

Next meeting:

Sunday 15th March

John Pearson Hall St John's Church

We do hope to see you there.

Info: Marian 01962 733921

Margaret 01962 735185

Roger 01962 734045

Gluten free
available



MEN'S SUPPER CLUB

FOR WIDOWERS

**WE MEET ON THE LAST THURSDAY
OF THE MONTH AT 7PM**

**IF INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT
ROGER WHIFFEN ON 01962 734045**

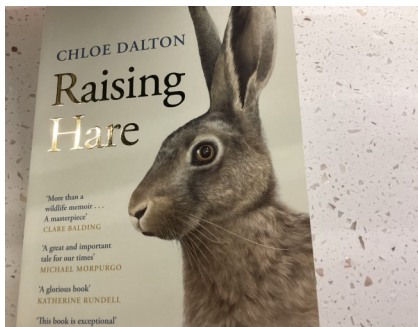


St John's Book Group

Our next meeting is on
Wednesday March 18th
2pm in the John Pearson Hall

We will be discussing *Raising Hare*

Please contact Hilary Carr
hilarycarr1@gmail.com
or 735279 for more information



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH & CHURCHYARD SPRING TIDY

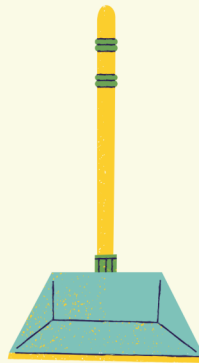


It's time for our annual Spring Tidy
for **both** the church and churchyard!

**SATURDAY,
28TH MARCH
9AM - 12PM**

We warmly invite you to join us!
Set for Saturday, 28th March,
we'll kick off at 9am and work until noon.
Refreshments provided.

Don't forget to bring your trusty work gloves
and garden tools as we come together to
spruce up the church in preparation for Easter!



**THANK YOU
FOR LENDING
A HAND!**



YOU ARE INVITED TO TAKE PART IN **THE TALE OF THREE TREES**

'THE TALE OF THREE TREES' MUSICAL BY
ANN BERESFORD IS A RETELLING OF THE
TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN FOLKTALE OF THREE TREES.

**Sunday, 29th March
St. John's Church**

Rehearsal 2.30pm - 3.30pm
Performance at 4pm (approx. 20 mins)
Everyone invited, no tickets needed!

Tea and cake afterwards!

To take part and receive the song pack in advance
(4 songs), details from Rosie Waring Green,
t. 07891 120662 / e. rosie@22rwg.co.uk



One of my churchwardens is a stickler for 'Health and Safety'...



**HOPE AND
DESPAIR**

ENCOUNTERS IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

WHEN:
Saturday, 7th March
10am - 12pm

WHERE:
The John Pearson Hall
St. John's Church

**A Talk by Miranda Pinch
following her visit to
Israel and Palestine
in January 2026**

Q & A afterwards



Vocations Morning

**Saturday 21st March
9:30am – 12:30pm**

St Mark's, Kempshott
Homesteads Road
Basingstoke Hampshire
RG22 5LQ

Do you think God might be calling you to use your gifts to serve Jesus Christ, but you're unsure of what your next step might be?

Join Bishop Kelly and Revd Dr Amy Roche, along with members of the Mission & Ministry Team, to find out more about the pathways available for both lay and ordained ministries. There will be a particular focus on opportunities for lay ministry including Exploring Theology, Bishops Commission for Mission and Bishops Permission to Preach.



DIOCESE OF
WINCHESTER

For more information and to book,
please contact Tracey Nicholls:
Tracey.Nicholls@winchester.anglican.org
01962 710983



ST JOHN'S LENT LUNCH

**Wednesday, 1st April
12.15 pm, JPH**

**£5 per person payable
on the door, or reserve
your place in advance
by emailing:
pippa@chocolatecraft.co.uk**

**Homemade Soup, bread,
cheese and chutneys.**

Raffle £1 a strip

**MONDAY, 9TH MARCH
12.30 - 2PM**

IN THE CHRISTY HALL, OLD ALRESFORD

Lent Lunch Soup, Bread and Cheese

In aid of St. Mary's Church servery and toilet project



**All
Welcome**



**Any queries, please contact
Sue Armstrong t.01962 734542**

Lent Groups

CHURCHES TOGETHER - LENT STUDIES 2026

Joy of the Gospel by Paula Gooder

This six-part course for parishes and Lent groups is based on Pope Francis' much acclaimed reflections on mission and evangelism, published as *Evangelii Gaudium* ('The Joy of the Gospel').

Widely recognised as offering wisdom and vision for all Christians in a culture that is often hostile to the church, *Evangelii Gaudium* offers a positive and realistic approach to sharing faith in the modern world.

There is a course book (one per person is recommended) available for around £9.00: please contact your course leader for a copy.

Here in Alresford, in order to give maximum opportunity for taking part, the full course will be available in three different venues, as follows:

Alresford Methodist Church at 2.30pm on Wednesday 18 February and then at the same time on the next five Wednesdays (25 February and 4, 11, 18 & 25 March): and led by Jonathan Hughes, Local Lay Pastor at Alresford Methodist Church: contact 07858 528379 or dandjhughes79@virginmedia.com

Alresford Methodist Church at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 24 February and then at the same time on the next five Tuesdays (3, 10, 17, 24 & 31 March) and led by Susan Armstrong, Licensed Lay Minister; 01962 734542 or susanarmstrong50@icloud.com

12 Hawthorn Close, Alresford SO24 9LE, beginning at 3.00pm on Thursday 19 February and then at the same time on the next five Thursdays (26 February and 5, 12, 19 & 26 March) and led by Kathryn and Roger Lockyer: contact 01962 809078 or lockererkathryn@gmail.com

Anyone wishing to enrol for one of the courses is invited to contact the course leader by telephone or email.

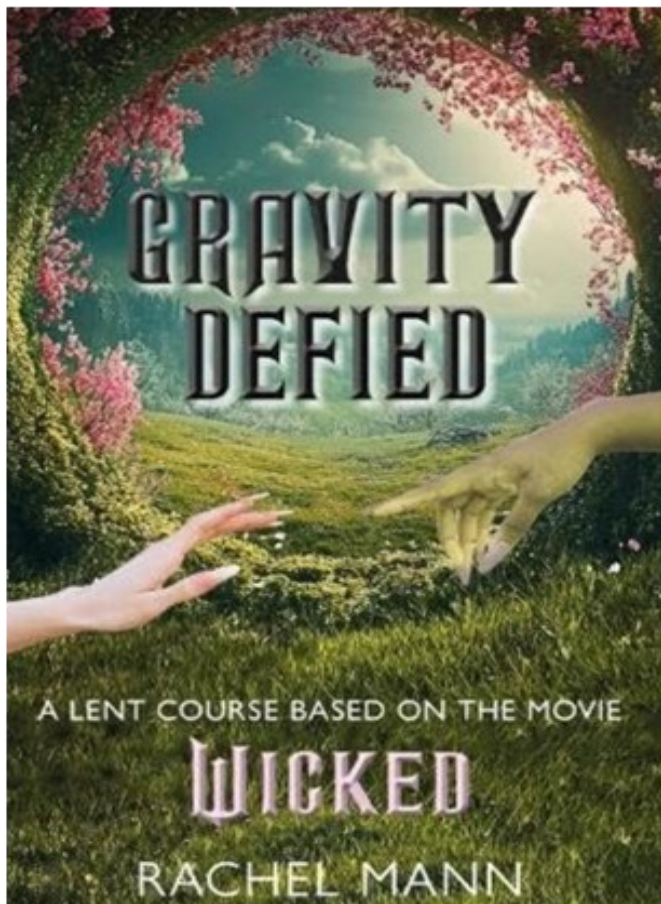
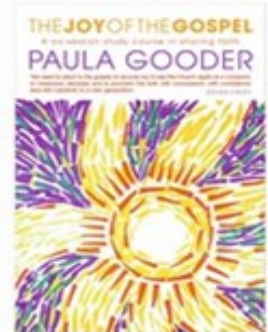


TABLE TALK Lent Course 2026 The John Pearson Hall St. John's Church

This year the Table Talk group will follow the Lent course "Gravity Defied" based on the film "Wicked".
Everyone is welcome. Bring your friends.

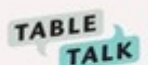
Friday 20th February: Film Screening

Lent Course: We'll watch clips and then break into discussion groups.

Starting at 12pm on Fridays with a Bring and Share Lunch.

Friday 27th February
Friday 6th March
Friday 13th March
Friday 20th March

For more information, please contact Jackie, t. 01962 732056, email: jackie.connell@btinternet.com



Old Alresford News

Pot holes and puddles February fill dyke has lived up to its name and there are a number of deep pot-holes along the B3046 through the village. The road frequently floods at the north end of the village beyond Barton Cottage and also on the bend in Drove Lane close to the track leading to the Fulling Mill. Take care!

The Can Bank Thank you to everyone for the aluminium tray and cans. We have now filled the bin 10 times and raising money for the Air Ambulance with every load.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Au-

St Mary's Church The church is currently closed while work to build a toilet with disabled access and a small kitchen servery is underway. Services are held at Old Alresford Place, opposite the church. Fund raising for the project is still ongoing and donations gratefully received.

Old Alresford Christmas Quiz 2025 47 entries were received and more than 10 scored 100 points or more out of 105. Congratulations to the winners, :- Tracey Pontin, Tessa McDonald, Jane and David Nash, Will Clarke, Janet Urquart and Mike McCartney.

Thank you to Candover Valley Community Store and Tesco Winnall for donating generous prizes and to everyone who bought a copy. We hope to be back with another quiz in November.



The Old Alresford Dramatic Society

TOADS This year TOADS will celebrate its 40th birthday. It was started in 1986 when the village school was closed and has provided fun, laughter and friendship with pantomimes and spring shows ever since. This year's spring production in May will feature favourite sketches and songs from across the years and will be produced by Helen Gard and Jo Stokes. Don't miss this wonderful celebration!



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is

Lent Lunch Monday March 9th 12 noon to 2pm in the Bernard Clarke room of the village hall. Homemade soups, bread and cheese.

Family Service The next service will be on Sunday 1st March at 11 am in Old Alresford Place.

Mondays@ 10 Coffee and Chat for everyone and toys for the toddlers. In the Bernard Clarke room. All Welcome!



Prayers



We pray for the church, creation and the needs of the whole world

- We continue to pray for peace in our broken world thinking especially of the situation in Gaza and the West Bank. We also remember the Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar and so many other places of conflict.
- For all in authority and with power that they may have compassion, courage and wisdom to do what is right for the people in their care. Help them have a heart for peace and for justice. Guide their decisions.
- For all who have taken a wrong path and ended up in addiction or crime. Help them find their way back to the path of righteousness and give them the courage to move away from their past.
- For this planet and its needs as pollution and climate change continue to threaten its fragility. For all affected by climate change who experiencing fires, floods, droughts and storms.
- For our farmers that may find a way to raise their crops and animals in spite of the changes in our weather. Give them the resources they need and help them feel less isolated in our increasingly urban society.
- For all who are ill or injured or hurting. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and may your healing grace fill them so they know they are not alone.

Alresford Methodist Church March 2026

1st March - Bacon Butties

Come and join us for Bacon Butties (also hot croissants and fresh coffee) and good conversation. No payment is asked for, but donations are accepted for the work of the church.

Breakfast is served from 9.30-11.00am.

2nd March – Memory Lane Café

The Monday Memory Café was initially set up with the specific purpose of supporting those suffering memory loss and their carers. However, we also welcome anyone who finds life a little lonely and would therefore welcome an additional social opportunity in their diary. If you would like to join us, you will find a warm welcome awaiting you. We offer an afternoon of fun, activities, fellowship, homemade cake and lots of tea – all for a cost of £2! If you would like more information, or would like to attend, please contact us on - 07858 528379.

12th March - Women's Fellowship

The 'Women's Fellowship' group will meet in the Methodist church hall at 2.30pm. Mrs Elizabeth Britton will be leading the meeting which will be followed with tea and cake. A warm welcome is extended to everyone.

21st March – Church Prayers

The church is open on the third Saturday of each month from 10–11am. All are welcome to join us in a time of reflective prayer, as we share concerns both local and worldwide. At the close of prayer time, we invite everyone to stay and chat over a coffee and biscuits in the coffee lounge.

Winchester Cathedral in March

EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING
DURING LENT
FROM 7.15PM

Lent Bible Study and Compline —

Everyone is welcome

Join us every Wednesday evening during Lent (**25 February–25 March**) for Bible Study at 7.15pm in the Lady Chapel, exploring the Letter to the Ephesians, followed by Compline at 8.00pm in the Quire—a quiet, reflective service of peace, forgiveness and trust in God.



CONCERT



FRIDAY 27TH MARCH 7.30PM, DOORS
OPEN 6.45PM

**Elgar's Dream of Gerontius
with the Waynflete Singers**

TALK



FRIDAY 20TH MARCH 7.30PM, DOORS
OPEN 6.45PM

**Jane Austen Among
Women Writers: Dr Gillian
Dow — A talk by an
Associate Professor at the
University of Southampton**

**Sophie Hacker
A Retrospective**



For twenty years, artist Sophie Hacker has been part of the creative and spiritual life of Winchester Cathedral. This exhibition brings together a rich body of work created during that time, Running across [Lent, Holy Week and Easter](#), the exhibition is anchored by the powerful work **Crucifixion Now, Resurrection Now**, which speaks directly into the drama, pain, mystery, and glory of this most significant season in the Christian calendar.

Winchester Cathedral records the records of the Dean and Chapter and is available on [www.wincathedral.org.uk](#)



**Welcoming The Very Reverend Chris Palmer
Dean of Winchester**

You are warmly invited to attend his installation on 15 March at 3.00pm. Tickets must be booked in advance online or through the Cathedral Box Office.



This service will be free but ticketed. Booking will available via the cathedral webpage on the 26th February at 10.00am. All are welcome

The Winchester Cathedral Chamber Choir will perform a Passiontide Concert on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at 5:30 pm in Winchester Cathedral. Directed by Joshua Stephens, this free, ticketed event features a reflective program of Renaissance masterpieces, including works by Weelkes, Byrd, Tallis, and Victoria's *Tenebrae Responsories*. Saturday March 28 2026 @5.30pm

Community Events

ALRESFORD & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

**FRIDAY MORNINGS
AT YOUR
COMMUNITY CENTRE**



TEA/COFFEE & BISCUITS

**WEEKLY MEAT RAFFLE
BOOK SALE
EGGS LOCAL PRODUCE**

Proceeds for the maintenance of Alresford Community Centre. Charity No. 301121

Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union is a worldwide Christian organisation dedicated to promoting marriage and family life. It has 3.6 million members in 76 countries.



The Mothers' Union was started in 1876 by Mary Sumner, the wife of an Anglican vicar. It is open to all baptised men and women and encourages all members to attend church and to read the Bible regularly.

Joining the Mothers' Union

If you are interested in joining the Mothers' Union, please contact Stephanie Durrant, t. 01962 732318 or email stephanie.durrant@hotmail.com

New Members are always welcome.

We look forward to welcoming you to be a part



JOIN US FOR

NEW ALRESFORD COMMUNITY LITTERPICK

ALRESFORD RECREATION CENTRE, ARLEBURY PARK
We are encouraging neighbours to get together to litter pick nearby roads.

Want to take part?

Collect your litter pickers, bags and gloves from the Council Office by **Thursday 5th March or on the day at Arlebury Park.**

A short risk assessment and signature will be required.

Thank you!

Join us afterwards for a complimentary hot or cold drink at Arlebury Park



Saturday 7th March
9.00 AM-11.00AM

Royal Air Forces Association

Alresford & District Branch



We are the local branch of the RAFA and we are looking for new members to join our team. Whether you are an ex serving member of the RAF or not you are welcome to join us. We are an active team of people holding many social events and we meet in Alresford each month.

For more information or details of how

to join please call Mike Trevelyan on

07920772781 email yann_221@yahoo.co.uk

Registered Charity 1071073 (England & Wales)



GRANDE EXPERIENCES

Van Gogh *Alive*

From 22nd January
Winchester Science Centre

**A world-first immersive experience.
 Only in Winchester**

The world's most visited immersive exhibition, **Van Gogh Alive**, is presented exclusively at Winchester Science Centre. From **Thursday 22 January to Sunday 22 March 2026**, step into Vincent's vivid world as his masterpieces come to life all around you. Be part of a world first as **Van Gogh Alive** is reimagined for a planetarium for the very first time. Powerful projections and an evocative classical score will surround you with colour, light and emotion, while Van Gogh's own words reveal the man behind the art. Wander through sunflowers, immerse yourself in his most famous painting, and make an evening of it with drinks and snacks available

Alresford & District Horticultural Society

Wednesday 11th March 2026

From 7.30pm to 9.30pm

St Gregory's Parish Hall, Grange Road,
 Alresford, SO24 9HE



Spring Show

Only members may enter exhibits

But visitors welcome.

Refreshments available.

Further information

at www.alresfordhorticultural.org

Chatty Cafe Scheme



At a loose end?
 Fancy a cuppa?

The 'Chatter & Natter table' is a wonderful way of encouraging people of all ages to talk to others. During the day and time below, the table will be hosted by a friendly volunteer. Do come along and sit for a chat.

Where: The Arlebury Cafe
 Arlebury Park, The Avenue,
 New Alresford,
 Alresford, SO24 9EP

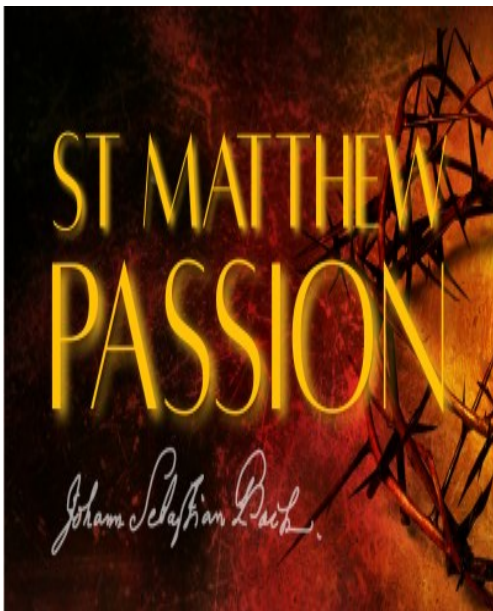
When: Every Monday
 1:30pm - 3pm

Alresford Art Society:

A demonstration
Cow Parsley and Dandelion Clocks
 in mixed media by Rachael Alexander.

Thursday 26 March at 7:30pm
 at Bishops Sutton Village Hall,
 Alresford, SO24 0AH.
 Non-members welcome, admission £3.
 For further information: 01962 733031
 or visit www.artsociety.alresford.org





St Matthew Passion - Romsey Abbey

Looking forward to Easter... local choirs: **Kingsgate Voices** and **Southern Voices** will join forces with a host of famous soloists and first-class orchestra to perform JS Bach's *St Matthew Passion* on **21 March** at 6.30pm (NB: early start time).

Katharine Fuge, Malachy Frame, Jessica Gillingwater & Gareth Brynmor John will be joined by rising stars including **Sebastian Hill** accompanied on period instruments by **London Baroque Sinfonia** with **Andrew Hayman** conducting and **Winchester Cathedral Girls Choir**.

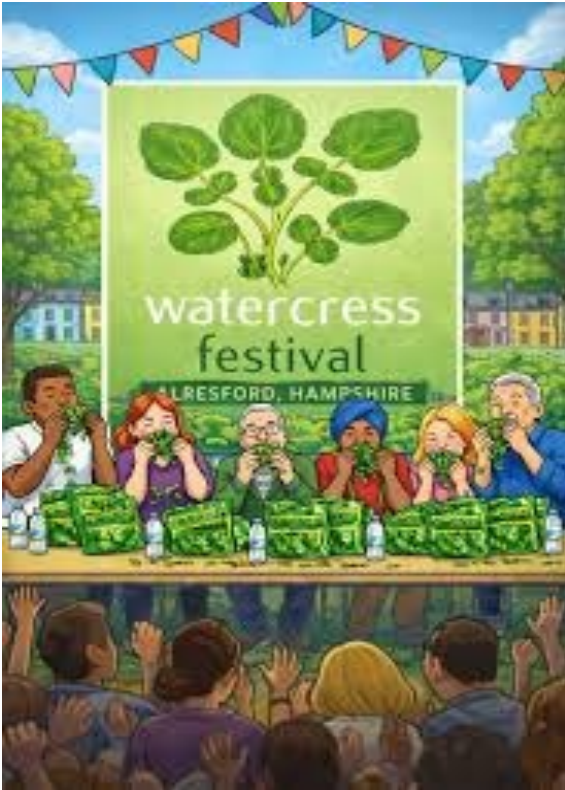
Perhaps a once in a life-time opportunity to hear this great work – not to be missed and book early!

A poster for 'A Season to Sing' by Alresford Community Choir. The background is a collage of four forest scenes: winter (snow), spring (green), summer (bright green), and autumn (yellow). The text is centered and reads: 'Alresford Community Choir with The Clarendon Ensemble present A Season to Sing'. Below this, it says 'Featuring Joanna L'Estrange's Choral Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of Vivaldi's Four Seasons'. The date and time are 'Saturday April 25th 7.30pm'. The location is 'St John the Baptist Church, New Alresford, SO24 9AG'. It also mentions 'Pre Concert & Interval Bar', 'Tickets: £20 and £15', and a website link. A charity number is at the bottom right.

In anticipation of warmer weather we will perform Joanna Forbes L'Estrange's wonderful new choral work, '*A Season To Sing*'. Written in 2025, this was co-commissioned by Alresford Community Choir, and celebrates the 300th anniversary of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*.

We will also be singing works by Brahms, Fauré, Monteverdi, Mozart and many others.

Community Events



Save the Date—17th May

A date for your diary!

Sunday 17th May

Watercress Festival ...

Cafe at St Johns....

open 10.00am until 4pm.

Do join us for tea/coffee
and homemade cakes

Your chance to see the world's most famous steam locomotive Flying Scotsman at The Watercress Line



The iconic Flying Scotsman visits The Watercress Line from 10 to 21 March.

Visitors to The Watercress Line in Hampshire will have the opportunity to view the world's most famous steam locomotive, Flying Scotsman, from 10 to 21 March, courtesy of The National Railway Museum.

A range of exclusive experiences are available, giving anyone interested in heritage a rare opportunity to celebrate the long-standing legacy of Flying Scotsman, more than 100 years after it first captured the nation's imagination.

See Watercress Line website for more information and to book. Tickets are apparently going fast.

Originally built by LNER in 1923, *Flying Scotsman* was named after the London to Edinburgh express service she was built for. In 1934, she was the first locomotive to officially reach 100mph and became a symbol of engineering excellence.

Flying Scotsman was withdrawn from service in 1963 and was bought by the National Railway Museum in 2004, where she underwent a £4.2 million restoration over 10 years.

Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal 2026 – as it celebrates 40 years

Throughout the month of March, the end-of-life charity Marie Curie will be holding its annual flagship fundraiser, the Great Daffodil Appeal.

There's only one chance to give someone the best possible end of life.

And one chance for you to help give care that makes all that possible. Care that protects someone's dignity – instead of leaving them alone or in pain. This Great Daffodil Appeal is that chance.

Now in its 40th year, the appeal raises vital funds to help Marie Curie provide end of life care and support in homes, hospitals and hospices across the UK. By donating and wearing your daffodil this March, you can help Marie Curie Nurses bring expert end of life care when there's no cure, whatever the illness.

Money raised also funds the charity's free support line and webchat which is available to anyone with an illness they're likely to die from and those close to them. It offers practical and emotional support on everything from managing symptoms and navigating care to financial information, including how to get help with energy bills and bereavement support.

Whether it's taking part in a fundraising challenge, organising a bake sale or volunteering your time to collect donations, every penny will help Marie Curie deliver quality care to those who need it most.

The Great Daffodil Appeal only happens once a year. This is your chance to make it count. For information and to donate visit: [Mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil](https://mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil)



Saturday 21st March

Street collection from 9am - 2pm.

If you are able to help for an hour with the collection please contact me:

**Val Bond
01962 275196**

Children's Activities

Monday Meet + Eat

Join Us

Mondays @ 3.30pm
Everyone Welcome

Organised by
CTiA

Families with primary school children and under are invited to join the fun in the John Pearson Hall.

3.30pm | A drink and a snack to start.

Followed by Board Games, Puzzles, Word Searches and lots more fun!

4.45pm | Dinner - we share a **FREE** hot meal.



Please inform us of any dietary requirements

Please book a place at:
e. rosie@22rwg.co.uk
or t. 07891 120662

Families at 4pm

Everyone welcome

1st Sunday of the month

St. John's Church
Alresford

Story, craft, song,
drinks and snacks

No more than an hour, very informal

CHILL, CHAT & CHOMP

Youth Group Y7 upwards

St John's Church

Contact Rosie on 07891 120662



Chatterbox



is our parent/carer & baby/toddler group that meets every Thursday (10am - 11am) in the John Pearson Hall.

Do come along and enjoy new friends (with refreshments) and fun activities for your little ones.

Please book a place with Vicki,
t. 07907 035998.





10AM - 12PM
 1ST MONDAY OF THE MONTH
 CHRISTY HALL, OLD ALRESFORD

Old Alresford Family Mondays

TOYS FOR TODDLERS AND A CHANCE TO
 MEET AND CHAT TO OTHER FAMILIES.

REFRESHMENTS TOO!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME FROM 10AM - 12PM
 ON THE 1ST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH

ORGANISED BY ST. MARY'S CHURCH,
 OLD ALRESFORD



CONTACTS:
 SUE ARMSTRONG
 TEL. 734542
 ERICA SISK
 TEL. 732735



We run full day activity camps during the school holidays for children aged 5-12. Children can sign up for one day or multiple days, the woods offer something different every day!

<https://hampshirebushcraft.com>

Join the Adventure



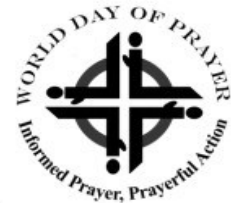
soul  children

Youth Gospel Choir
 in Alresford

Thursdays
 4.00pm to 6.00pm
 St John's Church Alresford
 For young people aged 10-18
 hello@timuffindell.co.uk

soulchildreuk.com

World Day of Prayer Friday 6th March@ 2.00pm



World Day of Prayer

Prepared by the WDP Committee of Nigeria

March 6th 2026

“I Will Give You Rest: Come”



Our sisters in Nigeria invite us to join them for the World Day of Prayer on Friday 6 March 2026. The service they have prepared reflects on the theme, "I will give you rest." The World Day of Prayer is an international, women-led, ecumenical movement that shares the hopes, concerns, and prayers of women from around the globe. Each year, women from a different country craft a service, sharing their unique spiritual journey and culture. For 2026, the women of Nigeria have created a service that speaks to our need for peace and solace, drawing on their faith and experiences in a world filled with struggles and anxieties.

This day is a powerful demonstration of global solidarity. It begins in Samoa and moves across the world in a continuous wave of prayer, finishing 38 hours later in American Samoa. It truly is a worldwide day of prayer.

Encounters in Israel and Palestine: Hope and Despair

A few extracts from Miranda's journal of her travels—to hear more come on March 7th

Each day is crammed full of terrible stories. Just the tip of the iceberg, which has been drowning Palestinians for many years, but ever increasing. A terrible analogy. Each day in Palestine has been more depressing than the last. Each day has brought fresh news of Israeli atrocities in Gaza and the West Bank.

At checkpoints Palestinians are sometimes stripped fully naked even women and children. There are examples of sexual assault. Women who are menstruating are not allowed to wash or use a toilet leaving them open to infections.

Umm Al-Khair has changed so much since I was last there. No more open views of the beautiful hills and Jordan Valley. Now, not only do they have the Carmel settlement on one side with their large factory chicken farms and intimidation with countless demolition orders on a village that by far predates the illegal settlement, but settlers have built a road, planted Israeli flags and stopped the villagers from reaching their grazing areas for their sheep and their greenhouses. They are hemmed in on every side and their village divided in two. A week ago the Palestinian villagers laid Astro-turf on a flat bit of land to create a small football field and immediately the settlers complained that it affected settlement security and development. The army were called twice and twice the settlers were asked to desist and to take down their flags. The settlers replaced their flags and refused to desist. They are the law and the soldiers obey them. We doubt the football pitch or even that part of the village will survive for much longer.

We visited **Ibelin** where we had a hour or so with Mar Elias Chacour. He is 88 and very frail. He was inspiring and was very clear that the conflict is not between Christians and Muslims but entirely to do with the behaviour of Israel. One joy on leaving the site after a very good lunch, was to be literally mobbed by schoolgirls who had been playing football! I have a wonderful photo taken by their teacher.

Near **Bethlehem** we were there with 3 Cof E Bishops, Rabbis for Human Rights and assorted others to help plant olive trees. Two 250 year old trees had recently been uprooted by settlers and stolen a short while ago! The trees we were planting were 3 or 4 years old



Top Left Miranda with football team



Bottom Left Miranda planting an Olive Tree near Bethlehem with Canon Richard Sewell and the Bishop of Norwich in the back ground



Bottom Right Elias Chacour



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- Rodent, Insect & Bird Control.
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Accommodation – Ovington



Double bedroom, single bedroom, your own sitting room, kitchenette, kettle, toaster, microwave and fridge. Plus your own parking space.

For bookings, please use the QR code above, or send Kevin and Jo an email on jomilner1@hotmail.com



*My sermon today comes from
Apps Chapter 1 beginning at verse 2...*

PART TIME COOK/HOUSEKEEPER

BAILEY HOUSE, STATION ROAD, ALRESFORD.

We have a vacancy for a part time cook/housekeeper.

Up to 14 hours per week over 2 days on a rota system, to include some weekends.

Fresh, healthy meals are provided for our ten residents.

Competitive rates of pay.

For more information please contact Sally (Manager)

sallybaileyhouse@gmail.com

Tel: 01962 735181



GREEN TIPS TO REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE



Buy unwrapped fruit and veg

- from Riverford, greengrocers and the Thursday market.
- In a supermarket put price ticket directly onto an item or use one bag for several items & their price tickets
- Alternatively use reusable fruit & veg bags.



Avoid use of clingfilm as much as possible. Cover dishes in fridge with saucers, small plates, re-usable silicone stretch covers etc. or tinfoil, which can be washed, re-used and recycled at the church to raise money for the Air Ambulance

Food packaging



- Save small plastic pots with lids and use many times in freezer instead of freezer bags
- Take pill blister packs and other difficult to recycle personal care items to Boots – see [Recycle at Boots](#)
- Re-use takeaway packaging
- Use own water bottle or flasks instead of buying bottled water

Take own containers to Eco Refill Shops which sell loose dry goods, cleaning fluids, herbs & spices etc.

For example:

- The Fillup Store in Alton
- Home Hardware in Alton for refilling Ecover products



Purchasing:

- Tea bags which are plastic free eg PG Tips & Clipper
- Milk in glass bottles delivered to the door.
- Items packaged in cardboard or glass.
- Biodegradable dog poo bags eg Adios

Plastic bags

- Wash in warm soapy water & re-use freezer bags where possible. If in doubt maybe wrap food in greaseproof paper first.
- Keep supermarket's small biodegradable bags to use as needed to transport things
- Refuse a plastic bag whenever possible.
- Use own shopping bag.
- Re-use carrier bags, washed if necessary



Other

- Use shampoo bar for hair washing
- Use bar soap in the bathroom and kitchen
- Pick up litter when out and about
- Not plastic, but Tetra packs can be recycled in the station car park
- Explore Terracycle website for drop off points for plastic not otherwise recyclable
- Stop using Oasis in flower arranging. 2021 Winchester Cathedral Flower Festival avoided it entirely
- Don't put biodegradable bags in with soft plastic recycling at supermarkets



St Peter's Ovington



St. Peter's Church
Ovington

**START
YOUR
MORNING**
with Café Church

11am
1st Sunday
every other month

Join us for good conversation
about faith and life in a
friendly, informal setting
at St. Peter's Church, Ovington.
Coffee, tea and homemade treats.





Apologies to all at Ovington especially Patsy for the distorted photograph in the last issue. The printer has apologised as well.

Anyway above, I hope, is the correct version of the photograph

St Peter's is open every day during daylight hours
So come and see our **Book Nook** where
you can swap or take second-hand books.
If you have good quality books you would like to
donate, please feel free to drop them off.
The **Book Nook** is in a pew at the back facing you
as you come in .

Holy Week Part One

The events of Easter took place over a week, traditionally called Holy or Passion Week.

It began on Palm Sunday. After all His teaching and healing, Jesus had built a following.

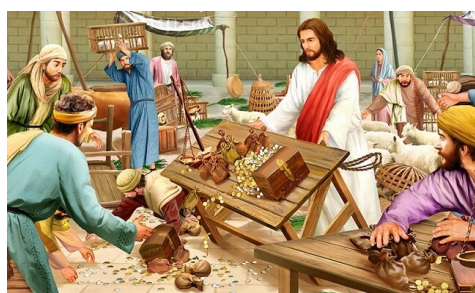
On the Sunday before He was to die, Jesus and His followers arrived at Jerusalem. The city was crowded. Jewish people were arriving from to celebrate Passover. This commemorates how they had escaped from slavery in Egypt nearly 1,500 year earlier.

Jesus rode into the city on a young donkey. He was greeted like a conquering hero. Cheering crowds waved palm branches in tribute. He was hailed as the Messiah who had come to re-establish a Jewish kingdom.



Why a donkey. First of all donkeys were cheap and available. Secondly Jesus had probably never ridden a horse. Thirdly riding donkey carried two messages which some ways are quite contradictory.: it was symbol of lowliness but also a symbol of victory. A warrior king rode a horse into battle but when he had won and was sure he was safe he rode a donkey. The Jewish people would have known both symbols. It added to their belief that he was the Messiah.

They shouted Son of David Hosanna. Most people assume hosanna is the same as Hurrah but it most definitely isn't. This Hebrew word means 'Save us'. And that is what the people wanted to be saved from the Romans. As we know Jesus wasn't interested in that his task was to save us all from a far greater evil—the power of Satan.



The next day they returned to Jerusalem. Jesus went to the temple, the epicentre of the Jewish faith, and confronted the money-changers and merchants who were ripping off the people. He overturned their tables and accused them of being thieves. He was also angry that most people were excluded from the Temple: women, Gentiles, those who were thought unclean like shepherds. The religious authorities were alarmed and feared how He was stirring up the crowds.

On the Tuesday, they challenged Jesus, questioning His authority. He answered by challenging and condemning their hypocrisy. Later that day Jesus spoke to His disciples about future times. He warned them about fake religious leaders; the coming destruction of Jerusalem; wars, earthquakes and famines; and how His followers would face persecution.

By midweek the Jewish religious leaders and elders were so angry with Jesus that they began plotting to arrest and kill Him. One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, went to the chief priests and agreed to betray Him to them. Traditionally this Wednesday was known as Spy Wednesday.

Part Two of Holy Week next month

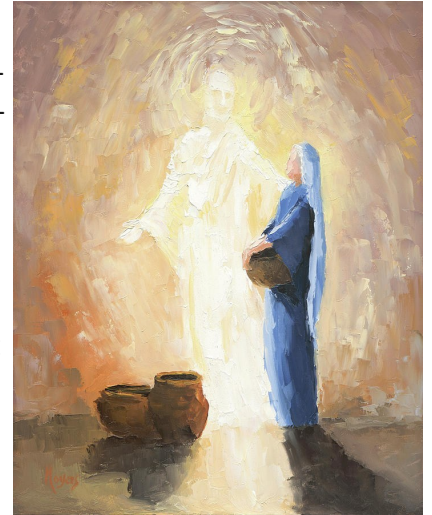
Joseph (19th March) and Mary (25th March)

Everyone knows about Mary the mother of Jesus (though actually we know very little about her). The 25th March (Lady Day) celebrates the moment of Jesus's conception when the Angel Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth. She was a young girl betrothed to Joseph (see below).

The church calendar sometimes feels muddled as this day is in the middle of Lent so when we should be celebrating his birth we are preparing to remember his death. Yet in a way that is right as Jesus's birth and death are intrinsically linked.

The Annunciation is one of the most frequently depicted in Christian art. It is after all one of the pivotal points in the Christian story. Just imagine if Mary had said 'no' to Gabriel which as she had free will she could have done.

There are several other dates when Mary is celebrated—her birth, her death, the presentation in the Temple and indeed Christmas itself.



Joseph on the other hand just has this day 19th March. Many people know that Joseph was the father of the most famous man who ever lived, but beyond that, we know very little about him, even less than we know about Mary. The Gospels name him as the 'father' of Jesus, while Luke and Matthew also asserting that the child was born of a virgin. Neither John nor Mark mention this. Even if Joseph wasn't what we call the 'biological' father, it was important to them that he was a distant descendant of the great King David – a necessary qualification for the Messiah.

It's obvious that Joseph (usually described as a 'carpenter') was not wealthy, because he was allowed to offer the poor man's sacrifice of two pigeons or turtle doves at the presentation of his infant son. No one expected eloquence or wisdom from this man's son. Jesus was born into an unremarkable family, with a doubtless hard-working artisan as His father. There would have been few luxuries in that little home at Nazareth.

Matthew begins his birth narrative with the bald statement that Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together she became pregnant 'with child from the Holy Spirit'. Joseph was not apparently privy to the divine intervention in her life, and drew the obvious conclusion: it was another man's child. However, he was not the sort of man who wished to disgrace her publicly, so he resolved to 'dismiss her quietly' – end their engagement without fuss, we might say.

However, at that point Joseph had a dream in which he was told by 'an angel of the Lord' not to hesitate to take Mary as his wife, because the child conceived in her was 'from the Holy Spirit', and that the baby was to be named 'Jesus' ('saviour') because He will 'save His people from their sins'. On waking, Joseph did as he had been instructed and took Mary as his wife.

So far as Joseph himself is concerned, we can be pretty sure of a few things. In human, legal terms he was the father of Jesus, he was a carpenter and he had probably died before Jesus began his public ministry. The little we are told suggests a devout, decent and sensitive man, one who shared Mary's anxiety when the 12 year-old Jesus went missing in Jerusalem, and who presumably taught his son the trade of a carpenter.



Joseph has become an icon of the working man – there are many churches nowadays dedicated to 'Joseph the Worker'. He can stand in the calendar of saints for the 'ordinary' person, a straight-forward craftsman who never expected or chose to be in the spotlight of history. He did what he could, and he was obedient to everything that he believed God required of him. To do the 'ordinary' thing well, to be kind, caring and open to guidance: these are great gifts, and Joseph seems to have had them in abundance.

Mothering Sunday



Mothering Sunday - the fourth Sunday of Lent- offers families an opportunity to honour the women and men who have nurtured or mothered them. Lots of different streams and traditions have come together to make today's Mothering Sunday the special day that it is.

In the Middle Ages it was an occasion for everyone to visit their 'mother' church. The Mother church was the cathedral so congregations tried to visit it but this was difficult. Later in the middle ages the 'mother' church was seen as the place where they had been baptised. Later, an opportunity for those who worked away from home to visit their mothers became added to the mix of reasons to make it a special day.

Why Mothering Sunday not as the Americans have it—Mother's Day. This is because we honour all who 'mother' us. This might be grandparents, siblings, teachers, youth leaders and fathers either as well as or instead of the woman we call mother.

Today we honour all women who have in one way or another been special to us, and in church this is usually signalled by small bunches of flowers for every woman present.

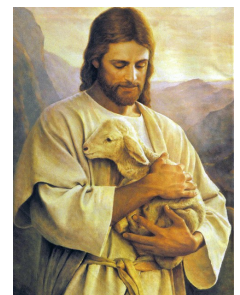


Treating mums and grans to Sunday lunch, chocolates and flowers is also part of the present mix. And will there be a simnel cake to be seen - a tradition from ages past - with its rich layers of marzipan, and eleven balls of marzipan on top, maybe reminders of the 11 disciples who remained faithful to Jesus?

Not everyone has enjoyed a wonderful or enduring relationship with their mum, so lest we get carried away on a wave of love and sentimentality, there is usually space in the Mothering Sunday church service to reflect on and pray for those whose relationships with their mother were not all they might have been.

Also, there are the families blighted by the lack of, or death of a child; families remembering a mum who died tragically young; women who never had a child but would have dearly loved the opportunity; all these and more are a recognition of the imperfections of human love, human life.

These imperfections can be brought in prayer to the God who mothers us. In the Old Testament, Isaiah speaks of God comforting His people like a mother hen. In the New Testament, both Matthew and Luke bear witness to Jesus expressing His desire to gather His people as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings. And surely the Good Shepherd is also an image for mothering. Yes, God has strong maternal qualities which He invites us to discover and enjoy!



Have you discovered the mothering, nurturing, maternal qualities which God offers to all people? It's lovelier than flowers, more long-lasting than simnel cake, better than a visit from family, and it's free to everyone who wants it - it could be yours!

Attitudes sorted! By Sue Clarke

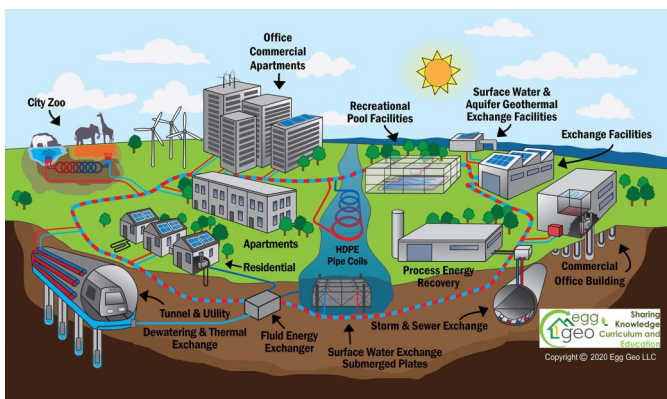
Last month our study group was asking “how can we change attitudes towards climate change?” This month there has been an extraordinary turn around in attitude thanks largely to drones. We have all become used to seeing the damage done by Russian drones flying into the Ukraine and dropping bombs with precision.

But drones have all sorts of uses and one of the websites we looked at recently are being used to come to terms with “The Great Pacific Garbage Patch”. This is a huge collection of pieces of plastic (about 1.8 trillion pieces) covering an area three times the size of France. That is very shocking – but what was even more shocking was that I had never read about it before.



You cannot just Hoover up the pieces of plastic because in so doing you will also Hoover up all kinds of microbes and other life on which surface fish depend. Well, that is where the drones come in. In Europe and in South Africa work has been done to use drones to collect plastic from the sea. The desire of many to see the seas cleared of plastic by 2040 might yet be achievable. Most of the time we either hear of terrible ways in which we have abused the planet, the latest being the great rubbish pile near Kidlington – or we hear about things we can collect or re-cycle and are encouraged to do so. It is often difficult to make the connection between aluminium foil and defeating the worse effects of climate change. Its not always easy to connect my personal life as a consumer (saving soft plastic, say) and the massive problems like the Garbage Patch.

But the other day that all changed and I am encouraged by what is happening elsewhere. We don't have our heads in the sand, but we have been given a chance to follow some success stories and some progress. We have some links to good news stories, of people making progress either through research or through thinking on a completely different scale. We can turn to websites that share exciting news that helps to show us how we can make a bigger contribution to ending the abuse of our planet. It will not make climate change go away – but it does point a way forward.



One of our 3 links leads to a website that features various stories. The Trump administration no less has just invested in a geothermal network. It reports how a coal port has now closed because renewable energy has made it unnecessary. The Chinese are just replacing all their old diesel lorries with new electric vehicles while in Iowa city the bus service is now free of charge and numbers using the buses have seen a huge increase. And so on. You don't often see a collection of positive stories about our response to the effects of climate change, but

these are the links that will take you to them https://youtu.be/2lj-BSZ7_As?si=B7ayDiMAiEnnF7Lp
<https://theoceancleanup.com/> <https://www.dailyclimate.org/Good-News/>

We hope you enjoy reading some of the news that does not seem to reach us very often and which tells us what is happening in other places. It is all very encouraging to know that not only do others share our concern for our planet, but they have found ways to make a difference. Perhaps we can now join in, knowing that we can make a difference and that by telling some of these stories we will find that plenty of people have already changed their attitude towards climate change

Michael Baron 17/10/1932 – 7/10/2025



Michael Baron was born in 1932, the youngest of four. His family home in Lancashire was near Pendle Hill, famed for the witch trials in the seventeenth century, and Michael frequently walked up there as a boy, discovering his lifelong passion for nature.

At 14 years old and already a member of the Alpine Garden Society, he travelled to the Dauphiné Alps in southeastern France. With courage, determination and very little

French he made all his travel connections to stay with family friends he hardly knew. Borrowing a bicycle Michael made trips to the surrounding hills and mountains to feed his love of nature.

As a young man he did his national service in the army and went on to teach at Winchester College for 32 years. Much of that time he also ran the Department of Science, shaping the way science was taught and writing his own successful biology textbook. Michael taught with humour and warmth, connecting with the boys as equals, influencing the lives and loves of many.

School holidays and sabbaticals enabled him to study botany at New College Oxford, achieving an MA in 1958. During this time he met his wife Caryl and together they travelled around many of the world's mountains looking for alpine plants, also working with the World Wide Fund for Nature in China.

Michael was a pioneer conservationist serving in various roles for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust through the 1960s and 1970s, including Chair of Trustees until 1993. He helped to shape the organisation, establishing a culture of drawing on the best science and evidence in making the case for nature and conservation, themes that are still the bedrock of the Trust's work today.

In retirement, he focused on his garden at Brandy Mount House, frequently sharing it with open days.

Michael even wrote a book called 'The Garden at Brandy Mount House'. In a review Michael Powell wrote Michael and Caryl, his wife of 57 years, 'developed the garden into a centre of horticultural excellence'. The garden incorporated national plant collections of Snowdrops and Daphnes. Michael was always busy, being a capable painter, a fly fisherman and a keen photographer.

Michael is survived by his two children, Clare and William, his four grandchildren and Adi, his great grandson.

Robin Stuart Gorham died on 5th September 2025, aged 86.

Robin lived with his family in Broad Street for many years before moving to Suffolk, but returned to Alresford for the last three years of his life. A distinguished former member of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Robin served in Germany, Canada, Japan, Finland, Zambia and Nigeria, as well as posts in the UK. He maintained lifelong interests in music, walking, the Jubilee Sailing Trust, and remained engaged with world affairs long after leaving office. Robin is survived by his two ex-wives, three daughters, seven grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.



ALRESFORD SOCIETY

The role of the Alresford Society

Essentially, our role is to do things like monitoring local developments; engaging in serious debate such as the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan for Alresford; highlighting significant change that impacts the town and surrounding villages, engaging in local consultations and challenging local actions that endanger our environment, such as the River Arle (see below).

Our rare chalk stream – the Arle

The Society is close focused on the distinctive heritage, culture and landscape of our chalk stream, the Arle and its wildlife. There are less than 300 chalk streams in the world, mostly in the south east and east of England. The river and its history are key elements in the foundation, growth and life of this town and important to residents and visitors who help to support local shops, pubs and restaurants. Have you noticed the rather concerning number of empty shops in town these days?



Our interests also cover practical things like water quality for drinking, irrigation and health of the ecosystem (living organisms and their environment). Another local group, the Upper Itchen Restoration Community Interest Company has just started. Like us, a not-for-profit organisation, it seeks to improve the quality of the aquatic environment in the Upper Itchen catchment area, including the Arle, Candover Brook and Cheriton Stream. They monitor the river to assess how clean it is, whether and how well it can support wildlife and will report pollution incidents to authorities like National England and the Environment Agency.

Housing development close to the Arle and other developments



Rivers – especially chalk streams, which are quite fragile things – are threatened by growing demand for water from housing development schemes. Excess water abstraction depletes the natural flow and pollution alters the stream's ecology. Increased sewage, road traffic oil and grime also enters the system.

Bodies such as Winchester City Council are keenly involved in protecting our streams but it is an uphill task.

Membership secretary: suealex13@gmail.com

Jan Field

Chairman Alresford Society

Debt Awareness Week 2026 – 16th to 22nd March

Everybody seems to be in debt these days, from households across the UK, right up to the public sector.

Our household debt is a burden to us. As of April 2024, the total debt per household (including mortgages) averaged £65,143. Many households struggle with 'problem debt', ominously relying more and more on credit cards and payday loans to simply meet essential living expenses. This bleak situation, often called a 'debt trap', can ruin lives.

At the same time, our national public debt is at record levels and rising. According to Goldman Sachs, it now stands at 101% of GDP. At the end of 2024, our national debt was the third highest of European countries. And high interest rates and inflation have only increased the cost of servicing this enormous debt, which in turn puts pressure on public finances.

While the government struggles, hundreds of thousands of households are seeking personal help. Debt advice charities like **StepChange**, **Citizens Advice** and **CAP (Christians Against Poverty)** have reported a record-high demand for help. The strain of living with unmanageable debt can affect your mental health, reduce your productivity, and increase your reliance on public services.

So this year's Debt Awareness Week will encourage people to not be ashamed of their debt, but instead to seek free, confidential, and professional advice on dealing with it.

Debt can affect anyone even those who think they are safe and solvent. The top reasons for getting into debt are: Unemployment or Redundancy, Long term illness, Lack of budgeting skills including not understanding interest, increased priority expenses often for children, bereavement, irregular income, and pregnancy. The problem of redundancy is rising as firms go out of business or jobs are taken over by Artificial Intelligence. Many people find that the skills that were profitable are no longer needed as more and more of our work is done by AI.

The occupations that analysts think will be most affected soonest are clerical, managerial and financial jobs, information and communication jobs, education, routine scientific work, translation, even artists, writers and other creative activities are being replaced to some extent by AI.

The sudden loss of a job for whatever reason or sudden illness can easily plunge someone into debt .

More info at:

CAP - <https://capuk.org>

Citizens Advice - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>

StepChange - <https://www.stepchange.org/debt-awareness-week.aspx>



Bell-ringing on Social Media

Raising awareness of local bellringing on social media was something the band wanted to do so, in a moment of madness.....I volunteered to take it on ...and as the All things New Alresford Facebook page is so well used we thought it would be a good avenue to raise awareness of bellringing in general, to let the local community know why we rang the bells and to explore how we can endeavour to make a contribution to the wonderful community of Alresford

After some false starts, and some struggles with the seemingly convoluted Facebook processes, I succeeded, I am sure some of you have seen my posts and even liked or commented on them.

On Facebook since 9th April 2025 I have posted 90 times, I didn't share all the posts with the All things Alresford because some are really only interesting to other ringers, and some were not regarding local ringing. There is a danger of bombardment of information becoming a nuisance!

The most viewed post was the video of ringing at Old Alresford 'on a misty morning' on 31st Dec with 1,173 views....maybe some of these were bots....but still pretty impressive!

The comments on all posts have all been overwhelmingly positive which is very encouraging, as we are never sure if we are always appreciated! The most likes have been for ringing in the New Year, 68, and for VJ80 anniversary ringing, 89

On Instagram in December we had 623 views, 53 interactions and 9 new followers

Here I post mostly to bellringing groups, and if relevant to the various Alresford pages too

An unexpected outcome has been an opening up of communication from other towers with ideas for engaging local people with the ringing, advice about recruiting new ringers, and, when we visit other towers, we often already have a link and a familiar friendly face

Following other Facebook and Instagram accounts has also given us inspiration and ideas, examples are, playing a game with some dice choosing the bells we rang, and at Christmas we had a go at ringing Jingle Bells....not very successfully!

Although the use of social media can be controversial and has inherent issues it is a really useful tool for communicating to the wider public and, in our case, it has been a very positive experience with some unexpected bonuses

Last year we rang for Laurence Oxley bookshop's 75th anniversary, we are keen to engage with local businesses as well as individuals. If you know of a local anniversary this year that we could ring for, do let us know!

We also have a website for more information about bellringing where there is a contact form, if you fancy giving it a go or if you are a lapsed ringer....<https://bellringing.co.uk> or you can also send a message on the Facebook page. We welcome new ringers to join our friendly band.



Two Actions to Save the Planet



For one week in March, thousands of people from schools, households and communities across the UK will count their plastic waste.

Together, we'll call for a fair future that's free from the impacts of the **plastics crisis**.

Since the last Big Plastic Count, the UK has elected a new government – one that says it's serious about tackling plastic waste. This is our chance to put their promise to the test. By counting every piece of plastic packaging we throw away, we will **together** uncover the true scale of the UK's plastics problem and call on the government to do more about it.

We're not just counting plastic. We're counting on the government to act.

Take action - Join us! Sign up today at:

[Home | The Big Plastic Count.](#)



6 SIMPLE STEPS:

Sign up

Read the How to Guide

Print out the count sheet

Stick copy/copies where easily seen

(eg near the bin and/or recycling)

On 9th March start counting

Submit your results by 22nd March



Earth Hour 2026 – a time to turn off your lights

The Earth Hour 2026 takes place on Saturday 28th March, when at 8.30pm in their local time millions of people worldwide will turn off their non-essential lights for one hour.

Organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the 20th anniversary of this global initiative will aim to raise awareness of the earth's climate crisis, and to encourage environmental action through sustainable, actionable lifestyle changes. The 2025/26 theme is 'Giving an Hour for Earth' is encouraging people to adapt sustainable habits in their daily lives. And while our lights are off for an hour, Earth Hour will encourage us to spend the time in nature, or stargazing, or engaging in environmental, educational, or sustainable activities.

More info at: <https://www.earthhour.org>



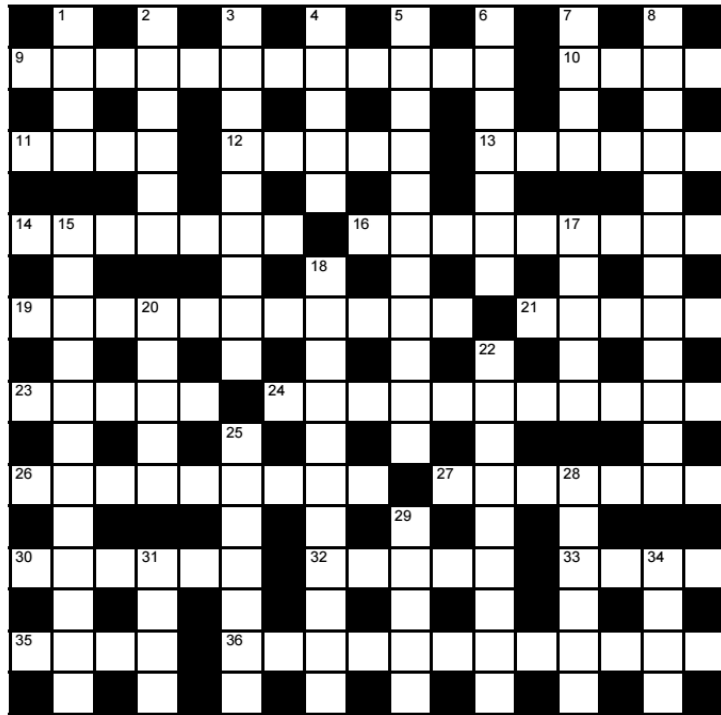
Find the following words in the square beneath:
 Another, As, Astonishing, Ceremony, Command,
 Death, Disciples, Domination, Feet, Final, Humil-
 ity, Jesus, Last, Latin, Loved, Maundy, Medieval,
 Must, Obedience, One, Purpose, Service,
 Supper, Teacher, Thursday, Washed, You.

Puzzles

N A T C Y E F N D R M Y E N
 T I I E R D L I M I Y F P T
 P O T S E O I A N O T H E R
 N S B A V F U C U A I E N S
 T L T E L N C E O C L O O J
 R H D T D A T R B M I I E D
 E T U Y Y I V W E T M S A R
 P S S R Y N E E A N U A P T
 P U E A S T O N I S H I N G
 U M R O L D I M C D H R U D
 S H V P H M A O E E E E D S
 D T I D O D G Y V R H M D O
 S T C D I S C I P L E S A S
 Y T E A C H E R A U O C I R

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

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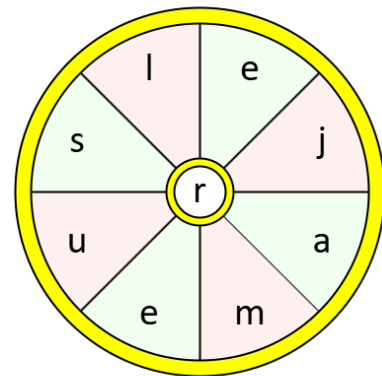


How many words of four letters or more can you make from the wheel below. No plurals and all words must include the centre letter.

45 words—excellent

30 words—good

15 words—fair



Across

- 9 He makes fun-car, mature though he might be (12)
- 10 Unusual not to be well done (4)
- 11 Sign on without me (4)
- 12 Thousand mark sailing ship (5)
- 13 Reason to get minced (6)
- 14 Overtake charged particle fervour (7)
- 16 Fox in Kent was the nearest relation (9)
- 19 Lively in US about hundred. Absurd (11)
- 21 Load vehicle before half of precious metal (5)

23 Smith's article six learner (5)

- 24 Place to twist and turn - space to negotiate (7,4)
- 26 Boy I put out over graph in life story (9)
- 27 Smooth time once? (4,3)
- 30 United to play in Australia first of all - ideal place (6)
- 32 Month for soldiers' movement (5)
- 33 About poem being in secret writing (4)
- 35 Colourful spring festival initially holy or like ilex. (4)
- 36 Over everything most important. (5,3,4)

Down

- 1 Part of Papal Mass one Sunday (4)
- 2 Bat made fertilisers (6)
- 3 Drudge has wrap with heroin (9)
- 4 Condition of Georgia, say (5)
- 5 Study. Remains to be seen (11)
- 6 Briefly Friday entrance to warship (7)
- 7 Monster rising up thus (4)
- 8 Imbibing music convivially (8,4)
- 15 Formal announcement for Lady Mary (12)

- 17 Natural aptitude of blonde embracing learner (5)
- 18 Very high, as lower jumping got? (4,3,4)
- 20 Reclining telling fictional stories (5)
- 22 Splendour. Hollow or small store of random items (5,4)
- 25 Force a boy in fast time (7)
- 28 Steal the Spanish coin (6)
- 29 Belief for which a Native American died (5)
- 31 Bucket of light colour, we hear (4)
- 34 Erin left the deerskin on the bureau (4)



"Go on. Use the pen."

CLOTTED CREAM CAKE

On a recent visit to the tea-room opposite Jane Austen's house in Chawton, I had a lovely slice of clotted cream cake. Here is a recipe for you to try, if accepting the universally acknowledged truth that a single fairy in possession of a functioning oven must be in want of good cake....

Ingredients

2 medium eggs
225g caster sugar
½ a vanilla pod
1 x 227g tub of clotted cream
A pinch of salt
200g self-raising flour
Crème fraîche or double cream mixed with a few vanilla seeds, to serve (optional)
A 20cm spring-clip tin or deep round cake tin lined with greaseproof paper



Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F, gas mark 4).

Put the eggs and sugar into a large bowl.

Split the vanilla pod along its length with the tip of a sharp knife and scrape the sticky black seeds into the bowl (reserve some of the seeds to mix with the serving cream if used).

Using an electric whisk or mixer, or a rotary whisk, whisk the eggs and sugar until they are very thick and mousse-like and the whisk leaves a thick trail when lifted out of the mixture. Stir the cream until smooth, and gently stir into the mixture with the salt. Sift the flour into the bowl and carefully fold in with a large metal spoon. When thoroughly combined, transfer the mixture to the prepared tin and spread evenly.

Bake in the preheated oven for 50 mins – 1 hr, until the cake is a good golden brown and firm, and a cocktail stick inserted into the centre comes out clean.

Leave for 5 mins to firm up, then carefully remove from the tin, discard the lining paper and leave to cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container.

For a sprinkle of fairy-dust try:

Lovely with the crème fraîche or double cream mixed with a few vanilla seeds, as suggested above, or a nice scoop of vanilla ice cream.



Time to fly! Fairy Cake

LIVING WITH STROKE

New Service for Alresford to Support for Stroke Survivors, Carers and Family

Stroke can have a sudden and devastating effect on peoples' lives. Most often out of the blue, it results in the immediate loss of certain mental and physical abilities. It is frightening, and causes a great deal of anxiety and feelings of desperation and isolation. This sudden life changing event not only affects the individual, but relatives and friends too.

When local stroke survivor Sally Stoodley from Alton finally came home from hospital, having spent three months in Twyford Stroke Unit, she says it was like 'falling off the edge of a cliff'. From the cushion of being in a hospital ward, suddenly there was virtually no support. The life change was massive and yet there was no one to really talk to, who could understand or appreciate a little about the effects of her stroke and what this meant, not only for her life, but for her family too.

With over 400 stroke survivors in Alton alone, Sally, along with daughter Jannine, set up **Alton Stroke Support Group** as a space to come together and support each other through the sharing of experience.

The Group has been meeting for the last couple of years next to Alton Sports Centre and now has a great team of volunteers who help with all aspects of welcoming the 30-40 people who join each month.

As Sally says 'we provide support in lots of ways - not only friendship and understanding, reassurance, and social enjoyment, but we also regularly invite experts to talk to us about a wide range of relevant issues regarding rehabilitation including exercise, emotional difficulties and financial concerns.

Often all we need is that welcoming cup of tea, piece of cake and a chat - an opportunity to share anxieties and experiences. We can learn a lot from each other'!

Every month there are a number of stroke survivors, family and carers who already join us from Alresford and Four Marks. Thanks to **New Alresford Town Trust minibus**, we are now able to offer accessible transport for others who would like to come along.

The fully accessible minibus, with first aid qualified and experienced driver, picks up from the Recreation Ground and the Community Centre. For those with mobility limitations the minibus collects from individual addresses. It also stops enroute to Alton at Long Sutton, Ropley and Four Marks.

Everyone is very welcome

Meet Up's are held on the first Tuesday of every month at Alton Cardiac Health, next to Alton Sports Centre from 2-3.30pm leaving Alresford at 1pm and returning 4.30pm.

For more details, our email address is admin@altonstrokesupportgroup.org.uk or phone 07340739251 to speak to Elaine, our transport coordinator.

Identify the Symptoms of a Stroke
Using the **F.A.S.T.** Method:



New St. Michael's Hospice Charity Shop Opens In Alresford

St. Michael's Hospice opened the doors to their new charity shop in West Street, Alresford just before the Christmas holiday. The Hospice has restored the Grade II listed building to its former glory by unveiling the traditional fireplace, as well as given the entire store a makeover with new floors and paint.



The team has filled the store with beautiful preloved items from women's, men's and children's clothing, to accessories, books and bric-a-brac. As well as accepting donations from the local community to support the vital work that the Hospice provides to people in their In-patient Unit in Basingstoke, and across North Hampshire in patient homes.

The new store marks St. Michael's Hospice twelfth store across North Hampshire, including their **Furniture Store**. All profits from St.

Michael's Hospice charity shops supports people across North Hampshire who have a life-limiting illness, are facing the end-of-life or experiencing bereavement.

Colin Tanner, St. Michael's Hospice Retail Business Manager said: "Thank you to the Alresford community for giving us such a warm welcome. We are excited to introduce our new store to Alresford. We have a wonderful variety of items, all of which have been generously donated by our local community to support the local community that needs the vital hospice care that St. Michael's Hospice provides everyday."

St. Michael's Hospice provides the highest quality and standard of specialist palliative care for people across North Hampshire who have a life-limiting illness, are facing the end-of-life or experiencing bereavement.

The Hospice provides In-Patient and Hospice at Home services as well as a growing range of Out-Patient services including the Living Well service,



Complementary Therapy and Medical Consultation. Family and carer support is also a significant part of the work at the Hospice, offering pre and post bereavement support to help loved ones journey through some of the most difficult times of their lives. All Hospice services are provided to patients and their families free of charge.



"At a time when our hearts were breaking, St. Michael's Hospice provided a place of comfort, support and peacefulness, helping us as a family to navigate an unbearable tough time. My hubby loved the kind and caring staff who looked after him. The Hospice is a truly special place and we will forever be grateful for the care and support you afforded him and us as a family." – wife of a St. Michael's Hospice patient

It may come as a surprise, but St. Michael's Hospice receives only 22% of its funding from the NHS. As an independent charity, they must raise an additional £14,500 a day to continue to provide free compassionate care for people in North Hampshire who have a life-limiting illness, are facing the end of life or experiencing bereavement.

If you would like to find out how you can support our local hospice through donations, volunteering, fundraising or events please visit their website www.stmichaelsospice.org.uk or contact the team on 01256 844744.

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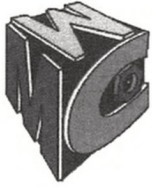
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Please contact the General Manager on 01962
733746 for further information or to take a look.

www.alresfordgolf.co.uk



Volunteers needed

Alresford Town Trust



Helping at Open Days – for just an hour or two on a few days per year, help to welcome visitors. No expertise needed, everything you need to know about the Museum, Bridge and Eel House is on display, we just need friendly people to help visitors enjoy their experience

Driving the Community Minibus-most drivers commit to just one half day trip per month, helping local people maintain their independence. You need D1 on your driving licence (which you will have automatically if you passed your test before 1997). If you are over 70, the Trust will fund the necessary eye and health checks to maintain your D1 entitlement.

--o0o--

Winchester Hospice



Volunteering inside our hospice gives you the opportunity to make a real difference to those using our services.

In Hospice volunteer - Our wonderful in-hospice volunteers support in many areas of our hospice, including helping out on our reception and providing support to our staff who care for our patients.

Garden Volunteer - Our hospice garden design was originally created as part of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2021! Gifted by the Bible Society to our hospice, the design was lifted and re-constructed in our very own grounds to provide a beautiful outdoor space for our patients, staff and visitors to enjoy.

These grounds require lots of care and attention, and our volunteer gardeners generously give up their time to help to maintain them with practical tasks such as watering, putting in bedding plants, keeping gardens free of litter, pruning and more.

Our volunteer gardeners also tend to the grounds in front of our hospice, ensuring the space is kept beautiful all year round.

Volunteering times for this role are very flexible.

For further information on both roles please Email winchester.hospice@hhft.nhs.uk or phone 01962 828353.

--o0o--



Volunteer Retail Assistants needed for the new **St Michael's Hospice shop** in Alresford.

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Home library service volunteer - Alresford

The home library service provides books, audiobooks and other library resources to those who are unable to visit the library. As a home library service volunteer, you will get to know the people you support so you can select and deliver books and reading materials to them.



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—o0—

Bookmark Reading Charity



We are looking for enthusiastic young people to join Bookmark as volunteers on our Reading Mentor programme, to help children develop a love of reading by completing 1:1 online reading sessions.

If you know a young person who's looking for a volunteering opportunity, we can liaise with their school about getting this set up. The experience could even count towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award!

It is a fantastic opportunity for young people to build confidence, gain valuable experience, and share the joy of reading with a child.

If you'd like to find out more or have someone in mind, please get in touch with us on readingmentors@bookmarkreading.org

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Alresford & District Voluntary Care Group



Alresford & District Voluntary Care Group (ADVCG) is looking for a volunteer to join the **Co-ordinator Team** – these are the volunteers who answer the central telephone line which people ring when they need help with transport to their medical appointments; the line is diverted to the landline or mobile of the duty Co-ordinator, so it can all be done from home.

Co-ordinators carry out a week manning the telephone line on a rota basis, once every seven weeks or so. Details of requested journeys are recorded on our web-based computer system, and the Co-ordinator then allocates the journey to one of our pool of approximately seventy volunteer drivers.

Co-ordinators carry out a very important and rewarding role for ADVCG, as they are the 'bridge' between members of the public who need assistance, and our volunteer drivers; so if you can spare some time, please either email us at alresfordvolcare@gmail.com or contact David Cooper, Chairman, on 07766 406704

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St. John's Churchwardens are looking for someone who can look after our maintenance programme for our church. The role would involve booking regular outside agencies and overseeing risk assessments. If you could you help, it would be **VERY** much appreciated. Please contact Rosie: 07891 120662 or rosie@22rwg.co.uk.

We have been so grateful to Paul Whiffen who has done an outstanding job over the last few years.

Thank you, Paul.



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Holiday Fun with Rory – Part Six



In the last magazine editions, the nightmares that beset each day of our first and dearly-anticipated Dartmoor holiday (the coat that was actually trousers; 5+hr traffic chaos; miscreant technology, etc.) paled into naught compared with what ensued when we were finally properly equipped and well-bent upon our first big planned walk in the North Dartmoor wilderness. Hell-bent, it turned out. To briefly recap:

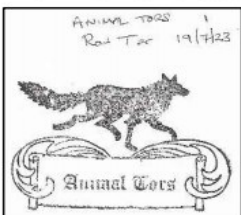
Rory's harness snapped and he gleefully absconded into the wilds, taking with him my mobile phone AND car key. Many members of His Majesty's Armed Forces turned out from the nearby Okehampton Battle Camp to assist. Many long, desperate hours passed, Rory was found and returned, clean, safe and unharmed – without the pack of keys/phone/lip-balm – a sorry carnival of failures ensued from those organisations supposed to help in these moments of crisis, until an angel in taxi-driver form, with an emergency car-key replacement friend, entered the fray to carry us away from the noble soldiers, stricken car and scenes of torment, back to our hotel. Where things took a uniquely surreal turn for the worse. After depositing an unrepentant Rory in our room, a chilling pantomime ensued which saw me for various reasons having to conceal an entire chicken curry within my bra and pants, all whilst expressing appreciation for the sincere generosity of the hotel staff who had made it for themselves, then having to waddle across the hotel's lobbies and staircases, trying to contain the entire secreted repast before gravity and seepage betrayed me in front of the kindly eyes of my hosts. I succeeded, a feat in which I take no pride, finally back, secure in our room in a state of abject wretchedness, leaving me to ultimately decant the poultry pieces from my undercrackers into possibly the most undeserving maw in all of canine-kind.

The following morning, having handed over £392 to Key Man and £110 to Taxi Lady, Rory and I were deposited back to our remote moorland-stranded car and back behind the wheel once more. Taxi Lady and another walker we met had asked if we were going to head out and search for the pack, but I knew it would do me no good. I decided that I was not going to torment myself by even trying to look for the pack. I had had enough. Of that cursed hillside, of the wretched carnival of perverse oddity that had paraded past me all week, waving and laughing at my misfortune, and I was sick of it. The chicken curry had been the final straw (almost literally – some of the bones had been very thin indeed). I was broken.

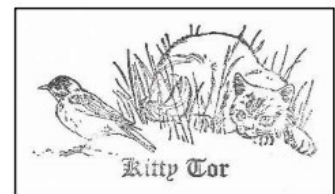
Blessing again, however, the kindness of strangers, I started the car (sweet) and drove back down to the military camp guardhouse, just to say thank you again to the soldiers. I was more grateful to them than I could ever express. Luke (officer tasked with looking after me, poor man) sadly was not there (probably spotted us inbound and legged it *pronto*). I left a letter of thanks, along with my details for the lost property in case anyone handed in the pack. The civilian guard on duty remembered us from the day before and said that he would keep an eye on the various Facebook pages for mention of any found property.

And, with that, I was all set to head off elsewhere. I drove out of the battle camp, Rory's head bobbing merrily up and down in the back, but found myself stopping at the cattle grid. "No," I suddenly thought to myself. "No! I'm *bl**dy well* going to *do* this walk. It's cost me an absolute fortune to get everything out here in terms of new keys, coat, GPS and taxi fares. I've just spent another £55 to get back up here just to get the car, PLUS the cost in utter mortification re. the chicken. I REFUSE to be defeated by this." I hate to be thwarted in anything (especially nonsense like this) and I was determined that this was not going to get the better of me. I was going to stick two defiant fingers up to the events of yesterday and not let it have the satisfaction of besting me. I was going to show fate what I thought of it by succeeding in doing the whole walk that I had planned and set out to do, and claw back a little bit of victory for myself from the whole sorry episode.

And finish it we certainly did. The whole lovely 4 mile walk and every single letterbox stamp (nice ones too -



it was the "Animal Tors" charity walk in aid of Pancreatic Cancer UK). Rory was slightly hobbling at times, but my sympathy for him was extremely limited. I told him that he was the architect of his own foul misery and that "you're going to finish this walk and you're going to enjoy every single ***** step." (he actually did enjoy himself in the end, though not the fact that he was now wearing two leads, one clipped to



his harness and literally tied to me and the other being an old lead of Jasper's clipped to his collar. Complacency will not beguile me again). It was VERY satisfying to complete the walk, feeling that I had secured victory over defeat, and return to the car exhausted, aching, but happy.

Less happily (though still thankful for a better outcome than had at first seemed likely – and VERY thankful that Rory and I were together again) for the rest of the holiday I had to restrict where we went, in case I got

myself into a tricky situation - because I now had no phone with which to summon help if I was in a predicament. Plus the fact that the phone was also my Sat Nav (though I was still able to navigate using paper maps, never a wasted skill).

We were, however, still blessed with the new GPS device, and that promoted our enjoyment of several other walks in more easily-accessible and less troublesome areas. We had some lovely times and walks in the days remaining to us. Sadly, I had no means of photographing them, but they are committed to memory now and that will have to do. My conscience still pricked me about the unwitting litter I had left somewhere on the North moor, and I grieved for the loss of all those photographs of sweet late dog Gisele stored on the phone. But I was incredibly mindful of how very much worse the situation could have been, and thankful for the outcome I had received. Rory Gamin de Pycombe returned to my side unharmed and innocent of malevolent wrongdoing or carnage was a blessing for which I will always be thankful.

It does beg the question of what on earth he WAS doing all the time that he was gone. I've come to the conclusion that I'm probably better-off not knowing. He was gone for hours, with no trace of him or his doings. I did try asking him, but he would not meet my eye. He ventured not into the valley of death and dismemberment, I know that for a fact, and for that fact I am grateful. That will have to suffice.

On our last day we went out on a lovely, gentle letterbox walk in the popular Pew Tor area, where there is generally a highly worthy local ice-cream van in the car park to reward ourselves on our return. Our final walk duly and happily completed; we met a coach party of Australian tourists also enjoying the rich bounty on offer from Willy's Ices on the Moor. They stopped to admire Rory (as with Jasper and Gisele. They were adored wherever we went, as now is Rory. I'm just incidental – Rory is Sooty and I am very much the Harry/Matthew Corbett of the piece. But no matter – he deserves to be loved, I would much rather they looked at him than me). I told them what Rory had done; they all ended up taking photographs of the dog so that they could show their friends back in Australia - saying "this is what this dog did! Look at him!" The worse the tale progressed, the more they laughed. One man laughed so much that he hurt himself and had to go and sit back on the coach. Still laughing. I stood idly, patiently by smiling and redundant, while the little performing monkey at the other end of the string capered, wagged, posed for pictures and defrauded his newfound friends out of their ice-cream cones.

In truth, they were lovely people, and it was nice to talk with them. I was glad that our tales of mishap had made them laugh. It's nice if we can make someone smile or make their day just that little bit better. It was not exactly the uneventful and battery-recharging holiday that I had hoped for. But it has at least been a tale (with a thankfully better-than-expected outcome) which can make people smile. I committed the whole thing to record at the time, in case I forgot any of the finer details, which I have recounted for you now. And also to remind me that, however, awful a day I might be having; however hopeless it may seem – this one was worse, and we came through it. It was OK in the end. Bad days will end, and we will endure.

Of course, I had to listen to daft radio in the car all the way home, my carefully curated play-list of tracks being on my lost phone. The Vodafone staff back in Winchester were kind, sympathetic and helpful (with laughter kept to a professional minimum) and we were soon in possession of a shiny new phone. A most happy *coda* to the whole came when it transpired that all my phone data – including all photographs of late dog Gisele – had been backed up to the Cloud all the way up to the morning of the fateful incident and were easily restored to my new phone. I grew so, so thankful for the Cloud Storage backup facility, having sneered at it previously. I will never be tardy about backing up my data again. Alas, the photos from the morning of "the incident" were non-recoverable (unless the old phone were to be located, but I doubted that that would ever happen), but I grieved not for *those*. The last photo I took was of Rory at his first letterbox, gurning at the camera with the box in the background. That was taken approximately 45 seconds before that day turned to merry hell and I wasn't sure I wanted a pictorial memento of *that*.

None of this has deterred us. By the time I had recounted the incident in full on our online Dog's Blog, we had already booked our return to Dartmoor – and have returned each year since. Although old Rory "Two Leads" Gamin de Pycombe will not be offered another opportunity for solo adventuring. Ever. Despite being ultimately some £710 down, after all costs associated with the incident and fallout were totted-up, plus the eternal mortification that haunts me still, we keep smiling, and very thankfully and gratefully so.



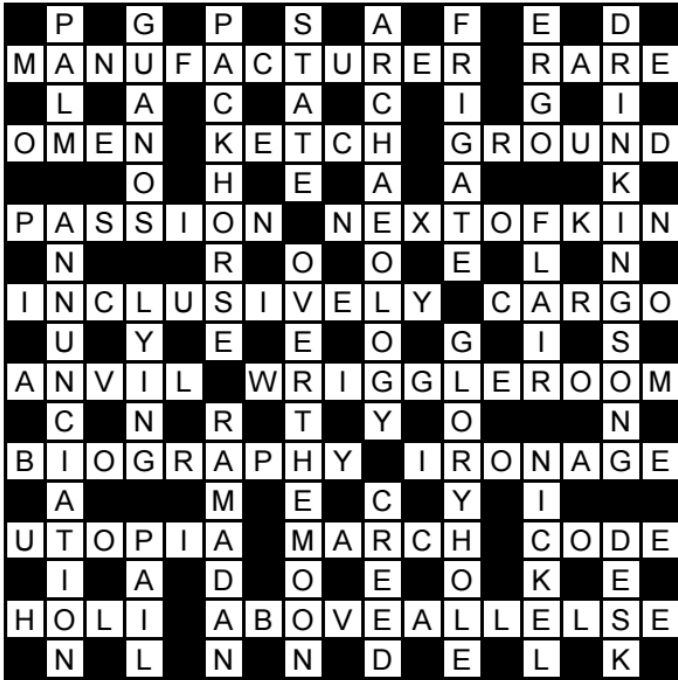
I suppose I should offer the last word to Rory himself:

"Mamma refused to rub cream onto my sore and calloused paws. Unacceptable."

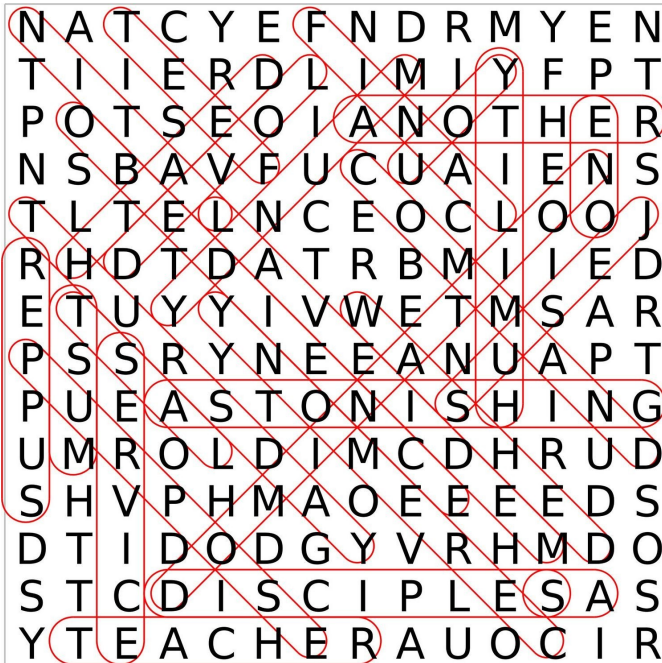
Happy days!

NEXT TIME: A reunion. Of sorts.

Puzzle Answers



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



Word Wheel words

alum, allure, amuser, arse, arum, earl, easer, erase, jarl, jeer, Jerusalem, jumar, jural, lamer, laser, leaser, leer, lemur, lure, majeure, mare, marl, maser, mauled, measure, mere, merle, mural, musser, rase, real, realm, ream, reel, resale, resale, resume, reuse, rule, ruse, sealer, seamer, sear, seer, seral, sere, serum, slur, smear, sure, urea, ursa, user.



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Monday 4th May
Sunday 7th June
Sunday 21st June
Sunday 19th July
Sunday 16th August
Sunday 20th September
Sunday 27th September



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alresfordchurchyard@gmail.com

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Flower Co-Ordinator
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Fundraising Co-ordinator
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Giving & Gift Aid Secretary

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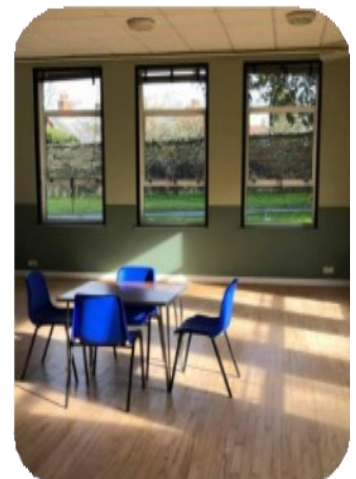
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'England's Most Beautiful Almshouse' Vacancies for Brothers

The Hospital, founded in 1132, is home to 25 retired laymen (Brothers). Applications are welcomed.

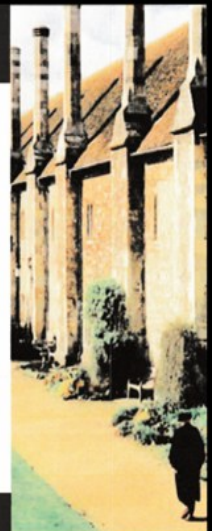
A registered Charity with a Christian foundation, the Hospital is situated in a glorious location on the edge of Winchester.

Each Brother lives independently, occupying a self-furnished apartment.

Further information and an application form are obtainable from:

- Clerk to the Trustees, Hospital of St Cross, Winchester, SO23 9SD
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- www.hospitalofstcross.co.uk

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