

THURCASTON WITH CROPSTON AND ANSTEY

# Heart & Soul

January 2026

of our community

All Saints' Church

St Mary's Church



# Happy New Year

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# Inside this month's magazine...

Some of you will be surprised by the new front cover, but after analysing our publications over the last twelve months it made sense to combine both parish magazines. We hope you like the new front page and the name which reflects the role of the two churches in our respective communities.

All good things come to an end and Barbara, Adam and I now feel it is time to hand over the role of editor and publisher of this magazine to someone else. It might be it is a role that two people can take on or perhaps a family like us. If you are interested please get in touch. For a greater insight into the role turn to page 13.

As we enter a new month, it is interesting to look back over December and see the events that have taken place during the festive season. You will find stories and pictures throughout our publication which will, we hope, bring back some happy memories.

On the subject of Christmas, we must pass on our congratulations to All Saints' handbell ringers who raised £800 for Loros at a time when that organisation needs all the support we can give. Find the full story

THURCASTON WITH CROPSTON AND ANSTEY  
**Heart & Soul**  
 of our community

## New Year. New look!

on page 26.

We British always talk about the weather and 2025 was exceptionally hot. Not only did it affect we humans, but it also changed the pattern of much of our local wildlife. In Cropston there is a verge which is left largely to nature. Read how the high temperatures effected our very own wildlife park on page 32.

The New Year sees the start of new programmes of events for our local societies and clubs. We are pleased to carry some of these and hope you will find something of interest in 2026.

*Wishing you all a Happy and Successful New Year.*

**Richard, Barbara & Adam**

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### Contributions for the February magazine by 20th January to:

Richard & Barbara Bradley, 3 All Saints Road, Thurcaston, Leics LE7 7JD

Tel: 0116 236 6469 or Email: [thurcastonallsaints@gmail.com](mailto:thurcastonallsaints@gmail.com)

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**Church details, events and services can be found at  
[www.stmarysandallsaints.co.uk](http://www.stmarysandallsaints.co.uk)**

All Saints Church and St Mary's Church exists for the benefit of the whole community, not simply those people who come to church on a Sunday!

*We are always delighted to arrange baptisms and weddings, or to bring Holy Communion to anyone who is unable to come to church. If we can help in this, or any other way, please contact the Rector or Church Wardens.*



Find us on Facebook - **asthurcastonwc**





*Just a thought...*

# Wishing you a happy and fruitful New Year!



**T**he Church of England beat most of us to it, by celebrating its New Year on Advent Sunday, 30th November. But as we view the prospects for 2026, I wonder how we all feel. For some people there will be hopeful anticipation, looking forward to some milestone in their lives or that of a loved one. Others may have fears and anxieties of various kinds.

As we look at the world around us, there seem to be serious concerns. These may look like the realm of politicians, but there is more to it than politics. It is worth repeating, that Christian teachings have helped to shape the things that we value in Britain, for example the importance of an individual person, the Magna Carta, helping the poor, slavery outlawed, and education for everyone. There are places, even in Europe, where these are not so highly valued.

Sociologists of religion told us of a decline in religious faith in Britain, but there are now strong signs of an upswing. There is a job to be done in maintaining and developing this upward momentum. Much of our crime, unemployment and homelessness is drug related. It would appear that people have wanted unprescribed drugs to overcome various painful things in their lives, such as broken relationships and traumatic experiences leaving their mark. Faith offers alternative and better ways. The psalms may be relevant, for example offering pathways from despair to hope. And Jesus invites, "Come to me, all who travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

As legislation on assisted dying continues to be debated, and it is not a simple matter, the importance of getting it right cannot be overstated. WE can help by treating our

MPs to whatever we see as a Christian perspective on this, as we keep an eye on developments.

As wars and rumours of wars prevail, our custom of observing Remembrance Sunday stands us in good stead. It is clear that Britain should not be complacent, but we should always remember as Sir Winston Churchill did, that God comes into it all.

The national decline in church attendance over many decades seems to have stopped, and gone into reverse. One missiology specialist predicts that 2026 will be the most spiritually open year in living memory. We must learn to help people with understanding their spiritual experiences. The use of our food banks may increase, offering opportunities to help new people to encounter faith in a new way. Bible sales have increased markedly, and we need to be ready to answer questions from new


enquirers and believers about the Bible, its contents, and how to relate it to today's circumstances. The way we are as a Christian community can help or hinder them.


All four gospels are worthy of study, and in the three-year lectionary cycle of readings the gospel according to St. Matthew will be prominent this year. It is well put together, and it has long been well respected. It gives a good grounding in the Christian faith. Amongst its special features it has the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. It has the conception of Jesus from Joseph's perspective, whereas Luke describes it from Mary's perspective. It ends with the Great Commission, involving the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**With my prayers and best wishes for the  
New Year,  
Ian**

**Starting Mondays from  
Jan 19th 11 weeks,  
7.30pm-9pm  
@Old Hare & Hounds Pub  
Contact Matthew  
07754961997 or Clare**

**Explore**  
Life  
Faith  
Meaning





**Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith.  
The sessions are relaxed and start with a short film, followed by  
questions and discussion.  
For more information visit [alpha.org](http://alpha.org)**

# *From the registers...*

## Funerals



Tuesday 2nd December

**David McKnight of Cropston,**

All Saints followed by burial at Thurcaston & Cropston Cemetery.

Friday 12th December

**Brenda Quilter of Anstey,**

St Mary's followed by cremation at Gilroes Crematorium.

Monday 22nd December

**Susan Bosworth of Anstey,**

Cremation at Gilroes Crematorium.

## Baptism



Sunday 7th December

**Rupert Rose of Anstey,**

St Mary's.

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## January Readings for Sundays

**January 4th  
(Epiphany)**

Isaiah 60, 1-6

Matthew 2, 1-12

**January 11th  
Baptism of Jesus**

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Matthew 3:13-17

**January 18th**

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

John 1:29-34

**January 25th**

Isaiah 8:23—9:3

Matthew 4:12-23

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# Barbara Temple

**S**adly mum, Barbara Temple, passed away peacefully on 21st December 2025. She lived in All Saints Rd from 1968 to 2023, moving to Cedar Mews Care Home in Birstall.

Mum taught for 27 years at Richard Hill School and also served as a church warden.

After retiring she and Arthur loved to travel particularly to Europe but also Africa and on many occasions to Egypt. They had a shared love of antique fairs and attended many

orchestral concerts and theatre productions. After Arthur died in 2021, life was quieter but she loved outings and visits with her daughters Sarah and Debbie, 5 grandchildren and was delighted to welcome 4 great grandchildren in recent years.

Her funeral and internment at Thurstaston is being planned and we should be able to update you soon with details

**Sarah A Smith**

## Vacancies...

**Do you have communication and creative skills combined with excellent organizational abilities?**

The office of **Magazine Editor** is becoming vacant and the Benefice is now looking for one or possibly two people with these skills to produce our two popular monthly publications.

With the new colour printer now in place it is the perfect time for a new editor to use their creativity to attract new readers while maintaining the trust and loyalty of our existing subscribers.

**Thurcaston & Cropston**  
Parish Magazine

To find out more contact  
Richard Bradley:  
[thurcastonallsaints@gmail.com](mailto:thurcastonallsaints@gmail.com)

**St Mary's**  
Church Magazine

## Executive Officer position of Treasurer.

*All Saints PCC has a vital vacancy from May 2026*

Are you interested and competent with figures and budgetary finance?

Want to support the work of All Saints Church in its Christian ministry and practical operations and church building?

There is a book-keeping and accountancy side as well as banking. The role can be done by one person or split up.

**Please get in touch [catbenefice@gmail.com](mailto:catbenefice@gmail.com) if you are at all interested**



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# A service for Candlemas with sung Compline *at All Saints' Thurcaston on Sunday 1st February*



A choral service with an augmented choir will be held at 6.30pm on Sunday 1st February to celebrate Candlemas. There will be readings and hymns and then the service will conclude with the singing of the ancient plainsong setting of Compline.

Candlemas is an ancient festival which marks the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring

equinox. It commemorates the purification of Mary forty days after the birth of her son Jesus. It is also the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ in the Temple, based on the account in Luke 2:22-40. It was the Jewish custom forty days after birth of a boy, to take him to the temple to be presented to God by his thankful parents. It is also officially the end of the Christmas cycle.

**Do join us for this contemplative service.**

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## Children's Society collection

I would like to thank all who donated to this year's collection for the Children's Society, and am pleased to say that this amounted to £235.09.

If anyone is interested in having a collection box to raise money for this charity, please contact me at [ansteygirl106@gmail.com](mailto:ansteygirl106@gmail.com).

**Mary Mitchell**

# Thurcaston Brownies are Games Masters



For the Autumn term the Brownies tried a new badge called 'Games Master'. We spread the idea of games over seven weeks to include different genres but we interrupted badge work on September 17th to celebrate Country Music Day, and the birthday of Hank Williams an influential country music artist Brownies and leaders wore cowboy clothes and hats and learned to Line Dance. Physical activity in games included our usual hide 'n' seek around the church grounds but we also learnt team skipping techniques. Bean bag games featured one Wednesday evening when the girls stood in a circle to catch the bean bag in a game with various names but Down On One Knee aptly describes the result of dropping the bean bag. Jump the Blob made use of a bean bag tied to a rope and swung in a circular motion at ground level. There is also a game called Mermaids where Mermaid Brownies 'swim' around and avoid being gently hit with a bean bag

thrown by Brownie 'Rocks'. For ball games we learned the rules and played volley ball, Action games included 'Brown Owl Says' our version of 'Simon Says' and a chaotic game of Twister and parents reported an enthusiasm to play Twister at home. Artistic talents were needed when together we played Pictionary using a large whiteboard. Dramatic skills were employed acting out animals/everyday items in a simple version of Charades.

There are no other uniformed organisations in the village so for Remembrance Sunday Brownies (7 to 10 years old) take on grown up roles carrying the Union flag, Brownie flag, wreath laying and church readings. We needed an evening for practising these roles while other Brownies made paper poppies for a display board in the church, thanks to help from Pat. Apart from the usual red poppies, the girls included purple ones for the animals such as horses, dogs and pigeons, and white ones for civilians killed



in war times. We had some spare time to play card games Uno and Top Trumps towards the Games Master badge. The weather on Remembrance Sunday was kind to us as it did not rain but was chilly. The readings, wreath laying, lowering and raising of the flags to the bugle calls were carried out well and much praise and a special Remembrance Day badge for these young girls was definitely deserved.

Illness struck down Barn Owl and Snowy Owl to limit their help with Bonfire night but ex Brownie Wren, stepped in to help as well as adults. Thank you also to the Crisswells for the fireworks. Food included hot dogs, hot chocolate and toasting marsh mallows when the blazing bonfire had died down. There is now a Toasting Marshmallows badge!

A week later and back to normal finishing the Games Master badge by playing Bingo and laughing at calls like 'Two little ducks' Quack, quack. One Brownie had a lucky evening being first with a line and full house on both games. But everyone received sweets as they completed a line.

Week one of crafts employed lots of pine cones as we made both a Christmas fairy



and a Rudolph the Red nosed Reindeer. In week two of crafts we fitted together cardboard shapes to make Rudolph again; we added some colours, 'snow', googly eyes and of course a red pom-pom nose. Can you remember all the nine names of the reindeer? The Brownies did. The girls also made a Christmas card. Thanks again to Pat for the craft work, and to Marley the dog for

pine cone hunting on his daily walk. We also welcomed Emily, a Guider from Birstall and Evie, our ex Brownie, volunteering as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award

Plans for the final weeks of term are to visit Cinderella, the pantomime at Loughborough and a Christmas party. Never a dull moment.

**Meetings are Wednesday 6.00 - 7.15pm in the**

**Harrison room of All Saints Church on Anstey Lane Thurcaston. Girls start at 7 years old. For more details contact (Brown Owl) Louise Keran 07711-422350 but outside work hours please.**

*Reindeer names; Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph*

**Snowy Owl**

## Money raised for RSPCA Woodside Animal Centre

£102 was raised from the sale of cakes and preserves at All Saints church fete and a further £82 from the sale of plants (July to November) from my front garden on Latimer Road. Cropston.

Both amounts were sent to the RSPCA Woodside Animal Centre, Leicester.

Thank you to all my customers,

**Snowy Owl (Irene Marriott)**

*I thought I was a good person, but the way I react when people drive slowly in the left lane would suggest otherwise.*





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# Reflections of a Magazine Editor

**W**ay back when Covid was still (allegedly) in a Chinese test tube I was approached by the then Rector, David McDonough, and church wardens Jane Westby and Jeff Kennington to edit the Parish Magazine as long time editor Audrey Geary was standing down.

At the time it was an easy decision for me to take on the role. Having just retired and with time to fill, my background in newspapers and advertising made the role an easy fit for my new lifestyle. That was in 2019 and then Covid hit and the lockdowns started.

Life in Thurcaston and Cropston had always provided the magazine editor with plenty of content both from All Saints' and the larger community. It was a completely different story (or lack of them) during lockdown. No church services, garden club or history society made articles difficult to obtain. The pages were filled out with stories about keeping chickens, bird watching, walks, and the one I was most proud of: an article from various ex-villagers who had moved abroad and how their new life differed from the one they had in Britain.

As Covid became less of a threat normal life resumed and content became easier to obtain. The magazine began to reflect the traditional active and vibrant lifestyle that is at the heart of the two villages. Because of the spare time in lockdown I also had the opportunity to update the look and feel of the magazine and move it from an 'analogue' hard copy production process using Word to a full digital operation.

There is a plethora of desk top publishing programmes available including Publisher which had been the favoured choice of many of my fellow church magazine editors. Microsoft have recently removed support of this so I am glad that I chose to use an Open Source application called Scribus which is far more sophisticated and flexible than Publisher. To complement this I chose to use Gimp instead of the industry standard,



Photoshop. While both products are similar, Gimp has the advantage of being free and instead of Illustrator I chose another free product called Inkscape for any artwork that I needed to produce.

With a new Rector came new ideas and Matthew wanted to see St Mary's Church Magazine back in production. Using change pages to a main publication it was relatively easy to create a viable magazine for Anstey along side the existing Thurcaston publication.

Digital publication of the magazine had been in pdf form but finding an ebook provider made viewing easier and more sophisticated for the online reader. For this we have Anstey & District Funeral Services to thank for their help. They never fail to go above and beyond!

With life back to normal Barbara, Adam and I are now having difficulty finding the time needed to produce the magazine to the standard and deadlines we would wish hence the reason for us stepping down at the end of February from what has been a hugely enjoyable and rewarding role in our three villages.

I am sure our successors will enjoy the role as much as we have and bring new ideas and creativity to our magazines.

To our readers and advertisers we would like to say thank you for your kind words about our publications and your support and contributions. Long may they continue.

**Richard Bradley**

# Annual Pre-Christmas Lunch

Once again, Lingdale Golf Club was the venue for our pre-Christmas lunch where members and their guests enjoyed an excellent meal in festive surroundings. It was another very enjoyable occasion, thanks to the staff at Lingdale, as well as Diane and David Rouse for planning the event.

The Monday Club Cropston and Thurcaston remains primarily a ladies' social group, and meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, unless notified otherwise.

We meet from 2.15pm to 4.15pm at our regular venue of the Schoolroom at the rear of Cropston Evangelical Free Church (CEFC), Station Road, Cropston, LE7 7HD. Our first meeting in 2026 will be on 12th January at CEFC, when our speaker will be



Lingdale Golf Club  
1st December 2025

Angela Dewes whose subject will be "One Crafter's Journey", with a demonstration of her skills, and an opportunity to purchase some handmade items.

Annual subscriptions of £15 per person will be due at this meeting, and the full programme of speakers and events for 2026 will be available upon payment.

The members' monthly entrance fee is £2 per person and the charge for visitors is £4 per meeting. New members and visitors will be assured of a warm welcome.

**Report from Mrs Jenny Kennington  
(Club Leader/Secretary) Phone: 0116 2365402**

**Or contact Mrs Maja Tompkins – Phone: 07709 201881**

## All Saints' carol service captures the magic of Christmas!





# Give bell ringing a try!



The tower bells have been silent on one or two occasions for lack of ringers. Our young learners are growing up. Other activities are taking the place of ringing! GCSEs, A levels, holiday jobs, sports and further education have been pre-occupations meaning we need to recruit. We do not ring unless we have four ringers available. The tower has 8 very fine bells, the tenor cast in around 1535 and number 7 in 1611! I have been very keen to have 8 bells ringing on Sundays; at present we are fortunate if we can ring 4.

We are planning training sessions in Spring and will be suggesting dates when anyone interested in trying their hand can turn up and have a go. Tim Holland and I are accredited members of the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) and follow their 'Learning the Ropes' Scheme. Watch this space.

The photograph in the Harrison Room shows a break in tower bell practice for cake and mince pies and a number of visitors who swelled our numbers.

**Peter Hunt**

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## What makes snow stick?

Depending on whether you are a child with a sleigh or an adult trying to drive home, snow is either your friend or your foe. And sometimes snow can be hard to understand....

Matt Taylot of the BBC Weather, recently named a couple of reasons as to why snow behaves in the way that it does. For instance: *Ground temperature* plays a massive part when it comes to whether snow sticks or not.

When the weather has been relatively warm, the ground will store some of that warmth and melt the snow more quickly. This happens faster on roads and pavements than on grass, which transfers the heat from the ground more slowly.

Sunshine helps melt snow, and any snow covered in dirt and debris will melt even quicker, as the darker surface absorbs the warmth from the sun more readily.

## Junior Corner...

*We continue our series of short stories about Ruffle, a mischievous Airedale Terrier, and his adventures on a steam railway...*

### Ruffle puts his paw in it!

*By Rachel Greaves*



Along the platform edge had been freshly painted white,

It all looked very smart, gleaming in the bright sunlight.

Satisfied with his work, Eric went back inside the station,

Didn't see Ruffle approaching hoping Eric had cooked some bacon.

Ruffle didn't realise that the paint would still be wet,

So walked across the white edge -to the platform he wanted to get.

As he trotted hopefully across to the open store house door,

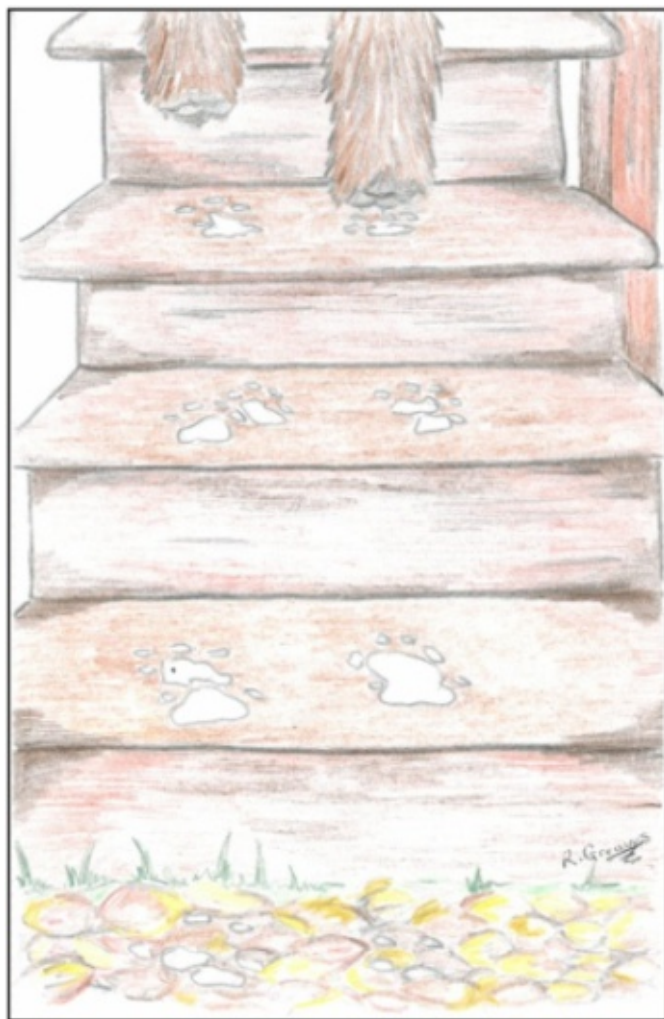
A trail of perfect paw prints followed upon the platform floor.

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## Junior Corner...



But Eric wasn't there - now where could he be?

Perhaps in the signal box - Ruffle would go and see!

Over to the signal box and up the steps they went,

The bright paw prints showed where Ruffle's time was spent.

For each time Ruffle crossed the fresh white paint,

A new coat painted his toes, giving them a bright white taint.

Coming out of the store, Eric looked on in dismay,

White paw prints all across the platform, going in every way.

Eric followed the prints all over until at last he came, To Ruffle sitting on a bench as though waiting for a train!

'Ruffle! I have spent all day painting the white edge bright and new.

But you've spread prints on the platform, so the painting I must redo!'

*Visit [www.ruffletheraildog.co.uk](http://www.ruffletheraildog.co.uk) /or more information about Ruffle's adventures.*



# Donkey delight at Christingle Service!



Christmas Eve's Family Christingle service at All Saints' Church welcomed a special guest this year: Maurice the donkey. He especially enjoyed



the Thurcaston rendering of 'Little Donkey'. The church looked magical as darkness fell and the candles twinkled putting everyone in a Christmas mood.



## Rachmaninov Vespers

performed in candlelight  
by  
*Viva la Musica* Chamber Choir  
Conducted by Simon Lumby

Performance interspersed with poetry read by  
The Rt Rev'd Rowan Williams  
former Archbishop of Canterbury

Saint Andrew's Church, Jarrom Street, LE2 7DH  
Saturday 10th January 2026 at 7.00pm

**Tickets - £15.00**  
available on the door or in advance from:  
[www.vivalamusica.org.uk](http://www.vivalamusica.org.uk)



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# Dates for your diary

## Four pages of Events and Activities this month

Date	Time	Event
Fri Jan 2	9.15 am	Coffee Morning - St Mary's Church Rooms
Sat Jan 3		No Coffee Morning
Sun Jan 4	10.30am	Sunday Worship (CEFC)
Mon Jan 5	11:00am	Bible Study (CEFC)

**Happy  
New Year**



Tue Jan 6	NOON	Leics MS Tuesday Group - coffee/tea, biscuits & chat ANSTEY JUBILEE HALL Stadon Rd LE7 7AY (AJH) -
Wed Jan 7	2.00pm	Wednesday Hub - coffee, cake & chat Harrison Room
Fri Jan 9	9.15 am	Coffee Morning - St Mary's Church Rooms
	7.30pm	Friday Film - Bridget Jones - Mad about the Boy (TMH)
Sat Jan 10	7.00pm	Viva La Musica at St.Andrew's Church see page 18
Sun Jan 11	10.30am	Sunday Worship (CEFC)
Mon Jan 12	11.00am	Prayer meeting (CEFC)
	2.15pm	Monday Club - Program for 2026! Schoolroom (CEFC) - One Crafter's Journey by Angela Dewes
Tue Jan 13	NOON	Leics MS Tuesday Group - coffee/tea, biscuits & chat (AJH)
Wed Jan 14	2.00pm	Wednesday Hub - coffee, cake & chat Harrison Room
	7.45pm	Gardening Club - My Favourite Gardening Blunders - (TMH)

**All Saints', Thurcaston with  
Cropston,  
January Services**

**Sunday 4th**

10am Morning Praise

(No 8.30am BCP

Communion or breakfast)

**Sunday 11th**

10am Holy Communion

**Sunday 18th**

8.30am BCP Communion

8pm Compline

**Sunday 25th**

10am Holy Communion



**St Mary's, Anstey  
January Services**

**Sunday 4th**

**10am Communion**

**Sunday 11th**

**10am All Age Worship**

**Sunday 18th**

**10am Communion**

**Sunday 25th**

**10am Fresh Praise**

**Wednesdays at 9.30am**

**BCP Holy Communion**

# Dates for your diary

## *Events and Activities this month continued*

Date	Time	Event
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<b>Fri Jan 16</b>	9.00am	<i>Cropston - Berries &amp; Bakes Market is back at the Bradgate Arms</i>
	9.15 am	<i>Coffee Morning - St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
<b>Sat Jan 17</b>	10.30am	<i>Coffee Morning All Saints' Harrison Room</i>
<b>Sun Jan 18</b>	10.30am	<i>Sunday Worship (CEFC)</i>
<b>Tue Jan 20</b>	NOON	<i>Leics MS Tuesday Group - coffee/tea, biscuits &amp; chat (AJH) -</i>
	7.30pm	<i>History Society 100 Years of Cycling - Stuart Warburton (TMH)</i>
<b>Wed Jan 21</b>	2.00pm	<i>Wednesday Hub - coffee, cake &amp; chat Harrison Room</i>
<b>Fri Jan 23</b>	9.15 am	<i>Coffee Morning - St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
<b>Sun Jan 25</b>	10.30am	<i>Sunday Worship (CEFC)</i>
<b>Tue Jan 27</b>	NOON	<i>Leics MS Tuesday Group - coffee/tea, biscuits &amp; chat (AJH) -</i>
	14:00	<i>Just for Ladies - Bring a craft, play board games or just have a chat. There will be a short Christian thought for the day. (CEFC)</i>
<b>Wed Jan 28</b>	2.00pm	<i>Wednesday Hub - coffee, cake &amp; chat Harrison Room</i>
<b>Fri Jan 30</b>	9.15 am	<i>Coffee Morning - St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
	1.00pm	<i>Tea &amp; Crafts - St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
<b>Sat Jan 31</b>	7.30pm	<i>A Concert for Peace see page 24</i>
<b>Sun Feb 1</b>	6.30pm	<i>Candlemas with sung Compline see page 9.</i>

*To place your event in our Diary next month, email Barbara at*  
**TCAdiary7@gmail.com**

**The times for services at St Mary's and All Saints' can be found on the centre pages.**

# **Art Classes**

## **With Liz Dowding**

**Starting Thursday January 8th**

### **Complete Beginners 6-8pm**

**A four week course to learn the basics of drawing and watercolour painting**

This is for anyone who wants to try art but is nervous about where to start

All equipment provided Cost - £45.00

**Places limited to ensure tuition time for all**

### **Beginners and Improvers 2-4pm**

**An ongoing class** for anyone wanting to progress their knowledge in drawing and watercolour painting.

Cost - £45 for a four week block

**All Saints' Church, Thurcaston with Cropston,  
Anstey Lane, LE7 7JA**

**Please contact Liz with any questions on;  
07885 729549**

**lizdowding@hotmail.co.uk  
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**Musical Director: Sue Ford**

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# Candlelit Strings

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March

Featuring

Highly Strung String Trio

2026

Doors open: 7pm

Performance starts: 7.30pm

Last entry 7.25pm



Thurcaston Memorial Hall

LE7 7JA

Tickets from £22.50 \*plus booking fee  
includes a glass of fizz on arrival.





# Handbells ring out for Loros



*'There's no place like home' - star attraction at All Saints' Christmas Fair.*



*The bells ring out in Lonsdale Mews, Quorn*



*Entertaining the diners at the Bradgate Arms*



*Our ringers take centre stage at Amberwood Care Home, Wigston*



*Ringling in the Wheatsheaf*



*Ian Roberts has a ring at Cedar House*

The handbells in Thurcaston are going from strength to strength, having rung at three care homes, two pubs, for the Church Christmas Fair, the School Christmas Assembly and opposite Tesco in

the Beaumont Leys Shopping Mall. A number of photographs above show us in action. We will be able to send to LOROS in excess of £800.00.



# Heartfelt and Hilarious Comeback

**B**ridget Jones - Mad about the Boy is on 9th Jan 2026 and lasts 130 mins.

Based on the latest book by Helen Fielding, our New Year film sees Bridget, played by Oscar-nominated Renée Zellweger, as a mother and widow. Marc Darcy died four years previously and her friends encourage Bridget to resume dating. Hugh Grant plays her children's Godfather while the eligible young Roxter, played by Lee Woodall, has a rival who is her son's school science teacher, played by Chiwetel Ejiofor.

January's romantic comedy is summed up by the famous line,

When one part of your life starts going okay, another falls spectacularly to pieces".

**Maria** will be shown on 13th February 2026 and lasts 124 minutes.

Set in 1970's Paris, our February film, chosen by the audience, follows the final days of the world's greatest opera singer, Maria Callas. In the BAFTA's, it was nominated for Best Cinematography. Angelia Jolie gives a magnificent performance as the legendary Maria, for which she trained to sing opera as well as to play the piano. Maria worked all over the



world and even had a love affair with the billionaire shipping magnate, Aristotle Onassis. Although Maria had faced hardships and insecurity through her life, she was a truly gifted performer.

**Thurcaston and Cropston Parish Council** will be showing these films in **Thurcaston Memorial Hall**, starting at 7.30pm.

Tickets will cost the same as for the last ten years, only £5, which includes a lucky prize draw and refreshments during the interval. You can pay for your tickets at the door, if there are any left, or buy in advance from Diana 0116 2362 619 or Sylvia 0116 2352 873 or the Parish Office 0116 2367 626.

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# Looking back in the future for History Society 2026 programme

**W**e do not hold a meeting in December because our regular "third Tuesday" would be too close to Christmas. So, in the absence of a talk to report to you, let me recommend the "Secret Leicestershire" podcast from BBC Radio Leicester. The presenter, Ben Jackson, visits a place of historic interest in the city or county to discuss its significance with a local expert – many of whom we have welcomed as speakers at our own meetings. Subjects have ranged from Leicester's Statue of Liberty and the Turkey Café and to Beacon Hill and the witches of Husband's Bosworth. Each episode is only about 5 minutes long so they are very easy

to digest! You can find them here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0j92lzw>

Our own events resume in January. We hold seven indoor meetings per year, usually with a visiting speaker. They are at 7.30pm in Thurcaston Memorial Hall and we serve free tea, coffee and biscuits at the end of each meeting so you will have a chance to discuss what you have heard or just get to know a few of your neighbours. In the three summer months, we arrange outings to local places of historic interest. We would love to welcome you as a visitor (£4) or as a member of the Society (£16 for the year).

**Our planned programme for 2026 is set out below.**

**Please check our website [www.thurcastoncropstonhistory.org.uk](http://www.thurcastoncropstonhistory.org.uk) for updates.**

<i>20th Jan</i>	<i>Stuart Warburton</i>	<i>100 Years of Cycling</i>
<i>17th Feb</i>	<i>Rachel Small</i>	<i>The diet of the Grey family at Bradgate</i>
<i>17th Mar</i>	<i>Brenda Hooper</i>	<i>Thurcaston moves into the 20th century</i>
<i>19th May</i>	<i>Claire Strachan</i>	<i>"Small Things Forgotten"</i>
<i>16th Jun</i>	<i>Jim Butler</i>	<i>Siege of Leicester walk</i>
<i>21st Jul</i>		<i>Visit to Shepshed Watermill</i>
<i>18th Aug</i>		<i>Tour of Whitwick</i>
<i>15th Sep</i>	<i>Eddie Smallwood</i>	<i>The Role of the Barber Surgeon in the Wars of the Roses</i>
<i>20th Oct</i>	<i>Alan Parker</i>	<i>Remembering the Kegworth Air Crash</i>
<i>17th Nov</i>	<i>Bishop Peter Fox</i>	<i>Magical History Tour</i>



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# Gardening Club Looks Forward to 2026

**A**s 2025 draws to a close the Thurstaston and Cropston Gardening Club can look back on another hugely successful year.

We offer a strong Programme of Events with visiting speakers and outings, and new members are always welcome.

Throughout the year we welcomed a wide range of top-class speakers, some who have visited in the past and a good number of speakers visiting us for the first time.

The 39th Garden, Craft and Produce Show held at the Richard Hill school was a great success. A big thank you to all those who entered the competition and what a

wonderful display you gave us.

We also enjoyed two very successful Club outings.

We now look forward to the Programme of Events for 2026.

An eye-catching poster is now available and we have reproduced it on the opposite page. Look out for it on local notice boards and in local garden centres in the New Year. For your personal copy contact:

**Dave Haddon (0116) 235 9758:**  
**david.haddon22@ntlworld.com**

**Or Richard Elks (0116) 236 8313:**  
**cropston161@hotmail.co.uk**

## Michael Bond, creator of Paddington Bear

**I**t was 100 years ago, on 13th January 1926, that Michael Bond, the children's writer, was born. He has an assured place in any literary Hall of Fame, for he created the characters Paddington Bear and Monsieur Pamplemousse.

Paddington Bear padded into Michael Bond's life quite by accident. It was back in 1956 that Michael was on his way home from work at the BBC when he spied a lonely looking teddy bear on the shelf in a shop window in London. On the spur of the moment, Michael decided to take it home as a stocking filler for his wife.

Michael called the bear Paddington, because they lived near Paddington Station at the time. Two years later, in 1958, while daydreaming over a typewriter and a blank sheet of paper, Michael wondered what might happen if an unaccompanied bear turned up at a railway station looking for a home.

The rest is literary history.

His first book, *A Bear Called Paddington*, was written in ten days and published by Collins in October of 1958. 28 more books followed, and in all more than 35 million Paddington books have been sold worldwide, in more than 40 languages. More than 27 million Paddington Bear soft toys have been sold, just since 2021. The films alone have grossed more than \$778 million.

Paddington made his most famous appearance at Buckingham Palace in 2022, where he had tea with Queen Elizabeth II on her Platinum Jubilee, and exchanged tips with her about the best place to store marmalade sandwiches.

Bond was born in Newbury in 1926 and served with the RAF and army during WW2. He started writing in 1945 while stationed in Cairo, and began his career at the BBC, where he later worked on *Blue Peter* as a cameraman. He died in 2017, aged 91.

# Thurcaston & Cropston Gardening Club

## 2026 PROGRAMME OF EVENTS VISITING SPEAKERS AND OUTINGS

**Wednesday 14th January**  
**My Favourite Gardening Blunders**

**Wednesday 11th February**  
**Weeds and how to love them**

**Wednesday 11th March**  
**How to enjoy your Houseplants**

**Wednesday 8th April**  
**Growing Vegetables in Small Spaces**

**Wednesday 13th May**  
**Contain your Enthusiasm**

**Thursday 18th June**  
**Club Outing – Gardeners World Live**

**Wednesday 8th July**  
**Flower Farmer – Sweet Peas**

**Wednesday 12th August**  
**Club Outing – Arley Hall and Gardens**

**Saturday 5th September**  
**Annual Craft and Produce Show (Open to All)**  
**To be held at the Richard Hill Primary School, Thurcaston**

**Wednesday 16th September**  
**Meadowmakers – Bringing Wild Flowers into your Garden**

**Wednesday 14th October**  
**Plants with a Story**

**Wednesday 11th November**  
**Colour in the Winter Garden**

**Wednesday 16th December**  
**Festive Evening**

- New members and visitors are always welcome
- Great value
- Only £15 annual membership
- £3 for visitors
- Meetings are held at the Thurcaston Memorial Hall 7.45pm
- For further details please contact:

**Dave Haddon**  
**0116 235 9758**  
david.haddon22@gmail.com

**Richard Elks**  
**0116 236 8313**  
cropston161@hotmail.co.uk



# Leicester Road wildlife verge in 2025



**T**he small verge on the corner of Leicester Road and Latimer Road has been left unmown through each summer since 2022 to encourage the growth of wild flowers and to provide food and shelter for other wildlife.

Do you remember how hot and dry the spring and summer of 2025 were? This wasn't good for flowers but the ants loved it and the verge became full of anthills. They are the work of the Yellow Meadow



*Six-Spot Burnet Moth caterpillar*

Ant (*Lasius flavus*, which is actually more of an amber brown colour). These ants might not be welcome in your manicured lawn – especially as they are the ones that can bite – but of course they have value as

wildlife in themselves and they provide food for other species such as green woodpeckers. The anthills also increase the local variety of habitats: they are drier on top, have a sunny side and a shady side, and an interior that is home to specialist species such as the small, white Ant Woodlouse.



*Six-Spot Burnet Moth adult*

You have probably seen black or red ants tending colonies of aphids on the leaves and stems of plants. A mirror image of this is also going on underground, where Yellow

Meadow Ants tend a different set of aphids that live on plant roots. 2025 was a good year for the Six-Spot Burnet Moth. Their caterpillars live on grasses and were seen weaving their cocoons on grass stems. Then, a few weeks later, the adults emerged



to show off their crimson-spotted black wings. The adult Cinnabar moth has a similar colour scheme but is even more stylish, with lines rather than spots – a real contrast to their “football jersey” caterpillars, which are a familiar sight on Ragwort.

For a couple of weeks in early June, Welsh Chafer beetles were bumbling about everywhere, including on our verge. The other new beetle to put in an appearance this year was a 22-spot Ladybird (see pic page 32). Though they are not rare, the first one you see is a surprise: very small and bright yellow but densely covered in spots and still obviously a kind of ladybird.

Three new species of plant were recorded in 2025. The ideal for our verge is that it should be a miniature meadow so it is good that Common Sorrel is now present. The name “sorrel” refers to the sour taste of the leaves which, like rhubarb, contain oxalic

acid. The other two plants are more typical of farmland. Cut-leaved Cranesbill is one of those that soon appears whenever the soil is ploughed and re-sown. There were only scattered records of Bristly Ox-tongue when Leicestershire’s flora was surveyed in 1979 but it is now common along field margins. The reasons are not understood but the way the species is spreading northwards suggests that climate change is a factor.

The species totals are now 76 plants and 54 animals. Not bad for less than the area of a tennis court!

The verge has a web page at the address below. The whole Naturespot website is an excellent resource for exploring, identifying and recording wildlife sightings throughout Leicestershire and Rutland. Do visit it and see what you can discover!

[https://www.naturespot.org/Cropston\\_Leicester\\_Road\\_Verge](https://www.naturespot.org/Cropston_Leicester_Road_Verge)

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# On the perils of leading prayer in church.



The Rectory  
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I do hope you have now settled down in your first parish – although it is such a pity that you did not choose a more distinguished one. I know you feel your vocation lies in inner city work – whereas mine, fortunately, has always been to the better sort of rural village. I have always felt that the Almighty understands me well in that regard.

We had a little flurry of activity in church on Sunday. At the signal “let us pray”, as the congregation dutifully flopped to their knees, sounding like a flock of geese settling in for the night, Major Hastings lost his glass eye. Yes, again! That man is so careless at times. Anyway, released from captivity, the eye rolled under the pews like a fugitive marble, ricocheting from hassock to handbag over the stone flags.

My sonorous entreaties to the Almighty were completely lost as the entire congregation scuttled under pews, trying to retrieve it. It finally appeared on the collection plate – along with £4.17, 100 pesetas and Miss Simpson’s front door key. I was unsure whether the last item represented a fit of absent-mindedness or an improper suggestion. I returned it to her very firmly at the end of the Service.

The eye stared at me mournfully as I blessed it, along with the money. But it left a small social dilemma. What is the etiquette of returning a lost glass eye to its owner?

To have processed down the aisle with it, accompanied by crucifer and verger seemed a little too public. To sneak it to him as we shook hands at the door seemed a little too furtive. I finally decided to send a server to deliver it during the last hymn. I still wonder if it was the right decision. Perhaps you could look through that new Common Worship book and see if they have included an appropriate rite for returning lost glass eyes. We here at St James-the-Least-of-All haven’t yet got round to Common Worship. The days are evil enough as it is..

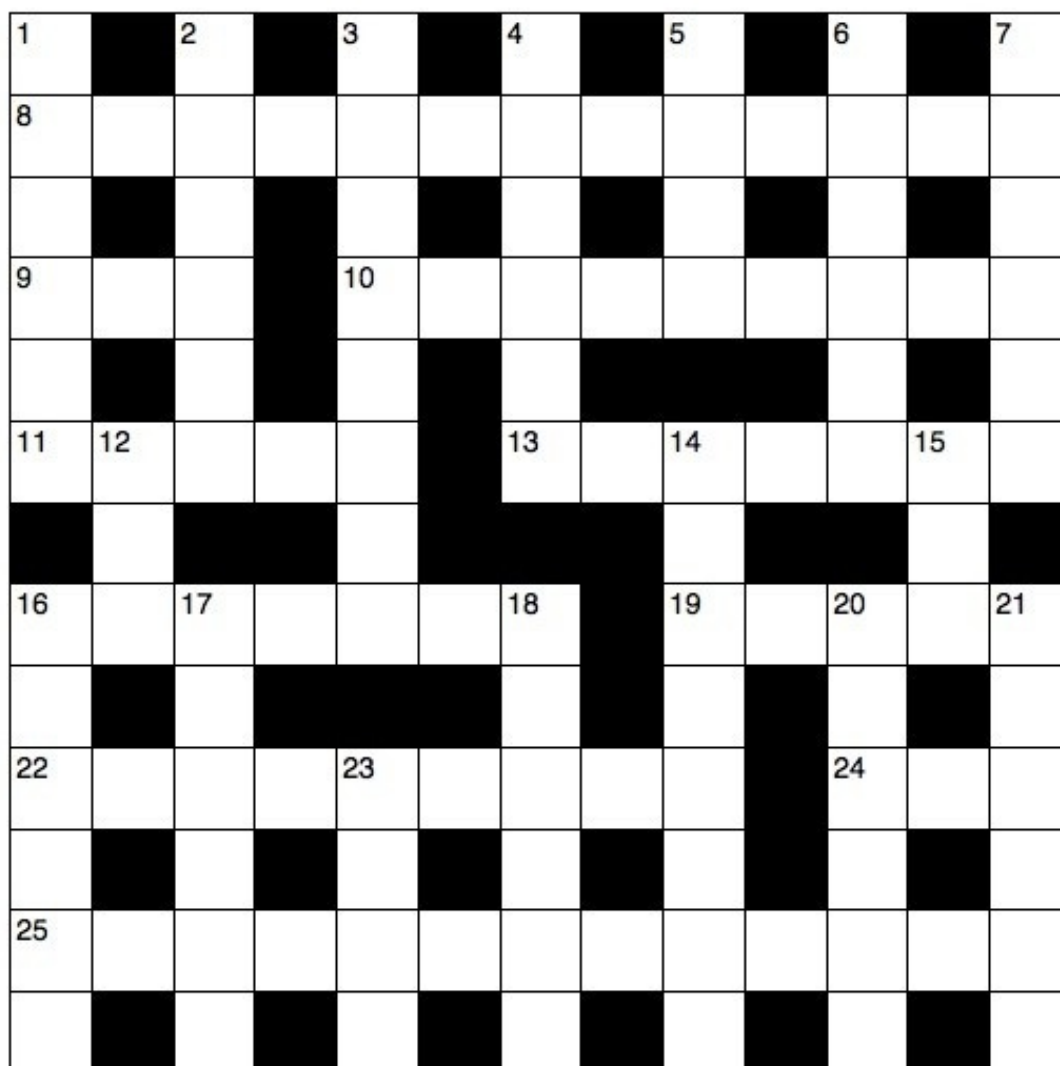
Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

**Sudoku**

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

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**Crossword****Across**

- 8 How the Abyss (NIV) is described in the Authorized Version (Revelation 9:1) (10,3)  
 9 Frozen water (Ezekiel 1:22) (3)  
 10 The Ten Commandments (9)  
 11 In Roman Catholic theology, neither heaven nor hell (5)  
 13 Des cons (anag.) (7)  
 16 'Though [your sins] are red as — , they shall be like wool' (Isaiah 1:18) (7)  
 19 Keen (Romans 1:15) (5)  
 22 Repugnant, loathsome (Jeremiah 24:9) (9)  
 24 Drink like an animal (Judges 7:5) (3)  
 25 First and last (Revelation 22:13) (5,3,5)

**Down**

- 1 Father of Ahi, a Gadite (1 Chronicles 5:15) (6)  
 2 Where David found the stone with which he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (6)

- 3** 'Hour by hour fresh lips are making thy — doings heard on high' (8)  
**4** 'And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their — at night' (Luke 2:8) (6)  
**5** United Society for Christian Literature (1,1,1,1)  
**6** 'If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would — — or a tax collector' (Matthew 18:17) (1,5)  
**7** Where Paul was taken when things became difficult for him in Berea (Acts 17:15) (6)  
**12** Istituto per le Opere di Religione (Vatican Bank) (1,1,1)  
**14** 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new — ; the old has gone, the new has come!' (2 Corinthians 5:17) (8)  
**15** Used to colour ram skins red for use in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:5) (3)  
**16** Vat car (anag.) (6)  
**17** 'Be joyful — — , patient in affliction, faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (6)  
**18** 'The parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts — — special treatment' (1 Corinthians 12:23) (4,2)  
**20** Ancient rowing boat (Isaiah 33:21) (6)  
**21** Say again (2 Corinthians 11:16) (6)  
**23** What Jesus did in the synagogue in Nazareth after he stood up (Luke 4:16) (4)

### Solution on Page 38

---

## Sudoku Solution

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



**Crossword Solution**

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

*All Saints 200 Club winners...***DECEMBER 2025 Draw****1st** *MALCOLM LEE***2nd** *CHRIS MIRANDA***3rd** *PETER WELLS****Congratulations to December's winners!***

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