

THURCASTON WITH CROPSTON AND ANSTEY

Heart & Soul

February 2026

of our community

All Saints' Church

St Mary's Church



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ST MARY'S CHURCH, ANSTEY

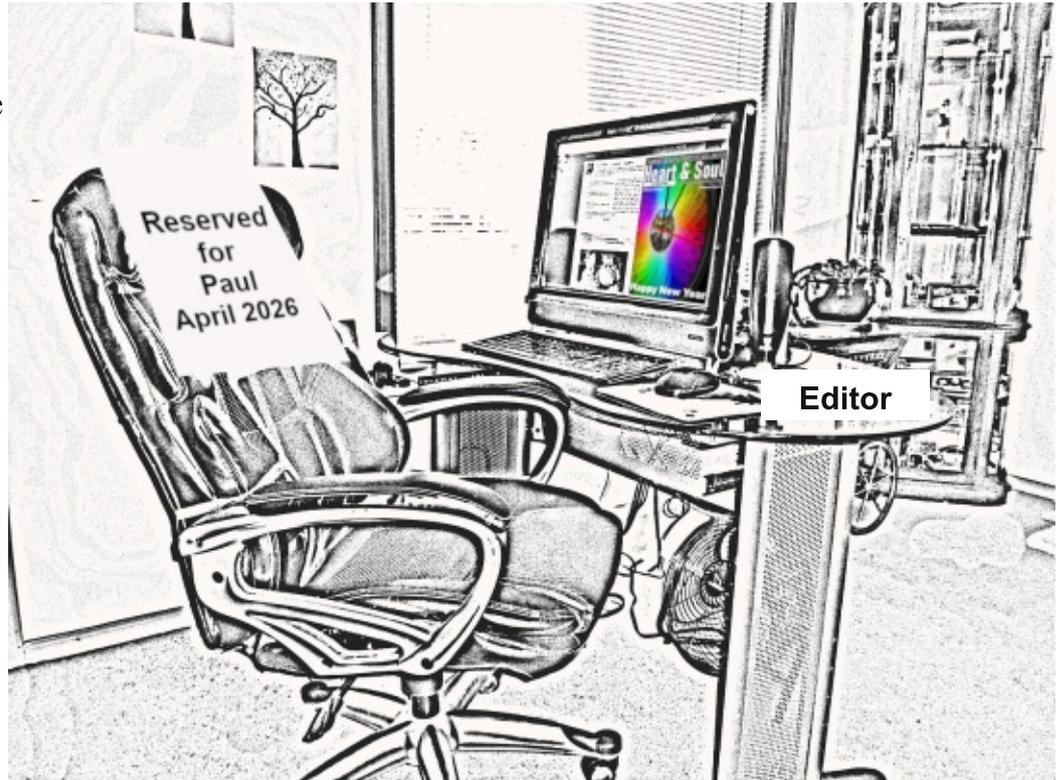
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CHURCH ROOM	Booking Enquiries	Stmaryschurchrooms@gmail.com

New Editor

Hearth and Soul's new editor will be Paul, who recently retired after 30 years in the communications and publishing industry. He says he's keen to hear news and views from as wide a range of people as possible (whether you're church goers or not).

He says the only criteria for getting in touch is you should live or work in Anstey, Thurcaston or Cropston, and have something you want to share - news, updates, information about events, ideas on how we can improve the villages, - anything in fact that might be of interest to other people.

He's especially keen to hear from anyone who'd like to share memories of how the area has changed, and the people who've



lived here. Keep an eye out for his first issue in April for more information!

For the April issue onwards the new email to send contributions, news items, event updates and other magazine content ideas will be **heartandsoulnews@gmail.com**. *Contributors please make a note in your diaries!*

Contributions for the March magazine by 20th February to:

Richard & Barbara Bradley, 3 All Saints Road, Thurcaston, Leics LE7 7JD
Tel: 0116 236 6469 or Email: thurcastonallsaints@gmail.com

**Church details, events and services can be found at
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](https://www.facebook.com/asthurcastonwc)



"You strain out a gnat and swallow a camel".

The bible reports Jesus as saying in Matthew 23, 24. Often Jesus is found to be having a go at those religious leaders who prioritise the apparent trivial detail whilst missing the bigger picture or important meaning. Similar imagery is employed by Jesus accusing them of being stingy in giving away small

amounts of herbs to the temple (Luke 11, 42) but not caring about love or justice. More challenging is the tale of 'the woman caught in adultery' and Jesus' provocation to the self righteous zealous men to cast the first stone if they themselves are without sin (John 8,7). I love these image rich juxtapositions which encourage wisdom in our thinking and choices. I like to think of myself as a lateral thinker with global picture vision rather than being concerned with the detail - looking for the narrative or meaning rather than the process or the instruction booklet. However, that is my own prejudice, bias and weakness.

Jesus cannot favour one mindset over another can he? Taking care of the overlooked and God even numbering how many hairs are on one's head (Luke 12), the sparrow that falls to the ground (Matt 10), these little ones (Matt 18) are all counterweights against neglect of the less obvious for the weight of more dominant forces.



God's grace is not easily calculated and humanity has struggled to quantify and build formulas to fully understand God. Perhaps there is a frustration with mystery and God's nature against our own wish for fairness and being rewarded for that which we earn. When biblical characters try to nail God down and calculate predictability whether it be a census before battle or in the parable about paying labourers or preparing fully for wedding feasts, God seems to prefer the unpredictable - the use of oil lamps in jars instead of armies, the undeserving rather than the earnest and elevating hospitality and proper attire over personal merit. The message seems to be consistent, rather than detail versus big picture, that we cannot earn God's grace through our own virtues, service or effort. The audacity of Jesus' death and resurrection is a path home to God. A free gift, demanding nothing but a daily pledge to turn to Him.

Rev Matthew



February Readings for Sundays

February 1st (Candlemas)	1 Kings 17, 8-16 John 2, 1-11
February 8th	Genesis 1, 1-2.3 Matthew 6, 25-end
February 15th	Exodus 24, 12-end Matthew 17, 1-9
February 22nd Lent	Genesis 2, 15-17, 3, 1-7 Matthew 4, 1-11

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

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From the registers...

Funerals

Monday 5th January

Annie Hopewell of Thurcaston,

Burial at Thurcaston and Cropston Cemetery.

Thursday 8th January

Florrie Bent of Anstey,

St Mary's committal Loughborough.



Monday 26th January

Lillian Anthony of Anstey,

Funeral St Mary's and burial Anstey Cemetery.

Wednesday 28th January

Mary Smith of Anstey,

Funeral St Mary's committal Gilroes.

Wednesday 4th February 11.30

Barbara Temple,

All Saints Church.

Baptism



Sunday 18th January

Toby Osawe of Anstey,

St Mary's.

How people fast during Lent

Many of us fast during Lent. It seems that the kind of fast you undertake may be connected to your denomination. A recent survey found the following:

94% Black Majority Churchgoers give up all food for a set time.

85% of Orthodox churchgoers cut out specific foods and/or drinks.

83% of Pentecostal churches give up all food for a set time.

79% of Roman Catholics cut out specific foods and/or drinks.

76% of New Churches give up all food for a set time.

57% of C of E cut out specific foods and/or drinks

30% or less of Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists cut out specific foods and/or drinks.

The survey was done by the charity Green Christian

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Come along and ring the bells

Saturday 14th March from 9.30am

All Saints' Church, Thurcaston.

Thurcaston Belltower is recruiting. A new year; try a new hobby. The bell does the work; the weight of the bell and gravity means it is not too physically demanding. Learning to handle the bell is all about managing the rope. The ropes are 90 feet long and it is just a question of taking in rope and letting it out. Tim Holland and I are members of the Association of Ringing Teachers and have taught many learners, varying in age from 9 years to 80 years old; my wife and I began to learn in our mid 40s but wish we had started earlier.

It is important to make headway in the first



few weeks, so we recommend three sessions each week for the first two weeks or the law of diminishing returns will delay progress and cause frustration. Once one has learned to handle the bell safely then ringing becomes much more sociable and more fun, ringing with others.



Then the only requirement is practice on

Wednesday evening and ringing for Sunday service once or twice a month.

Come and see and you may surprise yourself!

Peter Hunt, Tower Captain

0116 2359601

Unscheduled quiz proves popular!

Our planned speaker was ill, so instead we had a multi-topic quiz, and much hilarity ensued before a winning team was declared.

The sales table offered home-made scones, jams and marmalade. There were also greeting cards, second-hand paperbacks, and bricabrac.

After refreshments, our meeting closed around 4pm.

* * *

Meetings start at 2.15pm, on the second



Cropston Evangelical Free Church
12th January 2026

Monday of each month.

Annual membership is £15.00, plus an entrance fee of £2.00; and it is only £4.00 for visitors. New members / visitors are welcome at the Church Room – just turn up. Our next meeting will be on Monday 9th February, when

we have our AGM then a talk from one of our members Adele Fricker about Stress and Relaxation.

Mrs Maja Tompkins

Contact mobile 07709 201881.

Anstey Food Bank: more than a parcel of food!

As part of our Food Bank entry to the Christmas Tree Festival at St. Mary's we made baubles and asked our users to complete this phrase,

Anstey Food Bank can give you...

This is what they said:

Tea and somebody to talk to.

Friendship warmth with hot drink.

A smile and a warm drink.

Welcoming people, friendship warmth smiles kindness and connection.

Share your problems.

A safe meeting place, joy and friends.

A place to make new friends.

Hope in times of trouble.

Reassurance, and an acceptance of who you are.

A warm welcome.

A bag of food to help you out, proof that this community has your back during tough times.

Bags of love.

A parcel of food, pet food, just a little something.

Friendship and a sense of belonging.

Help with finances.

A chance to meet people from all walks of life.

Hope in dark times.

A new start.

Company and a reason to get up and get out.

Respite from worry.

A warm feeling.

Help with claiming benefits.

Light at the end of the tunnel.

Anstey Food Bank can be found in Church



Rooms, Church Lane Anstey.

It is open every Tuesday morning between 10.00 and 11.30 am. As part of the Soar Valley Community Food Project, we provide food parcels and can signpost people for debt advice and other support. If you need a little help, come along on Tuesday and chat to us. We provide refreshments and a bag of food. You do not have to be referred, just give us your personal contact details. You will be assured of a warm welcome and not just 'a bag of food'.

Many thanks to Anstey Town Charity, Anstey Parish Council and the many individuals and groups in the community who regularly support us with donations.

Marian Driver and Wendy Layton

Popular local poet's work rediscovered

Roger Hardy recently re-discovered a book of poems by his late colleague and friend local poet, "Hoz"

(Horace A. Gamble) called 'Before I Forget' and amongst the gems it contained was this example of his work from 2006.

View from the pew

*Whilst lying in a darkened room
a vision came – and none too soon -
of churches, old, that I once knew,
hard sitting in Victorian pew.
Priest and crucifer in procession
heralded B.C.P. progression;
churchwardens in such smart attire;
anthem (Stanford) from the choir;
there at Matins to Praise the Lord -
hymn'd, psalm'd and canticle-ly adored.*

*But now it's done the "modern" way:
unrecognised, I'm sad to say.
"Cool" songs (with slang and dubious
grammar),
no Glory in the Height, Hosanna!
We've come to the electronic age:
Yamaha keyboards all the rage
with plugs and sockets by the score,
cables, snake-like, cross the floor,
a plethora of "mikes" and "amps",
loud speakers and high wattage lamps.*

*The Brasso'd eagle's querulous glare
wonders why he's standing there
usurped by lectern, polished wood.*

"Hoz" was born in 1922 in Highfields, Leicester and educated at Alderman Newton Boys School. Between 1940 - 46 he served first in the Home Guard and then in the Merchant Navy.

In 1986 he moved to Ratby and developed a multitude of interests including railway and

*He'd exorcise it if he could!
While waiting to kneel at Communion rail
the congregation cannot fail
(If Vestry door is open wide)
to see the horror there inside -
Hoval's boiler so gigantic
would steam a "Queen" across Atlantic.*

*Stone pulpit, proud, not always used
by O.H.P. sometimes abused.
And the choir vestry too,
curtains open to afford the view
for all to see – a spare chair store,
plastic boxes, "et-cetera" galore.
Two wardens' staves, erect and tall,
still stand sentinel over all.
After service there's a "Naafi" -
serving tea and Tesco cafe...*

*Have we the right to criticize
that which doth offend our eyes?
Are we not there to offer praise
regardless of the current craze?
God cares not for the latest fad -
just joyful worship makes Him glad.*

local history, walking canal towpaths and village church life.

He was an author of several books about railways and in 1999 in collaboration with Lynn Mellor wrote 'A walk around Ratby Church'.



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Introducing Dame Sarah Mullally - *the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury*

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE officially became Archbishop of Canterbury on 28th January 2026, when she was legally confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral.

Most people know that she had been Bishop of London for several years, and that she is the first woman to ever become Archbishop of Canterbury. But what else do you know about her?

1. She was born in Woking in 1962, and is one of four children, with two sisters and one brother.

2. She attended Winston Churchill Comprehensive School and Woking Sixth Form College. She went on to South Bank Polytechnic and Heythrop College, University of London

3. She worked as a nurse in the National Health Service, which she has described as "an opportunity to reflect the love of God". She specialised as a cancer nurse and became a ward sister at Westminster Hospital, before being made Director of Nursing at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.

4. In 1999, at the age of 37, she was appointed the Government's Chief Nursing Officer for England in the Department of Health. She was the youngest person ever to be appointed to the post. Bishop Sarah was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 2005 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to nursing.

5. She had become a Christian at the age of 16. While working as the Chief Nursing Officer for England, she discerned a call to ordination and entered training ministry at the South East Institute for Theological Education.

6. She was ordained in 2001 and served her curacy in St Saviour's Battersea Fields,

initially as a self-supporting minister, before leaving her government post in 2004, which she has described at the time as "the biggest decision I have ever made".

7. In 2012 she was installed as Canon Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral and three years later took the role as Suffragan Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter, the fourth woman to become a Bishop in the Church of England.

8. On 12th May 2018, Bishop Sarah was installed as the 133rd Bishop of London at St Paul's Cathedral, the first woman to hold the role.

9. Bishop Sarah sits in the House of Lords as one of the Lords Spirituals, having been introduced on 24th May 2018. Her maiden speech paid tribute to the NHS on its 70th anniversary, telling the Lords: "I am the Bishop I am today because of that first vocation to nursing, and compassion and healing are constants at the heart of who I am."

10. She was sworn in as a member of the Privy Council in March 2018 and became Dean of Her Majesty's Chapels Royal in July 2019.

11. As Bishop of London, she led the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith process from 2020 to 2023. This included the formative stages of discernment and decision making which saw the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith for same-sex couples.

12. She has served on the Church's National Safeguarding Steering Group and is also Lead Bishop for Health and Social Care issues.

15. Archbishop Sarah is married to Eamonn, an Irish-born IT and Enterprise Architect who enjoys beekeeping and volunteering as a London tourist guide.

Junior Corner...

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

Ruffle gets into a flap!

By Rachel Greaves



There was something new in Eric's door,
It wasn't there yesterday, Ruffle was sure.
Now dogs are always hungry - what should
Ruffle do?
To get to the cat food, he would have to go
through!.

First Ruffle decided to put his head through,
Mmm, that seemed very easy to do.
Shoulders next - he gave a little woof!
As this he found was a little more tough.



Ruffle tried to move backwards, but found he was stuck!

Caught like a fly that's been swatted in a book,

For Ruffle had been stopped by the new cat flap,

And was now truly snared in the tight plastic trap!



Ruffle stood there helpless, stuck in the door,

He didn't think he would eat cat food anymore!

Luckily Eric soon came to Ruffle's rescue, 'Stand still Ruffle so the flap I can unscrew!'.

Once Ruffle was freed from the door he sat down,

Eric looked at him with a large cross frown.

But his face soon changed when he saw what Ruffle wore,

'A new collar Ruffle? It's the funniest I ever saw!'

Visit www.ruffletheraildog.co.uk for more information about Ruffle's adventures.

Early Spring Afternoon Tea

Saturday 28th February
In St Mary's Church Rooms
3pm - 5pm



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we have made & hear about our
future plans.*

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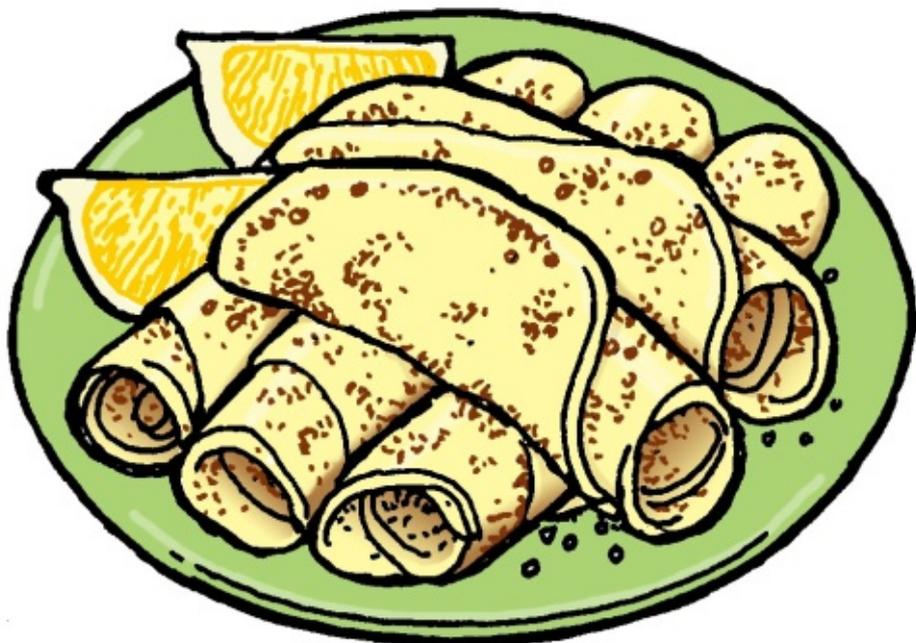
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Dates for your diary

Four pages of Events and Activities this month

Date	Time	Event
Sun Feb 1	9.15am	<i>Breakfast in the Church -Thurcaston All Saints' Church</i>
	10.30am	<i>Sunday Worship Cropston Evangelical Free Church (CEFC)</i>
Mon Feb 2	11.00am	<i>Bible Study (CEFC)</i>
Tue Feb 3	10:00	<i>Food Bank. Anstey St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
	NOON	<i>Leics MS Tuesday Group - coffee/tea, biscuits & chat ANSTEY JUBILEE HALL Stadon Rd LE7 7AY (AJH)</i>
Wed Feb 4	2. till 4pm	<i>Wednesday Hub - coffee, cake & chat in Harrison Room</i>
Fri Feb 6	9.15 am	<i>Coffee Morning - St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
Sat Feb 7	11:00am	<i>Charity Coffee Morning - The charity for 2026 is Sightsavers (CEFC)</i>
Sun Feb 8	10.30am	<i>Sunday Worship (CEFC)</i>
Mon Feb 9	2.15pm	<i>Monday Club - Stress & Relaxation Schoolroom (CEFC) see page 8</i>
Tues Feb 10	10:00	<i>Food Bank. Anstey St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
	noon	<i>Leics MS Tuesday Group - coffee/tea, biscuits & chat (AJH)</i>
Wed Feb 11	2 - 4	<i>Wednesday Hub - coffee, cake & chat Harrison Room</i>
	7.45pm	<i>Gardening Club - Memorial Hall - Weeds and How to Love them</i>
Fri Feb 13	9.15 am	<i>Coffee Morning - St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
	7.30pm	<i>Friday Film - Thurcaston Memorial Hall -Maria</i>
Sun Feb 15	10.30am	<i>Sunday Worship (CEFC)</i>
Tue Feb 17		<i>Shrove Tuesday</i>



All Saints', Thurcaston with Cropston, February Services



Sunday 1st

8.30am Prayer Book Communion
(9.15am Breakfast)
10am Morning Praise
6.30pm Candlemas Evensong

Sunday 8th

10am Holy Communion

Sunday 15th

8.30am Prayer Book Communion
8pm Night Prayer Compline

Sunday 22nd

(First Sunday of Lent)
10am Holy Communion

St Mary's, Anstey February Services

Sunday 1st

10am Holy Communion
6.30pm Taize



Sunday 8th

10am All Age Worship

Sunday 15th

10am Holy Communion

Wednesday 18th

First Day of Lent

7.00pm Ash Wednesday Service

Sunday 22nd

(First Sunday of Lent)

10am Fresh Worship

Every Wednesday

9.30am Prayer Book Communion

Dates for your diary

Events and Activities this month continued

Date	Time	Event
Mon Feb 16	11.00am	<i>Prayer meeting (CEFC)</i>
Tue Feb 17	10:00	<i>Food Bank. Anstey St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
	noon	<i>Leics MS Tuesday Group - coffee/tea, biscuits & chat (AJH)</i>
	7.30pm	<i>History Society - TMHI - Speaker Rachel Small, Household accounts of the Grey family at Bradgate Park - See page 25</i>
Wed Feb 18	2.00pm	<i>Wednesday Hub - coffee, cake & chat</i>
Fri Feb 20	9.15 am	<i>Coffee Morning - St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
	7:00 pm	<i>Quiz Night All Saints' Harrison Room see Page 21</i>
Sat Feb 21	10.30 - noon	<i>Coffee Morning Harrison Room</i>
Sun Feb 22	10.30am	<i>Sunday Worship (CEFC)</i>
Tue Feb 24	10:00	<i>Food Bank. Anstey St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
	noon	<i>Leics MS Tuesday Group - coffee/tea, biscuits & chat (AJH)</i>
	2.00pm	<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>



Wed Feb 25	2.00pm	<i>Wednesday Hub - coffee, cake & chat</i>
Fri Feb 27	9.15am	<i>Coffee Morning - St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
	2.00pm	<i>Tea & Crafts - St Mary's Church Rooms</i>
Sat Feb 28	10.3	<i>Sunday Worship (CEFC)</i>
	3 - 5pm	<i>Early Spring Afternoon Tea St Mary's Church Rooms see Page 16</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.



Harrison Room, All Saints' Thurstaston
Church Fundraiser £5 per person
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Jazz at The Wheatsheaf



The images in this article help to sum up the joyful atmosphere during the recent jazz session at the Wheatsheaf Inn at Thurstaston. Just before Christmas local villagers were joined by those from surrounding areas to enjoy two hours of exceptional music, provided by Dave Harmer and the Titanic Jazz Band. It was a thoroughly festive occasion, and many attendees took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy a meal from the pub's new menu. This menu has recently been extended to include dishes based on local pork from pigs reared just 100 yards from the Wheatsheaf Inn, by Grant, the landlord.

A new attraction at the rear of the Inn, is the Deli where a wide range of meats, sausage rolls and pasties, and delicious cakes, is available. We spent a very enjoyable 2 hours listening to the music of Bob on bass, Lol on percussion, Max on a variety of trumpets,



John on saxophones, Mike on guitar and, of course, Dave Harmer on trombone and vocals.

The jazz sessions take place each Tuesday from 12:30 to 2:30pm in the Skittle Alley behind the Wheatsheaf Inn on Leicester Road, and there is plenty of parking. Donations to the Band are always very welcome!! Why not give it a try?

Sylvia Cole

After Eden

Adam was out walking with his sons Cain and Abel. As they passed by the ruins of the Garden of Eden, one of the boys asked, "Father, what's that place?"

Adam replied, "Boys, that's where your mother ate us out of house and home."

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Candlelit Strings

Saturday 14th 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.



Its all about the bike!

The humble bicycle transformed societies by making it possible for ordinary people – both women and men – to travel independently beyond their immediate neighbourhood. But which nation can claim the credit for this invention? Stuart Warburton, who is a former curator of Snibston Discovery Park and an avid collector of veteran bicycles, assessed (quite literally) the runners and riders.

Italy's claim can be dismissed: although there is a clear image of a bicycle in one of Leonardo da Vinci's codexes, it turns out to have been a forgery added in the 1970s! The first two-wheeled vehicle that the rider sat astride was Germany's Laufmaschine. Developed in 1816, when horses were in short supply because of the Napoleonic wars, it became a fad for a few years and was much satirized by cartoonists. However, Stuart disqualifies it as a bicycle because the rider merely scooted along the ground.

Scottish court records of 1839 report that a blacksmith called Kirkpatrick MacMillan knocked over a child while riding his hand-cranked "velocipede" but we do not have any other details that could substantiate this as a claim to the bicycle as a British invention.

In Stuart's opinion, the French have the best claim. In 1861, both Ernest Michaux and Pierre Lallement sold a true bicycle with pedals, albeit they were located on the front axle. (The two men disputed who had developed it first.) Known in English as the "boneshaker", this design rapidly became extremely popular, despite lacking gears and being too heavy to ride uphill. The first British manufacturer was probably Rowley



Turner, who took advantage of a slump in Coventry's silk industry to set up a factory using the skills and labour available there – the foundation of the city's motor industry.

Early bicycles were still expensive so were owned only by the upper and middle classes, who created clubs along military lines for touring and racing them. Stuart was decked out in a club costume of the 1870s, with a pillbox hat, short tunic and breeches based on cavalry uniform. Having a larger front wheel meant you could win more races, which led to the development of the penny-farthing (though that name was not used until much later). They were difficult to get onto and could not be stopped suddenly without risk of injury so in the 1880s the "safety bicycle" was created. It had wheels of roughly equal sizes and a

chain drive to the rear wheel which, by using sprockets of different diameters, provided some gearing to make it easier to ride. Later improvements included tubular frames, wire spokes and air-filled tyres. The frame could be adapted so that ladies could ride in long skirts and soon cycling was accessible to everyone.

Cycling became a popular spectator sport and Leicester produced the 1887 world champion, Fred Wood. Illicit drug use was an early problem: one of Stuart's ancestors had been banned as a promoter for providing caffeine to his riders! Many football clubs, including Leicester and Chelsea, began by making use of the spaces in the middle of cycle tracks. Cycling also had effects on ladies' fashions. Culottes were developed to avoid "the passage of

cold air" between the legs, while still keeping the ankles modestly hidden. The Rational Dress Society campaigned against any fashion that "deforms the figure or impedes the movements of the body" and eventually, despite some setbacks in court, it became acceptable for female cyclists to dress in a more practical manner.

Our speaker on 17th February will be Rachel Small, who has been studying the household accounts of the Grey family at Bradgate Park to work out what their diet consisted of and how it changed in times of illness. We hope you will be able to join us as a visitor (£4) or as a member (£16 for the whole year).

www.thurcastoncropstonhistory.org.uk

Portrait

A teacher told her young class of children to try and draw the portrait of someone they knew. While they worked, she walked about, keeping an eye on their progress.

One little girl was working diligently, and the teacher asked who she was drawing. The child replied: "I'm drawing God."

The teacher protested that no one knows what God looks like. Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

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‘My Favourite Gardening Blunders’

with Joe Whitehead

Thurcaston and Cropston Gardening Club welcomed over 70+ members to their first meeting of 2026. This was a creative talk by Joe Whitehead, Head Gardener at Burghley House (his fourth head gardener position). His talk was full of jovial anecdotes of his time as gardener and useful tips from what he has learnt from his mistakes.

He trained as a gardener at RHS Garden Wisley and shared his student exploits, proudly showing off his first acquisition - one of the largest pinecones in the world, obtained in an after-hours venture of climbing up a tree to acquire the pinecone.

Joe shared that Burghley has been the location of many TV shows (Mortimer and Whithouse), period dramas and film blockbusters. Joe and his gardeners are often keen to be help, especially if they can

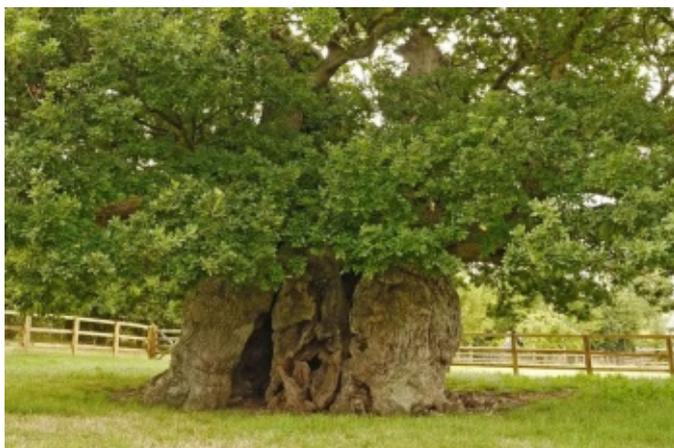


Ecballium Elaterium (commonly known as the squirting cucumber).

particular Warren the robot mower as they have proved valuable members in keeping Burghley looking lovely.

Joe showed Burghley’s oldest Oak tree (around a 1000 years old) and overviewed the work undertaken to prevent the decline of ancient oaks by mulching (noting the impact of large numbers of visitors and climate change resulting in ground around the tree becoming compacted and the tree becoming stressed). They have been successful in stemming the decline and the Oak trees have recovered so they will have many more years of health.

Joe shared tall stories about Burghley which he shares with his visitors and humour used to enhance their visits as part of his garden tours! My favourite of the evening was Ecballium Elaterium, commonly known as the squirting cucumber, Joe described its explosive seed dispersal mechanism. If planted in the wrong area you could be digging out the remnants for years to come. We were encouraged to create Wildflower areas to encourage more nature and colour



This ancient Oak tree at Burghley is almost 1000 yrs old. Many Oak trees are suffering because of climate change – but the staff at Burghley are finding ways to restore them to good health.

obtain tickets for the food truck. He went on to describe his team of robot mowers in

into are gardens.

Joe concluded the evening with a plea to save the British Gardener as a fulfilling career option as few people are applying and there is starting to be more jobs available and great opportunities.

This talk was very entertaining and Joe created a lovely relaxed start to the Club's new year.

The Gardening Club meets in the Thurcaston and Cropston Memorial Hall Whether an experienced gardener or an enthusiastic beginner we are sure you will find something of interest in this year's programme. New members are made most welcome. What's more, it's excellent value!!

The membership fee is only £15 for the year (pro rata) or £3.00 per meeting. So, if you are interested in gardening - come and give the Club a try.

For more information about the Club, please contact

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

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

The next Club events are:

Wed 11th Feb 2026 - Weeds and How to love Them - Russell Attwood

Wed 11 Mar 2026 - How to Enjoy Your Houseplants - Susie Lickman

A legendary diva in her final days

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.

The Penguin Lessons will be shown on 13th March and lasts 110 minutes.

March's warm and witty comedy drama, stars Steve Coogan as Tom, an unconventional teacher. For some reason, Tom moves to Argentina to teach but, following a military coup, he travels to Uruguay. Here, Tom rescues a mischievous penguin from an oil slick on a beach. Strangely, a beautiful friendship forms between these two unlikely pals. This is an



unexpected, yet uplifting, comedy that you'll love.

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 wine/fruit juice 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.

Cedar House... residential care that keeps the spring in your step.



January was another busy month for us at Cedar House... We continue to try old and new things!

We received lots of visitors and had special visits from Lilliput Nursery Group and Sidney Shakers.

On Thursday 1st January 2026 we had a party to see in the New Year with all the trimmings! We also toasted past, present and future friends! **HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!** All the best for 2026! We hope 2026 is going to be lucky for you all!

On Thursday 8th January 2026 some of the residents enjoyed a trip out to see The Sound of Music at the Curve in



Leicester. It was magical!

On Monday 19th January 2026 some of the residents enjoyed doing some scratch art.

On Tuesday 13th January 2026 some of our lovely Indian staff celebrated Lohri and invited the residents and staff to take part. It was a superb evening!

Lohri signifies the end of the cold winter and arrival

of warmer days along with the onset of harvest season. It normally consists of bonfires, music and good food.



On Wednesday 14th January 2026 the residents enjoyed being entertained by Glenn and Julie. There was lots of singing and



dancing. Harvey, our work placement, also enjoyed showing off his best dance moves.

On Monday 19th January 2026 the residents enjoyed doing some storytelling with the nursery group. The residents and children bought in some of their favourite books to share.

On Wednesday 21st January 2026 the

residents enjoyed doing an art and craft session on swans with Jean.

On Monday 26th January 2026 we even had a go at remote control car racing!

There's never a dull moment at Cedar House.

Bring on 2026, we are ready!

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On the art of drinking well.

The Rectory
St James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

You closed your last letter with the remark that it was time to retire to bed with a cup of cocoa. That may be all very well for the pious intensity of a theological college – although a stiff whisky was always acceptable in my day – but it is not a style to continue once in the parish. I do feel obliged to give you a few hints about what should and should not be drunk in public as a parish priest.

Morning visits are to be discouraged, but if one is unavoidable, and you are invited to have a drink, then it has to be coffee. It is the only time of day when a mug is acceptable – provided, of course, that it is bone china or porcelain. In the afternoons one changes to tea, but only from cups. Blended varieties may be all very well for Curates in their first year, but it should be Darjeeling for an incumbent. And fruit teas are for Quakers only.

If an inappropriate vessel is offered, then the drink should be accepted, but left untouched. Since the visit will be discussed in the finest detail throughout the parish the moment you have left, your host will soon learn why and not make the same error a second time. It is for the same reason that if you ever want to circulate a piece of news round the parish as quickly as possible, never put it in the parish magazine, just mention it casually during one of your visits. Everyone will know by teatime.

Alcoholic drinks must be carefully judged. A sherry – dry, naturally – is probably best if you are invited to lunch. In the early evening, a gin and tonic would be the drink of choice. To ask for whisky would indicate that you are about to go over to Rome, and a mineral water that you have your roots in non-conformity. Beer is never, ever drunk in someone's house unless you suffer from some personal tragedy, such as being the diocesan youth chaplain.

However, an occasional beer in the pub with the bell-ringers (who will be real ale fanatics to a man) or after choir practice – which seems to be the real purpose of holding practices anyway – or as a treat for the sacristan, will show you are a man of the people. It is some years since I visited the pub.

Understanding wine should be taught at every theological college as an essential part of the ministry. Develop a taste for claret, dear boy, and you will be starting your journey towards high office.

And perhaps you should give that tin of cocoa to the vergers..

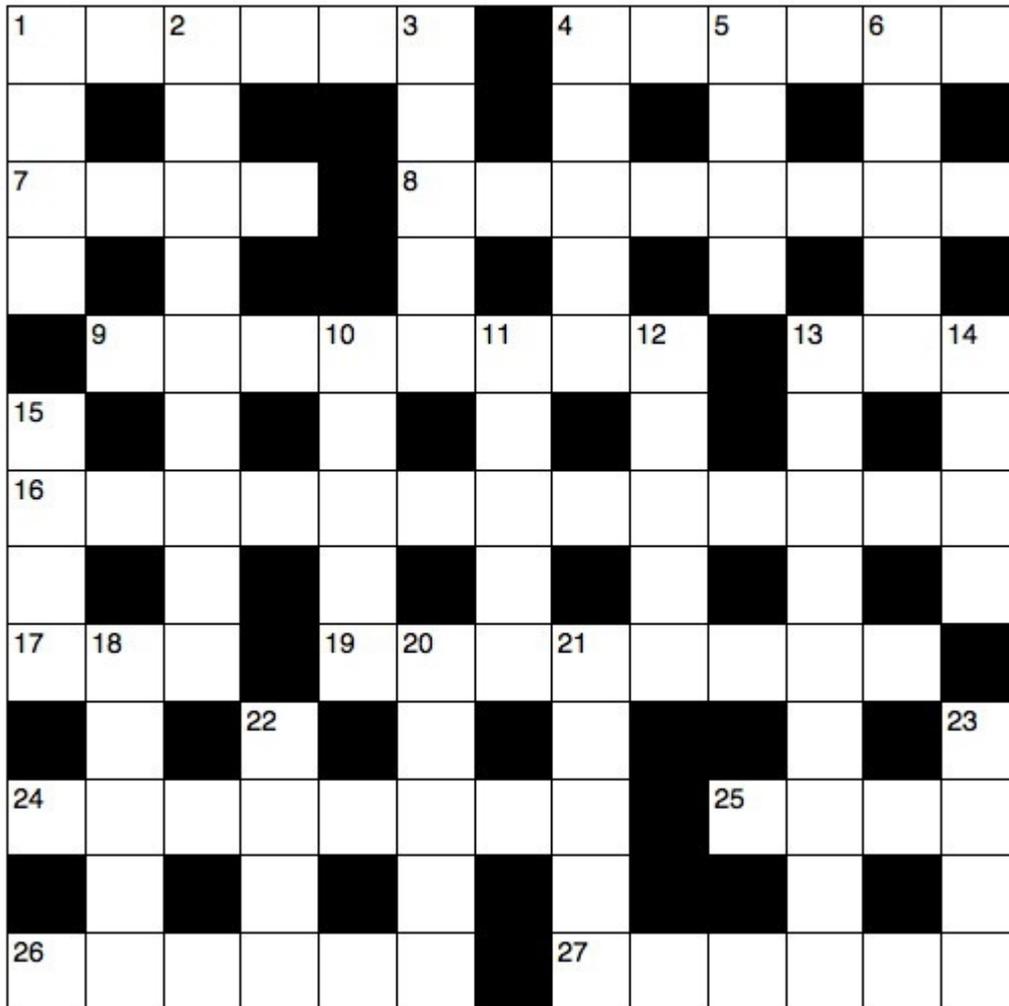
Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Sudoku

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

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Crossword



Across

- 1 'If you love those who love you, what — is that to you?' (Luke 6:32) (6)
- 4 'They threw the ship's — overboard' (Acts 27:19) (6)
- 7 The first murderer (Genesis 4:8) (4)
- 8 He was the head Levite in charge of the singing when the ark of God was brought back to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:22) (8)
- 9 Samson was noted for this (Judges 16:6) (8)
- 13 Solicit money or food from passers by (Acts 3:2) (3)
- 16 What William Booth's Christian Mission became in 1878 (9,4)
- 17 Alliance of Religions and Conservation (1,1,1)
- 19 'I will praise your name for ever and ever. — — I will praise you' (Psalm 145:1–2) (5,3)
- 24 Simon had (anag.) (8)
- 25 Desperate (Deuteronomy 28:48) (4)
- 26 Elisha witnessed the boy he was seeking to resuscitate do this seven times before opening his eyes (2 Kings 4:35) (6)
- 27 The belly and thighs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream were made of this (Daniel 2:32) (6)

Down

- 1 'Before the — crows, you will disown me three times' (Matthew 26:75) (4)
 2 Relating to the books of the Bible between Acts and Revelation (9)
 3 'They have — the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2) (5)
 4 Belief (5)
 5 'Take the following fine spices: ... 250 shekels of fragrant — ' (Exodus 30:23) (4)
 6 'Do not — Jerusalem, but wait for the gift' (Acts 1:4) (5)
 10 A seer (anag.) (5)
 11 'Even there your hand will — me' (Psalm 139:10) (5)
 12 The wild variety was part of John the Baptist's diet (Mark 1:6) (5)
 13 A non-Greek speaker who was looked down on by civilized people (Colossians 3:11) (9)
 14 Famous 1950s musical whose characters included members of
 16 Across, — and Dolls (4)
 15 The province from which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19) (4)
 18 'He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring — — his hand' (Ezekiel 40:3) (3,2)
 20 'Today, if you hear his — , do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion' (Hebrews 3:15) (5)
 21 The Jericho prostitute who hid two Israelite spies on the roof of her house (Hebrews 11:31) (5)
 22 'And now these three remain: faith, — and love. But the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13) (4)
 23 'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end' (Daniel 5:26) (4)

Solution on Page 38**Sudoku Solution**

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

Crossword Solution

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

*All Saints 200 Club winners...***JANUARY 2026 Draw****1st** *JENNY KENNINGTON***2nd** *MARGARET COLLIER***3rd** *BARBARA BRADLEY****Congratulations to January's winners!***

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