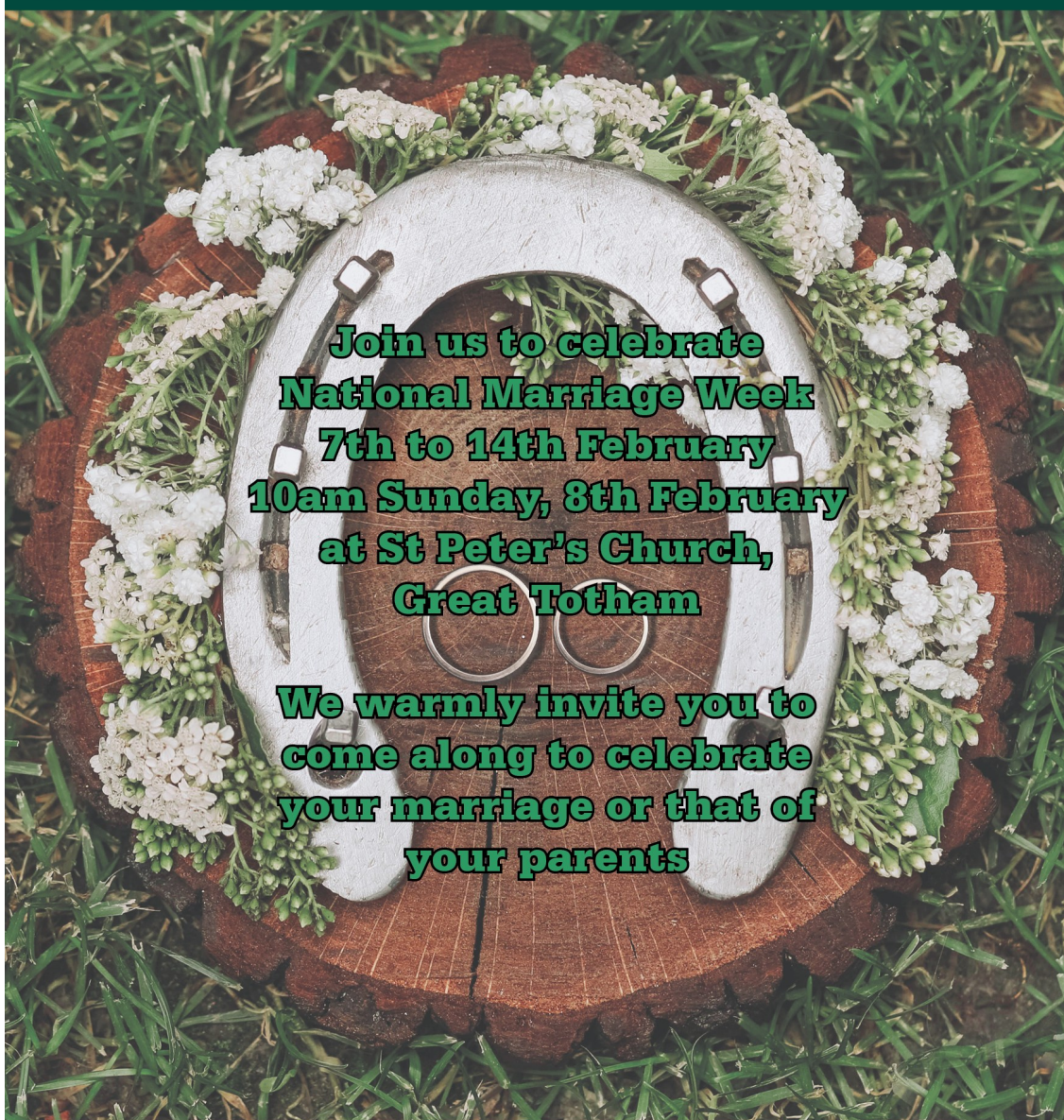




Great Totham Parish Magazine

sent to every home in Great Totham
February 2026

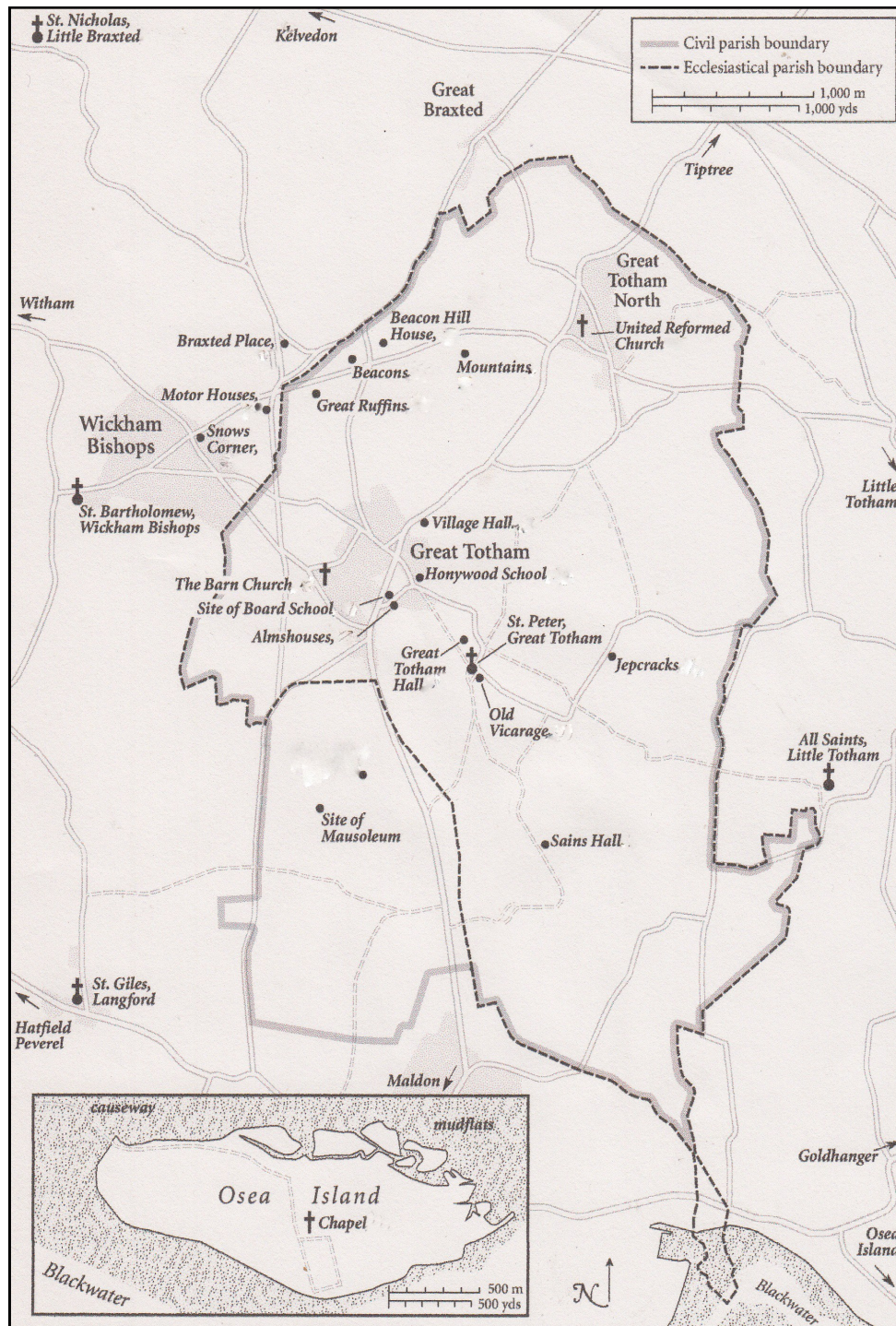


**Join us to celebrate
National Marriage Week
7th to 14th February
10am Sunday, 8th February
at St Peter's Church,
Great Totham**

**We warmly invite you to
come along to celebrate
your marriage or that of
your parents**

Inside this Edition -

Christmas celebrations
Lent



St Peter's Church Contact Details



Blackwater
Benefice



Blackwater
Benefice

Parish Contacts:

Priest in Charge (*Vacant*)

Lead Associate Minister

Andy Vince 01621 868415 / 07952 144613

Email: andrew.vince15@gmail.com

Associate Priest (*Vacant*)

Churchwarden (*Vacant*)

Please contact Rosie Pollock 07908 776750 with any enquiries.

Services

See pages 6 and 7 for details of services and online worship

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals

If you are considering baptism for yourself or your children, weddings, funeral arrangements, Holy Communion at home, or you would just like a visit, please contact Rosie Pollock, Benefice Administrator, 07908 776750, email office.blackwaterbenefice@gmail.com

Rosie is generally available on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Messages left at other times during the week will be responded to at regular intervals.

Magazine:

Enquiries:	Helen Mutton:	01621 891067
	Jackie Masterson	07951 537206
Adverts:	Sue Sharp	07548 826603
Deliveries:	Cheryl Knott	01621 890940
Email (for all enquiries):	parishmagazinetotham@yahoo.co.uk	

St Peter's Church Website:

www.achurchnearyou.com/church/6657



Photographs

On many occasions, photographs are taken of adults and children for the Parish Magazine, Church Website and Church Facebook page to record the life and work of the church in Great Totham. If at any time you would prefer that a photograph was neither kept nor used, please indicate this to the photographer who will delete the image.

Church News



Blackwater Benefice Ministry Team Message



February is often considered to be a somewhat dreary month. It is still wintertime with short days, cold weather and not yet much cheer in gardens or countryside. One of Jesus's main messages to us is "Love your neighbour as yourself" So, turn all that cold and dreary weather around and be kind to yourself and those around you, your neighbours near and far. When it is cold and dark, cheer yourself up with a phone call or meeting up; friendship is a good antidote to feeling tucked up and wintry.

My grandmother had a book with suggestions for dealing with the dark days of winter. Here are one or two that I remember, all things children can join in with:

- ◇ Bring a sprig from a hedgerow into the house, put it in some water and watch the leaf buds unfurl.
- ◇ With a needle and embroidery thread, stitch a coloured pattern onto a piece of cloth or a scarf etc.
- ◇ Take a walk along the same route now and again and note the differences each week as things grow.
- ◇ Sow mustard or cress seeds onto some tissue in a flat-bottomed dish and keep them damp.
- ◇ For a modern version, set mung beans in a flat-bottomed dish with a bit of water, cover and keep them warm. They will need gently teasing with a fork to loosen them now and again.
- ◇ Another idea, which many might not consider, is to go along to your nearest church or chapel on a Sunday morning and join in; it is known to be good for mental health. You don't have to be a believer, God won't mind! Check what time the service is on a Sunday morning and join in the singing, the quiet time and afterwards the cup of coffee and a chat.

Right in the middle of February is St Valentine's Day, which celebrates an obscure figure from the 3rd Century. An enormous myth has grown around St Valentine. He is thought to have been a bishop who married couples in defiance of the Emperor Claudius who had banned marriage because it was assumed to distract soldiers from fighting! Thus, St Valentine became associated with marriage. Then, about 600 years ago, this idea inspired Geoffrey Chaucer, best known for "The Canterbury Tales", to write a poem "The Parliament of Fowls"; this was about birds choosing their mate on St Valentine's Day. It is an amusing poem, where Dame Nature is surrounded by birds gathered on St Valentine's Day to profess their love for each other. The idea caught people's imagination.

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Church News

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Eventually, a Valentine card was recorded as having been made and sent in the 18th century. During the late 19th century, it became popular with people creating elaborate designs to send to their love. It has since been commercialised into a multi-million-pound industry as "St Valentine's Day". Surely a handmade card means more, or has capitalism succeeded in making people believe that money has to be spent?

This year, Lent begins in February because Easter is on 5th of April, so Lent begins on 18th. Shrove Tuesday is 17th February and Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is 18th February. Lent is traditionally a time for fasting; it represents the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert after he had been baptised by John the Baptist in preparation for his work on earth. As part of the Church's year, Lent is the 40 days before Easter (not counting Sundays). Lent is an opportunity for us to stop and think, to take a moment each day for reflection and contemplation.

I wish you well for an interesting, constructive and thoughtful February.

*Isobel Doubleday
Authorised Local Preacher,
St Peter's Church, Great Totham*

Rotas	Church Flowers	Church Cleaning
1st February	Chris Kemsley	Heather Gulliver / Hardy-King
8th February	Daphne Taplin	-
15th February	Jenny Barclay	Mr and Mrs Hardy-King
22nd February	Lent	-
1st March	Lent	Glynis Potter and Sally Thake
Church Extension and Kitchen Cleaning: Sandra Smith		

In your prayers at home this month, please include:

Our 'Friendship Church' - Bragernes Kirke, Drammen, Norway
John, Nina and Peter

Parish Magazine

We currently need volunteer deliverers, 10 times a year, for homes in Plains Road and Maypole Road. If you can help, please contact Cheryl on 01621 890940 or Helen on 01621 891067, email: parishmagazinetotham@yahoo.co.uk

Church News

Services at St Peter's Church

St Peter's Church is open for private prayer
10am-3pm Monday to Saturday
11am-3pm on Sundays

Date	Time	Service	Readings
1st February Fourth Sunday of Epiphany Candlemas	10am 6pm	Morning Service of the Word Evensong by Zoom	1 Kings 17. 8-16 1 Cor. 1. 18-end <i>Gospel:</i> John 2. 1-17
8th February Second Sunday before Lent National Marriage Week	10am 6pm	Morning Service of the Word Celebration of National Marriage Week Evensong by Zoom	Gen. 1. 1– 2. 3 Rom. 8. 18-25 <i>Gospel:</i> Matt. 6. 25-end
15th February Sunday next before Lent	10am 6pm	Holy Communion Evensong by Zoom	Exod. 24. 12-end 2 Pet. 1. 16-end <i>Gospel:</i> Matt. 17. 1-9
18th February Ash Wednesday	10am	Holy Communion	Isa. 58. 1-12 2 Cor. 5. 20—6. 10 <i>Gospel:</i> Matt. 6. 1-6, 16-21
22nd February First Sunday of Lent	10am 6pm	Holy Communion Evensong by Zoom	Gen. 2. 15-17, 3. 1-7 Rom. 5. 12-19 <i>Gospel:</i> Matt. 4. 1-11

Donations



To donate to St Peter's Church:

- scan the QR code;
- make a BACS payment to St Peter's Church (sort code 20-54-30, account number 20882739);
- send a cheque (payable to 'St Peter's Church, Great Totham') to:
17 Goat Lodge Road CM9 8BU

Church News



Benefice Worship

Visit the website or Facebook page for up to date information on services, or contact Karin Mann (01621 891215) or Karen Tarpey (01621 892122).



<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/6657/>

<https://www.facebook.com/StPetersChurchGreatTotham/>



For details of Evensong by Zoom contact Rev'd Sue Godsmark

Book of Common Prayer Communion Services:

10am	Wednesdays	at St. Nicholas, Tolleshunt D'Arcy
5.30pm	Saturdays	at All Saints Little Totham

Visit the website or email blackwaterbenefice@gmail.com for details of other Benefice events and activities.

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Charity Number: XN 12862

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2nd Prize: Vanessa Ellams
3rd Prize: David Kemsley

December

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2nd Prize: Peter Ashby
3rd Prize: Martyn Hardy-King

Over the course of a year, 50% of subscriptions is returned in prizes. For every 100 members, the prize value will be £50 per month: 1st prize £25, 2nd prize £15 and 3rd prize £10. More members means bigger prizes.

Membership runs from 1st May to 30th April the following year, although you may join at any time. If you would like to join the scheme, whose proceeds benefit the church, please contact Roger Allen, 100+ Club Administrator, on 01621 892334, email: rw_allen@yahoo.co.uk

Subscriptions (£12 per year) may be by standing order, online bank transfer (sort code 20-54-30, account number 20882739, reference "100+ Club") or by cheque/cash to: Roger Allen, "Kimlee", Burns Green, Great Totham, CM9 8UL



Coffee Morning at The Honywood

Our next Coffee Morning will be held on Saturday, 28th February. We look forward to seeing you then for bacon butties, tea, coffee, cake and chat, 10am to 12 noon, in The Honywood, Hall Road.

Sheila Allen

Church News

News from the Belfry

It was the night of 14th April 1912. It was dark and freezing cold, but the North Atlantic Sea was calm. The Titanic was steaming at nearly her maximum speed of 22 knots despite receiving a warning about pack ice in the vicinity. Most of the passengers had retired for the night except for a few gentlemen enjoying a game of cards. Up in the crow's nest on the forward mast, seamen lookouts Frederick Fleet and Reginald Lee were on duty. They did not have the advantage of having binoculars to use as these were locked in a cabin and the key could not be located. There was a strange haze between the sea and the horizon. Suddenly Fleet saw a huge dark shape directly in the path of the ship. He immediately rang the crow's nest bell three times to signal danger straight ahead. The bridge was alerted by telephone that there was an iceberg directly ahead. In response First Officer Murdoch ordered full astern and hard to starboard to try to avoid it. At exactly 11.40pm the ship's side scraped the iceberg. The rest is history, well documented in books and on film. Just over 1500 passengers and crew died that night, making it one of the worst loss of lives at sea in peacetime.

The Titanic's three bells served as both navigational and communication aids on board ship. One was located close to the crow's nest, a second bell below the crow's nest and a much smaller bell near the bridge window. The bells were also used for general timekeeping and for signalling other vessels in the vicinity. The brass crow's nest bell, the one rung by the lookout Frederick Fleet, was cast by Thomas Utley & Co Brass Founders at their Silverdale Works at Tuebrook, Liverpool. They also made all the brass portholes for the ship. It was common practice to inscribe a ship's bell with its name and it is likely that this was the case with the Titanic. Titanic had two sister ships, the Britannic and the Olympic. The Britannic sank in November 1916 following an explosion, whilst the Olympic was in service until 1935. When she was scrapped, her name was clearly visible on her bell. It was fortunate that bell founder Thomas Utley declined his invitation to sail on Titanic's maiden voyage.

There has always been a fascination in locating the wreck of the Titanic and, in the 1980s, technological advancement enabled this to become a reality. The problem was that no one knew exactly where the Titanic had sunk, as the coordinates, given at the time of her sinking, were incorrect. The wreck was eventually located in 1985 by Doctor Robert Ballard, an underwater geologist from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts. He used two submersibles to locate her whereabouts, the Argo, a remotely operated camera sledge and Jason, a smaller submersible also equipped with a camera and lighting. In 1987, despite fierce opposition, a further expedition took place backed by American and European investors. The mechanical arms of the submersible Nautilus plucked hundreds of articles from the wreck, including the crow's nest bell. The crow's nest disintegrated as the bell was snatched from the

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Church News

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foremast. The bell was quite badly corroded and any name inscribed upon it had long disappeared. The original bell's casting mould was donated to the Maritime Museum in Liverpool, whilst the bell itself is now exhibited in The Titanic Museum, Massachusetts.



Congratulations go to David Blake (pictured), who completed his 'Foundation Ringing Skills' on 5th December and has now passed his 'Learning the Ropes Level Two'. He was presented with his certificate on 14th December.

Do you fancy learning to ring our bells? It doesn't matter if you are a complete novice as full instruction will be given.

For further information, please contact Janice, our Tower Captain, on 07790 354338 or alternatively visit www.greattothambellringers.org.uk

Andrew and Catherine Hood

Christmas Wreath Making Workshop



On Saturday, 22nd November in the Honywood Hall, 22 ladies had an afternoon of laughter and fun whilst making Christmas wreaths under the expert guidance of Jacqui Anderson from Florist on the Green. The wreath making was followed by tea/coffee, homemade cakes and a raffle.



Thank you Jacqui!

Karen Tarpey

Published by the PCC of St Peter's Church, Great Totham

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Church News



Welcome to the Mothers' Union 150th year of celebration! More will be shared throughout the year. Although we do not meet in February, our March meeting is as below.

Mothering Sunday Posy Making

On Saturday, 14th March, we will be making the posies for Mothering Sunday, from 2.30pm in the church extension. If you would like to join us, just turn up with a pair of secateurs, some greenery from your garden (daffodils will be provided) and a smile. We look forward to seeing willing hands. You'll even get a cuppa and biscuit as a reward for your labours! Please contact me if you would like more information.

We warmly welcome any new members, please ring me on 01621 891315 for more details.

June Eaton

Christmas at St Peter's Church



Thank you to all those who helped in any way with our Christmas services. The church was beautifully decorated and we are grateful to all those who donated greenery and flowers, as well as to Wayne Buckley for providing the wonderful Christmas tree, expertly put up by the Tarpey family.

The church was completely full for both Christingles, and other services were very popular, including the wonderful children's Nativity Play. We enjoyed seasonal refreshments after the Nine Lessons and Carols service, organised by the Community Choir, ably supported by the Tower Bell Ringers and Hand Bell Ringers.

Photos courtesy of Chris Mutton and Rosie Pollock

Helen Mutton



Children's Colouring Page

National Marriage Week 7th-14th February

This week is celebrated in churches and communities across the country. The purpose is to celebrate the importance of marriage; it also celebrates diversity and vibrancy of marriage as a basis for family life in the UK. Maybe you could ask your mums and dads or grandparents to let you see their wedding photos? Have you ever been a bridesmaid, page boy, ring bearer or even a flower girl?



Sourced by June Eaton

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Community News

The late Jeanne Shrimpton: A Tribute

Mum was a larger-than-life character. She was brave, determined, generous and funny. There was always enough food in her cupboards to feed an army and room in her small home for anyone who needed it. Our bungalow was always full of people, including our friends, Mum's friends, pets and, more often than not, someone sleeping on the sofa who needed a place to stay. It was chaotic and noisy, but always full of life, love and drama.

Mum was kind, compassionate and generous with her time, looking after any neighbour or friend who needed help. Most evenings in her younger years, she would be visiting someone in the village who needed help. In 1988 she was presented with a Yeomanry of the Village Award for her voluntary services to the elderly, and it was well deserved. As children, we would be sent to our various elderly neighbours to see if they needed any errands run. We were issued with strict instructions not to take any money or reward for our efforts and if we did, we were sent straight back to return it.

Mum's passion since she was a child was amateur dramatics. Even after suffering a stroke, she still produced and acted in plays at Great Totham Village Hall, her second home. In the 1970s, Mum ran discos and a drama social club for us bored Totham teenagers and she played a big part in putting on the annual village carnival.

She was an avid Whist player and often played twice a week in Great Totham and Wickham Bishops with her best friend and whist partner Auntie Olive, who sadly passed away too many years ago. For years they also played scrabble every week in Mum's kitchen and poor Auntie Olive only won once. In her younger years Mum was very good at tennis, football and cricket and played the piano. Her other passion was gardening; she would always prefer to be outside digging than in the house, unless, of course, there was someone indoors to share a cup of tea and a chat.

Mum loved her children, grandchildren, brothers and sister, nieces and nephews. We were all aware that we needed to be careful not to mention that we liked a particular food or treat, or you would get it every week until you plucked up the courage to say you didn't like it anymore. Until her last illness, I still received M&S Walnut Whips every week. She showed her love through food, buying your favourite treats, books or collectables.

Mum worked in the fields all through our childhood, picking fruit and vegetables; throughout the summer, we were lucky enough to have strawberries every single day! In the school holidays, she would pack up us four children and take us to work with her. We loved it and Mum made the best packed lunches. In the 1980s, Mum got her dream job as a home help looking after the elderly and housebound in the village. Of course, she baked cakes and treats to take to her clients and became friends with them all.

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Community News

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The last 20 years of her life were difficult, but she carried on regardless and on her worst days she would say to me 'you just get up every morning and put one foot in front of the other'. And she did! She even joined the local art group, was a proud member of the Mothers' Union during this time, and managed holidays to Scotland with her best friends Joan or Joyce. She continued to be an avid knitter and knitted hundreds of teddies for Broomfield Hospital. The rest of her time was spent doing her crosswords, jigsaws or reading.

Sadly, due to Vascular Dementia and complex health needs, the last two years of her life were spent in a care home and not looking out on her beautiful garden. At the Lodge in Maldon, she was treated with love and respect, and we thank the wonderful staff who looked after her. We must also mention Jonathan, who has looked out for her and been at her side all his life, we thank you, Jon.

There is too much to say about Mum in such a short space but just know that she lived her life to the full. She was strong, capable, kind, energetic and funny.

Mum believed in heaven, and she will be there now, chatting with the many friends, family and pets who have gone before her. No one will be happier to see her than Dad who loved her with his whole heart.

Time to rest now Mum, your work is done and you did your best. Love you. Rest in Peace.

Sally Black

Church News

Graveyard

St Peter's Church graveyard looked lovely over the Christmas period, with flowers and wreaths on loved ones' graves. As we at St Peter's Church try and adhere to Diocesan regulations, we allow flowers, wreaths etc for a couple of weeks around significant events.

As Christmas is now over a month ago, we would ask you to remove items from your loved ones' graves/crosses please. We will be tidying the churchyard in February and any wreaths or flowers that have died will be thrown away, and memorabilia placed by the shed for you to collect at your convenience.



Thank you for your understanding.

*Karen Tarpey
On behalf of
St Peter's Church PCC*

Church News

St Peter's Church Great Totham Christmas Fayre A Great Success

On Saturday, 6th December, St Peter's Church, Great Totham, held its annual Christmas Fayre. This year's theme was "Elves' Workshop".

There was a fantastic atmosphere over the duration of the event, helped along by 'workings' of the human fruit machine. The hamper raffle was a phenomenal success with a staggering 25 hampers in total up for grabs. People were able to enjoy a hot cup of tea or coffee and a sausage roll or mince pie, and for those who fancied something a little stronger, a range of alcoholic drinks were available from the bar provided by Yamas Events. We would particularly like to thank Yamas Events for stepping in at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances. For those who were feeling a little more peckish, White Gold Fish & Chips Van (No.3) were on hand to provide a range of freshly cooked food. We thank them for stepping in at the last minute too.



It was a pleasure to see a fantastic range of ages attending, including lots of families, whose young children seemed to thoroughly enjoy the Christmas activities that were being run by some of the local youngsters, concluding with the highlight of meeting Father Christmas himself.

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Church News

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*Photos
courtesy of
Helen Sinclair*



For the older demographic, many a puzzle, book, or tombola prize was bought or won, along with a lovely array of local crafts.

With the support of the local community and many visitors from the surrounding villages and towns, we were able to raise the impressive sum of just over £2,300, up from just under £1,500 last year.

This amazing figure would not have been possible without the support of all the fantastic local businesses that donated items for the hampers or supported us financially, allowing us to elevate the event to the success it was. On behalf of the organising committee, we would like to thank everyone who gave up their time to help with the event, and to everyone who came along too.

We would like to thank the following businesses for their support:

Awareness in Balance, Baker Estates, BFS Fuel Services, Barracuda Garage Doors, Captains Wood Barn, Caroline Poulter, D.W. Clark & Sons, Elaris Chiropractic, ES Cleaning, FAB Footcare, Feature Walls & Panels, Frankee Hajder SPMU, G&C Painting, Gills Motors, Great Braxted Farm Shop, Great Totham Stores, Heidi's Here, Hughes & Son Landscapes, JAP Contracts, JD Fitness Trainer, Keymann, Little Oaks Care Home, Little Mountains Farm, Mighty Oak Brewery, Old Farm Totham, Olivers Nurseries, Pawfect Pooches, Perrywood, SM Tree & Landscaping Services, Storage Aspects, Take Me Out Trips, Tasha's Coffee, Tesco (Tiptree), Tom's Farm Shop, Tony Poulter, Upsons Mowers, Wicks Manor, Wickham Flooring.

John Keeble

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Community News

Infamy! Infamy! They've All Got It In For Me!

The above quote comes from Kenneth Williams, playing Julius Caesar in the famous 1964 film, *Carry On Cleo*, and it was 100 years ago this month that the highly talented actor was born.

Born on 22nd February 1926 in Kings Cross, London, to parents of Welsh descent, Kenneth Williams was educated at The Lyulph Stanley Boys' Central Council School in Camden Town, until he left to become apprenticed as a draughtsman to a map maker. However, it was at school that he first got the "acting bug" when his English teacher suggested he try out for the school play. He found that he loved acting and told his parents that he wanted to be an actor. However, his father regarded acting as "immoral and effeminate". So, he forbade his son becoming an actor although, as we know, Kenneth later became highly successful in this field.

Kenneth was sent to art school in 1941 and later called up for the army in 1944, where he joined the Royal Engineers, utilising his skill as a cartographer. He was serving in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) when the war ended, and he applied to join the Combined Services Entertainment Unit, where he met such luminaries as Stanley Baxter, Peter Vaughan and John Schlesinger. The unit put on shows for the troops and Kenneth helped design the posters for these shows as well as act in them.

After the army, he joined a repertory company as a professional actor. However, he struggled somewhat with serious roles, although he excelled in comedy parts. He got his big break when a radio producer spotted him and hired him to do voice characterisations on the hugely popular radio comedy, *Hancock's Half Hour*. Things then snowballed from there. The radio work led on to the producers of the "Carry On" films hiring him. This series became his most famous, and he starred in 26 of the 31 films in the series, more than any other actor. Apart from the *Carry On* films, Kenneth Williams was in very many plays, radio shows, television shows, and talk shows. He also wrote several books.

He was a complex man and full of contradictions; he complained about the "Carry On" films in private, but talked fondly about them in later talk shows. He also said he disliked having Welsh roots and the Welsh language, but talked in glowing terms of visiting there. He was also a lonely man and never had any romantic liaisons.

He suffered greatly from bowel and back complaints in his later life and sadly passed away at the age of 62 on 15th April 1988, after taking some sleeping pills on top of his normal pain medication, and the combination proved fatal. His passing at a relatively young age meant the world had lost one of its great comedic actors and orators.

Chris Bingham

Community News

News from Great Totham Primary School
www.greattotham.essex.sch.uk



iRock

At the end of last term, we enjoyed an exciting concert from iRock students who really impressed their audience.

Many KS2 children enjoy weekly sessions with iRock and enjoy performing within bands, including vocals, drums, guitar and keyboard.



Y3/4 Tag Rugby Friendly

Maldon Court Primary kindly invited us to their PE venue for a friendly tag rugby match. We brought along two teams from the rugby club, giving several children their first experience of playing against another school side.

Not even the rain could dampen our enthusiasm and it eventually eased off, making the afternoon more enjoyable for both players and spectators. We hope this will be the first of many fixtures between our schools.

All the children received a rugby pin badge as a memento of their efforts and the fun they had throughout the afternoon!



/continued on next page

Community News

/continued from previous page

Y5/6 Tag Rugby Tournament

Our Year 5/6 tag rugby team competed in the Colchester and Blackwater Schools Tournament on 4th December. Despite the drizzly weather, our spirits remained high!

The team played eight matches and won every single one, showcasing some runaway performances, as well as two closely fought games against Hamilton and Maldon Court. Their teamwork and sportsmanship shone throughout the tournament, and they fully earned their victory.



A huge thank-you to Stuart Pearson and Sam Delderfield for their fantastic coaching and support. This outstanding achievement not only secured the team gold medals, but also a place in the County Finals, which will take place on 4th February at Southend Rugby Club. Congratulations to the whole team!

Compiled by Jo Mazzarella

Essex Library Service



For more information, visit: <https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/>

Until 22nd February, take part in our exciting free winter reading challenges:

For children: The Winter Reading Challenge

Children can meet six adorable 'Pawfessionals' and enjoy a mix of reading and creative activities. If you finish, you can enter a prize draw to win some amazing goodies, including children's Kindles!

For adults: Online Winter Reading Bingo

Expand your reading list with 16 inspiring prompts. Complete a line of four and enter the prize draw to win book vouchers worth up to £100 or a book bundle!

<https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/digital-content/winter-reading-challenge/childrens-challenge>

<https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/news/adult-winter-bingo-challenge-2026>

Free Events for February Half Term

There are plenty of ways to keep your little ones entertained over half term at your local library. Become an Ocean Explorer, interview a police officer, enjoy tales of a mind-reading sausage dog, and much more!

Book of the month for February

'A Cold Wind from Moscow' by Rory Clements, the enthralling eighth instalment in the Tom Wilde spy thriller series. Download free with your library membership.

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Church News



Lent 2026

“Just as a bulb cannot be ready for spring unless it has lived through winter, so Christians cannot be ready for Easter unless they have observed Lent - God’s Springtime”.

Joyce Huggett

Writing at the beginning of January, it was such a delight to see the promise of spring to come when noticing the tiny snowdrop shoots just peeping through the soil of our cottage garden on a very cold winter’s day.

As usual, the 40 days of Lent begin on Ash Wednesday, which this year falls on 18th February. The period in the church calendar called Lent is to commemorate, and indeed celebrate, the 40 days leading up to Easter. We remember the very beginning of Christ’s public ministry, when the Holy Spirit sent him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Christians will treat Lent as an opportunity to practice acts of unselfishness and love to others in tribute to Jesus. This will sometimes take the form of acts of self denial, but also thankfulness and remembrance of all Christ has done for them. Often, people will practice a token of self-denial by temporarily forgoing treats such as chocolate or alcohol. Self denial is a discipline which, in a very small way, helps us appreciate what Jesus did.

May you know the presence of Jesus always, and especially as we look forward to the special time of Easter, a season of great hope, God’s springtime.

Paul Smith

Ruby Wedding Celebration

In December, a quarter peal was rung to celebrate the 40th Wedding anniversary of Daphne and Bernard Taplin.

Sunday, 14th December 2025 in 44m (6¾ in B)

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- 1 Vanessa Ellams
- 2 John Keeble
- 3 Vicki Elliott
- 4 Nicholas Elliott
- 5 Janice Spalding (C)
- 6 David Blake

Congratulations from all the Great Totham Bell Ringers.

Janice Spalding





Treat yourself

Come with your friends and/or family
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Introduction to Dyeing – Saturday February 7th, May 16th, June 23rd
Tuesday March 24th, April 21st, June 23rd

Create BOTANICAL prints on fabric and paper:

Introduction to printing – Saturday February 21st, April 25th, June 20th
Tuesday February 17th, April 28th, June 30th

Fee: £60 per person. Bookings limited to 8 per workshop.

Dates for advanced/specialist courses and family groups with children available on request

DYE CLUB meets at Lofts Farm 10.30am-12.30pm on the first Tuesday of each month. It's a relaxed way to develop and apply what you have learned to individual projects and your own area of interest with expert guidance.

£30 per session, including materials, equipment and friendship!

To book and for further information contact: edwinaann1517@gmail.com



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Community News



Your District Councillors



We will hear next month what the future structure of local authorities will be in Essex. This means that we need to ensure that we leave a legacy for the district before we lose some of the control. We are ensuring that we are investing and maintaining in our assets and I will provide more information after we have set the budget for the Council.

Places Leisure opened their brand-new Adventure Climb facility at Blackwater Leisure Centre, marking the completion of the first phase of the £6million investment works taking place across the leisure facilities, managed and operated by Places Leisure, in Maldon. The new Adventure Climb offers an action-packed experience for those of all ages and abilities by blending fun, fitness and challenge. The new facility is equipped with four climbing wall lanes, as well as 23 themed climbing experiences reaching heights up to nearly 28 feet. With over 60 climbing challenges, users can expect to learn the basics of climbing, as well as testing their agility, balance and confidence. This investment demonstrates our commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of our community, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have for years to come.

Maldon Mud Race Partnership in 2026

Maldon District Council will be partnering with the Maldon Mud Race in a new collaboration.

The Maldon Mud Race is an iconic event for the district. It is widely recognised both nationally and internationally, with frequent celebrity entrants and TV coverage. In addition, the Mud Race sees thousands of residents and visitors flock to Prom Park to watch the event each year. It is therefore the perfect opportunity to showcase what the district has to offer and the other events that take place over the year. The Economic Development and Tourism teams will be looking to maximise this opportunity to benefit the district's businesses, as well as to raise the profile of the Maldon District as an amazing destination.

The team behind the Maldon Mud Race has grown the charity immensely over the last 50 years and have built the event up to what it is today. We're delighted to be working in partnership with them this year.

The Maldon Mud Race is on **Sunday, 26th April**.

Jade and I are always keen to help with any ward issues, or if you have any problems or questions about the Council's services. If at any time you need to contact us, please phone 01621 890809 or email:

cllr.richard.siddall@maldon.gov.uk

cllr.jade.hughes@maldon.gov.uk

*Best wishes
Richard*

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Community News

What's on in your Community

The Treehouse Club Pre-School
Monday to Friday, Village Hall

Rainbows
Monday, Church Extension

Carpet Bowls
630pm-830pm Tuesday, Village Hall

Baby Signage
9am Wednesday, Church Extension

Bible Study Group
1030am Wednesday, Honywood Hall

Community Choir
730pm Wednesday, Church Extension

Edward Bear Club
1030am Thursday, Church Extension

Great Totham WI
730pm 2nd Thursday, Village Hall

Wickham Bishops Gardening Club
730pm third Thursday,
St Bartholomew's Church Hall

Wickham Bishops WI
2pm last Thursday,
St Bartholomew's Church Hall

Knit and Natter
10am Friday, Honywood Hall

Bellringing Practice
745pm Friday, St Peter's Church

Mothers' Union
145pm some Fridays, Honywood Hall
Contact June Eaton 01621 891315 for dates

St Peter's Church Coffee Morning
10am 4th Saturday, Honywood Hall

URC, Great Totham North

Art Club
Monday, 2pm-4pm

Upholstery Classes
Monday, 7.30pm-9.30pm
Tuesday, 10am-12 noon;
12.30pm-2.30pm

Lunch Club
10.30am—2pm
2nd and 4th Wednesday

Craft and Chatter
1.30pm—3.30pm 2nd Thursday

Piecemakers
Patchwork and Needlework Group
1.30pm—3.30pm last Thursday

Church Coffee Morning
10am—11.30am 2nd Saturday

*See page 39 for contact details
To include your group here, email:
parishmagazinetotham@yahoo.co.uk*

Future Events

Saturday, 14th March
MU Posy Making, St Peter's
Church Extension

Sunday, 15th March
Mothering Sunday Service at St
Peter's Church

Sunday, 5th April
Easter Sunday at St Peter's
Church



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Community News



Great Totham WI



In December we welcomed members, guests and our friends from Maldon Wycke, Eves Corner and Wickham Bishops to our Christmas meeting. We were entertained by the Goldhanger Shanty Singers and enjoyed platters of food in the interval before hearing more from the singers. A great evening!



Our January meeting had to be cancelled as we were expecting bad weather from Storm Goretti!

Next month we will be having a talk on The Fisherman's Mission with Andy Malcolm as our speaker. We will also hold our annual tombola.

We are always pleased to see new members and welcome you as a guest at any of our meetings, held on the second Thursday in the month at Great Totham Village Hall, commencing at

7.30pm. If you would like any more information about our group, you can find us on our website www.greattothamwi.weebly.com or, alternatively, email greattothamwi@gmail.com.

Sue Pulford



Wickham Bishops WI



On a blustery afternoon, we were regally entertained by Debbie Spice, an actress and singer whose voice filled the hall with songs from light opera and musical theatre. She told us of singing from a young age and achieving her ambition to perform on stage. As this was our last meeting before Christmas, one of our members had made a delicious Christmas cake, which was enjoyed by all. Nine members again made Christmas wreaths at Emma's, Tom's Shop at Great Totham, followed by lunch at Claire's Cabin, a lovely end to a busy morning.

Our meetings are held in Wickham Bishops Church Hall on the last Thursday of the month 2pm–4 pm. We are always happy to welcome visitors and new members. Please contact me on 01621 815161 for further information.

Margaret Curtis

Community News

Contacting the Police

In an emergency dial 999

For non-emergencies dial 101 extension 412335 / 01245 491491

Send non-emergency police related information/intelligence to your North Blackwater Neighbourhood Policing Team at:

<http://www.essex.police.uk/> or text 07624 80010

Maldon Police 0300 333 4444 or 101
Maldon District Council Offices, Princes Road, Maldon



Visit essex.police.uk/your-area for news and updates on:

- The work of the Community and Local Policing Teams
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- Crime prevention



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Great Totham Neighbourhood Watch

Visit Maldon District Neighbourhood Watch website for up to date local crime reports, non-urgent news and links to the police and national NHW websites: <http://www.maldondistrictnhw.co.uk/index.htm>

For Totham Hill Green, phone Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, Ian Barratt, on 891949, email: ianbarratt43@gmail.com

For local crime reports, visit <https://www.police.uk/essex/28/crime/>



Wickham Bishops Library

Monday: 2pm-5.30pm
Saturday: 9am-5pm

Wednesday: 2pm-5.30pm
Telephone: 0345 6037628

Baby and Toddler Rhymetime: Mondays 2.15pm-2.45pm.
Stories and rhymes for babies and young children.

Saturday Story Time: 10.30am-11am every third Saturday of the month.
Free sessions aimed at children aged 5 and under, but everyone is welcome.

Ancestry: Wednesdays 3.30pm-4.30pm. Help to research your family history.

Code Club: Saturdays 9am-10am.
Learn how to make cool games, animations and websites.

Contacts for Community Activities (See page 3 for Church Activities)

Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers		www.girlguiding.org.uk	
Rainbows at St Peter's Church	Rosie Pollock		893168
Scouts, Cubs, Beavers at Prances	Brenda Heal	bjheal@btinternet.com	
Great Totham Cricket Club Colts	Paul Marks		07709 793958
The Treehouse Club Pre-School	Village Hall		01621 468020
Edward Bear Club (Toddler Group)	St Peter's Church	Rosie Pollock	893168
Gardening Club	Village Hall	Pauline Wright	892855
WI: GT Evening 2nd Thurs. 7.30pm	Village Hall	Sue Pulford	892063
GT & WB last Thurs. 2pm	St.B Church Hall	Di Mellor	892247
Day Centre Wednesdays	URC	Jean Johnstone	892293
Carpet Bowls Tues 6.30pm-8.30pm	Village Hall	Jean Cloughton	892286
Tollesbury Table Tennis Club	Paul Freeman	freemans21@hotmail.com	
		862510 / 07855 204505	
Maldon Croquet Club		maldoncroquetclub@gmail.com	
Wickham Bishops Drama Club		www.wickhambishopsdrama.co.uk	
Knit and Natter (Honywood Hall)	Sandra Smith		893153
Wickham Bishops Gardening Club	Stewart / Wendy	HortiClub@outlook.com	893360

Useful Telephone Numbers

Honywood Hall Hire	Karin Mann	929866
St Peter's Church Extension Hire	Karin Mann	929866
Village Hall hire	Sue Pulford	892063
URC hall hire	Sue Bowyer	893285
St Peter's—Interment of Ashes and Iron Crosses	Chris Munton	891817
Great Totham Parish Council	Clerk: Nikki Smith	07811400803
District Councillors	Jade Hughes cllr.jade.hughes@maldon.gov.uk	
	Richard Siddall	07979 853947 / 890809
County Councillor	Mark Durham	01245 227249 / 07850 967239
Great Totham Primary School		891091
Maldon District Council		854477
Maldon Citizens Advice	email: manager@maldoncitizensadvice.org.uk	875774
Police Community Support Officer		101
Water		01245 491234
Electricity		0845 6014516
Frank (Drugs Helpline) (free)		0300 1236600
Childline Helpline for children		0800 1111 (free)
Maldon District Health / Wellbeing advice	emily.fallon@maldon.gov.uk	
NSPCC 24 hour helpline for children		0800 800 500 (free)
The Samaritans		116 123
DIAL UK (Disability Information & Advice Line)		www.dialuk.info
Church of England, St. Peter's	Rosie Pollock	07908 776750
Totham Barn Free Evangelical Church	Contact Danbury Mission:	01245 227428
United Reformed Church		01376 500958
Wickham Bishops Church		
Maldon Methodist Church Office	Rev'd Clifford Newman	853423
Maldon Roman Catholic Church	Parish Priest - Fr. Jerold Savio	852259
Society of Friends (Quakers)	Clerk to the meeting - Sue Smith	854056
Salvation Army		853942
Christian Growth Centre (CGC), Maldon	Rob & Jeannie Saggs Pastors	855855

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

**AMETHYST
AMIGO
SECRETO
ARROW
BOUQUET
CADBURY
CANDLELIGHT**

**CARD
CHAMPAGNE
CHAUCER
CHOCOLATE
CUPID
DOVES
FLOWERS**

**HALLMARK
HAMLET
HEARTS
LOVEBIRDS
MARTYR
ROMANTIC
ROSES ARE RED**

**SAINT
SPRING
SWEETIE
WILL YOU BE**

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