



Challow

NEWS



~ December 2025 ~



Christmas Services at St. Nicholas

~ Carol Service ~

Sunday 14th December - 11.00 am

~ Family Carols around the Crib ~

Christmas Eve - 4.00 pm

~ Midnight Mass ~

Christmas Eve - 11.15 pm

~ Christmas Eucharist ~

Christmas Day - 11.00 am



~ January 2026 ~



'Challow News' is the Community Newsletter of St. Nicholas Church, East Challow



Main Street, East Challow.
OX12 9SH

Churchwardens

Mrs Liz Belcher: 01235 763966
Dr. Jeff Penfold: 01235 763173

Vicar: Rev Alec Gill

07739 563894

Email: vicaralec@valebenefice.org.uk

Associate Vicar:

Rev Dr. Miriam Jones

07474 095190

vicarmiriam@valebenefice.org.uk

Licensed Lay Minister: Sarah Shackleton

07587 776609

Email: SarahLLM@valebenefice.org.uk

Benefice Office: Grove Parish Church,

Main Street, Grove. OX12 7LQ

Open: Mon - Fri 10.00 - 12.00

Tel: 01235 771479

Email: office@valebenefice.org.uk



Details of all Services and Festivals
can be found on the

St. Nicholas website page of

A Church Near You

**www.achurchnearyou.com/
church/5811/**

East Challow Parish Council

clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk

Cricket Club - 01235 763335

R B L Club - 01235 763430

Village Hall - bookings.ecvh@gmail.com

Challow News - nigel.langford@me.com

Mably Way Health Centre

Church Street - 01235 770245

Newbury Street - 01235 639521

3 - Digit Numbers

999 - Emergency

111 - NHS (non emergency)

101 - POLICE (non emergency)

105 - NATIONAL POWER CUT
SERVICE

Emergency Defibrillator Locations

The Old Red Telephone Box

The Village Green, Main Street. OX12 9SR



Entrance Doorway

Challow & Childrey Cricket Club

Vicarage Hill. OX12 9RR

"I'm dreaming of a White Christmas" – goes the old song.

But this year some people are talking about a *"Blue Christmas"*. That is, a Christmas for those who are not feeling *"Christmassy"* – whether because of personal circumstances or because of the current state of the world, which makes many of us feel somewhat demoralised and perhaps disillusioned.

Traditionally Advent was the *"Blue Season"* a time to focus on the darkness of the world before going on to celebrate the light and joy of Christmas.

But Christmas also has its dark side. The story of a young couple about to give birth finding themselves homeless in Bethlehem. Or worse still, the same young couple forced to flee and becoming refugees in Egypt. Or worse even than that, the story of the babies of Bethlehem massacred by King Herod.

The 16th century Coventry Carol is an evocative expression of this darkness, with its heart-rending words:

***That woe is me, poor Child for Thee! And ever mourn and sigh,
For thy parting neither say nor sing, Bye, bye, lully, lullay.***

Words that will match the feelings of too many in our world today.

So Christmas is not an escape from reality. The first Christmas took place in a world not unlike ours, riven with war and violence, poverty and oppression. But it is out of that darkness that the light of Christmas comes – the story of the birth of a very special human being.

This was a man who loved everybody, who cared for the poor, healed the sick, lifted up the downhearted, challenged the powerful, and empowered the weak. He was like a dazzling light in a dark world. He brought people joy and hope – and still does today. He has been an inspiration to millions of people through the ages. If I didn't believe in God, I would still think him worth following.

His birth is good news – still worth celebrating today. What better time to gather friends and family, give time to each other, and try to include everybody.

A light in the darkness - a light we can still celebrate and share with those around us.

So whatever is happening in the world, may the message of Christmas bring you joy and hope this Christmas time – a joy and a hope that we can discover even more when we share it with others.

Charles Draper

Retired Vicar living in East Hanney.



Next Two Parish Council Meetings

will be held in the Village Hall

Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 7.00pm

Wednesday 14th January 2026 at 7.00pm

All villagers are invited to attend Parish Council meetings as observers and there is a 10 minute public discussion time early in the meeting where you can raise any matter you wish with the council.

The minutes of each meeting are available on the website.

www.eastchallowpc.co.uk

Public Art - update

The Parish Council are very pleased to announce that the installation of the Public Art is planned for the 19th November. An informal ceremony will take place for 5th December at 11.30am on the green patch of grass between the A417 and Hedgehill Road, to celebrate the Public Art installation. It would be nice to see you, to celebrate the Public Art installation which will be seen in the Village for years to come.

Road Closure - Letcombe Hill

Please be aware that Letcombe Hill will be closed from 19th January 2026 up to and including 21st January 2026.

Polite Request

There have been incidents of cows entering the recreation ground from the local farmer's field. Please can we remind you that the fence on the north side of the recreation ground is privately owned. Please note any entry into the farmers field, to access the public footpath, should be made via the stile in Cornhill Lane.



DON'T GIVE THIEVES AN EASY RIDE

HAVE YOU

- ▶ Removed your valuables such as cash, credit cards, shopping bags, sunglasses, mobile phones and any device holders?
- ▶ Parked with care in a well-lit area where possible?
- ▶ Locked your car and closed your windows?

If you see anything suspicious, please report it to Thames Valley Police

Visit the Thames Valley Police website for advice on how to prevent theft from a vehicle

Matthew Barber
Neighbourhood Officer
for Thames Valley

THAMES VALLEY
POLICE



East Challow Parish Council

wish all residents a very



Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year

East Challow Parish Council

Staff Vacancy

Parish Maintenance Warden

Applications are invited for the post of Parish Maintenance Warden to carry out a range of tasks to keep the parish neat and tidy and to improve the environment within the Parish Council's boundaries.

The successful candidate will play an integral role in serving the Parish of East Challow by carrying out a range of maintenance tasks keeping areas tidy and Parish Council owned assets in good repair.

For a job description please email clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk.

Apply in writing, including any relevant experience. Please mark the envelope confidential and send to the Chair, East Challow Parish Council, Coach Row, Main Street, East Challow, Wantage. OX12 9SW

Closing date for applications: 4.00pm on 15th January 2026

Is your child 3 or 4 years old?

Primary school place - you must apply now

If your child was born on or between **1 September 2021** and **31 August 2022**, you need to apply for a primary school place now.

You must still apply even if your child already attends a nursery attached to the school.

Deadline for applications is **15 January 2026**.

Apply online at

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/primaryadmissions
- It's quick, easy and secure.

You can get free access to the internet at many of our libraries and children's centres - ask for details at your local facility.

For help and information:

Web: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/primaryadmissions
Email: admissions.schools@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Tel: **01865 519800 Option 2**



SESRO - Consultation

Thames Water have launched the Statutory Consultation for the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) Project.

This will run for 11 weeks and all feedback must be received by 11.59pm on **13th January 2026**.



Have your say
on our proposals for a new reservoir

The South East is one of the driest regions in the UK. With drought risk increasing, we need to act now to secure water supplies for future generations. The reservoir would also bring lasting local benefits, including new spaces for nature, leisure, and community use.

We've now reached a major milestone: the launch of a statutory public consultation on our proposals. This is your opportunity to view our proposals, provide feedback, and help shape the future of water in your area.

We want to hear from you. Share your views by visiting thames-water.co.uk/SESRO2025 or scanning the QR code. On our website, you can also find out more about our proposals, our consultation materials, upcoming community information events and where you can pick up hard copies of our materials.



~ Liz Belcher ~
Challow Chatter

Hello Everyone...

December is here, and with it the excitement of preparing for Christmas. I have baked the Christmas cake and got some mince pies in the freezer, so I have made a start. The year seems to have passed very quickly with all the ups and downs of everyday life. I have been out and about with my furry friend Roxy, our new rescue dog, a Jack Russell cross. She is settling in well and we have enjoyed getting to know each other. While out with Roxy I have been watching the starlings. They gather in flocks in fields early morning at this time of year grazing on insects, slugs, snails and vegetation. When disturbed they take off all at once in a flock or murmuration, a wonderful aerodynamic display they are absolutely beautiful. I think their plumage is lovely, iridescent black glossed purple and green with white spangles. I like it when they fly on to our bird table squabbling and arguing with each other but always together in groups.

We have a large number of ladybirds wintering behind the church door. They have come to us before to spend the winter months at Saint Nicholas. I just hope they don't get disturbed, how they all know where to come is certainly a mystery. There were a lot of ladybirds this year, the weather suited them. They do so much good in the garden eating aphids.

Halloween & Fireworks...

I have to say that there were some spectacular displays around the village on Halloween, people have really put a lot of effort in. With ghosts, skeletons, witches and carved pumpkins in gardens all over East Challow. I hope the pumpkin growing farmers are benefitting from it.

I also found out over Bonfire Night that Roxy was absolutely terrified of the bangs and was trembling until it stopped. She took a long time to calm down. Meg was never bothered by it, but we will be more prepared with Roxy next time. I expect there will be fireworks about on New Year's Eve.

Remembrance Day...

The Remembrance Service in November, with the Act of Remembrance at the lych gate was very well attended. The Cubs and Beavers placed a beautiful wreath after the Service. The Challow branch of the Royal British Legion of course placed their wreath later in the day as always. The lych gate is the War Memorial for East Challow with the names of those in the village that served in both world wars listed on it. I have always considered it important to honour those who lost their lives in conflict for their country. I always place a poppy cross in memory of Harold Herring, my Mum's uncle who died at the battle Messines Ridge in 1917 aged nineteen, his body was never recovered. The battle was fought from 7th to 14th June 1917 West Flanders, Belgium and was a British victory. Harold's name is on a memorial wall there. Such a tragedy for the family, his mother never accepted that he would never come back and refused to move from where they had lived just in case that he made his way home somehow.

I hope you managed to see the wonderful display of poppies which was created by Helen Sherwood in church for Remembrance Sunday. There were both red and blue poppies, the blue poppies honouring the animals that were lost in battles, horses, mules, dogs, pigeons and many more. The arrangements were amazing, thank you so much Helen.

Whats going on this Christmas...

There is of course lots going on heading up to Christmas in Saint Nicholas church. Advent actually starts on 30th November. We celebrate our patronal Feast of Saint Nicholas on the 7th of December. St Nicholas was a bishop of Myra Italy he died on 6th December 343. Many miracles are credited to him; he is said to have brought three young boys back to life that had been murdered by a butcher and put in barrels of brine to be sold as ham. Another legend is that he learned that a man that had three daughters, and he couldn't provide a proper dowry for them which meant they couldn't marry and might have been forced into prostitution. Nicholas secretly provided three bags of gold which saved their honour. This is probably why he became the patron saint of children and has now become Santa Clause who leaves secret gifts for children.

Carol Service...

We are holding our church Carol service on 14th December at 11.00am and hope to see you there, we will of course have refreshments afterwards.

Community Carol Singing...

The Village Carols on the Green will be the following day, Monday 15th December at 7.00pm whatever the weather. It was a huge success last year with people providing goodies to share and having a laugh together. It's lovely to get people of all ages together singing. So, bring yourselves and a torch, and the Carol sheets will be provided. We are not expecting a choir just enthusiastic singing, so see you on the green.

Family Carols around the Crib...

Of course, there will be Carols around the Crib on Christmas eve in Church as always.

It is a lovely tradition that has been held over many years at Saint Nicholas.

It is also an interactive event which the children always love.



All the services will be posted on our Church notice board and in this issue.

The next issue will be in February which is a while away.



**Have a very Merry and Joyous Christmas and a very Happy New Year,
and of course as always stay safe for yourself and others.**



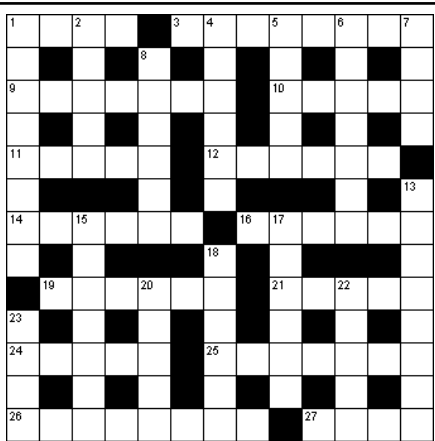
Would you love to feel slimmer for yourself, your health or an upcoming trip, without going on a diet, or completely cutting out your favourites...? Come along to any of my groups to discover how...

*Saturday	*Monday	*Tuesday
*7:30am & 9:00am	*5:30pm & 7:00pm	*4:00pm, 5:30pm & 7:00pm
*Challow & Childrey Cricket Club	*Wantage Methodist Church Hall	*Grove Old Mill Hall, Dixon Suite

Call or Message Becky on 07359 531030

real food, real support, real results





Across

Down

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Faith, -- and Charity (4) | 1 Good-looking (8) |
| 3 Roomy (8) | 2 One of the planets (5) |
| 9 Non-aligned (7) | 4 Constabulary (6) |
| 10 Choose to participate (3,2) | 5 Angry (5) |
| 11 Laziness (5) | 6 Trips (7) |
| 12 Trig ratio (6) | 7 Compos-mentis (4) |
| 14 Recollection (6) | 8 King in Camelot (6) |
| 16 Biblical strong man (6) | 13 Grounded (anag.) (8) |
| 19 Fleet of ships (6) | 15 Warlike (7) |
| 21 Use a divining-rod (5) | 17 Junkie (6) |
| 24 Egypt's capital (5) | 18 Simpler (6) |
| 25 Clique (2-5) | 20 Approximately (5) |
| 26 Lone (8) | 22 Fallacious (5) |
| 27 On tenterhooks (4) | 23 Frozen refreshments (4) |

And there were shepherds...

In his gospel, Luke tells how the shepherds in the fields were keeping watch over their flocks when they were terrified by the sudden arrival of heavenly angels, surrounded by the glory of the Lord. And the message of the angel that night has rung down the centuries:

"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10,11)

And so, the first people to greet the Saviour were not rich VIPs, but humble shepherds. And in turn, it was the shepherds who became the first evangelists: for they would have gone home to their families and neighbours that night with the amazing news of what they had seen.



Meanwhile, for Mary there followed a time of reflection. She gathered up in her mind all her impressions, and all that the shepherds had shared about the angelic visit. She knew it was treasure, and not to be squandered. Then she quietly pondered in her heart the meaning and significance of all that had happened, so that she would never forget.

Exuberant witness and quiet contemplation are not opposites. They are, in fact, good companions in the spiritual life!

So, this Christmas, let's be filled with the joy that the Saviour has also been born 'to us'. May our lives reflect the glory of His coming, even in a small way. May our interactions with friends, colleagues and families during this Advent season reflect the great joy that the angels brought that night, so long ago.



~ Save the Date ~

Sunday 1st February 2026

Service of Memories

To remember all those we have lost as we celebrate their lives and our time together

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



Everyone will be invited to light a candle in memory of a loved one



East Challow Community Warm Spaces

please join us for a Hot Drink and a chat at Challow and Childrey Cricket Club from 11.00 am on any of the following dates.

Friday 12th December

Friday 16th January, Friday 30th January

Friday 13th February, Friday 27th February



Come and be part of our
vibrant Christian community at...

Framland Care Home, Wantage

Call us on **0300 303 1470** or email
wantage@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

 **www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/framland**



PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY



November



£50 - N° 32 ~ Mr G. Shand

£20 - N° 58 ~ Mr N. Keay

£10 - N° 24 ~ Mr B. Penfold

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Would you like to join?

For further information please contact

Tricia Shand - 01235 764222

the.shandies@btinternet.com

**We are looking for more members
Would you like to join?**

Subscriptions to the 200 Club contribute towards the £20,000 which is required annually to keep our village Church open, in good repair and available for all who wish to use it.

The 200 Club is a monthly draw with 3 prizes each month - £50, £20 and £10

There is an additional prize of £100 in December.

The draw takes place on the first Sunday of every month, during coffee after morning service.

The cost is £2 per number per month, which can be paid monthly, 6 monthly or annually, and can be paid for by Cash or Standing Order.

If you would like to join the 200 Club, please contact Tricia Shand

Email: the.shandies@btinternet.com

Telephone: 01235 764222

The Parish Church of



Notices

Phillip Pepler

It is with great sadness that we have to tell you that our dear friend and long standing member of our congregation, Phillip Pepler has passed away.

Phillips understanding and knowledge of the scriptures was known to everyone, and the sound and tone of his wonderful singing voice that could be heard at our services will be missed immensely.

We send our Love and Prayers to Ruth and her Family.

Rest in Peace Phillip



Why is the vicar wearing white today?

You may have noticed that the Minister who officiates at Church Services may wear a long, thin scarf which is called a stole. This can be white, purple, red or green.

White is for festive occasions like Christmas and Easter, christenings and weddings. Purple is worn during Advent and Lent, when we bring to mind our sins and seek God's forgiveness, in preparation for the wonderful seasons of Christmas and Easter. Red at Pentecost, symbolises the fire of the Holy Spirit, and on Saints Days it signifies that many of them (and some today) were martyred because they were Christians. Green, marking growth and hope is worn for the rest of the year.

So, white for 'best', purple for penitence, red for the Holy Spirit and the blood of the Martyrs, and green for growth.

You will also spot the same changing colours for items on the Altar-Table at the beginning and end of the Service of Holy Communion. The Burse is a flat, square case holding a linen cloth called the corporal, on which the vessels used in Holy Communion are placed. The Veil covers them until they are used.

The vessels are called Paten and Chalice. The Paten is like a plate on which the bread is placed. A bowl, called a Ciborium, may be used for the same purpose. The Chalice is a cup for the wine. Because the bread and wine represent the Body and Blood of Christ, which He sacrificed for us when He was crucified, we handle them with care.

The minister's ceremonial robes, called vestments, and the vessels all point to something greater. In one of St Paul's letters in the New Testament, he explains in these words that receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion has past, present and future significance: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

25th December

Why begin at midnight with Holy Communion?

The hour was first chosen at Rome in the fifth century to symbolise the idea that Christ was born at midnight – a mystical idea in no way hindered by historical evidence! No one knows the real hour of His birth.

Certainly, in recent times, Holy Communion at midnight on Christmas morning has proved popular with modern families. One British writer pointed out its "domestic convenience" in 1947: "for where there are children and no servants, husband and wife may be unable to communicate at any other time."

(So things don't change, then!)

Children's Society to exhibit at Chelsea Flower Show

Children's Society is to have a show garden at the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Chelsea Flower show next year, 19th-23rd May 2026.

Designed to spotlight the urgent issue of teenage wellbeing in the UK, 'The Children's Society Garden' has been created by landscape architect Patrick Clarke. It draws inspiration from the Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi - celebrating the beauty in imperfection. This nurturing space will offer a message of hope, safety, and connection for young people facing challenges today.



All entries for the **FEBRUARY 2026**
Issue of the Challow News Must be submitted by

15th JANUARY 2026

Email: nigel.langford@me.com



Sunday Night Cash Bingo



(Eyes down at 8.00pm)

Monday Night Poker



Challows

Afternoon Club

for all over 60's
we meet every month
2.00 pm
on the 3rd Thursday
Everyone Welcome

Planning an Event or Party

Our Main Hall
with Kitchen Facilities
are available to hire

~ **Contact ~**

01235 763430

Saturday Night Entertainment

January 2026

To Be Confirmed

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

8.00 pm

Admission £10.00

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



LIVE - Super Sunday Football

SKY SPORTS

SHOWN HERE

New Years Eve

live music with

LOCARNO BEAT

Tickets available
£15 per person



Hand Bell Ringers

10.30 am Every Tuesday
New Members Welcome

01235 763430

~ For more details ~

Opening Hours

Monday - Thursday

7.00 pm - Close

~ ~ ~

Friday - 6.00 pm - Close

Saturday 1.00 pm - Close

Sunday 1.00 pm - Close



Saturday 6th December

from 7pm

You will need to book your
seat with a £5.00 deposit
per person

**Call in and see all that
the Club has to offer
Socialise over a drink
from the Bar or a game
of Darts, Snooker or Pool**

Club Membership is NOT a requirement to attend any events here ~ Everyone is Welcome

CHALLOW & CHILDREY



OUR WINTER OFFERING

SKY & TNT Sports now shown LIVE

Bar opening times through this period will generally be

Monday	4pm - 9pm
Tuesday	4pm - 9pm (unless Bowls when Closed)
Wednesday	4pm - 9pm
Thursday	4pm - 11pm
Friday	4pm - 10pm
Saturday	11.30am - 6.30pm
Sunday	11am - 6pm

**If you would like to join the club as a member it's just
£20 for the year.**

Remember that everyone is welcome at Challow,
membership is not required to enjoy the facilities although
it does mean we can keep you up to date with news and
events at the Club

www.challowcricket.co.uk
admin@challowcricket.co.uk

01235 763335

Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner

£200,000 taken from criminals going to local crime prevention initiative

I have recently announced the award of nearly £200,000 to 49 community and voluntary organisations to support crime prevention initiatives

My Community Fund is always hugely over subscribed with 248 applications submitted for over £1.7m of funding, so unfortunately I know many will be disappointed.

The Community Fund provides support to voluntary and community groups that help to prevent crime and keep communities safe. Importantly money for the Community Fund comes from proceeds from the sale of items seized from criminals that cannot be returned to their rightful owners and court orders. Making criminals pay, rather than the cash coming from taxpayers.

I'm delighted that we are able to take money away from criminals and use it in a positive way, to support many of our hard-working communities and voluntary organisations in the Thames Valley to reduce crime further.

In total there are 49 schemes funded across the whole of Thames Valley. To a flavour of the types of projects supported, here are a few of the local applications that were successful...

- Bright Futures Oxfordshire, Youth mentoring scheme - £5,000.00
- Didcot and Wallingford Didcot TRAIN, Inspiring young people - £6,000.00
- Improving Road Safety in Long Wittenham - £5,700.00
- Sandford-on-Thames Road Safety Initiative - £3,300.00
- Gloves Not Gangs, Spartans Boxing Club, Abingdon - £4,000.00
- Sweatbox Youth Work, Wantage - £5,000.00
- Abingdon Damascus Youth, The Gazebo Project - £4,000.00
- CCTV at Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall - £1,500.00
- Fraud and Scam Awareness, Vale Community Impact - £5,000.00

Successful recipients will attend a presentation event with members of the judiciary and Chief Constable in November.

Matthew Barber
matthewbarber.co.uk





Thank You



This years amazing Poppy Displays in church for the Remembrance Day Service were once again created by the very talented

Helen Sherwood



Remembering both the Fallen Servicemen & Women with Red Poppies but also remembering the fallen Service Animals lost during times of conflict with Blue Poppies.

We would like to thank Helen for her time and creativity and hope that many of you managed to view this years wonderful displays



Thank You

To all of our Sponsors and Supporters of the Challow News and especially to the Loyal Group of Villagers who deliver this **FREE Newsletter** through the letter boxes of everyones homes throughout the parish of East Challow each month

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



Save the Date

> Community Day <
Sunday 7th June 2026



2025-2026

East Challow Village hall committee meetings

26th January

30th March

18th May

Start at 8.30pm

AGM - 27th July @ 7.30pm

Save the Date



Christmas 2025

Community

Carol Singing

on the Village Green

~ ~ ~

Monday 15th December

7.00 pm

St. Nicholas Church

Coffee Morning

FREE Coffee, Tea and Biscuits



Thursday 4th December

10.30 - Midday

Everyone is welcome to our warm and safe place for company and friendly conversation

Take advantage of the opportunity to meet up with friends and neighbours in the village

S. J. ACKRILL

BUILDING AND DECORATING CONTRACTORS

ESTABLISHED OVER 60 YEARS

VAT No. 198 9173 96

The Croft,
Letcombe Hill, East Challow
Wantage, Oxon. OX12 9RW

01235 769728

07831 247130

sjackrill@gmail.com





~ Serving persecuted Christians worldwide ~

"Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" – Colossians 2:3

What does Christmas mean to you? One of the Christmas stories I love is about the wise men following the star to find the new-born Messiah. It's an unusual, left-field kind of wisdom that gets you making that kind of journey! Mary's response to Gabriel's announcement, and her later ponderings on the amazing events surrounding Jesus' birth, also show wisdom – as does Joseph when he follows God's night-time call to lead his young family to safety.

Another story of wisdom I've heard more recently is about Robin*, an 11-year-old in Bangladesh. He's a boy with an incredibly wise head on young shoulders. "Wisdom comes from Jesus," Robin explains. "My mother prays for me every day to receive that wisdom."

Like many of Bangladesh's small Christian population, his family have converted from Islam. It began with his mum, Moly*, asking to borrow her neighbour's Bible and led to her husband and son choosing also to follow Jesus. But there was a cost. Now, at school and around the village, other children won't sit next to Robin, or play with him. They won't even use his name – he's just known as 'the Christian'.

"I feel sad when they treat me like this," Robin says. "I want to play, too, but I can't even ask them, out of fear. I just sit there and feel very lonely. But I will never do the same to them. As a believer, we should not hurt others, even if they hurt us."

Robin has often felt rejected by other children at school – but persecution took on a terrifying new dimension last year. After Bangladesh's prime minister was ousted in August 2024, political disorder erupted across the country. The chaos emboldened some radical Muslims to take advantage of the situation and increase their targeting of religious minorities. A local extremist group started waging a hateful campaign against Robin's family and ten other local Christian families. They printed and distributed leaflets, accusing them of trying to coerce Muslims to convert to Christianity. It put the families in incredible danger.

One morning, about 11am, Robin remembers, a furious mob of 40-50 people descended on their small house church. "They were yelling, 'You are Christians!' and 'Christians can't live here!' They came to kill us. They burned everything to the ground."

Thankfully, the believers were warned and managed to flee, but it had a long-lasting impact on their family. Robin's dad, Jubayer, decided to return to Islam and gave his wife an ultimatum: renounce Christianity or he would divorce her. Moly knew she and Robin could never turn their backs on Jesus; but when Jubayer divorced her, she and Robin were left with nothing.

Mother and son still face pressure, but say their faith is too precious to abandon. At Christmas, Robin reads about Jesus's birth in his children's Bible and they gather together with other Bangladeshi families who have converted from Islam. "We cut a cake for Jesus's birthday," Robin says, "and have a lot of fun." Although he has lost family, community and safety, he knows he's part of a much wider family now. "Thank you all for praying for us," says Robin. "We are strangers, yet you are praying for us."

Find out more about how you can pray for, and write to, Robin, at www.opendoorsuk.org

Claire Page.

Men's curious reluctance to ask where they are going

If you are travelling far this Christmas, pray that your sat-nav works, or that there is a woman in the car. Research has found that men are so reluctant to ask directions that they waste hours and miles every year. Over a lifetime of travel, it can work out to be a wasted journey from Land's End to John O' Groats.

Very few men will ask for help or check a map to avoid unnecessary travel. They prefer to wander hopefully until they find their route on their own, regardless of how long it takes them.

Which of course has inspired the joke:

Why did the Children of Israel wander in the wilderness for 40 years?

Because Moses was a man and wouldn't ask directions...

WANTED

Record Collections

LP's - Singles & Memorabilia

Rock - Blues - Folk - Jazz - Reggae

Large or Small

Collections in Ex Condition

> Cash Paid <

07789 158485 / 01235 760383

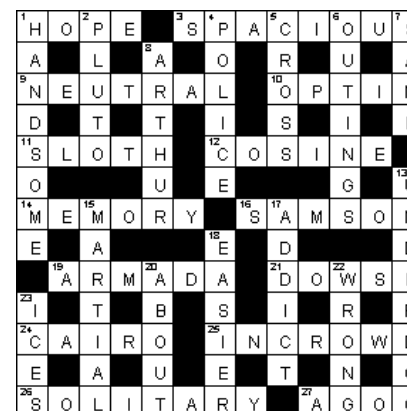


PEST WIZARDS
YOUR LOCAL PEST CONTROL SERVICE

WASPS & ALL INSECTS
RATS, MICE, MOLES & SQUIRRELS
PROMPT SERVICE

MARK DEARLOVE • 07446377816
01235 642689 • info@pestwizards.co.uk

❄️ Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year ❄️



Shaun Guard TV AERIAL & WIFI SERVICES

- Aerials - supplied & repaired also poor reception solved
- Satellite - Sky Q upgrades, discreet dish installation
- Internet - black spots cured, internal & external data cables installed
- TVs - hung on your wall or set up and tuned

OXFORD AERIALS

www.oxfordaerials.co.uk shaun@oxfordaerials.co.uk

Call us on 01235 642689

Waste & Recycling Information



Tuesday 2nd December	Green + Brown + Food
Tuesday 9th December	Black + Food
Tuesday 16th December	Green + Brown + Food
Tuesday 23rd December	Black + Food
Wednesday 31st December	Green + Food
Wednesday 7th January	Black + Food
Tuesday 13th January	Green + Brown + Food
Tuesday 20th January	Black + Food
Tuesday 27th January	Green + Brown + Food



Please note: The following changes to Collection Days
Wednesday 31st December & Wednesday 7th January

Please Note: There will NOT be a BROWN BIN collection on Wednesday 31st December

*Please ensure your Waste & Recycling Bins are placed on the kerbside before
06.00 am to ensure your bins are emptied*

* * * * *

Please return your bins to your property ASAP after collection to ensure they are not blown onto the road causing an obstruction or damage to other vehicles

Please help to keep our Village Tidy and free from Fly Tipping

Christmas tree recycling location

Village Hall car park, Main Street

Return your old tree here by
Monday 12th January

Trees left after this date will not be accepted.
 Trees larger than 6ft must be cut down in size before being left.

South Oxfordshire District Council
 Vale of White Horse District Council

Do you suffer with back, neck or joint pain, headaches, sports injuries or arthritis?

Main Clinic, East Challow and Wantage Health Centre
01235 821 800
 Bupa network approved and registered with most other healthcare insurers

Bupa
 info@progressivephysiotherapy.co.uk
 www.progressivephysiotherapy.co.uk

Black Fox Chimney Sweeping

Clean, professional service

Fully insured and DBS Checked

Sweeping certificates provided

All types of chimney and appliance

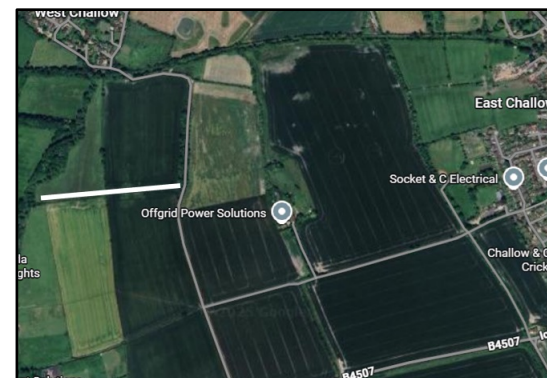
Nest removals

Stove repairs and maintenance

Call: 073 873 88 999
 Email: info@blackfoxsweep.co.uk
 Web: www.blackfoxsweep.co.uk

The Challows and Childrey Hedgerow Group

We are hoping to have one more session of hedge planting this winter close to where we have planted previously along Silver Lane. The new site, shown as a white bar on the image, will provide a green corridor for birds and bats. We hope to have the site prepared by the beginning of December and the planting day will be Dec 14th.



If you have joined us before you will be on our Whatsapp group.

If not feel free to call either myself, or Alastair for an update if you are interested in taking part.

Paul Barrow 07557 953862
Alastair Barclay 07762 925900

Church Service Information & Rotas

Sunday	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel Reading
7th December Patronal Service Rev Dr Miriam Jones Advent 2	Isaiah 11: 1 - 10	72 1 - 7 + 18 - 19	Romans 15: 4 - 13	Matthew 3: 1 - 12
14th December Rev Alec Gill Advent 3	Carol Service - 11.00 am			
21st December Eucharist Rev Dr Miriam Jones Advent 4	Isaiah 7: 10 - 16	80 1 - 7 + 17 - 19	Romans 1: 1 - 7	Matthew 1: 18 - 25
24th December Eucharist Rev Dr Miriam Jones Midnight Mass	Isaiah 9: 2 - 7	96	Titus 2: 11 - 14	Luke 2: 1 - 14
25th December Eucharist Rev Alec Gill Christmas Day	Isaiah 52: 7 - 10	98	Hebrews 1: 1 - 4, (5 - 12)	John 1: 1 - 14
28th December NO SERVICE at Challow	Joint Benefice Service at St. James Denchworth - 10.00 am			
4th January Eucharist Rev Alec Gill Christmas 2	Jeremiah 31: 7 - 14	147 13 - End	Ephesians 1: 3 - 14	John 1: [1 - 9] 10 - 18
11th January Eucharist T B A Baptism of Christ	Isaiah 42: 1 - 9	29	Acts 10: 34 - 43	Matthew 3: 13 - 17
18th January Eucharist Rev Alec Gill Epiphany 2	Isaiah 49: 1 - 7	40 1 - 12	1 Corinthians 1: 1 - 9	John 1: 29 - 42
25th January Eucharist Rev Dr Miriam Jones Epiphany 3	Isaiah 9: 1 - 4	80 1 - 6	1 Corinthians 1: 10 - 18	Matthew 4: 12 - 23
1st February	Service of Memories - 11.00 am			

	Date	Sacristan	Sidesperson	Prayers	Readings	Organist
1st Sunday	7th December	Ruth	Frances / Nigel	T B A	Ruth	Ruth
2nd Sunday	14th December	Louise / Claire	Linda / Noel	Louise / Claire	Graham	Ruth
3rd Sunday	21st December	Jenny	Liz / Jeff	Jenny	Jeff	Graham
Midnight Mass	24th December	Nigel	Trish / Sue	Jeff	Nigel	Graham
Christmas Day	25th December	Jenny	Trish / Nigel	Paul	Jeff	Ruth
4th Sunday	28th December	Joint Benefice Service at St. James Denchworth - 10.00 am				
1st Sunday	4th January	Ruth	Frances / Nigel	T B A	Ruth	Ruth
2nd Sunday	11th January	Louise / Claire	Linda / Noel	Louise / Claire	Graham	Ruth
3rd Sunday	18th January	Jenny	Liz / Jeff	Jenny	Jeff	Graham
4th Sunday	25th January	Nigel	Trish / Sue	Paul	Claire / Nick	Graham

Thursday	Sacristan
4th Dec	Jenny
11th Dec	Mandy
18th Dec	Heather
	Mandy
	Nigel

Thursday	Sacristan
8th Jan	Jenny
15th Jan	Mandy
22nd Jan	Heather
29th Jan	Mandy
	Nigel

	Coffee	Flowers	Cleaning
1st Sunday	Mandy	Heather	Linda / Liz
2nd Sunday	Jan / Hilary	Claire	Linda / Liz
3rd Sunday	Val / Barbara	Jenny	Mandy
4th Sunday	Linda / Janet	Mandy	Mandy
5th Sunday	Sue / Trish / Frances	Linda	Sue / Trish



- INFORMATION -

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals and Blessings
which have taken place at
St. Nicholas Church, East Challow.

Baptism
Emma Steele

All Information / Details are held as Public Records
within the Vale Benefice



LJ&CA
Cannings

Garden Machinery Centre
Sales - Service - Hire - Repair



- After Sales Support
- Friendly Service
- Garden Machinery Hire for Trade & DIY
- Collection & Delivery Service available



TIGA®

Mountfield

Local Dealer

*Dickies Workwear - Buckler Boots
PPE - Hoggs of Fife Country Clothing*



- Special Weekend Hire Rates
- Competitive Prices
- Friendly Service
- Parking



Trade & DIY Hire Centre
Plant & Tool Hire

LJ&CA
Cannings

Challow House Farm, Main Street, East Challow, OX12 9SR
Tel: 01235 763103 www.ljcannings.co.uk

A helping hand to shape your land