

# Challow

## NEWS

### ~ February 2026 ~

#### Sunday 1st February **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



*The Season of Renewal*  
**LENT**



**18th February - 2nd April**

'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](mailto:vicaralec@valebenefice.org.uk)

### Associate Vicar:

### Rev Dr. Miriam Jones

07474 095190

[vicarmiriam@valebenefice.org.uk](mailto:vicarmiriam@valebenefice.org.uk)

### Licensed Lay Minister: Sarah Shackleton

07587 776609

Email: [SarahLLM@valebenefice.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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/](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5811/)

### East Challow Parish Council

[clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk)

**Cricket Club** - 01235 763335

**R B L Club** - 01235 763430

**Village Hall** - [bookings.ecvh@gmail.com](mailto:bookings.ecvh@gmail.com)

**Challow News** - [nigel.langford@me.com](mailto:nigel.langford@me.com)

### Mably Way Health Centre

Church Street - 01235 770245

Newbury Street - 01235 639521

### 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

### 3 - Digit Numbers

999 - Emergency

111 - NHS (non emergency)

101 - POLICE (non emergency)

105 - NATIONAL POWER CUT  
SERVICE

### Aspects of Romantic Love

God obviously approves of romance – after all, putting Adam and Eve alone together in the Garden of Eden was His idea.

The history of the Israelites began with three great romances: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel. The on-going history of Israel was deeply affected by later romances: Esther and King Xerxes, David's love affair with Bathsheba, and Solomon's marriage to hundreds of foreign wives. There is even an entire book in the Old Testament devoted to human love: the Song of Solomon!

When we reach the New Testament, we find real love between Joseph and Mary (even when Joseph thought Mary had been faithless, he did not want to harm her). St Paul, though himself a bachelor, nevertheless spent a lot of time urging Christians to love and be kind and faithful and considerate to their spouses.

He even wrote 1 Corinthians 13 – the great love chapter that is read at millions of weddings worldwide 2000 years later.

Down the centuries ever since, romantic love has been critical in shaping history (Anthony and Cleopatra), in shaping cultural ideals (King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table). Some of our favourite stories are built on romance. (Puccini's Tosca, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre.)

Today, romance is still alive and well in Britain – last year we sent about 25 million Valentines to each other.

And what of the future? Well, just as the Bible begins with a love story, so it ends with one. And you are involved! For actually the greatest Love Story of all time is that between God and his people.

Christ is described in Revelation as our heavenly Bridegroom, and the Church is His beloved Bride. He has given us the most expensive present of all – Himself. And, just as in all the best romances, the story will end with the bride and groom getting together at last, so at the End of Time, Christ will return for His Bride.

## Next Parish Council Meeting

will be held in the Village Hall

**Wednesday 11th February 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](http://www.eastchallowpc.co.uk)

## Thank you

The Parish Council would like to thank Parishioners for the wonderful display of Christmas lights during the festive season. The lights certainly brightened up some dark and cold winter evenings. The Parish Council would also like to thank Mr and Mrs Cannings for their kind donation of a Christmas Tree for the Community to enjoy.

## Booking System for Waste Recycling Centres

From the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026 you will need to book a time slot before every visit to a waste recycling centre. This can be booked 2 weeks in advance or 30 minutes before your visit. Please see the poster for more details.

## Oxford Temporary Congestion Charge

From Wednesday 29 October cars with permits and all other vehicles can pass through the congestion charge locations for free.

If you don't have a permit you will need to pay £5 per day to drive a car through the six congestion charge locations.

Permits are available for residents, blue badge holders, community health and care workers, mobile traders and many other groups.

## Community Speed Watch Volunteers needed.

Community Speed Watch is a volunteer-led initiative where residents work with Thames Valley Police to monitor and report speeding in their areas. Volunteers are trained to use speed detection devices and report vehicles exceeding the limit.

The training will be online via a link supplied and will involve watching a few short videos and answering some questions. You would become part of a team; we estimate the ongoing time commitment will be 2 hours per month.

The goal for drivers? Education, awareness, and long-term change – not punishment.

If you are interested and could be part of the CSW Team, please email [clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk)

## Date change for a future Parish Council meeting

The Parish Council have changed the meeting date in April 2026.

The Parish Council meeting will now take place on the Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026.

## 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](mailto: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 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026



From 14 January 2026 you will need to **book a time slot** before every visit to our Household Waste Recycling Centres.

You can book up to **two weeks** in advance or **30 minutes\*** before you visit.  
\*Subject to availability



The booking system will help manage demand and make your visit quicker and easier.



[oxfordshire.gov.uk/hwrcbooking](http://oxfordshire.gov.uk/hwrcbooking)

Unable to book online?  
Call 01865 519800 Monday to Friday.

### Hello Everyone...

We are into 2026, I hope you enjoyed Christmas and the New Year celebrations.... I certainly did. A quick recap on all of the Christmas events, even if it seems a while ago now.

Before Christmas we had the Community Carol's on the Green. We could not have picked a wetter night but about twenty to thirty people turned up, it was dark so I'm not exactly sure how many, but I dried out thirty very wet carol sheets when I got home. We persevered with our carol singing with a good heart. I think the wettest carol was "When Shepherds watched their flocks by night" but we carried on regardless. It was still enjoyable and well done to each and every person for turning out on such a soggy evening. On behalf of everyone, I would like to thank the Cannings family for supplying the Christmas tree as a focal point to sing around, and Vanessa, Carol, and Neil for decorating and putting lights on it. We enjoyed sausage rolls from Mandy, which were delicious. Also a big thank you to Nigel for advertising the event. It really has become a community gathering with lots of people contributing into it making it happen. Next year I hope we will be blessed with a drier evening, so be prepared to head for the village green and join us. Weather hasn't stopped us yet. Well done everyone. I must also add that I don't blame those people that chose to stay indoors especially those with children.

I am glad to say that all our Christmas services at St. Nicholas were very well attended. As always I enjoy the Carol Service, and it was good to see new faces there. We indulged in mulled wine and mince pies after the service, which was very nice.

The interactive Carols Around the Crib was as popular as ever with children and adults joining in with gusto, Alec narrated the story of the Nativity through the eyes of a mouse with enthusiasm. This service has been a tradition since my own boys were young, (some forty years ago) and I still look forward to it every Christmas.

I had it on good authority that we also had a good gathering for the Midnight Service on Christmas Eve led by Miriam. I unfortunately was unable to attend it myself, which was a personal disappointment.

The festive decorations and lights around the village were very impressive I believe some of these wonderful displays were to raise funds for Sobell House. I hope they did well. They certainly lit up East Challow.

It always feels a bit of an anti climax when the decorations come down but no matter what the song says I don't wish it could be Christmas every day. Once a year is ideal.

At the end of November I had further surgery to both my feet which meant I couldn't get about much. Our dog Roxy went to stay with Chris, my son for a couple of weeks which she thoroughly enjoyed, and when she came back my husband took over dog duties. Not getting about easily did impede my Christmas preparations, but there was nothing I could do about that.

I have always maintained that nobody should expect to have a perfect Christmas, because it very rarely turns out like that, and it really doesn't matter, as long as you have enjoyed it. If you think about the first Christmas, Jesus was born in a stable, not Mary and Joseph's first choice of venues for such a momentous event, but they got on with it. My family were wonderful pitching in, and things got done without too much interference from me. It was wonderful having both my sons home for the holiday.

I am back on dog walking duties now, even if a bit slow and cautious, but it's what I enjoy doing, (well most of the time.)

On 1<sup>st</sup> February we are holding our Service of Memories to give people an opportunity to remember and honour relatives and friends who are no longer with us. It is an open invitation to everyone, you can light a candle or write a prayer to recall a departed loved one lost recently or long past. I hope you feel you can come. Losing people we love is never easy.

As I am writing this it is snowing outside and we have a power cut, I am hoping both are of a temporary nature, I tend to forget how much we rely on electricity for so many things, even the phone won't work, and I miss my cups of tea.

### Alan Tranter

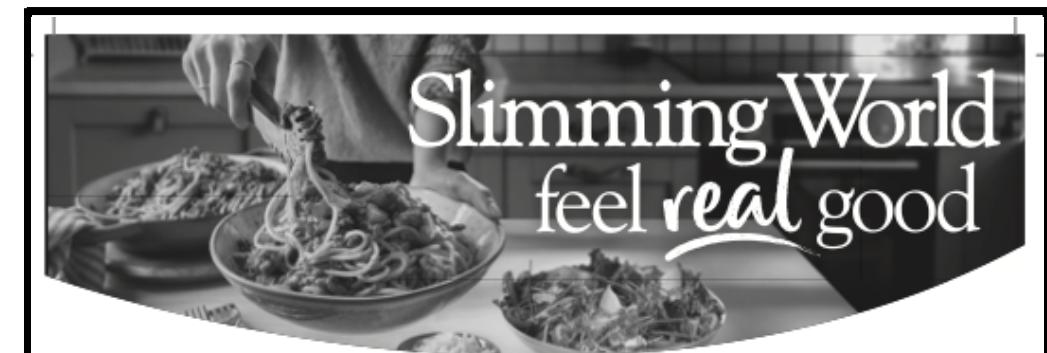
It is with great regret that I have to report the loss of another dear friend, Alan Tranter, a village person and regular member of the congregation of Saint Nicholas. This was following a recent decline in health. Alan was a lovely person, often seen out walking around the Challow area, until illness prevented it. Alan lost his wife Pam last year and he missed her badly. When I first came to the village Alan served at the altar in Saint Nicholas Church, he was a devout man and well respected, he also had a wonderful sense of humour and he will be much missed in church.

Our love, thoughts and prayers are with Alan's family at this time.

### Rest in peace Alan.

The power is now back on, so that's all for now, it's time for a cuppa.

Happy New Year and as always stay safe for yourself and others.



# Slimming World feel **real** good

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

\*7:30am & 9:00am

\*Challow & Childrey  
Cricket Club

\*Monday

\*5:30pm & 7:00pm

\*Wantage Methodist  
Church Hall

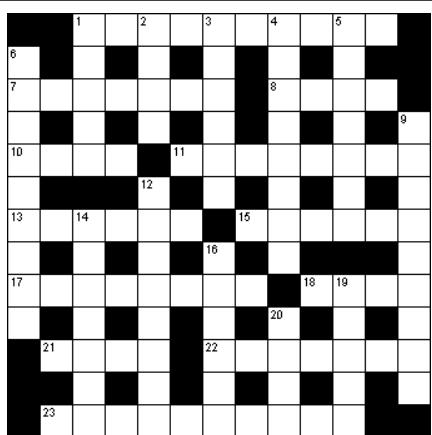
\*Tuesday

\*4:00pm, 5:30pm & 7:00pm

\*Grove Old Mill Hall,  
Dixon Suite

Call or Message Becky on 07359 531030  
**real food, real support, real results**

**Slimming**  
WORLD  
touching hearts, changing lives



## Across

- 1 Credible (10)
- 7 Chic (7)
- 8 Arrange in order (4)
- 10 Cook in an oven (4)
- 11 First showing of a film (8)
- 13 Uncover (6)
- 15 Northern Ireland (6)
- 17 Roomy (8)
- 18 Warmth (4)
- 21 Orient (4)
- 22 Bishop's district (7)
- 23 Unnecessarily (10)

## Down

- 1 Fracture (5)
- 2 Flesh without fat (4)
- 3 Whole (6)
- 4 Put together (8)
- 5 Of greatest size
- 6 Robin (9)
- 9 Rued (9)
- 12 Helped (8)
- 14 Mollify (7)
- 16 Obstacle (6)
- 19 Sorrowful poem (5)
- 20 Throw carelessly (4)



## Wantage & Grove Neighbour Hood Police Team

Let's talk about something surprisingly handy (and actually quite fun to explore)...

the [Police.uk](http://www.Police.uk) website

Think of it as the neighbourhood's information hub — all the useful bits, none of the rumours.

What can you find on there?

- Our full Wantage & Grove NHPT team details
- The local priorities YOU chose
- Clear, easy-to-digest crime statistics for the area
- Updates on what we're tackling and why

It's a brilliant way to stay connected with what's happening right on your doorstep.

A quick reminder about what we do:

As your Neighbourhood Policing Team, we're here for all crime in our patch — absolutely. But our main focus is on the long-term, complex issues that affect the community over time. Persistent anti-social behaviour, vulnerability concerns, problem-solving with partners... that's our bread and butter. Those one-off incidents still matter, but they're usually handled by our response colleagues who deal with immediate calls.

And here's the exciting bit:

With our recent mentoring scheme, plus our tough stance on local issues, we're really hoping to see those crime stats move in the right direction over time. It won't happen overnight, but we're putting in the work — and your support makes a huge difference. If you haven't checked out [www.Police.uk](http://www.Police.uk) yet, give it a look.

It's your community, your priorities, and your chance to see exactly how we're working to make Wantage & Grove even safer.



## The 2026 Winter Olympics returns to Europe

If you like snow-sports, you are in for a great month.

From 6<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> February, Italy will be hosting the 2026 Winter Olympics, officially known as Milano Cortina 2026. The opening ceremony is at football's famous San Siro stadium.

The Paralympic Winter Games follows, from 6<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March.

For the first time the Winter Games will have two host cities, Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, with events spread across 15 venues in northern Italy, using existing infrastructure to reduce costs. (Thus, Milan will host indoor events like hockey and figure skating, while Cortina hosts alpine skiing and snowboarding.)

Around 3,500 athletes from more than 90 countries are expected to compete for 195 medals across 16 Olympic disciplines.

New this year is ski-mountaineering.

## What, oh what, is that person's name?

Do your New Year Resolutions include the forlorn hope that you will be better at remembering people's names in 2026?

Many of us — and not only those of the older generation — have difficulty remembering names. It's not just TV personalities and so on, but people we meet in the street. We know exactly who they are, we see them every week in church or the supermarket, we know what job they do and which school their children go to. But as for their name — it's a blank. Help is at hand, however. Not to solve the problem, but at least to name it. 'Anomic aphasia' is the clinical name for the inability to remember a name, even when we can remember everything else about someone.

There is also the strange truth that the cure for anomic aphasia comes spontaneously, often in the middle of the night, when that elusive identity pops unbidden into our memory. We must be sure, of course, to put the light on and write it down, because for sure it will be gone again with the morning light!

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](mailto:wantage@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk)

 [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/framland](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/framland)



**SKY SPORTS**

SHOWN HERE

- LIVE -  
Super  
Sunday  
Football

## Planning an Event or Party

Our Main Hall with Kitchen Facilities are available to hire

~ Contact ~  
01235 763430

## Hand Bell Ringers

10.30 am  
Every Tuesday  
New Members Welcome

01235 763430  
For more details

## Challows RBL Club



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

## Opening Hours

Monday - Thursday

7.00 pm - Close

~ ~ ~

Friday - 6.00 pm - Close

Saturday 1.00 pm - Close

Sunday 1.00 pm - Close



## Crufts welcomes mongrels

The Royal Kennel Club, which runs Crufts, is going to admit mongrels for the first time in its 150-year history.

Crufts will become a 'year-round community', available to all dog owners, whatever kind of dog they have. Its new online platform will launch in February 2026.

Jannine Edgar, chief executive of the RKC explains: "While our initiatives in areas such as health, research and breeding have historically been focused on pedigree dogs, we recognise that dog ownership has evolved and therefore we must too.

"So now our remit extends to all dogs, and we will be investing our efforts to do more for every dog and their owners through the Crufts brand, which will be much more than an annual show."

This year Crufts Dog Show takes place 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> March at the NEC in Birmingham. Crufts has also held events aimed at non-pedigree dogs since 2000, after launching the crossbreed competition 'Scruffs'.

The late Queen, who was devoted to her corgis, was patron of The Kennel Club for 70 years. Following her death, the King granted the organisation a royal prefix in 2023.

## Our long love affair with coffee

London's first coffee house opened in 1652, using beans imported from modern-day Yemen. Although many in Cromwell's Britain had doubts about this new drink, others welcomed its reviving effects - and asked for another cup.



Nearly 400 years on, coffee drinking in Britain is a vast industry. We drink 98 million cups of it every day. Even though a takeaway flat white can now cost you more than £5 in London, still coffee has become a daily necessity for millions of us.

And nearly 400 years on, we can better appreciate why this should be so.

Coffee keeps us awake. This is because when caffeine accesses the brain, it actively blocks our adenosine-producing receptors, which run our sleep-promoting system.

Coffee makes us alert. The caffeine drives our brain towards a more excited state which allows us to process information faster.

Coffee can also improve our mood, especially during the winter, when the loss of daylight acts as a depressant.

And although too much coffee can make us jittery and even prone to heart palpitations, there is even growing evidence among neuroscientists that coffee can even help to lower our risk of neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

## Why you should aim to eat the rainbow

The supermarket chain Tesco has reported a surge in demand for brightly coloured vegetables, from rainbow carrots to pink onions.

The trend follows calls from nutritionists for people to 'eat the rainbow' of fruits and vegetables, so that they get the whole range of vitamins and minerals.

Demand for rainbow carrots and pink onions is up by 100 per cent this autumn versus last, the demand for rainbow chard is up 70 per cent and that for Cavolo Nero – also known as 'black cabbage' – is up around 30 per cent on last year.



Club Membership is NOT a requirement to attend any events here

# Parish Church of St. Nicholas - Service Information & Rotas

Sunday	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel Reading
1st February <b>Morning Worship</b> Rev Dr Miriam Jones <b>Epiphany 4</b>				
<b>Service of Memories - 11.00 am</b>				
8th February <b>Eucharist</b> Rev Alec Gill <b>2 before Lent</b>	Genesis 1: 1 - 2: 3	136 [136:1-9, 23-end]	Romans 8: 18 - 25	Matthew 6: 25 - end
15th February <b>Eucharist</b> Rev Dr Miriam Jones <b>1 before Lent</b>	Exodus 24: 12 - 18	2 [99]	2 Peter 1: 16 - 21	Matthew 17: 1 - 9
22nd February <b>Baptism &amp; Eucharist</b> Rev Dr Miriam Jones <b>Lent 1</b>	Genesis 2: 15 - 17, 3: 1 - 7	32	Romans 5: 12 - 19	Matthew 4: 1 - 11

## St. Nicholas Church - 200 club

**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 second 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](mailto:the.shandies@btinternet.com)



### December

£100 - N° 147 ~ Mr & Mrs G. Shand  
£50 - N° 130 ~ Mr G. Handley  
£20 - N° 20 ~ Mr G. Handley  
£10 - N° 35 ~ Mrs S. Curl  
~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### January

£50 - N° 8 ~ Mrs I. Game  
£20 - N° 45 ~ Mr G. Handley  
£10 - N° 56 ~ Mrs G. Gordon  
~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**Would you like to join?**  
For further information please contact  
**Tricia Shand - 01235 764222**  
[the.shandies@btinternet.com](mailto:the.shandies@btinternet.com)

	Date	Sacristan	Sidesperson	Prayers	Readings	Organist
1st Sunday	1st February	Ruth	Frances / Nigel	Linda	Ruth / Nigel	Ruth
2nd Sunday	8th February	Louise / Claire	Linda / Noel	Louise / Claire	Graham	Ruth
3rd Sunday	15th February	Jenny	Liz / Jeff	Jenny	Fiona	Graham
4th Sunday	22nd February	Nigel	Trish / Sue	Nick	Claire / Nigel	Graham

~ If you are unable to attend please arrange cover for your week ~

Thursday	Sacristan
5th Feb	Mandy
12th Feb	Jenny
19th Feb	Heather
26th Feb	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

## Ash Wednesday

18th February ~ 7.30 pm

Join us as we enter into

**LENT - The Season of Renewal**

The ash from last years burnt palm crosses will be used during this service.

St. Nicholas Church - East Challow



## 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](http://www.challowcricket.co.uk)

[admin@challowcricket.co.uk](mailto:admin@challowcricket.co.uk)

**01235 763335**



**Michael Bond  
creator of  
Paddington Bear**

It was 100 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1926, that Michael Bond, the children's writer, was born. He has an assured place in any literary Hall of Fame, for he created the characters Paddington Bear and Monsieur Pamplemousse.

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

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

The rest is literary history....

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

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

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

### **Eating alone is 'Bad for Pensioners' Health'**

Pensioners who eat at home alone are more likely to suffer from poor nutrition and health. So says new research. It has found strong links between dining solo and diets of poor quality, with fewer fruit, veg and meat. This can lead to weight loss and frailty.

Researchers at Flinders University in Australia are instead highlighting the importance of community-based initiatives – such as neighbourhood meal groups, intergenerational dining programmes, or local café partnerships to mitigate the harms of eating alone.

As one researcher explains, "Food is more than the nutritional benefit it provides. Sharing a meal is an important social activity that can influence appetite, dietary variety, and overall well-being for older adults."

## Making the best use of technology to help cut crime and catch criminals

Just before Christmas Thames Valley Police rolled out a live facial recognition operation in Oxford, aimed as much at explaining the technology to the public as well as catching criminals.

The use of live facial-recognition technology can bring great benefits to help cut crime and catch criminals.

Whilst the use of this technology is widely welcomed by most people, there are understandable concerns by some. I have worked closely with the police to ensure that all the necessary safeguards are put in place to protect privacy and the only people who should have anything to fear from the use of live facial-recognition are criminals seeking to target people and property in our community.

The system does not - and cannot - identify everyone that it sees, but instead is looking for those on a specific watchlist. Those who are either wanted by the police or have a warrant issued for them by the courts. Essentially it is very much like the screenlock that many of us will use on our mobile phones. It recognises the people the police are looking for, but simply doesn't recognise the rest of us.

It is important that the police explain the use of this tactic and ensure widespread consent from the public. The use of any technology just provides a tool to the police. It is still the men and women of Thames Valley Police who will use their professional judgment and put themselves in harm's way to protect the public.

The effectiveness of these operations will continually be evaluated, alongside other tactics the police use. With more officers in neighbourhood policing roles and overall crime falling, it remains important that the police are able to address the issues that matter most to the public. You can play your part by reporting any crimes or suspicious activity you see in your community on [thamesvalley.police.uk](http://thamesvalley.police.uk) or by calling 101.

On the first operation in Oxford eight arrests were made, several for domestic abuse offences. Dangerous people being taken off the streets to prevent crime.

**Matthew Barber**

matthewbarber.co.uk



## Australia celebrates a milestone

January 2026 was an important month for Australia.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> January, it has been 125 years (1901) since the Commonwealth of Australia was established, when the six British colonies of New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia were federated.

But a British presence in Australia began long before 1901. It was way back in 1788 that the First Fleet first landed in Australia, and the Union Flag of Great Britain was raised by Captain Arthur Phillip.

The 11 ships had left England seven months before. Their passengers were mostly convicts, and Captain Phillips had been charged with the job of establishing penal colonies to house them.

The First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay, but decided to explore further. A few days later, on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1788 the fleet finally landed at Sydney Cove, a small bay on the southern shore of Sydney harbour.

That was the day that British settlers arrived on Australian shores for the first time. They formally established the Colony of New South Wales on 7<sup>th</sup> February, and 20 years later, in 1808, the convicts who had been pardoned were now emancipated convicts, and heartily celebrating the anniversary of their arrival with dinners, drinking and toasts.

The first official celebration took place in 1818 on the 30th anniversary of their arrival, with Governor Lachlan Macquarie naming the day a national holiday, called Foundation Day.

While Australians have celebrated the 26<sup>th</sup> of January as Australia Day ever since, the story is not all a happy one. For indigenous Australians, who have been there for thousands of years, faced persecution and even dozens of massacres during the 19th and early 20th centuries.



Henry is making a real effort for Lent – he's giving up the remote control and walking to the TV



~ Serving persecuted Christians worldwide ~

**"With God all things are possible."** - Matthew 19:26

Have you ever tried to believe six impossible things before breakfast? The Queen of Hearts in Lewis Carroll's 'Alice Through the Looking Glass' claims that, at Alice's age, she 'always did it for half-an-hour a day'! It's interesting to think about what we personally consider to be impossible. Is it world peace? A God of love in a hurting world? Or just the ability to keep going from day to day when life seems against you?

Jack Jones, Andy Williams, Cynthia Erivo and many others have all sung with great fervour the inspirational lyrics of 'The Impossible Dream'. Based on the character of Don Quixote, in pursuit of a 'glorious quest', each vocalist declares themselves, 'willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause'. This seems an apt description of the many millions of faithful, persecuted Christians around the world who could be said, 'To fight the unbeatable foe, To bear with unbearable sorrow, To run where the brave dare not go'. Is their quest to follow Jesus in 2026 an impossible dream?

Certainly, those who are enemies of Christianity have one aim: to make it impossible to be a Christian. They pass laws and spread rumours; they close down churches and create an atmosphere of fear and hatred. They do everything in their power to starve the church of oxygen, to scorch the earth so badly that the seeds of faith simply cannot grow.

There's only one problem with this approach. It doesn't work.

They silence the sermons but Christians still tell others about Jesus. They close the churches, but Christians still find places to meet. They ban the Bible, so Christians memorise Scripture instead. They do all they can to make faith impossible, and yet still Christians persevere. Against the odds, in refugee camps and prison cells, in houses and apartments, faith finds a way. Tiny as a mustard seed, silent as yeast. Because with humanity, things might be impossible, but with God, it's a different story altogether.

Every year, Open Doors publishes the World Watch List – an extensive, authoritative guide to the countries where Christians face the greatest persecution. What makes the list special is that it draws directly from the on-the-ground experience of persecuted Christians. And each year, in Parliament, Open Doors presents the research to MPs, with two guest speakers who've experienced persecution themselves. This year's World Watch List shows that the top ten most dangerous countries to be a Christian are:

1. North Korea
2. Somalia
3. Yemen
4. Sudan
5. Eritrea
6. Syria
7. Nigeria
8. Pakistan
9. Libya
10. Iran.

Some of these countries are hitting the news headlines due to violence, oppression, or war. Some of them barely get a mention. But beneath the surface, Christians are proving that 'With God all things are possible'. Every day, they face unimaginable hardship and pay an unbelievable price - but they have not been defeated. And with your prayers and support, they can continue. If you go to the Open Doors website: [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org), you'll find some really inspiring resources that will help you pray for persecuted Christians. And while you're there, let their stories encourage you in the pursuit of your own quest, this year.

## 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](mailto:info@pestwizards.co.uk)

**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](http://www.oxfordaerials.co.uk) [shaun@oxfordaerials.co.uk](mailto:shaun@oxfordaerials.co.uk)  
**Call us on 01235 642689**

## Shrove Tuesday – Pancake Day

**9<sup>th</sup> February**

It's odd, really, to think that confessing one's sins to God should be linked to making pancakes. And yet the beginning of Lent brings us both – Shrove Tuesday is Pancake Day, and is followed by Ash Wednesday, and so Lent begins.

In centuries gone by, the pancakes were made to use up the milk and eggs before the fasting of Lent. More recently, many readers will have childhood memories of the wonder of watching our mothers break an egg, mix it with milk and flour – and out of that gooey mess, to produce a light and delicious pancake.

These days, more of us buy pancake mix, or even ready-made pancakes. It seems we prefer the certainty of ending up with pancakes – to the risk of having made nothing BUT a mess of the kitchen.

In many parishes they used to hold pancake races on the day. Why anyone would want to run around a field while holding a pancake is not clear, but in Olney, Bucks, they have held a pancake race almost every year since 1445.



## Community Notices



### East Challow Community Warm Spaces

Join us for a Hot Drink and friendly conversation at Challow and Childrey Cricket Club from 11.00 am on any of the following dates.

**Friday 13th February**

**Friday 27th February**



### KING ALFRED QUILTERS

Are you creative?

**Do you like Hand Sewing or Machine Sewing?**

Then come along to the King Alfred Patchwork and Quilting Group in East Challow. We don't just quilt we like to get involved in all sorts of needlecraft and are open to all age groups and all skill levels.

We meet on the 1st Wednesday evening of the month where we have speakers, or demonstrations.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month is a sewing day where you can hone your skills and get advice and chat.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February**, 19.00 hours we have the Quilters Guild Handbag Miniature Quilt Collection.

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February** 10.00am Sewing day.

Come along to see what we are about and join our friendly group.

Visitors are welcome at both events (fees apply).

For more information visit our website

[www.kingalfredquilters.org.uk](http://www.kingalfredquilters.org.uk)

Helen: 07763 923000 or Janice: 07786 333497



**2025-2026**

East Challow Village hall committee meetings

30th March

18th May

Start at 8.30pm

**AGM - 27th July @ 7.30pm**



**Save the Date**  
**> Community Day <**  
**Sunday 7th June 2026**

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

**15<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

Email: [nigel.langford@me.com](mailto:nigel.langford@me.com)



progressive  
physiotherapy

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



[info@progressivephysiotherapy.co.uk](mailto:info@progressivephysiotherapy.co.uk)  
[www.progressivephysiotherapy.co.uk](http://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](mailto:info@blackfoxsweep.co.uk)

Web: [www.blackfoxsweep.co.uk](http://www.blackfoxsweep.co.uk)

# 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](mailto:sjackrill@gmail.com)**



St. Nicholas Church

## Coffee Morning

FREE Coffee, Tea  
and Biscuits

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February



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

### - INFORMATION -

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### Service of Thanksgiving

for the life of

Philip Pepler

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### Baptism

Aleric White

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### Funeral

Alan Tranter



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

### Mowing Team

From March to October a dedicated team of volunteers cut the churchyard grass every  
two weeks and generally keep the churchyard tidy.

But we are in need of more volunteers to help us as the works rests on just a small group.

If you could help us out and join the mowing team it would be very much appreciated.

It would only involve helping us 3 - 4 times during the mowing season  
at the very most.



We provide all the equipment that is needed.  
If you would be interested please contact

Jeff Penfold - 01235 763173

jeffpenfold8548@gmail.com



### Waste & Recycling Information



Tuesday 3rd February	Black + Food
Tuesday 10th February	Green + Brown + Food
Tuesday 17th February	Black + Food
Tuesday 24th February	Green + Brown + Food
Tuesday 3rd March	Black + Food



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

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

#### **Household rubbish can only be collected if Bin Lids are Fully Closed**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are reminding  
residents that crews can only empty household wheelie bins if the lids are fully  
closed.

Crew members check to make sure that the waste is fully contained within each bin. They  
need to do this because there is a real risk that an overfilled bin won't attach properly to the  
lifting equipment at the rear of the collection vehicle. In such cases, it's common for bins  
to become unattached and end up being thrown from the lift, causing a serious danger to  
collection staff, the public and motorists who might be in the vicinity.

Waste can also drop from overfilled bins while they are being wheeled to the collection  
vehicle, creating a street cleansing issue. Closed lids minimize spillage and help to prevent  
vermin (such as foxes and gulls) from taking items from bins, which leads to dirtier streets.

As part of their safe working requirements, to minimise the chance of injury, collection  
crews are instructed to adopt correct manual handling techniques when lifting, carrying and  
wheeling waste receptacles to the collection vehicle. Unfortunately, it is human nature to  
try and catch waste falling from a bin while it is in motion, which can lead to injury. A closed  
bin lid will stop waste from falling out and prevent this from happening.

The councils' waste and recycling policy states that bin lids must be fully closed in order  
for the bin to be emptied on the scheduled collection day. This requirement applies to all  
wheelie bins – including general rubbish, recycling and garden waste.

**If a household has more waste than will fit in their bin  
with the lid shut, residents should:**

**For General Rubbish and Garden Waste** – hold it back for next time or take to their local  
Household Waste and Recycling Centre (you won't get charged for household waste)

**For Recycling** – put the extra items in a clear plastic sack or cardboard box and leave it  
next to the bin ready for collection



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



**STIGA**

**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**

**Challow House Farm, Main Street, East Challow, OX12 9SR  
Tel: 01235 763103**

LJ & CA  
**Cannings**

[www.ljcannings.co.uk](http://www.ljcannings.co.uk)

*A helping hand to shape your land*