



Cobham & Luddesdowne
September 2026 News £1

PARISH of COBHAM with LUDDESDOWNE and DODE

Parishes currently in a vacancy

For all enquires, including Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals, please contact Janet Weaver on 01732 823936 or Hilary Savage on 01634 723027. Please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Pastoral assistant- Janet Weaver, 36 Highview, Vigo Village, DA13 0RR
01732 823936

Church Safeguarding Officer - Hilary Savage - 01634 723027

Church Office Phone no. 01474 813495

Church Officers St. Mary Magdalene, Cobham

Lay Chair	Hilary Savage	01634 723027
PCC Secretary	Greg Atkinson	
Churchwarden	Hilary Savage	
Treasurer	Vacant	
Deanery Synod	Hilary Savage	01634 723027

Church Officers St Peter and St. Paul, Luddesdowne

Lay Chair	Janet Weaver	
PCC Secretary	Greg Atkinson	
Treasurer	Janet Weaver	01732 823936

Parochial Church Council Members

Cobham	Luddesdowne
Greg Atkinson	Diana Bampton
Peter Balanck	Jill Beety
Ron Chamberlain	Sue Campbell
Lynn Ruddock	Janet Weaver

SUBMISSIONS Cobham and Luddesdowne News is a community magazine produced by and for the residents of Cobham, Sole Street and Luddesdowne. - Please note new email address.

Please send material for inclusion by the 15th of the month preceding publication to clnewseditorial@gmail.com

Cover photograph by Adrian Whiteing - New College Cobham during roof repairs.

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September
2026

Government consultation on weddings proposes greater flexibility and cheaper options

Couples will soon be able to marry almost anywhere, including forests, beaches, cruise ships at sea, canal boats, and at home, under Government proposals that “shift the focus from bricks and mortar to people and promises”.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is to consult on plans to allow “authorised officiants” of any religion or belief to conduct weddings, in what are being described as the most radical changes to marriage law in England and Wales since the 19th century.

The Government says, however, that the “permanence” of marriage will be strengthened by enabling more questioning of candidates before their weddings.

“To protect against forced, predatory and sham marriages, couples must complete a two-stage process, including in-person interview, to verify their identity and demonstrate eligibility to marry.”

Anglican banns of marriage would continue “as an important part of the established Church”, the document says.

It continues: “The Government agrees with the Law Commission’s recommendation that Anglican weddings should continue to be conducted as they are now. It recognises the unique role of the Church of England and the Church [in] Wales in relation to marriage and has no plans to alter . . . these roles.”

The MoJ says that the proposals will reduce costs. The average wedding in England costs more than £20,000 and venue hire alone typically costs around £6,000 - before any food.

About 470,000 people marry in England and Wales each year. Anglican weddings are generally required to take place in a church or chapel, although they can take place in a private home by special licence.

RIDE & STRIDE



The annual fundraiser for village and town churches is due this September. There will be large and small churches across England taking part and sponsoring their volunteers to take to the highways by foot or pedal, horseback or canoe to visit as many churches as possible in one day.

On Ride and Stride Day last year over £152,674 was raised in Kent alone. It really is such a worthwhile day of effort and organisation to raise funds for your own church and we have all 3 of our churches taking part. Rosemary Dymond will be cycling across West Kent on Saturday 12th September to raise funds for Luddesdowne, St. Mary's Church Room, Sole Street and St. Mary Magdalene in Cobham. Her sponsor forms are in each Church so please add your name to the list or put your envelope through her front door at 25 The Street Cobham.

Cycling 100 miles in a day is challenge enough, but to know that this effort is so well supported locally makes it all worthwhile.
Thank you.

HOUSE BLESSING

Have you ever blessed your house? If not, here is a prayer to help you on your way!

God bless the house from ground to stay,
From beam to wall and all the way,
From head to post, from ridge to clay,
From balk to roof-tree let it lay,
From found to top and every day
God bless both fore and aft, I pray,
Nor from the house God's blessing stray,
From top to toe the blessing go.

From Poems of the Western Highlanders





September – Late summer progresses into autumn

September is generally a cooler month than August! While there's not as much to do in the ornamental garden at this time of the year, if you have a fruit or vegetable patch, you'll be busy reaping the rewards of harvest. It's also time to get out and start planting spring-flowering bulbs for next year and you can collect seeds for next summer's colour too. Make the most of the remaining warmth while you can!

RHS - Top 10 jobs this month

1. Divide herbaceous perennials
2. Pick autumn raspberries
3. Collect and sow seed from perennials and hardy annuals
4. Dig up remaining potatoes before slug damage spoils them
5. Net ponds before leaf fall gets underway
6. Keep up with watering of new plants, using rain or grey water
7. Start to reduce the frequency of houseplant watering
8. Clean out cold frames and greenhouses so that they are ready for use in the autumn
9. Cover leafy vegetable crops with bird-proof netting
10. Plant spring flowering bulbs

Cobham Gardeners' Society Next Events Both at The Meadow Rooms Are- Saturday 12th September 2026 Autumn Show & Plant Sale from 2pm to 3.30pm.

See Page 6

Wednesday 14th October 2026 – 7pm expert speaker talk.

Behind The Scenes At Kew Gardens By Dr John Hughes

See page 31

Why not join Cobham Gardeners Society You can apply for membership at the show, talk or by email. It's only a modest £10 for the year – money you get back from free entry into all Gardeners' expert speaker talks and massive savings of up to 50% on quality plants at local garden centres. For further details email cobhamgs@hotmail.co.uk



Meetings & Shows at the Meadow Room in Dickensian Cobham, Kent
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Saturday 12th September 2026 - 2:00-3:30pm
Cobham Gardeners' Society

Autumn Show & Plant Sale

Gardening Tips * Adult & Junior Show Categories
Flowers, Vegetables, Preserves & Photographic
Tea, coffee & home made cake on sale

Free Entry. Extra car parking Cobham Cricket Club



Sharing a love of gardening ... locally!
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Come and join us for a summer luncheon of assorted sandwiches,
delicious cake and tea/coffee all for just £5 per person.
A warm welcome is awaiting you and we look forward
to seeing you in St Mary's Church Room
On the 3rd Thursday of each month 12-2pm.



Local Funding Group '24



COFFEE MORNING
ST MARY'S CHURCH ROOM

2ND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH at 10.30am

Meet old Friends and make new Friends

Macmillan Coffee Morning 10th September (*see page 23*)

THE TUESDAY POP IN

**Meetings are held at the Leather Bottle on the second
Tuesday of the month from 10.30 till 12 noon;
all are welcome to join us for a relaxed chat and coffee.**

Next pop-in 9th September

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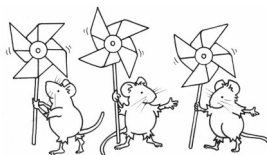
Thursday Fellowship.

Members will be visiting Meopham Windmill this month. Unfortunately, due to limited space, this visit is open to members only.

The Trust is, however, keen for visitors to enjoy the historic Mill and it is open on Sundays from 1.30pm to 4.30pm until the end of September and at other times by appointment.

If you are interested do contact; info@ [meophamwindmill.org.uk](mailto:info@meophamwindmill.org.uk)

With best wishes from Jennifer.



MONDAY CLUB—Sole Street

The Monday Club meets every week at St Mary's Church Room, Manor Road, Sole Street, Cobham from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. It is a small club for the retired and semi- retired. We have a very varied programme of Speakers, Choirs etc with Social Afternoons – tea, biscuits games etc. We also arrange outings to places of interest and afternoon teas. New Members are made very welcome.



Autumn

Yellow the bracken,
Golden the sheaves,
Rosy the apples,
Crimson the leaves;
Mist on the hillside,
Clouds grey and white.
Autumn, good morning!
Summer, good night!

By Florence Hoatson



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everyone else.

For further details contact
Lynn Ruddock
07928 700490

Sole Street W.I

On Thursday 2nd July, two of our ladies from Sole Street W.I had the pleasure of accepting an invitation to a delightful cream tea hosted by Shorne & Thong WI at Shorne Village Hall. We received a very warm welcome from their members and enjoyed a fascinating talk by Iain Craig, on the life and legacy of Pocahontas. It was wonderful to see another WI in action, share ideas, and spend a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon chatting over tea and scones. Thank you to everyone at Shorne & Thong WI for their warm hospitality.



On a very warm evening on 28th July, our speaker was Susan Shaw, who gave a presentation entitled “*Top Tips for Flower for Arranging.*”

Susan explained that every successful floral arrangement is built around five key elements: colour, form, space, texture and line. Susan treated us to a wonderful selection of photographs showcasing beautiful floral arrangements. She demonstrated how foliage can enhance any display and how seasonal flowers and greenery can be used to create stunning designs throughout the year. It was an enjoyable evening, leaving us with plenty of new ideas to have a go at floral displays.

Dates for your diary:

Tuesday 25th August - 1pm Garden Party at Kathy's house

Friday 18th September - Water Blitz (More info at Garden party meeting)

22nd September - 7.30pm 'All things Sloe Gin & Chocolate' - Katharine Hook

Please bring one item for the Harvest hamper

For further information about our meetings, walking group or craft sessions, please email:

solestreet@wkwfi.org.uk

Jayne Holden

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Back to School

The summer days of leisure
Give way to autumn cool;
Our mood is hard to measure
As we go back to school.

The table that was bearing
The fizzy pop and snacks
The surface is now caring
For books and packed lunch packs.

It's sad when times of easy rest
Give way to daily grind;
The bright side, when we're feeling
stressed
Can be quite hard to find!

But we can't live forever
On a beach of golden sand;
It wouldn't be so clever
To live our lives unplanned!

A new phase is beginning
New scope of things to learn,
New ways we can be winning
New corners we can turn!

When school days are behind us
And faded, like a ghost -
The summertime will find us
With two weeks hols at most!

By Nigel Beeton



Dates for your Diary

The dates for the Cobham Parish Council meetings are:

Tuesday 8th September St Mary's Church Room at 7.30pm
Tuesday 6th October Meadow Rooms at 7.30pm
Tuesday 3rd November St Mary's Church Room at 7.30pm
Tuesday 1st December Meadow Rooms at 7.30pm



The dates for the Luddesdown Parish Council meetings are:

Monday 21st September Luddesdown Village Hall
Monday 16th November Luddesdown Village Hall
All meetings start at 7.30pm

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email lvhbooking@gmail.com

BELL RINGING by Peter Hartley

Churches and bells need people to keep them going. Umpteen hurrahs to the few dedicated volunteers who keep our Cobham church going. Also thank you to our ringers who, along with family and work responsibilities, ensure our Cobham bells continue to ring out.

Ringling requires skill, physical effort, listening and concentration. Sitting in my chantry college my mind can wander. Bell ringing calls for various elements and churches are crucial. The Reverend Marcus Walker is the Rector of St. Bartholomew the Great in the City of London (5 bells). Bart's the Great is special to our family for in that church my parents were married and also my elder sister. The Reverend Walker is a member of the Church of England's General Synod and the founder of "Save the Parish" speaking up strongly for the future of the parish and determined to break the current cycle of decline.

Ringling obviously needs bells. The only bell foundry now in Britain is John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough. John Taylor was the son of a bellfounder and learned his trade early in both Devon and Oxford. In 1838 he was commissioned to recast the bells of ancient All Saint's Church in Loughborough (10 bells) with the stipulation that the work be carried out in the parish. Taylors of Loughborough have been there ever since in their Grade II red-brick buildings. In 2016 the Loughborough Bellfoundry Trust was set up to conserve the working foundry, their archives and the modern visitor attraction museum.

Bell ringling involves quite a bit of machinery. While Taylor's of Loughborough provide a comprehensive specialist service others provide particular skills. Bells hang in rigid metal frames these days replacing wood. Nicholson's of Bridport and Whites of Appleton are two church bellhangers. Ian Johnson of Masham, in his sixties, continues to make sliders, stays and bell wheels from ash wood, which are so essential to the control of bells. Then there are the makers of bell ropes with their coloured sallies.

Everything costs money. The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, where VAT was reclaimed has now been replaced. The Government has introduced the Places of Worship Renewal Fund which requires applications being submitted which might result in discretionary grants being made. Uncertainty on the total cost of bell restoration projects has been introduced. Ladock, Cornwall (8 bells) needed £150,000 and just beat the rule change. Lydlinch, Dorset (5 bells) need £103,000 and have to secure the last £20,000 now the routine VAT refund has gone.

Everything changes. The King has got his 4th Prime Minister in the first 4 years of his reign. Ever onwards.

Meopham Library Writing Group

Meopham Library Writing Group meets again on Thursday 3rd September 2026 at 10am.

Anyone who is interested in writing is very welcome to join us. Each month there is a writing challenge and a different writing theme, such as "Friendship", which can be used as a starting point for a short story, poem or an article. Creative writing is a very enjoyable activity which can also be used to record special family memories as well as being helpful for anyone facing difficult times.

Future meetings will be held on 1st October, 5th November and 3rd December.

Please ring 01474 813379 for more information.



1st South Street Boys Brigade and Girls Association Company

The 1st South Street Boys Brigade and Girls Association Company meets every Friday evening from 6pm-7.30pm during term time, for boys and girls aged 5-18 years, at South Street Baptist Church, Wrotham Road, Meopham, DA13 0QJ (next to Hope Hill). New members are very welcome to join us for games, craft and Bible stories. Meetings start again on 11th September.

Please ring 01474 815039 or 01474 813379 for more information or visit www.southstreetbaptist.org.uk and www.BOYS-BRIGADE.org.uk

SONG TIME meets every Monday morning 9.45am-11am during term time for families with babies and toddlers. Meetings start again on 14th September. South Street Baptist Church services all begin at 10.45am.

The MacMillan Cancer Charity Coffee Morning is on Saturday 26th September from 10.30am until midday. All are welcome.



ULTIMATE COLDPLAY



Thursday 8th October 2026

St Mary Magdalene Church, Cobham Kent

Doors open at 7pm, for 7:30pm start

Fully Licensed Bar

Free public car park nearby

Tickets £25.75 online on www.twowomenevents.com

Any questions? Contact us on info@twowomenevents.com

Luddesdown & District Rights of Way Group.

We are a small friendly group that usually walks from The Cock Inn, Henley Street, Luddesdown, Gravesend DA13 0XB, at 11am on Wednesdays. We walk at a gentle pace for some 90 minutes in beautiful countryside. Occasionally we lead weekend walks.

With four Socials a year in Luddesdown Village Hall and a twice yearly Newsletter, we would be delighted if you joined us for a walk or two. Becoming a member costs £7 per person a year. Please contact Walks Co-ordinator Janet Ferguson, preferably at janetferguson@hotmail.fr . Ian Sheridan, Acting Chairman, 07951 927 517

St John's Meopham with St Mildred's Nurstead Church Services for September 2026



Sunday 6 September	9.45am Morning Worship at St John's 11.30am Holy Communion at St Mildred's
Sunday 13 September	No 9.45am Holy Communion at St John's No 11.30am Mattins at St Mildred's
Sunday 20 September	9.45am Morning Worship & Baptism at St John's 11.30am Mattins at St Mildreds
Sunday 27 September	9.45am Harvest Festival at St John's No 11.30am Service at St Mildred's

Cobham, Luddesdowne and Sole Street
Church Services during September 2026



Sunday 30th August – Please note the time in the **August Magazine** is incorrect . The correct time is **9:45am**

9:45am **Morning Worship and Baptisms, Meopham**
(for all four parishes)

Sunday 6th September

10:30am **Holy Communion (BCP), Luddesdowne**

Sunday 13th September

10:30am **Holy Communion, Cobham**

Sunday 20th September

10:30am **Holy Communion, Luddesdowne**

Sunday 27th September

10:30am **Harvest Service, Cobham**

Midweek services in Sole Street

St Mary's Church Room, Informal Morning Prayer

9:30am – 2nd, 9th, 16th 23rd and 30th September



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Retreat



A man with a nagging secret couldn't keep it any longer. In the confessional he admitted that for years he had been stealing building supplies from the lumberyard where he worked. "What did you take?" his priest asked.

"Enough to build my own house and enough for my son's house. And houses for our two daughters and our cottage at the lake."

"This is very serious," the priest said. "I shall have to think of a far-reaching penance. Have you ever done a retreat?"

"No, Father, I haven't," the man replied. "But if you can get the plans, I can get the lumber."



"I am the Vine" - A Pilgrimage Walk
Led by the Rev Canon Chris Stone
Saturday 5th September

Join us for a circular 4 mile walk between Meopham and Luddesdowne churches (10am to 2pm approx) through fields and vineyard. Enjoy the beauty of nature, and talks exploring history and faith along the way and inside these ancient buildings. Departing from St John the Baptist Church, Meopham at 10.30am following introduction and short act of worship at 10am.

For more information and to register please contact:
Peter & Jill Kettle (email: twokettles@hotmail.co.uk)
Tel: 01474813632



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Local Funding Group '24

It's time for a Macmillan Coffee Morning and you're invited

Let's do whatever it takes to make cancer
care better for everyone, whoever and
wherever they are



MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

Raffle

St. Mary's Church Room

Thursday 10 September

**Bring
& Buy**

10:30 - 12:00

Quiz

Cash-only event

**LFG'24
Coffee
Mornings**

**2nd
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of month
10:30am**

**2026
8 October
12 November
10 December**

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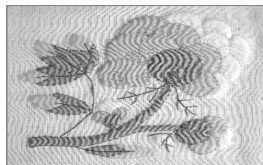
Our last meeting was a 'Summer Stitch Picnic' meeting with a chance to enjoy delicious cake and snacks including delicious homemade sausage rolls and fruit kebabs- thank you ladies!



This was an opportunity for some of our newer members to look at 'Betty's Book' which is a collection of beautiful embroidery samples produced by many ladies over many months. The book is dedicated to a former member. You can see a few examples here – you may recognise the free machine embroidery piece from our website (see below). Some of us had managed to finish our Kawandi quilting which was the topic of last month's meeting.



This time we also had the chance to bring our own stitching to work on while we chatted to each other. It was interesting to see what everyone was working on, although to be honest there was probably more chatting than stitching! Several of us had brought 'UFOs' (UnFinished Objects) – mostly embroidery - to work on. However, one member was doing some beautiful knitting for a small family member, whilst



another was making waistcoats for a charity venture. The weather was extremely hot on this occasion so we welcomed the chance to sit in a pleasant environment doing activities that we all enjoyed.

If you or someone you know would maybe like to start a new hobby and to join our group or would just like to find out a bit more about us then please pay us a visit - look at our website: <https://northkentembroiderers.co.uk/> or email us at: info@northkentembroiderers.co.uk or contact our

Chairman, Eileen on 01474 324734 Happy stitching, Karen





Cobham Church

Burial of ashes

Bryan Cecil TRELEAVEN was born on the 9th December 1938 and died on the 3rd December 2025 at the age of 86 years old. A Celebration of Life service was held on the 2nd January 2026 at Thames View Crematorium, conducted by Celebrant Nina MARTINEZ.

On the 7th July 2026 Bryan's ashes were buried in Cobham's Garden of Remembrance, the service was conducted by Alison HARDING (Lay Reader from Ash and Ridley). Our condolences and prayers go to Bryan's wife Brenda, son Bryan (junior) and family.

Graveside Burial

Rosemary Caroline LOVERIDGE (known as Jane) died on the 5th June 2026 at the age of 95 years old. Jane was buried in Cobham's lower churchyard on the 7th July 2026, the service was conducted by Alison HARDING (Lay Reader from Ash and Ridley). Our condolences and prayers go to Jane's daughter's Christine and Sheila and their families.

Burial of ashes

Adrian Guy CHAPMAN who was born on the 22nd November 1946 and died on the 18th May 2026 at the age of 79 years old. Adrian's ashes were buried in Cobham's Garden of Remembrance on the 25th July 2026, the service was conducted by Alison HARDING (Lay Reader from Ash and Ridley). Our condolences and prayers go to Adrian's wife Kathy, son Philip, daughter Joanna and their families.



Cobham Choir

10

10th Anniversary Season

Would you like to join a choir where you quickly feel like you belong?

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If the answer is yes, and you read music or sing well by ear, then come along and join us for a free 'give us a go and see what you think' rehearsal on 8th September.

Email cobhamchoir@gmail.com for more details and to let us know you're coming.



Sunday Afternoon Club

3.00pm on some Sunday Afternoons in the
St John's Centre Meopham: Songs and Stories,
Prayers and Games, Activities and Food!
For Children up to age 12 and their adults.
For further info visit stjohnsmeopham.co.uk





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HARVEST FESTIVAL



...I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!



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Book Reviews



Bible Stories Activity Pad – 60 Activities for 5 years and under By Deborah Lock, Candle Books, £9.99

Fun and engaging activity books with tear-off sheets covering all the favourite Bible stories and more for young children.

Packed with a wonderfully varied mix of early-learning activities inspired by favourite

Bible stories from both the Old and New Testaments, this vibrant activity pad gives children aged 5 years and under a playful, engaging way to explore the greatest story ever told – one page at a time.

It includes colouring pages featuring familiar Bible characters, dot-to-dot, puzzles, mazes, matching games, drawing and creative activities, bright illustrations, and tear-off sheets for easy use or for sharing

Makes a brilliant gift for birthdays, baptisms, Easter, Christmas, or as a Sunday school prize.

Hope for All Creation - a theological response to the environmental crises By the House of Bishops, CHP, £12.99

Hope for All Creation presents a theological vision by which members of the Church of England might think, reflect and act in response to the current environmental crises, in partnership with other denominations and all people of good will. Drawing on a rich history of Anglican theological reflection on the environment, it takes forward this tradition to inform the Church of England's care for creation. It does so at a time when humanity's disruption of the Earth seems on the threshold of the catastrophes earlier reports warned of. It also seeks to deepen the Church's vision of creation and human responsibility and to articulate more fully God's reconciliation of all things in Christ and the hope for the redemption and renewal he provides.

Finally, it offers a vision of how Christians can seek to live in a reconciled relationship with other creatures in the light of this hope and integrate this fully into Christian mission and discipleship. Hope for All Creation is a teaching document from the House of Bishops of the Church of England and features a Foreword by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.



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Wednesday 14th October 2026 - 7pm Behind The Scenes At Kew Gardens By Dr John Hughes

As a member of the RHS Tender Ornamental Plant Group, our Speaker John Hughes has had access to areas not normally visited by the general public. Amongst other things, he has promised to show us the work going on behind the scenes to keep the Davies Alpine House looking presentable throughout the year and the work involved in restoring the Temperate Glasshouse, including photos taken by a Kew staff member specially for the talk. He also promises to show some of the wonderful plants grown in the nursery areas which are not open to the public

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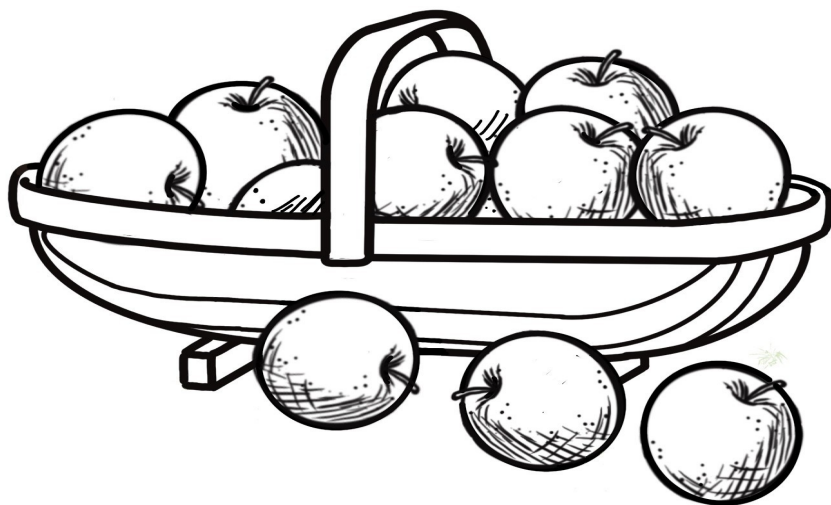
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Can you colour the apples, so they look the same as the apples on the front page?



Phew it has been hot!!

I hope you have had a fantastic summer. As you can imagine my big furry coat has made me very hot during the recent sizzling weather. I have been having lots of extra pamper sessions, where a special brush removes lots of loose fur and thins my coat a bit. Best of all I had a lovely summer bath, lots of bubbles and cooling rinses, then zoomies around the garden, digging random holes in the flower beds and then throwing myself down and rolling on the cool earth. Not sure the editor was happy with me, especially when I ran into the house to share my fun.



Luckily, I live in Sole Street, so when I go for my walk I'm kept under the shade of the trees, otherwise I would become a very hot dog and not the yummy kind you put ketchup on!

Love and licks Paddy

P.S. Enjoy the start of the new school year.

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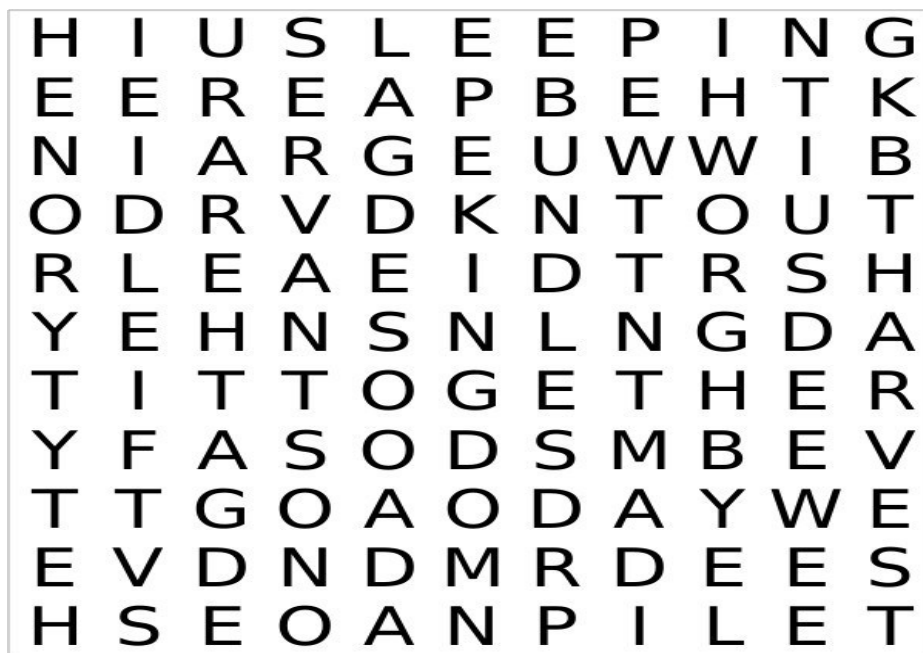
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The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13.24-30)

Ever wonder why there is both good and evil allowed in this world? Jesus told a parable that touched on this subject – it is called the Parable of the Weeds. It runs like this: Consider the world as if it were a field where a Farmer has sown good seed. But then an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat. So, when the wheat came up, so did the weeds. What to do? Instead of destroying the weeds, and thereby risking the wheat, the Farmer tells his reapers to wait and let both wheat and weeds grow together until the harvest. At the harvest he will instruct the reapers to gather up the wheat, but to discard the weeds. So do not despair when evil seems to thrive in this world – there is a reckoning still to come, and justice will be done.

Kingdom Heaven Good Seed Field Sleeping Grain Weeds Enemy Servants

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