

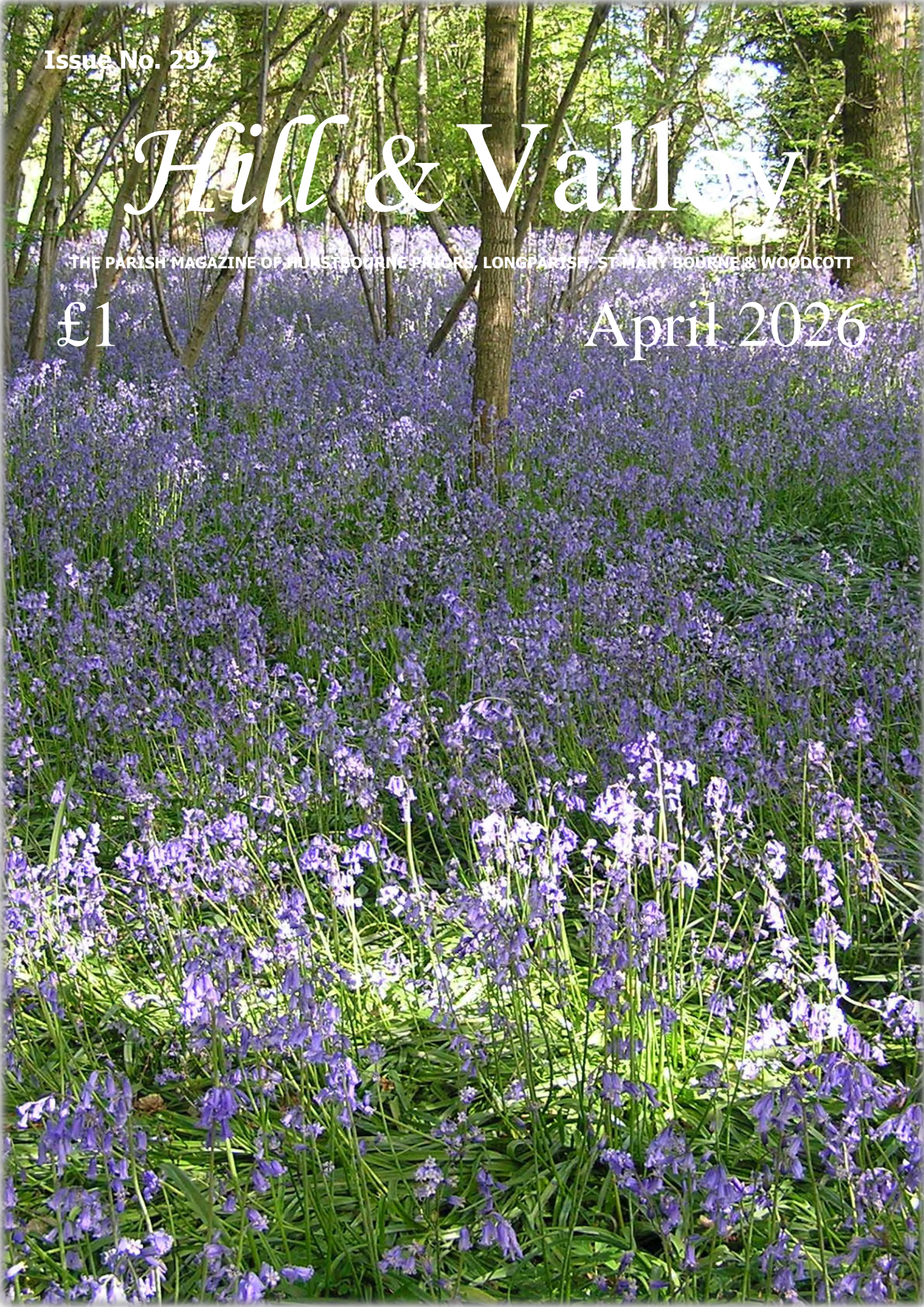
Issue No. 297

# Hill & Valley

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF HURSTBOURNE PAROIS, LONGPARISH, ST MARY BOURNE & WOODCOTT

£1

April 2026



## Finding something in a good read to reflect on...

I want to draw your attention to Alexander McCall Smith's latest 44 Scotland Street novel. I received it as a Christmas gift, a hardback copy - such a treat. There were wonderful, moving, humorous moments in it. I want to quote two of them, but there were lots more. These two have three very pertinent points worth thinking about.

In the book, Matthew's wife was commenting on the collapse of civilization. She suggested that the causes may well be found in the small things: the growth of dishonesty, loss of respect for legitimate authority or the weakening of belief in anything. This was confirmed, Matthew thought, when earlier in the day, a cyclist sailed past him, ignored a red light, shot across the intersection and caused a motorist to slam on his brakes to avoid an accident. No slowing down, no apology, just indifference. Matthew's mood swung from resentment and anger to depression and a sense of helplessness. But in his mind's eye he pictured revenge (and I let you guess the alternatives) and he felt perhaps this small incident shouldn't be disregarded, maybe it was important in that it reflected something much bigger going on in society.

Drawn out of these thoughts he had to attend to the bedtime story for his three boys. They wanted Babar (was this read to you when you were young?) who had gone from Africa to Europe to purchase clothes befitting a King in the Western World. First World values were being imposed on the Land of the Elephants. This point didn't really interest the young boys. But what did was any attempt by Matthew to edit out the sad or tragic parts. Babar's mother had been shot. That was the harsh reality, and one of the boys cautioned his father not to miss anything out.

What he was prone to do was to lower his voice in sympathy, knowing that it was likely that this reality was happening somewhere in Africa now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: baby elephants being left by the corpses of their mothers, shot by poachers for their tusks. The pain he felt was very real. One of the triplets said: *"You should speak louder, Daddy. We can't hear you if you mumble the bits that hurt."*

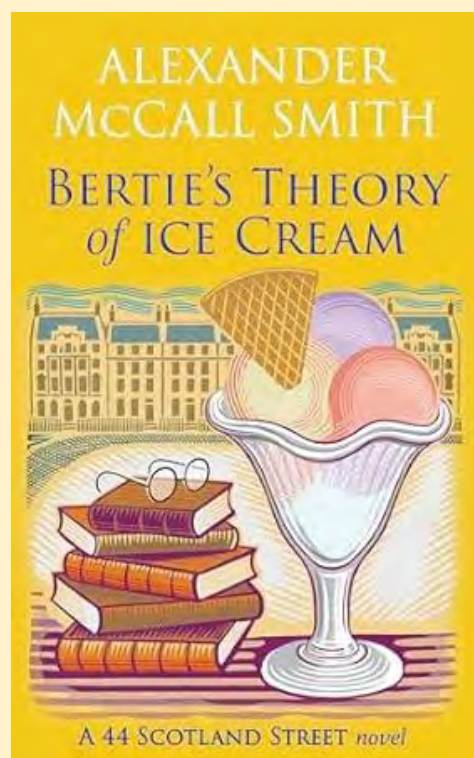
The second quote comes from Bertie, a small boy of seven, whose mother had instructed his father to find a tutor for Bertie to learn about Irish Culture. Bertie asks if he would feel different if he was Irish with an Irish passport. The tutor replied that this will be doubtful, but he may have a lot more fun!

Bertie seemed to understand that people should enjoy what they have; because it may not last forever. And he then quotes the philosophical example of ice cream. When you have one, you should eat it. If you just look at it, it will melt. But if you wanted to, you could also share it. If someone didn't have one, you could give them a lick of yours! Why? Because ice cream tastes better if it is shared. Bertie's tutor could only marvel at this youngster's understanding of life.

So, I find myself asking, do I agree about the collapse of civilization? Is it in the small things? Yes, I think I do agree with this theory. *"Should we leave texts of books alone - even the painful moments in children's stories? Yes, I think we should."* And do I agree with Bertie - his philosophical attitude to life about enjoying something that we might not have forever. I think yes is the answer to this question as well.

I know I can grasp onto those things that hold society together: by being honest, showing respect to those in authority, being kind and working hard. Most of all by holding onto my faith.

I know there are things that are difficult to understand; painful things but somehow for me, my faith helps me not to escape these things but to face them with courage and resolve. And finally, Bertie's idea about enjoying what we have while we have it, and if possible, sharing it. With a grateful heart, filled with faith, hope and love, I know I can face the future and I don't face it alone.



Copyright and grateful thanks to A M S.

## Services in the Parish Churches

### April 2026

All Zoom details are available from the Church wardens or Dodie Marsden.

#### Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>

St Peter's, St Mary Bourne 9.30am *Holy Communion*

#### Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Maundy Thursday

St Peter's, St Mary Bourne 7.00pm *Benefice Service  
Holy Communion*

#### Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> - Good Friday

St Nicholas', Longparish 2.00pm *Meditation*  
St Peter's, St Mary Bourne 10.30am *GF Service*

#### Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> - Easter Day

St Andrew's, Hurstbourne Priors 10.30am *Holy Communion*  
St Mary's, Tufton 9.00am *Holy Communion*  
St Nicholas', Longparish 10.30am *Holy Communion*  
St Peter's, St Mary Bourne 10.30am *Holy Communion*  
St James', Woodcott 9.00am *Holy Communion*  
**Winchester Cathedral Zoom Service Online**

#### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> - Easter 2

St Andrew's, Hurstbourne Priors 6.00pm *Benefice Evensong*  
St Mary's, Tufton *No service*  
St Nicholas', Longparish 10.30am *Holy Communion*  
St Peter's, St Mary Bourne 10.30am *Holy Communion*  
St James', Woodcott *No service*  
**Home Zoom Service at 10.30am**

#### Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>

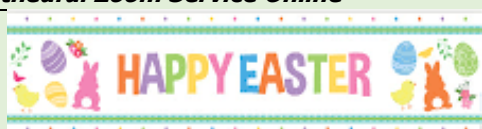
All Hallows, Whitchurch 9.30am *Holy Communion*

#### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> - Easter 3

St Andrew's, Hurstbourne Priors 9.00am *Holy Communion*  
St Mary's, Tufton *No service*  
St Nicholas', Longparish 10.30am *Family Service*  
St Peter's, St Mary Bourne 10.30am *Holy Communion*  
St James', Woodcott 9.00am *Matins*  
**Home Zoom Service at 10.30am**

#### Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> - Easter 4

St Andrew's, Hurstbourne Priors 10.30am *Holy Communion*  
St Mary's, Tufton 9.00am *Holy Communion*  
St Nicholas', Longparish 10.30am *Holy Communion*  
St Peter's, St Mary Bourne 10.30am *Morning Prayer*  
6.00pm *Benefice Evensong*  
St James', Woodcott *No service*  
**Winchester Cathedral Zoom Service Online**



For all enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals in any of the parish churches, please contact the Church Office Administrator:

☎ 01256 893573

[brightwatersbenefice@gmail.com](mailto:brightwatersbenefice@gmail.com)

Revd Russell Smart: ☎ 01962 760508  
[revrussellsmart@gmail.com](mailto:revrussellsmart@gmail.com)

Rev Canon Dodie Marsden:

☎ 01264 738211

[dodie.marsden@gmail.com](mailto:dodie.marsden@gmail.com)

• For details of **Roman Catholic Services** in Whitchurch or Andover: ☎ 01264 352829

• **Methodist Minister** for our parishes:

The Revd Rachel Borgars, 11 Lapwing Rise, Whitchurch, RG28 7SU ☎ 01256 895878 or [rachel.borgars@methodist.org.uk](mailto:rachel.borgars@methodist.org.uk)

#### From the Church Registers

##### • Baptisms

"Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father."

**Primrose Isabel Anne Docherty**

1/3/26 - Hurstbourne Priors

**Emily Louise Pincke-Dawson**

14/3/26 - St Mary Bourne

##### • Weddings

"Marriage is a gift of God in creation ..."

**Susan Waite and Jonathan Hugh**

**Macneill Spaul**

28/3/26 - St Mary Bourne

##### • Funerals

"Into God's loving care we commit you ..."

**Anna Bye**

Burial of ashes - 13/3/26 - Hurstbourne Priors

**LET US PRAY** - If you would like us to pray for You or someone else, please email [stnbrightwaters@icloud.com](mailto:stnbrightwaters@icloud.com) giving the name (no surname required) and include a reason if you wish, or contact a member of the local ministry team.





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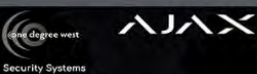
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**The Community Library - Club Room**  
Saturday mornings between 10.30 and 12.30



**Coffee at The George Inn**

All ages are welcome, from all the villages, to a social coffee morning at

**The George Inn** St Mary Bourne on **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 10.30am**

£2.50 for coffee and biscuits - For more information contact Win Coventry - ☎ 01264 738 199.

**The Lunch**

Our next village lunch will be held on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April** at St Mary Bourne Village Centre, as usual starting to serve at 12.30pm. All are welcome to come along and enjoy our monthly light social lunch. If a lift is needed, please phone Chris on ☎ 01264 738110 by Noon on the Tuesday.



**Community Evenings at St Mary Bourne Village Centre**  
**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026,**  
**7.30pm**

**Come and join us for our April Quiz Night**



This event is free to the local community, and everyone is welcome. No need to make up a team. There will be prizes and a licensed bar for refreshments.

You can just turn up on the day, but it will help us with planning if you could let us know that you intend to come by emailing [villagecentre@stmarybourne.org](mailto:villagecentre@stmarybourne.org)

**Film Night at Vernham Dean Millennium Hall - SP11 0JY**



2025 - PG - 2h 3m

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April - 7.30**

The final instalment of Julian Fellowes' very popular TV and film series, filmed up the road at Highclere Castle. Lady Mary finds herself in a public scandal and her family once again faces financial trouble and the threat of social disgrace. Will the Crawley family finally embrace the need to change?



**THE GEORGE INN**

This Month

**Social Coffee & Cake Morning** for all ages  
**10.30am on 14<sup>th</sup> April** (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month)

**Repair Café** from 10am to 12 noon on **4<sup>th</sup> April**  
(the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month)

**Supper Club**, Thai themed @£40 per person on  
**16<sup>th</sup> April**

**Garden Bar opening** - Easter weekend - subject to good weather

**Weekly deals**

**Steak Frites** - Monday £17 **Pie** - Wednesday £15

Why not treat someone to a George Inn **Gift Voucher?**

01264 318000 - [info@georgeinnstmarybourne.co.uk](mailto:info@georgeinnstmarybourne.co.uk)

**STOKE COFFEE AFTERNOON**

**Wednesday 1st April**  
**2 - 3.30pm**  
**1, Old Manor Farm**  
**SP11 ONP**

*Everyone welcome*

**St Mary Bourne School**

**Gardening Club**

We now run a weekly gardening club at the school.

If you are dividing plants or have any excess seedlings or plants we would love any donations.

*Thank you!*

Please get in touch with Ali Buckley  
[alisoncbuckley@hotmail.com](mailto:alisoncbuckley@hotmail.com)  
**07776 184000**

*Local Musicians Harriet and Nigel Dickinson invite all to:*

**An Evening of Music**

**St Peter's Church, St Mary Bourne**  
**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April at 7.00pm**

**The Amberly Ensemble**

**An evening concert to include works by Debussy, Zemlinsky, de Groot and others**  
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**Paukenmesse**

J Haydn

**Andover Choral**

**Nova Foresta Philharmonic**  
Conducted by Craig Lawton

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026 - 7.30pm**

Andover Community Church Charlton Rd, SP10 3JH  
Tickets £16 on door. £5 under 12. Student discount



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**Spring has finally arrived**, bringing longer days and lighter evenings and that sense of renewal in the air. As the season shifts, so does the atmosphere in our Shop & Café and we are delighted to welcome you to celebrate all things Spring and Easter with us...

Vicky has been refreshing her gift table to reflect the season, pretty egg cups, biscuit tins, bunny vases, flowers, **Easter eggs** and **Easter cards** (that you can send through our post office) perfect for the Easter break...

Sandra and the lovely baristas give that warm inviting feel that makes us the perfect spot to pause, catch up with friends or simply enjoy a quiet moment with a coffee. I think there is something about this month that encourages us all to slow down and savour the little things...

In the Café we have some limited-time Spring specials homemade bakes, so it's the perfect excuse to gather family and friends whether you're stopping by after a morning walk or making an afternoon of it.

We know Easter is about togetherness, conversation and meeting up; our aim is to offer more than just a place to shop and drink; we are part of a great community, and you can feel at home here...

So come and experience it with us, we would love to be part of your season and looking forward to welcoming you.

Here's to a joyful Easter *LOVE VICKY & SANDRA*

**The Boundary Shop & Café Easter Opening Times:**

**GOOD FRIDAY** - SHOP 9-2 - CAFE 9-1 - POST OFFICE 9-12

**EASTER SUNDAY** - CLOSED

**EASTER MONDAY** - SHOP 9-2 - CAFE 9-1 - POST OFFICE CLOSED

**The Boundary, our local village Shop and Café**, is more than just a place to buy milk - it's the beating heart of our community, a social hub for friends to meet, and a lifeline for many. **To keep this vital asset thriving, we are looking for passionate residents in the Bourne Valley to join our Management Committee.**

We are seeking **volunteers with a range of skills** - whether you have experience in retail, finance, marketing, or simply a desire to give back to our community. As a committee member, you will help make key decisions on stock, café improvements, community events, and long-term sustainability.

This is a fantastic opportunity to use your skills to make a tangible difference, meet new people, and ensure our village remains vibrant. It is a rewarding experience, requiring a small-time commitment that brings huge rewards for the whole village.

**Can you spare a few hours a month to ensure The Boundary continues to serve us all?**

We need fresh ideas and energy to keep our community-owned venture thriving. If you are enthusiastic about local, sustainable, and friendly retail, we want to hear from you.

**The Boundary Shop & Café - 1☺☺ Club**

**March 2026 draw:**

**£50** - G Darwent    **£20** - R Widén

**£20** - P St Quintin    **£10** - Kate Coldicott

**The next 1☺☺ Club Draw: Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April**



**What to do this month in your garden**

Finish chitting your potatoes ready for planting, sow seeds on a windowsill or under glass, mulch beds with compost.

Sow greenhouse crops including tomatoes, cucumbers, aubergines, peppers and chillies.

If you haven't had time to sow crops this spring, catch up by buying young plants instead - supermarkets, garden centres and the Hurstbourne Priors May Fair (4<sup>th</sup> May) are all good sources. Be vigilant as the temperature rises – look out for slugs and protect your new plants.

Lift and divide congested clumps of perennials and tie in new shoots on clematis, roses and other climbers to ensure they grow in the right direction.

Deadhead bulbs - pick off old flowerheads and leave the foliage to die down naturally.

Sprinkle fertiliser around perennials, trees, shrubs & roses.

Support tall growing perennials with sticks, canes or metal supports.

Don't forget to keep your competition seed potatoes safe from frosts. Water well to ensure the compost never dries out, and once the shoots break through - roughly every 7-10 days - earth up potatoes to cover over the shoots.



**A Fascinating Talk - The History of St Mary Bourne**

History in the making, as Julie Muirhead & Jeanette Davies entertained Parishioners of St Mary Bourne in the Village Hall.

Jeanette provided a pictorial slideshow of memorable occasions and events for the annual Scrap Book, whilst Julie took the audience further back in time. A fascinating insight into how the Parish evolved and the



Photo: <http://burlisonphotography.com/>

key figures who shaped its development. The attendees were then invited to peruse numerous scrapbooks throughout the ages, along with a collection of artefacts including a 5000-year-old axe head. A thoroughly entertaining evening.

**Be part of history:**

Jeanette would like to receive old photos in digital format, to add to the slideshow.

Email: [daviessmb@aol.com](mailto:daviessmb@aol.com)

Julie is keen to receive any old photographs, documentation etc. from St Mary Bourne to add to her growing collection & studies. Contact Julie via the St Mary Bourne History Facebook page.

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The Parish Council held its monthly meeting on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March.

There will be **local elections on 7<sup>th</sup> May**, for the Parish, Borough and County Councils. Information about standing for election to the Parish Council can

be found on the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council website.

The **Flood and Emergency Group** continue their weekly dialogue with Southern Water and have been highlighting parishioners' concern over damage done to roadside verges by the large number of tankers being deployed along the valley, aiming to get a commitment to restitution after water levels drop and tankers are withdrawn.

The **MUGA** (multi user games area) is scheduled to be cleaned before it is repainted for its use as a games area: this is currently scheduled to start on April 7<sup>th</sup> and will involve closure for several days to allow the surface to dry out. The Community Play Space Project Team are planning an **official opening of the Play Area for 26<sup>th</sup> April**. This will be advertised when plans are finalised.

The St Mary Bourne **litter pick** took place on Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>. Many volunteers took part and filled a large number of black bags. Many thanks to all, and to the Boundary for providing bacon butties to those taking part. Stoke followed on Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Planning Applications:**

T/00060/26/TCA	1 Applegate SMB	Trees
26/00124/FUL	Breach Farm Burial Ground	Extension of Ground and Parking
26/00168/HSE	Trestan Cottage SMB	Wood burner & Flues & Wall repair
T/00077/26/TCA	Bourne House SMB	Trees
25/02881/FUL	Win-Fos SMB	Extension onto loft
23/02000/FUL 25/00077/REF6002358	Lower Wyke Farm SMB	Inspectorate Appeal – Solar Farm
26/00315/AGPD	Oak Tree Farm, Upper Wyke	Agricultural permitted development enquiry
26/00182/LDPO	Bramley Cottage SMB	Certificate of lawfulness – Garden shed
T/00094/26/TCA	Bourne Farm, Gangbridge Lane	Trees
T00104/26/TCA	Hylands, Stoke	Trees
26/00365/LBC	Diplands Cottage SMB	Replacement windows
26/00397/HSE	Wakeswood SMB	Tennis court
T/00111/26/TCA	4 Spring Hill	Trees

**Date of next Parish Council Meeting  
Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm**



**St Mary Bourne Cricket Club  
Spring Update - Indoor Success**

Throughout the winter months, a dedicated group of St Mary Bourne's keenest cricketers once again took part in the Wellington Indoor Cricket League. While previous seasons hadn't quite yielded the results we hoped for, this year's efforts paid off brilliantly. The team finished a superb 2<sup>nd</sup> place, missing out on the top spot by only a handful of bonus points. A fantastic achievement and a great way to keep cricket alive during the off-season!

**Upcoming Events**

**Works Day – Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April, 10am–3pm**

As we prepare for the return of outdoor cricket, we will be holding our annual Grounds Workday. This is an important opportunity to get the ground "cricket ready" for the season ahead. Jobs will include tidying the pavilion, sprucing up the sightscreens and general maintenance around the ground.

**Breakfast will be provided**, and all volunteers, players, families, and supporters are warmly invited to come along and lend a hand.



**Andover Astronomical Society  
16<sup>th</sup> April Hurstbourne Tarrant  
Community Centre at 7.30pm**

**Black holes, neutron stars and  
gravitational waves: from a whisper  
to a symphony - Professor Patrick Brady**

Scientists first detected gravitational waves – ripples in spacetime predicted by Einstein – over ten years ago. In this online talk you'll learn how gravitational waves are generated, what happens at the black hole event horizon, how neutron star collisions are responsible for most of the gold in our Universe, and what mysteries gravitational-wave astronomy may soon solve. All are welcome.

For more information about Andover Astronomical Society go to [www.andoverastronomy.org.uk](http://www.andoverastronomy.org.uk) or email [andoverastrosoc@gmail.com](mailto:andoverastrosoc@gmail.com)

**An unlikely friendship!**



Fen and I, my 13-year-old Patterdale terrier, who live in Binley, had an unusual guest staying with us for a couple of weeks recently. My Mum (not the unusual guest!) was staying with us after a hip replacement.

My mum brought with her, her rescue tortoise called Fergie, who is approximately 80 years old!! She had just come out of hibernation. She really is a pickle when she's fully awake after hibernation. She loves company and climbs over anything in her way, including Fen's dog bed! Fen was extremely patient with her; as you can see, the pair sitting together on my sofa!

*Kathy Lister*

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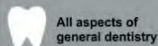


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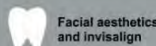
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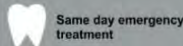
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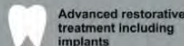
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## I Met a Lady in the Pub

Caroline Kremer - 12/03/2026

There was a pre-planned electricity cut in Stoke and Binley today. Yesterday sunshine. Today freezing, wet and windy. The house felt cold and, with an all-electric kitchen, I needed to warm up with a hot lunch. I never go to the pub for lunch on my own but today was somehow different. Chris and Ben were most welcoming.

The menu provided just what I needed: haddock fishcake, poached egg, tartare sauce and salad. I was on coffee when a woman walked past. I recognised her from the village enough to say hello. She stopped. We chatted. She told me she had recently been widowed.

"I know what that's like," I said and asked if she would like to sit down. She said she was on her way to the shop, but neither of us moved.

Her first husband had been in the Army. My dad was too. "What regiment?" "Royal Artillery, with a couple of tours in the Army Air Corps." "My dad too," I said. She asked my father's name. "John." Her first husband had also been called John.

When I told her my father's surname, she nearly fell over and sat down quickly. "John Athron with the shocking red hair?" "Yes!" You couldn't miss him.



Smiling broadly, she told me the two Johns had been best friends and had both flown the Skeeter. "They were the naughtiest men in the regiment," she added. They had met and served together in Detmold, Germany, 1963. And she fondly remembered my mother, Bobby. She said, her name was Gilly. And in those days, her married name was Williams. "Gilly Williams."

"I think I'm your godmother" she announced. I stared at her. "You are my godmother!" I exclaimed. Her eyes lit up. Mine filled with tears. Our hearts leapt.



I texted my mum, who replied immediately: "Ask her if she remembers doing the Limbo, drunk on orange squash circa 1965?" She did. Delighted by our rediscovery, we told everyone in the pub. Gilly said she felt guilty for being a terrible godmother so took me to the village shop and bought me a teddy bear saying, "This is 60 years late!"

Both Johns have now passed away. They'd lost touch in the 1970s. But Gilly and Bobby are back chatting with half a century to catch up on and plenty of mischief to remember.

I currently know very little of the Limbo dancing Gilly. I think I've worked out though, that guiding me on the religious path was not going to be the relationship we would have had. That twinkle in her eye tells me she's got a story or two to tell. *I'm going to enjoy getting to know you, Gilly Twine!*

Life, it seems, brings you exactly what you need, just when you need it. I can't help wondering if the two Johns (and maybe Nick too) had a hand in this serendipitous meeting.

CK



## Easter Bug Hunt

Looking for something fun to do with the children this Easter?

**Why not try an Easter Bug Hunt in your garden or local green space?**

Many small creatures begin to appear as the weather warms. **These tiny animals play a vital role in healthy gardens.** Bumblebees help pollinate flowers so plants, fruits and vegetables can grow. Ladybirds and lacewings eat aphids, helping keep garden pests under control.

Woodlice, worms and other soil creatures help **break down dead leaves and plant material**, recycling nutrients back into the soil. Even centipedes are helpful hunters that eat other small insects. All you need to do is look closely! Check flowers, watch sunny walls, and gently lift logs, stones or flowerpots (just remember to put them back



afterwards so the mini beasts keep their homes).

### Easter Bug Hunt Checklist

Can you spot these spring garden helpers?

- Ladybird
- Green Lacewing
- Centipede
- Butterfly
- Beetle
- Ant trail
- Bumblebee
- Earthworm
- Woodlouse
- Spider

If your young explorers enjoy ticking these off, there are also **free wildlife tick sheets** available from the



Woodland Trust that families can download and take on walks to spot even more nature. **Scan the QR Code for more information.**

You might be surprised how much wildlife is sharing our gardens and green spaces.

Every one of these creatures helps support **healthy soil, pollination and the balance of nature.**

*At Sustainable Bourne Valley we love encouraging people of all ages to notice and enjoy the wildlife right on our doorstep.*

## Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project Update: St Peter's Church, St Mary Bourne

By Karen Wardley and Sarah Gould

### Table in St Peter's Church, St Mary Bourne

The Autumn 2024 edition of this Newsletter (No 82) included an account of the graffiti found on the structure of the church (Hill & Valley February 2026), but further examples cover the upper surface of a very worn plank-topped table. The top of this table measures 137cm x 61cm and is supported on a wooden frame. It is normally located against the south wall of the chancel and protected by a fringed felt cloth. The scored marks include over one hundred examples of double and (more rarely) triple initials; unfortunately no forenames or family names are included. There are twelve instances of dates in the range 1763-1798, four of these having an indistinct final digit. Only one of the sets of initials is clearly associated with a date: a scored box includes both the initials "TB" and the year "1786". There are thirteen instances of these initials, more than any other set. If the table had spent its entire life in the church, then it is feasible that the initials belonged to former churchwardens. It is more likely, however, that the table had been used in a village school, at least during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Another example of a worn plank-topped table can be found in the nave of St Mary's church in Chilham, Kent. Like that at St Mary Bourne, it is marked with initials and eighteenth century dates, assumed to have been scored by boys receiving instruction in a schoolroom over the church porch at Chilham. Having learnt the alphabet pupils would very likely wish to practise newly acquired skills by leaving their mark, in the form of initials, on any surface to hand such as the tables described here.

Winchester College has recently acquired a plank-topped table believed to have been used in the common room of the school. Its surface has been scored with dates which fall in the nineteenth century. As well as initials, some of the marks include the names of boys, and where such examples are associated with dates comparison with the Winchester College records confirm the table's provenance.

The St Mary Bourne table may well have been used in that village's parochial school. Built in 1723, this was situated in the tithing of Swampton, a mile to the north-west of St Peter's church. A map of 1753 shows two buildings on a triangle of land: "a house now occupied by a School Master" and "a Parish House for the use of the Poor". By that time, the schoolmaster was Alexander Neave. The earliest reference to his surname is in the churchwardens' records: "21st April 1742: paid Neave his bill 8s 6d". The service for which Neave was compensated was not specified, but he was to be recorded as an overseer of the parish in 1765 and he kept the parochial records at some time.

The education act of 1870 ensured that education was available to all children. Prior to this, parents who could not afford private school fees were reliant on charity schools. The replies made to a school visitation enquiry which took place in about 1750 gave Alexander Neave as

the master of the charity school in the parish of St Mary Bourne. Twenty boys (but no girls) were taught "to read & write & cast accompt"; they were taught for free but were not clothed, fed or housed. The replies include the information that John Wallop (Viscount Lymington, to be made 1st Earl of Portsmouth in 1742) gave £10 annually to the school master after his foundation of the school in 1723. A year later, a will for Phillip Hedger 'schoolmaster' was probated, suggesting that Neave was not the first schoolmaster to live in the village.

Alexander Neave was buried in January 1779. He had previously resigned from the school, to be succeeded by Richard and Ann Sutton; Richard died intestate c.1803 but Ann held the school until 1835. So, throughout the period in the second half of the eighteenth century during which we have evidence that the table was being inscribed, the charity school on Swampton Green would have been under the supervision of Neave and then the Suttons.



## Warmer toes and lower bills at St James, Woodcott



There are some people in our world who continually contribute to society throughout their lives. One such person is Martin Copen. Through the proceeds of his book *B3048 Highway to the North*, worshippers at St James Woodcott will have warmer toes next winter.

Martin was our much loved parish priest for many years and we are grateful for his continued support, albeit in a different form.

We were delighted to be contacted by Michael Widén informing us that the proceeds from the sale of Martin's book were being distributed by Hill & Valley to Longparish CoE Primary School, St Mary Bourne Primary

School and Hurstbourne Priors for their recreation ground, receiving £250 each, and that we were to be the lucky recipients of a final donation of **£250**.

What to spend it on for the benefit of parishioners and worshippers, that was the question? It didn't take long to decide. We are constantly challenged with the costs of upkeep of St James Woodcott and one of the largest costs is for electricity.

Switching on the heating on Saturday evening to warm up the church has become too expensive and also follows the laws of physics... heat rises and most is lost in the vaults in the ceiling. The current strategy is to get up at 6am to flick the switch, it keeps the cost down but not ideal. So, our £250 will purchase a **space heater** which will be directed into the pews occupied by our faithful worshippers.

*Thank you Martin, thank you Hill & Valley.*

*Jane Griffiths and Pammie Nicholson*

## Remembering...

Bill Morris

22<sup>nd</sup> June 1937 - 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

Bill was the fourth child and eldest son born to Rose and William Morris in Rainham Kent. He had three older sisters Ruby, Daph & Ellen, and then after Bill there were eleven more siblings: George, Betty, Myra, Charlie, Ann, Ron, David, June, Noreen, Linda, and finally John.

During Bill's childhood, the family moved around the Kent countryside as his father worked on local farms. Bill went to secondary school in Gravesend which he left when he was 15 years old to join his dad and three of his sisters doing farmwork. When he reached the age of 18, he was called up for National Service and served in the Royal Engineers.



After Bill had completed National Service, he went back to farmwork, but changed to pipe laying for better pay. He then got a job helping on the construction of the new Medway Bridge. It was at this time he met Maureen (Finn). They started courting and got married on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1965 in St Mary the Virgin church in Upchurch.

Their first child Pat was born in 1967, shortly followed by Richard in 1968. When Jude was born in February 1974, the family was complete. Later that year the family moved to a cottage on the Highclere Estate where Bill worked in the grounds and the gardens and helped at the estate shoots, either loading for the late 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon or driving the game cart.

In 1984 the family moved to Woodcott. Whist living there, Bill and Maureen joined the British Legion darts team in Hurstbourne Tarrant and Bill was also a member of the Legion's tug-of-war team. Eighteen months later Bill moved back to the Highclere Estate as Head Gardener.

When Bill retired they moved to Stoke, as one of his sisters, Daphne (Miles), lived nearby in St Mary Bourne. Sadly, Bill was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2023 but he and Maureen were able to celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary in the village last year. Bill was moved to the Harrier Grange Care Home in November and died on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026.

He will be remembered as a good man, an honourable man, a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and friend. We offer Maureen and the family our deepest sympathy.

**Bill Morris – R.I.P.**



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**LONGPARISH PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

[www.longparish.org.uk/parish-council](http://www.longparish.org.uk/parish-council)

Council Chair: Emma Palmer

([emma.palmerpc@longparish.org.uk](mailto:emma.palmerpc@longparish.org.uk) or 07881 923150)

Parish Clerk: Hayley Thomas ([clerk@longparish.org.uk](mailto:clerk@longparish.org.uk) or 01256 396868)

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

No new planning applications were received in March. Full details of planning applications still under consultation can be viewed on the Test Valley Borough Council website [view-applications.testvalley.gov.uk/online-applications/](http://view-applications.testvalley.gov.uk/online-applications/)

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW PARISH COUNCILLOR**

The Parish Council would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Parish Councillor, Netta Wills. We are delighted to have her on board and look forward to working together.

**LONGPARISH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**7.45-9pm, Monday 13th April**

Longparish Parish Council, would like to invite residents of the village to join us for our Annual Parish Meeting at 7.45pm on Monday 13th April at the Village Hall.

This is your opportunity to hear about the various organisations that support the village and its community.

Speakers from Longparish Parish Council and its various working groups, Hampshire County Council, Test Valley Borough Council, the Longparish Community Association, the Longparish Community Pub Limited, the Village Hall Committee, the Longparish School, and other village groups will each give 2-minute updates on their work in the village over the past year and any plans for the year ahead

**POTHOLE REPORTING**

Longparish Parish Council encourages all residents to report any potholes or road defects directly with Hampshire County Council at

[www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblem/s/potholes](http://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblem/s/potholes) or via the Hampshire County Council app.

**POTHoles – A MESSAGE FROM LEADER OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR, CLLR NICK ADAMS-KING**

**THE BRUTAL TRUTH ABOUT HAMPSHIRE’S POTHoles — AND WHY WE CAN’T JUST “SPEND MORE”**

Hampshire’s roads have taken an absolute battering this winter. Weeks of relentless rain and violent freeze-thaw cycles have ripped open the surface across the county. Potholes are appearing faster than crews can fill them.

Here’s the blunt truth:

We simply don’t have the money to maintain the roads to the standard we all want.

**The scale of the problem**

Cost to bring roads up to the standard I’d want: £600 million

Highways budget this year: £60 million

£540 million shortfall

No amount of “efficiency” fills a gap like that.

**Why the money isn’t there**

Social care and education costs are exploding — and

Hampshire is hit harder than most:

- By 2030, nearly 5% of residents will be over 80
- More children with Special Educational Needs than average
- Rising demand for disability support
- These services are legally required. If someone qualifies, we must provide care.
- And now Government 'Fair Funding' is removing almost £40million from our budgets and sending it to mostly Labour run councils in London and the midlands and north.

**Council Tax reality**

Band D Council Tax paid to Hampshire: £1,609

Surrey: £1,846

West Sussex: £1,800

Oxfordshire: £1,911

We’ve had lower Council Tax for years — but that means less money for roads.

**Why repairs feel slow**

Here’s how the system actually works:

- 1 Every report triggers an inspection — councillors and residents use the same system.
- 2 Safety defects come first — A-roads and B-roads before residential streets and country lanes.
- 3 Temporary repairs are often unavoidable — asphalt won’t bond in cold, wet weather.
- 4 Permanent repairs take 7x longer — so crews make more locations safe first.
- 5 Non-safety defects are queued — tackled when weather and resources allow.

And yes — some temporary repairs fail in this weather. If they do, please re-report them.

**The national picture**

Hampshire faces a £500m highways funding gap

Government funding this year: £30m

We matched it — still nowhere near enough

Only a tiny fraction of road tax and fuel duty goes to road maintenance, Hampshire’s roads are better than many neighbours, but roads across the South East — and even motorways — are in dire condition. This is a national crisis, not a local failing.

**What we’re doing right now**

We’ve secured extra resources:

- More Jet/Dragon Patchers
- Extra patching gangs (started 12 Jan, more added end of Jan)
- More drainage jetting machines
- A dedicated flooding response team
- Extra white-lining crews

Temporary infills will be used where needed to keep roads safe. Permanent repairs will follow when conditions improve. We’re funding this by using underspends in other areas.

**What’s coming next**

We’re reshaping the 2026/27 budget to move every possible penny into road maintenance — likely £10m extra for summer repairs. And we’ve launched plans for a lane-rental disruption charge: Companies pay a daily fee for roadworks on key routes, in turn this encourages shorter, better-planned



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works, as well as could raise up to £5m a year for road maintenance.

**How you can help**

Please report potholes — especially worsening ones — via the official system:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/potholes>

Accurate locations and photos help enormously.

And thanks to you for your patience, it's a very difficult situation and we are doing our absolute best.



**LITTER FREE LONGPARISH for 2026!!**

After the winter weather cancelled some of the litter picks, the February and March pickers have gathered at

least six bags full of all sorts from the B3048 out to the A303 and Southside Road. Thank you to all those who help keep the roads in the village clear of rubbish. Litter breeds litter so if roads are clear the hope is that people are less inclined to throw things out of their vehicles.

Pick of the month - a box containing a heavy-duty glass mover vacuum cup.

Next Litter pick is on **Friday 10th April**. Free coffee afterwards at The Plough. Meet behind the **Village Hall at 9.15 am**, the Parish Council will provide litter picking sticks, hoops, and bags. For more information Tel Christian Dryden 720 398



Please join us for the next Friday Lunch Club  
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£3 for hot soup and freshly baked cake.

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To book lunch and or transport ring  
Andrea 720 457



**Longparish Cricket Club**

Come and join us on Friday 24 April 2026 for a fundraising Quiz night at the Longparish Village Hall. Doors open at 7.15pm. Entrance is £5 per person. Drinks,

hotdogs and burgers are available to buy during the evening. Book at [Longparishcc.fundraising@gmail.com](mailto:Longparishcc.fundraising@gmail.com). All monies raised go directly to support Longparish CC to expand coaching opportunities for juniors and to improve facilities at the ground. See poster for more details.

Training sessions for adults are held on Thursday evenings at the ground beginning on 16 April 2026. New adult players are very welcome to join us. Please use the contact form on the website to get in touch. Junior training sessions will begin on 13 April 2026, if your child is interested in playing please contact Justin Jackman, Junior Coordinator at [jackmanjustin@aol.com](mailto:jackmanjustin@aol.com). Allstars cricket for children aged 5-8 years will be returning again to LCC with sessions starting on 11 May 2026. Registration for Allstars is via the ECB website. <https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/all-stars>.

Longparish CC are supporting the Lightning Bolts Women's cricket team who are based in Wherwell this summer with their aim to offer cricket to girls aged U11 upwards. Their junior teams will be known as the Lightning Sparks. Regular training sessions and matches will be running from mid-April, look out for details on social media and posters at LCC.

Come and enjoy the cricket with us as a player or supporter in summer 2026!

Alison Allen

**LONGPARISH CRICKET CLUB**

**QUIZ NIGHT**

?

**FRIDAY 24 APRIL 2026**

**DOORS OPEN 7.15PM QUIZ STARTS 7.45PM**

**LONGPARISH VILLAGE HALL**

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**The Parish Church of St. Nicholas, Longparish**

**Introducing the Parish Giving Scheme – We invite everyone supporting the ministry of this church to give through the PGS**

As you read this, every household in Longparish should have received an envelope containing a letter and a leaflet about the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS).

Just a reminder that we rely solely on the generosity of donations, not only to safeguard our beautiful and historic church building ensuring it remains not just a place of worship, but also remains available for marriages, christenings or baptisms, funerals, thanksgiving services and other uses like concerts, for example, so that it serves the needs of the village and the community in all these ways.

We would be really grateful if you could consider helping us with a monthly gift to make sure the church flourishes in our community and is here for future generations. It's all in the leaflet, but a reminder - There are 3 secure ways to set up a regular gift by Direct Debit with PGS:

1. Online at [www.parishgiving.org.uk](http://www.parishgiving.org.uk) or by scanning the QR code (see below)
2. By telephone on 0333 002 1271
3. Or by completing a gift form and posting it to PGS (Forms available from the churchwardens)

With very many thanks from  
 John Young, Stewardship Officer & Churchwarden, Email: [jayoung1322@gmail.com](mailto:jayoung1322@gmail.com) or Mobile: 07860 630489  
 and Peter Hull, Churchwarden, Email: [peterhull192@btinternet.com](mailto:peterhull192@btinternet.com) or Mobile: 07747 328760

Please do not hesitate to contact either of us, if you want any more information or details about the PGS, or indeed any other aspect of church life at St. Nicholas.

*“Regular giving is an integral part of not only keeping the lights on in our parishes, but in ensuring the church remains an active part of every community. By using the Parish Giving Scheme, you can be assured that the giving is safe, secure, and deeply appreciated.”*

**Grant Forest, Chief Executive of PGS**

**Donate Here**



Join us for a fun evening of Bingo at  
**The Cricketers Inn.**  
**Thurs, April 2<sup>nd</sup>**



Ticket Sales from 7pm, Eyes down at 7:30pm  
 If you have anything suitable for a raffle prize, please bring it along. All profits go to Andover Foodbank. For more information, please email me, [finkys@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:finkys@hotmail.co.uk)

**St Nicholas Church**  
**100 Club**  
**Heritage Fund**



**Results of the February 2026 Draw**

Prizes are allocated on a percentage basis. First prize is 25% of the total income for the month, second prize 15% and third prize 5%.

**February Results**

**First prize: No. 40 £82.00**  
**Second prize: No. 28 £50.00**  
**Third Prize: No. 17 £17.00**

Our membership now stands at 66 numbers. The objective is to reach a membership of 100, so if you are not a member, please consider joining and supporting your church in this way. You can join at any time during the year. It works like this - Membership is set at £5.00 per number per month. There is no limit to the numbers you can purchase. If you would like to join, please let me know, and I will let you have the relevant forms. Or, if you have any other queries about church finances, or how the church is administered, for example, please feel free to contact me:

John Young, Churchwarden & PCC Stewardship Officer, St. Nicholas 100 Club  
 Tel: 01264 720233  
 Mob: 07860 630489 or  
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## Longparish Little School

We are delighted to share that, thanks to recent fundraising efforts, we have been able to purchase a new fire pit, cooking tripod and cooking pot. This exciting addition has

allowed us to extend the cooking experiences we offer during Forest School. The children were absolutely thrilled to use the new equipment this week, working together to make warm, comforting porridge over the fire – a perfect way to keep cosy on a chilly day.

We would like to say a huge thank you to our wonderful families, and the Parish Council for helping us raise the money needed. Their support has made a real difference and has already created memorable learning experiences for our children.

Cooking is just one small part of what happens during our Forest School sessions. The children also have enormous fun exploring the natural environment – from splashing in very big muddy puddles to extending them by digging channels that turned into a river and, eventually, a moat to protect a carefully built stick castle. Every week brings new adventures and child-led play.

These experiences play a vital role in children's physical development. Activities such as using the rope swing, walking the slack line, balancing on wobble logs and climbing trees all help to build balance, coordination and large muscle strength in a fun and engaging way. There are also plenty of opportunities for learning and discovery. Children safely use tools, go on bug hunts, identify birds, and investigate growth and life cycles, developing curiosity, confidence and respect for the natural world.



If you would like to find out more about our Forest School sessions, or the many other amazing things we do within our preschool, please call 01264 720455 to arrange a visit. We would love to welcome you.

## LCA - L2SOTM - The Longparish Second Sunday of the Month handicap race

We welcomed new runners Hamish Martin, Rachel Forrest. Jan Lacey and Barney Cooper to the March race. The sun shone, the conditions were good apart from a bit of mud underfoot and no fewer than 20 runners managed to break their handicaps.

Rachel and Hamish were first and second but you can't win the trophies off an estimated handicap so the honours went to Emma and Oliver Baker in 3rd and 4th place in personal best times. It is often the case that runners are most improved at their second race and so it was with Emma and Oliver even though, in Emma's case, it was more than 15 years since her first event. She also gets the honour of the longest gap between races!

There were personal records also for Susanna Benedetto, Jo Brunwin, Tom Rogers, Jack Dundas and Megan Brunwin who was our Rising Star. Special mention goes to Emma's sister, Katy Evans, who finished in 7th place with a personal best time that broke the women's course record by nearly a minute. Well done!



Afterwards we enjoyed a warm welcome, bacon rolls and coffee at The Plough.

Thank you very much to Maggie Barber, Christina Searle, Nick and Sarah Collier for marshalling, Andy Smith and Alice Evans for doing the signs and to David Gould for processing the results.

The next race is on **Sunday 12 April**, starting at **9am** at The Plough. New runners are always welcome and you don't have to be fast. It's a handicap race so everyone, whatever their pace, has a chance of winning.

Please do give us a call or send an email if you'd like to join us. For more information, please see

<http://l2sotm.longparish.org.uk/index.php>

Jeremy Barber

01264 720459 [mrjeremybarber@gmail.com](mailto:mrjeremybarber@gmail.com)

A few people have been asking about the one that was photographed by Emma on the bridge by Longparish House. It's not the first time it has visited the village. The last time was in November 2024, when it was seen by a number of people.



They still think it is an escapee, possibly from Paultons Park. It spent a long time last year at Lower Test Marshes and the surrounding area. This year it's back and has been seen up and down the valley, spending some time on the flooded fields in Hurstbourne. Its usual home is South America and the Caribbean; it is the national

bird of Trinidad and Tobago. They say its colour comes from the crustaceans it eats, but we don't have the same ones over here. However, it has now been around for over a year, so it must be finding plenty to eat and managing to keep its colour. January and February were very wet months, but the rivers are not as high as they were last year. The nesting season is underway. Rooks, Magpies, Swans, Mistle Thrushes, and Blackbirds all have nests. The other day at the Trout Farm I saw a young Heron. They usually nest in February, so this means the parents must have nested in late November to early December. I know birds are nesting earlier these days, but that is very early.

On the weekend of 7th and 8th March, during my walk we heard five singing Chiffchaffs. They have arrived two weeks earlier than last year. Swallows and House Martins were seen in late February down in the West Country.

Chris Bowman

Meet at The Plough  
 Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April  
 from 10am - 11:45am  
 Drop in for a chat, everyone welcome.  
 Coffee or Tea and biscuits, all for £1.00



**Spring is here!**  
**Easter Bank Holiday Monday Hog Roast**  
 Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April, served from 12noon – 2.30pm.



Celebrate Easter Monday with a delicious **Hog Roast** feast at The Plough.  
 Succulent pulled pork served in a bun with salads (vegetarian option available)  
 Bring friends and family for an afternoon of mouthwatering food, children's games and Easter cheer.  
 No cooking, no washing up — just enjoy

**NEW Games Night**  
 Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April, from 5.30pm – 9pm  
 Join us for our monthly Games Night!

Gather friends and family for a relaxed, laughter-filled evening of board games, card classics and friendly competition. Snack bowls and sweet treats will be available to buy from the bar, (funds from the sale of these will be donated to Naomi House & Jacksplace.)

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**LONGPARISH GARDENING CLUB**

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 Rosie Lowry 07771 645341 or  
 Kate Gibbons 01264 720536





**John Woodcock Centenary**

Five years ago, John Woodcock, the ‘Sage of Longparish’ and the greatest of cricket writers, died in Longparish where he lived for 73 years. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of August he would have reached his century ‘at the crease’. Perhaps you were one of the 200 or so who celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday over two days at The Old Curacy, his home for 73 years. Now is a good time to mark his contribution to the village and cricket with a stone plaque in St Nicholas Church and a blue plaque at The Old Curacy, his home.

**If you would like to contribute, the target is £8,000. It’s hoped that his many friends and admirers in the area may wish to participate.**

It will be a lasting monument to John’s many years in the village and his achievements as The Times’ cricket correspondent. His fellow cricket journalists described him variously as ‘the finest of all cricket writers’ and ‘the poet laureate of cricket.’

The highlight of the Longparish sporting year was when John brought test cricketers to the village including Dennis Compton, Sir Len Hutton, Richie Benaud and many others. As the ‘Woodcock XI’ they challenged the village team, spurring Longparish on to win the National Village Championships in 1987.

The plaque will commemorate the Woodcock family’s 263-year connection to Longparish, which ended with John’s death. Salisbury Cathedral stonemason Sarah Klopper will hand carve the lettering into an oval slab of Portland stone also featuring a woodcock in flight. It will be placed beneath the window he so generously gave to the church.

When not travelling the world chronicling over 400 test matches, John could be found most lunchtimes in his favourite seat in The Plough with a pint and a copy of The Times.



We hope both plaques will be in place by his one hundredth birthday.

**TO DONATE**

Via JustGiving: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/john-woodcock-memorial>

By BACS to: PCC of St Nicholas Longparish. Sort Code: 40-52-40. A/C No. 00036700. Please add **JW/F** as reference.

By Cheque to the above account. Please write **JW/F** on the back. May be left with the Longparish shop.

Any surplus raised will be donated to youth cricket

Any queries: **Brian Sanders** 07920 513931 **Henry Yelf** 07846 107900. **Alix Bremridge** 07808 137305 **John Young** 07860 630489 **Peter Hull** 07747 328760



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We use Lauren’s dance studio at Andover Down, lifts and car share available from Longparish, Hurstbourne Priors and St Mary Bourne. If you are interested phone or message Sarah, 07789 472820.

**Longparish Village Hall**



**Longparish Village Hall Committee**

We are looking for volunteers to fill the following roles, caretaker and secretary. If you think you could help or would like to know more about the roles, please do get in touch. Email [vhbooking@longparish.org.uk](mailto:vhbooking@longparish.org.uk) or Tel.

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**COCKER SPANIEL WANDERINGS...**

There are so many walking options around Chilbolton and Wherwell that I'm often left paralysed by choice. What a life, eh? Some people dream of Everest; I wrestle with whether to park near a bottle bank or a pub. My usual launchpads are West Down car park (scenic, with bonus recycling), Joys Lane in winter only (otherwise it's a mud spa), and the Abbotts Mitre if I've earned a pint.

Today's route is a circular from West Down, looping through Chilbolton and Wherwell before returning to base. Why this one? Because I like it. And this is my article.



*Are you taking your owner to the May Fair?*

**Step One: Up the Down**

Start at West Down car park on Coley Lane, just before Romsey Road. You'll recognise it by the photogenic bottle bank that is practically a heritage feature. After admiring the Prosecco archaeology, cross the road and tackle the short but sharp climb into West Down Nature Reserve. It's steep enough to test knees, sciatica and heart rate, but mercifully brief.

West Down is a small miracle. Once a wartime airfield and later a landfill, it's now thriving chalk downland stitched with woodland, heath and grassland. In summer, butterflies flicker past, grizzled skippers and painted ladies, while lizards bask in sunshine like they've booked an all-inclusive in Benidorm. It's a marvellous reinvention of space.



**Fences, Footpaths and the Test Way Tease**

After about 20 minutes, you'll exit West Down a cross onto the Test Way. The name promises riverside romance. The reality? Occasional tantalising glimpses of the River Test before it vanishes behind determined fencing and

private estates. It's a fine spot to watch American tourists peer through gaps wondering where the promised scenes in the holiday brochure went. Public access versus protection is a genuine dilemma in the Test Valley. Chalk streams are precious. As a result, keeping inflatable unicorns and halfwits with disposable barbecues at bay, is a must. Sensible folks, as always, miss out.



*Yes – they serve food there!*

*Every dog has its day and mine is at the May Fair!*

**Cows and Chaos on Chilbolton Common**

A woodland stretch leads to a football pitch and then Chilbolton Cow Common. In gentle weather it's pure pastoral bliss: river, wildflowers, cattle ankle-deep in shallows. In a heatwave, however, the vibe shifts dramatically. Basically, it's Bournemouth beach. Go early if it's above 25°C and pack wellies in winter when the Common becomes a bog worthy of a historical drama.



**Wherwell and a Fairytale Detour**

Cross the second footbridge into Wherwell, suspiciously picturesque. Turn left instead of right and admire the riverside house that looks lifted from an animated film. The quiet road threads past lakes fed by the Test until Black Chalk Vineyard appears ahead.



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Amport based

A glass of local wine and a cheeseboard might feel entirely justified at this stage.

Finally, turn left onto Romsey Road, then pick up the Test Way back through woodland and further snippets of the river, then back to West Down. One bottle bank, one nature reserve, cows, fences, vineyards and all in a thoroughly satisfying Hampshire loop that justifies a riverside pint in the Mayfly.

## THE HURSTBOURNE VIADUCT

Without doubt many of us see or pass under our viaduct everyday but have you ever wondered about its history - as this structure is considered a "hidden railway gem in the Hampshire Countryside and is a noted piece of Victorian railway engineering.

The **Hurstbourne Viaduct** designed by Joseph Locke for the London & South Western Railway It features nine round-headed arches, each with a 34-foot span and was completed as part of the line's westward extension in 1854 and spans the Bourne Rivulet.



The viaduct is located close to what used to be the former Hurstbourne Railway station which served the area before its closure in 1964.

The viaduct has undergone structural reinforcement. Three tie bars have been installed above the crown of each arch, and repurposed rails have been utilized to support the spandrels. These measures are designed to prevent lateral movement of the spandrels resulting from the loads exerted by passing trains. The viaduct features corbelled brick imposts, with the upper sections constructed from blue brick.

Significant mineral build-up can be found on the lower sections of the arch soffits and spandrels, a result of water seeping through the structure. This is likely due to an issue with the viaduct's drainage system. The absence of these

deposits higher up indicates that the inner surfaces have probably been waterproofed.

## HURSTBOURNE PRIORS MAY FAIR



### HURSTBOURNE PRIORS MAY FAIR

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**LADIES COFFEE MORNING**

Our April coffee morning will be held by Helen Mehaffey at The Limes (opposite the Equestrian Centre) on Wednesday, 22nd April from 10.15 to 12 midday. Newcomers welcome! Hoping to see you there.

For more information or offers to host a coffee morning, please contact Susie Sorby Tel: 01256 892665



**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH – ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of Hurstbourne Priors Parochial Church Council (PCC) will be held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April at 5pm in the Church followed by Evensong at 6pm.



There are two meetings: the Annual Vestry Meeting is a short meeting for the election of the two Churchwardens for the coming year. All parishioners may attend and vote at this meeting.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will follow on from the Vestry meeting. This is to present the annual report and accounts of Hurstbourne Priors

PCC and for the election of members of the PCC. All members of St Andrew's Church Electoral Roll may attend and vote. Refreshments will be served at 5.45pm, before Evensong at 6pm.

*Ann Orr and Fenella Williams  
Churchwardens*



**THE SKIES ABOVE US**

The Kingfisher seen here was photographed locally. The Kingfisher is a predator that hunts and eats other animals, but it's generally not classified as a "bird of prey" (raptor) by ornithologists, who reserve that term for birds with hooked beaks and talons like hawks or eagles. Kingfishers are specialized hunters of fish, insects, and small creatures, using sharp bills to snatch prey from water or land, making them skilled predators but not true raptors.



**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES**

The dates for the remaining Parish Council meetings in 2026 are as follows:

- Thursday 28th May
- Thursday 30th July
- Thursday 24th September
- Thursday 26th November

Any resident of the Parish can attend and there is no need to alert the Council if you are coming. However, if there is a matter which you might feel the members might want to look into before you attend, please do let me know: 01264 772460 or email:

[richard.waterman150@btinternet.com](mailto:richard.waterman150@btinternet.com).



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## WHITCHURCH SILK MILL EVENTS

Spring is always a special time at Whitchurch Silk Mill and this year is no exception. With the arrival of longer days and brighter weather, we're enjoying the sense of renewal across our historic site and looking forward to sharing a busy programme of events, workshops, and opportunities for our community to get involved.



### Call for Flower Festival Displays

Following the great success of our Open Gardens events, we are delighted to be launching our very first Flower Festival from 19–21 June 2026, open daily from 10.30 am–5 pm. This new celebration of creativity, nature and local talent will fill the Mill and its riverside grounds with floral-inspired displays of every kind. We are inviting gardeners, makers, and creative individuals of all ages to help us create something truly special, from imaginative crafted arrangements to fresh flowers, stitched or sculpted pieces, or contributions to a large installation that will cascade from the top of the Mill down to the lawn. If you would like to take part, please get in touch with Jess or Sue at [info@whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk](mailto:info@whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk). Further information is available on our website.

### News from the Mill Team

We're pleased to welcome Leonie, our new Trainee Weaver, who is already settling into the day-to-day rhythm of life in the weaving shed. Under the guidance of our Heritage Weaving Manager and Weaver Tackler, she will learn every stage of the process, from winding and warping to threading and finishing. We're equally delighted to have Sam, a local college student, join us once a week for the next two years as part of his T Level in business administration. Supporting the next generation of craftspeople and heritage workers is central to our mission, and we're thrilled to offer both Leonie and Sam hands-on experience at the Mill.

### Heritage Craft Workshops

If you're looking to try something new this spring, our programme of craft workshops offers the chance to learn a traditional skill in a relaxed and friendly environment. Highlights this month include a Viking Weave Jewellery Workshop (11 April), a two-day beginner's weaving course (17–18 April), a practical Darning Workshop (25 April), and our always-popular Silk Production Tour (28 April). We're also offering an Intermediate Weaving Course on 29 April for those ready to take the next step. Full details and booking are available via our website.

### What's On This Spring

The Whitchurch Folk Festival returns on 9 May, and we're excited to host a range of performances, workshops and activities within the Mill grounds. Looking further ahead, on 11 June, tailor Philip De Paola joins us online to discuss his recreation of George Washington's 1789 suit — made with silk woven here at the Mill.

For tickets, updates and more information, please visit [www.whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk](http://www.whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk), call 01256 892065, or follow us on social media. We look forward to welcoming you to the Mill this spring.

## WHITCHURCH RAMBLING CLUB

### WHITCHURCH RAMBLING CLUB

On Monday evenings between 13 April and 7 September (except bank holidays) the **Whitchurch Rambling Club** will meet at 7pm at the Bell Street car park in Whitchurch and set off for a walk, either within the environs of Whitchurch or further afield with a drive to the starting point. The 2026 walk programme will soon be available at [www.whitchurchramblers.org.uk](http://www.whitchurchramblers.org.uk) and on noticeboards around the town.

We're a friendly bunch of people of all ages and ability and we ramble rather than stride. Membership is £2 for the season. Dogs are welcome as long as they are on a lead. If you're interested in keeping fit while enjoying friendly company and the beautiful Hampshire countryside why not join us?

*April Issue photographs courtesy of Bob Lethaby, Phil Luckett & Whitchurch Silk Mill.*




**ST MARY BOURNE & WOODCOTT**

- 1 2 to 3.30pm - Stoke Coffee Afternoon - 1, Old Manor Farm  
 4 10am to 12 Noon - Repair Café - Village Centre  
 11 10am to 3pm - Cricket Club Works Day - Recreation Ground  
 14 10.30am - Coffee at The George Inn  
 14 7.30pm - Parish Council meeting - Village Centre  
 15 12.30pm - **'The Lunch'** - Village Centre  
 16 7.30pm - Andover Astronomical Soc - HBT Community Centre  
 21 7.30pm - **Quiz Night** - Village Centre  
 25 7pm - **An Evening of Music** - St Peter's Church  
**Saturday mornings** - 10.30am to 12.30pm -  
**The Community Library** - Village Centre Club Room

**LONGPARISH**

- 2 7pm - **Bingo** - The Cricketers  
 10 9.15am - Longparish Tidy - Village Hall  
 10 10 to 11.45am - LCA Coffee Morning - The Plough  
 12 9am - L2SOTM Race - The Plough  
 13 7.45 to 9pm - Longparish Annual Meeting - Village Hall  
 24 12 noon to 2pm - LCA Friday **Lunch Club** - Village Hall  
 24 7.15pm - Longparish Cricket Club **Quiz Night** - Village Hall  
 28 Longparish Gardening Club - "Outing to Forde Abbey"

**HURSTBOURNE PRIORS**

- 12 5pm - Annual Vestry Meeting followed by Parochial Church Council (PCC) Meeting - St Andrew's Church, followed by Evensong at 6pm  
 22 10.15am to 12 noon - Ladies Coffee Morning hosted by Helen Mehaffey at The Limes  
 23 St George's Day 

**Hill & Valley****Parish Magazine**

A new advertising year starts with this edition of *Hill & Valley*. **Please support our new and existing advertisers.**

Thanks to the advertising income and parish council grants we are able to deliver *Hill & Valley* free of charge to all households in the three parishes ten times a year.

A big thank-you goes to the many volunteers who regularly offer their time to distribute the magazine.

If you are able to take on a round, or stand in from time to time, please email [hillandvalley@btinternet.com](mailto:hillandvalley@btinternet.com) . MW

**St George's Day Lecture****"England's green and pleasant land"**

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**Speaker: Father Simon Everson, Headmaster of Farleigh School**

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2026 - 7pm**

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Front cover photograph: Michael Widén

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**St Mary Bourne Village Centre:** Miss Angela Cook, ☎ 01264 738158, e: [villagecentre@stmarybourne.org](mailto:villagecentre@stmarybourne.org)

Copy date for the **May 2026 edition** of Hill & Valley is **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026**.

Your contributions - letters, pictures, comments or articles are always welcome. Contact your parish editor by the copy date. Please provide editorial copy electronically as a text in Word and any images in JPEG format if possible.

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