

MARCH 2026

BENTWORTH, LASHAM, AND SHALDEN PARISH MAGAZINE

St. Mary's Bentworth; St. Mary's Lasham;

St. Peter and St. Paul Shalden

Dear friends,

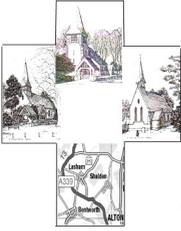
At this time of year there are signs of new beginnings all around us - birds gathering nest material, early lambs in the fields, buds on the trees I find it very cheering after such a grey and soggy winter.

What cheers me even more is to see signs of new beginnings amongst God's people. At All Saints we recently had the joy of witnessing two adult baptisms as Matthew and Russell declared their intent to make a new beginning with Jesus. Our recent and current Alpha courses are another way that people can be inspired to make a new beginning in their life of faith. And even those of us who have been disciples of Jesus for many years can still have our own new beginnings - those moments of revelation, our personal epiphanies, when God reveals new insights to us through His Holy Spirit. We were reminded at Candlemas how God prompted Simeon, by His Holy Spirit, to go into the Temple at just the right moment to meet Mary and Joseph with their very ordinary-looking baby. God gave Simeon the revelation that this baby was none other than God's long-awaited Messiah. We too can have these nudges from the Holy Spirit to be in the right place at the right time to receive God's revelation of truth to us, and life might never be the same again!

Let's pray we all have some new beginning this spring, as God leads each of us forward in our own journey of faith in Him.

Blessings,

Revd Wendy Burnhams



THE VILLAGER

the editor

Please send copy for the **April** Magazine to your Village Correspondent or the Editor at villager@candj.me.uk **by noon on Tuesday March 17th.**

This month all the adverts change. We have several new ones, and some old friends have retired. Do look through and see what's there; and remember to tell them where you found out about them, so they know advertising with us is worthwhile – they do pay for your magazine!

CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
Charity	14
Church services	46, 47 & 48
Church events and information	44
Clubs - Alton	21
Medstead	23
Events	15 - 20, 29 - 43 & 45
Regular Features:	
Bus Timetable	27
Farmers Markets	26
Country Matters	25
Library	17, 27, & 29
VILLAGES:	
Bentworth	3
Lasham	6
Shalden	12

A Thanksgiving Service for Charlie Shaylor will be held

at Alton Maltings Centre, GU34 1DT,

on Saturday 11th April at 2pm.

Everyone is welcome.

(Do note the change of venue. Parking is limited so unless there are mobility issues, kindly use the town car parks which are close by. Thank you.)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MARCH

- 2 Lasham Coffee Morning with Sarah & Kevin Miskella at The Walled Garden Cottage, Medstead Garden Club: Pamela Holt *Tree Planting and Aftercare* 7.30pm Page 24
- 3 AOS: Organ Concert by Carol Williams St Lawrence Church 8pm Page 15
- 4 Library: The Jane Austen Fan Club 7.00pm to 8.30pm Page 17
- 4 Roedowns WI: Making Easter bunting Medstead Village Hall 7.30pm
- 5 Start of Lent Course: Courage for the Journey Alton Maltings 7.30pm Page 44
- 5 ANHS: Olivia French: Natterjack Comeback Alton Community Centre 7.30pm Page 22
- 6 Cardiac Health Big Quiz Alton Maltings Page 20
- 7 Shalden Gardeners Club meeting 10.30am
- 7 Monthly Market St Lawrence Parish Room
- 7 Medstead Lent Lunch *Mind* St Andrew's Church Hall 12.30pm Page 43
- 10 ASA: Paul Chapmen Brett Whiteley's Lavender Bay Alton College 7.30pm P 22
- 12 Medstead WI: members will be entertained by Bishop's Bells
- 12 Museum: Tim Craven *Capture the Castle* Room 7 Alton Community Centre 7.30pm
- 13 Bentworth Film Night: *I Swear* Jubilee Hall 7 for 7.30pm Page 31
- 13 Screen by the Green Film: *I Swear* Beech Village Hall 7.30pm Pages 17 & 32
- 14 Alton Farmers' Market High Street 10 – 2pm
- 14 Alton Community Share Toy Library St Lawrence Parish Centre 2-4pm
- 14 Alton Party Night Assembly Rooms 7.30pm Page 33
- 17 Villager deadline for the April magazine by noon please**
- 17 Bentworth Garden Club first meeting of 2026 Jubilee Hall 7 for 7.30pm Page 5
- 19 ANHS: Keith Betton: Mysteries of Bird Migration Alton C C 7.30pm Page 22
- 20 Medstead Lent Lunch *Air Ambulance* St Andrew's Church Hall 12.30pm Page 43
- 21 Luminosa Concert St Lawrence Church 7pm Pages 19 & 34
- 25 Broadlands RDA Talk: Phyllida Lloyd Wivelrod Barns 6.30pm for 7pm Page 35
- 28 Gigs by the Green: Suntou Susso Beech Village Hall 7.30pm Pages 17 & 36
- 29 Broadlands RDA: Easter Wreath Making Wivelrod Barns 2 – 4pm Page 37

APRIL

- 1 Roedowns WI: Tips for mobile phone photography Wiltshire Room 7.30pm
- 3 Alton Choral Society: Music for Good Friday Alton Methodist Church 6pm P 45
- 11 Froyle 10K Trail Race Info: www.blendedtrails.co.uk Pages 18 & 38
- 13 Lasham Coffee Morning with Tony and Sandra Knight at Station House.
- 17 Broadlands RDA Quiz Night Medstead Village Hall 6.45 for 7.30pm Page 39
- 18 Alton Concert Band & The Lynden Singers Alton Maltings 7pm Page 40
- 23 Cardiac Health Social Bridge Afternoon Tea Beech Village Hall Page 20

BENTWORTH

BENTWORTH CARE GROUP

Jackie Crawford

The members on duty for medical appointments in March are:

Emma Goodwin 07780 706 053; Sarah Gore-Brown 563122 / 07713 147 012

Fred Moir 562380

We are also happy to do shopping or pick up prescriptions for those unable to do so themselves.

THE MUCK IN COFFEE MORNING

Mondays in March take us up to Easter, so there will be coffee / tea and biscuits every Monday in March, but then a break on April 6th for Easter Monday. So come and join in - just £1 per person 10.30 – 11.30am at Parsonage Farm Barn. Hope to see you there.



We even celebrate Birthdays – this was Jean Cripps'



Bentworth Cricket Club

Bentworth Cricket Club welcomes new playing members to join the team for 2026 season. The club plays in Hampshire Cricket League at a competitive but friendly level. Matches are played every Saturday afternoon from the first weekend in May through to end of August. Indoor nets are held at Alton College on Tuesday evenings in the winter and spring months and outdoor nets at our beautiful ground during the summer.

The club also runs a number of fun and fund raising events to ensure we are a full part of village life.

If you are interested please contact Richard Hill (07887821326) or Ken Thomas (07769 947033) in the first instance.

We look forward to meeting you.



Well this has been a very dreary damp winter so here is some news of better things to come for us gardeners.

The committee members have been busy, particularly Sarah, putting together the calendar of events for 2026.

We would happily welcome new members, our first meeting is on **Tuesday 17th March** in the Jubilee Hall 7 for 7.30pm. On this day you can pay your subscription for this season, meet up with friends and enjoy a glass of wine together. We will then have a short AGM followed by a talk by our first speaker of the year.

The talk is entitled 'Roses Revisited, the old the new and what to do'. The speaker is Gillian Taylor, a highly qualified professional gardener. We would love to have a good turn out so please do come and join the club.

One date for your diary: the BENTWORTH GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALE
will be on SATURDAY 9th MAY.

PLEASE NOTE (Change of date from 16th May as previously stated)

Let's hope spring will cheer us up, and we can put our wellies away this month.

Happy gardening everyone

BENTWORTH FILM NIGHT Friday 13th March – Jubilee Hall

We are pleased to announce the screening of **"I Swear"** on **Friday 13th March 2026**. A true-life story of John Davidson. Diagnosed with Tourette's at 15, targeted as insane by his peers, he struggled with a condition few had witnessed. Campaigning for Tourette's as an adult, he was awarded an MBE by the Queen in 2019.

This film has great reviews. Please join us to support your local film night, watch an excellent film, and catch up with friends!

"A terrifically warm, generous film." The Guardian

"It is a drama with three-dimensional people, facing three-dimensional problems and dealing with them... I absolutely loved it."
Mark Kermode

"Just lovely. Tourette syndrome has not been afforded its cinematic dues, but what an affable, funny character to explore it with in John Davidson -- and what a performance from Robert Aramayo." Empire

"Absolutely brilliant movie!

We were both blown away by the movie, which was funny, yet compassionate and thought-provoking. And the acting by the whole cast was top notch. In fifty five years of going to movie theatres, this is the first movie that I have witnessed receiving a standing ovation. And the adulation was duly deserved. I can't recommend 'I Swear' highly enough. Go see it... you definitely won't be disappointed." Review on IMDB website

Doors open at 7pm with the film showing at 7.30pm.

Tickets £5 on the door (Small notes and change for entrance fees, drinks, and ice cream, very much appreciated). This is a social event open to all, please feel free to bring friends along too.

Sue Brooking



BENTWORTH PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

Neal Day

Bentworth Parish Council has a vacancy for the position of councillor.

Would you like to play a part in shaping the future of Bentworth Parish. As a Parish Councillor you will focus on the quality of life for those living in the parish.

The Parish Council works to identify issues which are important to the lives of the residents they represent. Councillors influence and help to shape the long term development policy for the parish. They are consultees using their local knowledge to provide valuable input on all new planning applications in the parish.

The Council organise events and provide support through grants to organisations and community groups that act locally.

Ensuring the Parish is a nice place to live comes high on the councils priorities and we organise general maintenance throughout the Parish such as grass cutting , arranging maintenance work parties for litter picking and other general tidying and ongoing repairs within the Parish.

Bentworth Parish Council meets on a monthly basis with meetings that are open to the public.

If you would like to become a councillor for Bentworth please contact the Parish Clerk:
Clerk @bentworthparishcouncil.org

or for more information or to discuss further contact the Parish Council Chair Person
neal@bentworthparishcouncil.org

* * *

LASHAM

CHARLIE SHAYLOR 1943 – 2026

Caroline Egleston

A Thanksgiving Service for Charlie Shaylor will be held at Alton Maltings Centre, GU34 1DT, on Saturday 11th April at 2pm. Everyone is welcome.



(Thank you
Simon Gardiner and Frances Parris for these photographs.)

Charlie Shaylor was born in Kampala, Uganda. His father, Bindy, was a lawyer and his mother, Betty, a midwife. The family moved to Nairobi, Kenya, in 1947, where he met Maggie, whose parents were also based in Nairobi and were friends.

Charlie went to the UK in 1963 to study teacher training and then spent a year as a VSO in India. In 1968 he came back to the UK from India to be his brother David's best man... Maggie was one of the bridesmaids.

However, Maggie's father was insistent Charlie got a secure job before they could marry, so, in 1969, Charlie cycled from Reading to Nairobi (he did need the help of a steamer to go down the Nile and an air flight from Khartoum to Entebbe!) to start work at a prep school in Nairobi.

Charlie and Maggie returned from Kenya to Reading in 1973. They moved to Lasham in 1978 at the suggestion of David, based there and farming.

Charlie's mother was a keen gardener and Charlie, as a Head Teacher, gave each pupil a small plot of land to tend, which they then passed on to another child on leaving the school.

As a teacher, lay preacher and friend, Charlie Shaylor has touched so many people's lives in inspiring and significant ways. Here are the reflections of just a few of them....



Charlie would appear with a friendly hello, a card and cartoon, especially when big changes were happening for small people, like a change of school or exams, he knew, he cared. (**James Sunderland**)

Mr Shaylor always made learning fun, my most prominent memory was when he set up a Victorian day, with full Victorian dress and props! Even a cane which he convinced us all he had used on one of the naughty boys in class! (**Laura Ives**)

We remember Charlie for his cheerful nature and the lively, animated church services he led. He was such a big part of Lasham, always looking out for everyone. Whether he was helping organise the kids Christmas parties, dropping off homemade bread or sharing stories about his inspiring volunteering work in Africa, he did everything with generosity. He was a great role model and someone who we will always remember and look up to. Lots of love **Lucy, Amy and Michelle Née Chesterfield aka 'Chesterpesters' (Charlie's name for us!)**

I fondly remember the family services Charlie gave in Lasham, in particular the children's plays that he choreographed. He did such a good job of bringing the community together and creating strong friendships that, for me, are still going strong now. (**Teddy Grassi**)

...what an incredible man he was, his silent rounds of applause, what a lovely smile he had and he used to make the most delicious bread.... (**The Bolsover family**)

Our memories of Charlie are of the famous bread delivered by hand. We always had a joke about politics I was his Tory friend he was the red from under the bed! His veg patch should be mentioned - renowned for growing every single veg possible and of course never a weed in sight! Thank you for caring for us all in the village and beyond and taking a genuine interest in our lives. (**Robert and Sue Jamieson**)

Charlie was so active, young, and full of life—always on his bicycle and always delivering his legendary loaves! He was a true Lasham man who never forgot our names and what we loved. Selfless and joyful right to the end. We miss him. **(Gordon Clarks)**

Charlie was remarkable, compassionate, a true Christian and so energetic. I was privileged to have shared a enjoyed cycling/camping holidays in France with Charlie. Such happy memories. **(Roger Nash)**

For us, Charlie is indelibly linked with the Family Services. We always loved his rather eccentric plays (which encouraged audience participation). He made every effort to include as many children as possible, so we always had a good turnout. Sam and Joe would often receive a little postcard from him, thanking them for their participation. He would include a cartoon drawing of himself, which was rather delightful. And of course, who could forget Charlie's bread.. **(Cate and Ken Thomas)**

A stalwart Christian gentleman who contributed hugely to the life of the Church. **(Revd Peter Owen-Jones)**

May Charlie rest in peace, he will always be the guardian angel of Lasham **(Helen Moore)**

Always remember him pushing his wheelbarrow around the village years ago **(Glenys)**

The most selfless person I think I have ever known. His welcome to the village - the bread and the millennium map really set the scene for us in Lasham. He was a pillar for us during Jude's long illness and afterwards, including at the crematorium when he led the service. A special, caring man with a joyful energetic spirit. Always swimming and cycling, holding up the traffic on the A339. We will miss him very much. Thanks for Charlie. **(Stuart McCandlish)**

Charlie was so kind when we first arrived in the village. He gave us Easter cards.... "Any good that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now for I shall not pass this way again". It epitomises what Charlie was all about! **(Philippa Watt)**

Bicycles are a theme which ran through Charlie's life..... He couldn't get the hang of clipping his feet to the pedals and fell off several times as a result.... In one of Charlie's plays, I once had to be a bear at the back of the church and let out a roar which startled the congregation.. **(Hugo Egleston)**

They say it takes a village to bring up a child, but I think it needs Charlie. He took on the most wonderful role of bringing families and children together. He helped me so much to guide my children at school, church and in the village. All four of our children looked forward to the family service in Lasham, where Charlie had prepared prayers and plays for them to read and act out. I am so grateful to the whole family and always will be. **(Catherine Grassi)**

Charlie's services were never without a good laugh. I particularly remember the welcome speech he'd make at the beginning of each service. Advertising the next village events with great enthusiasm, introducing newcomers to make them feel welcome and, as I always noted, reminding us there were brownies for those who waited until the end of the service! **(Freddie Egleston)**

We heard about Charlie's death when we were in Kenya. It seemed the most amazingly appropriate place to be. Charlie so loved Kenya, and one of the poems he wrote talked about the 'gangling' boy he had been who walked hundreds of miles across the country which he loved so deeply. He spent his formative, childhood days there, he met his beloved Maggie there and Kenya forged the exceptional man whom we knew and loved. I would like to feel he is now back in the land he loved so well. **(Anthea Del Mar)**

As most people will know, Charlie was fluent in the language of Swahili . I only knew a few words of the language but we always managed a few words together, usually at coffee mornings. Rest in peace, Charlie. Kwaheri. Goodbye x. **(Sandra Knight)**

Charlie took my father's funeral beautifully. I'll always be grateful for his guidance and understanding. He also printed some of my mother's poems in The Villager! A small gesture which meant so much. **(Caroline Egleston)**

Every Thursday there'd be a knock at the door, and there was Charlie—script in hand—ready for the children to learn for Sunday's service. He was gently insistent, and somehow every child in the village had a part... whether they could read or not. The children loved going up to the front of the church to perform with their friends. Such happy memories, and a real gift to our village. **(Chris Withers)**

It was always fun when Charlie Shaylor was our supply teacher! He was energetic and kind to everyone. **(Suzannah Egleston)**

Charlie was a Godsend to this village. His life reflected his Christian values, his enthusiasm in involving the young in his plays will be a lifetime reminder of God's love, whether with the Youth Fellowship or Messy Church. Charlie was also very faithful with the elderly villagers, visiting regularly on his bicycle, often many miles away. Charlie will be missed but fondly remembered by many. **(Maurice Goor)**

When I was young, one of the reasons I loved going to 'Messy Church' on a Saturday afternoon in Bentworth was Charlie Shaylor. He was just so welcoming and made it so much fun and when I think of him I remember him as an actor who always brought stories to life. **(James Pomerance)**

Mr Shaylor was a joy! I first met him as a Headteacher in my early days of becoming a teacher in Hampshire. He was so kind, encouraging and well-respected within the profession. It is no exaggeration to say that fellow professionals knew they were in the presence of greatness. (He would hate me saying this of course as he was always so humble.) At St Mary's, through Open The Book and other school events, Mr Shaylor showed children how to live by your faith and your values. He was also instrumental in our Intergenerational Initiative in 2015 which has gone from strength to strength and is known as Generation Game. It was a privilege to have Mr Shaylor in our school community; he shone a special light. **(Mrs Jo Ayres Headteacher, Bentworth School)**

Mr Shaylor taught me at Greenfields in Hartley Wintney and when I won a bottle of win at the school fete, he said to my mum "you'd better put that by until she's older.." When we moved to Bentworth, we joked that he was following us and he laughed and said "small world..". I will remember him fondly for his amazing wit. **(Sharon King)**

I first met Mr Shaylor when I was at Bentworth Primary School. He would occasionally cover our lessons, and we all knew we were in for a great day whenever this happened! Charlie Shaylor was a man so full of life, that it was infectious. He was always ready to crack a joke and was such an interesting individual, just full of stories to tell. One thing I'll always remember of him, whenever someone was late to registration in the morning, we all knew what was coming next...

Mr Shaylor: 'Late this morning? Where have you been?'

Late student: *confusion/fumbled response*

Mr Shaylor: 'Saying goodbye to your girlfriend again?'

Charlie Shaylor was a very special man, and I feel incredibly grateful to have met him during my time at the school.' **(Joe Murrell)**

THANK YOU

Maggie Shaylor

A very heartfelt thank you from Maggie, Becca and Nick for all the cards, letters and messages we have received with your memories and appreciation of Charlie giving us such comfort and cheer.

We will be holding a Thanksgiving service for Charlie at Alton Maltings Centre, 2 Maltings Close Alton, GU34 1DT on Saturday, April 11th at 2 pm, with refreshments in the Centre afterwards. There are limited car parking spaces at the Centre which we respectfully request are kept for those travelling long distances and those with limited mobility. Please if you could, use Town Centre car parks and walk the short distance.

We do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join us.

LASHAM COFFEE MORNING

Anthea Del Mar

Looking across the fields from the Goors' house is alone enough to raise the spirits. To be doing it in the company of lots of lovely people is even better. Maurice and Antonia produced delicious coffee, tea, cake, biscuits and everyone produced a really happy convivial atmosphere. We even managed to forget we have had rain in Biblical proportions it would appear since Christmas. Thank you for generous hospitality.



It is always a pleasure to have Peter and Ingrid with us, and Peter has become a real whizz with the ramp and wheelchair.



Our next coffee mornings are on **Monday 2nd March** with Sarah and Kevin Miskella at
The Walled Garden Cottage,
and on **Monday 13th April** with Tony and Sandra Knight at Station House.

* * *

SHALDEN

St PETER & St PAUL GUILD OF MARTHA

March

7 Jane Shirvell / Lin Baxter
14 Karen Saponaro / Lynne Hignett
21 Michele Rankin / Kirsty Ennever
28 Rozanne Wilson / Rosalind Ommanney

Kirsty Ennever

April

4 Jane Shirvell / Lin Baxter
11 Karen Saponaro / Lynne Hignett
18 Michele Rankin / Kirsty Ennever
25 Rozanne Wilson / Rosalind Ommanney

SHALDEN CHURCHYARD TIDY ON JANUARY 3rd

Peter Rankin

Having had to delay from the autumn due to the weather, Shalden turned out in force to tackle the churchyard and blow away those post New Year blues.

16 fully equipped 'gardeners' and Arthur, the dachshund were on parade, directed by Brigadier Henry with his mini tractor and trailer whizzing about picking up the debris. Thanks in particular to the Milburns who came 'en famille' and Izzy & Sam, Xani's grandchildren, who got stuck in and didn't want to stop for coffee !

With his new blower, Ian the fire soon got it going and it had burnt down to hardly anything by the following day. Special mention too for Rozanne for fortifying us with coffee and her amazing flapjack.

Well done all and the best view in Shalden is restored once again.



NEW ARRIVALS....

Lorraine Champness

I am writing, rather belatedly, to welcome Chris and Jess Jordan, along with their children Arthur and Rosie to the village. They moved in to Honeycombe Cottage some time ago, along with their splendid cat, Loki. Hopefully they are settled in comfortably now, and beginning to enjoy Shalden village life.

MINIBUS FROM SHALDEN TO SCREEN BY THE GREEN AT BEECH

Cathy Boyes

The Village Hall Committee has been scoping out the possibility of hiring a minibus to take a group from Shalden to The Screen by the Green in Beech for one of their monthly film nights. The cost would likely be £3-£5 per person, on top of the screening price (usually £7, or £14 for National Theatre Live screenings).

For those who haven't yet been, the facilities at Beech are impressive, with specialist AV equipment, a licensed bar and comfy chairs! The hope is that an organised minibus would help us to enjoy an evening out with neighbours, without the worry of having to drive home.

If you would potentially be interested in this, could you let the VHC know by contacting Cathy Boyes on cathy@bluedodo.co.uk or 07958 790 173 / 01420 86267? This wouldn't represent a commitment at this stage – we're just trying to get an idea of how popular this might be. If you have already responded via the village WhatsApp there's no need to do so again.

NAME THAT HIT - Shalden Village

Ian Champness

Once again, Shalden residents turned out on a wet January night to fill the Village Hall, banish the January blues and test their knowledge of Top 20 hits and Golden Oldies of the 60's, 70's and 80's



This year, we held the annual get-together in memory of Michael Campbell and raised £500 for St Michael's Hospice, one of the many charities he supported so generously over the years he lived in Shalden.

10 tables competed to name the artist, the title and the year it was No.1 or in the Top 20 from a choice of three years.

Very high scores resulted in a fiercely contested Leaderboard with the Ospici & Holiday team winning the quiz and taking the magnum prize.

The Campbell table, including four of Michael's grandchildren, didn't win, but joined in singing out the title, along with most of the tables who, as the evening progresses, sing the title out loud! This underlines that the quiz is not taken too seriously, but a village community get-together.

And dancing! This year we were treated to a great dance performance by Henry and Rozanne Wilson, and the final hit – American Pie – had most on their feet, led by Helen Hilditch!



* * *

CHARITY

PATRICK BUSBY RUNNING THE BRIGHTON MARATHON

On **12th April** Patrick will be running in the Brighton marathon to raise money for the Alton Climate Action Network GUMBI Malawi Irrigation Project, especially important work given the recent severe droughts in Malawi.



If you would like to donate, please visit his JustGiving page:
Patrick Busby is fundraising for Alton Climate Action Network

EVENTS

THE ALTON CONCERT BAND

Clive Hicks

The Spring Concert for The Alton Concert Band will once again be as guests of The Lydian Singers on Saturday 18th April at The Alton Maltings. The choir will be accompanied by Linda Tan and Jeremy Morrish will be conducting both the choir and the band. The theme this year will be 'Thank You For The Music'.

The concert starts at 7.00 pm. Tickets will be available on the door or via www.ticketsource.co.uk/alton-concert-band



ALTON ORGAN SOCIETY

Elsbeth Mackeggie Gurney

Oliver Morrell, sub organist of Winchester Cathedral brought a programme exploring the development of organ music from Bach to James MacMillan. The recital started with five pieces by J S Bach, Piece d'Orgue which moves from intricate keyboard playing to majestic broader music, followed by a chorale prelude, BWV 684 and three pieces from the Orgelbuchlein which were a journey through the church's year. Prelude & Fugue in D minor by Mendelssohn followed, Mendelssohn was responsible for the revival on interest in Bach's music. Moving forward in time, we heard Fugue in F minor by Dupre, a flowing untraditional piece which sounded simple but Oliver assured us was quite the contrary & White Note Paraphrase by James MacMillan, full of Scottish rhythms. Pastoral-Prelude by Langlais demonstrated the wonderful range of colours of the organ as did the Baroque sounding Master Tallis's Testament by Herbert Howells. Another Howell's piece, Sarabande in modo elegiac, written in 1945, reflected the time at which it was composed, mournful & emotional. The recital ended with the 4th & 5th movements of Symphony V by Widor. The beautiful, lyrical & contemplative Adagio was followed by the rousing & well known Toccata – a fitting end to an excellent recital – we hope Oliver will be back soon.

Date for your diaries:

March 3rd – we are delighted that **Carol Williams** is returning to give what promises to be an exciting recital of works ranging from Susato & Beethoven, through Tchaikovsky & Faure to more contemporary composers including Paul Desmond's "Take Five" & two of her own compositions. Carol lived locally before making a stellar career in the US.

Refreshments are available from 7.30pm & the recital starts at 8.00pm. Tickets cost £12;



We look forward to welcoming you in March.

THE CURTIS MUSEUM

Jill Line

OPENING TIMES: Tuesday to Saturday 10am – 4.30pm 01420 82802

www.hampshireculture.org.uk/curtis-museum

Upcoming events for March.

Object of the Month: While the Allen Gallery is closed for refurbishment, the Curtis Museum will showcase each month a highlight from the ceramics collection in the Hampshire Cultural Trust stores.

Throughout March, the Museum will display a coronation mug designed by Dame Laura Knight. The artist also painted key scenes recording moments from early 20th century life, such as women workers during WW2.

In celebration of **International Women's Day** (Sunday 8th March), there will be a trail through the Museum - **Women in Art & History** - find the hidden heroines of Alton and Hampshire's history and discover their connections with the Curtis Museum & Allen Gallery collections.

This trail will be running throughout March, Women's History Month.

Natural History in the Curtis Museum.

Do you know the difference between a stoat and a weasel? Which owl is this?

Visitors (not only the younger ones) are often interested in the Museum's extensive collection of local flora and fauna. They will now be able to identify the creatures on display more easily. A small team of volunteers and staff have prepared illustrated guides for each case. These "keys" hang beside the cases. Although some items are obviously old, taxidermy having largely gone out of fashion, appropriate labelling \ identification was long overdue. We are grateful to various specialists in their field and assistance from Alton Natural History Society.

(PS it's a long-eared owl, and the stoat is larger than the weasel and has a black tail-tip. Come and see.)



Talks - Change of Venue

The Friends of the Curtis Museum and Allen Gallery have a full programme of talks during 2026. Friends talks will be held in **Room 7 of the Alton Community Centre, Amery Street, Alton GU34 1HN**. Alton Community Centre is located on one side of the car park in Amery Street (sat nav GU34 1HN). <https://www.altoncomcen.org.uk>, telephone number 01420 85057.

The March talk will be given by **Tim Craven**, local representative of BAFM - the British Association of Friends of Museums. It is entitled **Capture the Castle - The Story of Castles through Artist' Eyes, and will be held on March 12th**.

Doors open 7pm for 7.30. FREE, donations welcomed.

THE SCREEN BY THE GREEN, BEECH

Joanna Curtis

Come and laugh. Come and cry. Come and have a good swear.

With six BAFTA nominations, including Outstanding British Film and Best Leading Actor, the critically acclaimed **I Swear (15)** comes to Beech Village Hall on **Friday 13th March, 7:30pm**.

Robert Aramayo's transformative performance as Scottish Tourette's campaigner John Davidson has earned standing ovations nationwide. Critics are calling it "the most important British film of the year."

A rare 100% Rotten Tomatoes score. Laugh-out-loud moments balanced with raw, real drama.

Book early for this intimate 50-seat screening.

Friday 13th March, 7:30pm | £7 advance, £8 door

Cabaret seating • Licensed bar • Free parking

Book: beechvillage.org.uk/events

Beech Village Hall, 1 Wellhouse Road, Beech, Alton GU34 4AQ

GIGS BY THE GREEN AT BEECH VILLAGE HALL

Festival Favourite Suntou Susso Plays Beech Village Hall

Gambian musician Suntou Susso has graced stages at Glastonbury, WOMAD and Ronnie Scott's. On **Saturday 28 March**, he brings his captivating live show to Gigs by the Green at Beech Village Hall. Susso plays a stunning 22-string instrument called a kora. Mesmerising to watch, utterly beautiful to hear. He weaves together infectious rhythms with jazz, funk and soul, creating music that's joyful, warm and impossible to sit still to. Featured on BBC Radio 2 and 4, this is a rare chance to see this rising star in an intimate setting. Just 65 tickets available and selling fast.

Tickets £16.50. Doors 7pm. Starts 7:30pm. Book now at beechvillage.org.uk/events

Beech Village Hall, 1 Wellhouse Road, Beech, Alton GU34 4AQ

ALTON LIBRARY The Jane Austen Fan Club

Wednesday 4th March 2026 7.00pm to 8.30pm

Tickets £8.00 each

Charlotte and Ellie are best friends and Jane Austen superfans. Tonight's a special meeting of the Jane Austen Fan Club - and everyone's invited! Alongside the usual books, bonnets and biscuits, you can expect comedy, chaos and a lifesize cardboard Colin Firth.

With real life inconveniently intruding on the meeting, Charlotte and Ellie are faced with the question: in 250 years, how much have things really changed?

Hilarious and heartfelt, The Jane Austen Fan Club promises high drama, breathless romance and dancing of the highest quality*.

*Accurate at time of publishing – please note dancing may not be *that* high quality.

All performances are relaxed, baby-friendly and dementia-friendly.

Join us for a very special meeting... that isn't going *strictly* to plan.



Froyle 10k TRAIL RACE

BLENDLED TRAILS BRINGS VILLAGE-BASED TRAIL RUNNING TO FROYLE

Blended Trails is a Hampshire-based trail-running community that has grown steadily since its beginnings in 2020. What started as a marked pop-up trail run has evolved into a small number of carefully designed trail events and a year-round programme of free guided running. By making local trails accessible, the Blended Trails team created a welcoming running community that has grown year over year.

The team now hosts regular events across East Hampshire, including the Backyard Ultra in Chilton Candover, which returns this June for its third year and is nearly sold out; The Hard Yard event in September; and The Wallop in December. Together, these events cater to runners of all distances, from newcomers to experienced ultra-runners.



Their next event, **The Froyle 10k**, takes place a little closer to home. In collaboration with Froyle Village Hall, the team has organised a family-friendly event that includes a scenic 10k trail race and a kids' colour dash.

Taking place on **April 11th 2026**, the 10k event promises a beautiful route, starting and finishing in the heart of Froyle village, just outside Alton. The course follows public footpaths through rolling Hampshire countryside, following the flow of the landscape towards the small village of Holybourne. Runners will return past the Froyle Park estate and a charming tree-lined avenue whilst enjoying panoramic views of the surrounding area and, with any luck, some April sunshine.

BT founder Oliver Steele-Perkins describes the route as “A mildly challenging 10k, ideal for experienced runners or those wanting to explore trail running. It’s an undulating route but not technical underfoot, and the views showcase Hampshire at its very best.”

The BT trails team has always held the ethos that trails are for everyone, and the route is designed for runners of all abilities. Oliver said, “We encourage everyone to participate. We have always operated with an inclusive attitude and want all runners to know they’ll be well supported. There is no time limit, and we’ll have our friendly tail runners following at the back. Those wanting to race it will welcome wide tracks and easy terrain underfoot”



As part of the collaboration, Froyle residents will be marshalling on the course, and the village hall will serve as the base, selling homemade treats and hot drinks on the day. Committee member Sarah Zorab said, “Froyle village hall is excited to be working with Blended Trails on this event. We are keen to expand the range of offerings to the community and hope this venture will attract a wide range of participants from both the village and the surrounding area. There is a run for all ages, so please come and join us and keep up your fitness at the same time.”



Oliver commented, “Creating community through running and supporting local events is at the heart of what we do. It’s exciting to promote events that bring families together and let everyone get involved. This is shaping up to be a great family-friendly event, and we’re excited to kick off the trail race with a kids’ Colour Dash featuring a short lap or two around the recreation ground. Kids and young-at-heart adults can walk, jog, or dance the course whilst enjoying the freedom to get legitimately messy whilst exercising together.”

In addition to paid events, Blended Trails offers free guided runs throughout the year, encouraging people to explore new routes responsibly, with a strong leave-no-trace ethos and respect for the environment.

To find out more, join the Blended Trails community for free, or to secure tickets for the **Froyle 10K this April**, visit the Blended Trails website.

<https://blendedtrails.co.uk/events/froyle-10k-trail-and-kids-dash-colour-run/>

LUMINOSA MUSIC

Mary Desmond

to perform at St Lawrence Church in Alton this March!

Luminosa is delighted to announce it will be performing on **Saturday 21st March** at St Lawrence Church, Alton. Starting at 7pm, Luminosa will be performing a vibrant performance of excerpts from Haydn’s *The Seasons*. Luminosa will also be performing Joanna Forbes L’Estrange’s beautiful work *A Season to Sing*, a reimagining of Vivaldi’s Four Seasons. This will be Luminosa’s second performance of Joanna’s work after the choir premiered this at a sell-out evening in March 2025 at St Bartholomew the Great Church in London, as one of the commissioning choirs.

Haydn’s *The Seasons* is a celebrated musical masterpiece that vividly depicts the natural cycle of the year. Premiered in 1801, this work showcases Haydn’s genius in blending orchestral and choral music to portray spring, summer, autumn, and winter through enchanting melodies and rich harmonies. Luminosa’s Artistic Director Rebekah Abbott has carefully selected excerpts which highlight the work’s most evocative moments, from joyful choruses to intimate solo writing.

Joanna Forbes L’Estrange’s *A Season To Sing* was published by the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) in 2025, marking 300 years since the publication of *The Four Seasons*. This choral reimagining of Vivaldi’s enduringly popular set of violin concertos weaves texts from poetry and the Bible on the subject of spring, summer, autumn and winter into Vivaldi’s much-loved melodies.

The evening features soloists from the acclaimed Trinity Laban Conservatoire and with soprano solos from Rebekah Abbott. Co-conducted by Luminosa’s Assistant Director Adam Blossie and accompanied by Gavin Roberts at the superb St Lawrence Organ and on piano, this promises to be an evening not to miss.

Known for imaginative programming and high-quality performances, the acclaimed and 90-strong Luminosa continues to champion choral music that connects audiences with both the classical canon and contemporary works. This concert offers an opportunity to experience one of Haydn’s most life-affirming works in an intimate and uplifting setting alongside Joanna Forbes L’Estrange’s *A Season To Sing*. Luminosa’s concerts always sell out, so early booking is essential. Tickets are priced at £16 for adults and £9 for children.

For tickets and more information, visit www.luminosamusic.com.



LAUNCH A YEAR OF 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Throughout 2026 local Alton charity Cardiac Health are celebrating 50 years in operation with a host of fantastic fundraising events. Cardiac Health helps people lead stronger, healthier lives through exercise at their dedicated facility in Chawton Park Road.

The charity is launching their anniversary celebrations with an art and design competition for local children. Since July 2025 Alton Football Club has been their charity fundraising partner, so it was only natural that Alton FC Chairman Carl Saunders joined Cardiac Health Centre Manager Denise Ellis to jointly launch the competition at the start of February.

In this competition Cardiac Health are inviting young footballers from Alton Football Club and children from local schools to design a 'Heartfelt thank you card' for the cardiac charity.

Denise Ellis, Centre Manager at Cardiac Health said, *"So many local people have been supported by Cardiac Health over the last 50 years; it's been a pillar of the community since Dr Hugh Bethell first launched the 'cardiac rehab' exercise sessions at Alton Sports Centre in 1976.*

Partnering with Alton Football Club for this, our 50th anniversary year, makes so much sense as health, fitness, exercise and community are at the heart of everything we do. I am so pleased that Carl and the team at Alton FC have agreed to help us launch this competition and provide some of the prizes. I can't wait to see the entries!"

Cardiac Health will invite every child who enters the competition to see their design on display at their dedicated exercise centre in Alton on Thursday 26 March. As well as seeing the wonderful artwork, the children and their families will be offered after-school refreshments and given a chance to tour the facilities at Cardiac Health.

See the full terms and conditions of entry here:

<https://cardiachealth.org.uk/about/news/can-you-design-a-heartfelt-thank-you-card-for-us/>



On Friday 6 March 2026, the famous **Cardiac Health Big Quiz** returns to Alton Maltings. Sponsored by long-term supporters Sheen Stickland, tickets are £21 person and includes a hot supper. Tables seat 8 people and a bar will be open throughout the night.

The **Social Bridge Afternoon Tea** returns to Beech Village Hall on **Thursday 23 April**. This popular event, which combines an afternoon Bridge with a wonderful tea, provided by charity volunteers, costs just £70 for a table of four.



For further details on all Cardiac events and to purchase tickets please visit the website

www.cardiac-rehab.co.uk/events alternatively,

email hearty@cardiachealth.org.uk or call 01420 544 794

* * *

CLUBS

ALTON



ALTON CAMERA CLUB

Ian Hogg

Alton Camera club began the second half of its yearly programme with a flurry of activity. This included competitions, field trips and their own 'in-house clinic' question and answer session. Members submitted queries on a variety of camera and other related issues, all answered by the more experienced club members who had first-hand knowledge of overcoming problems and finding their way to taking better images!

A trip to Salisbury, where members not only acted as stewards at a Southern Counties photographic exhibition but also spent time exploring the City and enjoying its many opportunities for taking striking images of their own.

Wildlife entries are an ongoing theme in many of the club competitions and several members visited the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition at the Natural History Museum, where complimentary comparisons were made to the club's own wildlife experts images.

There has been a full programme of internal competitions and a fascinating talk on Landscapes and Waterscapes by French photographer Jonathan Geneveux, who is now living in Scotland. He gave some very informative insights as to how he goes about planning and taking his photographs, from using weather maps and Google locations to take stunning sunrise and sunset pictures. He added that he did have to get up very early for sunrise shots!

Still concentrating on weather, the club held its Projected Images 'weather' and challenge competition. Steve Smith achieved 1st place with his picture of "Frost on Fire". / Graham Wilson came 2nd with his image "Clouds on the Mountains"



with Lynne Harles 3rd with "Sunrays through the Cloud". Entries showed a variety of images as to how members were able to interpret the title.

In the Projected Image Colour League entries, there were several maximum scores, including two from Steve Smith with his two entries of 'Tap Inspector' and 'Just a scratch'; Jo Hawkes with 'Frosty Morning'; *(The photos work so much better in colour! Ed.)*

Neo Bissonnet with 'Emerging Daffodil, and Jason Bunce with 'Surfer Entry'. Steve heads the League table closely followed by Jo, while Jason is ahead in the Mono black and white images League.



The Club has an exhibition in the Freedom Through Expression gallery in Alton between the 1st and 29th of March when images taken by members will be on display. There are also further club competitions in both print and Projected Images in the coming months, and a trip to see the Bognor and Chichester Camera Club exhibition on February 8th.

The club meets every Wednesday evening at Holybourne Village Hall, new members are always welcome and more details can be found on the Club website at Alton Camera Club

ALTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

TALKS are open to non-Members but please consider a donation to the Society of £3 per head or whatever you can afford. Held in Garden Room, Alton Community Centre, Amery St, Alton GU34 1FE. [What3Words ///instructs.spreads.viewing](#). Pay-and-Display car park adjacent. Tea, coffee and biscuits available for a small donation.

MEMBERSHIP QUERIES Email altonnathistsoc@gmail.com

UNDER 18s welcome but please bring an adult with you (sorry, this is to comply with our insurance).

<p>Thurs 5 Mar 7.30pm -9pm</p>	<p>Olivia French: Natterjack Comeback – The Success Story of one of Britain’s Rarest Amphibians Olivia French, Project Team Leader for the Wealden Heath Special Protection Area, will tell us about the Wealden Heath SPA, focusing on current efforts to protect and increase Natterjack Toad populations and the challenges these rare animals face.</p>
<p>Thurs 19 Mar 7.30pm -9pm</p>	<p>Keith Betton: Mysteries of Bird Migration Why do birds migrate? How do they navigate? How do we know? Keith Betton, Chair of Hampshire Ornithological Society and a former trustee of both the RSPB and the British Trust for Ornithology, will unravel these mysteries for us.</p>

ASA

Forthcoming Lectures:

Tuesday 10th March: Paul Chapmen *Brett Whiteley's Lavender Bay*

Brett Whiteley is one of Australia's most admired painters. After spending the 1960s in London and New York, Whiteley returned to Sydney in 1970 and made Lavender Bay...

Tuesday 14th April 2026: Richard Whincop *In the National Interest:*

Art, The Sun King and the Academic Revolution

The Academie Royale de peinture et de Sculpture was founded in 1648 under Louis XIV of France, the 'Sun King', and placed the visual arts under direct royal control.

Both lectures will be held at Martin Read Hall at Alton College commencing at 7:30pm (doors open 6:45pm)



Vanessa MacMahon

MEDSTEAD

HAMPSHIRE FEDERATION OF WI - MEDSTEAD

Gill Siddall

Members were delighted to welcome two new members to the meeting and also several guests who we hope will join us. Members were reminded that subscriptions will be due on or after 1st April.

A Speaker Selection Day will be held in Alton on March 19th which members were encouraged to consider attending to hear and report on potential speakers for the WI in Hampshire. A team of 5 members will be required for the WI Quiz evening to be held probably in June.

There were signs of spring on the Flower of the Month table with some beautiful flowers on show.

It was lovely to welcome local up and coming author Louise Morrish who lives in Alton and is now the author of two books with a third coming out in April! The research that Louise carries out for her books is meticulous and she showed photos and film clips from the time in which her books are set. Some real characters and amazing women are the base for Louise's books in which she reimagines the lives of these women. 1914 when the books are set was very much a man's world - so many jobs and professions that women were not allowed to be a part of. It is amazing to think how life has progressed in a relatively short time. One example was Dorothy Lawrence who was keen to become the first female war correspondent. She managed to get herself to the frontline posing as a man and all went well until she was injured and her real identity revealed. She led a very sad life after that but in 2025 finally a memorial stone was erected to celebrate her life. We learnt about the Endell Street Hospital in the Covent Garden area of London which was staffed entirely by women. The hospital had a library of 5,000 books.

An excellent talk with so much to learn about some wonderful amazing women and how very different their lives were.

At the meeting on March 12th members will be entertained by Bishop's Bells and maybe even have a chance to have a go!

Medstead WI is always pleased to welcome new members and visitors to the meetings on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 2pm in Medstead Village hall. The programme right up till July 2027 is all in place so lots to look forward to!

HAMPSHIRE FEDERATION OF WI – ROEDOWNS

Diana Constantine

Our guest at the February meeting was Angela Lewis, who joined us to talk about Aromatherapy. She gave us a background about it and we were then given the task of identifying what different oils were in a 'smell workshop'. At the end of the evening we could buy a roller ball bottle containing our choice of mixed oils.

We have an interesting programme planned for our meetings in the coming year, along with the monthly Book Club meetings and craft group evenings. We will also plan some walks and other activities.

Forthcoming meetings 4th March

Making Easter bunting

1st April

Tips for mobile phone photography

13th May

AGM and supper

Roedowns WI meet in the Wiltshire Room, Medstead Village Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 19.30hrs. Guest speakers, outings and good company. Tea/coffee, biscuits, raffle and gift voucher prize at each meeting. Visitors and newmembers are very welcome. Contact Secretary on roedownssec@hampshire.org.uk

Or President Jill Kerr 01420 564116.



We started our 2026 programme on 3rd February with speaker Christian Dupont who inspired us to have water in our gardens. We have water for movement and sound, wildlife, calm and well-being and to have different planting. We learned that deeper water makes ponds easier to manage and give habitats for wildlife. Different plants can be marginal, floating and emergent. Water lilies need deeper water but there are an enormous range of different water plants to have. Sharing plants with friends and neighbours is a good way to add to your garden pond or feature. Putting in a waterfall is a great way to add movement. Aquatic plants can be easily split and take very well. It was a very informative talk and the photos were inspiring!

Come along and join a new club and learn about the world of gardening.



PROGRAMME 2026
www.medsteadgardenersclub.org

MAR	Tuesday 3rd	Tree planting and aftercare Pamela Holt
APR	Tuesday 7th	Fuchsias Carol Gubler
MAY	Tuesday 5th	Pests and disease control Alan Horgan

Meeting at Medstead Village Hall. Doors open 7.00pm ready for 7.30pm start

Membership February to December 2026 - £12pp

Guest £3pp (max 2 visits)

Some of the gardening jobs for March-March is a good time to sow a huge variety of seeds. Get seeds in for your summer fruit and vegetables. It is the last chance to plant bare -root trees and shrubs. Finish pruning roses early this month. Cut dogwoods, willows and continus down to the base. Weeds will be emerging so get on top of them! Mulch borders generously and feed shrubs to give them a good start for a great summer display.

Prepare vegetable beds for planting.

Enjoy gardening as the days get lighter and the garden starts bursting into colour.

CLUB CONTACTS

Medstead Bowls: Dennis Church 01420 564475 dennis@windhamhill.plus.com

Medstead Players: Tania McCullough chairman@medsteadplayers.co.uk
 or Secretary Julia Halls 07747 665 968 ; or publicity@medsteadplayers.co.uk

Medstead Tennis: www.medsteadtennisclub.org.uk

Alton Rotary: Roy Roberts 07768 070 572 Mike 07808 093 953

REGULAR FEATURES

COUNTRY MATTERS

Julian Lewis

Good quality food will never be the cheapest.

You will all be fed up with the number of wet days that we have had this winter but it is better to rain now rather than having a wet summer – remember the rainfall does average out. The details – November had 103mm (4.2 ins), December 110mm (4.45 ins) and January 182mm (7.4ins). The running total for the last 12 months is 854mm (34.6 ins) which is still low compared to recent years. January 2025 was nearly as wet as January 2026 but remember how warm and sunny the summer of 2025 was – will it be repeated in 2026?

The dry autumn allowed growers to plant the over winter crops in ideal conditions and they, almost without exception, look great. When the ground dries the first fertiliser applications will be made and herbicides applied when the temperatures rise. As I am writing this article the sun has just come out and feels warm through the glass of the window - great. There will be a small acreage of spring sown crops this year because so much ground was sown to the winter crops. The birds and especially the Red Kites will be looking to eat earth worms disturbed by any cultivations. Take a pair of binoculars if walking in the countryside to watch the wildlife – sit down and watch the wildlife appear – it is a fantastic display and costs nothing – just be patient.

The last of my lambs have been sold for the highest price ever achieved - £163 per head before market fees. It was not long ago that we were receiving £80 head if lucky. The ewes are still grazing the fields but will not be lambing this year. I love the lambing time of year especially the last 3 years when it was timed for mid-April and the days are longer and warmer. However, having growing lambs in the field is very time consuming and does limit our ability to take time away from Bentworth (plus my age – I don't move as fast as I used to) hence the decision to stop lambing.

There are presently 2 large groups of sheep grazing arable cover crops in the village. The cover crops were sown into arable land and improve the soil structure and fertility of the fields. The sheep then graze the turnips, kale and other species which makes it easier to cultivate the ground for the spring crops plus as they poo they are returning nutrients to the ground. A good mixed farming system beneficial in many ways – which has been used for many years but has come back into usage. In times past I used to grow up to 100 acres of turnips to fatten the lambs. Turnips are very nutritious and full of sugars that add body condition.

Government support farming has almost disappeared from farming in the UK and EU which is a complete change from the post second World War political drift. The political aim was to create national stability and part of that was plentiful supplies of good quality food to keep the populations content. The incentives and support for farm production was sufficient to encourage extra production which resulted in the now forgotten milk lakes and grain mountains. The surplus stock was a very small percentage of the population's consumption of basic foods and the cost was not huge in terms of the stability it created. An additional and highly politically desirable effect was the deflationary effect upon food prices which saw food costs as a percentage of a household's budget drop from nearly 50% to the current 6 – 8%. The farmers effectively were bribed to increase production but the oversupply had the effect of flooding the market and reducing the prices received for farm production. Additionally, the politicians linked the farm support to conditions and regulations that meant the EU especially could dictate production methods, food standards and good environmental rules. UK food production was 80% of that required by the nation - this has now reduced to about 45% self-sufficiency.

We now have a situation that although we have the highest welfare and environmental standards in the world but the majority of the UK food consumed by us is imported from nations (some of which) don't even understand environmental or welfare standards. Cheap food can only be produced by lowering quality. An example in the news at present is the situation in Welsh schools whereby 94% of the chicken used to make school meals is imported from Thailand and Brazil where production standards would be abhorrent to most of us in terms of the dense stocking rates in the buildings leading to cannibalism and high death rates. This makes no sense for food security, animal welfare or the climate – the food fed to those poultry is probably grown on land which used to be rain forest or wild grassland – plus the energy used in transporting the frozen meat to the UK in chilled containers. This is one of the bonkers examples of the high standards of production within UK food production that are sacrificed to save a few pennies regardless of the rubbish that is then imported.

Good quality food produced in a morally sound and environmentally responsible system will never be cheap and what is the long-term cost of cheap food?

To not consider good quality food readily available and affordable as a right for everyone is an abdication of responsibility by Governments over the last 10 years and so short sighted.

Sadly, the ability to grow UK food is disappearing at an alarming rate in terms of available land, business structures, support industries, trained and educated staff and this makes us more vulnerable to world events. We have choices - plentiful food and consequent lower prices encouraged by Government supported production **OR** being subject to world upheavals, interference and supply interruptions from malign states and low standards. Think back to the food inflation that occurred after the Russian invasion of Ukraine when wheat rose from £170 to over £900 per tonne. Personally, I find it very frightening that a small densely populated island nation such as ours is becoming more and more vulnerable to food shortages. Food production cannot be restarted by flicking a switch – it would / will take years to increase production to even partly feed the UK population.

Despite all of the political turbulence the natural world around us is starting the wonderful spring routines of birdsong, spring flowers - snow drops are flowering and daffodils emerging, birds nesting and so much more – I even heard the engine of a lawn mower cutting grass a couple of days ago!

HAMPSHIRE FARMERS MARKETS <https://hampshirefarmersmarkets.co.uk/>

Alton Saturday 14th March

Sunday, March 1st	Romsey	Sunday, March 1st	Petersfield
Sunday, March 8th	Winchester	Sunday, March 8th	Whiteley
Sunday, March 15th	Alresford	Saturday, March 21st	Emsworth
Saturday, March 28th	Ringwood	Sunday, March 29th	Winchester

*Markets open at different times – most are 10am until 2pm
except Winchester which opens at 9am. But do check the website to find out correct times*

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - ALTON LIBRARY

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9.30am to 1.30pm	9.30am to 5pm	Closed	9.30am to 5pm	9.30am to 5pm	9.30am to 5pm

The Jane Austen Fan Club Wednesday 4th March 2026 7.00pm to 8.30pm

See page 17 for more details.

Step into Sculpture

Fridays 27 February - 27 March 10am – 12pm

Expressive Watercolours for Improvers

Saturday 28 February - 28 March 10am - 12pm

BUS TIMETABLE run by Cresta Coaches of Alresford (01962 773236) only on Tuesdays and Fridays (NOT Saturdays) - **SERVICE 208**

Alton High Street	9.35	11.35	13.35
Beech Well House Road	9.43	11.43	13.43
Medstead War Memorial	9.49	11.49	13.49
Bentworth The Star	9.55	11.55	13.55
Alton High Street	10.09	12.09	

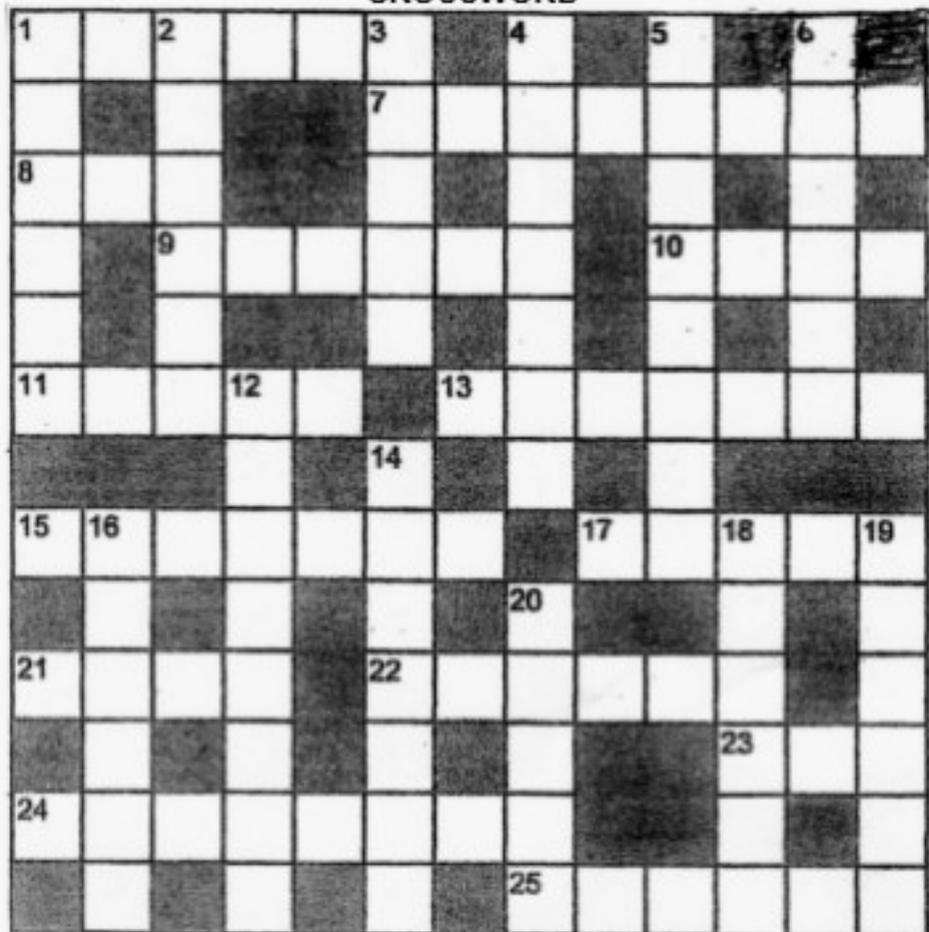


CHILDREN AND FAMILIES MINISTER



The Benefice of the Resurrection is recruiting for a Children and Families Minister. This is a part-time post of 25 hours. For more information please visit www.resurrectionbenefice.org/children-youth-and-families-leader/

CROSSWORD



Clues Across

1. Glass splinter
7. Xmas
8. French friend
9. Approach
10. Youth
11. Prominent person
13. Accounts
15. Fate
17. Regular
21. Spotted
22. Empty
23. Stop
24. Lowered dignity
25. Expelled

Clues Down

1. Reprieved
2. Bee farm
3. Church council
4. Absolute
5. Posts
6. Strangest
12. Elongated
14. Delight
16. Levelled
18. Ailing
19. Stepped ashore
20. Knife part





EVENTS



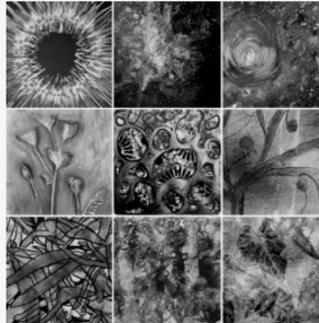
Step into Sculpture Alton Library

Fridays 27 February - 27 March 10am - 12pm

FREE tuition, £15 for materials

Booking is essential, please visit

shop.hants.gov.uk/collections/learning-in-libraries to book your place. If you have issues booking online please contact branch staff or call **02392 232957**



Expressive Watercolours for Improvers Alton Library

Saturday 28 February - 28 March 10am - 12pm

£90 tuition, plus £10 materials fee

Booking is essential, please visit

<https://shop.hants.gov.uk/collections/learning-in-libraries> to book your place. If you have issues booking online please contact branch staff or call **02392 232957**





National
Theatre
Live

Sat 28
Feb

HELEN
MIRREN

as Queen Elizabeth II in

THE
AUDIENCE

Screen by the Green



beechvillage.org.uk

BENTWORTH FILM NIGHT

will be screening

I, SWEAR

on Friday 13th March

at the Jubilee Hall, Bentworth.



Doors open at 7pm for drinks, with film showing at 7.30pm. Tickets £5 on the door.

Ice Creams in the Interval

This is a social event open to all local villagers,
please feel free to bring friends along too.

*Small Notes and change for entrance, drinks and ice cream, very
much appreciated!*

Future Dates and Films to be announced

I SWEAR

Fri
13
Mar

7:30pm



Screen by the Green

Beech Village Hall



Money raised is going to establish a rehabilitation centre,
near Lviv in Ukraine
for treating injured service personnel and civilians

Alton

**14
MARCH
at 7.30pm**

Party



Carbon Copy Party Band



Donate here



Night

TICKETS available from Margaret Lockett
☎ 07543125195,
Newbury Building Society,
Holybourne Post Office.

at the
Assembly Rooms
(High Street, GU14 5BA)



LUMINOSA
OUTSTANDING CHOIRS

Forbes L'Estrange
**A SEASON TO
SING**

Haydn

THE SEASONS

Saturday 21st March 2026
at 7pm



St. Lawrence Church
Church Street, Alton, GU34 2BW

TICKETS: £16 (Children £9)
www.ticketsource.co.uk/luminosa-music
Box Office: boxoffice@luminosamusic.com
luminosamusic.com

GET TICKETS





BROADLANDS WELCOMES
PHYLLIDA LLOYD
DIRECTOR OF FILM, THEATRE AND OPERA

PHYLLIDA IS WELL KNOWN FOR MAMMA MIA!, THE IRON LADY AND TINA. SHE HAS WORKED WITH THE NATIONAL THEATRE, RSC, DONMAR WAREHOUSE AND MORE



25 March 2026
6.30 P.M. FOR 7.00 PM START



Wivelrod Barns
Wivelrod, GU34 4AS

TICKETS ON SALE NOW



£15 to include drink on arrival



www.broadlandsgrouprda.org.uk

Suntou Susso

Sat
28
Mar

Gigs by the Green

Beech Village Hall



Easter Wreath Making

Join us for a creative afternoon
at Wivelrod Barns, GU34 4AS



Sunday 29th March
2.00 - 4.00 p.m.

**£35 to include refreshments
and everything you need for your wreath**

For tickets visit
www.broadlandsgrouprda.org.uk/events



Broadlands
Equine Therapy & RDA



BLENDED
TRAILS

Froyle 10k TRAIL RACE

Saturday 11th April 2026

All information and entries

www.blendedtrails.co.uk



BROADLANDS EQUINE THERAPY AND RIDING FOR THE
DISABLED



QUIZ NIGHT

Get ready for an evening of laughs, friendly competition,
and brain-teasing questions at our annual Quiz Night.
All proceeds go towards Broadlands Riding for the
Disabled, so every question answered helps support us.
No quiz expertise required – just enthusiasm and a sense
of fun!

DATE: FRIDAY 17 APRIL, 2026

TIME: 6.45 FOR 7.30 START

VENUE: MEDSTEAD VILLAGE HALL

REGISTER YOUR TEAM OF 6 TODAY!

£20 PER PERSON TO INCLUDE A HOT MEAL

BEER, WINE AND NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS AVAILABLE TO
PURCHASE. RAFFLE TICKETS WILL ALSO BE ON SALE

Visit Our Website

www.broadlandsgroupprda.org.uk

CHARITY NUMBER:
1170398

Broadlands
Equine Therapy & RDA





Alton Concert Band and The Lydian Singers

Musical Director for both
Jeremy Hilton Morrish

“Thank You For The Music”

Saturday 18th April 2026

Alton Maltings: 7:00pm

Tickets : Adult - £12.00
12-18 - £6.00 (Under 12 free)

Available from Ticketsource
or at the door



For more information please contact :
altonconcertband@outlook.com or www.altonconcertband.co.uk
lydiansinfo@gmail.com or www.lydiansingersfarnborough.co.uk



ALTON RUNNERS



ALTON 10 ROAD RACE

WHEN? Sunday 10th May at 9:30am

WHERE? Race HQ at Eggar's School, Alton

10-miles around Alton and surrounding villages.
Part of the Hampshire Road Race League.
All runners welcome.

Entry **from £19** - early bird pricing available.

SIGN UP NOW

www.altonrunners.co.uk



ALTON COMMUNITY SHARE

FREE TOY
LIBRARY

**ST LAWRENCE
PARISH CENTRE**

Every 2nd Saturday of
the month
2:00pm - 4:00pm

**BORROW
GAMES,
TOYS,
& MORE!
FOR FREE!**





St Andrew's Church Medstead

2026 - Charity Lent Lunches

Please join us for delicious home-made soups, bread and cheese

St Andrew's Church Hall – Medstead

from 12.30

Saturday 07th March – MIND

Friday 20th March – Hampshire & IoW Air Ambulance

Entry is free. donations welcomed and all proceeds will be shared equally
between the charities involved.



COURAGE FOR THE JOURNEY

Lent Course 2026

March 5th Courage to step into the unknown

Speaker: Rev David Chattell (Genesis 12)

March 12th Courage to lead

Speaker: Rev Philip Simpkins (Judges 6)

March 19th 'Open Doors'

Speaker: Geoff & Irene Green

March 26th Courage to live counter culturally

Speaker: Rev Ben Burge (Daniel 6)

April 2nd Courage to follow God's call

Speaker: Bishop Philip (Matthew 20)

A time to meet together as Christians during the season of lent for worship, a talk and time for discussion.

It is held at The Alton Maltings. Refreshments from 7:15 (start 7:30pm)

Course content designed by the Salvation Army



www.altonchoral.org.uk

Charity no.900258

Alton Choral Society Presents

Music for Good Friday

Featuring Fauré's Requiem

3rd April, 6pm

Alton Methodist Church

Admission free

Retiring collection for





GOOD FRIDAY

3RD APRIL

**OUTDOOR EASTER
SERVICE 10AM**

**Retelling of the Easter Story
with live animals (from Mill
Cottage Farm)**

**Followed by hot cross buns and
refreshments.**

Outside St Lawrence Church

THE LAST HOUR

**Music and Meditation service
2pm at St Lawrence Church**

WWW.POTR-ALTON.CO.UK



POTR Services for March and Easter 2026

1st March

8am BCP Holy Communion St Lawrence
9.30am Family Service St Lawrence
10.30am POTR altogether St Lawrence

8th March

9.15am Communion Service St Peter's
9.30am Morning Worship
with Baptism Holy Rood
10.30am Communion St Lawrence
3pm Afternoon Worship All Saints
4pm Church @ 4 Parish Centre
6pm Evening Prayer for vacancy St
Law'ce

15th March

9.30am Communion Service Holy Rood
10.30am Communion Service All Saints
10.30am Family Morning Worship
St Lawrence
3.30pm Choral Evensong St Lawrence

22nd March

9.15am Communion Service St Peter's
10.30am Communion Service St Lawrence
4pm Lego Church Holy Rood
6pm Evening Worship St Lawrence

29th March

8.00am BCP Holy Communion St
Lawrence
10.30am GAP Service St Lawrence

Holy Week see BLS Service page

2nd April Maundy Thursday

7pm Maundy Thursday Communion
All Saints
7.30pm Lent Talk with Communion
The Maltings

5th April EASTER DAY

8am BCP Holy Communion St Lawrence
9.15am Easter Communion St Peter's
9.30am Easter Communion Holy Rood
10.30am Easter Family Communion
St Lawrence
11am Easter Traditional Communion
All Saints
(9.30am HOPE Church Service All Saints)

Every Wednesday 10am
Holy Communion All Saints



SERVICES FOR MARCH & EASTER 2026

BENTWORTH LASHAM MEDSTEAD SHALDEN

1st March - THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Purple

Holy Communion (CW)				10.00a.m.
Holy Communion (CW)			11.00a.m.	

8th March – THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Purple

Holy Communion (CW)			8.00a.m.	
Holy Communion (CW)	10.00a.m.			

15th March –THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT Mothering Sunday

Purple

Holy Communion (CW)		11.00a.m.		
Holy Communion (CW)			11.00a.m.	
Evensong				6.00p.m.

22nd March - THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT Passiontide begins

Purple

Holy Communion (CW)	10.00a.m.			
Cafe Church (in the hall)			11.00 a.m.	
Family Service (in the church hall)			4.00p.m.	

29th March - PALM SUNDAY

Purple

BLS Together Communion				10.00a.m
Holy Communion (CW)			11.00a.m.	

30th March MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK Compline 8pm St Lawrence Church

31st March TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK Compline 8pm St Lawrence Church

1st April WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK Compline 8pm St Lawrence Church

2nd April MAUNDY THURSDAY COMMUNION 7pm All Saints Church

3rd April GOOD FRIDAY The Last Hour 2pm St Lawrence Church

5th April – EASTER SUNDAY

White

Easter Communion	10.00a.m			
Easter Communion				10.00a.m
Easter Communion		11.00a.m.		
Easter Communion			11.00a.m.	