

# The Parishioner

YARPOLE LUCTON CROFT BIRCHER BICTON

December 2025

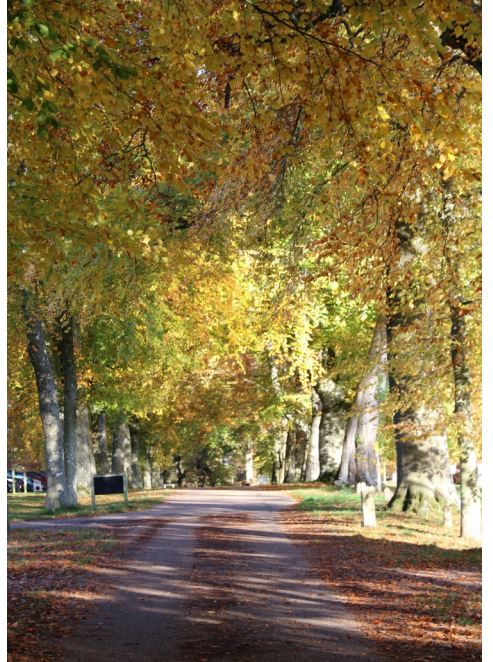
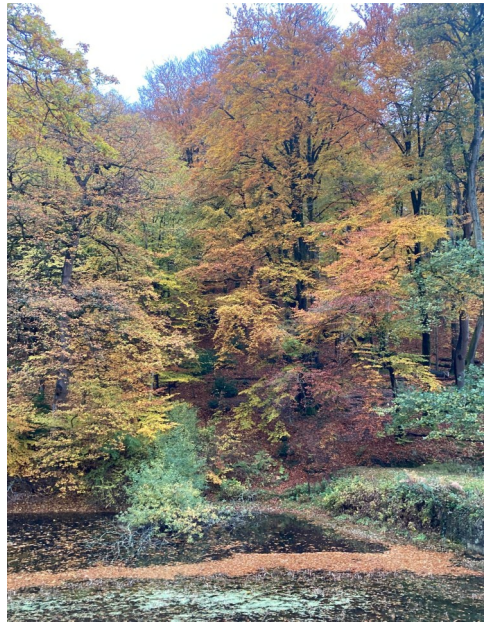
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And all our regular features







Thanks to the following for their photos: [Front Cover](#) - David Cheshire (View from Bircher Common to Leys Lane). [This page](#) - Di Hill (Croft); Kate Griffiths (Fishpool Valley); Judy Connolly (Deer in the Round Wood, Bircher Common); Keith Smith (Beech Trees at Croft Castle).

## FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

As the year draws to a close and thoughts turn to Christmas, it's a good moment for Hetty and me to say thank you; not just once, but many times over.

We depend on the contributors who commission, write, photograph, and send in pieces month after month; the proofreaders who check our work and the delivery team who distribute 380 copies of the newsletter ten times a year. We also want to thank the volunteers who've stepped up to read and record the audio version, Ella Sherr who helped us to get the audio project off the ground and Dave and Lesley Bradford who are taking it forward.

Advertising revenue covers a good portion of our printing costs but we wouldn't be able to survive without readers' donations. We need the equivalent of £7+ per household to keep going and many of you have responded generously to our appeal for contributions. A big thank you to those who have donated, including those who have done so anonymously, via the collection tin in the village shop.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year. We'll be back in February with the first issue of 2026.

Lynne

**STOP PRESS** We are sorry to report the deaths of two members of the community: Peter Kay of Brick Villa, Turnpike Lane and Mary Taylor of Lucton Court, Lucton.

**To send in articles and news items, please e-mail us at:**

[newsletter@yarpole.org](mailto:newsletter@yarpole.org)

**Or leave in the box at the shop**

**The deadline for all submissions is**

**THE 10th OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH**

### ADVERTISEMENTS

**To place a commercial advert in *The Parishioner*, please email [newsletter@yarpole.org](mailto:newsletter@yarpole.org) and we'll send you more information**

**Prices start at £5 for a ½ page ad**

We also print small ads for parishioners for which we suggest that a small donation is left in the yellow collection box in the shop.

### Audio version of *The Parishioner*

The Parishioner is also available by email in audio files for parish residents with sight problems. If you'd like to receive it in this format, or know someone who would, please let us know at [newsletter@yarpole.org](mailto:newsletter@yarpole.org).

## WHAT'S ON

## WHAT'S ON



### Stay in touch: Yarpole WhatsApp Group

Share local information & news, relevant to our community, via the Yarpole WhatsApp group. We now have over 150 members! To join send a message with your mobile number to: Katie Daniels **07786 515922**



### Calling Facebook Users

To get Yarpole news on Facebook, search for 'Yarpole Community'. See what's on! See what matters in Yarpole! Contribute to the page. Like us and become a friend.

### Yarpole Welcome Packs

If you are aware of new residents who have moved to the parish, or if you have recently moved yourself and haven't received one, please get in touch with Sue Langley:

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

### Don't miss out on what's happening!

To be added to the events mailing list, email [events@yarpole.org](mailto:events@yarpole.org).

### Police Community Support Officer meetings

Our local (Leominster) PCSO Steph Harper aims to visit the Gallery Café every 5 weeks but there's no meeting in January. The next visit, all being well, is on

**Friday 6 February.** Join Steph in the café for coffee and chat.



Come and

### Be Still

Some music, a reading, a prayer and time for your own quiet reflection.

Monthly, on the first Wednesday, 5.30 - 6 pm.

St. Leonard's Church, Yarpole.

All are welcome



### Walking Group

We meet regularly, on the 2nd Friday and 4th Sunday of every month, at 10:30 by the church.

**Friday 12 & Sunday 28 December**

**Friday 9 & Sunday 25 January**

All welcome to join our walks but please phone to check details, if you are not on the email list.

Contact: **Viv 01568 782271** or [seiftonbatch@gmail.com](mailto:seiftonbatch@gmail.com)





## WHAT'S ON

## WHAT'S ON



**★ New Term - New MD**  
**Birchpoles**  
**Love To Sing Choir**  
**Do you love to sing?**  
 Come and be part of  
 something amazing!  
 Every Wednesday Term Time  
 7:15-9:15pm (Adult Choir)  
 Refreshments included  
**St. Leonard's Church, YARPOLE**  
 £5/ session Contact details  
 07915886265 or fb page



**Orleton**  
**Stars & Angels**  
**Festival**  
 Back by popular demand  
**Saturday 6 December**  
**11am-4pm (free entry\*)**  
**St George's Church, Orleton**  
**Craft activities for all ages**  
**Beautiful decorations**  
**Lego Christmas Village**  
**Visit Santa's Grotto**  
**Enjoy delicious refreshments**  
 (soup, rolls, mince pies, apple pies,  
 gingerbread, warm drinks)  
 \*Donations welcome; charges for Grotto and refreshments  
 Brought to you by Orleton Village Hall, Orleton Recreation Association  
 and St George's Church. Enquiries welcome in the Village Shop



**Orleton Evergreens**  
**11 Dec:** Christmas lunch  
 All Welcome (50+)  
 Meetings at Orleton Village Large Hall  
 2.30 pm  
 Further details contact Sue Turner  
 01584 831324/[sue.a.turner@gmail.com](mailto:sue.a.turner@gmail.com)



**CHESS**  
 New day/time? 7.00 - 9.00 pm  
 Thursdays in the Cider Barn at The Bell.  
 Meeting to discuss this, or other  
 suggestions, at **7.00 pm, Thursday 15**  
**January 2026**  
 For more information contact John Nurse:  
[bandjo@btopenworld.com](mailto:bandjo@btopenworld.com)



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 Pembridge Church  
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 2S  
 Birchpoles

## St. Leonard's and St. Michael's Christmas events for your diary...

### ***Christmas Card Tree***

As usual there will be a small Christmas tree in the church for attaching a card with your Christmas greetings to the whole village. Cards and ribbon will be available by the tree. Write your own greeting and tie the card to the tree. This generates a wonderful visual of Christmas spirit amongst us all, saves time and raises donations for the Little Princess Trust.



### ***The Mary and Joseph Tour***

Mary and Joseph will be travelling around the village; see note in November *Parishioner*.



### **Friday 28 – Sunday 30 November: *Christmas Crib Festival***

The cribs will be on display in St. Leonard's Church. If you have a crib and would be willing to lend it for the display, please bring it along on the afternoon of Friday 28 November.

### **Sunday 30 November: *Christingle Christmas Service***

3 pm in St. Leonard's. Donations to The Children's Society.

### **Sunday 30 November: *Adopt a Grave Winter Get Together***

11 am in St. Leonard's Church for coffee, cake and chat and, weather permitting, a bit of a final tidy up beforehand. This is to thank everyone who has taken on a neglected grave. If you haven't yet done so but are interested in the group's work, well then why not come along?



### **Saturday 6 December: *Unwanted Christmas Gifts Table***

St. Leonard's Church. Do you have things lurking around the home that would make a good Christmas gift for someone, but you just don't know who? Socks, gloves, DVDs, books etc. Bring them down to the church on Saturday 6 Dec between 10 am and noon. At this time of year, often called the season of peace, all proceeds will go to MAG (Mines Advisory Group) to support their work in clearing landmines in areas previously scarred by military conflict.



### **Sunday 14 December: *Nine Lessons and Carols at Croft Castle Chapel***

3 pm in St. Michael's Chapel at Croft Castle. Open to all, even if you are not a National Trust member.

### **Wednesday 17 December: Carol Singing Round the Village**

We will meet from 4 pm at the Bell Tower for mulled wine and mince pies. Then, at 4.30 pm, fully lubricated and weather permitting we shall process around the village, looking at the advent windows and singing the odd hymn here and there. All are very welcome, bring a torch and wear hi vis if you have it. We aim to reach the pub by 6 pm for a final round of half a dozen hymns. Those who don't want to walk are welcome to join us there.



### **Wednesday 24 December: Christmas Eve Carols Round the Tree**

3 pm at St. Leonard's. Come and sing your favourites and enjoy a glass of mulled wine.

### **Thursday 25 December: Christmas Day Church Service**

9.30 am at St. Leonard's, with Rev. William Talbot-Ponsonby.



### **Thank You**

At this time of year we would like to say thanks to all those who keep St. Leonard's running the rest of the year and to let you know how much your efforts are appreciated: St. Leonard's Management Team, the spectacular flower arrangers, the hard-working plant stallers, the manic bell ringers, those who tend the churchyard and, of course, everyone who comes to worship with us and support us during the year.



**Wishing everyone a warm and Happy Christmas from  
St. Leonard's PCC.**



**P.S.** Don't forget our normal service offerings:

### **Sunday 23 November: Lay-led 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

9.30 am at St. Michael's Chapel. The service this time will be at Croft so that we don't get in the way of **Made in HR6**. We hope you will all join us. We are having **Bring and Share Worship** so if you have a hymn or a prayer or a reading that you would like to share, do come and join us.

### **Wednesday 3 December: Be Still**

5.30 pm, a quiet half hour away from Christmas bedlam with Jeanette Kinsey.



## **St. Leonard's Church and Community Hub**

Our church and community hub is a superb venue for your next celebration or special event – whether it be for an exhibition, an illustrated talk, a musical soirée, a family gathering, a special anniversary or a public event.

With flexible space, outstanding acoustics, an atmospheric setting and superb support from a team of volunteers, it is a unique location for you.

For booking enquiries email us at : [yarpolechurchbookings@gmail.com](mailto:yarpolechurchbookings@gmail.com)



## WHAT'S ON

## WHAT'S ON

### COMMUNAL CRAFTERS

Next meeting:

**Monday 8 December**

At Yarpole Parish Hall, Green Lane, HR6 0BL

Cost: £3 towards the hire of the hall

We are a friendly group of crafters of all abilities who meet once a month to craft together and learn new skills

**NEW MEMBERS VERY WELCOME!**

Please contact Sue Beagley on 07816 060746

or email [suebeagley@aol.com](mailto:suebeagley@aol.com) for info.

### Arts Society Lectures

Lively and interesting illustrated lectures on arts-related topics at Ludlow Assembly Rooms, 2.15 pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Lectures from nationally recognised experts take about one hour.



Next meeting on **Wednesday 21 January 2026**

**Cartier: Jeweller of Genius**

Judy Rudoe

Visitors are welcome, paying £8.00 on the door. Membership, which buys you eight lectures and reduced fees for outings and study days, costs £45.

More information: <http://www.theartsocietytemevalley.org.uk>



### LEOMINSTER SHOPMOBILITY



Did you know that you can borrow disability equipment and medical supplies, from Leominster Shopmobility? We provide mobility scooters, wheelchairs and powered wheelchairs.

#### **Opening Times:**

Open Monday - Saturday: 10am - 1pm

Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays

Our office is situated in the Central Car Park in Leominster town centre (adjacent to Morris Mews and near to the Library)

**THE SERVICE IS AVAILABLE FREE TO ANYONE WHO NEEDS IT**

## Flicks &amp; Food



Timothy Spall, Imelda Staunton, Joanna Lumley

12

# Finding Your Feet

When Sandra discovers that her husband is having an affair, she seeks refuge with her older sister Bif. Sandra is a fish out of water next to her outspoken, serial dating sibling, she reluctantly goes to the community dance class, where gradually she starts finding her feet... and romance.

**Yarpole Parish  
Hall**

HR6 OBL

**Saturday  
10 January**  
7.30 pm

**Tickets**

Standard: £5.00  
Under 18s: £4.00

**Enquiries: 01568 780250**

This is a Flicks & Food event. Food £9. Film £5. £14 for food and film. Food at 6.30pm, film at 7.30pm. Food must be booked in advance by phone - 01568 701996 or 07531 599700.



Information and Tickets at [www.artsalive.co.uk](http://www.artsalive.co.uk)

**FLICKS  
IN THE  
STICKS**

## EVENTS DIARY FOR DECEMBER & JANUARY

| Date         | Venue         | Event                      | Time           |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Tues 2 Dec   | Parish Hall   | Parish Council meeting     | 7.00-9.00 pm   |
| Wed 3 Dec    | St. Leonard's | Be Still                   | 5.30 - 6 pm    |
| Thurs 4 Dec  | The Bell      | Monthly quiz               | 6.00 pm        |
| Mon 8 Dec    | Parish Hall   | Communal Crafters          | 1.30-3.30 pm   |
| Tues 9 Dec   | Gallery Café  | Tasty Tuesday              | 1.00 pm        |
| Fri 12 Dec   | Parish Hall   | 4Cs                        | 11.00 -12 noon |
| Fri 12 Dec   | Various       | Walking Group              | 10.30 am       |
| Sun 28 Dec   | Various       | Walking Group              | 10.30 am       |
| Wed 7 Jan    | St. Leonard's | Be Still                   | 5.30 - 6 pm    |
| Fri 9 Jan    | Various       | Walking Group              | 10.30 am       |
| Sat 10 Jan   | Parish Hall   | Flicks - Finding your Feet | 6.30 pm        |
| Tues 13 Jan  | Gallery Café  | Tasty Tuesday              | 1.00 pm        |
| Thurs 15 Jan | The Bell      | Meeting to discuss Chess   | 7.00 pm        |
| Fri 23 Jan   | Parish Hall   | 4Cs                        | 11.00 -12 noon |
| Sun 25 Jan   | Various       | Walking Group              | 10.30 am       |

## REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

| Date       | Venue         | Event               | Time           |
|------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Mondays    | Parish Hall   | Move it or Lose it! | 11.00-12 noon  |
|            | Parish Hall   | Zumba               | 6.00-7.00 pm   |
| Tuesdays   | Parish Hall   | Move it or Lose it! | 11.00-12 noon  |
| Wednesdays | Parish Hall   | T'ai Chi            | 10.00-11.00 am |
|            | Parish Hall   | Art Group           | 2.00-4.30 pm   |
|            | St. Leonard's | Birchpole Singers   | 7.15-9.15 pm   |
| Thursdays  | Parish Hall   | Pilates             | 10.45-11.45 am |
| Fridays    | Parish Hall   | Bowls               | 7.30-9.30 pm   |

See 'What's on' pages for more details of events  
Check [www.yarpole.org](http://www.yarpole.org) for up to date information and any changes



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# YARPOLE COMMUNITY SHOP

## December 2025



**It's nearly that time again ...** The shop is now filled with delicious treats and temptations for Christmas, to give as presents or to enjoy yourself!

If you are ordering your Christmas turkeys/ham/sausages, etc. from Tudges, the family butchers based in Richards Castle and our regular shop supplier, then you will need to pick up an order form - available in the shop - and get it back to us ASAP! If you would like a form e-mailed to you then please e-mail us: [yarpolshop@mail.com](mailto:yarpolshop@mail.com)

If you would like to order any bread/cheese/pâté /Quarry Farm products, then again, please let Rowena know in good time!

### Christmas 2025: Last Recommended Posting Dates

| Wed 17 Dec                           | Fri 19 Dec               | Sat 20 Dec                           | Mon 22 Dec               | Tues 23 Dec                       |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2nd Class<br>2nd Class<br>Signed For | Royal Mail<br>Tracked 48 | 1st Class<br>1st Class<br>Signed For | Royal Mail<br>Tracked 24 | Special<br>Delivery<br>Guaranteed |

At the time of going to press the Post Office had still not announced last dates for international postage.

### Holiday shop hours

Wed 24 Dec open 9am to 1pm.

Thurs 25, Fri 26, Sat 27 Dec and Sun 28: closed.

Mon 29, Tues 30 and Wed 31 Dec: open 9am to 1pm.

Thurs 1 Jan: closed.

### Post Office

As above but closing at 12, as usual.

### Newspapers

Available all days apart from Christmas Day

### Very best wishes

Our very best wishes to all our customers, volunteers, staff and all in the parish for a peaceful and Happy Christmas and New Year. Thank you for all your support over the year.

Jon and Rowena





## GALLERY CAFÉ



**Tasty Tuesday will be on Tuesday 9 December  
and Tuesday 13 January at 1.00pm**

Places will be limited so please book by

**Friday 5 December and Friday 9 January at 3.00pm**

Please inform us of any allergies; we are happy to cater for individual needs if possible.

Mince pies will appear at the end of November, and we will be looking forward to warming soups and lunches too.

*We welcome new volunteers, why not drop in to see what's involved? We are a friendly team and it's a great way to meet people and support your community.*

**The Gallery Café will be open on Christmas Eve  
but we will be closed from 25 – 31 December and on 1 January**

Happy Christmas and New Year from all at the Gallery Café!



Thank you to all the people who support the café.

### Gallery Café Opening Hours

Monday – Wednesday 10.30-12.30 for drinks & cakes

Thursday – Friday 10.30-3.00, serving lunch 12-2pm

Saturday 10.30 -12.30 for brunch

For enquiries/bookings, please email: [gallerycafeyarpole@outlook.com](mailto:gallerycafeyarpole@outlook.com), call the café during opening hours on 01568 780594, or drop in to see us in person. There will be a booking sheet on the tall cupboard.

Check [www.yarpole.org](http://www.yarpole.org) or <https://www.facebook.com/GalleryCafeYarpole/>

### SHOP AND POST OFFICE OPENING HOURS

|  | Shop                                     | Post Office  |
|--|--|--------------|
| <b>Monday - Friday</b>   | 9am - 5pm                                | 9am - 12noon |
| <b>Saturday</b>  | 9am - 1pm                                | 9am - 12noon |
| <b>Sunday/Bank Holidays</b>  | closed except for pre-ordered newspapers |              |
| <b>Tel: 01568 780148   Email: <a href="mailto:varpoleshop@mail.com">varpoleshop@mail.com</a></b> |  |              |





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



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# J STOKES

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Next session:

**6 December 10.00 - 12.00**

Online bookings open two weeks before:

<https://leominsterepaircafe.org.uk>

Leominster Community Centre, Church  
Street, Leominster, HR6 8NJ

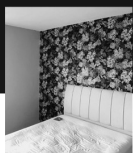
Refreshments available

## JDK SERVICES HANDYMAN



Wishing all of our  
customers a very  
Happy Christmas

- |                                  |                               |
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## CHURCH MATTERS

As we move into Advent and start to prepare for Christmas, we will no doubt be thinking about what presents to get for our friends and family. Sometimes finding the right gift can be a chore. Sometimes we just buy the same things for people, that we think will be acceptable, rather than taking the time to think hard about what a person might really value. If we take the time to put more thought and effort into it, we may find the perfect gift, and we feel happy when we see the pleasure on their face when they receive it. Just as St. Francis said in his prayer "For it is in giving that we receive".

In this time of giving we are also often approached by charities asking for donations to help the poor and needy. For me this reminds me of the story of the Widow's Mite (Luke 21: 1-4) and what Jesus has to say about it. In observing the rich offer up large sums of money and then seeing a widow give her last two small coins as an offering he says: "Truly I say to you that this poor Widow has put in more than all". I think of how easy it is for me as a person who is financially secure to give money to charity, without it having any real impact on me or my life. In thinking about this I realise that I am not giving of myself. I am not investing all that I have, to give to others. I am not spending time to find the perfect gift.

Unlike the widow, most of us do not have the courage to give all that we have. However, there are ways that we can give of ourselves: through kind words, kind deeds, the gift of a smile, taking the time to listen to someone in need and showing them we care. If we give to each other in these ways, the love we give will spread through others and we too will find ourselves on the receiving end.

*Lord Jesus, help me to give of myself by sharing the love and kindness that you have given to me.*

*Thank you, for giving of yourself totally, through sacrificing yourself, by dying on the cross and taking on our sins, so that we might live.*

*Amen*

Jane Higgins  
Local Minister, Croft, Yarpole and Lucton

This is the link for the Diocese of Hereford where the parish magazine article, and other material, can be viewed: <https://www.hereford.anglican.org/news/parish-newsletter/>



*'Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail.'* - Robert Waldo Emerson

During my career in education the pressure to achieve was palpable but I always remember at one parents' evening a farmer telling me that all he wanted was for his daughter to be happy. He continued, 'Let her learn from her mistakes and be there to support and encourage her.' I always remembered that and in the years after, as a headteacher and school inspector, it became obvious that the best teachers kept this approach at the heart of their work.

Looking back on 2025 from SLM's viewpoint, whilst there are many successes of which to be proud, there are lessons to learn along the way. Having a larger group of trustees and a strong team behind them, SLM has achieved much including the following.

- Improving the interior of our historic Bell Tower has created a space that celebrates its unique features.
- Installing the automated doors has undoubtedly improved access for all.
- Refurbishing the display boards in the nave has allowed us to promote the fascinating work of our archives team – telling the incredible stories of past Yarpolians - showing how their influence has spread far and wide.
- Using the church as an exhibition space for children's artwork from local schools brought life and colour into our 14<sup>th</sup> century nave.
- The involvement of SLM and the PCC in celebrating local history through the Herefordshire Histories Festival increased visitor footfall to our village, the church, the shop and the Gallery Café.
- Purchasing our own scaffolding tower has had an immediate impact on our ability to undertake internal/external repairs to the fabric of the church.
- The growing income from the Gallery Café has been a key foundation to SLM's ability to consider more challenging projects in the future, such as the Gallery Café extension.

But there are areas where we did less well. For example, we have barely scratched the surface in meeting the challenges set by the Church Building Inspector's quinquennial report setting a 5-year improvement plan estimated at £90,000+. As important, we fell at the second stage of a grant-funding application seeking up to £50,000 towards the extension and refurbishment of the Gallery Café.

That said, we are dusting ourselves off from these falls and will strive to do better in 2026 for our village community whose support has been immeasurable. We are always looking to strengthen our team but are sad to report that Stefano Street has decided, for personal reasons, to stand down as a trustee and we are sorry to see him leave. We wish him well for the future. Consequently, we are looking to recruit an additional trustee to help SLM build on its successes. We meet every 6-8 weeks, sharing the demands of the role. To join us, please contact me for further information.

Gordon Ewing, Trustee [gordon.ewing@me.com](mailto:gordon.ewing@me.com)



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## An Old Flame

Val, who used to be a Girl Guide, has never forgotten the motto ‘Be Prepared,’ indeed her life runs on it. Going on holiday means preparing for wet and dry conditions, heat and cold, and emergencies of all kinds. The First Aid box is like a pharmacy and surgery rolled into one. If it weren’t for restrictions on space, we would probably take wellies to the Sahara. Just in case.

It’s like that when we have family, especially at Christmas, with a dozen extra bodies staying for a week or ten days. That requires serious up-front food prep, making soups, casseroles, fish pie, Bolognese sauce and so on, which can then be hoiked out of the freezer and microwaved when needed, to give the impression of a well organised machine, thus allowing us time to spend on more important activities with the younger ones: assisting with Lego, supervising knitting, reading stories, clearing up painting and other mess, avoiding CBeebies and so on.

It was all the more surprising therefore when, a couple of years ago, Val shouted out in the middle of Christmas lunch ‘Do we have any brandy?’ If we had needed brandy, surely it would have figured on one of the many lists prepared weeks in advance. At the time, I was clearing away turkey remains, pooling bowls of veg, loading the dishwasher, pouring wine etc before the pudding arrived.

‘Have you looked in the box?’ Val and I don’t drink spirits, but we have, over the years, amassed a collection of miniatures of all kinds from Heaven knows where, and have just been pulling one out every year to pour over Christmas pudding, assuming they would go on for ever. ‘Yes.’ ‘Are you sure?’ What a question. ‘Well try the cupboard in the other room.’ Val emerged with an unopened bottle. ‘Is this OK?’ ‘Yes,’ I said, without looking.

‘Wow! This is good,’ said at least three people round the table on tasting the pudding after the flames had died down. Even Val thought it was impressive, and she doesn’t impress easy. I looked at the label. It was a *très vieille réserve cognac* from Château Lafite-Rothschild, one of the top five producers of Bordeaux, renowned throughout the world for its hundreds-of-pounds-a-bottle wines.

Ah, I remembered. I had visited the château many years ago, with a couple of colleagues, to interview Baron Eric de Rothschild. Why he needed the publicity I never found out, but we were royally entertained with a splendid dinner including a bottle of the 1914 Lafite-Rothschild, just to show their wine doesn’t go off in a hurry. As a parting bribe, sorry gift, we were presented with a bottle of cognac and, as was my wont with spirits, I put it away and forgot about it. Now I was intrigued.

Next day I looked online to see if it was available to buy. Having blown so many socks off at lunch, even when set fire to, it should be worth exploring. And yes, it was available. At £1,600 a bottle! I had to let that sink in. Even Mrs ‘Be Prepared’ didn’t see that coming. Had I known before and sold it, it would have paid for Christmas, several times over. I was gutted. But on the other hand, it hadn’t cost me a penny.

Jim Ainsworth



## YARPOLE PARISH HALL

December 2025

### Regular Classes and Clubs

We are fortunate to have a range of regular classes and clubs available at the Parish Hall. The wide variety will of course only continue if we use them. Thinking about having a go at something new? There is something for everyone. If you would like to find out more please contact Amanda, who will put you in contact with the class organiser. [parishhall@yarpole.org](mailto:parishhall@yarpole.org) or 01568 701996

The popular "Move it or Lose it" is on Monday and Tuesday mornings. Fun, friendly and accessible exercise led by Kath Procter.

Also on a Monday is the weekly Zumba class with Mandy Harrison. This dance-fitness is fun and effective! Build endurance and improve cardio-vascular fitness.

The Communal Crafters are a friendly group who meet monthly to craft together and learn new skills.

T'ai Chi on Wednesday morning is gentle, low-impact movement, whilst focusing on breathing. Often described as meditation in motion. This long standing class is led by Rose Jacks.

The Art Group on a Wednesday afternoon is for all - practiced artists and those wanting to give it a go. A very welcoming group of various abilities, each term is led by a different tutor. Tea and biscuits too!

Pilates on a Thursday morning with Jane Lawrence is exercise designed to improve physical strength, flexibility, posture, and enhance mental awareness.

Friday evening is the very long standing Carpet Bowls Club. Play bowls, have a chat and a cup of tea. No previous experience is necessary.

To make a booking for the hall, contact Dave Bradford on 07974 193294 or [parishhall@yarpole.org](mailto:parishhall@yarpole.org) or go to [www.yarpole.com](http://www.yarpole.com) and click on 'Church & Parish Hall bookings' to book online. If you are interested in joining one of the classes please e-mail Dave who will put you in contact with the class organiser.

### Parish Hall future dates

10 January Flicks & Food 'Finding your Feet'

21 February "Shake off those Winter blues" with a Ceilidh and food

11 April Flicks & Food

### 200 Club winning numbers for November

147 - £50 102 - £20 116 - £10

Jan Tandy - Lottery Administrator

## Garden in the Storm

Moving here one wet spring,  
the house sad, strange, *unheimlich*,  
we rose that first morning  
to a cacophony of bleating lambs,  
birds in full song,  
and came out to you,  
all radiance hidden  
under a canopy of neglect.

Tonight after  
twenty years of  
nurturing each other  
you are torn by a wanton  
storm, violent winds,  
weaponizing trees,  
smash the flesh of you,  
seeking out your mysteries.

Ruptured by anguish,  
we feel the threat,  
wood in the wind  
cracking our thoughts,  
collapsing limbs  
crushing stone,  
our solace and joy  
seems forever rendered.

Then another day  
arrives, and another,  
wind retreats  
in a change of direction,  
people come, children run  
over your green, down to the water,  
friendship and laughter  
settling our minds.

Panic subsides  
along with gathering doubts,  
and occasional gusts  
of anguish;  
clearing and repairing,  
we sigh, and remember,  
we have done this before,  
given you time.

I wrote this poem after Storm Darragh  
last December, with huge thanks to  
everyone who helped us to clear up,  
including: David Connor, Josh Hall,  
Stuart Hurst, Martin Jones, and Estelle  
Theobalds.

Joanna Latimer



# MORTIMER MEDICAL PRACTICE

## Patients' Participation Group (PPG) November 2025

### General Information

Building work is currently happening at Kingsland surgery to create a new consultation room.

### Staff Training days

14 January 2026 and 16 April 2026. Surgeries and Dispensaries will be closed from 12 noon. For urgent care during these times, please call Reception on 01568 708214 before 6.30 pm.

### Staff changes

Dr Verity Jones leaves this month. Mrs Jackie Hodnett is retiring after 34 years of service at the Practice. Sharon and Amanda will be starting in the Dispensary and Kim, Raighan and Millie will be starting on reception.

### Flu and COVID Vaccinations

It's not too late to book your vaccinations. Please call Reception on 01568 708214 to make your appointment.

**Next PPG meeting** 21 January 2026.

Anne O'Brien 07581 402274 [anne.ppg@yahoo.com](mailto:anne.ppg@yahoo.com)

## It's a learning curve....

Ask me the definition of theft and I could still tell you. It's something we learnt at Hendon and even after 30 years' service most police officers will remember.

Ask me when can you remove a hedgerow without permission or what you can do to a property within a conservation area well that's a different matter!

Who knew that the length, location or age of the hedgerow could make it protected. Even when you read the legislation it's not necessarily clear.

It's all a bit of a minefield and easy to fall foul, but it has made interesting reading.

The Parish Council would always suggest contacting Herefordshire council for advice on either of these matters.

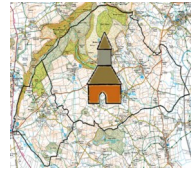
Maggie, our parish clerk, may also be able to point you in the right direction. Her phone number is 07398 222 310.



Councillor Diane Hill



# Yarpole Group Parish Council



Three members of public were welcomed to the last meeting on 4 November 2025. Draft minutes of the meeting will be online by the time you read this. These provide more information than the summary below.

Councillors unanimously agreed to elect Cllr Adam Scott as the new chairman. One vacancy has been advertised, and the council may be able to co-opt a new member in December. If you are interested in joining the council, please contact me for an application form. Why become a councillor? To help improve the community, influence decisions on services, represent concerns and support community projects. A practical way to make a positive change.

A concern was raised that the public phone on Green Lane is not working. This has been reported to British Telecom.

The exclusion of dogs from the playground at the Community Meadow was also discussed. It is an offence to take a dog into the fenced area, except in certain circumstances explained in the Public Spaces Protection Order [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/ielev3lt/public\\_spaces\\_protection\\_order\\_-\\_pspo-dog\\_control\\_2024\\_-\\_sealed\\_order.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/ielev3lt/public_spaces_protection_order_-_pspo-dog_control_2024_-_sealed_order.pdf) Please ensure dogs are kept out of the playground.

It was agreed to replace wood chip under the picnic bench with slabs. Three quotations for the work will be sought.

A new bench has been ordered, to be placed outside the graveyard in **Lucton**. Councillor Trotter offered to take delivery and install the bench, for which he is thanked.

The road sweeper will visit once more this year. The plan is to sweep roads until the hopper is full, in the following order: Green Lane, St James Close and Croft Crescent/Green Lane Crescent. No chemical spray will be used. The emphasis is on keeping drains clear to help prevent flooding.

The budget for 2026/27 will be finalised at the December meeting, and the precept for 2026/27 set. Projects for next year were considered and possibly allocating a higher budget to lengthsmen tasks.

Do come along to a meeting or contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Upcoming dates are Tuesday 2 December 2025 and Tuesday 3 February 2026, at 7 pm at the Parish Hall. There is no scheduled meeting in January 2026.

Mrs Maggie Brown, Clerk.

[clerk@yarpolegroupparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@yarpolegroupparishcouncil.gov.uk) 07398222310



## **News from our County Councillor**

I am glad to report that after expressing my frustrations for two and a half years over the state of the road markings on the B4362 / B4361 between Mortimers Cross and the A49, the Council has finally agreed to repaint those areas which were not resurfaced this year. As part of this they have also agreed to resurface 250m from Mortimers Cross Junction back towards Lucton. I have challenged them to go further and at the very least undertake patching works on the worst bits before you reach the turn to Lucton. At the time of writing, I am waiting to have a site meeting (scheduled for 11 November) with the Senior Highways Engineer to present a case for additional works. By the time you read this it will be too late to wish me luck, but you'll be able to see whether I succeeded! I will also use this opportunity to continue to press for a traffic mirror opposite the Lucton Lane junction in Lucton to improve the visibility and safety there.

In last month's column I wrote about the financial situation Herefordshire Council was facing due to the government funding review and rising demand for temporary accommodation and adult social care services (amongst other things). The chancellor's budget at the end of November and the publication of the Draft Local Government Finance Settlement in December will bring greater clarity to the situation and I will of course update you in the next edition of the Parishioner.

In May 2026 I will have been your ward councillor for three years. Over that time we have made significant progress on the local highway network (and yes there will always be more to do!), road safety and flooding. However, one of my longstanding ambitions has been to bring pressure on the mobile phone providers to improve the signal blackspot in Yarpole Village. Going into the new year this will be my priority locally; if you have any ideas on how to help then please let me know.

Finally, I was delighted to attend the opening of the Yarpole Men's Shed in its new location behind The Bell. It was a heartwarming occasion, and it is yet another string to Yarpole's bow. You really do lead the way for community-run projects locally. To all those involved, past and present, well done and keep up the good work!

As always if you have any concerns, issues or would just like a chat then please do get in touch. It only remains to say Merry Christmas and to wish you and yours a happy and prosperous new year.

Dan Hurcomb

[dan.hurcomb@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:dan.hurcomb@herefordshire.gov.uk)

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## Peter Greer 1946 - 2025

My soulmate of 41 years lost his battle with cancer in October.

He died peacefully at home with me by his side; supported wonderfully by St Michael's Hospice and Marie Curie Nurses and many of our dear friends & neighbours.

Peter was at his happiest quietly walking and maintaining the footpaths of the locality with his beloved dog by his side.

Family was so important to him and he will be greatly missed by us all.

Our thanks to all who have helped over the past years and to all who came to say farewell on the 7th.



Ann Greer

## Colin Knight 1944 -2025

Colin was born in Beckenham in 1944. He always embraced life with enthusiasm. His formative years were filled with friendships and adventures, running youth clubs, organising scout hikes or motor biking over the Alps.

He started his working life in Hatton Garden, providing legal stationery for the nearby law courts; in later years starting his own business. In 1968 he married Janet and lived in Surrey, with their two children, Alison and Greg.



We moved to Yarpole in 1998, and Colin immediately engaged in village life. Community minded all his life, in Yarpole that meant lending his practical skills to building and organising many things for the community. These included leading the first Parish plan, organising the community oil scheme, running dog agility classes (for which he built much of the equipment) and many other village projects.

Yarpole is a wonderful community which Colin loved. As a family, we have been so touched by all the cards and messages, the flowers, the hugs and support, the meals, the cups of tea (and the gin!). We only wish he could have read them all.

His smile - and his laugh - will be remembered fondly by family and friends alike.

Janet, Alison & Greg



# Yarpole Men's Shed



**Our Official Opening Day was a great success!** Thank you to everyone who came along to support us and a big 'thank you' to Viv Mitchell who officially opened the Shed. We could not have done this without our 'Shedders' who have contributed their time, knowledge and skills to work together, plan and construct our Shed. They have also contributed to the community through other projects and have consistently demonstrated this is what being a 'Shedder' is all about. We also could not have done this without the generous donations we've received from The Croft Trust and the Community Fund. Thank you all.

**Putting back into the community** We are currently working on several community projects: installing new Perspex in the Parish Hall notice board; the installation of a new storage shed at St. Leonard's Church and refurbishing the seating in the community park. We also continue to run the weekly maintenance checks at the church.

**New members are welcome!** We are looking for more men to join. Whether you're interested in helping with DIY projects, just socialising or would like to get involved in developing the group's activities, we would like to hear from you.

**DIY Life Skills** If you would like to get some hints and tips on how to undertake some simple DIY tasks, or maybe choose the tools you might need, let us know by email. If there is enough interest, we may be able to run some sessions next year.

**Would you like to find out more about us?** The best ways to get in touch are to e-mail us at [yarpolshed@gmail.com](mailto:yarpolshed@gmail.com) or to let one of our existing members know you're interested. We're a friendly, supportive group and you'll be welcome to come along to a meeting and chat with some members of our group.

Trevor Edwards

## Community Equipment Service – Important Update

The Community Equipment Service, previously run by NRS Healthcare on behalf of Herefordshire Council, is now provided by Hoople.

If you, or your family members, have assistive equipment such as shower stools, toilet frames, chairs and beds labelled *NRS Healthcare* that need to be returned or repaired, please contact the Community Equipment Service on 01432 261 818 or e-mail [communityequipservice@hoopleltd.co.uk](mailto:communityequipservice@hoopleltd.co.uk).

Please note that crutches and zimmer frames should be returned to the hospital or local authority after use.



Hello everyone! Welcome to 'Lisa's Book Nook'. Can you believe this is the last instalment of 2025! Where has the year gone again? With Christmas just around the corner, it has become something of a tradition at this time of year for me to recommend some books that I think are perfect for the festive season and for the long, cold months ahead. I hope you enjoy my selections. I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you in 2026!



***The Twelve Days of Christmas* by Susan Stokes-Chapman** This delightful collection of short stories, set in the fictional town of Merrywake during the Regency era, is the perfect companion for those cosy festive days. Consisting of twelve separate (yet cleverly linked) tales, each of which is based upon a verse in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' song, this is whimsical and heartwarming in equal measure. The descriptions leap forth from the pages; you can practically smell the cinnamon and pine in the air and feel the crisp white snow beneath your feet. If this book does not get you into the spirit of Christmas, nothing will. However, whilst it is a magical, feel-good read, it also does not shy away from depicting some of the harsher sides of life in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, which adds a sprinkling of grit to proceedings. All in all, this is a sumptuous treat of a book. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

***Rainforest* by Michelle Paver** I do like a good ghost story at this time of year, and the excellent Michelle Paver makes a long overdue return to my book nook with her latest offering, a deliciously creepy psychological tale set in the jungles of South America. Protagonist Simon Corbett joins an archaeological dig to the rainforest in a bid to escape his troubled past in England, but the jungle soon proves not to be the paradise he hoped and expected it to be. He cannot shake the feeling he is being watched, but is he? And if he is, by whom? Or should that be by what? As if that were not enough, the secrets of his past are fast catching up with him. As in all her earlier books, Paver gradually builds up the tension and sense of dread and before you know where you are, you are well and truly caught up in its web. Whilst not as chilling as *Dark Matter* and *Thin Air*, which are two of the scariest books I have ever read, this is still a genuinely unsettling and unnerving read, and one that is best enjoyed whilst snuggled up under a blanket on a cold, dark night. Just make sure to leave a light on...

***The Witching Hour* by various authors** If the above recommendations have whetted your appetite for all things Susan Stokes-Chapman and Michelle Paver, you will be pleased to hear that they both feature in this collection of thirteen original spooky tales which breathe new life into the age-old superstition of the witching hour. It follows the previously published *The Haunting Season* and *The Winter Spirits*, and I am pleased to say it is just as enjoyable as its predecessors. I did prefer some of the stories to others, it is only natural with a collection such as this, but do not let that put you off as all of them are good in their own way, and there is not really a weak link amongst them. Not only is this a terrific book to read during the winter months, it would also make a great Christmas present for any horror or ghost story fans as well.

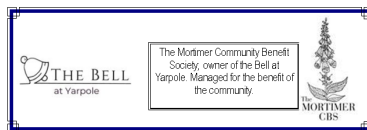
Lisa North

## Christmas & New Year at The Bell

Our Christmas menu is available to view on The Bell website. On Friday, 5 December and Friday, 12

December the menu is available to all comers. We

hope that many of you will choose to have a pre-Christmas celebration with us. Why not meet up with friends? Group bookings are available during December.



Downton Abbey is coming to The Bell for a Gala New Years Eve celebration! Are you Upstairs material or Downstairs? A special 3-course menu will be available, at a cost of £39.50 per person, for those of you who belong upstairs and relish the opportunity to dress up for the occasion. As is usual upstairs, sitting will be between 7.00 pm and 8.00 pm. Diners will be asked to pre-choose their meal (menu is available to view on the website; see the post on the Homepage). Numbers are limited, so book early to avoid disappointment.

For those more comfortable downstairs, we will be serving a 'Servants Supper' from 8.30 pm in the Village Bar. This will consist of a hearty country casserole with dumplings, a jacket potato and warm crusty bread. For just £11.50 per person.

The dancing will be led by 'Run for Cover' who played recently at the Bell as well as for our Summer BBQ. The party will continue into the night...

There will also be a raffle draw on the night (1<sup>st</sup> prize will be a meal for 2 at the Bell). Profits will be shared between the MCBS and St Michael's Hospice. Tickets cost £1.00 each and are available at the bar.

Carols around the village and at The Bell on Wednesday, 18 December. Mulled wine will be served.

Our Theme Evenings are returning in the New Year on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month. There is a Chinese Buffet on Thursday, 22 January, served in 3 sittings at 6.00 pm, 7.00 pm & 8.00 pm. £17.50 per person.

Fish & Chips will be returning on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month. Eat in or takeaway.

## Christmas Closure

The Bell will close after lunch on Sunday, 21 December. The pub will re-open on Saturday evening, 27 December for drinks only and Sunday 28 December for normal lunch. It will then be closed until New Year's Eve when we will be open for Downton Abbey. After New Year's Eve the Bell will close.

We have a considerable amount of annual maintenance to carry out and will be putting out requests for help, which we hope people will respond to. The pub will open again in the New Year on Friday, 9 January for evening service.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

***Use local. Or Bye Bye Local.***



## YARPOLE PARISH GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

*Our mission: to provide the kind of practical assistance and support that a good neighbour would offer.*



**Yarpole Talk  
Community**

The Annual Big Quiz is back!  
**7 February 2026**

The Parish Hall, 7.00 pm, bring a picnic, teams of six, bar available,  
[robanna.morley@btinternet.com](mailto:robanna.morley@btinternet.com) to book

### 4Cs

New faces join us, old friends continue to show up every month and we're so happy that we have so much fun as well as COFFEE, CAKE, COMPANY and CHAT. All guaranteed to give you a lovely interlude each month. Forthcoming events include:

**Friday 12 December:** Make a Christmas table decoration, led by our Flower Ladies.

**Friday 23 January:** The Deer Man, Patrick Faulkner, shares his local knowledge of deer species which are closer than you may think!

**Friday 27 February:** Clare Powell from Leominster Dementia Support Group shares her insights regarding something which touches us all at some time.

**Friday 27 March:** Crafting activities with our local crafting group. Learn a new skill.

Need a lift? Phone Val on 01568 780807 or Avis, on 01568 780874, in advance.

### MIOLI

This very popular activity, in 6-week terms, offers fitness at your own pace and ability in a friendly and fun atmosphere, with tea, coffee and biscuits when you've cooled down. Come on, chaps! We've got plenty of ladies, and some men, but you'll be in good company, with lots of laughter and music. Couldn't be easier!

£30 for 6 sessions, led by our favourite, Kath. Something new every session.

Mondays and Tuesdays 11.00 in the Parish Hall.

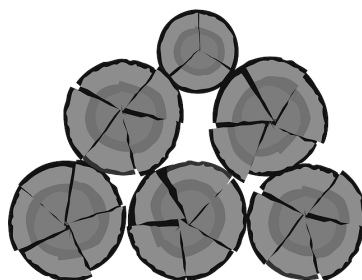


Thanks to Val for this photo of  
MIOLI Halloween antics!

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## Stone Soup

On 28 October ODGC welcomed back Kevin Alviti. No stranger to the club Kevin lives on a five-acre smallholding with his wife and three children. He has fifty-two vegetable beds, an orchard and coppice and keeps chickens and bees. He is a carpenter and craftsman, a scoutmaster and contributes articles to woodworking magazines as well as giving gardening talks.

Following time-honoured tradition Kevin began with 'Once upon a time...' recounting the story of an old man who, arriving in a village at nightfall, told the locals that he was going to make stone soup for supper. Drawing a silk purse from his pocket he slipped a stone from it into a pan of boiling water. Intrigued, the villagers gathered round and each was gently persuaded to contribute an ingredient to add to the pot thus creating a delicious soup. The moral being that the magic ingredient was not the stone but the communal effort and variety of ingredients.

Modern diet is largely derived from thirty or so ingredients available in supermarkets. Kevin showed us that we can make tasty and nutritious meals from plants from our own gardens which otherwise would be composted. He makes a delicious soup from young nettle leaves in spring and stock from the pods of broad beans and peas. Broad bean tops are steamed and served with butter.

Butter makes ingredients go a long way and is good with wild garlic. Kevin makes a tasty supper from tomato leaf pesto, crushed garlic, olive oil, cider vinegar, toasted salted peanuts and crispy bacon served with pasta. Pea tendrils and leaves are good in salads. Soup can be made from the leaves, growing tips and blossoms of squash cooked with garlic, basil, mushrooms and crispy pork fat.

Elderflower blossoms coated in a light tempura batter and cooked in butter make a delicious pudding dredged with icing sugar. The early leaves of blackcurrants are used to make cordial, and herbal teas can be made from the leaves of Sweet Cicely, nettle and mint. Haws are stewed then sieved and mixed with an equal quantity of apples to make a fruit leather. Windfall apples are cooked to provide pectin and unripe plums are combined with sugar to make *cheong*, a Korean fruit syrup.

Adding the proviso that correct plant identification is crucial, Kevin demonstrated that with a little ingenuity, instead of a stone, tasty and unusual meals can be made to enliven the modern diet.

*Ghislaine Arundale*

There will be no talk during December. Club members who have booked are looking forward to their annual Christmas meal at The Riverside, Aymestrey on 9 December. Details of the 2026 programme will be posted on our website in due course.

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

# THE CURIOUS GARDENER

## Bringing the garden inside

'Bring your garden inside' is a marketing phrase often used by people selling conservatories. It's supposed to conjure up a brightly-lit 'garden room', a place where you feel as if you're outside while enjoying protection from the weather. A few years ago we brought our garden inside without intending to, and not in quite such a romantic way.

The room where I practise my music has a door leading to the garden. On sunny days I like to have the door open: it makes me feel better while I'm stumbling through my scales and murdering my arpeggios. One very hot day I left the door open until evening to help let some air into the house. What I didn't realise was that I was letting something else in as well, a visitor whose silent entry I hadn't noticed, but who was going to make a big impression on the room.

At the end of the day I shut the door, and the following morning we went away for the weekend. When we got home, I went into my practice room and was hit by an indescribable stink: strong, horribly unpleasant, like nothing I'd ever smelt before. I searched around and saw that the piles of music on the bottom shelf of my bookcase were smeared with something black. And then my eye was caught by some movement. Peeking out from behind the piano was a pair of glittering eyes. A hedgehog had come in while the door was open and had spent the weekend exploring the room and defecating generously on every surface.

We caught the little fellow and released it into the garden. I did my best to clean up the music, though some had to be thrown away because it really was beyond rescue. But the smell behind the piano was a different problem. It's a very tall, very heavy instrument and no matter how we heaved and grunted we couldn't move it. I just had to grit my teeth and wait for the stink to subside, which it eventually did.

Last month, though, we had the builders in. They needed to move the piano, and their superior strength and know-how succeeded in shifting it. There, where the piano had stood, was the evidence of the hedgehog's visit. Large dark patches, dry now after all this time but still treacly-looking, disfigured the carpet all along the wall. Now was my chance to clear up the mess. I got a bucket of soapy water, some carpet-cleaning spray and various sponges and cloths and set to work. Big mistake.

I sprayed, sponged, dampened, blotted, but all to no avail. The hedgehog outflow had bonded itself to the carpet so thoroughly that no matter what I did I couldn't shift it. But what I managed to do was to resurrect the smell. The moment that the stains became damp they released that awful pong, as if the hedgehog had only passed that way that morning instead of ten years ago. There was nothing to be done but put the piano back and wait for the whiff to dissipate again.

Sometimes the garden is best left outside.



Sue Russell



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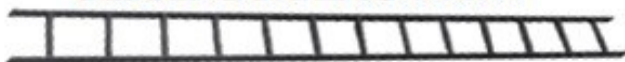
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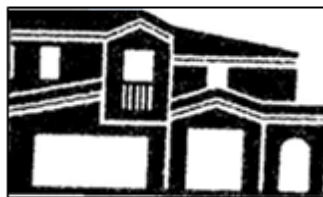
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## Shropshire Sheep in Yarpole

If you walk the Yarpole loop of the Mortimer Trail, at some point you will pass through the sloping paddock near to the bank at the bottom of the village. In this, or the adjacent paddock, are from time to time 16 pure Shropshire Ewes, part of the



biggest flock of this rare breed in the country, albeit still a modest number. At the time of writing these lovely ladies are running with a very handsome tup so their owner is hoping for lambs in the spring. This old breed is also called the Shropshire Down and was considered a breed suitable for small farms, and smallholders, being easy to manage, tough, and suitable for all types of pasture. They were not prone to foot rot or scab and produced wool of a superior quality.

They were developed in the middle part of the C19<sup>th</sup> by crossing the indigenous border sheep of Shropshire and Staffordshire with other breeds notably the Leicester and Southdown. Today's Shropshire sheep is a medium-size hornless sheep, docile in nature, with a black face, white fleece and black legs.

The Royal Agricultural Society of England organised a show in Shrewsbury in 1845, and here several local rams were shown for the first time, attracting much interest. Again in 1884 in Shrewsbury, 875 Shropshires were exhibited from 15 counties showing the increasing popularity of this new breed. Overseas trade increased and between 1880 and 1900, 253 registered rams left Britain to all continents, but mainly Australia, New Zealand and America.

The fortunes of the Shropshire Down were affected by war, disease and the changing requirements of the domestic market during the early 1900s. An outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 1922 stopped exports of all livestock as did continuing outbreaks through the 1930s. The registration of rams for use at home declined rapidly. The members of the Flock Breed Society worked hard to promote the breed but by 1973 this once highly-regarded and successful breed was found in only seven British flocks with 402 breeding ewes. With the help of the Rare Breed Trust late 1970 saw an increase in numbers. By 1993 there were 1844 registered breeding ewes in 78 flocks. Now the breed is having a small resurgence in popularity being crossed with other breeds and is a popular choice to graze plantations of Christmas trees and other conifers as it does not eat the bark off the trees and removes the need for chemical control of grass and weeds between the trees.

So say hello to these lovely sheep as you pass through the fields, but please keep all dogs on leads. The sheep will look up, ignore you and go on grazing. A traditional breed with an interesting history minding their own business.

Carol Clare



Thanks to Louise Hodgetts (Rainbow), Di Hill (Halloween), Keith Smith (Walled Garden, Croft)



# Croft with Yarpole and Lucton

## Parish Church Services for December 2025 and January 2026



| Date                 | Service                              | Church  | Time  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| <b>December 2025</b> |                                      |         |       |
| Wednesday 3 Dec      | Be Still                             | Yarpole | 17:30 |
| Sunday 7 Dec         | Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer | Croft   | 9:30  |
| Monday 8 Dec         | Café Church                          | Yarpole | 19:30 |
| Sunday 14 Dec        | Holy Communion Common Worship        | Yarpole | 9:30  |
|                      | 9 lessons and carols                 | Croft   | 15:00 |
| Sunday 21 Dec        | Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer | Yarpole | 8:30  |
| Monday 22 Dec        | Café Church                          | Yarpole | 19:30 |
| Thursday 25 Dec      | Christmas Day                        | Yarpole | 9:30  |
| Sunday 28 Dec        | Non-Liturgical service               | Yarpole | 9:30  |
| <b>January 2026</b>  |                                      |         |       |
| Sunday 4 Jan         | Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer | Croft   | 9:30  |
| Wednesday 7 Jan      | Be Still                             | Yarpole | 17:30 |
| Sunday 11 Jan        | Holy Communion Common Worship        | Yarpole | 9:30  |
| Monday 12 Jan        | Café Church                          | Yarpole | 19:30 |
| Sunday 18 Jan        | Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer | Yarpole | 08:30 |
|                      | Celtic Worship                       | Yarpole | 15:00 |
| Sunday 25 Jan        | Lay-led Service                      | Yarpole | 9:30  |
| Monday 26 Jan        | Café Church                          | Yarpole | 19:30 |

Anyone wishing to contact a priest, please phone or email:

Rev. Matthew Burns on 01568 614399, [teamvicarwest@jeominsterteam.org.uk](mailto:teamvicarwest@jeominsterteam.org.uk)

To book a funeral, interment, wedding or baptism and for other information please phone:

Priory Office 01568 612124, Monday to Friday 9.30 – 1.00

Churchwardens: Jane Higgins (01568 708390) Anna Morley (01568 780321)



Thanks to Keith Smith and Lesley Bradford for the photos on this page.