

Westcott Village

Magazine

November 2025



The poster features a festive design with a red border. At the top, there are pine branches with red berries and hanging red Christmas ornaments. The word "WEST" is in large red capital letters, and "festivity" is in a green cursive font. A yellow star with the text "FREE ENTRY!" is on the left, and a red bow is in the center. The year "2025" is in yellow with starbursts. Below this, the text "Westcott Christmas Fair" is in red, and "Sat 15 November" is in green. A central illustration shows a cartoon elf, a snowman, and a child in a sleigh. At the bottom, the text "10am - 3pm" is in red, and "Village Hall & Church" is in green. A small credit in the bottom right corner reads "Cover Design by Saskia Age 10".

WEST *festivity*

FREE ENTRY!

2025

Westcott Christmas Fair

Sat 15 November

10am - 3pm

Village Hall & Church

Cover Design
by Saskia
Age 10

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Westcott has a population of over 2,000 and this is the only magazine written specifically for the Westcott area by the people of Westcott. It is hand delivered, free of charge, to every household and further copies are available at the church, local shops, pub and doctor's surgery.



If you have any articles, photos, letters, etc that you think we may like to feature in the next issue, please email the Editor on:

editor@westcottmag.com

But please note, publication will always be subject to space and at the discretion of the Editor.

Copy deadline for

December issue:

8th November 2025

This magazine, published by the Church in Westcott, is printed on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) accredited paper from a sustainable source. The views expressed are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Church, Editor or Westcott residents.

FROM THE EDITOR



It's looking extremely autumnal as I write this, and there are some photos on pages 31 and 33 to prove it!

The Hub has some events on at the moment, if you get this magazine before the end of October there is a crafting session on 30th and a Halloween evening on Friday 31st October, all details on page 32.

The Draft Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan will be showcased at various places this month, see page 37 for details and complete the feedback form to give your views.

CorefitPhysio are hosting a Bake Off Competition on 20th November for World Children's Day, with all proceeds to Surrey Hills School, do get your cake tins out and have a go, see page 43.

Westfestivity is on Saturday 15th at the village hall and up at Holy Trinity, so pop along and stock up on presents and other Christmassy items. Please see page 21 for ways in which you can contribute and more details.

I hope you miss most of the bugs that seem to be doing the rounds, and if not, that you manage to get over it as quickly as possible!

Cath
editor@westcottmag.com

Thank You!



The magazine team would like to say a big Thank You to all our Advertisers for supporting us as a village magazine. If any readers need a trade or service in order to complete a job, please do look in here first and give someone local a try!

...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



LIVING YOUR (BEST?) LIFE

One of the phrases that slightly irks me currently is the questions as to whether someone is 'living your best life.' I know it is well intended – we all get one life, and we should reflect on whether we are making the best use of the tie given to us – but can you hear the haunting pressure which lies behind the question? Are you living your best life – your one shot at true happiness – the only life which will truly fulfil you? An idea which is turbocharged by Instagram and TikTok for some, or a desire to keep up with the Joneses for others.

**"I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO
BREAK IT TO ANYONE WHO
BELIEVES OTHERWISE, BUT LIFE
DOES NOT ALWAYS GO AS
PLANNED."**



To live life with this sort of self-absorbed pressure hanging over you is a surefire way of finding disappointment. I hate to be the one to break it to anyone who believes otherwise, but life does not always go as planned. In fact, most/all of us are living lives which are not what we thought our 'best life' would be.

A group of us recently returned from the Westcott Church Weekend Away (it was excellent thanks for asking). Along with marvellous grub we had a couple of insightful talks from our guest speakers.

In one of them we heard about the story of Daniel – he of Lion's Den fame. Daniel is a fascinating character because we learn right at the start of his story that his life has not gone to plan. Daniel, well-educated and of a priestly class, was probably lined up for

a successful career in God's temple in Jerusalem, but then disaster strikes. His land is overtaken, his culture is lost, and he is forced into exile in a foreign land. He is not living his best life, and yet... Daniel's life in exile is marked by a willingness to trust God and to live fully and intentionally in the place and situations he finds himself in.

...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



He serves his foreign rulers with distinction, gains a reputation for administrative competence and integrity, and yet never compromises on what he believes to be morally right as he seeks to be faithful to God. Daniel never gets anywhere near to living some imagined ideal of his best life – but he does live his life to the full. There is an important distinction between the two. Jesus never says, 'I have come that people may be comfortable, content and self-fulfilled,' but he does say that 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10.10). Fullness comes not from living an imagined ideal, but by being fully present in the here and now – a fully alive human being made in the image of God!

November is often the month when we set aside time to remember as the winter evenings close in. We remember the ways in which life often does not entirely go to plan and reflect on how we are to live in response. Whether you join us to remember a loved one who is no longer with us at our service of remembering, or on Remembrance Sunday as we recall the horror of war and the price paid by those who went before us which paved the way to the freedoms we now enjoy, church is a space to reflect on what it means to live life as you find it – and to learn to live it to the full.

Every Blessing
Tim

SUNDAY SERVICES AT HOLY TRINITY



8.30am Book of Common Prayer Communion, A warm welcome in our beautiful, traditional service.

10.15am Friendly, relaxed service, using Common Worship and a range of music styles. This service is also livestreamed on Zoom.



For 10:15am Zoom service connection, please scan this QR code, or visit the Online Services page of thechurchinwestcott.org.uk and follow the link.

The church is open every day, 9am-4pm for private prayer & reflection

DATE	THEME	8:30AM	10:15AM
2nd Nov	TBC	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
9th Nov	Remembrance	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Remembrance
16th Nov	Safeguarding Sunday	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
23rd Nov	TBC	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
30th Nov	Advent 1	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Forest Church

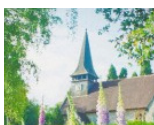


MARKING LIFE EVENTS

All who live in Westcott or have a connection here are very welcome to have christenings, funerals, weddings in Holy Trinity. Contact vicar@holytrinitywestcott.org.uk for more information.

MIDWEEK PRAYER & WORSHIP

Wednesdays	10am	Communion at St John's
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Service of Remembering

Sunday 2nd November, 5:00pm
Holy Trinity Church, Westcott

Join us for an opportunity to remember those you love but see no longer,
whether the loss is recent or long ago. All welcome.

THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT

The Church in Westcott is part of the Westcott Good Neighbour Scheme and we are always here for a chat, prayer, pastoral need.

Debt advice: Paul Stacey (paulstacey88@gmail.com)

Holy Trinity Pastoral Assistants: Mark Shakespeare (01306 888010), Ali Mabley (alimabley.htw@gmail.com)

For help, or more information, please contact
Tim Armstrong, Vicar: vicar@holyltrinitywestcott.org.uk

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Marriage:

20th September 2025

William Matthew Cormack and
Jessica Alice Kennedy Palmer



FLOODLIGHTING

Many thanks to Carol Smetham, who has sponsored the church floodlighting for November: In Loving Memory of Basil Smetham, from all the Family.

If you would like to sponsor the floodlighting, please contact Sarah Massey at admin@holyltrinitywestcott.org.uk. (Suggested donation of £75 to Westcott Church Funds.)

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SURREY HILLS ALL SAINTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Forest School



Our sunflowers are now taller than most of the children!! A big THANK YOU to FASH for providing new watering cans and trowels to help us tend the plants as well as new materials for den building.



The children harvested our potatoes at Forest School and Dawn (the legend that she is!) has produced these for the children!



Year 3

Year 3 had an exciting opportunity last half term! They have been loving our latest class book of *An alien in the Jam factory* so as a reward they had a virtual interview with the author Chrissie Sains herself. Hedgehogs were extremely excited to be able to see a real author and ask her all of their interesting questions. They loved hearing about the thought processes behind Chrissie's ideas and even got to see a sneak peak of her new book coming out in a few months



time! It was a real pleasure to see how inspired they were by her.

Rocket Launch Workshop

Year 3 & 4 enjoyed their rocket launch science workshop. They loved making their own rockets, thinking how to





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SURREY HILLS ALL SAINTS SCHOOL (cont.)



make objects move with balloons and watching various rocket launches happen.

"I enjoyed it because he

set off a real rocket and it went more than 100ft into the air which was really cool!" Ben

"You make your rocket fly by blowing air powerfully into the straw which propels the rocket upwards into the air!" Keavy

**Mrs Kathryn
Saundersen
Acting
Headteacher**



Tuesday 11 November 2025

"O For the Wings of a Dove" - The Life of a Cathedral Chorister Roger Askew

Drawing on his own experience as a chorister in Wells Cathedral, lecturer Roger Askew gives an insight into the life of a cathedral chorister. As he says, "Our rich cathedral choral tradition is unique." The lecture will explore the development of the tradition from medieval times to the present. It will be illustrated with examples of some of the outstanding choirs of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The lecture will be held at 10.30 in Martineau Hall. Coffee is available from 9:30am. Visitors are welcome for a fee of £7.50 but contact Linda Packham on 07960 995707 (email - ljpackman@gmail.com) to book. For more information and details of the [forthcoming programme](http://www.theartsocietydorking.org.uk), visit www.theartsocietydorking.org.uk

Roger was a chorister at Wells Cathedral School and a choral scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford. He combined a teaching career with professional singing in London, and then became Director of Music at Daniel Stewart's and Melville College in Edinburgh. He is President Emeritus of The Stoke Poges Society.





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WESTCOTT GARDENERS' CLUB

Autumn Show - 13th September



The club held their annual Autumn Show in the Reading Room on the Saturday and after the difficult growing conditions this year, we were pleasantly surprised at the large number of exhibits. The number of entries were back to pre-covid times and the exhibits presented were of a

good standard and all participants should be proud of their efforts.

The winner of the Banksian Medal for the highest number of points in Horticultural classes in the Summer and Autumn shows was Jeff Jones and the winner of the Club Challenge Cup, for the highest number of points in the Show, was Kay Meldrum. The best exhibit was won by Kay Meldrum for her Dahlia.

The winners of the various classes were:

Club Dahlia Cup - Jeff Jones, Hapgood Cup - Kay Meldrum, Garden News Shield - Jeff Jones, Irene Lannon Cup - Sheena Salmon, Club Challenge Cup - Janice Carter, Chance Cup - Angela Deloford, F Tupper Cup - Kay Meldrum, Bax Cup - Angela Deloford, Meldrum Quaich - Angela Deloford, Robinson Salver - Jeff Jones, Bennett Cup - William Deloford, Webster Cup - Suellen Peskett, Mike Flower Autumn Novice Cup - Lutfu Hood

Rosette for Best in Section

Flower Arranging - Pat Greenaway, Roses - Janice Carter, Flowers - Kay Meldrum, Dahlias - Kay Meldrum, Chrysanthemum - Kay Meldrum, Vegetables - Andrew Gordon, Pot Plants - Sheena Salmon, Home Produce - Sue Farman, Children - Leo Burse, Fruit - Sarah Massey, Handicraft - Jo Smewing

Alistair Meldrum





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The full moon in November is a supermoon, the second in a consecutive row of three, in October, November and December 2025, and will occur on 5th November. It is known as the Beaver Moon.



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Dorking Local History Group

The DLHG continues its popular programme of both live and Zoom talks on a fascinating range of topics. These are free to members, but non-members are welcome. Upcoming dates include:

- **The Battle of Rorke's Drift (Zulu War 1879) and the Dorking connection:** Live talk by Ian Castle: the famous engagement with dogged determination shown by the defenders in the face of overwhelming odds – the subject of the 1964 film 'Zulu'. Amongst the heroes was Colour Sergeant Frank Bourne, one of very few survivors, who later led a quiet life in Dorking until his death 80 years ago: Monday 3rd November at Crossways Community Baptist Church, Junction Road, Dorking RH4 3HB, 7.15 for 7.30pm, £2 at the door for non-members.

- **Clandon and the Onslows:** Zoom talk by Martin Ellis of Surrey National Trust. The Onslow family bought Clandon Park in 1641. Three members of the family were Speakers in the House of Commons and more recently, Sir Cranley Onslow was chair of the 1922 Committee. Sadly Clandon Park House, an early 18th-century grade I listed Palladian mansion, was gutted by fire in 2015. Monday 17th November 7.30pm, <https://www.meet-up.com/Surrey-History-Meetup/>.

For further details of talks and other activities – or to join DLHG – go to <https://dlhg.org.uk>



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Owls, hooting and a hunting

As the nights draw in, Tawny Owls call out to claim their patch. Around now, younger owls are noisily making themselves known, hoping to muscle in and set up their own territory. But if other owls are close by, there's often a standoff



Short Eared Owl: Image courtesy RSPB images

in the darkness, it's hoots before dawn. Listen out as the rival calls reverberate through the woodlands, mature parks and gardens throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The famous 'too-wit, too-woo' is actually a duet – the female making a 'toot-wit' (or more like a 'kerweeek') first note and the male answering with a long, drawn-out "too wooooooo".

There are Short-eared Owls in the UK all year round, but now is a great time to see them as more join us from Scandinavia, Russia and Iceland to escape the freezing conditions further north. In winter the best places to spot them are during the day at our wetlands and coastal marshes, flying low over the landscape on the hunt for rodents. You often see more than one owl surveying the same area, slowly and silently scanning the long grass or marsh, ready to swoop down at deadly speed to catch their supper.

See more on our activities and photos or if you're interested in joining below
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Instagram: @rspb_dorking
Website: <https://group.rspb.org.uk/dorkinganddistrict/>

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WEST festivity
2025

Westcott Christmas Fair

Free entry! **Sat 15 Nov**
10am - 3pm
Village Hall & Church



WEST festivity
2025

Join us for...

- 30 Independent local makers
- Rock choir 11am
- Village Hall Cafe
- Tea & homemade cake
- Treasure hunt
- Local hot spiced gin
- Mulled wine & mince pies
- ...and loads of Christmas Spirit!

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Thank you from F@SH Surrey Hills School & Westcott Village Association



WEST festivity

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Becky & Charlie, with baby Ezra & big sister Eliya ❤️

WESTCOTT BABY MEALS



NOVEMBER UPDATE

The cooks were called upon again in September to cook for the family of Baby Ezra. Becky & Charlie (and big sister Eliya) were very grateful not to have to worry about making dinner for a couple of weeks while they adjusted to Ezra's arrival. Thank you cooks!

CAN WE HELP YOU?



The Westcott Baby Meals service has been operating over 25 years. It's an incredible community initiative. We are delighted to help Westcott families with new babies, AND happy to help in other situations like illness or family crisis, where a few home cooked meals might make a big difference. Our fabulous Westcott Cooks buy, cook and deliver meals (for free!) when they are needed.

We also need more cooks, could you join the list? There's no commitment - just sign up to rotas as and when you can. It's a great thing to be part of!

Get in touch: Anna 07710425487
annakemkers@hotmail.co.uk

Community Fridge

Westcott
Village



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- Westcott Village Hub, We 12-4, Th 10-4, Fr-10-7, Sa-10-2.

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Holmbury St Mary Choral Society

WESTCOTT HISTORY GROUP

Murder on Westcott Heath August 1901

On a peaceful Sunday morning in August 1901 Mr Alfred Heaver was walking across Westcott Heath accompanied by his wife, making his way to Holy Trinity Church at about 11 o'clock from his house, Holcombe Cottage (now comprising Pippacre, Middle House and Menawathen) when he was shot in the back by an assailant. They were making their way towards the church when a man leapt out of the bushes. He had a revolver in his hand, a shot was fired and Mr Heaver fell. The would-be murderer, not content with his dastardly act, approached the wounded man, levelled the revolver close to Mr Heaver's head and emptied the contents of the second chamber as he lay prostrate on the ground.

The terrible tragedy had been witnessed by a garden lad named Arthur Grace, who ran down the hill and informed Mr Dixon who was making his way to the church. He then proceeded to summon Dr Royston Fairbank from the village. The noise of the shooting had also attracted others to the spot. The first to arrive was William Burrell and as he approached the prostrate Mr Heaver he saw the stranger running up the hill. He set off in pursuit but before he could overtake him, the man shot himself. This culminating act of tragedy took place about forty yards from where Mr Heaver lay. Meanwhile others had arrived and gave Mr Heaver what relief it was possible to render. Two members of the

Imperial Yeomanry carried him back to Holcombe Cottage. There was not much to denote the extent of his injuries except for a streak of blood which flowed from the back of his head, but Mr Heaver was clearly in a most serious condition. Mr Heaver was a successful business man and was engaged in large building operations in Balham.

Until some time later the assailant remained where he had fallen, bleeding from the large wound in his head while his breathing indicated his end would not be long delayed. The man was taken in Mr Dixon's cart to an outhouse at the Crown Inn where he died at one o'clock. In the black bag the man carried were letters and papers which established his identity as James Young of Battersea, and Mr Heaver's brother-in-law. He was shabbily dressed in blue serge trousers, a black cloth coat and a bowler hat. He had been seen earlier coming over Milton Heath from the direction of Dorking so it is possible that he had come down by train.

The inquest on James Young was held at the Crown Inn. Ernest Young, a painter and decorator who lived at Clapham, identified the body as that of his father who was about 63 years of age. In response to questioning from the coroner, he said that his father was separated from his mother. He was not aware that his father had a revolver but knew that twelve years previously he had been charged with shooting a



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man who had seduced his sister, but added that he had been acquitted when the trial took place at the Old Bailey. There had been animosity between his father and Mr Heaver because of financial assistance Mr Heaver had provided to his mother and sister. In addition to evidence from Arthur Grace, Joseph Hall (a miller), said that he saw Mr and Mrs Heaver coming from their house to the church and when he heard screaming he hurried to the scene, where he saw the deceased raise a revolver to his head and shoot himself. There were others who reached the scene of the crime and saw the assailant running away before shooting himself.

The items in the bag found on the deceased included 4s 9d in money and a large number of library tickets from the City of London and Battersea Free Libraries. The coroner observed that the books which he favoured were of a high character and not at all '*in the nature of penny horribles and trashy nature*'. It was evident that the act was premeditated as the bag also held a revolver, cocked with four chambers loaded and a fearful looking butcher's knife. It was quite new and had been ground to a point and sharpened. The coroner noted that there were several letters in the bag signed by himself, including one to his wife. Dr Fairbank drew the jury's attention to the fact that the bullets of the cartridges used had been modified by boring a hole

in the apex to make them spread when fired and make a much more serious wound. Following the coroner's summing up the jury returned a verdict that the deceased had died from injuries inflicted by himself and that from the evidence he was suffering from hallucinations.

For the first few days, Mr Heaver, who retained consciousness throughout, made good progress but on the Wednesday he became weaker. Three eminent physicians from London attended and X-rays located the two bullets in his neck and back. On Thursday his condition became critical and late in the afternoon he passed away. A second inquest was held at the Reading Room and the coroner's jury heard similar evidence to that given a few days before but with more detail about the relationship between the two men. The jury unanimously reached a verdict of wilful murder against James Young. A large number of village people were at the graveside. At the hour of the interment the shops in the village were closed and nearly all the private houses had their blinds drawn.

Alfred Heaver born 10th February 1841 and died 8th August 1901 aged 60 years.

The WLHG committee encourages members to propose subjects for talks and articles and indeed to give talks.

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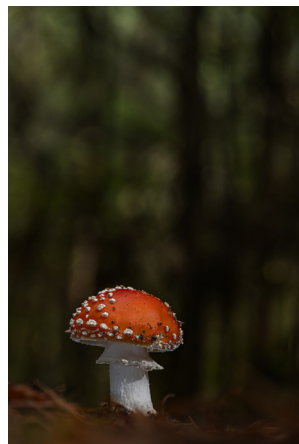


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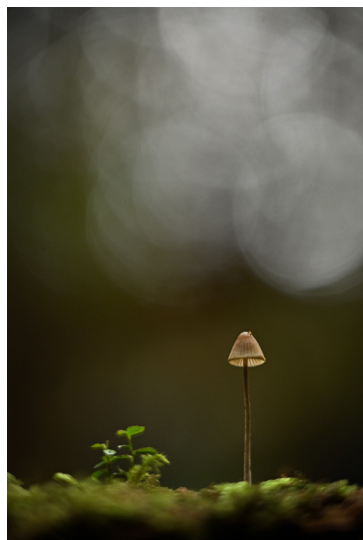
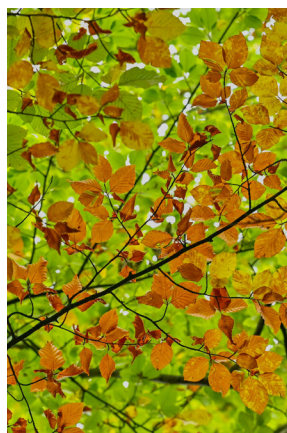
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These autumnal shots were taken by Fiona Humphrey, they are very atmospheric and I think the one at the bottom on the right looks like a watercolour painting! Please keep sending them in (or start sending them in if you haven't before) so we can all enjoy them.





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These 2 stunning pictures were sent in by Nick Jordan Moss, illustrating how lovely our surroundings can look in the hazy autumn sunshine. Hopefully these two pages have inspired you all to get out there and snap away!



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We have gone bonkers for conkers! We are very fortunate to have a few beautiful

horse chestnut trees to collect our fallen bounty from. Shiny, rough, teeny, humungous, perfectly round or wibbly wobbly they all make the cut. Can



you imagine the many things you can do with a conker? Well for starters we created a marvellous

masterpiece of artwork by rolling them in paint and onto a huge piece of paper. We then carefully crafted conker key rings to hang onto our backpacks. And just riffling through them with our hands and peering at them through magnifying glasses gave us tremendous joy. You should try it!

Another autumn glory is fallen leaves and the ever stunning colours that transform the landscape. Stomping through them with a careful amount of kicking is a wonderful past time (again another thing that will bring out your inner child!). You can also collect and crinkle them into leaf confetti which comes in handy when decorating a

(pretend) hedgehog or producing a fanciful autumnal wreath.

With the shift of season comes an opportunity to cook up some winter warmers to fill our tummies. We started the term with a classic delight of apple crumble – is there anything more heart warming? Followed closely by vegetable spider stew (no real spiders were harmed or eaten) and chose your own toppings ‘face’ pizza. Yes they really did look very much like us.



Our parents tell us they had a rip roaring time on the dance floor at the Abinger Hatch Barn Dance which raised vital funds for our nursery. The dancing was lead by the brilliant Lydia who heads up The Stage Studio in Reigate. Delicious fresh pizza was served by Matt and his team from Club Pizza who visit Albury Village Hall every Thursday from 4 until 8pm. Thanks a million to you all.

Just in case you weren't aware we have wraparound options from 7.45am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and until 12.45 Friday. If you have a child looking to start nursery please don't hesitate to get in touch as there are still spaces for this term. Please call 07842 978823 or email abingercommonnursery@gmail.com We can't wait to meet you!

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Publication of the **DRAFT** updated Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan



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The current village hall is likely to be redeveloped within the next 1-2 years, replacing it with a modern, flexible, sustainable community facility. We will give our users at least 6 months' notice of the anticipated closure date so that everyone will have enough time to secure a replacement venue during the building period.

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Westcott 100 Club

Our 40th quarterly draw was held at Holy Trinity church on 20 September after the Organ Celebration event. We are very grateful to our two organists, Charles Hellier and Benjamin Morrell, for drawing the winning numbers which are:

First prize (£ 111.25) 118 – Second prize (£ 55.63) 22

The 41st quarterly and 11th annual draws will be held in December. We still have plenty of space for new members and for existing members to subscribe to more numbers. Each number costs £25 per year (equivalent to less than 50p per week). If you would like to join in time for the December draw, we need to receive your subscription on 1st December. Joining is straightforward (it can all be done by email).

Since our first draws in December 2015, our generous members have enabled us to pay out over £9,000 in prizes and distribute grants of over £15,000 to good causes around the village including Holy Trinity Church, St John's Chapel, The Westcott Village Association (for the Christmas tree), Surrey Hills School, the Westcott Community Hub and the Westcott Village Hall. Thank you all!

For more information on joining the Westcott 100 Club or the process to apply for funds please email us at:

westcott.100.club@gmail.com

Alda Andreotti (Chair) – Edwin Harland (Treasurer) – Richard Packer (Secretary)

The Westcott 100 Club is a Small Society Lottery registered with Mole Valley DC no. 48965.

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HOT WATER BOTTLE SAFETY



Hot Water Bottle Safety

This is a tip from the NHS. For a cozy and safe autumn, the NHS and safety experts recommend checking your hot water bottle for age and damage. Before the first use in Autumn and to avoid burns and leaks from degraded rubber, follow these steps before you start using your hot water bottle for the season.



- Check the expiration date. Hot water bottles should be replaced every two years, even if they look fine.
- Find the “daisy wheel”. A date stamp, often shaped like a flower, is usually found on the neck or body of the bottle.
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 - The twelve segments represent the months. Filled segments indicate the month it was made.
- Inspect for wear and tear. Look for cracks, splits, discolouration, or brittle areas. Do not use the bottle if you notice any damage.
- Check for leaks. Fill the bottle with cool water, insert the stopper tightly, and turn it upside down to see if any water leaks out.
- In addition, never using boiling water, and always use a protective cover.

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Angela Gifford
Managing Director

DORKING MUSEUM

To the Last Man – the Dorking Home Guard:

The Museum's autumn exhibition tells the story of the men of Dorking and the villages who stepped forward to enlist in the 'People's Army' – later, the Home Guard – in 1940 to defend the nation. Five hundred men living in the town and immediate neighbourhood offered their services – many without any military experience, often in full-time work – and many also volunteered



for other home front organisations. The 7th (Dorking) Battalion, Surrey Home Guard was commanded by Major Geoffrey Lane (see left).

The Dorking area was clearly identified as being of key strategic importance – for an invading force, the route to London from the coast ran through the Mole Gap and the town was also the operational headquarters for the Southern Railway, responsible for transport of troops and supplies across the south of England. The Home Guard was called upon to establish strongholds, secure sites to ensure public safety and guard aircraft crash sites.



Home Guard drilling in civilian dress

Facing what looked like a hopeless situation, at the time, poorly armed and equipped and often having worked a full day, then staying alert, facing a very real threat and expecting to hold invaders at bay for a short time. They went from a poorly armed and equipped group of part-time volunteers to a trained fighting force protecting the local community and freeing up regular troops for front-line duty.



Home Guard at The Box Hill tunnel

The feared invasion never came, so their skills were never fully tested. The Dorking Battalion gave a public demonstration of weapons and defensive techniques on the Nower before being stood down at the

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DORKING MUSEUM (cont.)

end of 1944, having proved its value throughout the war.



Home Guard at a crash site near Ockley

The exhibition display includes uniforms, weaponry, medals, incident reports, photographs and other items of the period.

Museum Family Activities at Dorking Library: Classic Table-top Games!

Learn how to play some tabletop games your grandparents used to play with your family: Saturday 25th October, 10am-noon. '... and the Dish ran away with the Spoon' – Make a moving nursery rhyme character



using simple levers or split pins; make Humpty Dumpty fall off the wall, the mouse run up the clock or the cow jump over the moon: Saturday 15th November, 10am-noon. Spy School – WW2 gadgets, morse code messages, memory games and disguises. Make your own secret code converter: Saturday 22nd November, 10am-2pm. All free events, materials provided and children must be accompanied.

Get involved: The Museum depends on its enthusiastic team of volunteers to maintain this valuable community resource. Maybe you could spare a few hours a month, with opportunities in an interesting range of key roles with flexible working in the Museum, in the community or from home. Perhaps you could help maintain our collections, recruit and train volunteers, maintain our website, train as a guide on our walking tours, organise events, help with maintenance or be a Museum trustee. See dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities for further details.

Dorking Museum. Thursdays 1pm-4pm, Fridays and Saturdays 10am-4pm, free entry. www.dorkingmuseum.org.uk. 01306 876591.

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MUSIC IN DORKING



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2nd at 3.00, Glenn Miller Orchestra at Dorking Halls, £30, 01306 881717
5th at 7.15, ballet screening at Dorking Halls, 01306 881717
8th at 7.30, Dorking Philharmonia at St Martin's church, £15
9th at 2.00, ballet screening at Dorking Halls, 01306 881717
15th at 7.30, English Arts Chorale at Dorking Halls, £25-30, 01306 881717
16th at 7.00, Dorking Choral Society at St Martin's church, £18
22nd at 7.30, The Nutcracker at Dorking Halls, £30, 01306 881717
28th at 7.15, ballet screening at Dorking Halls, 01306 881717
30th at 2.00, ballet screening at Dorking Halls, 01306 881717
30th at 2.00 & 4.30, The Snowman at Dorking Halls, 01306 881717

There is a wide range of musical events in Dorking in November. The Dorking choral society is giving a concert whose centrepiece is Haydn's great *Nelson Mass*. Other items in the concert include Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* and choral pieces by Herbert Sumsion and the Latvian composer Peteris Vasks.

The Dorking Philharmonia, conducted by Paul Newbold, will play Haydn's *symphony number 103*, known as the *Drumroll Symphony* from its opening bars. The programme will also include Mendelssohn's first symphony – written when he was only 15 years old! – and Gluck's *Dances of the Furies and the Blessed Spirits*, from his opera *Orpheus and Euridice*.

The English Arts Chorale has a programme entitled *War and Peace*. They will sing Karl Jenkins' mass *The Armed Man – A Mass for Peace*, and Fauré's beautiful *Requiem*. The Chromatica Orchestra will play Mozart's *Haffner Serenade* and Bartók's atmospheric *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*. And the Glenn Miller Orchestra will also make an appearance at the Dorking Halls.

The Crown Ballet will perform Tchaikovsky's delightful *Nutcracker* ballet, always a seasonal favourite. There are also several screenings from the Royal Ballet at the Dorking Halls: *La Fille Mal Gardée* and *Cinderella* – both of them shown twice, in live and encore screenings. The Dorking Halls will also present a production of *The Snowman* with orchestra.

Ian Codd



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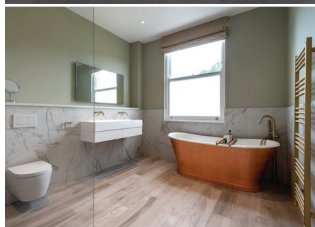
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GREEN WESTCOTT

Spiky Wanderers of the Night



Sporting around five to seven thousand dark brown spines made of keratin, with a lighter brown furry face and belly, *Erinaceus europaeus* – the hedgehog – holds a place dear in our hearts, despite their prickly appearance! These nocturnal creatures, measuring around 20-30cm in length, spend much of their lives alone, except during the mating season. Travelling up to a mile each night, they are a welcome visitor to the garden - being partial to eating slugs and snails, as well as caterpillars, beetles, worms, they are a great help with pest control! You will likely be able to hear them snuffling around in the garden, if they are present, as they hunt out insects, fruit, berries, fungi and maybe occasionally a small vertebrates, such as a frog.

May is mating season. This is the only time the male and female come together. The female will give birth to around 4-5 hoglets after a four-week gestation. She cares for the hoglets alone, leaving the nest to forage and returning to feed her young until they are old enough to accompany her, to learn for themselves. Mature females may mate for a second time during the year, but this can leave these later hoglets short on time to put on enough weight to see them through winter

hibernation.

During the colder winter months from November to March hedgehogs hibernate in nests made from leaves and grass to conserve energy, often under hedges, sheds or in brushwood piles. As November is bonfire season, please do check bonfires for hedgehogs and other creatures before lighting! It is preferable to relocate piles for burning to a fresh bonfire site.



Symbol of protection and resourcefulness

A clever trait is the ability to roll up into a tight ball of protective spikes, to defend themselves from danger. Many cultures therefore have seen hedgehogs as symbolizing protection, with their ball of spikes warding off danger and demonstrating the power of setting physical and emotional boundaries to protect oneself when feeling threatened.

Hedgehogs are also seen as a symbol of resourcefulness. They have adapted to live in urban settings and are now more common in urban than rural areas. Hedgehogs are opportunistic feeders with a varied diet and their heightened sense of sound and smell is well adapted to nocturnal foraging.

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GREEN WESTCOTT (cont.)

Feeding after dark means that they largely avoid human contact. Hedgehogs play a valuable role in ecosystems, through their insect control, their foraging behaviour which helps aerate soil and through contributing to biodiversity through seed dispersal via droppings and carrying them on their spines.

Yet, once a common sight, the British wild hedgehog, is now classed as 'vulnerable' to extinction in the UK. In the 1950s there were over 30 million of these endearing mammals in Britain, yet today they number fewer than 900,000. Populations in urban areas have declined by a third since 2000 and, even more alarmingly, in rural areas by a half.

Reasons for decline

As their name would suggest, hedgerows can provide a particularly favourable habitat for hedgehogs. Disastrously for hedgehogs, modern agricultural practices, which favour monocultures and use of huge machinery, have led to the loss of 50% of British hedgerows over the past

75 years. Additionally, industrialised agriculture frequently relies on repeated widespread applications of insecticides and herbicides on crop fields which has led to the degradation of soils and waters, destroying wildlife habitat and compromising nature's ability to support abundant life throughout the seasons.

Overly manicured parks and tidy, fenced gardens also represent a hostile environment for wildlife and our spiny friends, diminishing food sources, giving little opportunity for safe shelter and hindering their ability to move about to look for food and a mate. Although questions have been raised about the role of predation by other animals, such as badgers, this is not seen as a significant factor in hedgehog decline. These animals have co-existed for millennia, it is only now when human land management practices are having a detrimental impact on natural resources and a diminishing supply of common prey that threatens their natural balance.

Our changing climate poses further risks to hedgehogs. This year's hot, dry summer made it harder for them to dig for worms and other insects in the hard, compacted soil, with the lack of puddles to drink from, leading to the risk of dehydration. The severe decline in hedgehog populations has led to the UK's first National Hedgehog Conservation Strategy being published





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GREEN WESTCOTT (cont.)

at the start of 2025. This identifies the main threats to hedgehogs and suggests strategies of how to reduce them. After habitat loss and road collisions, unintended consequences from human intervention is listed as the number three threat. Well intentioned human actions to 'help' hedgehogs, can unwittingly cause harm.

Ways to help

Overall, the very best way that we can help hedgehogs is to stop harmful practices and to work with nature to re-create native habitats which support insects, their natural food sources and provide shelter.

- Don't use slug pellets – these can poison hedgehogs too
- Don't use pesticides or harmful chemicals in your garden
- Encourage a plentiful supply of the hedgehog's natural food by creating micro-habitats that are perfect for invertebrates: stick piles; mounds of fallen leaves; compost heaps; and areas of long grass
- Create a pile with hawthorn twigs and deciduous leaves, particularly apple and cherry, suitable for hibernation
- In dry weather place a shallow saucer



of water on the ground to provide a drink. If you have a pond

ensure that there is a shallow slope or plank to access as means of escape

We can also help hedgehogs with their nighttime wanderings by creating 'Hedgehog Highways'. This involves making a small opening – a 13cm x 13cm square is sufficient – in fence or by digging out a small tunnel underneath a wall or fence, lines to allow passage between gardens and beyond. Or, even better... replace fences with a native hedgerow! It is also helpful for building up a picture of hedgehog populations to log sightings. At present there are few hedgehog sightings logged in our area, so if you do see one please log it via one of the websites listed below. Or, if you prefer, let us know and we'll log it for you: info@greenwestcott.org.

If anyone reading this has an interest or knowledge to share on hedgehogs (or other species) and would like to get involved with specific projects please do get in touch. We are hoping to host a series of wildlife habitat workshops next year and welcome any help with this.

Jakki Phillips

Report hedgehog sightings at:

<https://bighedgehogmap.org>

<https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org/wildlife/helping-wildlife-home/hedgehog-hotspots>

Fully referenced articles are posted monthly at <https://greenwestcott.org>

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