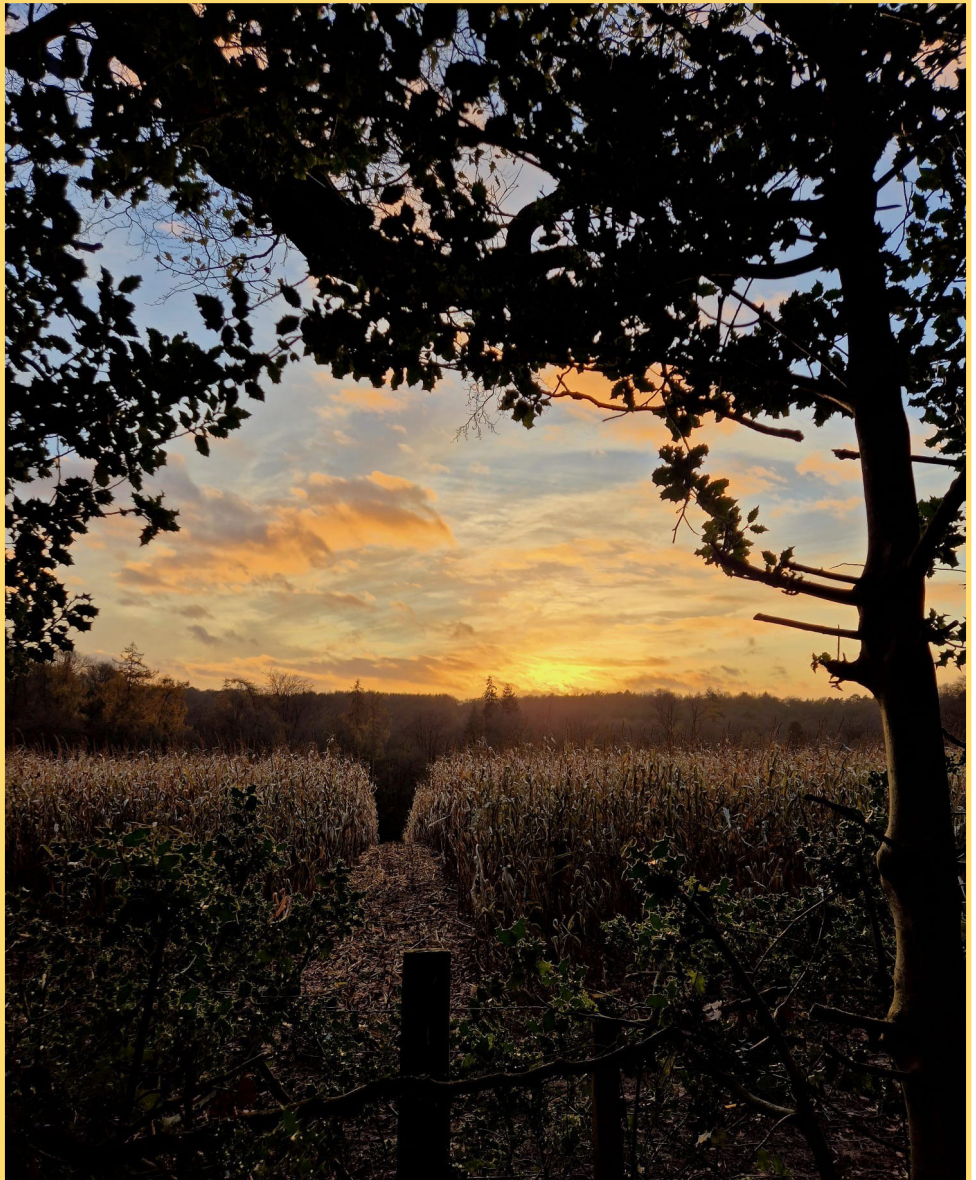


Westcott Village Magazine

January 2026



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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

February issue:

8th January 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



Well, I hope you all had a relaxing and joyful Christmas and have a happy and healthy 2026!

This month is the last chance to see the Dorking Home Guard exhibition at Dorking Museum - it finishes on 17th if you haven't yet been to see it.

Page 13 has details of the Baby Meals service, Anna is always keen to hear from extra cooks who would be happy to help out on the rota, the more the merrier, so get in touch if you think you might be able to help.

There is no coffee morning in January, but they are also looking for new

helpers once a month, see details on page 17 if you can spare a couple of hours for this village institution.

If you can remember as far back as Westfestivity there are some photos and a report (in poetry) on pages 32-33 so take a look and see if you feature!

There is a further consultation on the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan on the Mole Valley District Council website, running for the whole of the month, see page 43 for all details, and make sure you have your say.

Cath
editor@westcottmag.com



...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



FASHIONABLY OUT OF DATE

Ever nostalgically kept an item of clothing at the back of the wardrobe only for it to come unexpectedly back into fashion? I've even heard a rumour that flared jeans made a comeback recently so well done to you if you kept hold of a pair from the 70s – you are bang on trend. Or perhaps you have heard of the 100 year rule for baby names? That names formally associated with older folks become fashionable again once they hit the great-grandparent stage (all four of our children's names fall into this category I believe).

"I BELIEVE THAT YOU
ARE A BEING OF ETERNAL
SIGNIFICANCE."



Part of the challenge of writing these magazine articles is that I have to pen them a month before the magazine comes out. What references will appear hopelessly out of date by the time you read them? What local, national or international situations will be on people's minds that I have entirely failed to comment on, due to the fact that they have yet to happen as I sit at my keyboard.

Thankfully some ideas never go entirely out of date – even if they drift in and out of fashion in the popular and academic worlds as the decades drift by. There are themes I can return to like a broken record (incidentally, a great example of what should be an out of date idiom if it were not for the retro return of vinyl) believing them to have a relevance for the lives of the people of Westcott, and indeed in the strange wide world beyond the village boundaries.

...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT

So, let me begin 2026 with themes I refuse to leave behind:

I believe that you are a being of eternal significance. I believe you (and I) muck things up – relationships, projects, nature, you name it. I believe in a God who created a complex evolving cosmos so that He could have a relationship with those creatures He created in His image that dwell therein. I believe this God is complex – beyond the absolute comprehensions of the greatest human minds and the most advanced AI – but He chooses to make himself known in ways finite minds can grasp and grapple with.

I believe this God loves you and the world so much that He entered into history as one of us and then chose to die in our place so that the seemingly infinite weight of our mistakes can not keep us from the freedom He desires for us.

I believe this God invites all – including you – to be a part of His broken, flawed and yet often beautiful family known as the 'Church' to learn about Him in the context of community to come and explore more and discover that this God is waiting and longing for you to experience that freedom.

Depending which papers, social media channels, and people you spend time with, these ideas we crudely call Christianity may or may not currently be in fashion in your circle. Most probably the latter. But I will keep seeking, all too imperfectly, to live and speak them out regardless – as this Jesus has transformed my life, and I believe He is the one who offers the hope the world is seeking. So I'll begin 2026, as indeed I will end it, fashionably out of date.

Rev'd 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
4th Jan	New Year, Faithful God	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Morning Worship with Sunday Club
11th Jan	Baptism of Christ	Book of Common Prayer Communion	20-20-20 Service with Breakfast
18th Jan	One Church Family (Week of Prayer for Christian Unity)	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
25th Jan	The Conversion of Paul	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club



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



BUILDING
FRIENDSHIPS



SHARING
LIFE



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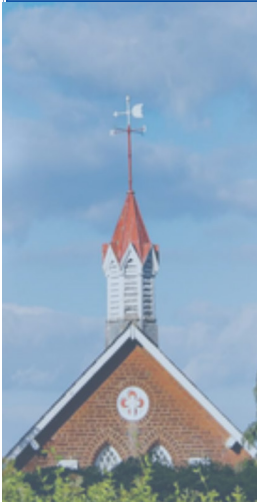
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THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



Westcott's baby & toddler group

COOKIE CLUB

snacks
crafts
games
music
friendship
fun

parents
grandparents
guardians...
all welcome!

St John's Hall, Westcott
9-11am every Thursday during term time
£2 voluntary donation

The poster features a central yellow circle with the text 'COOKIE CLUB' in large, bold, red letters. Above the circle, the text 'Westcott's baby & toddler group' is written in a blue, curved font. To the left of the circle, a list of activities (snacks, crafts, games, music, friendship, fun) is written in red. To the right, a list of welcome participants (parents, grandparents, guardians... all welcome!) is written in red. Below the circle, the location and time (St John's Hall, Westcott, 9-11am every Thursday during term time) and a £2 voluntary donation are listed in blue. At the bottom, a row of colorful illustrations shows children playing with toys like blocks, a car, and a ball.



Gathering to
Pray

Holy Trinity Church, 7.45pm
First Tuesday of every Month

 THE CHURCH IN
WESTCOTT
Building Friendships. Sharing Life.

The poster has a dark blue background with a close-up image of a woman with her eyes closed and hands clasped in prayer. The text 'Gathering to' is in a white serif font, and 'Pray' is in a large, bold, white serif font. Below this, the location and time 'Holy Trinity Church, 7.45pm' and the frequency 'First Tuesday of every Month' are written in a white sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a logo consisting of a stylized cross made of four squares, followed by the text 'THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT' in a bold, sans-serif font, and 'Building Friendships. Sharing Life.' in a smaller, sans-serif font.

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
or visit thechurchinwestcott.org.uk



FLOODLIGHTING

Many thanks to Yasmin and Freddie George, who have sponsored January's floodlighting in memory of their son Freddie (Little Freddie) and their Grandpa Freddie Harry George, who passed away in the summer of 2018 aged 98.

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

Reception class enjoying Forest School



'This is my face I made at Forest School'

Leaf printing



their very own castle. They had to think carefully about who they were designing their castle for, making a range of different nets and then construct their castle together. We were incredibly proud of our end results!



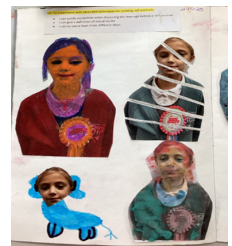
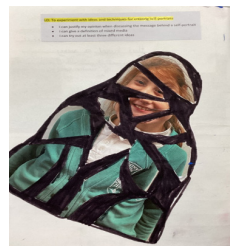
Year 1 Bees

Let's not forget our Year 1 Bees, in addition to all the wonderful things they have been doing with Butterflies they have also been very busy honing their mathematical skills – from counting, sorting to becoming human balancing scales!



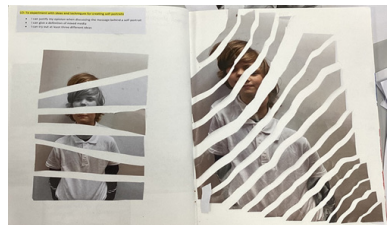
Year 4&5 Self-portraits

In Art lessons we have been focusing on creating self-portraits. We have explored a variety of different techniques as well as looked at some famous self-portraits. When it came to creating our final piece, we had to think very hard about what message we wanted our art work to convey and how we were going to do that.



Year 3 have been busy constructing castles

As part of our D&T project, Hedgehogs have been designing and constructing





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SURREY HILLS ALL SAINTS SCHOOL (cont.)

Odd Socks Day



We took part in Odd Socks Day to mark the start of Antibullying week. We thought about why it is important to all be different and how it makes us unique. We also took part in the live BBC live lesson about how we can use our power for good. We discussed how it is important to speak up when you notice things aren't right and how we can show kindness to others in a range of different ways. At Surrey Hills, we use our voice to help others and put a stop to bullying!

Kathryn Saunderson
Acting Headteacher



**WESTCOTT
BABY MEALS**

What are “Baby Meals”?!

The Westcott “Baby Meals” service has been running over 25 years! It's a highly valued community initiative; our fabulous volunteer cooks buy, cook and deliver a (free!) hot meal for families living in the village with a new baby, usually for 2 weeks. At a time of chaos as the family adjusts to baby, dinner is one less thing to think about!

Please do get in touch if you are expecting a baby, or if we can help during a challenging time - we're always really pleased to help out! We're also keen to hear from potential new cooks - there's no obligation, just sign up to rotas as and when you can.

Anna: 07710 425487 annakemkers@hotmail.co.uk



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WESTCOTT VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING

The Village Hall



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on*

Wednesday February 4th 2026



10.30 am - 12.00 midday

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Happy New Year Everyone!



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*This month's full moon is
on 3rd January, and is
variously known as the
Moon After Yule, the Ice
Moon and the Old Moon,
but most commonly called
the Wolf Moon.*

WHO IS THE BEST



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WESTCOTT VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING

There has been a Coffee Morning held in the Village Hall on the first Wednesday of every month (except January). It has remained an unbroken tradition since 1964, apart from the Covid lockdown.

If anyone would like to join our teams of volunteers it would be lovely to hear from you. This would involve helping once a year, possibly twice, depending on the number of volunteers. A team of two people would need to make and serve the coffee and biscuits for a couple of hours and leave the kitchen tidy.

We also would like volunteers who would be willing to help set up the tables and chairs beforehand, and to put them away again afterwards.

Thank you to our loyal supporters!



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Fieldfare: Image courtesy RSPB images

Feast your eyes on Fieldfares

The Fieldfare is a winter visitor to the UK and is a member of the Thrush family. This is the largest thrush seen in the UK and is distinguished from others by its grey head and yellow bill. Like Redwings, these birds are also seeking food and shelter in a warmer climate, flying in from Finland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and Eastern Europe to spend the winter here. They have a fast-paced 'chack, chack, chack' call which is likened to chuckling. Should cold weather persist and berries dwindle, Fieldfares may be tempted into gardens with pieces of apple and other fruit.

See more on our activities and photos or if you're interested in joining below
Facebook: RSPB Dorking and District

Instagram: @rsfb_dorking

Website: <https://group.rspb.org.uk/dorkinganddistrict/>

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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 Surrey farmland girls 1939-1950:** Live talk by Neil Mach. Monday 5th January at Crossways Community Baptist Church, Junction Road, Dorking RH4 3HB, 7.15 for 7.30pm, £2 at the door for non-members.
- **Ralph Vaughan Williams & Lucy Broadwood – Musical Friends and Neighbours:** Zoom talk by Graham Muncy, Monday 19th January 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>.

Snow!

As I put this issue together, nobody knows if there will be any snow in January, but if not, here is a suitably wintry scene taken previously by Fiona Humphrey.



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Tuesday 13th January 2026

Becoming Jane Austen: The Making of a Literary Superstar - Annalie Talent

Jane Austen is one of our best-loved authors. Her novels have inspired countless stage and screen adaptations and she is known everywhere from our £10 notes to fridge magnets and tea towels.

But her fame has not always been such. She was unknown in her lifetime and for years thereafter. So just how did Jane Austen become the literary superstar she is today? This lecture will chart Jane Austen's rise to fame; it will explore the makings of a literary celebrity and examine Austen's legacy, 250 years after her birth.

The lecture will be held at 10.30 in Martineau Hall. Coffee is available from 9:30am. Visitors are welcome for a fee of £10.00 but contact Linda Packham on 07960 995707 (email - ljpackman@gmail.com) to book.

For more information and details of the forthcoming programme, visit www.theartsocietydorking.org.uk



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Brockham Choral



Brockham Choral's rehearsal for Mendelssohn's Elijah starts on 6th January at 7.30pm at St. John's C of E Primary school, Dorking, RH4 2LR.

David Swinson, our Musical Director, takes us with wit, humour and musical expertise with our wonderful Marion Lea at the piano, for a 2 hour vocal experience. Join us for a joyful time. New singers in all voices most welcome, no audition required.

In addition there will be an Elijah workshop on Saturday 1st February.

Many social events take part during the year.

For more information visit www.brockhamchoral.org

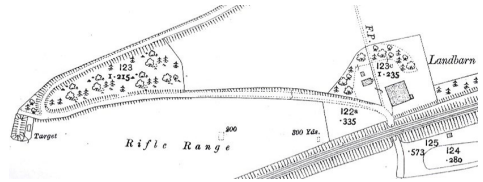
Westcott Rifle Range and the Rifle Range Halt

In June 1915 the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Company completed the construction of a small station almost midway between Dorking and Gomshall. It had two 400 feet platforms, 9 to 12 feet wide with ramps and fenced approaches, and was located just west of the tunnel serving the footpath leading from Coomb Farm to Ranmore. It was partially destroyed by fire in 1928 and never rebuilt. There is no sign of its existence today, nor did its existence have any effect on the development of Westcott. It was too far from the village and in any event the railway stop was exclusively for use by soldiers and was known as the Westcott Rifle Range Halt.

A range had existed in the locality since at least November 1889, when the Rt Hon George Cubitt (later the first Lord Ashcombe) signed an agreement with Captain Harman Young, Officer Commanding 'G' Company 2nd Volunteer Battalion (Queens) Royal West Surrey Regiment, permitting targets to be set up in part of a field on the Denbies Estate near Landbarn Farm, with firing points established at a distance of 100, 200 and 300 yards.

The plan accompanying the agreement indicated the location, and the detail (less the 100 yards

marker) was subsequently included on the 1891 edition of the Ordnance Survey 25 inch map.



Extract from 1891 OS 25 inch map showing rifle range

The agreement restricted shooting to just one day between the 1st November and 1st March, and on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 2pm until sunset, plus one whole day that shall be mutually agreed upon, between 1st April and 30th October. The agreed rent for this use was one shilling per year. In 1909 the agreement was amended to apply to the new Surrey Territorial Force Association but a few years later, following increased use before and during the Great War and the introduction of more powerful weaponry, the Landbarn range was



The 'new' Westcott Rifle Range



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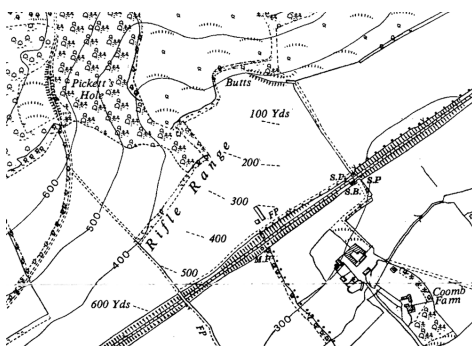
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abandoned. It was replaced, in 1916, by a much larger 'War Office' range occupying almost 50 acres. This was constructed a few hundred yards to the west, much closer to the new Rifle Range Halt. The butts were built against the scarp slope of the North Downs and supported at least nine targets, as illustrated on the previous page.

In the post war years the range, and the nearby Halt, continued to be used. In April 1922, for example, the Dorking Advertiser reported that 300 officers and men of the East Surreys 5th Battalion spent a day firing at the Westcott Range. These were territorials but with the approach of the Second World War the range was also used by regular troops, and during the war by the Home Guard.

After the war national servicemen and cadets practised at the Westcott Range and in July 1948 the War Office proposed a significant extension, embracing much of Ranmore Common, to create a military training area of nearly 900 acres. The local Planning Officer objected on the grounds that the land formed part of the North Downs Preservation Scheme and the proposal was withdrawn, as was an amended scheme submitted a year later that involved 320 acres. Although isolated, the noise generated by the range evidently

travelled across the Holmesdale Valley, especially when machine gun training was introduced in October 1954. Mr J Moody of Stowe Cottage in Balchins Lane, Westcott, protested to the local authority, but the Clerk to Dorking Council was able to reply that the matter was out of his hands; *"The rifle range is in War Department occupation and is outside town planning control"*.



The 'New' Rifle Range and firing points in 1955 (after the abandonment of the Rifle Range Halt)

New butts and a range warden's workshop were constructed between 1956 and 1959 and these were accompanied by the introduction of new byelaws requiring a sufficiency of warning signals and specifically 'Firing in Progress' notices to give adequate warning when the area was closed to the public. However, the use of the new facilities was short lived. Problems arose when the 'stop butt', cut into the side of the hill, started to slip, and then the concrete and brick

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mantlet crumbled so badly that a 'low shot' bullet actually went through and caused a slight injury to one of the target markers. In the light of this evidence, the cessation of National Service, being aware that there was a public footpath nearby, and that for long range events it was necessary to fire across the railway line, the War Office decided that the range was no longer required. It closed in June 1962 and cattle from Coomb Farm were permitted to return to grazing from which they had been displaced 50 years earlier. The butts are still in place but much of the brickwork has collapsed.

In addition to military use, the range was used by the Westcott Rifle Club and from 1954 until 1958 (less 1956 when the range was closed for repair) it was the venue for teams from other Surrey Rifle Clubs who competed for the Westcott Cup. That competition continues to be held each year, organised by the Surrey Rifle Association, but the venue is now the National Rifle Association ranges at Bisley.

This article came from the archives of Westcott Local History Group. Find more on www.westcottvillage.com

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WESTFESTIVITY 2025



WEST festivity
2025
Westcott



WESTFESTIVITY 2025 (cont.)

WESTfestivity 2025

The day began foggy, but out of the mist,
Came dozens of stallholders, carrying "gifts",
(not quite the three kings!) to our church they climbed
To make pretty their stalls, before the bell chimed
At 10 o'clock sharp. The fair had begun,
With visitors thronging, both older and young.
Down in the Hall, stalls looking festive,
People were browsing, cake options extensive!
With the clip clop of hooves, dear old Santa appeared,
And when Rock Choir sang, the audience cheered.
So it continued, this convivial day,
With villagers meeting and chatting away,
The mulled wine was warmed, and the pies piping hot,
And everyone ate, and bought, quite a lot!
The school choir sang, to the warmest applause,
And then came the time for proceedings to pause...
The raffle was drawn, the winners were thrilled.
Happy guests left for home with tummies well-filled.
The stalls were packed up, the tables away,
The church chairs laid out for service next day.
Now a wonderful day has come to an end,
The fundraising is counted, the money we'll send*.
And all that is left is a message sincere;
Thanks so much for coming, have a Happy New Year!



See you at WESTfestivity 2026!
Anna, Catherine and the WESTfest team

*Charity fundraising (over £1000)
raised for Westcott Village Hall
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Happy New Year! We hope you all had a super lovely Christmas and are ready to get stuck in to the year ahead!

Our last weeks at Nursery were filled to the brim with wonderful traditional fun. We were both cosy and enthralled as we snuggled down for a special tea time viewing of Stick Man. Once we were suitably rested and tummies full of hearty food we then partied hard! Musical chairs, pass the parcel and lots of jumping around to Christmas tunes!



Last year we were gifted the most beautiful advent calendar by the very talented local knitter natter group and it is still going strong! Each day of December was terribly exciting as we waited to see whose turn it was to open up the knitted pouch and discover the treasure inside!

Our Nativity was held on the last day of term and we welcomed parents, grandparents and the local community

through the doors of St James's. Tea towels a plenty, tinsel a twinkling and lots of cotton wool fluffy sheep! We sang our hearts out and clip clopped through the streets of Bethlehem with a wonderful donkey and his carrot!

As the finale whilst the grown ups sipped tea and munched on mince pies we were visited by the big man



himself! And do you know he had a present for each one of us? What a memorable way to start the holidays!

Exciting news in the world of technology we are entering 2026 in true 2026 style with an Instagram page! Please do follow us to see all the wonders that we get up to on the big (little) screen!

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Firstly I would like to wish everyone a Very Happy New Year and hope that you all had a peaceful and happy Christmas. I visited the Memorial Woodland for a period of reflection on Christmas morning. Christmas can be a lonely time for those who no longer have their loved ones; a good friend of mine, having lost his wife, had driven up from Brighton to spend some time of reflection with his Veteran mates who are resting in peace at the Memorial Woodland. It was good to sit and have a talk with him over a cuppa before going home for the usual festive Christmas Dinner with family and friends.

So as we go into 2026 the first fund raising event at the Woodland will be the Easter Egg Hunt which will take place on Sunday 29th March, and more details will be notified in the coming weeks. The next event after that will be our Annual Anniversary of the opening of the Woodland and Commemoration Service which will take place on Saturday 6th June, when families will be honouring a number of Veterans by planting a young tree. We will also be celebrating 'D' Day and 60 years of the Queen's Regiment with some 1940's singers. This event is open to everyone so do put it in your diaries.



At the beginning of December we had our annual Christmas at the Woodland event to which

many local families to help us raise funds. The stalls were full of sweet treats, toys and games for the children. There was a grand Christmas Raffle, Bottle Tombola and Christmas Tombola for the adults to spend their money plus Hot Dogs and drinks for everyone. The children completed a Treasure Hunt followed by a visit to Father Christmas in his Grotto. It was a very successful day enjoyed by all.



The woodland itself is looking great thanks to the number of volunteers we had during the Autumn who cleared the pathways of leaves and picked up fallen branches to keep us all safe as we walk around.

It won't be long before we shall see the first signs of new life when the Spring bulbs start to pop up. Lots to look forward to when the dark days of January and February are behind us. In the meantime I hope you all keep safe and warm and don't forget if you fancy a walk on one of our crisp bright days during those months the woodland is always open and if I am there the kettle will be on! I look forward to seeing you.

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Jeff Allam

Jeff's dog's name might give a clue to our castaway's former profession. Called Enzo he shares this with the Italian motor racing ace, Enzo Ferrari. As a shortened form of Vincenzo, meaning conquering or victorious, this is actually rather apt as Jeff was a highly successful racing car driver. Jeff won many of the races that he competed in and was often placed on the podium.

His proudest win was with former formula one world champion Denny Hulme when, at Silverstone in 1986, they came first in the Tourist Trophy, Britain's oldest automobile race. Jeff has a lovely story about their triumph. The winners were announced as Denny, then Jeff, but the former champion graciously conceded that his teammate deserved the accolade as he had done most of the driving. Jeff commented that theirs were the last names added to the original trophy's base which then had run out of space.

Born and brought up in Epsom, Jeff's early competitive spirit found an outlet in swimming. He remembers paying the old sixpence as entry into Epsom swimming pool and he excelled in the medley, consisting of the four disciplines of breaststroke, butterfly, backstroke and freestyle. He also trained at Crystal Palace

and competed in championship races. Clearly racing was in his blood as was his love of cars. His grandfather ran a taxi service, memorably taking punters up to the Derby, whilst father Ray established Allam's of Epsom in 1952. Young Jeff recalls his Dad's first workshop where he carried out repairs in an unused undertaker's shed at the back of their garden. Jeff crawled under the fence to get into a magical kingdom of spanners, wrenches, car parts and the heady aroma of engine oil. He was hooked.

Progressing from go-karting and club racing he turned professional in 1980. Determination and confidence in his natural ability he said driving came easily. Interestingly he observes that effective racing relies not on aggressive driving but on being at one with the car, letting it run smoothly. Liking driving to Motown and Reggae, the louder the music the faster the car. Regularly hitting 165 miles per hour, the 200 mph Le Mans was just about his limit. Racing all over Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand he said it was just great being paid for his hobby, he would have done it for nothing.

Jeff's approach to his disc choices befits his character. He is a man of the moment and selected music that he likes rather than songs that have a particular memory. If he hears one



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DESERT ISLAND DISCS (cont.)



of these on the radio he would turn it up to listen rather than put on a CD. His picks reflect the glory days of the 1980s and 90s, resonating with his victorious racing years.

All-time favourite and the one he would save is *The Chain* by Fleetwood Mac, famously associated with the introduction to the BBC's F1 broadcast. He chose Kate Bush's *Running up the Hill* as he loves her voice and several other picks were from concerts he went to: Elvis Costello's *A Good Year for the Roses* and M People's *Moving On Up*. *Its only Rock and Roll* by the Rolling Stones was from a gig he wanted to go to but didn't make. Perhaps Meatloaf's *Bat out of Hell* and Tina Turner's *Simply the Best* do have echoes that mirror his racing career, whilst Pulp's *Disco 2000*, and Bryan Ferry's *Love is the Drug* reveal the simpatico side of his temperament.

Jeff drove saloon cars known as tin tops as they had a roof, not like the more open Formula One cars. Achieving not a little fame, Jeff warrants an entry in Wikipedia. A colleague mischievously added that Jeff collected fridge magnets and as a consequence he was sent or was given over 50 from all parts of the world.

He moved to Westcott in 2004, once

partner Maddie's insistence that a cat flap fitted to the back door had been satisfied. By then he had retired from professional motor racing and was managing several garages in Dorking, Leatherhead and Epsom. He sold the remaining of his garages last year.

After his racing career he became the driving standards advisor for the British Touring Car Championships which had become "*too much crashing and bashing*". Order having been restored he retired from this role in 2021. Enjoyment now is walking his beloved dog and his competitive spirit is exercised through his enthusiasm for padel. Sunday afternoons watching the motor racing allow him to reflect on his 50 years in the business. He has many mementos but keeps only one in view, a black and white photograph of his British Touring Car which was so far out in front it's the only one in the picture.

He has time for reading now he is equipped with new glasses. The book he would take with him to his desert island is the 1980 to 2000 Touring Car Book to recall the great times of racing, and his luxury item, a pair of binoculars.

Jennifer Brown

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Updated Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan

Following the feedback received during the 'Regulation 14' Public Consultation run by the Westcott Village Forum in October and November the draft Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan has been further updated.

Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) are now hosting their own 'Regulation 16' Public Consultation as part of its duties under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. This second consultation runs from Monday 8th December 2025 and ends at 5pm on Monday 2nd February 2026.

To take part in the MVDC consultation, use the link to view the documents on the MVDC website <https://www.molevalley.gov.uk/planning-building/consultations/> and send your comments to: planning.policy@molevalley.gov.uk or post to Planning Policy, Mole Valley District Council, Pippbrook, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1SJ.

Hard copies of the documents can also be viewed at the Church, Riverbank GP Surgery, Westcott Village Hub and the Prince of Wales.

The individual documents can be viewed on the website above on the *background documents* section via the headings below. The feedback received during the first consultation can be viewed by reading the *Regulation 14 Consultation Statement*.

1. Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2039 (Final Submission Version) (December 2025)
2. Basic Conditions Statement
3. Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report
4. Statement of Representations Procedure
5. Regulation 14 Consultation Statement
6. Survey Summary
7. Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2039 (Final Submission Version) (December 2025) (Regulation 14 Tracked Change Version)
8. Housing Needs Report

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DORKING MUSEUM

The team at Dorking Museum wishes all the best for 2026 to all readers and to the supporters and friends of the Museum. The Museum will reopen after the break on Saturday 3rd January 2026.

To the Last Man – the Dorking Home Guard:



The Museum's autumn exhibition, telling the story of the men of Dorking and the villages who enlisted in the Home Guard in 1940, has proved to



be particularly popular with visitors, some of whom have been able to recognise family members and friends among the photos and names shown. Local units were trained for hand-to-hand fighting, transforming from a poorly armed and equipped group of part-time volunteers to a trained fighting force protecting the local community. If you have not



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DORKING MUSEUM (cont.)

visited the exhibition yet – or want another opportunity to see it again – come along to the Museum soon as it will finish on Saturday 17th January. The exhibition display includes uniforms, weaponry, medals, incident reports, photographs and other items of the period.

Dorking's Dinosaur Legacy:



The Museum's first new exhibition for 2026 opens on Thursday 22nd January and celebrates Dorking's contribution to the developing understanding of the wild life that roamed the area 125 million years ago. At that time, the Dorking area was part of a vast tropical river delta with swamps, sand flats and lagoons that extended across much of what is now South-East England and the Isle of Wight. Extreme seasons and changing conditions resulted in the evolution of amazing species and the Wealden clay has yielded much evidence of the dinosaurs that evolved.

A discovery by fossil enthusiast Bill Walker in a quarry near Ockley in 1983 provided evidence of a previously unknown dinosaur species and led to the recognition of a new group of specialised fish-eating dinosaurs. The creature was given the scientific name *Baryonyx walkeri* in honour of its finder and provided the key to understanding more fragmentary remains of similar dinosaurs that were being unearthed on other continents.

The almost complete fossilised skeleton found by Walker – and dubbed 'Claws' by the media at the time – is now on display at the Natural History Museum. Four decades on from the discovery, two new *Baryonyx* cousins have been found in the cliffs of the Isle of Wight, and maybe other unknown species are still down there in the clay.



The new exhibition explores Dorking's dinosaur connections in greater detail, displays including lifelike

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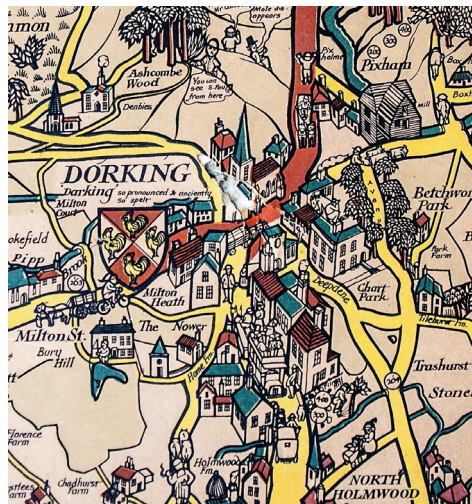
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DORKING MUSEUM (cont.)

replica models on loan from the University of Southampton.

Museum Family Activities at Dorking Library: Warm Welcome Week:



A warm welcome from Dorking Museum is awaiting you at Dorking Library. Come and look at some old photos and maps of Dorking and see how Dorking has changed: Saturday 24th January, 10am-noon. Free, materials provided and children must be accompanied.

Something for everyone:

Dorking Museum attracts many visitors every year, often from other parts of the globe or of the UK. Our guided local walks and tours of the

South Street Caves are very popular in the season. Yet, well established as it is within the local community, some of our local visitors are discovering the museum for the first time, or maybe rediscovering it.

Apart from the changing temporary exhibitions, the remainder of the gallery is regularly refreshed and new exhibits added, depicting facets of local history and life from prehistoric times to the modern day.

Perhaps a new year's resolution might be to come and look around (again). Or see dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities for current vacancies.

Dorking Museum, The Old Foundry, 62 West Street, Dorking RH4 1BS. Thursdays 1pm-4pm, Fridays and Saturdays 10am-4pm, free entry. www.dorkingmuseum.org.uk. Visit dorkingmuseum.org.uk/digital-guide/. 01306 876591.



NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Historians believe that the idea of New Year's resolutions, in one form or another, dates back more than 4,000 years. They say the Babylonians, one of the first cultures to actually celebrate the changing of the year, made promises to pay debts or return borrowed objects.

In Spain the tradition is to eat one grape at each stroke of midnight to bring good luck throughout the year.



It's believed in Brazil that your luck increases if you get in the surf at the beach and jump over seven waves - one for each of the divine spirits of the Umbanda religion.

In Denmark, smashing plates on New Year's Eve is a tradition. People go around breaking crockery on the doorsteps of their friends and family. The more shards there are in front of your home the next day, the luckier and more well liked you are.



It's customary in Greece to hang bundles of onions above the doors as a way of inviting in good luck. Onions are symbols of prosperity because they sprout even when no one is paying them any attention. On New Year's Day, parents wake up their children by gently tapping them on the head with the onions that were outside!

In the Philippines, it's traditional to eat 12 round fruits, one for every month, to ensure a year of abundance.



****Happy New**

NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD



The Irish bang Christmas bread on the walls of their homes. It's supposed to chase any bad spirits out of the house to start the new year off with a clean slate.

In Colombia, people take empty suitcases and run around the block as fast as they can. It's supposed to guarantee a year filled with travel.



It's traditional to eat *toshikoshi soba* in Japan, a dish with buckwheat noodles served hot or cold. The long noodles symbolize longevity, and the buckwheat plant represents resilience.

In Turkey, pomegranates are symbols of abundance, and those who want a good year will smash the fruit on their doorstep. The more pieces and the farther they go, the better the year will be. For a little extra luck, sprinkle a little salt in front of the door to bring peace.



Vasilopita or other cake is eaten for dessert in Greece, and it has a coin baked into it. Whoever finds the coin will have good luck for the next year.

In Scandinavian countries, they do something similar with rice pudding, served either at New Year's or Christmas. One portion will have a peeled almond in it, and whoever finds it in their bowl is assured of luck in the new year and might even win a prize.



Year 2026! ❄️ ❄️

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MUSIC IN DORKING



10th at 7.30, Ukulele orchestra at Dorking Halls, £33, 01306 881717
14th at 6.45, opera screening at Dorking Halls, £19.50, 01306 881717
17th at 7.30, cello & piano recital at Dorking Halls, £25, 01306 740619
18th at 2.00, opera screening at Dorking Halls, £19.50, 01306 881717

Happy New Year! January begins with a concert given by the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, now celebrating their 40th anniversary. The programme will include a wide range of music, covering various genres from Abba to Tchaikovsky and Bluegrass to Broadway.

The Dorking Concertgoers present music for cello and piano, played by Nigel Hutchinson and Thomas Carroll. As well as playing together as a duo, both musicians enjoy distinguished solo careers. Their varied programme includes sonatas by Beethoven, Brahms and Boccherini, plus two short pieces by Martinu and Lutoslawski.

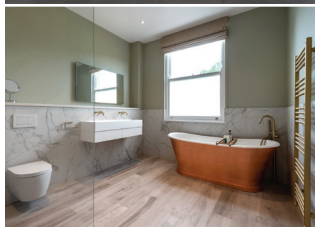
There are also two opportunities to see Verdi's tragic opera *La Traviata* from the Royal Opera House, with a live and an encore screening at the Dorking Halls.

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Time is Ticking



I recently read a book called *Raising Hare* by Chloe Dalton. This book was one woman's account of her experience of raising a leveret that she found near her home. Her journey through this process was extraordinary as she aimed not to domesticate the leveret, but to raise it to reintegrate it into the wild once it was old enough to do so.

Through this process she was able to observe things about this animal, previously unseen or witnessed by humans and debunk some of the misinformation about this amazing animal. Previous information about hares and their habits was severely lacking and most was inaccurate. Over a number of years, she witnessed the secret life of hares and their behaviour.

One thing she noticed was the way that hares, like many of us, are creatures of habit. Following patterns of when they eat, sleep and forage for food. The hare would leave the

house at set times during the day and return like clockwork. I'm sure many of us have noticed birds visiting our gardens at certain times each day and how badgers will do the same and follow certain specific tracks on their nocturnal nightly wanderings.

This got me thinking about how we, as humans, also have routines. We leave the house in the morning for work at the same time each day, we eat and drink at regular moments throughout the day and generally go to bed around the same time. With the changing of the clocks in autumn, I wondered about how many species of wildlife had continued to follow their routines of leaving their burrows, sets and lairs, to go about their daily routines and how, when something changes in their world, there is an impact.

Wildlife vulnerability



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GREEN WESTCOTT (cont.)

contribute to mortality rates outnumbering reproduction rates and, therefore, making populations vulnerable. One million animals are killed each year in the UK due to roadkill. The top 5 species affected and recorded in a study by Goodwin (2024) shows general roadkill rates as the following, between 2013 – 2024.

1. Badger – 16,529
2. Pheasant – 11,715
3. Fox – 10,837
4. Hedgehog – 8,554
5. Rabbit – 7,201

There is also an increase in deer strikes by 14 times in the weeks following the clocks changing noted in a study by Cunningham et al (2022). Our wildlife is vulnerable to human activity causing habitat loss and to the consequences of climate change.

Our actions continue to challenge our wildlife and how they move amongst us. One study by Raymond et al (2021) showed by that in 1951 there were 4.2 million vehicles on the UK's roads. By the end of 2016 this had increased to 37.3 million. Coupled with this, the overall length of the road network increased from 184,000 to 246,500 miles over the same period. Not only does the road network expansion take land from the wildlife, but it cuts across territorial areas isolating creatures off from mating partners and essential food sources.

Human vulnerability

The impacts on human life are also affected by these subtle changes to our routines, with one study showing an increase in car collisions by 11% on the roads following the changing of the clocks (Roberts, 2024). We share our planet with the other creatures who live on it. As we sit at the top of the food chain it makes no sense to ignore the impact we are having, not only by reducing the land available to wildlife, but the other periodic changes we impose which impact them further. We need to recognise that all actions have consequences, not only for ourselves but for the other beings that inhabit our planet.

The damage we are doing to the planet not only impacts ourselves but the delicate ecosystems that are essential to our survival. Biodiversity - the variability among living organisms from all sources - underpins all life on Earth. Biodiversity loss is occurring at an alarming rate, with recent estimates showing that species extinctions are currently 10 to 100 times higher than the natural baseline. This is largely due to human activities like deforestation, habitat fragmentation, and climate change, and yet we continue to act as if these delicate systems are secondary to our advancement. We rely, for our own existence, on the balance of



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nature being maintained to ensure everything works in harmony. When we mess with the system it throws out the order of things, disrupting delicate ecological networks, ultimately leading to a reduction in wildlife damaging the balance of nature. We are all part of nature and to ignore this, is to do so at our peril.

Nancy Lund

A fully referenced article with links to studies is available at <https://greenwestcott.org>

The Past is a Foreign Country - They Do Things Differently There



This might be a tricky one for today's health and safety monitors, but towards the end of the nineteenth century, when this picture was captured by Walter Rose, local photographer and bee keeper, the Westcott School curriculum focussed on practical roles that pupils might take up on leaving.

At that time most boys would find work locally in an agricultural or horticultural environment; hence the presence of beehives on the school allotment.



Photograph kindly provided from the Westcott Local History Group archives.

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