



Cobham & Luddesdowne

January 2026 **News** £1

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Church Office Phone no. 01474 813495

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SUBMISSIONS Cobham and Luddesdowne News is a community magazine produced by and for the residents of Cobham, Sole Street and Luddesdowne. - Please note new email address.

Please send material for inclusion by the 15th of the month preceding publication to cnewseditorial@gmail.com

Cover photograph - Adrian Whiteing—Path between the vines towards Luddesdowne Cricket pitch.

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2026

January 2026

This month we celebrate Epiphany, the occasion on which we remember the Magi from the East following a star to find the baby Jesus: ‘Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews?’ (Matthew 2:1). At the start of a New Year, in an uncertain world, we can be asking the same question. The gifts the Magi offered point us to how Jesus can answer our concerns and worries: ‘they bowed down and worshipped Him...and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.’ (2:11).

The *gift of gold* reflects that the Magi saw in the baby a king, destined to rule over us all. In this coming year we need to remember that Jesus is on the throne, the seat of power and authority in the whole universe. Will we crown Him king of our lives and dedicate all that we are and do to Him?

The *gift of frankincense* reflects that the visitors saw not just an earthly king, but God in human flesh. Incense symbolises the prayers of God’s people and so this gift reminds us that God is worthy of our worship and prayer. Will we offer our praise and prayer, as we seek God to guide us through the uncertainties of this coming year?

The *gift of myrrh* reflects that these astrologers saw beyond the baby’s birth and life, to His death which would secure life for all. Jesus was offered myrrh on the cross and was a spice used in His tomb. As we face challenges in the future, we can be confident that Jesus knows and understands our experience. Are we ready to trust Him in everything?

‘Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice! Heav’n sings Hallelujah: Hallelujah the earth replies.’ (‘We Three Kings’).



The story behind the Bear

Michael Bond, creator of Paddington Bear

It was 100 years ago, on 13th January 1926, that Michael Bond, the children's writer, was born. He has an assured place in any literary Hall of Fame, for he created the characters Paddington Bear and Monsieur Pamplemousse.

Paddington Bear padded into Michael Bond's life quite by accident. It was back in 1956 that Michael was on his way home from work at the BBC when he spied a lonely looking teddy bear on the shelf in a shop window in London. On the spur of the moment, Michael decided to take it home as a stocking filler for his wife.

Michael called the bear Paddington, because they lived near Paddington Station at the time. Two years later, in 1958, while daydreaming over a typewriter and a blank sheet of paper, Michael wondered what might happen if an unaccompanied bear turned up at a railway station looking for a home.

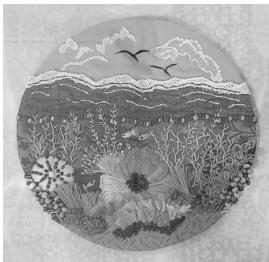
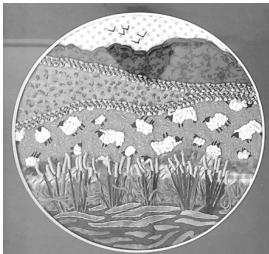
The rest is literary history.

His first book, *A Bear Called Paddington*, was written in ten days and published by Collins in October of 1958. 28 more books followed, and in all more than 35 million Paddington books have been sold worldwide, in more than 40 languages. More than 27 million Paddington Bear soft toys have been sold, just since 2021. The films alone have grossed more than \$778 million.

Paddington made his most famous appearance at Buckingham Palace in 2022, where he had tea with Queen Elizabeth II on her Platinum Jubilee, and exchanged tips with her about the best place to store marmalade sandwiches.

Bond was born in Newbury in 1926 and served with the RAF and army during WW2. He started writing in 1945 while stationed in Cairo, and began his career at the BBC, where he later worked on Blue Peter as a cameraman. He died in 2017, aged 91.

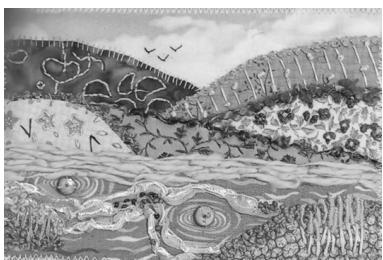
North Kent Embroiderers



There was much creativity on show at our last meeting. We welcomed back Elitta Fell mouse-line.co.uk for a practical silk painting workshop that we could take part in. The hall was noticeably quiet as we concentrated on using silk paints to carefully fill in the different sections of the image we had chosen. The outline of the image is created with 'Gutta'. This acts as a resist and stops the colours from bleeding into each other. The delicate silk was backed to reinforce it and to enable us to attach it to a greetings card blank. Everyone enjoyed the session. Back in March this year, Beth Power of Dotty Textiles <https://www.dottystextiles.com/> had also led a

workshop with us based on her own beautiful 'stitchscapes'. These are embroidered pictures which use decorative fabrics as a basis for the design and embroidery style. Beth set us a challenge to complete our own 'stitchscape' by November this year. The results were stunning as you can see from the two shown on the left. They were truly pieces to be proud of and as you can see the style was used in one of our latest 'postcards'

The theme for this month was waterfall/ stream/ pond (to include some Fly Stitch).



If you or someone you know would maybe like to start a new hobby and to join our group or would just like to find out a bit more about us then please pay us a visit - look at our website <https://northkentembroiderers.co.uk/> or email us at: info@northkentembroiderers.co.uk or contact our Chairman, Eileen on 01474 324734

Happy stitching, Karen
All photos with permission.





Cobham
Gardeners'
Society

Meetings & Shows at the Meadow Room in Dickensian Cobham, Kent
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Wednesday 11th February 2026 - 7pm Pruning - How, When and Why

Kevin Tooher ..also known as Sirplantalot Takes us through the do's and don'ts of pruning a wide range of woody plants including flowering shrubs, roses and climbers. A subject which is often made unnecessarily complicated!

Members free - non members £3

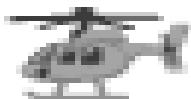


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Local Funding Group '24

COFFEE MORNING
ST MARY'S CHURCH ROOM
2ND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH at 10.30am
Meet old Friends and make new Friends



**Coffee Morning held on the 11th December
in St Mary's Church Room.**

Many thanks to all those who attended the coffee morning in aid of the Kent, Surrey, Sussex Air Ambulance Charity.

Also thanks to those who gave a donation.

The amount raised was £240

Well done
Lindsey and Paul

THANK YOU. As we celebrate a New Year, I would like to thank everyone involved in ensuring the magazine can be enjoyed each month. Here goes; Thanks are due to the regular contributors who fill the magazine with local news and our local advertisers. Janet who looks after the advertisers and subscriptions. Veronica who does the proof reading, Kalle for distributing the magazines to our wonderful delivery volunteers, who bravely take on the parish letter boxes. Thanks also to Adrian who provides the lovely front covers, Al at Wested for the printing and for going that extra step by dropping them off to Cobham.

Sadly many parish magazine are no longer in circulation...so a very big thanks to you for sticking with us. Tina

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Thursday Fellowship.

Our January meeting is on 29th January at 2.00 pm in the St. John's Centre, Meopham. This change is because we wanted to invite Roz Oliver back after she was prevented from coming because of covid in November. Roz will give us a talk on her role as a Volunteer at Rochester Prison.

You are welcome to join us for the talk and then enjoy a cup of tea before we finish at 3.45.p.m.



LUDDESDOWN SOCIETY

NEW YEARS DAY *Walk*

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11AM

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Sole Street WI

On November 25th, we welcomed Stephen Kelly from Kent Police, who delivered an insightful talk on fraud and scams — offences that can affect virtually anyone. Stephen outlined the various methods criminals use to target individuals and offered practical advice on how we can safeguard ourselves emphasising the importance of trusting one's instincts.

He also shared a helpful A–B–C acronym to remember when faced with suspicious situations:

A – never Assume

B – never Believe

C – always Confirm

This is a particularly useful principle to bear in mind whenever something seems 'too good to be true.'



On 9th December, our members gathered to enjoy a wonderfully festive Christmas lunch—and what a treat it was! Our amazing culinary crew truly outdid themselves, serving up a delicious 'coq au vin,' alongside a tasty vegetarian option, all followed by an irresistible spread of desserts. Full plates, happy faces, and festive cheer all round. A huge thank you to the ladies for all their hard work in making it such a memorable occasion!



Our next meeting will take place on the 27th January and will be a social gathering for fun & games. The members of Sole Street WI wish you a very healthy & Happy New Year.

Jayne Holden

Lewis Solomon

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Dates for your Diary



The dates for the Cobham Parish Council meetings are:

Tuesday 6th January St Mary's Church Rooms at 7.30pm
Tuesday 3rd February Meadow Rooms at 7.30pm
Tuesday 3rd March St Mary's Church Rooms at 7.30pm
Annual Parish Assembly Tuesday 21st April Meadow Rooms at 7.30pm
Annual Parish Meeting Tuesday 12th May Meadow Rooms at 7.30pm
Tuesday 2nd June St Mary's Church Rooms at 7.30pm
Tuesday 7th July Meadow Rooms at 7.30pm
Tuesday 8th September St Mary's Church Rooms at 7.30pm
Tuesday 6th October Meadow Rooms at 7.30pm
Tuesday 3rd November St Mary's Church Rooms at 7.30pm
Tuesday 1st December Meadow Rooms at 7.30pm

The dates for the Luddesdown Parish Council meetings are:

Monday 19th January Luddesdown Village Hall
Annual Parish Assembly Monday 16th March Luddesdown Village Hall
Annual Parish Meeting Mon 18th May Luddesdown Village Hall
Monday 20th July Luddesdown Village Hall
Monday 21st September Luddesdown Village Hall
Monday 16th November Luddesdown Village Hall
All meetings start at 7.30pm

- * Keep an eye out for details of forthcoming events at St Mary's Church Room.
- * Concerts presented by Two Women events at St Mary Magdalen Church Cobham, will be advertised within these pages
- * See page 25 for the full years programme of events from the Cobham Gardeners' Society and page 6 for details of the February Talk



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For bookings and enquiries please
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email lvhbooking@gmail.com

COBHAM & LUDDESDOWN W.I.

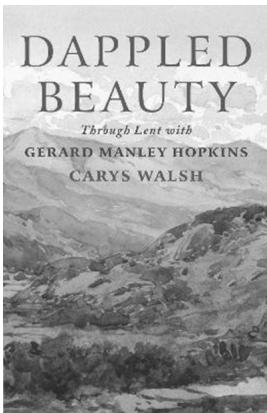
Our Festive Tea this year on 3rd December was a great success and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. The food tables stretched the whole length of the hall and were stacked with some delicious food, provided by our members. We started with a hearty rendering of "Jerusalem" and, after an introduction by our president, June Nicholson, we tucked in, trying at the same time, to solve some tricky questions in the two quizzes. The committee were the hostesses for the afternoon (assisted by others). There was no background Christmas music but we sang carols and were entertained by members of the "Read and Rabbit" book group, who gave a condensed and amusing rendering of "Cinderella" whose glass slipper turned out to be a wellington boot! And "Snow White", performed as a double act by Anne Latcham (of CADs fame) and her sister, Molly Neville. (Their table of six ladies, also managed to win the quiz). The raffle was drawn at the end of the afternoon, and a separate draw took place for the beautiful floral table decorations, provided by Marilyn Haigh, together with their embroidered mats, made by members of the Needlework group.

We look forward now to the start of the New Year and to our first meeting, which will be on Wednesday 7th January 2026, when our speaker will be demonstrating First Aid techniques.

We wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year and if any ladies would like to come along to our meetings, (which are at 2pm on the first Wednesday of each month) as a visitor, (we charge £2 to cover the cost of tea, cake etc.) you will be warmly welcomed and we guarantee that you will meet some wonderful ladies and, who knows, may even decide to join us as a member yourself. In addition to our monthly meetings, we have a number of groups which meet in various locations to pursue interests such as art, craft, reading etc, and there is also a popular lunch club.

For further information, contact our secretary, Jenny Brooker by email at cobhamluddesdown@wkfwi.org

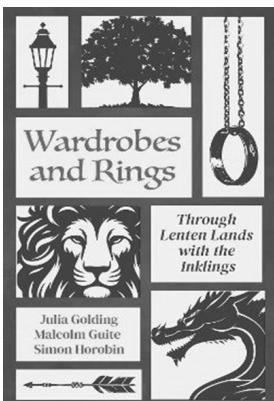




Dappled Beauty - Through Lent with Gerard Manley Hopkins

By Carys Walsh, Canterbury Press, £12.99

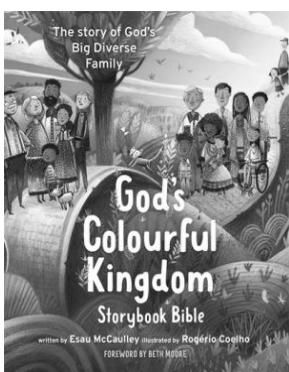
Following the success of her first book on R. S. Thomas, Carys Walsh invites readers to experience Lent through the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins—one of English literature's most celebrated religious poets. Hopkins' vivid, inventive language and profound spiritual insight make him a powerful companion for the Lenten season. His poetry captures both human frailty and divine presence, drawing us into the beauty of creation and the journey of Christ toward the Passion.



Wardrobes and Rings - Through Lenten Lands with the Inklings

By Julia Golding, Malcolm Guite, and Simon Horobin, Canterbury Press, £12.99

Drawing on the work of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, as well as friends of the Inklings such as Dorothy Sayers and T.S. Eliot, this book explores through their eyes a faith which is tinged with seriousness, creativity and joy. Using their fiction, poetry, and essays, the book offers daily readings and reflections on the cross and resurrection, helping you to rediscover Lent through the lens of imagination fused faith.



God's Colourful Kingdom Storybook Bible - the Story of God's Big Diverse Family

By Esau McCaulley. SPCK £11.99

This book tells the story of God's love of ethnic diversity and his concern for the poor, His justice and His compassion. It includes 16 Old Testament stories and 15 New Testament stories, guiding children and their parents and carers to discover God's overarching story of grace and His intentional design for a diverse church that cares about the vulnerable. Several of the stories are not traditionally included in storybook Bibles, providing new reflective opportunities for families.

BELL RINGING by Peter Hartley

On Advent Sunday we rang a Quarter Peal of 1260 changes of Plain Bob Doubles in 47 minutes in fond remembrance of Nigel Pagram. We were an all Cobham band of ringers – Treble Peter Hartley 2, Simon Williamson 3, Christian Antrobus 4, Mike Hyde 5, Stuart Edwards (conductor) Tenor Byron Aldous. We had all enjoyed ringing with Nigel.

Nigel was happiest ringing the Tenor bell which in a Doubles method beats out a valuable steady rhythm while the front five bells weave the particular changing order of the named method being rung.

Ringing is a team exercise and our 6 bells need 6 people to ring them. Fortunately, at Cobham we have a dedicated band of ringers, in spite of the calls of family and work on their time.

Unfortunately farming and ringing have a high average age and new recruits are always needed. But at Cobham we still manage to ring for our practices on Wednesday evenings and the now less frequent Sunday Morning Services.

Advancing years, I know, make the steps up the church tower ever more challenging and the bells seem ever heavier. Our Cobham ringers are very courteously considerate.

Most ringing bells are in Anglican churches, so the health of the Church of England is significant. Reading recent copies of the weekly “The Ringing World” it is encouraging to learn that the 8 bells of King’s Lynn Minster were restored in 2005; the 8 “Liberation Bells” of the Town Church, St. Peter Port, Guernsey were cast in 1995; the 8 “a bit tricky” bells of Fairford, Gloucestershire continue to be rung; and the 2 bells at Brympton d’Evercy, Somerset can be chimed again.

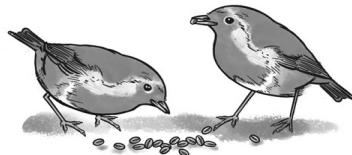
Nigel Haig, when a student, rang at St. Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh. Now with two extra bells they have a full ring of 12 bells. Amongst this good news are stories of teenage ringers “Lancs Lads and Lassies”, ringing and riding cycling ringers “The Society of Roving Ringers” and the experiences of a husband and wife who, just retired, have learnt to ring. When you can handle a bell you are a valued member of your local band of ringers.

2026 is coming and may bells keep ringing.

Happy New Year.



St John's Meopham with St Mildred's Nurstead
Church Services January 2026



Sunday 4th January 9.45am All Age Worship at St John's
 11.30am Holy Communion at St Mildred's

Wednesday 7th January 10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre

Sunday 11th January 9.45am Holy Communion at St John's
 11.30am Mattins at St Mildred's

Wednesday 14th January 10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre

Sunday 18th January 9.45am Morning Worship at St John's
 11.15am Churches Prayer Mtg at St John's Centre

Wednesday 21st January **NO** 10am Holy Communion at St John's

Sunday 25th January 9.45am Holy Communion at St John's
 11.30am Family Service at St Mildred's

Wednesday 28th January 10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre

Cobham, Luddesdowne and Sole Street

Church Services during January 2026



Sunday 4th January

Sunday 11th January

10:30am **Holy Communion (BCP), Luddesdowne**

Sunday 18th January

Sunday 25th January

Midweek services in Sole Street

St Mary's Church Room, Informal Morning Prayer

9:30am 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th January



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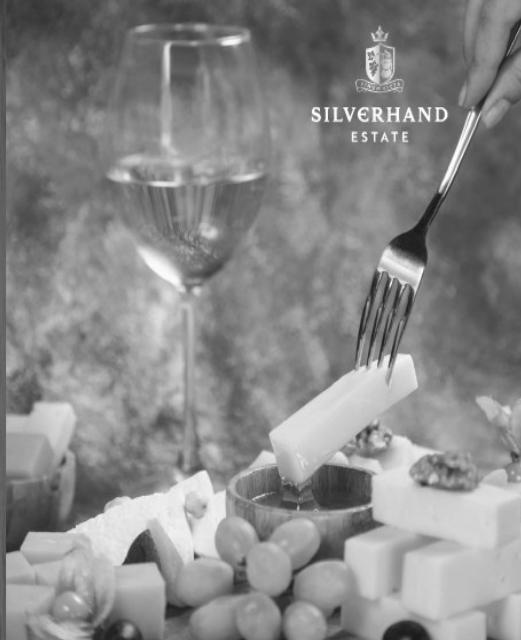
CELLAR DOOR

THE ART OF PAIRING CHEESE

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Thursday 15th January 2026
7:00pm-9:30pm

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Burns Night – 25th January

Each year, Burns Night takes place on 25th January to celebrate the life and legacy of Scotland's National Bard, Robert Burns. (1759 to 1796)

Burns Night is usually a combination of haggis, neeps, tatties, and warming 'drams', accompanied by recitals of some of Robert Burns' famous work.

Robert Burns was born in 1759 and died only 37 years later, in 1796. But his life and writing certainly left a rich inheritance behind. Here are some interesting facts:

- After Queen Victoria and Christopher Columbus, Robert Burns has more statues dedicated to him around the world than any other non-religious figure.
- American music legend Bob Dylan said that his greatest-ever source of inspiration was Burns' A Red, Red Rose
- J.D. Salinger's 1951 novel 'The Catcher in the Rye' based its title on the Robert Burns poem, 'Comin' Thro' the Rye'.
- Auld Lang Syne is a song of friendship in China. Known as You Yi Di Jiu Tian Chang – or Friendship Forever and Ever – the song is played at graduations and other formal gatherings.
- 'Is There For Honest Poverty' (also known as 'A Man's a Man for a' That') was chosen to open the new Scottish Parliament in 1999 due to its themes of equality and universal brotherhood.
- 'Auld Lang Syne' is recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records as one of the top three most popular songs in the entire English language.
- American fashion designer Tommy Hilfiger claims to be a direct descendant of Robert Burns.
- A book of Burns' poetry was carried into space by astronaut Nick Patrick during a two-week space mission in 2010. The book completed a 5.7-million-mile trip, managing 217 orbits of the Earth.
- Burns fathered at least 12 children during his short lifetime. His youngest son, Maxwell, was born on the day of Burns' funeral.



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Cobham Gardeners' Society

Cobham Gardeners' Society programme of Expert Speaker Talks & Shows for 2026, all talks and shows are held at The Meadow Room and are as follows:

Wednesday 11th February, 7pm

talk Kevin Tooher – Pruning, the How, When and Why

Wednesday 11th March, 7pm

talk Caroline Halfpenny – Companion Planting

Saturday 28th March

Spring Show

Wednesday 13th May, 7pm

Talk Paul Grimmer – Plants Suitable for All Year Planting

Saturday 13th June

Summer Show

Saturday 12th September

Autumn Show

Wednesday 14th October, 7pm

talk Dr John Hughes – Behind The Scenes At Kew Gardens

Wednesday 2nd December, 7pm

AGM & Christmas Get Together

Non-members are welcome at the talks and pay £3. Viewing of shows free to all.

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January - Often The coldest month

January might be the middle of winter but as the days lengthen the garden starts to grow. Now is a great time to plan for the coming gardening year and to order seeds and plants. Enjoy the fresh air, on dry sunny days, and check your winter protection, stakes, ties and supports are still working after any severe weather. Also put out food for birds and leave some garden areas uncut, a little longer, to provide shelter for wildlife in your garden.

RHS - Top 10 jobs this month

1. Recycle your Christmas tree by shredding it for mulch
2. Clean pots and greenhouses ready for spring
3. Dig over any vacant plots that have not been dug already
4. Disperse worm casts in lawns
5. Inspect stored tubers of Dahlia, Begonia and Canna for rots or drying out
6. Prune apple and pear trees
7. Start forcing rhubarb
8. Plan your vegetable crop rotations for the coming season
9. Keep putting out food and water for hungry birds
10. Make a polythene shelter for outdoor peaches and nectarines, to protect against peach leaf curl

(See page 25 for events list)

Meopham Library Writing Group meets again on Thursday 8th January 2026 at 10am after the New Year bank holiday. The writing theme is “The Letter”, which can be used as a starting point for a poem, short story or an article and there is also a writing challenge. Anyone who is interested in writing, either as a beginner or a more experienced writer, is warmly invited to join our small, friendly group and new members are always very welcome. Creative writing can be used to record special memories for the family or to help people who are facing difficult times, as well as being a very enjoyable and sociable activity. Future meetings will be held on 5th February, 5th March and 2nd April.
Please ring 01474 813379 for more information.

Luddesdown & District Rights of Way Group.

We are a small friendly group that usually walks from The Cock Inn, Henley Street, Luddesdown, Gravesend DA13 0XB, at 11am on Wednesdays. We walk at a gentle pace for some 90 minutes in beautiful countryside. Occasionally we lead weekend walks. With four Socials a year in Luddesdown Village Hall and a twice yearly Newsletter, we would be delighted if you joined us for a walk or two. Becoming a member costs £7 per person a year. Please contact Walks Coordinator Janet Ferguson, preferably at janetferguson@hotmail.fr . Ian Sheridan, Acting Chairman, 07951 927 517

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The 1st South Street Boys Brigade and Girls Association Company starts again on Friday 9-1-26 at South Street Baptist Church, Wrotham Road, Meopham, DA13 0QJ (next to *Hope Hill*).

There will be an Anchors Taster Evening on Friday 16th January at 6pm, for boys and girls aged

5-8 years old, with craft activities, games and activities all about animals.

Please ring 01474 815039 or 01474 813379 or visit

www.southstreetbaptist.org.uk for more information.

Boys and girls aged 5-18 years are invited to join us every Friday evening 6pm-7.30pm during term time. Please visit **www.BOYS-BRIGADE.org.uk** to find out more about Boys Brigade.

Song time starts again on 5th January and meets every Monday during term time 9.45am-11am for families with babies and children under five.

There are lots of different toys, art activities, musical instruments and singing.



TWO WOMEN EVENTS

Present:

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St Mary Magdalene Church, Cobham KENT

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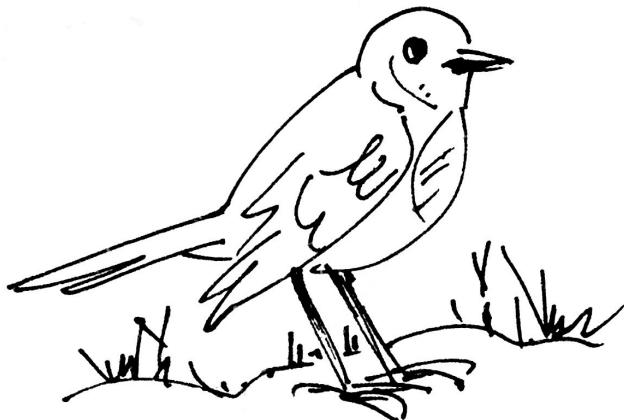
01474 814433



What colour
are the Robin's
chest feathers?

The mice look
nice and warm
with their mugs
of hot chocolate
– are the
Marshmallows
all white?

Can you colour
in the pictures?



I hope you had a wonderful Christmas.
I have recently completed my training course.
As you can see from the photograph I
received a certificate and a rosette! I will, of
course, miss my new friends however, as they say
on Strictly we have completed 'our journey' and we
are moving on with our new skills into a New Year!
Even though I am now a highly qualified canine, I
have told the editor that I am very happy to
continue in my role as assistant editor, for a small
increase in treats.
Love and licks -Paddy

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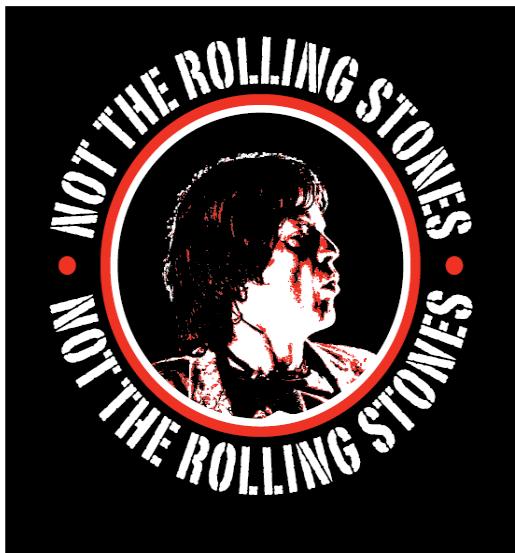
6th January brings Epiphany - the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. Matthew calls them 'Magi', the name of an ancient priestly caste from Persia. Early church tradition says there were three: Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior. As for their gifts? Gold is a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense is a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh is a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things.

Epiphany Visit Wise Men Magi Priestly Persia Balthasar Caspar
Melchior Gold Wealth wisdom Incense Worship sacrifice Myrrh
Symbol Healing Embalming Ancient Gifts Tradition Challenged
World



TWO WOMEN EVENTS

Present:



Thursday 15th January 2026
St Mary Magdalene Church, Cobham Kent

Tickets £27 in advance (+ booking fee)

Book online on www.twowomenevents.com

Fully Licensed Bar (cash only)

7pm for 7.30 start

contact: info@twowomenevents.com