

**CLENCHWARTON**  
**Your Village News**  
**JANUARY 2026**

happy  
NEW  
Year!





SOME OF THE WONDERFUL CRAFT STALLS AT OUR WINTER CRAFT FAIR LAST NOVEMBER.

SEE PAGE 12 AND 13 FOR A REPORT ABOUT THIS EVENT.

## ***Welcome to your Magazine***

This is a monthly magazine and contains adverts from local businesses near you, village and church news and “what’s on in the village” as well as articles from our parishioners and the community. We hope it is a valuable resource for newcomers to the village as well as our long-standing residents.

### **St Margaret’s Church Clenchwarton (OPEN 10am – 4pm every day)**

**Rector: Reverend Barbara Burton  
01945 781228**

#### **Churchwardens:**

Debra McGowan – 01553 773467  
[warden@clenchwarton-church.org.uk](mailto:warden@clenchwarton-church.org.uk)  
Andy Taylor – 07939 055031

#### **Parish Safeguarding Officer:**

Jan Taylor – 07725 940453

Please contact Debra McGowan for Baptisms, Marriages, etc.

**St Margaret's Parish Church, Church Road, Clenchwarton,  
Kings Lynn, PE34 4EA**

**<https://clenchwarton-church.org.uk>**

### **Contact your magazine**

Editor: Grahame Sampson: 01553 769819  
[grahamesampson@btinternet.com](mailto:grahamesampson@btinternet.com)  
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All other enquiries and advertising enquires:  
Debra McGowan: 01553 773467  
[warden@clenchwarton-church.org.uk](mailto:warden@clenchwarton-church.org.uk)

The advertising and magazine subscriptions help keep the magazine in print and provides some funds towards church projects. If you can help with the magazine please let either Debra or Grahame know.

**We need your articles in by 14th January for the  
February 2026 edition**

*CLENCHWARTON*  
*Your Village News*

**From the editors:**

We are determined to make this magazine an inclusive voice for our entire community.

We welcome all contributions, however modest, on the understanding that we will not publish any offensive material, and may have to edit articles for reasons of space.

**The views expressed in this magazine are those of the contributors.**

GS; DM; AJT; JT

*Welcome to the January edition of*  
*YOURVILLAGE NEWS*

We wish all our readers a very Happy New Year, and hope that 2026 remains a peaceful one for all of us. Once again thank you to all our contributors, without whom this magazine would not be possible.

In this edition we travel back in time to the 1500s, travel abroad to South Africa, continue with life memories from Debra, and school memories from Grahame, learn about New Year traditions, and about how some of our wonderful local birdlife cope with the winds that we have here in our beautiful area.

*JT*

**THIS MAGAZINE NEEDS YOUR HELP!!**

- We would love to have some more adverts in this magazine! Do you run a small (or large!) business locally and feel you would like to support this magazine by taking out an advert? Prices listed on page 5 opposite. Contact Debra on 01553 773467
- When putting the magazine together there are often gaps and I have to try to find something of interest to fill them. It would be great if other people would be willing to send in articles about something that interests them - a hobby, an interesting country they have visited etc. Editors rights reserved!! Please email [grahamesampson@btinternet.com](mailto:grahamesampson@btinternet.com)
- Photos needed - lots of opportunities: emerging flowers, trees budding etc. Do you have a special celebration in your family? Can we see a photo? Please email a copy to me: [1753jan@gmail.com](mailto:1753jan@gmail.com)

**Photo credits.** Front cover - top small picture: free clip art

Front cover drawing: Brian Edwards

Inside cover: Jane Moore and Tracey Groves

Page 13 and 39: Jan Taylor



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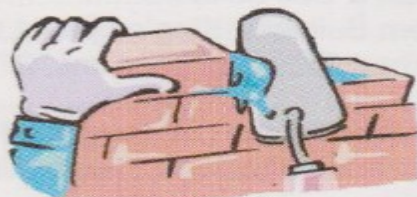


Answers on page on page 38

All the answers are towns in Britain with the word New in it

- 1 This should be in Sussex but actually it is in the Wirral.
- 2 A new place to feel safe?
- 3 Sounds like you have found a new way to open the door.
- 4 Leading member of the priory weighs twenty hundredweight.
- 5 Was George Stephenson involved?
- 6 There are at least four of these in South Wales, Shropshire, Essex and the Isle of Wight.
- 7 Noah is still busy. They are expecting a flood in Nottinghamshire.
- 8 Sounds like there is a new successor to James and Charles and he weighs twenty hundred weight.
- 9 They have apparently built a new fort under a fruit. Well - sounds like it.
- 10 Nice to hear there is a new place to shop.

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## *From The Methodist Chapel*

### **Story Cafe**

This is on Sunday 11th January starting at 6.30pm. If you have not been yet, you are missing out on a fun experience. Just listen if you wish, or please join in – just let your imagination run away with you.

### **The Clenchwarton Talk**

This will be on Saturday 17th January starting at 2.30pm. It will be a mystery talk as it has not been finalised at the time of going to print. Please come - who ever we have it is sure to be entertaining and educational.

### **Free school holiday Brunch at the Methodist Chapel (FiSH)**

This initiative was launched in November during the school half term, and the aim is to offer heathy breakfasts to anyone who needs it in this cost of living crisis. It is being run by the Revd. Jackie Goddard and a team of volunteers from the Methodist Church. Everyone is welcome and all eat free. Revd. Jackie said “This is more than breakfast. We want families to feel welcome and know that there is a place where they can come to eat for free”.

The next FiSH breakfast will be on Wednesday 18th Feb from 9:30am to 11:30am.

## *A polite request from St Margaret's Church about our Memorial garden*

It is lovely that so many of the memorial stones in our Memorial Garden are tended regularly. In order to keep it looking well cared for it is important that fresh flowers are removed when they are dead; that all artificial flowers are changed regularly as they fade, discolour and in some cases start to come apart; and that only small funeral flowers are left as there is simply not room for large displays. Also please do not spread memorial flowers etc on to the grass surrounding the stones - it is very time consuming for the volunteer cutting the grass to have to remove, then replace them each time.

**Please remove all Christmas items from the memorial stones and graves by the 31st January. After this date anything left will be removed. Thank you.**

## *St Margaret's Church Services in January*



- Sunday 4th            Revd. Barbara Burton - Holy Communion Service
- Sunday 11th        Morning prayer with Hymns, led by a Churchwarden
- Sunday 18th        Revd. Barbara Burton - Holy Communion Service
- Sunday 25th        Morning prayer with Hymns, led by a Churchwarden

All services at 10am unless otherwise stated.

**ALL VERY WELCOME at all our services, whatever your age.**

## *Methodist Chapel Services in January*

- Sunday 4th            Annual Covenant Service led by Revd. Jackie Goddard
- Sunday 11th        Café service
- Sunday 18th        Service led by P Batstone
- Sunday 25th        Holy Communion led by Revd. Jackie Goddard



All services begin at 10.30am unless otherwise stated

**Please join us at any of our services. All are welcome to attend.**

## *Walking Group - Saturday January 10th 10.15am*



Our next walk is on Saturday January 10th beginning at 10.15am from the Tuesday Market Place. This is not a Lynn guided walk but we will be following the town walls. Please note that if it is pouring with rain or there is snow this walk will not take place. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge.

## *Quiz - Friday 2nd January 7.30pm*

**Methodist Church Hall, Main Road, Clenchwarton**

It's back! After a Christmas break the Quiz returns on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> January starting at 7.00pm. Just come along and teams will be formed, or bring a team with you. Refreshments are provided. There is no cost but donations are gratefully accepted.

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*January Diary of Events in Clenchwarton and surrounding area.*



**EVERY THURSDAY 10am - 12 Noon**  
**COFFEE MORNING at St MARGARET'S CHURCH**  
**ALL WELCOME**

- Thurs 1st 10am -12pm **Coffee Morning** at St Margaret's Church
- Fri 2nd 7pm **Quiz** Methodist Chapel hall
- Tues 6th 10am -12pm **Coffee Morning** Methodist Chapel
- Thurs 8th 10am -12pm **Coffee Morning** at St Margaret's Church
- Sat 10th 10.15am **Walking Group** Tuesday Market Place
- Sun 11th 6.30pm **Story Café** Methodist Chapel see page 9 for details
- Tues 13th 10am - 12pm **Coffee Morning** Methodist Chapel
- Thurs 15th 10am - 12pm **Coffee Morning** St Margaret's Church
- Sat 17th 2.30pm **The Clenchwarton Talk** Methodist Chapel
- Tues 20th 10am - 12pm **Coffee Morning** Methodist Chapel
- Tues 20th 7.30pm **Talk - The Guildhall in Lynn**, at Marriotts Warehouse, Lynn  
see page 21 for details
- Thurs 22nd 10am - 12pm **Coffee Morning** St Margaret's Church
- Tues 27th 10am - 12pm **Coffee Morning** Methodist Chapel
- Thurs 29th 10am - 12pm **Coffee Morning** St Margaret's Church

*St Margaret's Church - Looking Back*

At the end of November we had our annual **Christmas Craft fair** which was very well attended. There were 15 excellent local craft stalls, plus the church stall. The ladies on refreshments were kept very busy all day and the event raised a very welcome £434 for church funds.

We took four large carrier bags to the **food bank** in Kings Lynn in December, and

*Continued on page 13*

## *St Margaret's Church Looking back* Continued from page 12

the very next day there were goodies in our foodbank again. Please keep them coming. Thank you for your generosity.

At the end of November we were delighted that two members of our congregation - **Ellie Hammond and Julian Cox** - were married at St Margaret's. Both have been members of our church for several years. The wedding took place on Friday 28th November, and they were surrounded by their family and friends.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ELLIE AND JULIAN FROM ALL YOUR FRIENDS AT ST MARGARET'S.



One of our Thursday Coffee Morning ladies, Vera Osborne, once again was very happy to run a **Christmas Greenery arrangement workshop** for us in December. Nine people attended and I think all who did were amazed at the end results. Not only is Vera an excellent and very helpful teacher, but she also provided much of the necessary greenery, oasis, and the bases we needed. I was extremely pleased with my final result! See page 40 for some photos.

Because of the early print date the special Christmas services are still to happen as I write this. You will be able to read about them in next month's magazine.

On a very sad note we said goodbye to **Andrew Jarvis**, at a memorial service in church on December 11th. The service was attended by his family and many actor friends, as well as friends from Clenchwarton. It was wonderful to hear the various readings (including some Shakespeare) read with such expression, and to hear the high regard and warmth with which he was held in the acting fraternity - 'the master'. Rest in peace dear friend.

We have been the **Village Warm Hub** during the colder months and this will continue until the warmer weather appears. There are books to read, and self serve tea/coffee and biscuits for you to have.

*Looking Forward is on page 24*



## From the Little Yellow Smart Car

Revd. Jackie Goddard

[j.goddard@methodist.org.uk](mailto:j.goddard@methodist.org.uk) (07881 952098)  
(Clenchwarton & Terrington St Clement Methodist Churches)



2026 is like a blank page waiting to be written on.

It is full of days ready to begin. The new year stretches ahead with possibilities, but with no certainties. There is anticipation, and anxiety, about the future. We pace our lives by the routines of each new month, or by the changing seasons, and we often present the change of year with a demand - that it somehow unfolds in our favour. But January moves on without waiting for us. We attempt to bend it to our will it by our New Year resolutions but often realise that it has run away with the changes we hoped to make, and we look for the next place of reset – perhaps with the coming of Spring.

Jesus said, “Which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life or increase your height? God knows and will take care of what you need.” Instead of trying to control things, Jesus points us to things that lead to God’s Kingdom. Righteousness is one of the few religious words which hasn’t been adopted by politics, publicity, or economics– perhaps because it challenges less-than loving practices. Righteousness means choosing to put God’s priorities ahead of profit and praise. It’s guiding principle is love and truth is fundamental to decision making. Righteousness can be found in what the Bible calls the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – not by making resolutions to change, but by reaching out to others and growing together.

I pray that we can grow together in our villages through 2026 - seeking righteousness and better relationships, choosing to build community, serving one another, and encouraging the best in us to become more real. I wish you all every blessing for 2026 and peace in all it brings.

Revd. Jackie Goddard

## PASTORAL LETTER

*Reverend Barbara Burton writes.....*



As you receive this magazine most of us will be thinking about taking down our Christmas decorations and getting 'back to normal'. Some years ago, I was in Poland in early January and I celebrated Epiphany in the lovely town of Krakow. Epiphany is a church season which begins by celebrating the arrival of the three kings on the 6th January. In the main square in Krakow, the crowds had gathered. Many people went to mass in the Cathedral, and almost every-



one was wearing a cardboard crown. At 12 noon three men dressed as the Kings arrived and went into the Cathedral, carrying their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, which they left at the Crib. It was very moving.

In our culture, we tend to include the Kings in our celebration of Christmas and forget that they belong to the season of Epiphany, which is why many churches only introduce them to the Christmas Crib on the 6th January and leave the Crib in place until Candlemas on 2nd February, which marks the end of Epiphany.

Those three men took incredible risks to visit Jesus. When they arrived at the stable and saw Jesus, they fell down and worshipped him. We don't hear any more about them, but we assume that they returned home and told people what they had seen. Their lives had been transformed by their experience. As we begin a New Year and enter the season of Epiphany, may we allow our lives to be transformed by the love of God in Jesus which is for all people.

With my prayers and best wishes for you all for 2026

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## *VIEW FROM THE GALLERY* By David Hutton

### *Clenchwarton Parish Council Meeting Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December.*

Although the meeting took place on a wet miserable evening, approximately 30 residents were in attendance. However, only four councillors were present.

The meeting started promptly and several residents asked questions. I took the opportunity to ask why the Co-option policy was not published on the PC website especially as this is a 'live' issue in the village. Nobody seemed to have any idea. A resident asked why our council couldn't follow the good practice and publish minutes earlier, in draft form. Councillors responded with what seemed to suggest 'we do it our way'. There was a question on when the report of the structural survey of the Pavilion would be available (took place in August). There is no timescale regarding its availability. A parent also eloquently shared his concerns regarding the 'them and us' mindset he has detected towards the football club. At this point Cllr Fox, speaking independently, suggested to the football club that it could be better for them if they could buy land and have their own venue.

Regarding PC finances the good news is that the VAT refund has been received .....£42,000!!!!

Cllr Thornalley reported succinctly, that 3 new bus shelters will soon be in the village on the route to Terrington which hopefully will protect schoolchildren from the rain in the mornings. Over 800 days have passed since this was first raised as an issue but we are getting closer. He also reported the new 45 space car park is progressing as biodiversity issues have been overcome. The busy councillor has also worked with the football club to make what seemed like significant progress on the contentious hire agreement.

Obviously, Hall Road parking was mentioned. Good news. The football club has been proactive in approaching the village school who will allow some parking

*Continued on page 20*

## *VIEW FROM THE GALLERY*

*continued from page 19*

on their premises over weekends. Cllr Lucas has drawn up some ideas for parking but these were not shared with those observing the meeting. As Facebook followers are aware, several residents have made our council aware that they are willing to serve as councillors. Finally, our council have gotten around to dealing with this issue (apparently they have been busy). Interviews should take place in January and applicants will also have to complete an aptitude test!

Finally, the football club will run a 'Family Fun Day' in May and their annual tournament in June.

### *My Reflections by David Hutton*

Firstly, I must commend Cllr Thornalley. His contributions provided me with a few moments of hope during the disappointing meeting. He's clearly the most effective councillor, and I know the football club believe his involvement in negotiations was a major factor in progress being made after months of stalemate.

The council's attitude to 'minutes' is disappointing. Following good practice didn't seem to interest some councillors. It's worth bringing to the attention of residents that our council recently decided to leave the National Association of Local Councils whose role includes promoting good practice. Approximately 90% of Parish Councils are members. As our council has few members and consequently possesses a limited collective skill set, this decision is baffling as they clearly need a lot of support. In October the PC made amendments to the standing orders. Parish Council standing orders are the essential rules that govern the internal operations of a council. They help control the way the council operates. Unsurprisingly, the minutes do not inform residents what changes were made.

Some councillors suggested that the reason some issues had not been tackled was because they were busy addressing other issues. I find this unconvincing. They have recently made some decisions that have upset many in the village and in the process they have lost a lot of trust. The changing of the Pavilion locks fiasco and all that went getting to that point, demonstrated flaws in the approach to governance which ultimately slows an organisation.

Finally, our council are getting around to interviewing potential councillors. I am unaware of these people and their capabilities. However, if any are deemed not good enough to sit on our council in its present state I would be stunned.

## *Reflections of a very Happy Birthday Party*

### *By Eileen Knight*

*(Editors note: apologies for not including this in the December issue – unusually we had too many articles).*

On November 2nd I went to Old Buckenham Village Hall for my granddaughter's 6th birthday party. As we approached the hall we went past the Old Buckenham High School, and Primary school. Entering the hall was like going into a theatre with no seats. The decor was light grey with royal blue curtains at the windows and long ones at the stage, and above were spotlights, making it a good venue for a panto! To start with some of the children were outside catching an array of bubbles, and an escaped balloon; others were inside also playing with the bubbles and balloons. There was plenty of lovely food, with orange and lemon quash always available. Then along came the birthday cake, complete with candles, prepared by the birthday girl's mum. Lots of games, including 'pass the parcel' – a must - were played. The kitchen had catering standard equipment in it and was very impressive and it is clearly used for many different events. The only downside was that we had to dispose of all our rubbish at home. It was a very nice different Sunday, enjoyed by all the children, who had gone home with party bags. Only the birthday girl, her young brother and her friend were left eating ice lollies.

### *King's Lynn Activities*

On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January starting at 7.30pm at Marriott's Warehouse, South Quay, King's Lynn there is a chance to hear about recent discoveries at the Guildhall in King's Lynn. The lecture cost is £5 per person. This is of national interest because of the link with William Shakespeare and particularly with the acting group he is associated with. Shakespeare's leading comic actor was also born in King's Lynn.

### *Did you make a New year's resolution?*

#### *Ever wondered why we do this?*

New Year's resolutions are more than just a modern trend; they are a practice rooted in history, from Roman promises to the two-faced god Janus to 17th-century diary pledges.

*Continued on page 22*

## *New Years Resolutions*

*Continued from page 21*

Historians believe that the Ancient Babylonians may have been the first to make New Year's Resolutions 4,000 years ago, although their New Year started in mid-March. Akitu, a 12-day religious festival, saw them reaffirm their loyalty to the king, debts were promised to be paid to Gods, and borrowed objects returned.

Romans in 46 BC had a similar practise, but by then Julius Caesar reformed the calendar, so that the start of New Year fell on 1 January, the month being inspired by Janus, the God with two faces. On 1 January, they looked back at the year that had just passed and looked forward to the year that was to come. Early Christians would look back and think about past mistakes, resolving to do better in the year to come.

In the Middle Ages, it is possible but not confirmed, that the Peacock Vow was a form of New Year's Resolution. Each knight gathered at a New Year's feast, had to place a hand on a peacock, whether dead, alive or cooked, we don't know, and swear to live by chivalric ideals for the coming year.

A diary entry written by Scottish gentlewoman, Anne Halkett, in 1671 lists a number of pledges taken from biblical verses including 'I will not offend any-more.' She titled the page Resolutions and wrote them on 2 January which would suggest that the practise of setting resolutions was in use at the time.

*Continued on page 23*



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## *New Years Resolutions*

*Continued from page 22*

By the beginning of the 19th century, it was common to find people setting and failing to keep such resolutions. An article from 'Walker's Hibernian Magazine in 1802, states that "the following personages have begun the year with a string of resolutions, which they all solemnly pledged to keep", before listing a series of obviously fictitious resolutions.

### **Why do we make New Year's resolutions?**

According to Ivo Vlaev, Professor of Behavioural Science at the University of Warwick, New Year's resolutions offer a 'powerful opportunity for self-reflection and intentional growth, that is rooted in six fundamental psychological needs shared by all humans, and they serve as a catalyst for meaningful change. Setting resolutions encourages us to assess our past achievements and shortcomings, and by taking stock of the past year we can identify what matters to us, laying the foundations for personal and professional development.

### **Why do we fail to keep New Year's Resolutions?**

- People set resolutions that are too big, rather than setting smaller, achievable, immediate goals.
- Understanding why you want to change is more important than thinking you should change.
- Change only becomes a habit by sticking with small steps rather than by making drastic and immediate changes.

### **Some of the most popular resolutions:**

- get fit or exercise more
- lose weight
- Reduce alcohol intake
- quit smoking or vaping
- improve their skills or knowledge
- become a better person
- embrace the important things in life
- spend more time with family and friends
- save more/spend less

**The vast majority of people break their resolution within 1-2 weeks! What was yours? By the time you have read this magazine will you have managed to keep it?**

Information taken from <https://www.beechcroft.co.uk/blog/lifestyle/new-year>

## *St Margaret's - Looking Forward*

We are delighted to announce that we already have two exciting events in the diary for you to come to next year. Be sure to put these dates in your diary and don't miss out. Ticket prices will be announced in next months magazine.

**15th MAY A RACE NIGHT 'LIKE NO OTHER'** Doors open 6.30pm for 7pm start. Will it be sheep, horses, or dogs racing - or another animal? Come along for an hysterically funny evening.

**20th JUNE SINGERS OF NOTE** Doors open 6.30pm for 7pm start. This fantastic group make their third visit to our church, raising the roof with their wonderful singing of an eclectic programme of songs from musical theatre, old standards, and religious songs written for choirs. Put the date in your diary and watch this space for details of tickets.



Other events will include a Strawberry Cream Tea, a Craft Fair or two, a talk on Judaism, a Quiz, and maybe a Christmas concert by a visiting choir. So lots to be looking forward to. All events will be advertised in this magazine, on the village Facebook pages and on posters around the village.

## *Some New Year traditions from around the world*

(Information taken from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwxjjsjg>)

### **New Year Fireworks**

The tradition of lighting up the sky with fireworks at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve goes back more than a thousand years. The ancient Chinese first discovered pyrotechnics and used them to ward off evil spirits during festivities. Eventually, this custom spread to Europe, and the Italians started using fireworks to welcome the New Year.

### **Scotland**

New Year celebrations in Scotland are an important part of the calendar. The festivities are called Hogmanay and last three days in all. 2nd January is usually an extra bank holiday in Scotland, depending on which day of the week New Year's Day falls.

*Continued on page 30*

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## *Memories*

### *Part 7 by Debra McGowan*

I worked at the factory for about a year. Dad had a Ford Escort van at that time and he was teaching me how to drive. I would drive to work and then he would drop me off and drive on to the brewery's depot at Acton. My Dad and his fellow workers had been made redundant from Benskin's brewery in Watford High Street when it ceased brewery operations in 1972. However, a few weeks later a number of workers including my Dad were offered jobs at an Ind Coope depot in Acton and they were allowed to keep their redundancy pay.

Then I decided to go to Canada, so I got a job working as a nanny in Toronto. I looked after two girls: Shana aged 7 and Amanda aged 5. I stayed in Canada for a year and celebrated my 21st birthday there. I had a great relationship with Sally and Elliott who employed me to look after their two girls. They had never employed a nanny before, so they had no expectations, and as I had never done the job either we worked it out together. I do remember that on my arrival with the family, Sally told me that as well as looking after the children I would have some housework to do. One of the jobs that she asked me to do was to clean the carpets, to which I replied "where do you keep your hoover?" Sally looked at me and said "I don't have a hoover", to which I exclaimed "You must have a hoover, how do you expect me to clean your carpet without one!". Sally looked at me rather perplexed. "I'm really sorry I don't have a hoover, I have a Kirby!". Happily she did see the funny side, when I explained that we often refer to all brands of carpet cleaner as a Hoover.

I loved Canada and I got on really well with the family I worked for but I missed home. My parents came out for a holiday whilst I was living there. It was wonderful to see them but it only reminded me how much I missed them, and home. I came back home to England after a year for a two week holiday; it was all the time Sally could allow me. Unfortunately it was a big mistake, it wasn't long enough! By the time I had seen all my friends and family I was back on the plane to Canada. The home sickness now kicked in big time. So I decided to come home. There were tears from Shana and Amanda and promises to write, which we did for many years and then life moves on, and we lost contact.

I remember Sally telling me in one of her letters about 'Mushkins'. He was a young grey squirrel that I had tamed and I used to hand feed him. He was confident around all the kids in the neighbourhood and he was always on the scrounge for titbits. Sally had a fly screen on the rear kitchen door leading out to the garden. Sally came home from shopping one day in the summer to find

*Continued on page 29*

*Memories by Debra McGowan*      *Continued from page 28*

that 'Mushkins' had torn the fly screen and got into the kitchen and helped himself to some biscuits that had been left out on the table. Sally was not impressed!

(To be continued next month)

*Memories of Life at Clenchwarton Primary School  
in the 1960's. By Grahame Sampson*

I attended the primary school between 1961 and 1967 when the Headmaster was Mr Milnes. When I started there was no hall and the school was divided into two separate blocks. Juniors were in the old school and infants were in the newly built new school. Separate assemblies were held in the classrooms. The Hall was being built whilst I was in the infants and was in use when I was in the Junior School and then the hall was used for assemblies for the junior school. Infants continued to use one of their classrooms.

Most of our playing was in the school ground at the front of the school. There was only one car then and Miss Snasdell parked near the Schoolhouse. Where today there is a car park, in my day we used that area as a football pitch. There was a coal bunker at the back which was one goalmouth and the other goalmouth was part of the railings next to the road.

When I started the Infant school teachers were Mrs Howard who was not married at that time, she became Mrs Howard later, and Miss Flowers. Miss Flowers had left just before I went up to Class 2 and had not been replaced so we had two supply teachers – one taught Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the other taught Tuesdays and Thursdays. Eventually they were both replaced by Mrs Beck.

The teachers who taught me at Junior School were Miss Snasdell, Mr Bayfield, Mr Monen, Mr Bayfield again and Mr Milnes. There was also a class 3a and class 5a taught by Miss Annison and Mr Cody but I was never in those classes. When I started Miss Breeze taught a class at Junior School but by the time I had reached her class she had married to become Mrs Morris and left to have a baby. I think that is why we had Mr Bayfield twice. Mrs Morris taught music and usually played the piano in assembly, but sometimes it was one of her pupils, or in her absence Mr Bayfield was the pianist. Apart from teaching top class Mr Milnes taught scripture to younger children.

*Continued on page 30*

## *Memories of Life at Clenchwarton Primary School - continued from page 29*

Miss Snasdell was a very good teacher because she seemed to know all about you and everyone else. I think everyone liked her and when I was at work one of my workmates said that her favourite teacher was a Miss Snasdell, because she seemed to care about everybody. She had attended St James school for girls and that is where Miss Snasdell went to teach after leaving Clenchwarton. I remember when she left she gave the school a print of "the Cornfield" by John Constable and for many years it hung in the lobby leading to the hall. I wonder if the school still has it, and if so where is it ?

After the School Assembly, Mr Milnes always had Mental Arithmetic as his first lesson. He would wander round the classroom giving questions and expecting an immediate correct answer. He would lull you into a false sense of security by going past your desk and then asking you a question when he was behind you. It taught you to be alert and to be quick and confident with easy arithmetic questions.

Whilst I was there we did a lot of fund raising for a swimming pool. I remember going round the neighbours asking for old newspapers and bottle tops. I believe some time after I left they did have a swimming pool. We were taken once a week to an outdoor pool in the Walks. It was always freezing!

There were four houses at the school which were Balmoral which had blue as its colour, Buckingham which had red as its colour, Sandringham - yellow, and Windsor - green. I never really had loyalty to any house because I kept being moved from one house to another whenever one house went short in numbers.

## *Some New Year Traditions continued from page 24*

One of the biggest Hogmanay traditions is first footing. It is said that having a tall, dark-haired man as the first visitor to your home of the new year will bring good luck. Usually, an ideal first footer candidate is sent out of the house just before midnight, then returns after the bells have chimed. Ideally, they will be carrying symbolic gifts for their host. Coal for heat, whisky for good cheer and hospitality, while shortbread and black bun, a rich cake, symbolised good food all year. Although it is predominantly a Scottish custom, first footing is popular in parts of England as well as the Isle of Man and other countries, including Greece.

*Continued on page 34*

## *Life in the 1500s by Revd. Barbara Burton*

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men would follow using the same tub of water, then the women and finally the children—still using the same water. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying “Don't throw the baby out with the bath water”.

Houses had thatched roofs - thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying “It's raining cats and dogs”.

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, “Dirt poor”. The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway. Hence the saying a “thresh hold”.

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot.

They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while.

*Continued on page 32*

Hence the rhyme “Pease porridge hot, pease porridge, cold, pease porridge in the pot nine days old”.

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could bring home the bacon. They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat.

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous. Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the “upper crust”.

*(Editors note: Pease porridge - the name refers to a type of porridge made from peas. Today it is known as pease pudding, and was also known in Middle English as pease pottage.)*

*Education in Rural South Africa -  
23 years of visiting schools in Thyume Valley  
By Stephanie Gallier (a Clenchwarton resident)*

The Thyume Valley is an impoverished region of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. As a teacher and trustee of a small UK charity, I have visited this area many times over the last twenty three years. In that time I have grown to love the people and the place and I have learnt so much about the challenges that are faced by the communities that live there.

The villages are scattered along the valley with a single tar road that leads from the busy town of Alice up to the very different village of Hogsback, in the Amathola Mountains. Pot-holed dirt tracks lead to the villages where the Xhosa people have their homes. These homes vary from traditional rondavels to single storey brick built houses with small plots of land for the chickens and pigs and vegetables. Goats roam freely through the scrub but are occasionally herded by young boys as they are an important part of traditional ceremonies.

*Continued on page 33*

A village has little more than a church, a community hall or clinic and a primary or secondary school. All other amenities are accessed from Alice and with no public transport the villagers rely on expensive taxis or hitching a lift on the tar road.

My latest visit to the valley was in October 2025, with two other trustees. Our role was to assess the impact of our teaching programmes in the primary schools and at our Learning Centre. Our focus for the last two years has been on improving the standard of reading in English in Grades 4 and 5, because South African children consistently come bottom of the international league tables. We provide books, IT equipment, training for our Reading Ambassadors, programmes for after school teaching and community reading clubs. When funds permit, we set up study camps at an outdoor education centre in Hogsback.

### **Challenges**

There are many challenges that impact on the daily lives of the people in this beautiful area. Unemployment, especially amongst young people, is very high. The mothers and fathers often travel to the big cities for work, leaving elderly grandparents to look after children. But many parents have also died during the Aids epidemic. Other health issues that impact the community are diabetes, TB and alcoholism and drugs. Corruption at local and national government means that rural communities are often left behind in what should be a thriving and growing post apartheid country. Schools are particularly underfunded and teachers lack skills and motivation to make a difference. English is not the home language for the children and there is no culture of reading for pleasure. Homes rarely have books.

### **Signs of Hope**

It was three years since my last visit and it was wonderful to see the growing confidence in the children and their teachers. As younger teachers begin their careers and a new cohort of head teachers arrive with a willingness to take on new ideas, we can see that the children are beginning to make better progress. Classrooms are happier places with children engaged in their learning.

But there is still a lot of work to be done. More teacher training, better resources (books, laptops) and a small library van to deliver a regular supply of books to the reading clubs.

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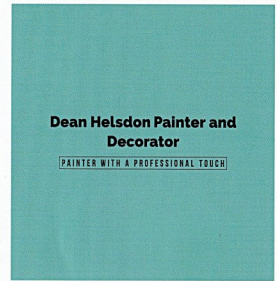
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## *Some New Year Traditions* continued from page 30

### **Denmark**

Denmark has a number of New Year traditions and it all starts with the annual speech given by the reigning monarch. It airs at 6pm on Danish television and is often seen as a sign for the festivities to begin. As long as it's safe to do so, people jump off chairs at midnight as a sign of 'leaping' into another year. They also enjoy a slice of *kranselage*, a cake created from rings of baked marzipan.

### **The Netherlands**

An *oliebol* is a ball of raisins in dough fried in oil and then dipped in sugar. Having *oliebollen* - the plural of *oliebol* - at New Year is now a Dutch tradition. Families either make them to their own recipe or street sellers can have lines of customers waiting to buy them fresh. *Oliebollen* history is tricky to pin down, but they do feature in a 1652 painting by the Dutch landscape artist Aelbert Cuyp, and a recipe has been traced to a 1667 cookbook. The origins of enjoying them at New Year are also unclear. One theory is that it dates back to the Middle Ages, when the rich handed them out to the poor, in the hope their generous act would be rewarded with good fortune over the coming year.

## *Nature Watch*

*by Brian Edwards*

Autumn on the Fens is always the season of winds. They blow relentlessly but bring their own ornithological pleasures. The Corvids in particular relish a good wind. Rooks dive and weave in the air currents as they chase their partners amongst the growing flocks of winter. Jackdaws join in but are always a step behind in the aerial dance. Carrion crows have their own side show rarely far from trees. At times the crows imitate ravens in their dexterity as they spread their wing and tail feathers at the end of aerial dives. Only crows and ravens have the ability to somersault high above our heads.

Less agile are the pink footed geese whose lines in the sky are disrupted by the autumn gales. Their roosting and sunrise flocks en route to the saltings of the Wash break up under the force of the wind. What are normally precise lines and 'V's become a scattering of dots as they try to regain their place in the formation. The dialogue between order and chaos makes watching the overhead geese flocks such an autumn pleasure.

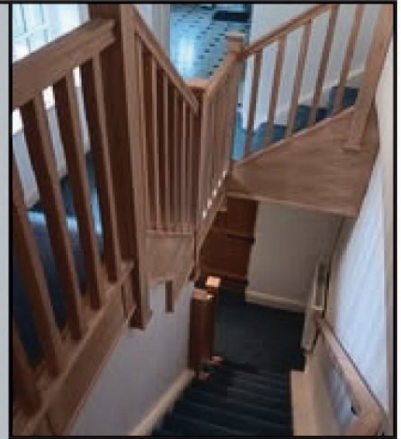
Gulls come and go too as they leave their roosts on the Wash to forage on our fields. Their long wings and flexible feathers means the gulls are more capable of coping with a gale. Unlike the rooks and crows which seem to enjoy a good wind, the gulls just glide gracefully through the gusts. Their buoyancy is a pleasure to watch even if we need to hold on to our hats.

Starlings come and go too as they leave their roost in the docks of Lynn. Their strategy is to dive into each gust of wind, flapping hard in the brief calm spells. As such their flight pattern is a study in undulation. When bigger flocks congregate, the murmurations begin. A good wind means a good murmuration.



So although an autumn gale tends to spoil a country walk at this time of year, try to look up and watch the birds. They have their own way of coping and often enjoying a good Fenland blow.





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The Food bank staff and recipients are always extremely grateful. There is a thank you card on the notice board in the porch. Thank you.



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- 5 Newry
- 6 Newport
- 7 Newark on Trent
- 8 Newton Stewart
- 9 Newcastle Under Lyme
- 10 Newmarket.



The Singers and Performers at the Clenchwarton Christmas Concert in December, which raised over £230. This was split between the Methodist Chapel, St Margaret's Church and The Motor Neurone Disease Association.



Children and Teachers at a School in the Thyume Valley Eastern Cape in South Africa. See report on page 32/33



Above: the Thursday Christmas Coffee morning attended by approximately 25 people. Every one brought some food to be shared with all, and we had a great spread.

Below: Vera and some of her 'pupils' with their finished flower displays.

