



Cobham & Luddesdowne *News* Christmas 2025

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Priest-in-Charge – The Rev'd Canon Alyson Davie

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Phone no. 01474-812068 email:- alyson@stjohnsmeopham.co.uk
(Rest Day: Friday)

Pastoral assistant- Janet Weaver, 36 Highview, Vigo Village, DA13 0RR
01732 823936

Church Safeguarding Officer - Hilary Savage - 01634 723027

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 clnewseditorial@gmail.com

Cover photograph - Adrian Whiteing—Winter time in Cobham Village

Printed by Wested Logistics Limited 01474 361615
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December
2025

Jesus: A gift to the world

For God loved the world so much, that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.
John 3 verse 16

Christmas is about gifts – we all like to receive them, but giving them, I think, brings us even greater pleasure. But when we buy the Christmas presents, we will give this year, we know, if we are honest, that we are not buying something that will last for ever. Whether our gift is hi tech, high price, or socks, books or bath foam, they will get used up, wear out, fall apart through use or sadly get lost. We know that though some things appear to last forever, in reality they don't.

Christmas, if nothing else, reminds us of the transient nature of all earthly things. Nothing in this world is everlasting. **Everything** breaks, wears out or dies. As the writer of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes noted this could lead us to the pessimistic conclusion that life is entirely pointless. What is the point of our working hard, making friendships, and bringing up families if it all ends in destruction and death? If whatever we do, life ends in the grave, then why bother?

The Christian faith has an answer to this view, and it is this; the idea that life ends at death is a great deception. The reason why there is more to this life than a number of years then death, is because of what happened at the first Christmas in Bethlehem.

Continued on page 4

We celebrate at Christmas, the fact that God, who loves us immeasurably more than we can even begin to understand, gave us the greatest gift of all time. He gave us Jesus, born as a baby in the stable at Bethlehem, a baby who would grow up and die on a cross and rise again so that sin might be overcome, death abolished for ever and the way to friendship with God restored.

This gift of life forever with God through trust in Jesus is freely offered to everyone and we bring great pleasure to God when we accept it, unwrap it and make it an essential part of our everyday lives.

This is the real meaning of Christmas.

Christmas is not essentially about tinsel, turkeys or how many days we'll get off from work. It is about God, what he has done for us in Jesus and what he offers to each one of us. All we have to do is receive his gift, say thank you and allow God to change our life and he will certainly do so. After 40 years, The Dogs Trust, still need to run the slogan 'a dog is for life, not just for Christmas', to misquote this slogan, what we need to remember above all else as we approach Christmas this year is:-

God is for life, not just for Christmas.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas.

Alyson & Martin Davie

Thursday Fellowship.

We are celebrating Christmas on 18th December at 2.00.p.m.
in the St. John's Centre Meopham.

Members will be bringing readings, jokes, seasonal items, favourite music, a short Quiz maybe - anything to share and enjoy together.

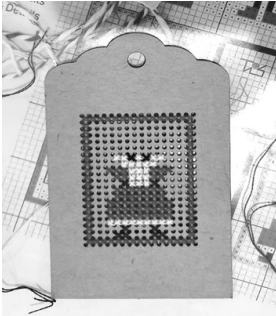
Tea and cakes to follow.

Everyone is welcome.

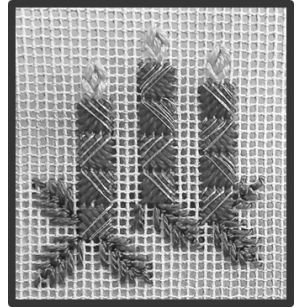


North Kent Embroiderers

North Kent Embroiderers



This month we enjoyed a bit of 'home tuition'. Our 'Four Corners' were led by members of the group. Sarah was leading the festive labels project with a variety of ideas to choose from. Veronica showed some of us how to work on canvas with perlé thread and Eve-



lyn taught another group the art of making 'Suffolk Puffs' also known as 'Yo-yos'. These are small, padded discs made from scraps of fabric and which can be used to make quilts and other decorative items. They are a very good way of using some of the 'stash' that all embroiderers seem to acquire. The technique goes back as far as the 1600s.



The hall was noticeably quiet as we worked on our tasks. The canvas work and festive labels were fun to do and as a tapestry needle was used there was no squinting at the tiny eye of a needle when trying to thread it!

In case you wondered, the fourth corner was to stitch and chat (working on your own project).

The postcard challenge continued this month following the theme of 'Trees' but with the added requirement to use chain stitch as part of the design.

You can see one example here.

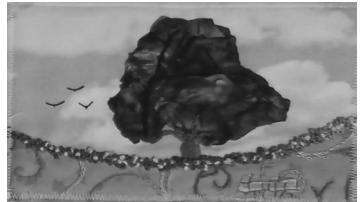
We held our usual raffle and there was delicious cake to eat with our tea or coffee.

If you 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 at: info@northkentembroiderers.co.uk or contact our Chairman, Eileen on 01474 324734

Happy stitching, Karen

All photos with permission



Cobham Church



Funeral

David GINGELL (known as Dave) was born on the 14th October 1945 and died on the 15th September 2025 at the age of 79 years old. Dave's funeral took place on the 6th October 2025 in Cobham church followed by burial in Cobham's lower churchyard. The service was conducted by Susan HEADS (Licensed Lay Minister from Ash Benefice). Our condolences and prayers go to his wife Ann, daughter Sarah, son James and their families.

Other funeral

David John SUMMERFIELD (known as Dave) was born on the 17th February 1943 and died on the 30th September 2025 at the age of 82 years old. Dave's funeral took place at Thamesview Crematorium on the 27th October 2025. The service was conducted by The Rev'd Angela WALKER (P.T.O.). Our condolences and prayers go to his wife Pat, son Darren, daughter Nikki and their families.

The 1st **South Street Boys Brigade and Girls Association Company** meets every Friday evening, during term time, from 6pm-7.30pm at South Street Baptist Church, Wrotham Road, Meopham, DA13 0QJ (*next to Hope Hill*). Boys and girls aged 5-18 years are invited to join us for games, cooking, art and craft, Bible stories, nature and science activities and water sports.

Please visit www.BOYS-BRIGADE.org.uk for more information.

SONG TIME meets every Monday during term time 9.45am-11am for families with babies and children under five. There are lots of toys, art activities, musical instruments and singing.

SOUTH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH Sunday morning services all begin at 10.45am.

The Christmas Carols by Candlelight Service is on Sunday 21st December at 4pm. All are welcome.

Please visit www.southstreetbaptist.org.uk or ring 01474 815039 or 01474 813379 for more information about services and activities for families at South Street Baptist Church.

THE TUESDAY POP-IN



Coffee Pop-in - Tuesday, December 9
Instead of the usual meeting at 10.30 there will be a
Christmas lunch at the Leather Bottle.
Please contact Mary Palmer (01474 816788)
not later than 2 December
if you would like to come to this session.

A WELCOME OF FLOWERS- Rosemary Dymond

Cobham is only a small village of some 400 residents but everyone plays their part in one way or another to keep the streets and green spaces looking clean and attractive. To decorate everywhere with flowers from the Meadow Room to Halfpence Lane roundabout makes a huge difference and shows visitors how we care about our village and shows our best faces to visitors. Someone in Battle Street filled the road edges and nearby field with snowdrops and bright pink rockery plants. Our Community Shop and pubs had displays all summer and beyond. Villagers in The Street hung flower baskets and the roadsides had troughs bursting with brightly coloured Begonias. Along College Lane the allotments were neat and tidy but full of self-grown produce and the Britain in Bloom inspector was very impressed with these as he was with the College garden where masses of bright coloured flowers jostled with an abundance of a huge range of very healthy vegetables, no wonder our College residents enjoy their time working in the garden. As a result of touring the village from the perfectly manicured Memorial Green to the pretty floral display around the Sports Club and Bowls Club the Inspector was impressed so when the results were announced in September the village once again was given the Silver Gilt award but no first place as it was felt Cobham though small was good enough to go into the Large village category so next year we will be battling against the large villages winner - Eynsford! But of course we have our own HOME COMPETITION - Front of House judged in May and July by two other RHS judges. Well done Rob who won first place with his hanging basket display and the Leather Bottle pub with its masses of very bright displays all around the pub of huge begonias. Another Rob won two prizes with his front garden and allotment. Well done to all the other 7 competitors, your contribution kept our village a picture to admire. Now for next year when our displays need everyone taking part to celebrate the very special birthday of COBHAM GARDENERS SOCIETY

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On Wednesday 3rd December at 6.30 pm for 7 pm the Society will combine its AGM, Annual Prize Giving, with a Christmas Get-Together, a celebration of the achievements of our worthy cup & trophy winners. If you are interested in joining why not come along and take the opportunity of finding out what the Society offers over a glass of wine and some festive nibbles! The AGM doesn't take long; we quickly move onto the festive nibbles and wine!

At the AGM our 2026 schedule will be available giving full details of our shows and talks for 2026, plus our plans to celebrate 125 years of Cobham Gardeners' Society.

December

Winter frost

As we approach the shortest day of the year in December you will need work hard to keep warm outside, such as digging and tree pruning. Check your winter protection and if you have a greenhouse make sure the heater is working. Hopefully there are not too many jobs left to do this year so you will have time for some fireside garden planning.

Top 10 jobs this month

- 1 Check your winter protection structures are still securely in place
- 2 Check that greenhouse heaters are working
- 3 Insulate outdoor taps and prevent ponds from freezing
- 4 Prune open-grown apples and pears (not those trained against walls)
- 5 Prune acers, birches and vines before Christmas to avoid bleeding
- 6 Harvest leeks, parsnips, winter cabbage, sprouts/remaining root crops
- 7 Deciduous trees and shrubs can still be planted and transplanted
- 8 Take hardwood cuttings
- 9 Keep mice away from stored produce
- 10 Reduce watering of houseplants

Looking for ideas for the Christmas Stocking? Why not give 2026 membership of Cobham Gardeners - a year of fun for a very reasonable £10! For a membership application form email cobhamgs@hotmail.co.uk
For more information on Cobham Gardeners' Society
email cobhamgs@hotmail.co.uk or phone 07770-985965

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Sole Street WI

As Christmas approaches, it's always a bustling time of year, and our members at Sole Street WI have certainly been keeping busy.

On 28th October, we welcomed Peter Batty, who delivered an engaging and entertaining talk on the '*Hidden Gems of Kent*,' uncovering some of the county's lesser-known people, places, objects, and events.

On Saturday 1st November, we gathered in St Mary's Church Room for our '*Coffee, Cake & Christmas*,' get-together. It was wonderful to see such a fantastic turnout! Guests enjoyed our homemade cakes, and many picked up a few festive bargains. Thank you to everyone who supported the event and helped make it such a success.



Our WI ladies have also been busy crocheting beautiful poppies for our Armistice Day post box topper; now proudly displayed outside the Little Shop in Sole Street—a heartfelt tribute to ensure 'we never forget'!



Jayne Holden

Lewis Solomon

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RIDERS & STRIDERS—Rosemary Dymond

After all the publicity from April onwards, the yellow invitation letters arrived in the churches in July and the yellow advert boards across Kent were up outside the churches in August and then on Saturday 13th September the cyclists, walkers and riders were off to visit as many of the 700 churches open in Kent prepared to welcome us in and indeed they did! I was welcomed in by 56 churches during the day, in some by hot and cold drinks laid out surrounded by a tempting mound of homemade cakes, biscuits and sandwiches, enough to slow you down in a moment. It might have been wet and windy in Gravesend and Wrotham that morning but on reaching Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells the sun was out and the day became quite pleasant. The quiet country lanes were bright again with vibrant berries and the scent of hops. It was a tremendous day of exhilaration on a pedal bike boosted by the community spirit I met everywhere. I know that our own churches gave the same welcome to all that came through the church door and I am very grateful to all of you. Giving your time to sit on duty for hours during the day is a challenge but your welcome to the visitors has made those riders and walkers 100% better sped on by the vast arrangement of refreshments you offered.

Thank you all so much for your generosity to raise the sponsorship in each of our three churches totalling almost £2,000, your support is very special.

St. Mary Magdalene, Cobham greeted 16 visitors and raised £550

St. Mary's Church Room in Sole Street raised £595 and greeted 10 visitors

St. Peter & St. Paul, Luddesdowne welcomed 4 visitors and raised £810

Well done all of you and now is the time to apply for FKC grants!

Meopham Library Writing Group meets again on Thursday 4th December 2025 at 10am

This month's writing theme is "WINDOWS", which can be used as a starting point for a poem, short story or an article and there is also a writing challenge. If you are interested in writing, either as a beginner or a more experienced writer, you are warmly invited to join our small, friendly group and new members are always very welcome. Creative writing is a very enjoyable activity, which can also be used to record special memories for the family or help people who are facing difficult times. Future meetings will be held on 8th January 2026, 5th February and 5th March.

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COBHAM & LUDDESDOWN W.I.

October and November are busy months for our W.I. Our October meeting was an enjoyable one, when we all managed to turn some pieces of coloured paper, with the help of some scissors and glue and the advice of Anne Latcham and co, into really beautiful Christmas tree decorations. The art, craft and needlework groups and other gifted members were all busy during October, putting the final touches to their entries for our Autumn Art and Craft Show, which took place on 5th November; and what a magnificent display it was. Our judge, Jenny Way was impressed by the quality and presented the Dorothy Kemp Trophy for most overall points in craft, to Kaye Wren. We were told that it was a very close-run thing between Kaye and Anne Tobutt, who came second. Liz Hulf came third and was presented with the 'Judge's Choice' trophy for her tailored jacket. Anne Latcham scooped all three awards, voted for by members, for her painting, painted card and photograph.

After the judging, we were able to look a little more closely at some of the larger items; in particular, three magnificent patchwork quilts. All of the items on show, though, including those on the display table, were a credit to our W.I. and its members. In pride of place on the stage, was our magnificent centenary banner, displaying some exquisite embroidery skills by Kaye Wren. After all the excitement and jollity of the afternoon, we heard the very sad news about the passing of one of our much-loved former members, Ruth Vinall. Ruth was herself an extremely talented artist and a dear friend, who had generously donated commemorative mugs and other items for our centenary celebrations in 2019. Our sincere condolences go to Ruth's family and friends. A minute's silence was held for Ruth during our meeting.

Our next meeting, on Weds 3rd December, will be our 'Festive Tea', when we all get together to share food, tea, a bit of singing and a lot of fun and laughter. New members are always welcome to join our W.I. or come along for a couple of meetings as visitors, for which we charge £2. Our meetings are at 2pm on the 1st Wednesday of the month at the Meadow Room. Our first meeting of 2026 will be on Weds 7th January when Babs Dixon will be coming along to talk about 'First Aid'. For further details email our Secretary, Jenny Brooker at cobhamluddesdown@wkwfi.org.uk





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BELL RINGING by Peter Hartley

First to Tonbridge on a Rochester Cathedral Ringers' Outing. I was last in this large parish church 63 years ago on Skinners' Day, the annual Speech Day of Tonbridge School when, by tradition, the whole School and Governors, the Skinners Company, process to the church for a Service. The bells are still rung on Skinners' Day.

I now climbed the tower to ring their bells. The 8 bells (tenor 19cwt) were cast and installed in 1774 by Whitechapels and a peal was rung when the rector was the Reverend Baskerville. These bells have just been returned from the Loughborough Foundry having been restored and retuned. Now rehung the bells were a joy to ring going very smoothly with a rich and melodious sound. The about £70,000 cost was largely borne by one very generous church member. Gosh and thank you.

Following a fire the church in pretty hill village of Speldhurst was rebuilt in 1871 with a fine series of Morris & Co windows with designs by Burne-Jones. Up another tower this time to ring their 8 Victorian bells (tenor 13cwt) which were restored in the 1980's.

After lunch it was on via Frant and Lamberhurst for a final ring at Horsmonden Church which stands far outside its village. In 1944 a stray VI rocket, a "doodlebug", exploded near the church blowing out all the windows. The Marriott family had been the vicars for 160 years and the daughter of the last Marriott vicar designed the new colourful east and west windows which were installed in 1946 and 1948.

The 8 bells (tenor 17cwt) were cast in the 1770's. Then in 1925 they were retuned and rehung on a metal frame by Gillett & Johnson of Croydon. The ringing room has a low ceiling so each fluffy colourful woollen sally disappears up through its hole in the ceiling at every backstroke to reappear at every handstroke.

On a board on the ringing room wall were listed the names of all 20 Lambert dynasty who rang between 1799 and 1979. They were fine ringers for an 1896 peal board records the ringing of 720 changes of Double Stedman Slow by 4 Lamberts and 2 relations.

It had been an enjoyable day and the ringing had included the staple methods of Plain Bob, Grandshire, Stedman and Cambridge. After 5 towers I was ready to rest my legs as Storm Amy blew away.

A Happy Christmas to all from all bell ringers.



St John's Meopham with St Mildred's Nurstead
Church Services December 2025



- Sunday 7th Dec 9.45am All Age Worship at St John's
 11.30am Holy Communion at St Mildred's
- Wednesday 10th Dec 10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre
- Sunday 14th Dec 9.45am Holy Communion at St John's
 11.30am Mattins at St Mildred's
 3.00pm Christingle Service at St John's Church
- Wednesday 17th Dec 10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre
- Sunday 21st Dec 10.30am Christmas Carols at St Mildred's Church
 4pm Carols by Candlelight at St John's Church
- Christmas Eve 4pm Crib Service at St John's Church
 11pm Christmas Holy Communion at St John's
- Christmas Day 9.45am Joint Family Worship for Christmas at
 St John's.
- Sunday 28th Dec 10.30am Holy Communion for all four churches at
 St Mary's Church Room, Sole Street

Cobham, Luddesdowne and Sole Street
Church Services during December 2025



Sunday 7th December

10:30am Holy Communion, Luddesdowne

Sunday 14th December

3pm Christingle, Cobham

Sunday 21st December

4pm Carols by Candlelight, Luddesdowne

Wednesday 24th December Christmas Eve

11pm Holy Communion, Cobham

Thursday 25th December Christmas Day

10:30am Holy Communion, Luddesdowne

Sunday 28th December

**10:30am Holy Communion, St Mary's Church Room
All four parishes together**

Midweek services in Sole Street

St Mary's Church Room, Informal Morning Prayer

9:30am 3rd, 10th and 17th December



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11th December

2026

8th January



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RBLI is completely separate to The Royal British Legion and receives no financial support from the annual poppy appeal. The charity must raise its own funds to deliver care and employability support, and build more homes.

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Flying Lessons

The angels that the shepherds saw
Whose singing led them to adore
The new-born Jesus in a stall
At one time could not fly at all!

To hover, singing, o'er a hill
While playing harps –
well, that takes skill!
And blowing trumpets as you fly
Without falling from the sky?

So novice angels all must go
And learn the facts that
they must know.
Aerodynamics, and such things
Before they even get their wings!

Then they practice flying well
For crashing just might break
the spell
The shepherds won't be 'sore afraid'
As laughter drowns the carols
played!

It's sad, but some are never meant
For soaring through the firmament.
But they can spend eternal days
Writing hymns of angel-praise!

But some soon grasp the things
they're taught
Becoming singing aeronauts!
Formation flying? Piece of cake!
And what an awesome sight they
make!

And, like the angels in the sky
God teaches us both how and why
That we should learn, this
Christmastime
To praise His name in song and
rhyme!

(P.S. You have to be an angel to fly.
Don't try this at home! ☺)

By Nigel Beeton



On the 7th December at 2pm -5pm, the new family living in Yeoman's House, will be hosting a Christmas event in St Mary's Church Room. There will be Christmas items to purchase; kid's nail art and more....

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 Co-ordinator Janet Ferguson, preferably at janetferguson@hotmail.fr. Ian Sheridan, Acting Chairman, 07951 927 517

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Ruth Marie Vinall

The Family of Ruth Vinall are sad to announce her passing. Ruth sadly passed away peacefully aged 90 on Monday 3rd November 2025. Now reunited forever with husband, Brian.

A Thanksgiving service to remember the life of Ruth will be held on Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 2:30 pm, St John's the Baptist Church Meopham, and afterwards in the St John's centre.



LUDDESDOWN SOCIETY

NEW YEARS DAY *Walk*

FREE EVENT

11AM

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Hello everybuddy,

It is a very exciting time of the year and Santa Paws is making a list of all the pets that have been nippy or nice. I hope to be on the nice list this year after making friends with lots of different doggies and, as always, being very polite when meeting people.

I do, however, get very excited when people come to the house and I was so pleased to see Janet the other day that I jumped up to greet her and she was so happy she threw the box, she was carrying, into the air just so she could say hello to me, I do hope Santa didn't see me run off with her shoe!

I hope you have a fun Christmas.

Love licks, peace and joy

Paddy



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Did the Old Testament expect Jesus to come? Yes indeed! Here are just some examples of OT prophesies:

He would be born of a virgin. ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son and will call Him Immanuel.’ (Isaiah 7:14)

He would be born in Bethlehem. ‘But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel...’ (Micah 5:2)

His lineage would be of the line of David. ‘I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.’ (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

He would bring healing. ‘Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.’ (Isaiah 35:5-6)

He would be crucified. They pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. (Psalm 22)

He would rise from the dead. ‘You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay’ (Psalm 16: 8-11)

Born Virgin Immanuel Bethlehem Ruler Israel David King Just

Right Healing Blind Deaf Lame Mute Crucified Pierce Hands

Feet Gloat Rise Dead Abandon



**Sunday 21st December
4pm Carols by Candlelight, Luddesdowne**

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