



Cobham & Luddesdowne

February 2026 **News** £1

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(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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Churchwarden	Hilary Savage	
PCC Secretary	Vacant	
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Cobham

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Ron Chamberlain
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Luddesdowne

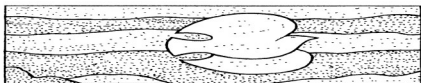
Diana Bampton
Jill Beety
Sue Campbell
Janet Weaver

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

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February
2026

People are coming to faith amidst the 'darkness' of crises around the world. So says several Church of England bishops. They believe that increasing numbers of people have been turning to the Christian faith.

The Bishop of Rochester, Jonathan Gibbs said: “Something is going on. Or rather, God Himself seems to be up to something – way beyond what we as Christians have been doing to share the message of the gospel with the people around us.

“Humanly speaking, I believe this is happening because people have begun to realise that the things in which they had placed their hopes – things like ever-increasing prosperity or the ability of science and technology to solve all our problems – have started to crumble in the face of economic crises, global pandemics and climate change.”

The Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel Treweek said: “As I have listened to the voices of children, young people and adults across this diocese; the voices in Westminster, and indeed in prisons; I believe there is a yearning for certainty amid the turbulence, anxiety and uncertainty, and the endless messaging of crises.”

The Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, speaks of joyful celebrations of baptisms and confirmations in his Diocese and new congregation members at Chichester Cathedral.

“A new generation attending Chichester Cathedral have shifted the atmosphere,” he said. “Buggies now take their place alongside the Zimmer frames, to the delight of everyone.”



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



February - Spring is in sight

This month there are signs of the approaching spring, with bulbs appearing and wildlife waking up as light levels and temperatures increase. There's plenty to do indoors this month to prepare for the season ahead. Outdoors, as the garden comes to life again, it's time to prune shrubs and climbers, such as Wisteria as well as evergreen hedges.

Also, February sees the start of our expert speaker talks, all held at the Meadow Rooms.

Wednesday 11th February at 6.30pm for 7pm

"Pruning, the How, When & Why" by Kevin ~Tooher See Page 6

Wednesday 11th March at 6.30pm for 7pm

"Companion Planting" by Caroline Halfpenny

Caroline Halfpenny talks about companion planting for vegetables and flowers, which plants enhance the growth, cropping, or vulnerability to pests and diseases, or even 'prepare' the soil for other plants. These intricate relationships will help you select appropriate plants to maximise a healthy ecosystem in your garden, greenhouse or allotment. Entry is free to members and non-members are welcome and pay £3.

RHS – Top 10 Jobs for February

1. Prepare vegetable seed beds, and sow some vegetables under cover
2. Chit potato tubers
3. Protect blossom on apricots, nectarines, and peaches
4. Net fruit and vegetable crops to keep the birds off
5. Prune winter-flowering shrubs that have finished flowering
6. Divide bulbs such as snowdrops, and plant those that need planting 'in the green'
7. Prune Wisteria
8. Prune hardy evergreen hedges & renovate overgrown deciduous hedges
9. Prune conservatory climbers such as bougainvillea
10. Cut back deciduous grasses left uncut over the winter, remove dead grass from evergreen grasses

You can buy Membership of Cobham Gardeners at any time and get savings at local garden centres straight away to help with all those garden jobs. You can apply at the talks or via email cobhamgs@hotmail.co.uk It is only a modest £10 for the year.

North Kent Embroiderers

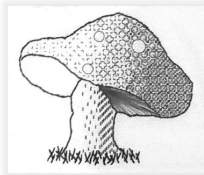
This was a busy meeting, the last one of the year. After Eileen had welcomed us, we worked in teams to answer the questions in Claire's excellent quiz, which proved to be highly challenging! I'm pretty sure we all learnt something about jolly old Santa.



After the quiz, we had an opportunity to see what some of our members had been working on this year. Our 'show and tell' was extremely varied from Sue's delicate lace work to Louise's beautiful dragonfly started on a day school and Lis's self-designed delicate embroidery of two Spanish dancers



(both seen here). We also saw a spotted 3D pumpkin inspired by the work of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama and Veronica's stitchscape based on the techniques she had learnt on Beth Power's day school. Claire showed us the embroidered panel she had used to cover a mark on a favourite jacket. She had tried to remove the mark in several ways but without any success. In



fact she ended up shrinking the jacket, but luckily it was still wearable! Eileen commented that she thought it was the best supported 'show and tell' that we had had for a long time!

Instead of swapping presents or cards this year we had decided to do a 'Secret Santa' based on tree decorations. Those who wished to take part had made a decoration to put in the sack ready for a 'lucky dip'. It was exciting to dig in and pull out a beautiful piece to adorn our trees at home. Again there was a wide variety.

Of course there was also the 'postcard challenge' again this month. The theme was 'fungi'. There was a good selection to be exchanged with a wide variety of embroidery techniques used. You can see one of the entries here. Although there was no requirement to use a particular stitch, as you can see, it proved a good opportunity to employ a range of different ones.

Finally, a festive meeting called for seasonal food which was enjoyed by all, with Eileen encouraging us all to eat plenty! 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 northkentembroiderers.co.uk/ or email us at: info@northkentembroiderers.co.uk or contact Eileen on 01474 324734. Happy stitching, Karen (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



Sharing a love of gardening ... locally
Contact us cobhamgs@hotmail.co.uk

Cobham Church



Burial of ashes

Donald Thomas PEAKE died on the 10th May 2025 at the age of 91 years old. Donald's ashes were buried on the 15th November 2025 in Cobham's Garden of Remembrance in with his wife Sylvia Anne PEAKE. The service was conducted by Susan HEADS (Licensed Lay Minister from Ash Benefice). Our condolences and prayers go to his son Richard, daughter Jackie and their families.

Other funeral

Brenda Morton MITCHELL was born on the 29th August 1926 and died on the 1st December 2025 at the age of 99 years old. Brenda's funeral took place at Thames View Crematorium on the 22nd December 2025. Our condolences and prayers go to her daughter Anna, son Peter and their families.

Shrove Tuesday – Pancake Day – 17th February

It's odd, really, to think that that confessing one's sins to God should be linked to making pancakes. And yet the beginning of Lent brings us both – Shrove Tuesday is Pancake Day, and is followed by Ash Wednesday, and so Lent begins.

In centuries gone by, the pancakes were made to use up the milk and eggs before the fasting of Lent. More recently, many readers will have childhood memories of the wonder of watching our mothers break an egg, mix it with milk and flour – and out of that gooey mess, to produce a light and delicious pancake.

These days, more of us buy pancake mix, or even ready-made pancakes. It seems we prefer the certainty of ending up with pancakes - to the risk of having made nothing BUT a mess of the kitchen.

In many parishes they used to hold pancake races on the day. Why anyone would want to run around a field while holding a pancake is not clear, but in Olney, Bucks, they have held a pancake race almost every year since 1445.

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Thursday Fellowship.

Let's celebrate our 21st Year!

We are meeting on 26th February in the St. John's Centre Meopham at 2.00p.m.

Members will be giving us a Music Recital, followed by Tea with a celebration cake.

Come along you will be most welcome !



**Why not come along and join us for a
heart-warming soup lunch.**

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Sole Street WI

As we settle into 2026, we hope the year ahead brings good health & happiness to our WI members and residents of Sole Street.



Our Sole Street WI ladies continue to enjoy their Tuesday morning walking group; with routes chosen to suit the weather and underfoot conditions. Walkers often pause along the way for a well-earned hot drink and a friendly chat. Any members interested in joining the group are very welcome — please contact: SoleStreet@wkfi.org.uk for more information.

Our next meeting will take place in St Mary's Church Room at 7.30pm on 24th February 2026. We are delighted to welcome local historian Christoph Bull, who will present a talk entitled Gravesend One Hundred Years Ago, exploring what has changed over time and what has remained the same.

Jayne Holden

THE TUESDAY POP IN

Meetings are held at the Leather Bottle on the second Tuesday of the month from 10.30 till 12 noon; all are welcome to join us for a relaxed chat and coffee.

Next pop-in - 10th February

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Dates for your Diary





The dates for the Cobham Parish Council meetings are:

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:

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

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Insomnia | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Musculoskeletal problems | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fertility & IVF support |

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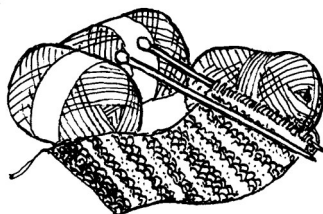
We started off our new year programme of meetings with a really informative talk and demonstration of first aid techniques, given by Babs Dixon from the British Red Cross. Babs had brought her experience and extensive knowledge and we learned a lot of useful tips about what to do in an emergency, including dealing with wounds, how to identify strokes and heart attacks and administering CPR and defibrillator techniques. We were, however, surprised and delighted to see just how clued up our members were already on this subject.

Our next meeting will be at 2pm on Wednesday 4th February, when Janie Ramsay will be coming along to talk about antiques in her talk entitled 'For What it's Worth'. All of our 'groups' have started up again after the Christmas break. Jill Beety's 'Knit and Natter' ladies are knitting children's bobble hats to send to Ukraine; the art group ladies are going to be painting or drawing something beginning with the letter K; the 'Read and Rabbit' book group ladies are reading 'My Cousin Rachel' by Daphne du Maurier; the Craft Group will be carrying on with their varied and interesting craft projects; the Needlework Group will be looking for a new project to enhance our monthly meetings; the Lunch Club will be carrying on with their lunches at various venues in the area; and the Crochet Group is looking for a new home.

We are a very friendly group of ladies who meet on the first Wednesday of the month (except August), at 2pm at the Meadow Room, The Street, Cobham and you will be very welcome to join us. Visitors are charged £2 and we hope that after one or two visits, you will decide to join us as a member to experience all that the W.I. has to offer the women of Great Britain. Further information from our secretary,

Jenny Brooker.

Email: cobhamluddesdown@wkwfi.org.uk





Cobham Gardeners' Society are celebrating being 125 years old this year.

To celebrate members have the chance to win a Royal Horticultural Society Banksian Medal which will be awarded to the member with the most points over all three of their shows in 2026 – Spring, Summer and Autumn. So, their shows this year should be even more spectacular than usual. The Banksian medal was established by the RHS in 1820 in honour of Sir Joseph Banks, a founder of the RHS.

On the 17th April they are holding a fish and chip supper at The Meadow Rooms to celebrate 125 years of the Society. The evening will include a welcome drink, fish & chips, a copy of their anniversary souvenir booklet compiled by the Society's Treasurer, Michael Wood, detailing their first 125 years and a presentation by their Treasurer and President on the history of the club.

For more information on the Society or if you would like to attend the supper please email cobhamgs@hotmail.co.uk or call 07770-985965

Meopham Library Writing Group

Meopham Library Writing Group meets again on Thursday 5th February 2026 at 10am.

The writing theme is "Traitors", 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, you are warmly invited to join our small, friendly group and new members are always very welcome.

Creative writing can be used to record special family memories and is also helpful for anyone facing difficult times, as well as being a very enjoyable and sociable activity.

Future meetings will be held on 5th March, 2nd April and 7th May.

Please ring **01474 813379** for more information.

BELL RINGING by Peter Hartley

We rang on Christmas morning to share in the joy of Christmas Day. This ringer when ringing an unseen bell high above him often thinks that bell must have rung through the decades and often the centuries for many great occasions and also happy and sad moments. Not forgetting the transitory ringers who gave the bells their voices and are now forgotten.

Bells are a part of a place and its history. Rory Stewart was Member of Parliament for Penrith and the Border and too intelligent and interesting to stay in today's House of Commons nor understandably prepared to serve under fellow Etonian Boris Johnson. He knew his constituents and the unique history of Britain's lost middle land either side of the border between the Kingdoms of Scotland and England. He wrote and broadcast about the turbulent history of these border lands or debateable lands where reivers, with violence, rustled cattle and sheep across the disputed border.

Mediaeval Carlisle Cathedral, at the western end of the border, lost its 4 original bells in a storm in the late 1300s when the tower blew down. These bells had been chimed when, in the presence of King Edward I (1272 – 1307), the Papal Legate had solemnly cursed Robert the Bruce (King Robert I of Scotland 1306 – 1329). In the Civil War the Scottish Presbyterian Army demolished much of the Cathedral nave using the stone to reinforce Carlisle castle. In the Commonwealth period 6 chiming bells were put in order and these bells were sounded in 1745 when 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' the Young Pretender and his Jacobite army entered the city. But the Duke of Cumberland retook the city three weeks later and ordered the bells to be silenced for 100 years.

In 1897 Queen Victoria enquired of the Dean if the Hanoverian embargo was the cause of the cathedral bells being silent during her Diamond Jubilee. Only in 1925 did the Whitechapel foundry restore the existing bells and add two more making a ring of eight. But 8 bells cast by 5 different founders and dating between the 15th and 20th century resulted in the 'worst Cathedral bells in England'.

At the Millennium, with a Millennium grant and other monies, Taylor's of Loughborough cast 10 new bells with another 2 being added in 2005. Now this second smallest cathedral in England has the best cathedral bells in the Country say the Carlisle Cathedral band of ringers perhaps ending all disputes in the debateable lands.

St John's Meopham with St Mildred's Nurstead

Church Services February 2026



Sunday 1 st February	9.45am All Age Worship at St John's 11.30am Holy Communion at St Mildred's
Weds 4 th February	10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre
Sunday 8 th February	9.45am Holy Communion at St John's 11.30am Mattins at St Mildred's
Weds 11 th February	10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre
Sunday 15 th February	9.45am Morning Worship at St John's 11.15am Churches Prayer Mtg at St John's Centre
Ash Wednesday	
18 th February	10am Holy Communion at St John's
Sunday 22 nd February	9.45am Morning Worship & Baptism at St John's 11.30am Family Service at St Mildred's
Weds 25 th February	10am Holy Communion at St John's Centre

**Cobham, Luddesdowne and Sole Street
Church Services during February 2026**



Sunday 1st February

10:30am Holy Communion (BCP), Cobham

Sunday 8th February

10:30am Holy Communion, Luddesdowne

Sunday 15th February

10:30am Holy Communion, Cobham

Wednesday 18th February

7:30pm Ash Wednesday Service, Cobham

Sunday 22nd February

10:30am Holy Communion, Luddesdowne

Midweek services in Sole Street

St Mary's Church Room, Informal Morning Prayer

9:30am 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th February



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The 1st South Street Boys Brigade and Girls Association Company

Boys and girls aged 5-18 years are invited to join us on Friday evenings 6pm-7.30pm during term time for fun and games. The 1st South Street Boys Brigade and Girls Association Company meets at South Street Baptist Church, Wrotham Road, Meopham, DA13 0QJ (*next to Hope Hill*).

Please visit www.southstreetbaptist.org.uk and www.BOYS-BRIGADE.org.uk for more information or ring 01474 815039.

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

South Street Baptist Church Sunday morning services begin at 10.45am and everyone is very welcome to join us.

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THROUGHOUT 2026




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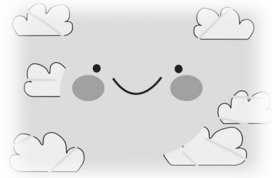
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The Rules of Marriage

Here are real answers from a group of children:



Question: How do you decide who to marry?

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff.

Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming. - Alan, age 10

No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, age 10

Question: What is the right age to get married?

23 is the best age because you know the person FOREVER by then. - Camille, age 10

Question: How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids. - Derrick, age 8

Question: What do most people do on a date?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. - Lynnette, age 8

On the first date, they just tell each other lies and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date. - Martin, age 10

Question: What would you do on a first date that was turning sour?

I'd run home and play dead. The next day I would call all the newspapers and make sure they wrote about me in all the dead columns. - Craig, age 9

What a cynical lot!

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Sunday Afternoon Club

Programme to Easter

8 February : Wise men visit Bethlehem

The new king of the world
is not in Jerusalem!



8 March: Baby Moses in danger

A rescue involving his big
sister and two mothers



18 April: Good Friday

The Easter story over
three amazing days



3.00pm on Sunday Afternoons in the St John's
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Activities and Food! For Children up to age 12
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The Boffins and the Technocrats

The boffins and the technocrats
Help folk like me and you
Inventing lots of clever things
That tell us what to do!

My car now has a clever light
Dispelling doubt or fear,
Without it I'd have not a clue
When to shift up a gear!

Of course there is the Sat Nav
To help me find my way
The time I learned to read a map
Was just a wasted day!

My PC's a law unto itself
So busy telling me
To upgrade this or restart that –
The net I never see!

And sometimes, when my work is
done
I turn on my TV
All chance to watch my programme
gone –
“Retune” it says to me.

The oven, fridge, and microwave
They make a beeping sound
Or else they have bright lights which
flash
To order me around.

And so I am a harassed man,
I live a hassled life;
The one who shouts at me the least
Is my sweet and lovely wife!

By Nigel Beeton



*...between you and me, it's the
only way I can remember my PIN number!*



"Mike composes all his sermons on his
iPhone – he uses something called
Predictable Text..."

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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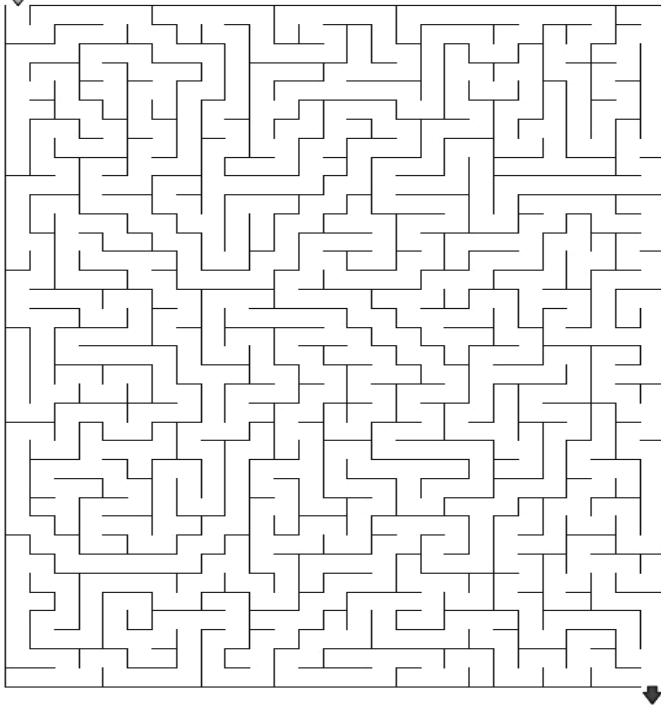
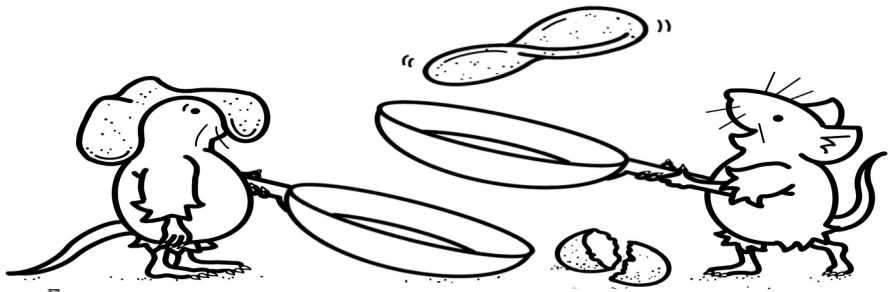


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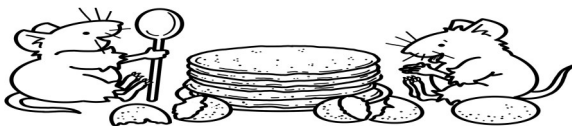
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to the hungry
Mice?



Did you know that you can make dog friendly pancakes? The Dog Trust has a recipe just for us! I have included details of their website if you and your big person want to take a look.

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/dog-advice/life-with-your-dog/enrichment/dog-friendly-cakes>



Love and licks Paddy

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The Presentation of Christ in the Temple/ Candlemas

Candlemas, 2nd February, comes exactly 40 days after Christmas. In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Luke 2: 22-40). So where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day.

Candlemas Forty Days After Christmas New Testament Important

Age Baby Boy First Public Appearance Mary Jewish Temple festival

presentation described light world candles lighting early



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