

# Horsell Matters



**The Village Magazine from your Parish Church  
February – March 2025**

# Horsell Directory

<b>St Mary's Church</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarys-horsell.org.uk">www.stmarys-horsell.org.uk</a>	
	Baptisms, Weddings or Funerals	772134
<b>Parish Office open</b>	Helen Gravette Tues 9am-4pm, Wed & Fri 9am-1.00pm	772134
	<a href="mailto:stmaryshorsell@btinternet.com">stmaryshorsell@btinternet.com</a>	
<b>Vicar</b>	Revd Dmitry Lutsenko <a href="mailto:vicar@stmarys-horsell.org.uk">vicar@stmarys-horsell.org.uk</a>	755618
<b>Children &amp; Families' Worker</b>	Rebecca Connolly <a href="mailto:childrenandfamiliesstmarys@gmail.com">childrenandfamiliesstmarys@gmail.com</a>	772134
<b>Church Wardens</b>	Brian Sheriff Mark McMurtrie	474975 07815 635609
<b>Treasurer</b>	David Leach	07708 866196
<b>Pastoral Assistants</b>	Janet Johnson Margaret Johnson Hilary Mitchell Coral Colclough	591756 762481 715459 747481
<b>JAM (Jesus and Me)</b>	Rebecca Connolly (3+) 10am most Sundays	772134
<b>Tiny Treasures</b>	Rebecca Connolly, St Andrew's Room Tues 9.30am to 11.30am, term time	772134
<b>Bell-ringers and Servers</b>	Alan Nichols [occasional] Tues. evening practice	767852
<b>Trinity Methodist Church</b>	<a href="mailto:office@trinitywoking.org.uk">office@trinitywoking.org.uk</a>	730754
<b>Horsell Evangelical Church</b>	Revd Andrew Bents	822259
<b>To Book the Village Hall</b>	Paul Bowyer	764047
<b>Parish Institute</b>	<a href="http://www.horsell-parish-institute.org.uk">www.horsell-parish-institute.org.uk</a>	772134
<b>Horsell Village School</b>	Infants Head Teacher – Mrs J Reeve	714804
<b>Horsell C of E School</b>	Junior Head Teacher – Mrs C Wand	761531
<b>Woking High School</b>	Head Teacher – Mrs M Walter	888447
<b>Halstead St Andrew's School</b>	Head Teacher – Mr A Ward	760943
<b>Horsell Care</b>	Helpline	07552 553414
<b>Residents Association</b>	Alan Taylor <a href="mailto:ajrolyat@gmail.com">ajrolyat@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Scouts, Beavers, Cubs</b>	Ali Stubbs <a href="mailto:gsl@horsellscouts.org.uk">gsl@horsellscouts.org.uk</a>	07734 424568
<b>Explorer Scouts (14-18 Yrs)</b>	Roy Thompson <a href="mailto:explorers@woking.scouts.host">explorers@woking.scouts.host</a>	
<b>Guides &amp; Brownies</b>	<a href="http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents">www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents</a>	
<b>WI Horsell Afternoon</b>	Lyn Clark <a href="mailto:lyn.clark@btinternet.com">lyn.clark@btinternet.com</a>	01932 353382
	Meets on 1st Thursday at 1.45pm in the Village Hall	
<b>WI Horsell Evening</b>	Mrs Joan Cox	760783
	Meets on 4th Tuesday at 7.45pm in the Village Hall	
<b>Woking Police Station</b>	dial 101 from mobile or landline	

# Homily

St Mary's was packed over the Christmas period to celebrate the birth of Jesus and to listen to the retelling of the Nativity story in a variety of styles.

We were delighted to welcome so many of you to St Mary's to attend Christmas services and special events, whether this be for a School, Nativity, Nine Lessons & Carols, Messy Church, Midnight Mass or Holy Communion service. It was heartening to see an increase in attendance at most of our services.

But **Church is not just for Christmas** which is why we have created a comprehensive Parish Development Plan that has at its heart Growing Discipleship, Growing Diversity, Growing Community, and ensuring we Change to meet today's and tomorrow's needs.

We have started a Consultation process to hear how we can better support Christian faith development, make our services more accessible to the younger generation and welcome suggestions on how we should be changing. Ideas should be sent by email to the Parish Office at [stmaryshorsell@btinternet.com](mailto:stmaryshorsell@btinternet.com)

Starting on 12th March at 7.30pm we will be running a five-week study course looking at Paul's letter to the Romans. This will tackle ten big themes that are key to understanding the Christian faith and how we should live our lives, including: how we can find rest in a stressed world, how, as a community, we can live together in love and peace, how we can avoid negative cycles, and how we can grow and become confident in our faith. Please email the Parish Office if you would like to know more and/or attend.



Mark McMurtrie

We have a great range of activities, services and volunteering opportunities suitable for all age groups. We would love to see you at St Mary's soon and throughout 2025.  
Mark McMurtrie, Churchwarden

## SERVICES CARRIED OUT BY THE VICAR OF ST MARY'S CHURCH

### Funerals, Burials and Cremations

*We offer our sympathy to the families and friends of those who have died:*

Barbara McCue

## ST MARY'S CHURCH DIARY FEBRUARY/APRIL 2025

<b>Sun 2nd</b>	8.00am 10.00am	Holy Communion (CW) First Sunday Service
<b>Tues 4th</b>	9.30am-11.00am 2.00pm	Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group Service at Kettlewell House
<b>Wed 5th</b>	8.00pm	Engine Room House of Prayer
<b>Fri 7th</b>	8.45am-12noon	Pop In Coffee
<b>Sun 9th</b>	8.00am 10.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion Contemplative Meditation
<b>Tues 11th</b>	9.30am-11.00am	Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group
<b>Fri 14th</b>	8.45am-12noon	Pop In Coffee
<b>Sun 16th</b>	8.00am 10.00am 4.00pm	Holy Communion (CW) Parish Communion Messy Church
<b>Tues 18th</b>	9.30am-11.00am	NO Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group
<b>Fri 21st</b>	10.00am-12noon	Pop In Coffee
<b>Sun 23rd</b>	8.00am 10.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion Peaceful Prayer & Praise
<b>Tues 25th</b>	9.30am-11.00am	Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group
<b>Fri 28th</b>	8.45am-12noon	Pop In Coffee

## ST MARY'S CHURCH DIARY APRIL 2025

<b>Tues 1st</b>	9.30am-11.00am 9.30am 2.00pm	Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group Junior School Easter Service to parents Service at Kettlewell House
<b>Wed 2nd</b>	7.30pm-8.45pm	Romans Course Part 4
<b>Fri 4th</b>	8.45am-12noon 9.30am	Pop In Coffee Village School Easter Service to parents
<b>Sun 6th</b>	8.00am 10.00am	Holy Communion (CW) First Sunday Service
<b>Tues 8th</b>	9.30am-11.00am	NO Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group
<b>Wed 9th</b>	7.30pm-8.45pm	Romans Course Part 5

## ST MARY'S CHURCH DIARY MARCH 2025

<b>Sun 2nd</b>	8.00am 10.00am	Holy Communion Service (CW) First Sunday Service
<b>Tues 4th</b>	9.30am-11.00am 2.00pm	Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group Service at Kettlewell House
<b>Wed 5th</b>	7.30pm	Ash Wednesday Communion
<b>Fri 7th</b>	8.45am-12noon	Pop In Coffee
<b>Sun 9th</b>	8.00am 10.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion Service (BCP) Parish Communion Contemplative Meditation
<b>Tues 11th</b>	9.30am-11.00am	Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group
<b>Wed 12th</b>	7.30pm-8.45pm	Romans Course Part 1
<b>Fri 14th</b>	8.45am-12noon	Pop In Coffee
<b>Sun 16th</b>	8.00am 10.00am 4.00pm	Holy Communion (CW) Parish Communion Messy Church
<b>Mon 17th</b>	7.30pm	PCC Meeting
<b>Tues 18th</b>	9.30am-11.00am	Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group
<b>Wed 19th</b>	7.30pm-8.45pm	Romans Course Part 2
<b>Fri 21st</b>	8.45am-12noon	Pop In Coffee
<b>Sun 23rd</b>	8.00am 10.00am 6.30pm	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion Peaceful Prayer & Praise
<b>Tues 25th</b>	9.30am-11.00am	Tiny Treasures Baby & Toddler Group
<b>Wed 26th</b>	7.30pm-8.45pm	Romans Course Part 3
<b>Fri 28th</b>	8.45am-12noon	Pop In Coffee
<b>Sun 30th</b>	8.00am 10.00am 12.15pm	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion On Your Own Lunch
<b>Mon 31st</b>	9.30am	Junior School Easter Service to rest of the school

**THE CHURCH BUILDING WILL BE OPEN:  
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9.30am to 3pm.**



**St Mary's Church, Horsell:** @StMarysChurchHorsell  
*CW means Common Worship. BCP means Book of Common Prayer.  
 All correct at the time of going to print.*  
 For further details please look at our website: [www.stmarys-horsell.org.uk](http://www.stmarys-horsell.org.uk)

# Eco Matters

St Mary's recently hosted a sustainable flowers evening, led by Dr Jill Timms, a sustainability expert and Professor at Surrey University.

There was a large attendance, including the St Mary's flower arrangers, colleagues from other churches from as far afield as Godalming, and florists and representatives from local nurseries. It was explained that 90% of our flowers were imported, largely from East Africa, so air transport and flower miles are an issue, as is the reliance on water from drought-affected regions. The use of pesticides, plastic packaging, waste, fashion trends such as the requirement for red roses in February when they are not naturally in bloom, transfer of pests and diseases and Floral Foam were discussed.

Floral Foam is a single-use plastic product which breaks down into microplastics that have already entered the food chain. St Mary's was praised for having eliminated its use some years ago, as part of our Eco Church initiatives, although funerals and wedding florists may still use it. There was an introduction to the 'Sustainable Church Flower Group', Bishop Martin Gorick of Dudley being the lead Bishop in this churchwide initiative; he was quoted as saying "I urge churches to take a lead in ensuring our wonderful floral displays are as sustainable as possible". This initiative will be reaching out to every church in the coming months.

# Outward Giving

Every year St Mary's gives money locally, nationally and internationally. In 2024 payments were:

- ★ £1,515 to York Road Project
- ★ £3,600 to Horsell CofE Junior School
- ★ £500 to Engage
- ★ £500 to the Children's Society
- ★ £2,000 to Bible Reading Fellowship
- ★ £1,000 to A Rocha
- ★ £1,250 to Bible Society
- ★ £1,250 to Five Talents
- ★ £520 to Christian Aid
- ★ £200 to Macmillan Cancer
- ★ Further ad-hoc donations were also made during the year.

# Giving Matters

Marian Wernham visited the York Road Project (YRP) – one of our 'Outward Giving' charities.

I was delighted to receive a personal invitation to visit YRP on World Homeless Day, October 10th. The same week, gifts from St. Mary's Harvest Festival service, pictured below, were delivered as usual to the Resource Centre and gratefully received. Having been a volunteer there some years ago, until Covid prevented access, I was particularly interested to see how the Resource Centre (formerly known as 'The Prop') had been transformed to better serve the needs of a growing number of clients. The original space has been painted in soft pastels and re-ordered to provide private consultation rooms as well as a communal area. Clients have access to laundry and showering facilities, and a nourishing hot meal. The Resource Centre feels welcoming, encouraging and cheerful.

I was greeted by a couple of enthusiastic clients eager to tell me their stories of progress- from finding themselves unexpectedly homeless to now looking forward to an imminent placement in temporary accommodation, from where they expected to find work and move forward with their lives. A 'success table' with past clients' stories bore witness to the positive impact YRP had made; they could not speak too highly of the staff there, and of the consistent support of all kinds which helped restore them to

being happy, independent members of society.

A couple of big improvements were evident as I spoke to the dedicated staff. As a volunteer, I had been helping to sort the clothing generously donated but often, alas, unsuitable for homeless people. Now instead clients are given a voucher with which to choose and buy new clothes to fit and suit them. Much better!

Also, individual self-help sessions from a professional life coach enable those whose self-esteem has inevitably taken a battering, to regain hope and confidence for the future.

YRP is a local initiative doing great things but relying on public generosity. Help is always welcome, from volunteers or online donations. For more information contact their website

[www.yorkroadproject.org.uk](http://www.yorkroadproject.org.uk)



Harvest Festival

# Churchyard Cat

My mewing for St Mary's starts with the Ancient Festival of Candlemas in early February, which marks the midpoint of winter. So, it should start to warm up soon, but maybe not until next month. My thick ginger fur keeps me warm, but I know my humans suffer in the winter due to their lack of fur, strange creatures that they are.

March closes with Mothering Sunday, when traditionally younger humans give their mothers posies of flowers, which marks the start of summer, so not too long to wait until I can laze in the sunshine in my churchyard. I do think it looks in reasonable shape now,

following the winter storms, which reeked a lot of damage, all cleared away by probationary service lads doing community payback work.

I hope to see you in my Church at Candlemas, Mothering Sunday, when younger humans can collect posies for their mothers, or any time during the build-up to Lent or during Lent, when there is always a lot going on, especially for the younger humans.





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# Bible Matters



The second in a series of articles by Roy Wernham, Licenced Lay Minister

The Old Testament of the Bible is a collection of writings that date from before the time of Jesus and were known to him as 'The Scriptures'. They were probably written between around 1000 BC and 200 BC. Some of them started life as oral traditions. The Old Testament contains historical texts as well as prophecy, prayers, hymns, theology and philosophy. It tells of the development of the Hebrew people's relationship with God and points the way to the coming of Jesus as God's Messiah (anointed one).

The first five books tell of the giving of the Hebrew law to Moses, primarily the ten commandments, which are in the book of Exodus chapter 20. The key principle in the law is the challenge that we should love God with all our heart and our neighbours as ourselves. The historical sections contain accounts that mostly accord well with current archaeological findings. There is a hymn book, the Psalms, many of

which are attributed to King David although they may not have all been written by him. There is a section of philosophical writings, books like Proverbs and Job.

The final writings are by teachers known collectively as the prophets who tried to interpret historical events and explain what God was telling the Hebrews and the rest of the human race about how to live Godly lives. Perhaps the best-known and most admired of the prophetic books is the work of Isaiah, especially the magnificent chapters 40 – 65 of the book.

The New Testament authors harked back to the Old Testament, the prophetic sections especially, for inspiration as did Jesus in his teaching. As the Old Testament draws to a close it increasingly points to the coming of Jesus, especially the final book, that of Malachi.

## Horsell Matters: Next Edition April /May 2025

Copy to be sent by 1st March by email please to: [stmaryshorsell@btinternet.com](mailto:stmaryshorsell@btinternet.com)

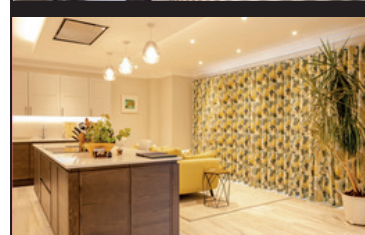
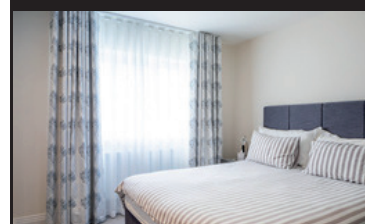
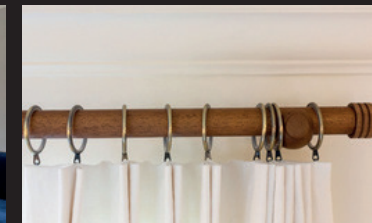
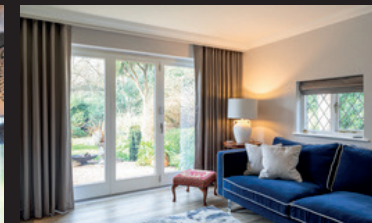
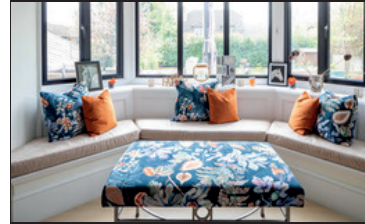
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The views expressed by contributors to the magazine are not necessarily those of the PCC of St. Mary's Church. All advertisements are accepted in good faith.

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# Grave Matters

By the path from Wilson Way to the Church, near the back gate to the Vicarage, is a rather battered stone, the base of a cross, parts of which are heaped up behind it, forming the grave of Spencer Compton and his wife, Alicia.



Alicia Spencer Compton Jr Grave

The name appears quite splendid and is shared by Spencer Compton the second Prime Minister of Great Britain after Robert Walpole in 1742-43, and by others such as Spencer Joshua Alwyne Compton, 2nd Marquess of Northampton (1790-1851) – whose name also includes that of the family home in Brewery Road. Our Spencer must have had some family connection to this noble house, but the actual link eludes us. He was baptised in Stepney in 1814, the son of Charles Spencer Compton, a Devon man, who is described as a master mariner. Little is known of his youth; in 1839 he may have been Registrar of the Supreme Court of Bombay (now Mumbai), but he could also in 1841 have become the father of Annie Clarke Compton with his future wife Alicia Watson back in Devon. He returned to England to marry Alicia at Kennington, in August 1852, but he could have returned to India for a short time, as a prothonotary in the Bombay Supreme Court. He was established at Alwyne House by 1858. Spencer retained his interests in India, now largely financial, as he is described in the 1861 census as land, fund and

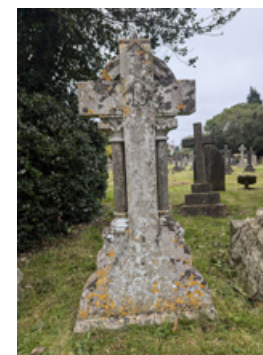
stockholder, redefined in 1871 as 'East India merchant'. His house had originally been built as a Baptist Church, with a school and master's house adjoining, but these had closed by 1854 and the plan of the chapel on Edward Ryde's 1851 map and the photograph of the house in its final days shows the house occupying the same footprint as the chapel and having rather ecclesiastical windows. The first references to Spencer's living there are his paying tax in 1858 and the sad one of the burial of an infant son in Horsell churchyard, Herbert Alwyne, aged 11 weeks in January 1859. In happier times Spencer was involved in arranging for floral decorations to brighten the room at a concert in the Horsell schoolroom in 1874 at which his daughters, Alicia and Annie, played a piano duet. In October 1877 the 'Surrey Advertiser' reported a burglary at the house, with the ground floor being ransacked and the burglars drinking some of the best wine in the house.

In March 1878 Spencer was appointed an overseer at the Horsell Petty Sessions. In 1881 he died suddenly of a disease of the heart, followed shortly by his son Charles Spencer Carstairs, aged 25, both were buried in the churchyard. Alicia stayed in the house until her death in 1901, aged 84, along with her daughters who died there in 1922 and 1927.

After the death of the last of the daughters, the house had several occupants, mostly for short periods, the last one leaving in 1957 for the house to become unoccupied until eventually bought by Woking Methodist Church for a new church to replace that in Commerical Road, and

this was opened on a site on the plot nearer Brewery Road in 1965. The whole site had also contained Alwyne Cottage, which was replaced in the 1970s by the apartments of Alwyne Court which thus continued the name linked with the family.

Rosemary and Richard Christophers



Charles Spencer Compton Grave





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2nd February  
2nd March  
6th April

Saint Mary the Virgin  
Horsell

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Jesus and Me


A time for children aged 3+ to learn  
and worship together during our  
10am Sunday Services

Every Sunday except the first  
Sunday of the month  
when we are all together in church

Saint Mary the Virgin  
Horsell

## FRIDAY POP-IN COFFEE

8.45am until noon  
(term time)



10am to 12 noon  
(school holidays)

Why not drop in for a  
cuppa, a piece of cake and  
a chat once you have done  
the school drop-off?

Saint Mary the Virgin  
Horsell

## Bible study course

Wednesdays at 7.30pm on  
12th, 19th and 26th March  
2nd and 9th April  
a five-week study course  
St Andrew's Room  
All welcome

St Paul's letter to the Romans  
\*Tackling ten big themes  
\*Unlock understanding faith  
\*Learn to live better lives

Saint Mary the Virgin  
Horsell



4.00pm to 5.30pm

16th February  
16th March

Explore a Bible theme through  
craft, food, games or nature.  
There will be a short celebration  
with a story, songs and prayers.

For all ages!  
Picnic tea provided!

Messy Church is part of The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF), a  
Registered Charity.  
brf.org.uk

Saint Mary the Virgin  
Horsell

## TINY TREASURES

Baby and Toddler Group  
Every Tuesday (term time)  
9.30am to 11.00am

No group on  
18th Feb, 8th and 15th April


In the St Andrew's Room  
St Mary's Church, Horsell

Come and make friends,  
enjoy play, craft,  
and songs




Saint Mary the Virgin  
Horsell

## CASHLESS GIVING



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Saint Mary the Virgin  
Horsell

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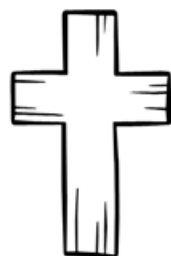
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# COLOUR AND LEARN ABOUT SHROVE TUESDAY, ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENT.



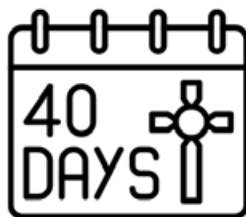
This year **Shrove Tuesday** is on the 4th of March. It is known as 'Pancake Day' to use up butter, eggs and sugar before starting Lent.



Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday**, this year it is on the 5th of March. Minister takes ash from burning palm crosses from the year before, and marks a sign of a cross on the foreheads of believers as a sign of commitment to the Lord.



Lent lasts for 40 days\*, starting from Ash Wednesday and finishing on Easter Sunday. Lent is a time of preparation for Easter, when Christians reflect on Jesus' suffering on the cross.



Did you know? The 40 days of Lent is linked with the 40 days Jesus spent praying and fasting in the desert. You can read about it in the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 4 and the Gospel of Luke chapter 4.

\*When counting the days of Lent, Sundays are excluded.

## Christmas Tree Festival Results

About 1200 people of all ages came into St Mary's on the 6th and 7th of December to enjoy the creativity of the trees on display. The winners in each category are set out below. Well done and thank you to everyone who took part, including the exhibitors, raffle prize donators, the voters and visitors.

### Children's group

- 1st** Wishing You An Egg-cellent Christmas.....Bright Horizons Teddies Woking Day Nursery & Pre-School  
This entry won the most votes overall, too
- 2nd** The Beavers' Late En-Tree.....1st Horsell Adventurers Beavers
- 3rd** Many Hands.....Horsell & Woking Childminders

### School

- 1st** Winter Wonderland.....Halstead St. Andrew's School
- 2nd** The Elves and the Shoemaker.....Horsell Village School
- 3rd** Huge Hearts and Helping Hands.....Horsell CofE Junior School Young Carers

### Family

- 1st** Step into Christmas Treepee.....The Butler Family

### Individual

- 1st** The Lav-a-Tree.....W. Closet
- 2nd** The Chris Mouse Family Tree.....Chris Mouse & His Family
- 3rd** Heavenly Family.....Karen Saunbury

### Child

- 1st** Paddington's Christmas .....Emma & Susannah Wicks
- 2nd** Christmas Corner .....Emma & Susannah Wicks
- 3rd** Royal's Christmas Tree .....Mary & Abi

### Adult group

- 1st** Hope For A Brighter Future .....Horsell Afternoon W.I.
- 2nd** The Bell Fact-Tree.....Horsell Church Bell Ringers
- 3rd** Seedar Tree .....Horsell Village Horsell Village Evening W.I.



Ancient trees are precious. There is little else on Earth that plays host to such a rich community of life within a single living organism. ( Sir David Attenborough)

# Garden Matters

As the new gardening year begins, ensure your plants have the correct growing conditions.

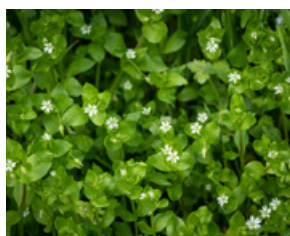
The obvious starting point is the soil, and I want to be certain that mine remains in good condition regardless of extreme weather conditions. Provided that the ground is not frozen or waterlogged, mulch, preferably using homemade organic compost, can be spread over bare patches. This is teeming with life, full of microorganisms required to nourish the soil. Healthy, fertile soil with a good structure allows plants to absorb water and mineral nutrients and encourages strong growth. If homemade compost is in short supply, allowing non-invasive annual weeds such as chickweed to grow between plants will, as with mulch, help protect the soil from heavy rain, wind and UV radiation, retain moisture and keep surface temperatures mild. As other plants grow, the weeds (it seems wrong to call them that as they are so useful)



*Calendula flower*



*White clover*



*A group of common chickweed with small white blossoms*

can be chopped down at soil level (preferably before they have set too much seed) and left on the surface or composted. The nutrients they have accumulated will benefit the soil/compost. (Further information can be found at <https://livingpermaculturepnw.com/weeds-good-for-soil-and-helpful-indicators/>). Annuals like calendulas and green manures such as clover can be sown in March and will have the same effect. Furthermore, calendula roots repel some pests such as asparagus beetle and the vigorous root opens the soil; clover fixes nitrogen, releasing nutrients back into the soil and improving its structure. Isn't nature clever?

I wish you all a good start to your growing year.

Elna Broe

Caring for the environment by gardening naturally is one of the most satisfying and worthwhile occupations we can find. (Bob Flowerdew)



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# Inspire Kitchens Competition

## Lucky Local Couple Wins Dream Kitchen

**I**nspire Kitchens, based on Knaphill High Street, recently brought some festive cheer to the community with their 'Win a Kitchen' competition. The incredible prize, valued at £15,000, includes a kitchen complete with NEFF appliances and luxurious quartz worktops.

The competition was open to customers who placed their kitchen order before December 13th. Among the hopeful participants were Shobin and Sneha from West End, Woking, who placed their order back in November. Sneha joked at the time that winning would make the perfect early birthday present for her husband, but he remained sceptical, saying, "We never win anything."

However, luck was on their side! Just days before Christmas, Jamie Baker, owner of

*Inspire Kitchens*, paid the couple a visit under the guise of resolving an invoice issue. To their astonishment, he revealed the real reason for his visit — they had won the competition! "This is the best Christmas present we could ever have received," the delighted couple said.

The dream kitchen installation is scheduled to begin in mid-January, and Inspire Kitchens is excited to help the family transform their space.

While this competition has come to an end, *Inspire Kitchens* continues to welcome new customers in 2025. Visit them on Knaphill High Street to see how they can bring your kitchen dreams to life!



## Recipe – An Easy Leek and Cheese Scone Loaf

This recipe makes one giant scone-shaped loaf, with a prep time of 20 minutes and cooking time of about 30 - 35 minutes. Serve with butter. Delicious with soup.

### Ingredients:

2 leeks finely chopped, sautéed until softened  
500g self-raising flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon dried parsley  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon black pepper  
110g cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces  
175g grated cheddar cheese  
200ml water  
A little milk to brush on top

**Method:** Preheat oven to 200°C (fan). Line a baking tray with parchment paper. Place sliced leek in a pan with a drizzle of oil – fry for 5 minutes until soft. Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl. Cut in the cold butter using a pastry blender or your fingers until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Mix in the grated cheddar cheese and sautéed leeks. Add the water, using your hands to mix it until you have a smoothish dough. Be careful not to overmix. Place the dough on a large greased or lined baking tray and press it down until you have a thick circle or oblong shape. Brush the top of the loaf with a little milk. Bake for 30 – 35 minutes, or until golden brown and a skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool before cutting into wedges whilst still warm.

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# Book Review

The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah is an uncomfortably good read.

It is a powerful and poignant historical fiction novel set in 1930s America that follows the story of Elsa Martinelli, a young woman from rural Texas, navigating the challenges of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Hannah's vivid storytelling and rich character development bring this tumultuous period to life, making it a compelling and unforgettable read.

The novel's central character, Elsa, is complex and multifaceted. She is a strong and determined woman who is forced to make difficult choices as she strives to provide for her family. Elsa's journey is one of resilience, courage, and unwavering hope, even in the face of adversity. Her struggles with poverty, loss, and the harsh realities of the Dust Bowl make her a relatable and sympathetic character.

Another key character is Elsa's husband, Roy. While initially supportive, Roy becomes increasingly overwhelmed by their circumstances. His struggles with alcoholism and his inability to cope with adversity add depth and complexity to the story, albeit Roy's character is underdeveloped.

The supporting characters, such as Elsa's mother-in-law and her children,



also play significant roles in the story. Their struggles and triumphs contribute to the overall narrative and highlight the impact of the Great Depression on individuals and families.

Overall, *The Four Winds* is a well-crafted and emotionally charged novel, a poignant portrayal of the human spirit during times of great hardship. Its pace is uneven in places and the ending is abrupt, but this does not detract from the book's vivid historical setting, compelling characters, and exploration of themes of resilience, family, migration, prejudice, extreme poverty and the American Dream.

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