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Issue 898 • December 18th to January 21st • 2024

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Christmas Eve in the Marketplace



Photo courtesy of Derek Maidment

24th December 2024 - 18:00 hrs to 20:00 hrs

This year, Father Christmas will be in the Marketplace on his sleigh receiving presents from the children to give to others not so fortunate.

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1st Team Fixtures
2024-25

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Bring on 2025...

The festive season is in full swing! The Christmas lights are up, we're making plans for the Christmas Eve gatherings in the market place and already thinking about the New Year resolutions for 2025.

2024 has been a rollercoaster year for Ringwood and Fordingbridge News. With your help and support we've managed to break records with the paper, making issues bigger and better than ever. We've managed to increase distribution with more drop off locations and an online version of every issue available on our website and through social media channels.

There are more features within the paper, including the What's On, History, Sport and Health and Beauty and Puzzle pages.

These additions have given us the opportunity to showcase many local businesses and causes, without which our

communities would not be the same.

We hope 2025 will bring more growth and adaptation to the paper, continuing to provide you with information about what is happening in your community, whilst helping businesses to grow.

From all of us at the Ringwood and Fordingbridge we wanted to say a huge thank you for your ongoing support.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from our family to yours.



Darren & Naomi

Ringwood & Fordingbridge NEWS

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Ringwood Shines Bright at Annual Christmas Event

Ringwood came alive last weekend during its much-loved annual Christmas event. Despite unexpected rain showers, locals and visitors from near and far turned out in droves to enjoy a festive market, live music, a grotto, circus walkabouts, and more.

Every year, Ringwood Town Council curates its unique “Winter Wanderland”—a series of festive-themed activities that celebrate the town’s community spirit and encourage visitors and shoppers to explore the area. The name “Wanderland” is intentional, promoting movement and discovery throughout the town.

This year, the High Street was buzzing with over 70 market stalls offering unique gifts and seasonal treats. An unusual and captivating art installation filled Gateway Square, adding an extra touch of magic. Crowds eagerly awaited the arrival of Father Christmas on his grand red sleigh, and he certainly didn’t disappoint. Hundreds of delighted children, joined by their families, embraced the festive spirit and shared the magic on social media. The event also featured a performance by the remarkable Steamship Circus, whose stilt-walking fairies, giant unicycle-riding toy soldiers, and tinsel-clad acrobats brought wonder and excitement to the day.



Speaking about the event, Cllr Rae Frederick, Town Mayor, expressed gratitude to the community: “We want to thank our volunteers from across the communi-



ty and our sponsors for your support. We could not do it without you!”

The fun doesn’t end there. 35 shops, businesses, and organisations have entered the **2024 Christmas Window Decoration Competition**. A Winter Wanderland map has been created so visitors can stroll through Ringwood, “wander” around the festive displays, and vote for their favourite decorations. Voting opened on Monday 2nd December, and winners will be announced in the New Year!

Families can also join in the festive fun with the **Ringwood Reindeer Ramble** around the centre of Ringwood. Santa’s nine reindeer have gone missing, and he needs help tracking them down! Explore the town, complete the activity sheet, and find all of Santa’s reindeer hiding in local shops and businesses’ windows. It’s a fantastic way to get into the holiday spirit. Once the activity sheet is completed, it can be handed in at Ringwood Gateway or posted through the letterbox to be entered into a draw to win amazing prizes. A huge thanks to Liberty’s Owl, Raptor and Reptile Centre, Lunn’s Art Store, Fred Olsen Travel Agents, Arboro Lounge, and Price’s Fish & Chips for providing the prizes. Winners will be announced in the New Year!

Plan Your Visit

Copies of the Wanderland Window Decoration map and the Reindeer Ramble Activity sheet can be downloaded from: <https://www.ringwood.gov.uk/events/ringwood-winter-wanderland> or pick up a copy at Ringwood Gateway.

more photos on page 13



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NEWS

Homeless Appeal

As we draw a close to another amazing response to our Danny Cracknell Homeless at Christmas' appeal' Jock McMaster and Jon Grant would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to all the contributors of food and clothing from the townsfolk of Ringwood,

Fordingbridge and the surrounding areas, plus special mention to the following people which include the staff and pupils of Ringwood School, Eric Champion, Abacus Van Hire (Ferndown), Di Cracknell, Ash Jones and team at Showcase Marketing, Peter/Steve Hayward, Dave Reed, Keith White, Dave & Cathy Mercer, Rae Frederick and Ringwood Town Council, Darren and team at Ringwood/Fordingbridge News and Jon's colleagues, Sally & Toni.

Your continued support is beyond measure and we wish you all a peaceful and healthy festive season. Happy 2025 to one and all



SPOT THE REINDEER RESULT

We were overwhelmed with the amount of entries with answers from 10 to 18. The correct answer was 17 and the winner picked at random was ... *Caroline Foster.* Congratulations



SPOT SANTA

With such a good response from the previous competition we have decided to have another one. **How many Santa's can you spot? They have to be this size only!** This is no.1 = Email answers to editor@rfnews.uk by 31st December.



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NEWS

Exciting New Chapter: Little Acorns Preschool Opens at Poulner Infant School and Nursery

Poulner Infant School and Nursery celebrated the opening of its brand-new preschool building with the cutting of a ribbon by Mayor of Ringwood, Cllr. Rae Frederick.

Little Acorns is set to provide high-quality early years education for children aged 2 to 4 years. The school worked with Hampshire Children Services, and Hampshire Council to make the building come to fruition after 4 years of being in the planning.

Located on the school's vibrant campus, Little Acorns has been purposefully designed to foster a love of learning from the very start. With a focus on play-based education, the preschool offers a safe, stimulating environment where children can explore, grow, and thrive under the guidance of experienced and caring early years practitioners.



Headteacher Jo Conner shared her excitement about this addition to the school community: "The opening of Little Acorns is a dream come true. We are passionate about providing an exceptional start to education, and this new preschool allows us to extend our nurturing ethos to even younger children. We look forward to welcoming families to Little Acorns and being a part of their children's first steps in learning."

The preschool features:

- **Innovative Learning Spaces:** Indoor and outdoor areas designed to encourage curiosity, creativity, and collaboration.
- **Tailored Curriculum:** Activities and experiences aligned with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework to support all areas of child development.
- **Inclusive and Caring Environment:** A focus on individual needs to ensure every child feels valued and supported.

Little Acorns is now open for registrations, with spaces available for the current academic year. The preschool will operate closely with Poulner Infant School and Nursery, ensuring a seamless transition for children moving on to Reception. For more information or to book a visit, please contact Poulner Infant School and Nursery's office.

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NEWS

Simply bowled over at Avonway

Members of The Vale of Avon Lodge, Ringwood, marked the end of another masonic year with a Celebration Meeting in which they re-elected Worshipful Brother Dr Mike Horswell as their Worshipful Master for the coming year and also distributed some of the funds already raised this year to three local charities.

A cheque for £1500 was presented to Teddies for Loving Care the masonic charity that provides teddy bears to our local hospitals in Bournemouth and Salisbury. The bears are used both to comfort anxious young patients and to enable medical practitioners to explain treatments to children by first demonstrating them on teddy. An initial sum of £500 was presented to 'We are Humans', the Bournemouth charity providing food and other essentials to local people in financial hardship, with a further £500 donation pledged for 2025. WBro George Forster received £200 on behalf of The Royal Marines Association as thanks for his enthralling presentation to the Lodge of his experiences as one of HM Yeoman of The Guard at major state occasions.

Fundraising events in the new masonic year have already started with a Family and Friends Skittles Evening and supper held at Avonway Community Centre, where the food was generously sponsored by Fordingbridge's Kebab House. Dr Mike said: 'Our Lodge has financially supported Avonway for a number of years and so it was great to make use of their excellent facilities for our own skittles event. I guess you could say I am bowled over with the £350 that we raised whilst having a lot of fun!'

A Family Quiz Night will be held at Unity Hall, Ringwood in February and the Lodge's highly popular Barn Dance repeated at The Burgate School in April. For full details of these events, the wider work of the Lodge, and how to join The Vale of Avon Lodge please contact vale_of_avon_social@outlook.com or the Master Dr Mike Horswell on 07917 589378.



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Winter Wonderland


photo collection courtesy of Derek Maidment



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NEWS

Help for Fordingbridge families through The Salvation Army Christmas Present Appeal

The Salvation Army is calling on the community in Fordingbridge to donate new toys to its Christmas Present Appeal to support families who will struggle to make ends meet over the festive season.

Every year Salvation Army churches ask people to donate new toys and gifts for children whose families cannot put food on the table, heat their homes or pay their bills.

Last year, Fordingbridge Salvation Army distributed more gifts to at least 74 adults and 144 children. The church and charity fears more people will need support this year.

Fordingbridge Salvation Army church leader Mike French said: “The Salvation Army’s present appeal is an opportunity for people in our communities to embrace the spirit of Christmas and give to families and individuals who have very little. We are incredibly grateful for the public’s generosity over the years and hope this year our appeal will be able to bring some respite to those who are struggling the most.

“Christmas is a time when financial worries are brought into sharp focus as the cost-of-living crisis continues to have a devastating impact on families who can’t afford to heat their homes or put a nutritious meal on the table. Helping parents provide a gift for their child not only eases financial pressures but helps bring the joy of Christmas into their homes.”

The church on Roundhill in Fordingbridge will be collecting donations of new unwrapped toys, and food for hampers, particularly Christmas treat bits e.g. chocolate fingers, chocolate tubs; until Friday 20th December.

People can drop their generous contribution at Fordingbridge Salvation Army hall, Fordingbridge Information Office, The Branch, The Gourmet Grocer and Wolvercroft Garden Centre. Donations can also be made via justgiving:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/thesalvationarmychristmas-2024-18>

The Salvation Army will sort and distribute the gifts to children and families in the area through local groups, schools and social services. Gifts can include anything from educational toys, baby clothes, bath toys, books, including learn to read books (for babies and toddlers) to dolls and action figures, sports equipment and clothing, toiletries (please try to ensure non-allergic ingredients if possible), gloves, scarves, hats, T-shirts, hair accessories and gift vouchers for older children.

The church is inviting the public to its Christmas programmes: Christmas Carols – Family Church 15th December 9.30-10.15am; and also the Evening Service 22nd December 6pm both at the Hall. A church and charity, The Salvation Army expresses its Christian faith by offering friendship, practical help and support to some of the most disadvantaged people in our communities. To help support The Salvation Army’s year-round work please visit: salvationarmy.org.uk/donate

For more information about the Christmas Present Appeal and ideas about gifts, see our website: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/christmas-present-appeal>





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Understanding Investments: Reflections on the investment year

I hope 2024 has been a good year for you. It's certainly been politically eventful (significant changes in Governments both here and in the US) and economically encouraging (inflation levels falling back, albeit still slightly elevated, and interest rates appearing to have peaked), whilst geo-political concerns continue.

From an investment perspective, we had endured 2 challenging investment years and I am pleased to say that 2024 has rewarded patience with balanced portfolio returns in excess of 10%. Whilst most global economies continue to suffer from low growth, the US economy performed well. The trigger for the strong investment returns was interest rates peaking and starting to come down, whilst at the same time an expectation that this would happen without the world (and specifically the US) entering a recession. Of course a recession could still happen but what markets really fear is a deep recession and that appears highly unlikely, barring a "black-swan" event none of us are talking about today. So it's been a good investment year!

Looking ahead, fixed interest investments are yielding between 4% and 7% and equities look reasonable value (other than some tech companies where growth expectations are high and could disappoint). Therefore we are positive looking ahead over the next 5 years. The low risk portion of portfolios (fixed interest) should contribute a strong yield (interest payments) which means there is less demand on equities to do all the "heavy lifting" to achieve a reasonable return. In addition, new governments are focused on supporting growth (whether we agree or not on how they go about it) which should be broadly supportive for equities.

On the flip side, geo-political concerns continue. Sadly, this is forever the case and in our opinion not a primary reason to avoid investing (otherwise you'd never invest and would miss out in the long-term). Equity markets are also likely to see a return to some volatility as they have been comparatively benign in 2024. The political decisions coming out of the US may be more controversial and erratic as the new government leverage and flex their muscle in trade talks and foreign policy. Again market volatility is normal and shouldn't be feared by long-term investors. It's better to tune-

out of short-term commentary and news headlines which aim to be dramatic and instead view declines as opportunities for the long-term.

In the UK the recent budget was big news. We did send an update post-budget so I won't dwell on all the changes and instead will mention one on which further advice will follow during the next 12 months and will require some detailed financial planning. The taxation of pension death benefits is changing from April 2027 and they will become liable to inheritance tax (the spousal exemption still applies so no IHT if left to a spouse). For many clients, pensions have been the last place from which to draw income or tax-free cash whilst the pension values were excluded from IHT.

In fact many clients earmarked their surplus pension savings to pass down to children and grandchildren inheritance tax-free. That is changing and will require careful planning ahead of the rule change in 2 years' time.

Moving on, our Ringwood office continues to thrive. We believe that our offering of local, personal face to face independent advice, delivered by highly qualified advisers, is attractive. Thank you to our clients. We will never take your trust and loyalty for granted.

We wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and a super 2025. If you'd like to discuss your personal financial situation and planning, my colleagues Stewart Sims-Handcock, Harry Goodship and I are available for a free initial, no obligation chat.

Howard Goodship is an Independent Financial Adviser with Lonsdale Wealth Management, 5 Friday's Court, Ringwood Tel: 01425 208490 www.lonsdaleservices.co.uk

The value of an investment and the income from it could go down as well as up. The return at the end of the investment period is not guaranteed and you may get back less than you originally invested. The contents of this article are for information purposes only and do not constitute individual advice.

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NEWS

continued from page 1

Christmas Eve in the Market Place in Ringwood is a very special time. The tradition of this event goes back to the 1950s when the idea of children giving presents to Father Christmas began. Ringwood Rotary CIO took over the organisation and management of the event in back in 1999 and this traditional event continues to this day.

This special night gives the children of Ringwood the chance to meet Father Christmas as he journeys around the world on Christmas Eve. They present him with a gift that he can then deliver to children in the region who are less fortunate. This means lots more children manage to celebrate Christmas through the opening of a present.

Date changes for Christmas and New Year recycling and rubbish collections

There are some changes to household recycling and rubbish collections in the New Forest district over Christmas and New Year.



Clear recycling sack and black rubbish sack collections:

Sack collections usually due on Wednesday 25 December and Wednesday 1 January, will instead be on Thursday 2 January. Sack collections usually due on Thursday 26 December and Thursday 2 January, will instead be on Friday 3 January. Sack collections usually due on Friday 3 January, will instead be on Saturday 4 January. We can collect extra recycling and rubbish from affected households. All other sack collections will stay the same as usual.

Glass collections:

Glass collections usually due on Wednesday 25 December, will instead be on Saturday 21 December. Glass collections usually due on Thursday 26 December, will instead be on Saturday 28 December. Glass collections usually due on Wednesday 1 January, will instead be on Saturday 4 January. All other glass collections will stay the same as usual.

Garden waste collections:

As usual, garden waste collections will be paused for two weeks from late December. This will be from Monday 23 December 2024 to Sunday 5 January 2025. All other collection days will stay the same.

Christmas tree recycling

Drop-off points will be open at the following locations from 31 December to 14 January.

List of Christmas tree drop-off locations:

Burley (Burley Coach Park, BH24 4AA)
 Fordingbridge (A338 Slip Road Car Park, SP6 1AW)
 Ringwood (Furlong Long Stay Car Park, follow signs to designated area, BH24 1AT)
 Any trees left in car parks not on this list will be treated as fly-tipping.

Residents are asked to only drop off real Christmas trees and remove any decorations first, such as lights or wreaths. Trees must be placed as far back as possible in the fenced bay. We will recycle the trees by chipping them to create mulch. The mulch will be used locally to help keep moisture around plant roots, and to prevent weeds from growing.

Ringwood Town Council Job Opportunity: Finance Manager (Responsible Finance Officer)

Hours: Part-time, 21 hours per week
Salary: £42,708 - £45,718 (FTE)

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How to Apply

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Closing Date: Wednesday 8 January 2025
Interview Date: Tuesday 21 January 2025



Ringwood
Town Council

Ringwood Lantern of Remembrance

SHINING IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY IN HONOUR OF

DATE OF DEATH	NAME	RANK	REGIMENT OR SHIP
01/12/1942	Harold Leslie Skeats	Marine	Royal Marines
06/12/1941	Thomas Michael Geoffrey Codrington	Lieutenant	Royal Navy
13/12/1918	A S Guy	Lance Corporal	28th Company, Royal Engineers
16/01/1945	Henry Frank King	Flight Sergeant	RAF Volunteer Reserve 466 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force
19/01/1942	Richard George Barlow	Captain	Royal Corps of Signals

Lest We Forget



THE WINNERS OF THE BRIGHTWATER CHRISTMAS COLOURING COMPETITION

A huge congratulations to Monet, Florence and Sebi who placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd in our colouring competition! We were so impressed with your pictures. We would also like to say a big thank you to everyone that entered, the Mayor was truly spoilt for choice! Pop into town and visit the BrightWater office and the old WHSmith shop where lots of them can be seen.





Christmas Carols

BRIGHTWATER

Thank you to all our current clients for their loyalty over the past year.
Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from
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Jenny & Nikki

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~ 1 ~

WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED

WHILE shepherds watched their flocks by night
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

Fear not! said he; for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

To you, in David's town, this day
Is born, of David's line,
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign:

The heavenly babe you there shall find
To human view displayed
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid.

All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from Heaven to men
Begin and never cease!

~ 2 ~

THE HOLLY AND THE IVY

THE holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.

The rising of the sun,
And the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ,
Sweet singing in the choir.

~ 3 ~

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

HARK! the herald angels sing:
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Hark! the herald angels sing:
Glory to the new-born King.

Christ, by highest Heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

Hail the Heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

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Christmas Carols

~ 4 ~

THE FIRST NOWELL

THE first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping
their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star,
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

And by the light of that same star,
Three wise men came from country far,
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
That hath made Heaven and earth
of nought,
And with his blood mankind hath bought.

~ 5 ~

IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER

IN the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter, Long ago.

Our God, Heav'n cannot hold him
Nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away
When he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man
I would do my part;
Yet what can I give him?
Give my heart.

~ 6 ~ O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O LITTLE town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God, the King,
And peace to men on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary;
And, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep,
the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his Heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel.



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Christmas Carols



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~ 7 ~
AWAY IN A MANGER

AWAY in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes;
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for Heaven to live with thee there.

~ 8 ~
ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

ONCE, in royal David's city,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a Mother laid her Baby
In a manger for His bed;
Mary was that Mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from Heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

~ 9 ~
**DING DONG!
MERRILY ON HIGH**

DING dong! merrily on high
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing.

Glo - - - ri - a,
Hosanna in excelsis!
Glo - - - ri - a,
Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen.
And i-o, i-o, i-o,
By priest and people sungen.

Pray you dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your eve-time song, ye singers:

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Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year

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Christmas Carols

~ 10 ~

GOOD KING WENCESLAS

GOOD King Wenceslas looked out
On the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about,
Deep and crisp and even.
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gathering winter fuel.

"Hither, page, and stand by me,
If you know it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence,
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

In his master's steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
Which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
You who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing.

~ 12 ~ O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

O COME, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye,
O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of angels:

O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

~ 11 ~

GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN, REJOICE

GOOD Christian men, rejoice
With heart and soul, and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
News! News!
Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before Him bow;
And He is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

Good Christian men, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss: Joy! Joy!
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened the heavenly door,
And man is blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

Good Christian men, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave:
Peace! Peace!
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all,
To gain His everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb,
Very God,
Begotten, not created.

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above;
Glory to God, In the highest:

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and a
happy and healthy 2025

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Christmas Carols

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~ 13 ~
ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

ANGELS from the realms of Glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye, who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

Come and worship,
Christ the new-born King;
Come and worship,
Worship Christ,
the new-born King.

Shepherds in the fields abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light:

Sinners, moved by true repentance,
Doomed for guilt to endless pains,
Justice now revokes the sentence,
Mercy calls you; break your chains.

~ 14 ~
JESUS, GOOD ABOVE ALL OTHER

Jesus, good above all other,
Gentle Child of gentle mother,
In a stable born our brother,
Give us grace to persevere.

Jesus, cradled in a manger,
For us facing every danger,
Living as a homeless stranger,
Make we thee our King most dear.

Jesus, for thy people dying,
Risen Master, death defying,
Lord in Heav'n, thy grace supplying,
Keep us to thy presence near.

Lord, in all our doings guide us;
Pride and hate shall ne'er divide us;
We'll go on with thee beside us,
And with joy we'll persevere!

~ 15 ~
WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE

We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar.
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect Light.

Born a king on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I.
Incense owns a Deity nigh.
Prayer and praising all men raising,
Worship Him, God most high.

Myrrh is mine: it's bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Glorious now behold Him arise,
King and God and sacrifice.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Earth to the heaven's replies.

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Merry Christmas and Happy new year from everyone at Rose & Lily!

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Christmas Carols

~ 16 ~
**LONG TIME AGO
 IN BETHLEHEM**

LONG time ago in Bethlehem
 So the Holy Bible says
 Mary's boy child, Jesus Christ
 Was born on Christmas Day.

Hark now hear the angels sing
 A new king's born today
 And man will live for evermore
 Because of Christmas Day.

While shepherds watched
 their flocks by night,
 They saw a bright new shining star
 And heard a choir from
 Heaven sing
 The music came from afar.

Now Joseph and his wife, Mary,
 Came to Bethlehem that night,
 They found no place to
 bear her child,
 Not a single room was in sight.

By and by they found a little nook
 In a stable all forlorn,
 And in a manger cold and dark,
 Mary's little boy-child was born.

~ 17 ~
GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN

GOD rest you merry, gentlemen
 Let nothing you dismay,
 Remember, Christ, our Saviour
 Was born on Christmas day;
 To save us all from Satan's power
 When we were gone astray;
 O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!
 O tidings of comfort and joy!

From God our Heavenly Father
 A blessed Angel came;
 And unto certain Shepherds
 Brought tidings of the same:
 How that in Bethlehem was born
 The Son of God by name.
 O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!
 O tidings of comfort and joy!

Now to the Lord sing praises,
 All you within this place,
 And with true love and brotherhood
 Each other now embrace;
 This holy tide of Christmas
 All other doth efface.
 O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!
 O tidings of comfort and joy!



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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



**"Merry Xmas and
 Happy New Year
 to all our candidates
 and clients"**



Christmas Carols

<p align="center">~ 18 ~ RUDOLPH, THE RED-NOSED REINDEER</p> <p>RUDOLPH, the red-nosed reindeer Had a very shiny nose. And if you ever saw him, You would even say it glows.</p> <p>All of the other reindeer Used to laugh and call him names. They never let poor Rudolph Play in any reindeer games.</p> <p>Then one foggy Christmas eve Santa came to say: "Rudolph with your nose so bright, Won't you guide my sleigh tonight?"</p> <p>Then all the reindeer loved him As they shouted out with glee: "Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer, You'll go down in history!"</p>	<p align="center">~ 19 ~ SILENT NIGHT</p> <p>SILENT night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright, Round the virgin mother and child; Holy infant, tender and mild, Rests in heav'nly peace, Rests in heav'nly peace.</p> <p>Silent night! Holy night! Guiding star, lend thy light. See, the eastern wise men bring Gifts and homage to our King, Jesus Christ is here, Jesus Christ is here.</p> <p>Silent night! Holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light. With the angels let us sing Hallelujahs to our King, Jesus Christ is here, Jesus Christ is here.</p>	<p align="center">~ 21 ~ WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS</p> <p>We wish you a Merry Christmas We wish you a Merry Christmas We wish you a Merry Christmas And a Happy New Year.</p> <p><i>Good tidings we bring To you and your kin Good tidings for Christmas And a happy new year.</i></p> <p>We all like our figgy pudding; We all like our figgy pudding; We won't go until we get some So bring it out here!</p> <p><i>Good tidings we bring</i></p> <p>We all know that Santa's coming, We all know that Santa's coming, We all know that Santa's coming, And soon will be here.</p> <p><i>Good tidings we bring</i></p> <p>We wish you a Merry Christmas We wish you a Merry Christmas We wish you a Merry Christmas And a Happy New Year.</p> <p><i>Good tidings we bring</i></p>
<p align="center">~ 20 ~ THE INFANT KING</p>		
<p>SING lullaby! Lullaby baby, now reclining, Sing lullaby!</p> <p>Hush, do not wake the Infant King. Angels are watching, stars are shining Over the place where he is lying. Sing lullaby!</p> <p>Sing lullaby! Lullaby baby, now a-sleeping, Sing lullaby!</p> <p>Hush, do not wake the Infant King. Soon will come sorrow with the morning, Soon will come bitter grief and weeping: Sing lullaby!</p>	<p>Sing lullaby! Lullaby baby, now a-dozing, Sing lullaby!</p> <p>Hush, do not wake the Infant King. Soon comes the cross, the nails, the piercing, Then in the grave at last reposing: Sing lullaby!</p> <p>Sing lullaby! Lullaby! is the babe a-waking? Sing lullaby!</p> <p>Hush, do not stir the Infant King. Dreaming of Easter, gladsome morning, Conquering Death, its bondage breaking: Sing lullaby!</p>	

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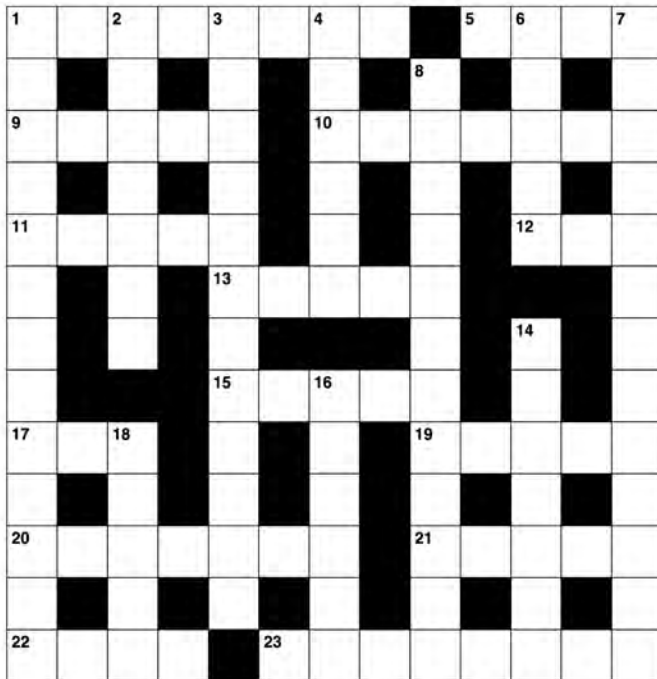
Puzzle Corner

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Crossword



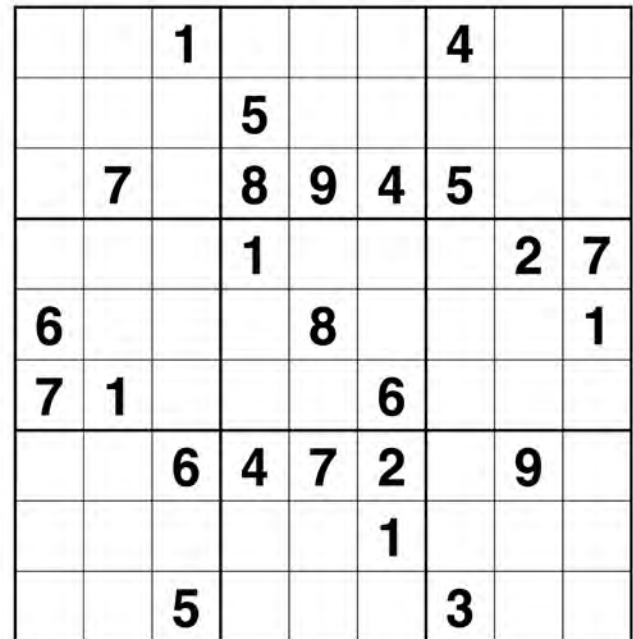
Across

- 1 - Warns (8)
- 5 - Simple aquatic organism (4)
- 9 - Giraffes have long ones (5)
- 10 - Folds in a material (7)
- 11 - Factual evidence (5)
- 12 - Male aristocrat (3)
- 13 - Leaf of parchment (5)
- 15 - Appeal (5)
- 17 - Unit of resistance (3)
- 19 - Severe (5)
- 20 - Eg biology (7)
- 21 - Group of activists (5)
- 22 - Abominable snowman (4)
- 23 - Gauges (8)

Down

- 1 - Prominently (13)
- 2 - Reveal (7)
- 3 - Inadequate (12)
- 4 - Five cent coin (US) (6)
- 6 - Enumerates (5)
- 7 - Aggressive self-assurance (13)
- 8 - Renditions (12)
- 14 - Careless mistake (7)
- 16 - Assent or agree to (6)
- 18 - Damp (5)

Sudoku



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ANSWERS FOR THE LAST ISSUE



SPORT & NEWS

Fordingbridge Mini Rugby Foodbank Appeal

On Sunday, the Minis division of Fordingbridge Rugby Club came together to collect food essentials for the local Ringwood, Fordingbridge and Verwood Foodbank. Supporting the local community and those less fortunate is really important for the Club. Minis Lead Gemma Murphy said "Our local community is so important to us and we recognise how important it is for our players to feel that too. For young children, Christmas can often get caught up with receiving gifts so it was great to see so many children engaging to support those less fortunate to support those in need. Working with the Foodbank to organise collections has become somewhat of a Christmas tradition!"

The large collection of food and toiletries will be used to support vulnerable and in need local families at the difficult time of the year.

For children looking to get into rugby the club runs training for all age groups from U5s-U12s every Sunday at 9:30am on Fordingbridge recreational ground. All ages and abilities are encouraged to try, with the emphasis on fun and enjoyment. Email frfcmis@outlook.com



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Ringwood Community Hub
1st Team Fixtures 2024-25

Date	H/A	Opponents
Sat 21-Dec	A	Amesbury Town
Sat 28-Dec	H	Totton & Eling
Sat 4-Jan	H	Lymington Town
Sat 11-Jan	A	Aldermaston
Tue 14-Jan	H	Hamworthy Utd*

We wish you a **Merry Christmas** and Happy New Year!
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Top Inheritance Tax Planning Mistakes to Avoid



Inheritance Tax (IHT) is a concern for many individuals and families if not managed properly, particularly those with significant assets such as property, business interests or investment. Diane Warren, Head of Private Client Tax at Fiander Tovell, highlights the top IHT planning mistakes and how to avoid them.

Failing to Utilise Available Reliefs

There are various reliefs available during life and after death that are key to effective IHT planning. For example, the Residence Nil Rate Band of £175,000 applies if the estate is under £2 million and the home is passed to a direct descendant. Annual exemptions, though small individually, can also add up over time.

Diane’s Solution: “To make sure you don’t miss out on these allowances, review your estate plan regularly and consult an IHT specialist to structure your estate to maximise these reliefs.”

Not Updating Your Will

Your will is the foundation of your estate plan, but many fail to update it after life changes like marriage, divorce or acquiring assets. An outdated will can lead to a higher IHT bill or assets being passed to the wrong beneficiaries.

Diane’s Solution: “Regularly reviewing and updating your will is key to IHT planning. Revisit it every few years or after major life changes to ensure it aligns with your wishes and is tax efficient.”

Overlooking the Seven-Year Rule for Lifetime Gifts

Gifting assets during your lifetime can reduce IHT, but many misunderstand the seven-year rule and taper relief. If you pass away within seven years of gifting, those assets remain part of your estate for tax purposes. Taper relief applies only to the value above the nil rate band, not the entire gift.

Diane’s Solution: “Work closely with an adviser to ensure your gifts are structured in the most beneficial manner. We often recommend a strategy of making regular smaller gifts, which can fall within annual exemptions and be exempt from IHT straight away.”

Leaving it Too Late

IHT planning can be an emotional topic, and many avoid it while they’re younger. However, delaying planning often means it’s too late to take advantage of options that reduce IHT exposure, such as surviving seven years after a gift.

Diane’s Solution: “Understanding your IHT exposure and available reliefs is crucial for effective estate planning. Seek professional help early to make informed decisions.”

Seek Professional Advice

IHT planning is complex, and mistakes can be costly. Diane Warren and her team at Fiander Tovell are experts in estate and tax planning, helping families navigate IHT. Whether it’s valuing your estate, reviewing your will or making lifetime gifts, professional guidance is key to preserving wealth for future generations.

To learn more or discuss your specific needs, please get in touch by calling **023 8033 2733** or email dianewarren@fiandertovell.co.uk

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NEWS

Church Stars Light the Road to Christmas

Two illuminated stars have caught the eye of locals and travellers on the A31 at Ringwood. New Vicar, Revd Stephen Miles had placed a star on his previous church at Christmas and suggested placing two on the tower of Ringwood Parish Church. The stars, some 5 metres high, had to be assembled on the roof of the church tower. 'The stars had to be as big as possible, but we had to get all the bits up four stories of spiral staircase and then three long ladders to get to the roof. Then we needed a break in the weather to put it all together. We have had issues with rain getting into the lights – it's very exposed. But the response we have had has been overwhelming. The three of us who put it up have been absolutely amazed,' said Paul Gray, who coordinated the project.

The first star was in place for Ringwood's annual Winter Wonderland on 1st December when the town Christmas lights were switched on in front of 2,000 people. They will stay on the church tower until the end of the Christmas season.

Jacqueline Brown, Churchwarden said, 'We always get lots of messages about the tower and flag; for many people it's a well-loved landmark, visible from many miles away, but the response this time has been really incredible.' Revd Miles, who came to the Parish of Ringwood in September, was enthusiastic: 'When you walk around in a clergy dog-collar, it's not unusual to be stopped and asked why anyone should have hope. I think this is part of the answer: the Christmas message is as relevant as ever and the stars hopefully cause people to think a little more deeply about it. We've had such a wonderfully positive response to the stars, and I'd like to think that the people of Ringwood and surrounding areas can Follow the Star this Christmas and find the joy and hope they are seeking.'



SHORT STORY BY LOCAL AUTHOR SET TO SUPPORT SHELTER

Self-published author releases story to support national charity this Christmas 02 December 2025: Local self-published author Sarah Ironside is proud to announce the release of her short story, 'Jake's Tale', from the highly acclaimed book 'Tales on Two Legs', as a standalone eBook in aid of national housing and homelessness charity Shelter. Sarah has pledged to donate all royalties from the Kindle edition of this tale to the charity, who lead the way in supporting everyone's fundamental right to a safe home, a right that is especially highlighted at Christmas time.

'Jake's Tale' is taken from the book **Tales on Two Legs**. A collection of short stories inspired by the music of international American rock band **Pearl Jam**. When the reader meets Jake, he is on the streets and misunderstood, a story not unfamiliar to the struggles of some who turn to Shelter for advice and support.

Sarah said, "Jake's Tale touches on social issues, where it's easier to dismiss homelessness and the people it affects, walk past those less fortunate and forget that there is a story behind how they have ended up in this position. It's heartbreaking that we live in times where people need charitable support to be able to keep a roof over their heads and that of their families. It's the time of year we all want to be able to do something for others and I felt moved to do something practical – releasing **Jake's Tale** as an eBook in its own right has allowed me to do just that."

Sarah approached Shelter and proposed she release the story as a way to raise money and awareness for the charity.

She continued; "It was an email I really didn't expect them to reply to, but the story has a powerful voice. I'm delighted I can support them with this tale. I like to think that Jake is playing an

important role this Christmas and I'm really proud to be supporting Shelter and their 'Fight for Home'.

"Shelter is close to my heart, I believe everyone deserves the stability and security that a home provides. By donating all royalties, I hope to contribute to their life-changing work and continued awareness about the urgent need for action."

'**Jake's Tale**' is available for purchase as a Kindle edition on Amazon. Every copy sold will help fund Shelter's vital services, offering a beacon of hope to those at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. To purchase the short story and support Shelter's mission, visit <https://amzn.eu/d/OjWPqrP> today. The story costs £1.99, with all the royalties donated to Shelter via Work for Good'.

Sarah added; "By joining the fight for home, we can help ensure that everyone has a place to call their own. This story is a small contribution, but together, we can make a big difference."



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A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

HISTORY & NEWS

The 'platform' now arriving at.....



After the great success of the 'Memories of Ringwood Railway' exhibition at Greyfriars and The Meeting House over the Summer, The Ringwood Society have since turned their attention to the next phase of their lottery funded project.

A forgotten corner of land on Castleman Way has been transformed into a permanent reminder of the town's railway heritage.

New signage has been erected, four replacement trees planted, remaining railway features restored and an interpretation board added to bring the history of the town's railway to passers by.



A lot of hard work has gone into creating the project and The Society is grateful for the assistance received from Will Jones of The Tree Management Company, Craig Elliott of CGE Outdoor Construction, Chris Penwarden of The One Stop Resin Shop, Ringwood Men's Shed, MultiSigns, and Stuart Wallis of New Forest Metalwork who

created the large 'Ringwood' sign. In addition, several people have donated items to the project; Matthew England of England's Garden Machinery has donated the boundary marker, Des and Laura Cockayne have donated a tree to supplement the others planted, Sue Treleaven who donated a genuine railway bench for people to sit on and enjoy the site, and a special thanks to Hallam Mills of the Bisterne Estate for the use of the land in the first place.

The specially produced videos from the exhibition remain available on the revamped Society website, and there will be an official opening of the site in the New Year.

The Ringwood Society promotes the town through their Town Trail, which leads visitors through the town, illuminating the history and character to those who may not be aware. Copies of this can be picked up throughout the town centre.

The Society always welcomes new members to support their work, with projects and by joining the executive committee. The more members the Society has, the more which can be achieved! Membership of the Society is only £10 a year for a single membership, only £18 per year for a couple, with students receiving free membership. Further details can be found on their relaunched website www.ringwoodsociety.org.uk



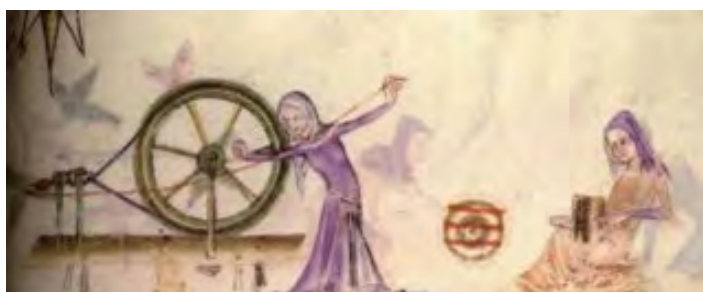
The Ringwood Society



Medieval Women and Where To Find Them

Fordingbridge History Society's next talk will be delivered by Dr Cindy Wood is a Senior Lecturer in the School of History and Archaeology at the University of Winchester.

Her talk debunks the traditional myth that medieval women are considered invisible by illustrating how to uncover the lives and experiences of these women. The talk will be given in our new venue of the Avonway Hall 36 Shaftesbury St Fordingbridge SP6 1FJ at 2.30pm on the 13 January 2025. Meetings are free for members and £5 for visitors.



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Ringwood carers enjoy afternoon tea and festive music at St Ives House care home

A Ringwood care home welcomed in local carers for an afternoon of rest and relaxation while enjoying afternoon tea.

St Ives House care home, based on Horton Road, welcomed around 30 members of the Ringwood Carers Group to get together for afternoon tea in the bistro with the food prepared by the care home's chefs. Sue, a military band musician who is staying at St Ives House for respite care, kindly offered to play festive music on the care home's piano for the event's attendees to listen and sing along to.

Members of the Ringwood Carers Group care for their spouse, parent, or loved one on an unpaid basis and benefit from attending monthly meetings by talking to other like-minded people.

Roger Gregory, a Trustee of Ringwood Carers Group, said: "Thank you so much to the team at St Ives House for inviting us all for afternoon tea. It was very kind of Emma, the Home Manager, to welcome us in. I don't think we've ever seen so many members at one event before, so it was nice to see everyone get together."

Pam, who is a carer and member of Ringwood Carers Group, said: "The afternoon was a real luxury for me. I don't normally get to do things like afternoon tea, so it was really nice. It's nice to be part of the group and know that I'm not the only one in my position, as I can mix and socialise with others."

Emma Cotton, Home Manager at St Ives House, said: "We love welcoming in the community, and this was a great way to give back to the Ringwood Carers Group, giving them a well-deserved afternoon to relax and unwind. Caring for a loved one can be challenging, so we wanted to offer the group a chance to take a break and enjoy their time."

Earlier this year, Care South, which owns and operates St Ives House came home, donated £500 to Ringwood Carers Group through the Chairman's 2020 Fund towards costs to help them reach out and support more people.

Sessions with the Ringwood Carers Group take place on the second Thursday of each month from 10.30am to 12pm at Trinity Centre in Trinity Church on Christchurch Road.

St Ives House is hosting a free dementia information session and afternoon tea on Wednesday 15 January from 2pm - 4pm. Open to Ringwood residents caring for loved ones with dementia, the event offers a chance to connect, seek advice, and share experiences. No booking is required—just turn up.

St Ives House, which is part of the Care South family of care homes, provides residential, respite, and dementia care. It features a dedicated activities team who organise a daily programme of events to bring residents together to socialise and build friendships. The care home features a choice of communal lounges overlooking a landscaped courtyard and garden offering peace and tranquillity, as well as a bistro and onsite hairdressing salon.

Care South is a leading provider of high quality residential and home care services across the south of England. The not-for-profit organisation, which is a registered charity, has care homes in Dorset, north Devon, Somerset and West Sussex, and home care offices covering east and west Dorset, and northeast Somerset and south Somerset.

For more information about the care services available, go to care-south.co.uk or call Care South on 01202 712410.



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GREYFRIARS
community centre

What's on at Greyfriars...

14 December- Ringwood Repair Café

Returning for the final time this year and open from 10-12. Book in your repair online at ringwoodrepaircafeuk@gmail.com or pop in on the day to see what we do and join us for a festive refreshment! Monthly apart from August on the 2nd Saturday.

9, 16 & 23 January Beginners Photography Course

Billions of photos are taken annually, but many leave the photographer disappointed. Our course will give you the skills to take better photos and improve your keeper rate. Just £30 for the three week course, Thursdays from 7:30, book online at www.ringwoodcameraclub.co.uk.

25 January -Study Group Day School- The Romantics

Is music your passion? Led by Ian Lowes, this day will explore the marriage of voice and orchestra through the works of the Romantic composers. £30 to include a delicious two course lunch and coffee and from 10:00am -3:45pm, book in the centre or on TicketSource.

25 January –Moviola presents “Thelma”

2024 American comedy-drama film written, directed and edited by Josh Margolin. The film stars June Squibb as an elderly woman who falls victim to a phone scam, and sets out to find the perpetrators with the help of her grandson and friend. Tickets just £6, in the centre or on TicketSource. Doors open at 2 for s 2:30 start.

Christmas - Greyfriars will be closed to the general public from 4pm 23 December to 8am 2 January 2025. We wish all our members and centre users a very Merry Christmas and Peaceful & Happy New Year!

HAVE AN EVENT COMING UP?

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Contact us for further information.



Carole-Ann

ccarmichael280860@gmail.com

07808 301327



avonvalleypals.co.uk

**Ringwood Repair Cafe -
Jacko's story**

After being stored in a garden shed, Andy Booth's 'Jacko' toy monkey had suffered significant water damage. He contacted Ringwood Repair Café in the hope they might be able to restore his beloved childhood toy.

Although she had had advance warning of Jacko's condition, on examination at November's café, repairer Anne Tobin soon realised Jacko would need much more intensive care. Andy agreed that she could take what was left of Jacko home.

After cleaning components that could be saved, washing and repairing the original cardigan, and making a new body with fillings and textiles from Ringwood Fabrics, reattaching his face, hands and feet, Anne painstakingly put Jacko back together again – good as new.

A delighted Andy was reunited with Jacko at the December repair café. Anne said she was going to miss him and had loved the restoration project. Additional details and photographs of Jacko's repair journey can be seen on the repair café's Facebook page. The next Ringwood Repair Café will be on Saturday 11th January at Greyfriars.



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BEREAVEMENT NOTICE

TOPP

Jean Mary (nee Kebby)

Passed away peacefully on 30th November 2024 aged 82 years. Jean requested a private cremation and her Cremated Remains will be scattered with those of her late husband Jim at Harbour View Woodland Burial Ground.

CARTER

Daphne Ann

Sadly passed away on Tuesday 3rd December 2024 at home while her loyal dog, Molly watched over her.

A Devoted Wife to the late Ronald Carter BEM and a wonderful friend.

Yn ôl ym mreichiau dy gariad'

A Funeral Service will be held in The Barn, Harbour View Crematorium, Randells Hill, Lytchett Minster, Poole Dorset BH16 6AN on Friday 27th December at 3.00pm.

Family Flowers only please. Donations to Cancer Research UK or the RNLI may be made online at www.tapperfuneralservice.co.uk or cheques sent to Barrow & Tapper Funeral Service, 29a Southampton Road, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 1HB (01425 472104)



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Merry Christmas!

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BRIGHTWATER



Gingerbread House Recipe

1. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Melt the butter, sugar and syrup in a pan. Mix the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ground ginger into a large bowl, then stir in the butter mixture to make a stiff dough. If it won't quite come together, add a tiny splash of water.
2. Cut out the template (download from the tips below). Put a sheet of baking paper on a work surface and roll about one quarter of the dough to the thickness of two £1 coins. Cut out one of the sections, then slide the gingerbread, still on its baking paper, onto a baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough, re-rolling the trimmings, until you have two side walls, a front and back wall and two roof panels. Any leftover dough can be cut into Christmas trees, if you like.
3. Pick out the most intact flaked almonds and gently poke them into the roof sections, pointy-end first, to look like roof tiles. Bake all the sections for 12 mins or until firm and just a little darker at the edges. Leave to cool for a few minutes to firm up, then trim around the templates again to give clean, sharp edges. Leave to cool completely.
4. Put the egg whites in a large bowl, sift in the icing sugar, then stir to make a thick, smooth icing. Spoon into a piping bag with a medium nozzle. Pipe generous snakes of icing along the wall edges, one by one, to join the walls together. Use a small bowl to support the walls from the inside, then allow to dry, ideally for a few hours.
5. Once dry, remove the supports and fix the roof panels on. The angle is steep so you may need to hold these on firmly for a few mins until the icing starts to dry. Dry completely, ideally overnight. To decorate, pipe a little icing along the length of 20 mini chocolate fingers and stick these lengthways onto the side walls of the house. Use three, upright, for the door.
6. Using the icing, stick sweets around the door and on the front of the house. To make the icicles, start with the nozzle at a 90-degree angle to the roof and squeeze out a pea-sized blob of icing. Keeping the pressure on, pull the nozzle down and then off – the icing will pull away, leaving a pointy trail. Repeat all around the front of the house. Cut the chocolate mini roll or dipped Flake on an angle, then fix with icing to make a chimney. Pipe a little icing around the top. If you've made gingerbread trees, decorate these now, too, topping each with a silver ball, if using. Dust the roof with icing sugar for a snowy effect. Lay a winding path of sweets, and fix gingerbread trees around and about using blobs of icing.

- 250g unsalted butter
- 200g dark muscovado sugar
- 7 tsp golden syrup
- 600g plain flour
- 2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 4 tsp ground ginger

Decorations -

- 200g flaked almonds
- 2 egg whites
- 500g icing sugar
- 125g mini chocolate
- Generous selection of sweets

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This cruise has been specially timed to visit the Netherlands during the colourful tulip season. From Rotterdam, you can see these iconic flowers in bloom at Keukenhof Gardens or at a tulip farm accompanied by a local tulip grower who can share an insight into how they're grown. Only smaller ships like Balmoral are able to dock in Antwerp, where you will be within walking distance of the city centre, offering you the chance to explore its famous diamond district and sample treats synonymous with Belgium, such as velvety, rich chocolate and flavoursome beer; glide along the canals of Rotterdam and Hamburg; or explore the cities' charming streets by bicycle. Home to one of the world's most influential music scenes, Hamburg is where the Beatles began their career, which you can discover more about with a local Beatles enthusiast.

You will be wanting to know, how to enter - it's simple, you will need token 1 from the last edition together with token 2, answer the question, complete the entry form and drop it in to Fred. Olsen Travel Agents 25 Market Place, Ringwood before 25th January 2025 - to be in with a chance to win. The draw will take place on 31st January and the winner will be notified.

Terms & Conditions: This prize is non transferrable, or exchangeable and has no cash value. The winner must be available to travel on 24th April 2025 and have a valid passport. The prize includes accommodation during your cruise, all meals and entertainment onboard and does not include drinks, excursions, specialty dining, gratuities or any other personal expenditure. You will need to have valid travel insurance and make your own arrangements to and from the port.

The prize - Cabin for 2 adults sharing onboard L2506 European River Cities with Dutch Tulips departing Southampton, 24th April 2025

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