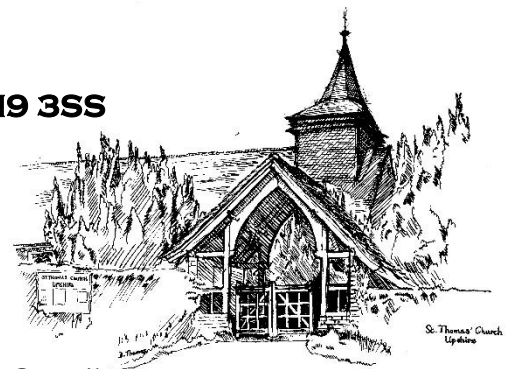


ST THOMAS' CHURCH, UPSHIRE EN9 3SS

NEWSLETTER

September 2025



Rector: Revd Peter Smith, 01992 767897
Team Vicar: Revd Jane Yeadon, 07960 604416. Email janeyeadon@gmail.com
Benefice Office: Abbey Church Centre, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1XQ. 01992 767897
Church address: Horseshoe Hill, Upshire, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3SS.
Website: <https://stthomaschurchupshire.com>
Email: lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk

This Newsletter is free: donations to Lyn Wackett. Copy date for September Newsletter: 14th August

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. The PCC has adopted the Church of England's policies and best practice on safeguarding which may be found on the Church of England website and also on the Diocese of Chelmsford website.

SERVICES AND DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER

Saturday 6th 3-4pm SEEDLINGS meet in the church

Sunday 7th Twelfth Sunday after Trinity
9.15am HOLY COMMUNION
Readings: Deuteronomy 30:15-end Luke 14:25-33

Sunday 14th Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity
9.15am HOLY COMMUNION
Readings: Exodus 32:7-14 Luke 15:1-10

2.30-5.30pm FUN DOG SHOW AND AFTERNOON TEAS in the churchyard/church
Registration for Dog Show at 2.00pm

Wednesday 17th 11.30am for 12noon COMMUNITY LUNCH in church – 07899 846711 to book. Please let us know if you have to cancel. Thank you.

Sunday 21st Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity
9.15am HOLY COMMUNION
Readings: Amos 8:4-7 Luke 16:1-13

Friday 26th 10am-2pm MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING & CAKE COMPETITION
Cakes for the competition should be at the church by 9.30am please.

Sunday 28th Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity - Harvest
9.15am HOLY COMMUNION
Readings: Amos 6:1a, 4-7 Luke 16:19-end
2.30-4.30pm LAST AFTERNOON TEAS in the church with Harvest Service at 4pm

Sunday 5th October Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity
9.15am HOLY COMMUNION
Readings: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4 Luke 17:5-10

CHURCH FLOWERS

We will be decorating the church with flowers and produce for Harvest on Saturday 27th September from 10am, everyone is welcome to come along and help. Donations of foliage, flowers and produce will be very welcome.

Each month we can create memorial dedications, wedding, anniversary or special occasion flowers - Contact Kate Dale email: dalek16@btinternet.com. Tel: 02085083942

PRAYER REQUESTS

You are invited to offer names to be added to our prayer diary to remember those who are unwell or unhappy. First names only are required as God will know who we are praying for.

Contact Lyn Wackett on 01992 711573 or email lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk

This month we pray for Laura, Alan & Pam, Lesley, Charlie & John, Anne, Pam & John, Barbara, Vernon, Mal, Sue, Ann & Cyril, Rosalind, Doreen, Maureen, Carol & George, Beverly, Terry, Jackie, Andrea & her Mum & Dad, Nina, Carmel & the Price family, Dave, Nigel, Lola, Pearl, Susan & Alan, Jackie & Linda, Graham, Christine, Chris, Izzie, Pennie and Sue.

THE VICAR WRITES

As summer begins to give way to autumn, the Church invites us to pause and celebrate the Feast of St Matthew which occurs on 21st September.

While he may not be the most talked-about of the disciples, Matthew's story – and his Gospel – hold profound meaning for us today not least as a powerful story of transformation and calling.

Matthew's journey with Jesus began in the most unexpected way. He wasn't a fisherman like Peter or John. He was a tax collector, a profession notorious in ancient Israel for corruption and collaboration with the Roman oppressors. In short, Matthew was someone most religious people of the day would have steered clear of and instinctively distrusted.

But not Jesus.

In Matthew 9:9 we read:

“As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. ‘Follow me,’ he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.”

No long negotiation. No proof of worthiness. Just a simple, immediate response to those two words: Matthew didn't hesitate.

What does this mean for us? It means that no one is beyond the reach of grace, Not you, not me, not that person you've given up on. If Jesus could see intrinsic worth in a tax collector, He can see purpose in anyone.

And of course Matthew didn't just follow Jesus – he eventually wrote one of the four Gospels, giving us a bridge between the Old Testament and the New. His Gospel is especially focused on showing that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets.

He wrote for a primarily Jewish audience, and yet his message was radically inclusive – remember the Great Commission in Matthew 28: “Go and make disciples of all nations.”

In a time when division and exclusion often make headlines, Matthew reminds us that the Gospel is for everyone. His writing calls the Church to teach, baptize, and welcome people from every background, tribe and nation.

This is especially important in this day and age where many feel unworthy of God's love. Where division is more common than unity. Where the church sometimes struggles to connect its teaching with daily life...

Into this age Matthew's story shows that God can and does choose the unlikely and his Gospel is for all. In a world that often tells us we need to earn our place, Matthew reminds us that Jesus calls us as we are – flawed, messy, uncertain – and transforms us by His love. It's a message that still echoes deeply today. Whether you're a lifelong believer or someone just beginning to wonder about faith, Matthew's story is a powerful reminder: God doesn't wait until we're perfect to call us. He meets us in the middle of our ordinary lives.

Blessings,

Rev'd Jane Yeadon,

Team Vicar St Thomas, Upshire and Holy Innocents, High Beech

Benefice Youth Missioner MB 07960 604416

St Thomas Church, Upshire Bank details

St Thomas Church Upshire PCC

HSBC Bank Sort Code 40 45 20 Account number 00724505

Any queries regarding setting up a Standing Order, giving a donation to the church, Gift Aid or about joining the Parish Giving Scheme please contact our Treasurer, Ruth Moore on 07852 668633

Ruth4366@gmail.com

If you are able to Gift Aid donations this increases your gift without any extra cost to yourself.

Our mailing list to receive the electronic version of the Newsletter is now in excess of 100 participants so if you are not one of those and wish to be included please send your email address to Kate at dalek16@btinternet.com or phone 02085083942. We are looking to reduce our 'paper footprint' for climate change by printing fewer copies – your contribution will help. Thank you.



ST THOMAS' SEEDLINGS

1st Saturdays of each month (unless otherwise stated)

A free Stay and Play church group for children and those who care for them
Join us Saturdays 3-4pm for messy craft, play, songs and stories along with a welcome cuppa
St Thomas' Church, Horseshoe Hill, Upshire, EN9 3SS



GROWER'S CORNER

The shift in season is upon us, especially noticeable when you try and fit your gardening in after work. But you do get treated with lovely light and sunsets.

The last few years we've had what has felt like an extended summer. So let's see what September 2025 will bring.

We have some sad news to share; Stephan's grandmother Eleni sadly passed away last month. She really was a gardening inspiration, always taking cuttings wherever she went. She loved coming to our allotment harvesting food and flowers. We will all miss her terribly. She has now made her final journey back to Cyprus and has been buried with her late husband Savvas. May she rest in eternal peace.

Update on the plots:

Stephan and I have been working hard assembling and cleaning the new greenhouse. I certainly have felt like a window cleaner, every individual pane has had years' worth of grime that needs scraping off but we are nearer the end now and the finishing line is in sight. The greenhouse is 12.5 ft (3.81 metres) by 8.5ft (2.59 metres), so it's a good size. By next year will be in full swing and we will have another covered growing space.

Unfortunately we had problems with some sort of wildlife be it foxes or badgers. They seem to have taken a liking for our plots by digging and unearthing so many plants and crops. It has been rather frustrating.

We have a good year for fruit especially. We have harvested so many figs from the home garden. The plums were good but sadly the plum moth got to them. We need to try and net the tree next year to see if we can help reduce the problem. The grapes have been abundant too.

September to do:

- Harvest main crop potatoes before the cold and wet weather sets in
- Keep harvesting the courgettes/marrows most will be done by the months end
- Remove any remaining outdoor tomatoes allowing green ones to ripen indoors (to prevent the risk of blight).

September sowings:

- Over-wintering onions
- Salad leaves/ winter lettuce
- Spinach
- If you have a covered space, sow oriental greens such as mizuna, Pak Choi and salad crops

Flowers/shrubs

- Leave sunflower heads on, birds will continue to feed on them.
- Keep deadheading annuals such as cosmos to keep the flowers coming
- Divide perennials such as achillea to keep the growth fresh. The division can be done with a spade or knife. Once divided these can be added into your borders, creating more free plants.

Tip: Remember to close the windows/doors on greenhouses/ polytunnels at night if chilly but to keep them ventilated on warmer days.

Happy growing. Love Louise.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Thank you to the people who have sent in articles to be included in the Newsletter. Please keep them coming! Anything: maybe a poem you have written, what you have been doing in the garden, childhood memories, something that happened to make you smile, it all makes for interesting reading.

ANAGRAM Unscramble this 9 letter anagram: FINEFROGS. The answer will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

STAMPS Please continue to save your postage stamps and foreign or out of circulation coins as the charities we support can use them to raise funds. At present we collect the coins for Essex and Herts Air Ambulance and The British Legion and stamps for British Heart Foundation. Stamps and coins can be left with Lyn & Dave at 94 Upshire Road – please leave in the porch if no reply. Please leave about ½“ of envelope around the stamps. Thank you.

COMING UP AT ST. THOMAS’

1st Saturday of each month: 3.00-4.00pm Seedlings – messy craft, play, songs and stories for children and those who care for them.

2nd & 4th Sundays, 2.30-4.30pm Afternoon Teas

Sunday 14th September, 2pm Fun Dog Show with Teas and stalls (postponed from Summer Fayre)

Friday 26th September: 10am-2.00pm Macmillan Coffee Morning with Cake Competition

Sunday 28th September: Harvest Festival with last of the Afternoon Teas, 2.30-4.30pm

Saturday 11th October: Quiz Night

Saturday 22nd November: Christmas Bazaar in the Village Hall

Wednesday 3rd December: Community Christmas Lunch

Sunday 7th December: 3pm for 3.30pm start – Enfield Brass Band Christmas Concert

50/50 CLUB

Congratulations to the winners of the 50/50 Club Draw in July who were:

1 st :	£35	No. 46	Pearl Pegg of Waltham Abbey
2 nd :	£25	No. 48	Kate Dale of Loughton
3 rd :	£15	No. 96	Gill Torrance of Upshire

It is not too late to join Draw 16 of St Thomas’ 50/50 Club.

There will be monthly draws and the entry fee is £12.00 every six months (or £2 for every month of membership). Each member is entitled to a maximum of two entries, couples can have four. Please complete the form below and return it to me; payment by Bank Transfer is preferred or alternatively you may pay by cheque or cash to the address stated. Please let me know if you pay by Bank Transfer so I can include your number in the Draw (email lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk or phone 01992 711573).

Our thanks to all our members for their support of St Thomas’ Church. Good luck to everyone who enters.

St Thomas’ Church 50/50 Club Draw 16

July to December 2025

I wish to become a member of St Thomas’ 50/50 Club and have paid by Bank Transfer to HSBC Bank, A/c St Thomas Church Upshire PCC, Sort Code 404520, A/c No: 00724505.

OR I enclose cash/cheque of £12 per entry (maximum 2 per person). Please make cheques payable to St Thomas’ Church Upshire PCC and return your entries to Lyn Wackett, 94 Upshire Road, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3PA.

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

We are sorry to announce that the
CONCERT BY ENFIELD BRASS BAND
has been cancelled due to lack of numbers, etc.
However, don't despair, the band will be back on
Sunday 7th December for their popular Christmas Concert
Book early with Lyn on 01992 711573

ST THOMAS' CHURCH COMMUNITY LUNCHESES 2025

Wednesdays, 11.30 for 12noon-2pm

17th September, 15th October, 12th November (a week earlier than usual), 3rd December

Please book your place to confirm attendance: 07899 846711

If after booking you are unable to come, please phone to cancel,
we can then offer a place to people on the waiting list.

WILDFLOWER CONSERVATION IN THE CHURCHYARD

Before Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who lived at Warlies, conceived the idea of building St Thomas' Church, the churchyard was a field. An area at the back of the church has not been disturbed, except for the burials of members of the Buxton family, or been treated with chemicals. By allowing the wild flowers to grow we can see a snapshot of what Upshire's countryside was like in 1900 and before. We do not sow wildflower seed, just help the existing population to continue. This area is mown twice – in Spring, usually in April, then again towards the end of Summer, when the mowings are left for a few days for the seed to fall out, then raked off to prevent the soil becoming too rich, encouraging coarse grasses which would choke out the flowering plants. The result is not only beautiful but is a haven for butterflies, grasshoppers and many other insects.

The only other management is to make sure the inscriptions on the horizontal Buxton graves can be read.

Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and his brother Edward North Buxton were both Verderers of Epping Forest and the latter wrote a definitive guide to the Forest and its plants and animals in 1885. The 6th edition was published in the year St. Thomas' was built. Since then many members of the family have had an interest in Natural History and we are very grateful that when approached in around 2005 about this part of the churchyard being managed for wildlife and historical interest, they were pleased to agree.

You can read more about the churchyard meadow on St. Thomas' website.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING & CAKE COMPETITION

26th September, 10am-2pm in the church. Become a star baker – classes for under 16 years and over 16 years of age: make a cake of your choice and bring to the church by 9.30am for judging at 10.15am. Please bring a list of ingredients used in the cakes in case of allergies, thank you. There will be rosettes for the winners. All cake entries will become a donation to the Macmillan event refreshments. There will also be a raffle.

Please try to attend and show your support for the Macmillan nurses as they carry out valuable work and let us do whatever it takes to support people living with cancer.

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, HIGH BEACH

Sunday afternoon teas 2.00-5.30pm every week until Sunday 28th September. There will be a free walk-in concert by Asaph at 3pm on 21st September. Everyone is welcome to enjoy the tranquillity of our churchyard whilst sampling home-made cakes, tea and coffee.

ANAGRAM The answer to the anagram is OFFERINGS.

CRAFT MARKET

The Craft Market and Table Top Sale in Waltham Abbey Town Hall will be on Tuesday 2nd September, then the first Tuesday of each month until December. 10.00am – 2.00pm. Admission free; refreshments.

UPSHIRE SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB

Held in Upshire Village Hall, Mondays 2.00-4.30pm, Tuesdays 7.00-9.30pm No experience necessary. Tuition and bowls available. It's fun to play! Contact Fred on 01992 711720 or Jean on 07733 084815.

Upshire Mothers' Union

At our July meeting Revd Jane gave us another interesting talk about her travels. Themed 'Think beyond the Ordinary', which could be a number of things.

The first Jane spoke about was, 'Travelling by an unusual route'. In 2012 Jane went to Athens travelling overland. She went by train from London to Paris, then Paris to Milan, then Milan to Bari. From Bari she got an overnight ferry to Athens. Athens has everything Jane adores, Architecture, Museums plus more. One of the amazing sights Jane watched was the Changing of the Guard at the parliament building. The ceremony is performed by Greek soldiers who perform a synchronised slow-motion change of the guard, she showed us a short video of this. The soldiers are all over 6 foot tall, wear kilts and have pom poms on their feet. After 4 days in Athens, it was time to head home, via a different route. First a train from Athens to Thessaloniki then a bus to Sofia in Bulgaria. Sofia was a wonderful place with lots of churches and spas. After a couple of days in Sofia Jane took the train to Budapest. Buda is one side of the Széchenyi Bridge and Pest is the other and together they are Budapest, the capital of Hungary. Jane said everywhere you go there are memories of the Holocaust. Jane was fascinated by the Jewish history and the amazing synagogues. From Budapest Jane took an overnight train to Cologne, then a train home. It is a more expensive way to travel than flying but you get to see so much more and it's all part of the holiday.

The second Jane spoke about was, 'Visiting lesser-known countries'. In 2007 Jane went to Mali. It was under French control then but is an independent country now. Jane took a tour in Mali, only 3 people on the tour as it was out of season for tourists. On tour they saw some incredible buildings all built from mud, one of which was a huge cathedral. They visited a regular market, the sight and smells brought back memories of when Jane lived in Nigeria as a child. They climb down a canyon, where the Dogon people lived in mud houses. The Dogon people are known for their mask dances, wooden sculptures and their architecture. They use mud to dye the cloth they use to make clothing etc. Jane showed us a beautiful table runner she bought, the pattern of the material had been made by using mud to create the various colours. After the tour Jane then took a ferry boat to Timbuktu. The ferry journey took 3 days. In those 3 days she saw lots of life along the river, people, Crocodiles, Hippos and more. Overnight they camped on the riverbank. They went into towns along to river too. Children were fascinated by the colour of Jane's skin and they kept touching her arms. Timbuktu was another city made of mud. It has one of the oldest Universities in the world, older than Cambridge. It also has lots of amazing markets. Jane advised Mali is an amazing place to visit.

The third Jane spoke about was, 'Doing something different in a familiar place'. For Jane this was a visit to Egypt. Jane went to Cairo where she did normal things like visiting the Pyramids. Jane said where you see pictures of the pyramids they look like they are in the middle of nowhere. They are photographed from one side to give that illusion, if photographed from the other side, you would see how they are actually on the edge of Cairo.

After Cairo Jane spent 6 days walking the Sinai Desert. They were taken to and dropped off in the desert by 4x4 vehicles. After that it was them and camels. They walked with rucksacks to carry water etc, the rest of their belongings were transported by the camels. Relief vehicles took supplies out to the camp stops. The Sinai Desert has a very varied landscape, sand plains and sand dunes and mountains. It was very hot in the day and cold at night. They would wake up early in the morning, around 5.30am, have breakfast, Coffee, eggs and porridge, then start walking to around 11.00am. Between 11.00am – 3.00pm they would find shade and chill out. They would then set off again and walk until they got to camp. Jane did ride on a camel some afternoons, instead of walking. Camp would already be set up for them when they got there. They slept in the open air just on a sleeping mat.

Most days they went to bed about 7.30pm.

Next Jane was going to talk about 'Going totally off grid'. Chernobyl 2018. But that is for another time.

Jane finished with a couple of statements:

Not all those who wander are lost - JRR Tolkien.

Travel is the only thing you buy that makes you richer - Anonymous

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed listening to Jane and asked if she will come back next July.

Thank you Jane.

At the end of July, we received sad news of the passing of a former MU Member, Dorothy Chiswell at the age of 106 $\frac{3}{4}$ years old. What a fantastic age. Dorothy was a Upshire MU member for many years. She moved to Bedford over 20 years ago, to be nearer to her family, and became a MU Member of her local church in Bedford.

Our next meeting is on 24th September at 2.15pm, our Corporate Communion service in Church, followed by Tea and cake. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Tea Hostesses: Ann Smith and Eleanor Huxter. Raffle: Sue McKinley

Further information on Mothers' Union contact Eleanor Huxter on 01992 892869

Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can read
No-one gets giddy doing a good turn

FUN DOG SHOW AND AFTERNOON TEAS

SUNDAY 14th SEPTEMBER

The Fun Dog Show which was due to be held at the Summer Fayre was postponed due to the heat.

However, it was decided that we would still have a Dog Show

on 14th September, with registration at 2pm with classes starting at 2.30pm.

There will be classes of: Prettiest Bitch, Most Handsome Dog, Best Puppy (under 12 months)

Best Veteran (over 7), Best child handler (under 14), Best Condition, Waggiest Tail,

the Dog the Judge would most like to take home, Best in Show.

£2 per class, rosette awards for 1st to 3rd places, Best in Show and Reserve Best in Show.

Judging by Vets from Medivet.

There will also be stalls and our usual delicious afternoon teas.

The Dog Show will take place in front of the church this time

Do come along and join us for an enjoyable afternoon!

THANK YOU.....and goodbye

Thank you to everyone who sent their good wishes, also cards, flowers and gifts for our Diamond (60th) Wedding Anniversary on 7th August. Although Dave was in hospital we were able to celebrate the event with a Cream Tea thanks to the goodness of our daughter-in-law Louise and the ward sister who allowed several members of our family to be at the hospital with us.

After just over 3 weeks in hospital Dave came home and was able to spend time with the family before he passed away peacefully on the morning of Saturday 23rd August. He was in good spirits and was still 'winding me up' late on the Friday evening. Further details have yet to be finalised. My thanks again to all the kind people who have sent me their love and given me hugs, it means such a lot. Lyn xxx

COMMUNITY LUNCHESES: Why not join us for one of our Community Lunches held on the third Wednesday of every month. In the Summer, you will be treated to a hearty meal of home cooked ham (vegetarian option available) with a variety of salad accompaniments followed by a delicious dessert selection and a cup of tea or coffee in friendly company. All for £9.00. If you come on your own, you will not eat alone! For catering purposes please ring Pauline on: 07899 846711. As added bonuses, you will certainly not need to cook for yourselves and you will have the opportunity to take a look at our new banner.

TEDDIES FOR TRAGEDIES

Here is the latest Newsletter from Tricia Gibb of Teddies for Tragedies:

'Once again a huge thank you to everyone for all the Teddies (992 in total) and bags which I have been delighted to receive since the last Newsletter. Welcome, too, to new knitters.

At Christmas time parcels for refugee children in this area were being made up by local Brownie and Guide companies and they received 11 Teddies from me to add to them.

Another 881 Teddies have gone to Poland to be added to food parcels being transported into Ukraine. 4676 of your Teddies have now gone there, where they are welcomed by young and old. Thank you all for making this possible so can you keep knitting, please, so we can continue to help bring some cheer to the people of Ukraine.

In January 100 Teddies were taken to Uganda where they were distributed to children in several nursery schools.

Lastly, I was pleased to be able to respond to an appeal from the charity Toys2Syria and sent them 30 Teddies (my stocks were a bit low at the time!)

Thank you all again for your support. Please keep those Teddies coming!'

CARD SHOP

Have you seen the new Card Shop at 40a Sun Street (Library end)? They have a wide range of beautiful cards for all occasions at very reasonable prices, wrapping paper, stationery and much more. It is very hard to get a new business up and running so do go along and give them your support.

WALTHAM ABBEY CHURCH

Music for Lunch – Saturdays at 12 noon. Refreshments available from 11.30am. Free admission with retiring collection.

At **HOME INSTEAD** Epping Forest we recognise that as we get older, you may need help to be able to stay living in your own home. We Tailor our care packages to meet your needs making it possible for you to stay living in your own home where you are happiest.

Our services include Dementia Care, Personal Care, Home Help, Companionship and much more.

Our monthly Memory Lane and Singing for the Brain Sessions are held at Theydon Bois Village Hall providing lots of fun complimented with refreshments served by our lovely Team. Why not contact us to find out more and to get a copy of our What's on Where Guide (WOW Guide) and future newsletters.

Telephone 01992 666777 or email: Victoria.rigby@homeinstead.co.uk

WALTHAM ABBEY FLOWER CLUB 2024

We meet on the 4th Tuesday in the month except January, June, August and December at Waltham Abbey Community Centre, Crooked Mile, EN9 1QD. Door open 1.45 for 2pm start.

We have an outing to the Mount, an open garden in Epping Road, Roydon on Thursday 3rd July. All welcome, £7 per person, contact Chris as below.

All are welcome, raffle, sales table, tea, coffee and homemade cake. Further details from Chris on 07792 594443.

WALTHAM ABBEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Monthly talks on Friday evenings at 7.30pm at the Baptist Church, Paradise Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1RL.

Next meeting: Friday 19th September – Richard Thomas will speak on 'Panama'

Friday 17th October – Georgina Green will speak on 'Keepers, Cockney and Kitchen Maids'. Memories of Epping Forest looking at life before, during and after the Great War in relation to the forest and the grand houses around it. Visitors welcome, donation of £2 per person requested.

WALTHAM ABBEY COMMUNITY POPPY PROJECT

Come and join our team working to create poppy displays around Waltham Abbey for Remembrance 2025.

Monthly crafting sessions: Saturdays 1.00-3.00pm in Waltham Abbey Library

20th September, 18th October.

For more information, search 'Waltham Abbey Community Poppy Project' on Facebook, or email

walthamabbeydi@gmail.com If you have other crafting skills and want to get involved, please come to one of the above sessions. **All welcome**

Words on a notice in the office of the hill-walking section of an Opportunities In Retirement Club in Ayr:

Protect wildlife, plants and trees.

Make no unnecessary noise.

Leave nothing but footprints.

Take away only memories and photos.

How true! Footprints vanish in a day or two, but memories stay with us for years.

I'M LATE, I'M LATE, FOR A VERY IMPORTANT DATE.

Some months ago, I had to travel to Ripon on business but on the way back to the station at Thirsk, the nearest to Ripon, I had the chance of a quick look around the city; yes, it is a city, the third smallest in

England. It struck me that it is an interesting place so decided that another visit was on the cards in order to have a better look around. So having booked my ticket I joined a Grand Central train at Kings Cross for the journey north, a Class 180 DMU, that is a train with a Cummins diesel motor on each carriage turning out 750hp and despite being nearly twenty-five years old still capable of 125mph; in fact my train averaged a smidgeon over a 100mph for the journey arriving in Thirsk spot on time. Our friend Sue picked me up from the station and whisked me into Ripon where there is plenty to see. Unfortunately, we realised that there would not be time to visit the three excellent museums: the courthouse, the police & prison and the workhouse which give a very good representation of life in the Victorian times and earlier. They will have to wait for another visit! So we made our way firstly to the main square where there is a large obelisk.

Ripon was originally a small hamlet but was raided by the Vikings in the 600s. The residents at the time repelled the Vikings and in so doing impressed the King, Alfred the Great. He awarded a Charter to the settlement and a horn which he instructed should be blown each evening in the town square. To this day the tradition is still carried out by a team of Hornblowers who take turns undertaking the task at 9pm each day. Wearing a costume of tricorne hat, khaki long coat and each with a horn which is almost big enough to go around the body the Hornblower on duty stands at each corner of the obelisk in the square and gives a long one note blast, then he, or she, moves to the Town Hall steps where the horn is blown again. Whilst the blowing was to indicate that the 'watch' was set the ritual is now more of a tourist attraction with spectators turning up most evenings to watch. However, it is said that each evening a ghost, resident in an overlooking building, checks that the Hornblowers are not late. In 2002 the horn blowing was indeed late one evening and the next day an earthquake occurred in the city; obviously the ghost was displeased! The obelisk in the square has at its apex a replica horn and all the benches and cycle racks likewise have emblems of the horn engraved on them; the original horn is kept under lock and key though.

The city, it would appear, has managed to avoid modern development within its confines as all the premises appear of considerable age with most of the shops being small independent businesses. The walk from the square to the jewel in the crown, the cathedral, is down a narrow-cobbled street which then runs upslope to the cathedral and one is presented with the west façade soaring majestically upwards. Unbelievably in this day and age entrance into the cathedral is free; walking into what is, compared to many of our other cathedrals, a relatively small building one is immediately taken with the amount of space. Everywhere there are magnificent stained-glass windows. The original church was built by St Wilfred in 672 and although destroyed in 948 the crypt, the oldest Saxon one in England, still survives. In it is a small aperture called 'Wilfred's needle' and it is said that any women who can pass through the opening shall be declared a virgin. The present cathedral authorities have put up a glass screen over the aperture so attempting to pass through it will not now be possible. The present building was built in 1180 and became a cathedral in 1836 with a major restoration undertaken in 1861 by George Gilbert Scott. As with many cathedrals there is a medieval screen which separates the nave from the choir stalls and means that the priests at the High Altar cannot be seen by the congregation. Sensibly an altar has been set up at the 'crossing' directly under the tower in front of the screen which ensures that the congregation can feel and see that they are taking part in services. However, the choir stalls are still used and are embellished with intricate wooden carving. Unfortunately, it is not clear who the carvers were but are referred to as 'Ripon woodworkers'. But it is the misericords that draw people from far and wide. A misericord is a special hinged seat on which the priests and choir members sit but when they must stand for a long time the seats can be hinged up and are shaped so that the occupant can lean on them to gain relief from the standing. On the underside are carvings that depict various scenes from the bible: Jonah being taken by the whale and on another being delivered up out of its stomach. It is apparent that the carver had little knowledge of whales as the fish has a plentiful supply of teeth much as a monkfish does! Another shows Samson carrying off the gates of Gaza. In total there are some several dozen carvings and on one stall, the Mayor's, there is a carving of a monkey, surely not a political statement! However, there is one choir stall in particular that people come to see and that is the one showing a rabbit escaping down a rabbit hole whilst another rabbit is being devoured by a griffin which is considered to be the inspiration for Lewis Carroll's story of 'Alice in Wonderland'; despite other churches laying claim to Carroll's inspiration credence can be attached to Ripon because Carroll's father was Canon at the cathedral. If you're holidaying in Yorkshire, take time to visit Ripon and its cathedral, you will not be disappointed. Adrian J Liddle