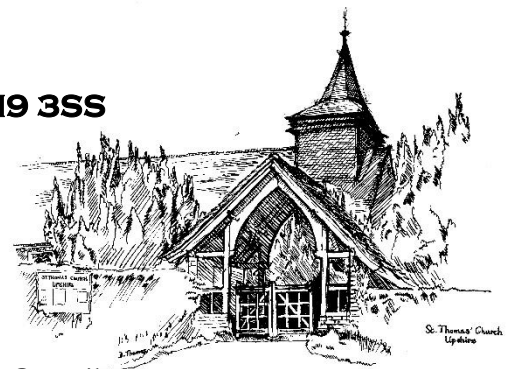


# ST THOMAS' CHURCH, UPSHIRE EN9 3SS

## NEWSLETTER

### *December 2025*



Rector: Revd Peter Smith, 01992 767897  
Team Vicar: Revd Jane Yeadon, 07960 604416. Email [janeyeadon@gmail.com](mailto:janeyeadon@gmail.com)  
Benefice Office: Abbey Church Centre, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1XQ. 01992 767897  
Church address: Horseshoe Hill, Upshire, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3SS.  
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This Newsletter is free: donations to Lyn Wackett. Copy date for January 2026 Newsletter: **7<sup>th</sup> December**

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 DECEMBER

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> 11.30am for 12noon CHRISTMAS LUNCH in church- 07899 846711 to book  
Please let us know if you have to cancel. Thank you

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> 3pm-4pm SEEDLINGS meet in the church

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Advent  
9.15am HOLY COMMUNION  
Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10 Matthew 3:1-12

3pm for 3.30pm start CHRISTMAS CONCERT by Enfield Brass Band

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> 2.15pm Upshire Mothers' Union Carol Service in church followed by refreshments.  
All welcome

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday of Advent  
9.15 am HOLY COMMUNION  
Readings: Isaiah 35:1-10 Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Fourth Sunday of Advent  
9.15am HOLY COMMUNION  
Readings: Isaiah 7:10-16 Matthew 1:18-end

3pm Carol Service, refreshments afterwards

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve  
8pm EARLY MIDNIGHT COMMUNION

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day  
9.15am CHRISTMAS COMMUNION  
Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10 John 1:1-14

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>: The Holy Innocents  
9.15am HOLY COMMUNION  
Readings: Jeremiah 31:15-17 Matthew 2:13-18

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January Epiphany  
9.15am HOLY COMMUNION  
Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6 Matthew 2:1-12

WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PEACEFUL  
CHRISTMAS

## 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](mailto: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, Nigel, Lola, Pearl, Susan & Alan, Jackie & Linda, Graham, Christine, Chris, Izzie, Pennie and Sue.

## THE VICAR WRITES:

As December dawns so the church season of Advent begins.

Advent is the period of around four weeks leading up to Christmas, observed by many Christians around the world.

Many churches mark the season by using the seasonal colour of purple and lighting candles on an Advent wreath, one each week. It's a season that reminds people to look forward with hope — not only to Christmas Day, but also to the promise of light, peace, and renewal in the world. Indeed the very word "Advent" comes from a Latin term meaning "coming,"

I love Advent and consider it one of the most beautiful seasons of the Christian year — but I seem to be in a dwindling minority. With Christmas starting earlier and earlier each year (this year I saw a house in Loughton bedecked with Christmas lights in the second week in November) Advent is in danger of being squeezed out in a blaze of red, gold, inflatable snowmen and the ever present smell of pine needles. But in the increasing encroachment of Christmas I think we are in danger of losing something very special indeed.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas day, we often find ourselves busily preparing: hanging lights on the tree, wrapping presents, rehearsing for the crib service, and writing cards to loved ones. These small acts of preparation can sometimes feel hectic, yet they are also filled with meaning and quiet joy. Advent reminds us that preparation itself is holy work. Just as Mary prepared to welcome the Christ Child, and John the Baptist prepared the way for the Lord, we too are encouraged to prepare our hearts and homes to receive Jesus anew. Every light we hang, every carol we practice, and every gift we wrap can become an act of love — a way of saying, "Come, Lord Jesus."

In our churches and homes, the observation of Advent is a constant reminder that the joy of the season often builds gradually. The glow of the Advent candles grows brighter week by week, reminding us that the Light of the World is drawing near. Children rehearse their lines for the nativity play or crib service with excitement and laughter, and we adults rediscover something of that same wonder as we listen again to the story of a baby's birth at Bethlehem.

It's all too tempting to rush ahead to Christmas, but Advent invites us to slow down and savour the waiting. God meets us not only in the celebration, but also in the preparation — in the quiet moments of prayer, in the gentle rhythm of getting ready, and in the shared joy of community

So as we decorate, rehearse, and prepare this Advent, let us remember this important truth.... the joy is not just in the destination, but in the journey itself. Christ comes to us in the midst of our busyness and our longing, filling even our preparations with His presence and peace.

May your Advent be full of joyful preparation, and your Christmas, when it comes, be filled with the light and love of Christ.

Happy Christmas everyone.

Revd Jane Yeadon,

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

Benefice Youth Missioner MB 07960 604416

## ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

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](mailto: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 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](mailto:Ruth4366@gmail.com)

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

## CHURCH FLOWERS

We will start the festive arrangements at the beginning of the month to celebrate this time of year. Any foliage contributions would be most welcome. If anyone would like to come along and help, we will be in church on 5<sup>th</sup> December and 19<sup>th</sup> December from 10am.

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

## GROWER'S CORNER

December brings us the shortest day of the year, as light rapidly fades, the joy of snuggling up on sofa with a cuppa and the fire roaring helps replace the time I'd normally be in the garden or at the allotment. Finding a good time to get outside is as hard as festive engagements book up but there is still plenty to be getting on with as we prepare for the gardening year ahead and we will reap the rewards come spring.

Looking back on 2025 it's always good to recognise the successes and failures. We had a bounty of fruit this year. It has been lovely that we still have enjoyment now for the coming months of eating these harvests in lots of different forms, be it from stored fruits from the freezer or jams and jellies. Same goes for the tomatoes. We still have lovely pasta sauces made from the glut. Dad would be proud and I know he would have sampled the rewards too.

My biggest failure is not capturing enough rain water. Something I want to make sure I integrate into new plans for the plots this coming year. Keeping on top of watering was so hard and as result plants and crops suffered. More drought resilient planting and crops will need to become part of all our gardens as our summers become hotter and drier.

### Update on the plots:

I had to make some investments for the new plot which include mostly new fruit trees and roses. I've pre-ordered them as bare root and they should be delivered this month. To make space for them as we will be training them as espaliers or fanning depending on the tree. New apple varieties, peach, nectarines and an apricot.

I have decided I want to create an avenue of roses. So I have selected a range of colours and made sure they are suitable for cutting too as I adore to bring them into the house.

My sister Katherine generously gave me lots of raspberry canes and divided perennials, so I have been busy finding space for them. I have also planted some thornless blackberries and tayberries and have got the garlic in too.

We continue to mulch the paths with woodchip and the beds with manure. As I write, we still haven't had our first frost yet but according to weather reports it's on its way. So I will be clearing the dahlias as soon as they have blackened and tucking them in with some wool and a thick layer of manure.

I still have lots of bulbs to get in so need to make time for this before it's too late.

### December to do:

- \* Check fleece and cloches are secure over winter salads, onions and broad beans.
- \* Stake any tall brassicas such as Brussels sprouts and sprouting broccoli.
- \* Cover bare soil to suppress weeds and keep warmth in.
- \* Remove leaves from strawberry beds and tidy runners.
- \* Harvest the winter salad leaves and thin out.

### December sowings:

- \* Sow hardy broad beans or peas in modules under cover for spring planting.

### Flowers/shrubs/trees

- \* Sow sweetpeas, snapdragons and larkspur indoors.
- \* Plant bare root plants/trees/fruit bushes

**Tip:** Keep the warmth in the greenhouse/polytunnel by keeping the door shut but open on sunnier days to prevent damp. Making sure to close before you leave.

**New Years Resolution:** Stay on top of flower and vegetable sowings. Now I have the new greenhouse I have no excuses!

Wishing everyone a joyful Christmas with loved ones and a Happy and Healthy 2026. With special prayers for those who are no longer with us. Love Louise.

## CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make our Christmas Fayre in the Village Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> December such a happy occasion, to stock the stalls and keep us all fed and watered! We are delighted to tell you that we raised, after expenses, £2,311.40. Well done everyone, and thank you again.



## **ST THOMAS' SEEDLINGS**

**1<sup>st</sup> 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



## 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 8 letter anagram: DIMTHING. The answer will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

### **ST THOMAS' CHURCH COMMUNITY LUNCHES 2025**

Wednesdays, 11.30 for 12noon start

3<sup>rd</sup> December – Christmas Lunch £12 per person

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.

## **COMING UP AT ST. THOMAS'**

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

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December: Community Christmas Lunch £12 per person, 07899 846711 to book

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December: 3pm for 3.30pm start – Enfield Brass Band Christmas Concert – 01992 711573 to book

## 50/50 CLUB

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

1 <sup>st</sup> :	£35	No. 65	Kate Dale of Loughton
2 <sup>nd</sup> :	£25	No. 40	George Green of Upshire
3 <sup>rd</sup> :	£15	No. 53	Malcolm Songer of Nazeing

It is now time to begin Draw 17 of St Thomas' 50/50 Club.

There will still 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 [lynanddaveuwackett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lynanddaveuwackett@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 17**

**January to June 2026**

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: .....

## UPSHIRE MOTHERS' UNION

In October we held a Just Desserts afternoon in the Village Hall. It was an enjoyable afternoon. Thank you to the members for all their hard work and to everyone who came along to supported it and for the lovely feedback we got.

This year Mothers' Union continued to promote their RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse campaign and will be supporting the 16 Days of Activism which is an international campaign running annually from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day). It aims to raise awareness, promote gender equality, and end gender-based violence globally.

Technology enables us to be connected, linking international families and friends across the world and making information and media more accessible than before. Yet with all the benefits technology provides, there are issues that are often overlooked. One of these is digital violence, particularly as it relates to gender-based violence. This year's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence focuses on the theme: Unite to end digital violence against all women and girls.

The campaign seeks to raise awareness and advocate for the elimination of digital violence, emphasising the growing issue in all its forms, from online harassment and cyberstalking to non-consensual sharing of images, digital surveillance, and targeted abuse on social media. As access to technology grows, so too does the potential for its misuse.

Mothers' Union stand united with women and girls everywhere who face harm, harassment or exclusion in digital spaces, especially where gender-based violence is involved. Whether online or offline, every woman and girl deserves to feel safe, valued and protected.

Younger women and girls, who are often among the most active users of online platforms such as social media channels, are particularly vulnerable. Research conducted by Refuge in 2021 found that 1 in 3 women in the UK have experienced online abuse at some point in their lives, with online platforms increasingly used to perpetrate domestic abuse. Digital violence, however, does not discriminate by age; it affects women at every stage of life in different ways.

In many parts of the world where Mothers' Union works, access to technology remains limited, especially for women. Mobile phones, computers and internet access may be seen as luxuries, or simply unavailable due to cost, geography or cultural barriers. This lack of access deepens inequality. When women are excluded from the digital world, they miss opportunities for education, employment, advocacy and connection. And when they do gain access, many find themselves unprepared for the risks that come with life online. Digital safety requires both access and understanding.

Digital technology helps us to connect across generations, but it also highlights the gaps between them. There are generations who have grown up in the digital space, navigating online worlds with ease, whilst older generations, many of whom are newer to technology, can be more vulnerable to scams, misinformation and exploitation.

As a global movement of over four million members, Mothers' Union has always championed the safety, dignity and equality of women and girls. Ending gender-based violence, including digital violence, is central to that mission.

This 16 Days of Activism, we invite all our members and friends to:

Raise awareness of digital violence in your communities

Promote digital literacy, especially for women and girls with limited access

Encourage intergenerational conversations about online safety

Pray and act for a world where technology empowers, not endangers, women and girls.

If you have been affected by domestic abuse or any form of violence, or are concerned for someone else who has, please contact: National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247.

Our next meeting is our Christmas Carol Service and Corporate Communion in church on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 2.15pm. Followed by refreshments in church. Everyone is welcome to come along and join us.

## **WALTHAM ABBEY CRAFT MARKET**

The last Craft Market and Table Top Sale for this year is on 2<sup>nd</sup> December at Waltham Abbey Town Hall, EN1 9DE. They will restart in April 2026.

## ENFIELD BRASS BAND CHRISTMAS CONCERT

In the church  
Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December, 3pm for 3.30pm start.

Book early for this lively concert  
tickets £10 (£5 for under 16s) from Lyn on 01992 711573.  
Seasonal refreshments, raffle.

### 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.

**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.

### PUDDING BASINS

Please remember to save your plastic pudding basins and give them to me to recycle so that I can keep the costs down next year. Thank you.

**ANAGRAM** The answer to the anagram is MIDNIGHT.

### ABBEY CHURCH

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

#### The Church of the Holy Innocents, High Beach, IG10 4BF

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2pm The Woodford Singers present SING OUT WITH JOY.  
Tickets which include seasonal refreshments) £15 adults, £5 children from 07949 961184

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December, 3pm CHRISTMAS IN THE FOREST. Traditional carols, wassails and more.  
Join the Fellowes Chorus and friends for an afternoon of festive entertainment.  
£15 include seasonal refreshments, available from [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk). All proceeds to church funds.

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December, 7pm-9pm Informal Carol Singing by Candlelight on a Tudor Theme.  
Come and choose your favourite carol to sing and at the same time learn more about the Tudor Christmas Customs and Food.  
Retiring collection for The Children's Society.

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December, 7-8pm. Carol Singing at the kind invitation of The Owl Pub.  
Enjoy a lovely meal in the beautiful Owl Pub and join in singing your favourite Christmas carols and songs.  
Retiring collection for The Children's Society.

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](mailto:Victoria.rigby@homeinstead.co.uk)

### Visiting Father Christmas

A mother took her young daughter to visit Father Christmas in his grotto at the garden centre. He greeted the youngster merrily and asked: "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The little girl stared at him, opened mouth with horror. Then she gasped: "Didn't you get my email?!!!"



### **A most important Christian festival.**

Christmas started early this year. In August there were adverts on TV for Christmas get-aways, the pub up the road from us had its Christmas dinner advert out on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September (at £85 a head) and by the beginning of October a house near to us had its Christmas lights up and running! Unfortunately, many people forget the real significance of Christmas but just look upon the time as an excuse to eat, drink and be merry and to receive presents, even missing out on the greeting 'Happy Christmas' and substitute 'Happy Holidays' instead. Mind you I was always told that Christmas is the only time of the year that when someone calls out something to you from across the road you can legitimately call back 'and the same to you'! As for presents, as a devotee of Ebenezer Scrooge, I have told all my family and friends that I don't want any, I have enough socks to last a lifetime, thank you.

Whilst Christmas is hugely important in the Christian calendar for celebrating the birth of Christ often one forgets that there is another event far greater in importance – Easter, when He came to the end of his mortal life. And it was not just a simple ending but a time of great physical pain and suffering well depicted in the film 'The Passion of the Christ' directed by Mel Gibson. Hanging on the cross, how on earth did he have the strength of character to say 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'; I can't even forgive the drivers who cut me up on the Charlie Brown's roundabout! But Easter as a time to commemorate His crucifixion does not occur each year at the same time as Christmas does. There is a slightly convoluted formula for determining the date: the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, and it is interesting how this came about.

I receive each month a lovely little magazine called 'The Yorkshire Dalesman' which has articles about the people and places of Yorkshire. Now I do not have any connections with Yorkshire apart from visiting the Royal Armouries at Leeds a couple of times and travelling on the Settle Carlisle rail line but my Mother worked for the Police in Leeds in a civilian capacity and her parents ran a pub in Whitby which had a tunnel from the cellars down to the shore line, presumably, in times past, to enable the contraband to be brought ashore away from the watchful eyes of the Revenue Men. During the high Spring tides the cellar would flood and the beer barrels would float about! The Dalesman, apart from the articles, also has each month a quiz about the County. Amazingly I am often able to answer a couple of questions correctly but one did stump me recently. It asked, 'The practice of changing the date of Easter each year originated in which seaside town?'. The answer was, of course, Whitby! As far as I was concerned Whitby, apart from having a pub my grandparents ran, was once a major fishing port, is renowned as the landing place of Dracula and now has two festivals each year, one for the Goths which has been a regular for several years, the other is the Whitby Lit Fest, a literary festival that held its inaugural event this November; so how does Easter come into it?

At a time when Christianity was a new phenomenon in these islands different sects had different ideas as to when Easter should be celebrated. The complexity arose because of the desire to associate the date of Easter with the date of the Jewish feast of Passover which, Christians believe, is when Jesus was crucified. The Celtic method of calculating Easter used in parts of Ireland and Britain traditionally involved celebrating it on the Sunday following the 14th day of the lunar month of Nisan which is the first month of the Hebrew calendar and is significant in the Bible as it marks the time of the Exodus from Egypt. The Roman church favoured the system we now have today so there was disparity. To complicate matters there was also disagreement about the date of the Spring Equinox, the days of the lunar month on which it was permissible for Easter Sunday to fall, and even the hour of the day when Easter Sunday began! In 644 King Oswiu decided to resolve the differences between the Celtic (or Irish) and Roman forms of Christianity and instigated the Synod of Whitby where Celtic practices were defended by Bishop Colman of Northumbria and Abbess Hild of Whitby, whilst Roman customs were advocated by Agilbert, formerly bishop of the West Saxons, and Wilfred (of Ripon). Oswiu subsequently found in favour of the Roman tradition and Colman, refusing to conform, withdrew to Iona. According to Bede, Tuda succeeded Colman but died of the plague shortly afterwards and Wilfred was subsequently elected Bishop of Northumbria in his place. Interestingly, whilst Celts had favoured their own date for Easter many had already adopted the Roman method of determining Easter and with time the decision of the Synod was accepted throughout Britain and Ireland. It is worth remembering that whilst we have a system that has been in place for nearly 1400 years there are other Christian religions throughout the world that celebrate Easter at different times, as they also do with Christmas.

Speaking to tradesmen and especially those who have shops or are in the hospitality business it would appear that many would favour an Easter with a date each year that did not change, like Christmas. It would be interesting to know what other people think; me, I rather like the fact that it moves each year, it gives a bit of mysticism to the whole event. That only leaves for me to wish everyone a joyous and peaceful Christmas; and please, do take a moment during the eating, drinking and present giving to remember what Christ, having been born on this day, would have to face at the end of his short mortal life here whilst also being well aware of the pain that was to befall him.

Adrian J Liddle

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

In British folklore, holly left in hedgerows was believed to block witches from "flying" or running along the hedge tops. It is a charming tradition explaining why boundary hollies were often spared during trimming.