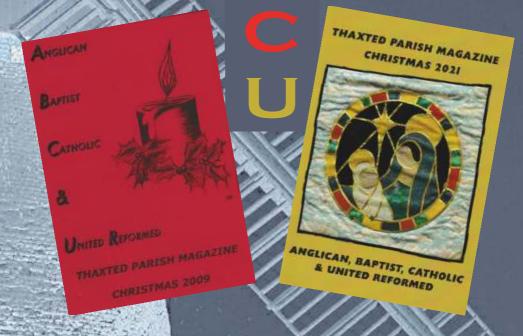


# THAXTED COMMUNITY MAGAZINE CHRISTMAS 2024 EDITION 100



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THAXTED COMMUNITY MAGAZINE ANGLICAN, BAPTIST, CATHOLIC AND UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES OF THAXTED

# What have you done to the cover?

It seems over the 33 years and 99 editions the cover has been as much of a discussion point as has the content. On the next page I have told some of the cover story and the present cover illustrates the major changes; from the first with hand drawn lettering, much admired by some, through various designs to a colour photograph.

On the back cover, where there usually is an advert there are four of the adverts that were in the first edition. These busineses no longer trade. Many of you will remember Benjamina at what is now 1, 2 and 3 The Bullring. Many an hour was passed wandering through the corridors and rooms in the self-styled department store.

To those of you my age 33 years does not seem distant past. Looking back you are made to realise what changes there have been in magazine publishing from typing words on a page and taking them to the local printers as a sheaf of paper, to today when I send an electronic file to somewhere in the world for boxes to arrive on a pallet a week later. Actually to Micropress Printer Ltd. Reydon near Southwold.

I wonder if the magazine will still be coming through your letterbox in 33 years time - in 2057?

We heard the sad news of Simon Latham's death shortly before going to press. Simon was a long time supporter of this magazine and had sent us a message to congratulate the past and present ABC&U committee on the 100th edition. We will include an article about Simon's contribution to the life of Thaxted in the Easter edition.

THANKS AGAIN TO LOWIE OF LOWREDPHOTO.COM FOR LETTING ME USE A PREVIOUS STUNNING COVER PHOTO AGAIN.

# Edition 1 to edition 100

In the summer of 1991, arising from a suggestion of the then vicar of the parish church Rev Richard Rowe, a was formed committee with representatives of the four churches Anglican, Baptist, Catholic and United Reformed to take the idea of an all churches magazine forward. The opening article in that first edition explained their thinking.

#### Editorial

"Some of us in Thaxted have decided to launch a new parish magazine, a combined effort from all the churches in our town. Whatever we are, be it Anglican, Baptist, Catholic or a member of the United Reform or Methodist Church, we're all Christians. We worship the same God

and were baptised into one faith. But we are split. We have our differences, even suspicions, of fellow Christians. So this magazine is aimed at bringing us together in a small way. In a hope of giving all the Christians of Thaxted some sense of unity.

Our intention is to be a growing fraternity, to invite opinions and

criticisms about our format, to ask how the Church can best operate to fulfil our spiritual needs.

To start our united venture we are organising a joint Harvest festival in the parish church. Most of our united celebrations will be held in the parish church simply because it is the largest building in Thaxted. It was built by the people of Thaxted

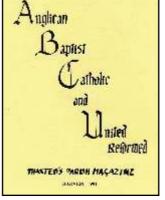
> nearly 600 years ago for the use of all the people of that seed, and it should not be regarded as belonging to the Anglican Church. It belongs to all of us."

#### First Issue

The first issue was twelve pages, of which five were adverts and a

front cover. From the start it was distributed to all homes in the town and surrounding hamlets. Of that first committee two members are still on the present committee. Of the nine advertisers one is still faithfully in the present magazine.

Fr Richard, at the first editorial meeting said *"We don't want any knitting patterns or recipes do we?"* 



#### **Readers reactions**

The magazine was welcomed. Here are some comments that were received in response to this first edition.

"I feel I must write and say how pleased I was when the magazine came through my door. Really nice little bits of news that

"We don't want any knitting patterns or recipes do we?"

everyone can understand." "Thank you – I think it is a good idea to involve all the churches." "I congratulate you especially on its format and front cover." "It was so good to know that the Magazine has got off the ground at last. I am sure it has a great future."

#### A developing magazine

This first edition had an article written by the clergy of each of the four churches and followed by a description of their church building and its history.

The only other articles were - as we still have today - the church times and forthcoming events.

Over time the magazine has developed from an almost entirely

church driven project into the whole community magazine you see today.

#### "A cover up"

Up until the Christmas 2017 edition the covers were the same three colours, green for Easter, yellow for harvest and red for Christmas. The shade varied depending on what paper the printers had in stock. The only exception was Christmas 2004 which was my first edition and a certain gift shop was persuaded to advertise on the back cover and we agreed that deep red would not make reading the advert easy. I picked light green! I was not very popular with the editor and it was not repeated! Christmas 2017 was our first colour cover with a picture rather than a clip-art or pencil drawing. This was followed in Easter 2022 with full colour throughout and a change of the cover and text font.

#### Editors

Stephanie was the first editor, who was joined as joint editor by Eileen Walsh who then continued alone. Eileen died after completing the 2017 Harvest edition. There was not a rush to be editor, so here I am trying to stay true to Eileen's editorial rules. We welcome new committee members - no pressure to be editor!

#### Mike Collins







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# Parish Council News

# Andy Frater - Chairman

# Dear residents,

As we embrace the Christmas season, I am delighted to share some new updates and initiatives from our Parish Council. But first, this 100<sup>th</sup> edition of the ABCU magazine, as always, highlights the unique and special nature of the place we live, supported by many clubs, societies and individuals, many of whom have contributed to the magazine over time. The Council and I send our thanks and congratulations to the teams that have ensured copies of the ABCU have, and continue to be, produced and distributed.

# Welcoming New Councillors



I am pleased to introduce our new elected councillors who joined us in With October. а wealth of experience and fresh perspectives, Cllrs Tom Breen and Nicky Tisseyre are looking forward to serving our community. Experience and enthusiasm aside. new our



additions reduce the Parish Council's average age considerably!

# Housing Needs Survey

Understanding the future housing needs of our community is crucial for planning and development. The Parish Council, along with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, will work with Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) to undertake a Housing Needs Survey, the outcome of which will provide evidence for our revised Neighbourhood Plan. I'd like to encourage everyone to complete the survey, whether or not you have a need for new or alternative accommodation yourself. A paper survey will be delivered to all households very soon, so please do keep a watchful eye out. Alternately you can take part in the survey NOW by clicking the link here: <u>https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ThaxtedNP24</u>.

 $\underline{A}$  small selection of paper surveys and freepost envelopes will also be available from the library from Mid-December.

# New Outdoor Gym

In our efforts to promote health and well-being we were thrilled to announce the installation of the new outdoor gym. Situated on the Recreation Ground, this facility is designed to provide residents with a convenient and accessible way to stay active and healthy. Whether you're a fitness enthusiast or just looking to incorporate more physical activity into your daily routine, the outdoor gym offers a variety of equipment to suit all fitness levels.

# Parking and Speeding

On November 1st, residents of Newbiggen St, County Cllr Martin Foley, Sarah Tomlin from Essex Highways and members of the Parish Council met to discuss parking and speeding issues through the Town. A good debate was had, issues aired, and ideas put forward. We now await confirmation of next steps from Essex Highways which we will share as soon as we see them. Related, and following a campaign by Cllr Theresa Egan and Andrea Adams, our Tri-Service community officer, the Thaxted Speedwatch will return! We now have some 15 volunteers that will be trained, our speed gun will be calibrated and we'll hopefully be fully operational very early in 2025. In the meantime, there are a couple of things we can all do to reduce traffic speed, like driving at 20mph ourselves through our Town and not parking completely on the pavements, which will also help our pram, buggy and wheelchair users.

# Goodbyes

During the Autumn, I sadly received resignations from Cllr Jo Herbert and Cllr Alison Howells. On behalf of the Council and personally, I'd like to thank them so much for the time given to the Council and the community, for Alison over a very long period – thank you.

Finally, as we get to the close of this year, I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the work of our Council, the events and initiatives. Your support and involvement are what make our community strong and vibrant.

Thank you for reading this far and warm regards.

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# Thaxted - NEWS - Society

# Community Spirit

The last Holst celebrations were in 1974. A huge effort was made to celebrate the anniversary of one of the town's most famous residents. But what mattered, at the time, was that in celebrating the life and works of the composer Gustav Holst there would be something for everyone. A small list of what was on offer demonstrates the lengths to which organisers went to involve the whole town. After all not everyone was a classical music buff.



A committee led by Fr Peter Elers, made sure everyone had a good time. Of these publicspirited folk the redoubtable Daniel Fox remains, regularly found dancing out with Thaxted Morris. A Victorian Fair might not be the way we come together today but what matters is that there are times we still do.

Thaxted holds the Fayre and Dog Show, the Festival, the Morris Ring, the Arts and Craft Fayre, the Christmas Market, Rangers, Craftability, Pams Place, an incomplete list but a clear demonstration of coming together fifty years later in 2024 and onward.

## **Details Matter**

The Executive of the Society are often involved in discussion of detail. Details both small and large that affect our view and our reaction to the sensitivities of a place like Thaxted. For example there are various views of the new eco-friendly net zero lighting. Clearly the white light is far closer to the historic light of the past than the orange sodium of not so long ago. Street lighting is about safety and your Society applauds the care taken by ECC with the replica lanterns and brackets. We received a negative comment a few months ago regarding their brightness, so revisited the complaint at our last meeting and it was reported that the complainant had confirmed they no longer noticed. They had got used to them.



A suggestion to repaint the Guildhall pink would be met with general disdain and near revolution, but whilst not for the Guildhall, pink was a historically prevalent colour, derived as it was from everyday lime wash and added animal blood. In this there is both detail and history. When it comes to today's requirements for road safety, for universal access, for directional

signs, for pavements and their surfaces, and for some wires to connect our homes to the world, all these details are needed but at Thaxted they must be added with care. When it comes to the Guildhall and our largely historic town-scape its important that care is taken with the details. Thaxted Building Design Guide 2023. https://www.thaxtedsociety.com/records-and-reports.

# Speedwatch

The Society is encouraged by the recent initiative from the Parish Council for a new Speed Watch group. Whilst not the 'holistic' solution to the overarching scourge of the struggle between traffic and a town centre of people going about their lives, it is a step in the right direction, where 'we the people' take charge of our town and our wellbeing in it. People lived here long before traffic and so do we!

# Here First

There is a longstanding myth of a tourist who on looking out of the plane window on approach to Heathrow remarked *"What a terrible spot to build a castle, under the flight path"*. The same might be said of Thaxted but that belies a universal truth that the past is just that. It is the future we can change, the past is a little harder.

Some folk moan about Thaxted's church bells in the same breath as the planes and the traffic. We protect the past at Thaxted with a conservation area and many listed buildings, but we would not suggest protecting the road or air traffic and there lies the rub. We may affect the recent past, new planes are quieter, as are EV cars etc, but must do more by insisting that care for our heritage comes before the planes and the traffic. That's what your Society is about, reminding *the powers that be* that like Windsor Castle, Thaxted and its heritage was here first!

# We all have a Budget

There are always budgets, family, organisation, company, even voluntary groups and we know how fluid they can be. Whilst infuriating, the same may be said for any government. It is never truly a question of available money but where it is spent. When it comes to Thaxted your Society is vigilant in examining where our money is spent. Is it spent for a broad-based purpose. Does it include true needs and urgency? Does it respond to residents? The climate change demands of net zero and a solid future for our children? Is it useful in promoting Thaxted as a unique place with a rich heritage? The Thaxted Society has a very simple policy of raising funds for a purpose and not just for the sake of it. We may ask it quietly but we do respond to suggestions hereto.

#### 8 TO A WEE COTTAGE

Time was when folk did not live in their house but in their village. There are cottages, remembered today, as being occupied by families of eight, even ten. No room to swing a cat. The only place to live was in the pub, the church, the street or the countryside. Home was primarily for sleeping and feeding. If you ever ask what happened to that 'old sense of community', indoor plumbing, is the answer. We no longer need to live in our pubs and churches, or streets even, as we are quite comfortable at home, until we make an effort to get out and find ourselves and our town!

#### ANOTHER CHRISTMAS.

The Christmas of 1946 was particular for Thaxted. The of young choir German POW's who sang in the Church, at the invitation of Fr Jack Puttrell, were not only prisoners but also far from their own homes. The Church welcomed them and they replied in song. In that vein, Thaxted Society wishes everyone a joyous Christmas!



# Peace on Earth?

#### Jim Ford

I don't think anyone will be surprised that I ended the above title with a question mark. Although I am writing this article in the middle of October, I would have to be very brave or very stupid to declare that there will be peace on Earth this Christmas. As I write Ukraine continues to fight for its very existence while in Gaza and Lebanon bombs rain down causing catastrophic injury, death, and destruction. In Israel whole families wait for news of their loved ones who have been taken hostage. Civil wars rage in Yemen, Sudan and Myanmar causing further suffering.

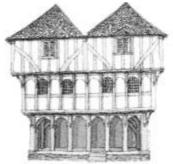
In all of this where are we to find comfort this Christmas? Is it all bad news or is there anywhere we can find hope? Strangely enough we can find it from a man who lived in the 8th century BC. Isaiah, he too lived in a time of bleak uncertainty. The city of Jerusalem where he lived was surrounded on all sides by a huge hostile army. The internal leadership was falling apart and the people were facing certain death or exile. Yet in the midst of this crisis God gave him a promise about a future king who would bring peace to the world and he said:

# "The government will be on his shoulders and he will be called, wonderful counsellor mighty God, everlasting father and the Prince of peace":

When that king first came it was as a baby born in a manger. The Bible says that he came to forgive humanity's wrongdoing and reconcile them to God. This would happen 33 years later when the king died for our sins on the cross. Yet the bible also tells us that he will return again to bring in a new world free from suffering and death. Yes, the wars remain for the time being and the suffering, but a new world is promised. Christians live in the hope of that world and In the light of this hope they labour to make this world a better place where they can. They too suffer tragedy and suffering, but they look beyond to the hope of a better world. In the meantime they find comfort and strength from the king who promises to walk beside them.

Maybe it's time for you to accept a new gift this Christmas. A gift from God. One that will never wear out. A gift from a king. A gift called Jesus.

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We may be in the dark days of winter, but there's a great summer of music awaiting in June and July at Thaxted Festival. Come and hear all about our new season at our launch on Sunday 9th March at 3.00pm in the Parish Church. You'll be entertained by music and singing from Wild Arts, who are performing 2025's opera – Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin.* You'll hear full details of all our events, at the same time being entertained by the wonderful singing of these talented artists, who will introduce some of the items from this summer's opera. Our new season brochure will be available, and there'll be drinks and light refreshments. Tickets are on sale from 2 January, at £25 for an afternoon which will brighten a short winter day.



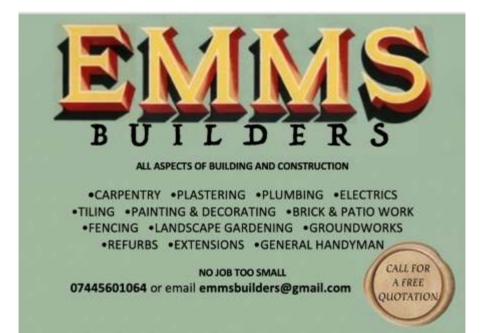
*Choir of King's College London and English Chamber Orchestra, July 2024. Image © Sean Calitz/Thaxted Festival* 

Thaxted Festival is one of the UK's leading independent festivals, featuring classical, jazz/blues and lighter styles of music. Once again, there will be a great selection of the Festival Extras which have become a feature in recent years. We'll again welcome leading UK and international artists to our town for four summer weekends of great music-making in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Our summer season will run from 20 June to 13 July, and tickets will go on sale from Monday 3 March for our Thaxted Music Lovers supporters, and on general sale from 31 March. From as little as £15 a year from January you can join Thaxted Music Lovers and enjoy priority booking and other benefits for the 2025 season. Tickets for the launch, and details of all our events and membership are on our website: www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk.

Did you know that Thaxted Festival has always been run by dedicated teams of volunteers, many from our town? If you would like to join us, either during our season or in our organisation throughout the year, just drop an email to chair@thaxtedfestival.co.uk. We are particularly interested in hearing from you if you can offer skills and experience in admin, marketing/promotion, event ticketing and management, and fundraising to support our events, including our education and community activity. Can you play a part in steering our major local and national Festival forward towards our anniversary season in 2026 and beyond?

# Peter Donovan - Chairman, Thaxted Festival Foundation

# God's Gift by Paddy MarchThe time for giving presents<br/>has come,To reflect God's presenceIn the great gift of his Son.<br/>Light invisible is seen<br/>Among us, born between<br/>Ox and ass, Jesus, Mary's childSo deck the halls<br/>with gifts for all<br/>At this most gracious festival.<br/>For Heaven and earth<br/>have met<br/>Puer natus est.



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This supports Thaxted church in restoration work and other projects.

The draw takes place around 12 noon on the last Monday of the month.

To join, find a membership form in church, OR send a cheque payable to the Friends of Thaxted Church OR send cash with your name address, phone number and email to Joan Holley, 5 The Maltings Thaxted CM6 2NB.

#### Thank you.

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# Legend-on-the-Bench

The Thaxted based mental health charity, "Legend on the Bench" has been set up to save lives. In 2019, Thaxted residents Lee and Michelle Mead's 23-year-old son Jay sadly took his own life due to mental health issues. While his family were aware that Jay had some issues, they did not expect that he would take his own life.

Mental health problems affect

around one in four people in any given year and can often lead to suicide. But there is help out there to support them in times of crisis, someone is ready to listen, maybe even just a

shoulder to without cry on judgement. Michelle and her brother Micky Hazard joined forces to build this charity which aims, with the Legend Benches, to support people suffering from mental health issues and thus prevent loss of a life due to suicide. To do this, they aspire to place informative benches in every local park in the UK. The charity is in the process of installing

Legend on the Bench

benches in towns all over the UK, including one for Thaxted, that we hope will be installed by the end of the year. So far ten benches have been installed in the first year of the charity. There are approximately 40 more in the pipeline.

On each bench is a QR code, taking anyone requiring support, directly to the help page on 'LotB' website . There are contact telephone

> numbers on the bench to 24 hour support services with real people at the other end, ready to listen and offer the The support. benches have built-in lighting, giving a beam of

light for those in crisis at night.

Mental health can change the lives of people forever, whether that be for you, your family or people around you. If you need help, just talk, someone is always listening! There is absolutely no stigma attached to mental health sufferers seeking help... In fact we want you to speak.

www.legend-on-the-bench.co.uk/ "Someone is always Listening"

# Uttlesford Community Travel Your Gateway to Reliable Transport Services

At Uttlesford Community Travel we are dedicated to ensuring that every member of our community has access to safe, reliable, and affordable transport services. Whether you're an elderly individual requiring assistance with hospital appointments or a person with disabilities in need of accessible transport, we're here to provide reliable transport solutions tailored to your needs.

# Become A Member

To become a member, simply fill out our online membership form or contact our office directly. Membership is open to residents of Uttlesford who find it difficult to access normal public



transport, individuals over 60, the disabled, and those who are rurally isolated. We can also do group travel for educational settings, care homes, day centres, community groups.

# **Contact Information**

Office Hours: 09:00-13:00 Mon – Fri. (Other times leave a voice message.) 01371 875787 - 01799 519008 - 01245 279052

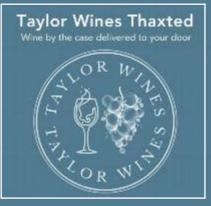
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# THAXTED LIBRARY NEWS

Janet Easterbrooke - Senior Customer Services Assistant

# **CHILDREN'S EVENTS**

Our popular **rhymetime** for babies and toddlers continues every Friday at 9.30 – 10.00am. It's a very friendly group and a great place to meet other parents and carers with young children. If you can't make Fridays, we also run a **family story-time** session on the last Saturday of the month at 10.00am.

**Lego Club** launches on Tuesday 19th November, 3.30 – 4.30pm and will take place every month on the following dates: Tuesday 17th December 14th January and 11th February. Come along and see what you can create!

The children's **Winter Reading Challenge** starts on 2 January 2025 through to the 22 February. This year's theme is 'The Dragon's Adventure'!

# ADULT EVENTS

Our **'Warm Welcome**' coffee morning is held every 3rd Saturday of the month, 10.30am -12.00pm. Drop in for a cuppa and bring your knitting, crocheting or sewing if that's your thing!

# LIBRARY OPENING HOURS

Tuesday 2.00-5.30pm, Friday 9.00am – 4pm (staffed by an information volunteer from 1pm), Saturday 9.00am – 5.00pm.

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# LOCAL WINDOW CLEANER

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# Up-date on the past year at the Windmill

As yet another year draws to a close now is the time to reflect on everything positive that has happened with the Windmill.

Funding from both Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund has allowed further investigative work at the Windmill and full costings for its restoration. In addition the Trust has continued with pilot projects in the local community.

In late November 2023 a group of volunteers helped list and pack all the artefacts and objects from the Museum collections. This was supported by Museums Essex and was overseen by a very experienced Conservator. The collections are currently housed in safe, dry conditions until they can be considered as part of the new Museum installation.

The year has also allowed the Trust to work more closely with CraftAbility, an organisation that carries out such excellent work in the locale. We look forward to developing this relationship over the coming years. We have also had the opportunity to develop our contacts with local schools and as a result the Trust is working on learning materials that can be used by a variety of age groups.

More recently, the Trustees celebrated the 220<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Windmill and held a Family Fun day to celebrate this occasion raising £4,000 through the sale of lottery tickets, takings and donations. We have since been further supported by the Maypole pub with a special edition of John Webb's beer on offer and with other well attended fundraising nights. Our thanks to all those who made these events happen.

This Autumn has also seen the launch of our Website and Instagram page which complements our existing Facebook page. We will therefore be able to keep everyone up to date with our progress more regularly on a variety of platforms. Please do visit any of these for updates on the project.

The Trust has now submitted applications for further funding to a variety of agencies and if all goes well we should hear as to whether we have been successful sometime in December. If we do receive adequate funding the Delivery Phase of the restoration project will start in March 2025 with the aim of reopening the Windmill and a fully refurbished Museum in the Spring of 2027

So, as we wait for any news, the Windmill Trustees would like to thank all of our supporting funders, local charities, benefactors, the community, our volunteers and the wonderful team that we have working for us behind the scenes. Without any of you this project would not be happening.

The Trustees wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year and please could you keep your fingers crossed for us!

Any further donations to the restoration project would be gratefully received. Please visit our website or scan the QR code on Facebook or posters at the Windmill.









# Thaxted Lecture Society

Thaxted Lecture Society (TLS) will begin its Spring lectures on January 15<sup>th</sup> and once again we aim to provide a variety of topics.

At the time of writing we are more than half way through our Autumn programme and have already been fascinated by aspects of life under the Tudors and in the Napoleonic army. We have laughed our way through another of lestyn Edwards evenings of entertainment and learnt so much about the life and work of the artist Freda Kahlo.

The programme for the next term is still in progress but we still await Tony Dale's talk on Carver Barracks, and Mark Lewis on London through artists' eyes. Other topics we hope to cover are the history of the Recorder in Thaxted and being a house detective. We hope there will also be something horticultural. But we can promise you it will be entertaining, educational and enlightening.

#### TLS meets on Wednesday evenings from 7.30 to 9.00pm in Pam's Place and at a cost of £5 per week.

Lectures usually last about an hour and there is time afterwards for questions and chat over a cup of tea or coffee. Details of lecture topics will be advertised on Facebook as well as by posters around the town. Look out for more information in January.

If you would like to be included on the mailing list to be kept up to date with upcoming events please email **simmons.peter@btinternet.com** 

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100

# One hundred not out!

#### Revd Mark Hayes - Thaxted United Reformed Church

A.B.C.U has made it to one hundred! As we celebrate one hundred editions, it's interesting to reflect on the significance of the number. There are one hundred years in a century and when someone reaches their 100th birthday they become a centenarian. We know that water boils at 100 degrees Celsius. The Karmen line, an arbitrary boundary between the earth's atmosphere and outer space, is set at 100-km altitude above the earth's mean sea level.

There's a tradition in Judaism that a devout Jew is expected to recite 100 *brachot* - blessings that begin with the words *Baruch Atah* - a day. In Greek mythology, the giant Argus had one hundred eyes. Turning to the Bible, the number 100 features far more times than we might expect. The apocryphal book of Barnabas claims Adam and Eve cried for one hundred days in repentance of their sins. We read in Genesis that Shem was a hundred years old when he became father of Arphaxad, and Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born. If we move on to the Book of Exodus, we read that God's instruction for the construction of the Tabernacle was that the courtyard was to be 100 cubits long on the north and south sides. Exodus also records the cost of the building materials to be used: the silver obtained from the people in the community weighed 100 talents.

Moving on to the New Testament, the number hundred might best be remembered from the parable of the lost sheep. Both Matthew and Luke's gospels record Jesus as asking if we own a hundred sheep and lose one, wouldn't we leave the ninety-nine and go to look for the one that is lost? Because our notational system for numbers is decimal, the number 100 takes on a significance that it would probably not possess if we used another system. But does the number one hundred hold other special meanings? Some writers have proposed that one hundred represents wholeness, and it is also used as a symbol of celestial beatitude.

However, while we probably shouldn't attach too much special significance to a number that owes its status to our decimal method of counting, we should still congratulate A.B.C.U on achieving its one hundredth edition!

# Baptist Church News Peter Archibald

#### Coffee & Company

If you have experienced the loss of a loved one and would like to chat and also have mutual support with people who understand, please come and join us for coffee/tea and cake. We meet on the last Saturday of every month in our Church Hall between 10 and 11.30 am. For details visit www.thaxted baptistchurch.com: or ring Debbie on 01371831548

# Humphrey Lodge Service.

As part of our community activities we continue holding a service at Humphrey Lodge on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month at 10.30 am.

## **Exercise Classes**

The armchair exercise class for the elderly is held in our Church Hall every Thursday starting at 11.00 am. All very welcome.

## Men's Breakfast

The Men's Community Breakfast is now held on the second Saturday of each month and continues to have a good attendance. We now have a wide selection of Speakers covering various subjects. For further details please contact Paul Tingey on 07494 757114.

# **Community Choir**

The Thaxted Ladies Community Choir sing for companionship and pleasure, and if you enjoy singing come along and join us. For more details please ring Jill Jones on 01371 830 104.

# Friday Coffee Morning

We have a Coffee Morning every Friday between 10 and 11.30 am in our Church Hall. After your market shopping come and enjoy a good chat together with a tasty beverage.



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# **United Reformed Church Activities**

#### The Advent Story

An informal service exploring the significance of the Advent story. Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 3pm.

## Our Garden

We are working on a "wild garden" at the rear of our church: a space to sit, reflect and also provide a home for birds, insects and other wildlife. If you'd like to get involved in this project, please get in touch.

# Messy Church

"Messy Church" meets on the second Tuesday each month from 4.00pm to 5.30pm and is probably best described as "Church, but not as you know it"! Ideal for families, we have fun exploring stories through craft, songs and sharing tea together. Messy Church meets again at 4pm on Tuesdays 10th December and 14th January

# Second Saturday Coffee Mornings

We meet for tea, coffee, cake and chat on the second Saturday each month from 10.00am to 12.30. Everybody welcome and we have activities available for children.

The next Second Saturday Coffee Mornings will be on 14th December and 11th January.

For more information about all our activities, please contact our minister, Revd Mark Hayes. Phone 01799 524944 or email markhayes@hotmail.co.uk

# Here we come a wassailing

Clarance House Conservation Garden,

Margaret Street, Sat 18th Jan 5.45 pm.

This is where we come to together to toast our fruit trees, drive off the evil spirits (!) and ensure a good crop. We need lots of people to sing, make loud noises and dance round the trees. We will be serving mulled cider and apple juice and home-made apple cake. We will put up posters nearer the time and hope very much to see you there.

# *Church of St. John The Baptist, Our Lady and St. Laurence*

www.thaxtedparishchurch.co.uk

Contact: Benefice Administrator, Maryanne Fleming admin@ttsrh.org or 07958 629506.

December 15	6 pm	Town Carol Service with UDC
December 24	11.30 pm	Midnight Mass
December 25	10 am	Christmas Mass
December 29	Benefice Servic	e at Great Sampford
First Sundays	8 am	Said Mass
of the month	10 am	Open Doors
All other Sundays	11 am	Sung Mass
Wednesday	10 am	Said Mass

# The Baptist Church, Park Street

www.thaxtedbaptistchurch.com or facebook.com/thaxtedbaptists/ Contact : Jim Ford Tel 07889758285

Sunday 22 Dec	5 pm	Carol Service
Christmas Day	9.30 am	Morning Service
Sundays	10.30 am	Morning Service
Thursday	7.30 pm	Bible Study
Friday	10 - 11.30 am	Coffee Morning

For details of our other activities and events please see page 29.

# United Reformed Church Bolford Street

Contact our minister, Revd Mark Hayes. Phone 01799 524944 or email **markhayes@hotmail.co.uk** 

Sundays	9.30 am	Service with Communion on the first Sunday of the month, with coffee following all services.
Sunday 22 Dec Christmas Eve	9.30am 10am	Christmas Carol Service. Morning Service. There will be activities for children at this friendly celebration of Christmas.

Breakfast Church will meet at 9.30am on Sundays 14<sup>th</sup> Dec and 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025. For details of our other activities and events please see page 31.

# The Catholic Church

*For information contact : Patrick O'Brien 01371 830 480* Regular Thaxted Services SATURDAYS 5 pm in Parish Church All other Services will be in Bardfield.

#### Baptisms

1st September James Tingey at the Baptist Church			
18 August	Albie James, son of Matt and Sally Ogilvie		
1 September	August Aurelia, daughter of William and Sophie Masters		
20 October	Sofia Grace, daughter of Daniel and Rose McDonald		
	at the Parish Church		
25 August:	Delilah Amelia Wilson, daughter of Ben Wilson and Abbie		
	Mead		
	at Saffron Walden parish church		
Weddings			
30 August	Sheldon Richards to Louise George		

27 October Sean Haugh to Zoe Brennan at the Parish Church

#### In Memoriam

Michael Richard Anderson, Harry Briant, Amy Busittil, Neil Donovan, Robert Garth Doran, Simon Latham, Dr Julian Litten, John William Parkin, Phil Pemberton, Olive Saych and Peter Wood.

# Parish Church Dates Town Carol Service with Uttlesford DC -15th December

6.00pm In the Parish Church. All are welcome to come along and sing traditional carols, followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

## Plough Sunday 12th January 2025 at 11 am

A special service to support all who work with the land.

# Thaxted Christmas Tree - 2024

Switching on the lights - Join the count down on Sat 7th Dec 4.30 pm. Carols round the Tree - mulled wine - mince pies Sun 22nd Dec 8 pm. Christmas Eve. See the crib and hear the Christmas story 3.30 - 4.30 pm. Father Christmas and Carols round the tree from 4.30 pm.



#### Website: www.pamsplace.org.uk

# Defibrillator Raffle - A Big Thank You



Thanks to all the people who supported our raffle by buying a ticket, making a donation or providing the extra prizes. We had aimed to try to get enough to be able to apply for match funding, this was exceeded. We were also lucky that a funding partner was suggested to us as soon as the raffle draw had taken place. **London Hearts** are a charity that raises funds

for defibrillators and then distributes them on a 50/50 basis. So we now have it and at the time of writing we are waiting for an electrician to mount it and connect it to a power source. Photos show it with our friendly dog and the

place where it should be by the time you read this piece. We have also had a Quiz Night which raised a magnificent sum which will ensure we have the funds to maintain it. There is a cost of replacing parts when it has been used and when they are out of date.



The use of Pam's Place as a Community Hub has continued to grow. Recently we have started "Bump and Babies" a mother and new-born babies drop-in occasion. Touchpoint Food Share have set up a Monday drop-off available to all. Pilates sessions have begun on Tuesday mornings – two sessions with one for all and one for seated participants.

Monday and Friday "Drop-In" cafes along with Wednesday lunches have continue to grow in popularity.

A big thank-you to our volunteers without whom we could not function.

**Regular Activities Reminder.** 

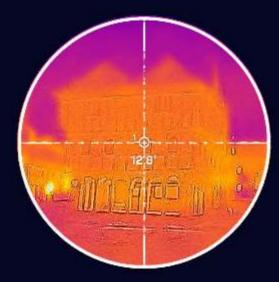
Monday 11 am – 6 pm, Light lunch and family evening meals. Wednesday and alternate Thursdays 12.30 lunch. Friday 10 am – 1 pm, Drop-in café.

Volunteers: Can you help with admin work, such as book-keeping, stock management and logistics? This is help which could be done at home and at hours to suit those who maybe are not able to help with the daytime activities. We always welcome more volunteers in all roles. Why not come and see what we do and how you could help.

Contact information: Phone: 01371 830094 email: info@pamsplace.org.uk, website: pamsplace.org.uk Cassy - Facilities Manager, Cally - Catering Manager Charity no: 1197612. Charity name: Thaxted Day Centre



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## Thaxted Singers Maggi Griffiths

Thaxted Singers continues to flourish in the wake of the covid pandemic, which affected so many choirs. We now have a regular membership of 40-45 singers. We rehearse weekly on a Thursday evening in Thaxted and work hard to prepare for performances in the local area. We also have a lot of fun along the way! Singing in a choir is a great way to meet new people and singing is so good for our mental health and well-being.

We recently took part in a choral festival in Bishop's Stortford along with six other choirs, which was a wonderful experience and enabled us to perform and socialise with other singers.

We are currently preparing for our next concert on December 19th at 7pm in Thaxted Church, as well as participating and leading the carol singing in the Thaxted Town Carol Service on Sunday December 15th at 6pm in Thaxted Church.

New members are always warmly welcomed into this friendly, all-inclusive, non-audition choir.

Follow us on Facebook and for more details about the choir, please contact Maggi Griffiths maggigriffiths@gmail.com





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## Advice from Citizens Advice Bureau

**Managed Migration** From the beginning of November, people who are currently claiming Employment Support Allowance (ESA) will start to receive migration notices, all of which are expected to be sent by the end of December 2025.

It is vital that you wait until you receive a migration notice and claim by the deadline date on your letter. If you are

worried about what the change might mean for you, please get in touch or contact the Citizens Advice Help to Claim service on 0800 144 8 444

Switching is Back! Many households are on standard energy tariffs, with prices dictated by the energy price cap. After a 10% rise on 1st October, the cap is predicted to rise substantially again this winter and then stay around that level in January. With competition slowly returning, fixes and other energy deals are available to those willing to switch.

**Share the Warmth 2024** - More than 4,000 people in Uttlesford are already living in fuel poverty and there has been a rapid rise in the number of people coming to us for help and advice relating to utility bills over the last few years. With recent changes to

eligibility for Winter Fuel Payment and rise in the Energy Price Cap, we are concerned that even more people will struggle to heat their homes. We have re-launched our Crowdfunder Campaign, "Share

the Warmth Fund for 2024". This fund will be ring-fenced and used to provide emergency support for local people who cannot afford to top up their meters, pay their utility bills or fill their oil tank.

https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/uttlesford-citizens-advice-bureau-1078222

citizens

advice

Uttlesford Citizens Advice, Barnards Yard, Saffron Walden, CB11 4EB 01799 618840 - help@uttlesfordca.org.uk - www.uttlesfordca.org.uk

Hazel Latham will not be sending local Christmas Cards this year. I will be making a contribution to charity instead.

I take this opportunity to wish all our friends a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

### More from the "Dragon's Den"

### Donna Bryant

**Thaxted Dragons Karate** offers martial arts classes for children and adults on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings. We are a fun, friendly and inclusive club where members can achieve their maximum potential.

In October, a strong squad of 12

Thaxted Dragons travelled to Warsaw in Poland for the WUKF Karate Championships.

**Congratulations** to **Thaxted Dragon Bo-Leigh** Murrill who returned from the championships with a GOLD medal. Bo is already a World European and Champion and is currently in for training the World Championships which take place in Sweden in 2025.

The Thaxted Dragons have entered numerous

competitions around the country, including Manchester, Birmingham and most recently the Docklands University of East London and Brunel University of London. It was great to see a range of experienced competitors as well as newer members stepping onto the mat for the first time and giving it their all. Every competition is a great experience. Each competitor, and their families



work together to support, encourage and mentor each other.

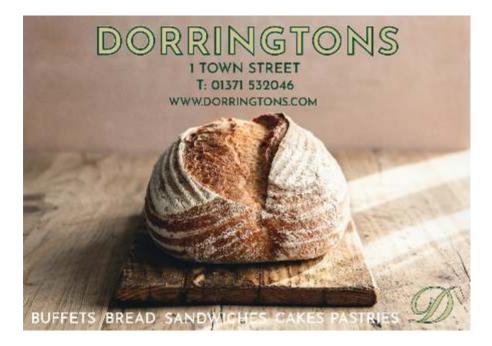
2025 is already looking like it will be an exciting year for the club with competitions in Liverpool, Sweden and a return to Poland for the senior squad. Until then, there will be Easter and

Summer schools, in-house competitions as well as weekly classes and gradings where the children can showcase to friends and family all they have learnt and skills they have gained.

Huge Congratulations to Sensei Barry who has been short-listed in the Unsung hero category in the Active Essex Awards. This award is for the coach who has made outstanding contribution to local sport or physical activity. Thaxted Dragons

families feel passionately that Sensei Barry should win as his commitment and passion for encouraging his pupils is second to none. The winner will be announced in December

Classes are for children aged 3 upwards. If you'd like to find out more, please visit the Thaxted Dragons Facebook page or contact Sensei Barry on 07522 067436.





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## **Tales from the Church and Churchyard** an occasional series by Mike Goatcher and Glyn Pritchard

In the northwest corner of Thaxted Church sits a wooden chest with carved reliefs, together with other items that have been together since the 1930s.

The chest was carved by Arthur Brown, who did not live in Thaxted, but was a supporter of Conrad Noel's 'Social Gospel Preaching' in the 1930s.

Carved into the front are four relief panels, depicting the preaching of the gospel from the church pulpit, resulting in the treading down of the dynasties and crowns. The second panel shows an axe head over pointed stars. The hammer and sickle adorns the third panel, the symbols of artisans and labourers coming into their own. The fourth panel represents the music of the spheres, which will be the music of the Kingdom of Heaven here on Earth.

Above the chest are the delicately shaped 'Praying Hands' by Eric Kennington.

*Eric Henri Kennington* RA (12 March 1888 – 13 April 1960) was an English sculptor, artist and illustrator, and an official war artist in both of the world wars.

The inscription on the central panel reads,

' Uplift our adventurous hearts and prosper thou the work of our hands upon us.'

Flanking the chest are two shapely candlesticks in black with tall tapers.

Above the hands is the medieval poem, The General Dance, which describes Our Lord's ministry in the pattern of a dance, and its refrain starts with,

*Tomorrow will be my dancing day: I would my true love did so chance To see the legend of my play, To call my true love to my dance:* This ancient Cornish carol was set to music by Gustav Holst and was sung in cathedrals and parish churches. This was not met with the Bishop's approval, at first, who asked it to be removed from Thaxted 'at once.'





Exciting times over here at TCLT as we await planning decision on our first project: "The Hedges" on Bardfield Rd. This project would provide four homes for members of our community. Thank you for your support thus far. It was a tricky few months, with the implementation of biodiversity net gain (BNG) and financial pressures in the industry, but in collaboration with English Rural - a non-profit organisation working with rural communities to build and manage affordable homes - we've managed to achieve BNG on-site, and are hopeful we can overcome the financial restrictions.

There is of course, a lot of uncertainty with a change of Government, and so we had been eagerly anticipating the Chancellor's budget. She has this week announced a swathe of measures designed to help tackle the UK housing crisis, including an immediate one-year cash injection of £500 million to top up the Affordable Homes Programme. We now await seeing these proposals in action.

Thank you for all your support during the formal consultation period. The online portal registered no negative feedback and our colleague at English Rural informed us this is the most community-backed project he has worked on in terms of support lodged. It was, he said, "outstanding".

UDC are currently running behind with their determination dates (ours was September) but we are hopeful we'll hear back soon and look forward to reporting back. Successfully progressing to build phase would make us the first Community-Led project in Uttlesford, a real achievement for Thaxted.

If you'd like to keep up to date with our news and events as we move forward with this project, then please do give us a follow on our social media pages. You can find us at:





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### **Lighting up Thaxted Church** Friends of Thaxted Church Working Party

Improved lighting to enhance the beauty of Thaxted Church and benefit worshippers, visitors and concert-goers alike, has been the main fund-raising project for Friends of Thaxted Church for some years. Despite various problems and set-backs to the project, including Covid, we have raised over £100,000 towards the new lighting. This has mainly come from the people of Thaxted and their generous support for FOTC events and demonstrates the affection Thaxted residents have for their Parish Church.

The long administrative journey is almost at an end, and we are optimistic that work can begin on the new lighting next year - 2025. What will this mean? Anyone who has been to an evening service or event will know that the current lighting barely allows you to read a hymn book or a programme. In the new design, the main lighting for the nave is from the aisle roof, which will achieve the high angle required for a greater spread of light. The present wall lights on the columns will be replaced by new lights which provide downlighting to enhance areas shaded by the columns and incorporate uplighting that will enable architectural features in the nave to be lit from below. The side aisles and chapels will receive extra lighting, as well as the choir area and the north porch. The whole effect will be transformative, and there will be an opportunity to see a demonstration of the final plan in the New Year.

We are also close to reaching our financial target: we just need a final push to raise the last remaining amount to reach our goal. Friends of Thaxted Church will continue to fund-raise by putting on events, but you could help the process by making a donation. We are conscious of financial constraints at the moment, but if you feel you can donate £5 or any amount of your choice. Follow the QR code at the end to go straight to the FOTC donation page. Or you can send

a cheque payable to Friends of Thaxted church, to Membership Officer, Piggots Mill, Watling Lane, Thaxted, CM6 2QY. Thank you for all your support, both past and present, and we look forward to the completion of this wonderful project.



## Death of the Thaxted Flyer Crowds and Detonators Greeted the Last Train



On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September 1952 Bill Pearson of Thaxted purchased this ticket for the last journey of the Thaxted Train. Between 1944 and 1950 Mr B. Munro along with fellow school-boys travelled from Thaxted to Newport GS and school-girls going to Herts & Essesx GS, changing trains at Elsenham. The final journey on that Saturday is well documented as is the whole story of the Elsenham and Thaxted Light Railway. As one of the last lines to be built and with changing times it was inevitable that it could not remain viable.

Built between 1911-13 it was promoted by Sir Walter Gilbey of gin fame, Lancelot and Hugh Cranmer of Folly Mill, George Lee the confectionary maker and four local

farmers. On the first morning over 50 people travelled on the first train and in the evening 200 were on the last train, many having walked to Cutler's Green halt just for the ride.

With a hiss of escaping steam and a series of light hearted blasts on the whistle, the Thaxted Flyer ended its run. After 39 years the rail passenger service between Thaxted and Elsenham, 6 miles away, closed down. Crowds of people began to gather at Thaxted station long before the last train was due. At 8:00 pm over 140 cars were parked along the steep approach to the station. The train came in, carrying over 400 people, a rousing cheer went up and railway detonators were

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exploded. A wreath was placed around the neck of driver Frederick Dever. The crowd cheered and a mock coffin draped in black and bearing the inscription "Died Waiting" was unloaded and ceremoniously escorted into Thaxted, preceded by a young man ringing a hand bell. After the passengers had climbed down, other people, climbed on the train to buy souvenir tickets from Guards Tom Buck and Percy Reeve.





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**Dunmow u3a's** dedicated Outing Team have arranged some fantastic trips this year for our members from Dunmow and the surrounding villages, including Thaxted.

We've had theatre trips to **Kiss Me Kate** at the Barbican Theatre, London and the stage version of **Drop the Dead Donkey** at the Cambridge Arts Theatre, both of which were very well supported.

Our arty members enjoyed a day at the Gainsborough House in Sudbury, followed by a trip, a couple of months later, to the Sargent and Fashion exhibition at Tate Britain in London.

A couple of longer-than-usual journeys took members to Holkham Hall in north Norwich and the National Space Centre in Leicester - both proved to be very enjoyable and interesting days out.

Staying with the space theme, there was a trip to the Lightroom in London to experience Moonwalkers, narrated by Tom Hanks and the summer saw a cruise on the River Lee with afternoon tea. Although it was arranged at short notice, places were booked very quickly.

We had a day out in **Oxford**, where we were free to do whatever we wanted: shopping, one or more of the university museums or just taking in the atmosphere of this iconic city.

The year was completed with a trip to Cambridge to tie in with their outdoor Christmas Market which is always a popular day out - we do like a good Christmas fair or market to start the festive season.

Dunmow u3a is aimed at adults living in Dunmow and the surrounding villages who are no longer in full time employment and have an interest in all things new: hobbies, challenges, sports or just making new friends. Is this you? Then Dunmow u3a could be for you!

To find out more, visit the Du3a's website https://dunmow.u3asite.uk or email membership@dunmowu3a.org.uk Registered charity number: 1168310





### Rainbows, Brownies and Girl Guides of Thaxted

It's been a busy and fun 2024 for us with a few highlights being:

- Legoland sleepover and day trips to Thorpe Park and Chessington World of Adventures.
- London Monopoly run visiting as many sites in London as possible.
- Sponsored fun run.
- Summer pack holiday at Chigwell Row
- Visit to a local farm and circus trip.
- Activity days involving kayaking, climbing walls and ziplining.
- First aid training and visit from a local First Responder.

**Girl Guiding Values are:** Caring, Challenging, Empowering, Fun, Inclusive and Inspiring. Anyone involved with the Thaxted packs will agree that we live by these values with our weekly meetings and exciting trips and opportunities.

Most recently, the girls enjoyed a jampacked day at the Girlguiding centre in Newmarket, the Jarmen Centre, where over 150 young people participated in a 'jail break'. The children had to build their jails from bamboo canes and tarpaulin and complete a series of challenges to avoid capture from Guides and Scouts who were hiding in the woods with water pistols.

For the rest of the year the girls are looking forward to ice-skating, a trip to the Pantomime and of course a Christmas party.

We would like to **congratulate our young leader** and Thaxted resident, Fern Haddock for being awarded a Jack Petchey achievement award for her commitment and dedication to Girlguiding. We would also like to congratulate Leanne Kell, District Commissioner and Thaxted Girlguiding leader for winning Volunteer of the Year in the BBC Essex Make a Difference Awards where Olly Murrs was the celebrity judge. We are very grateful for all Fern and Leanne do to help provide enjoyable and exciting opportunities for the girls of Thaxted.



If you would like your daughter to join Rainbows (age 4-7) Brownies (age 7-10) or Guides (age 10-14) please register on www.girlguiding.org.uk



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## CELEBRATE Christmas at the



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#### **FESTIVE DINING**

We are now taking bookings for our Christmas menu. This is available for both our lunch and evening meal sessions and is available from Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November to Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December and Christmas eve lunchtime. The menu is on our Facebook page and website or available from the pub. The Christmas menu must be booked and pre-ordered in advance

### **EVENTS IN DECEMBER**

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Bingo & Trivia Night Friday 13<sup>th</sup> – Vintage, Jazzy Christmas Dinner with vintage and jazz singer Miss Jones Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> – Ginny Tonics Christmas Spectacular featuring guest singers from 8:00pm

### **New Years Eve**

70s Themed Party Night with Buffet, Disco plus entertainment from Ginny Tonic and the amazing Abalicious U.K's No.1 Tribute to Abba TICKET ONLY - £15 per person (Further details to follow)

### We are not serving food Christmas Day

But will be open for drinks. Join Vince and Leon from 11:45am until 2:30pm

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

Web: http://www.maypolet.ie.xted.com ebook: https://www.facebook.com/theo.ypolethaxted



Guildhall Girls Thaxted WI commenced as a group just over 9 years ago. It has continued to thrive, providing the local ladies of our community with friendship and education.



Our monthly meetings have consisted of talks from some very interesting speakers and craft activities. Our most recent speakers have included a very interesting talk on the prison service from Lindsay Whitehouse who is a retired prison governor; Lindsey Barrell gave us an introduction to British Sign Language; Petra Wenham spoke about her experiences during her talk titled, 'Transgender Awareness' and, we welcomed the fabulous Iestyn Edwards with his presentation, 'My Tutu Went AWOL'.

In some of our craft sessions, we have made felt poppy wreaths (one of which is currently hung in Pam's Place). Earlier this year, we made simple, but very effective, paper flowers. Most recently, some of the ladies went to a glass fusion workshop where they made colourful bowls, coasters and window hangings.

The WI have long held campaigns to address issues that matter to members, from equal pay to climate change, and mental health to microplastic pollution. Monthly and quarterly magazines from WI are given to members.

We currently have 35 members and meet at 7:30pm on the first Thursday of each month at Pam's Place, Vicarage Mead, Thaxted. The first visit is free with the following two visits costing £5 each. Thereafter, you would need to decide whether to continue your visits by becoming a paid member.



Please contact the Guildhall Girls WI via email (guildhallgirls@gmail.com) if you would like to come along to one of our meetings, or get more information.



The Guildhall Girls Thaxted WI send congratulations to the ABC&U team on the Centenary edition of its publication.

## *Julian Meeting Great Bardfield Quaker Meeting House Monday 16th December 1.30pm*

Our regular monthly Julian Meetings are now running on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the Month at the Quaker Meeting House in Great Bardfield. We were pleased to have a number of people turn out from Bardfield and the surrounding communities. All

attendees expressed that they found the time calming and thought provoking and we would welcome other interested people to join us.

Julian Meetings are named after Julian of Norwich who spent many

years in a small cell in contemplative prayer in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and is still an inspiration to many interested in silent prayer and meditation today. Each meeting centres on contemplative prayer in the Christian

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tradition and welcomes people of all faiths or none.

Our meetings begin with a short passage from Julian's writing and then go into 30 minute's silent reflection on the passage. There is

> then an opportunity to discuss anything that arose for the attendees during the silence for those who want to share, followed by refreshments and a chance to chat more informally.

> More information can be found at The Julian

Meetings website thejulianmeetings .net, they can put you in touch with the organiser if you wish to make contact in advance, otherwise please just turn up on the day.

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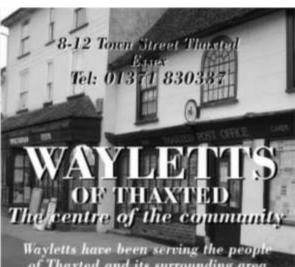
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Tucked away behind flint walls in Margaret Street, close to the Church Hall, is about half an acre of garden. It was created in 1715 as a kitchen garden for Clarance House and separated from that property and its pleasure garden by the lane that The house was runs between. bought by Essex County Council in 1942 and turned into a youth and residential centre aimed at providing access to the countryside for town dwellers. The stable building in the kitchen garden was converted into teaching space.

Times change. In the 1980's Barry Wright (the former local policeman and wildlife photographer) and Pat Mussard turned the garden into a conservation garden, planting many unusual varieties of fruit trees funded by local donation. By 2012





Essex CC was reducing its property portfolio and the garden was transferred to Thaxted Parish Council for the sum of £1, and today is run by a group of volunteers on behalf of the Council and the town.

The garden is open every weekend from 10.00 - 5.00 during British Summer Time. It contains a few formal flowerbeds but is mainly looked after for the wildlife. There is a wildflower meadow, log piles (and nettles) to encourage insects, bird boxes and mature trees. There is also a pond and our Herculean task last winter was to dig out the old pond. It had been badly designed and was being taken over by unwanted plant species, and the sides were too steep to allow safe access for small mammals. So we



drained, dug, watching out for the toads! We reshaped, smoothed, relined and filled with water. When it came to burying the liner, we had to carefully rescue 50+ newts which were hiding under the edges, having decided it was a nice cosy place to It was all establishing itself live. nicely until some unsavoury locals decided to scale the walls whilst the garden was locked and rip holes in the liner. Repairs made, it still seems to lose water quickly so we continue to battle with it – though it has been full of toads and newts, with damsel and dragonflies flitting above it.

The garden is available to hire and there were several very successful events this year, including a picnic during the Thaxted Festival and a great afternoon hosted by the Thaxted Fayre Trust and some private parties. We advertised our fruit picking on social media and by poster and many people came and picked; they all kindly left a donation and we have some useful funds to spend on new plants!

We held our annual wassail in January which was very well attended and, despite the cold, everyone enjoyed themselves. It obviously worked as the apple harvest was very good this year.

Finally, we are actually quite a small group of volunteers and we are not getting any younger and we would love to have some fresh blood and enthusiasm. You don't need tools, we have all those and any degree of knowledge is useful. Please do think about joining us on Sunday mornings and sharing this wonderful space.



WASSAIL 2025. 18 JANUARY 5.45PM BRING SOMETHING TO MAKE A NOISE AND DRESS WARMLY



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Message Mary: 07811 399 247

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## *Editorial Information Dates for the next edition - Easter 2025*

Date for copy to Editor:Friday 7th March 2025Publication date:Sunday 5th April 2025

### How to contact us

Editorial:	Mike Collins	editor@abc-u.co.uk	
Adverts:	Emma Fearnhamm	email: adverts@	abc-u.co.uk
Committee:	Peter Archibald	Julie Barnard	Yvonne Baccush
	Sue Collins	Michael Culkin	Andy Frater
	Stephanie Hughes	Jill Jones	Dena Oxley
	Glyn Pritchard	Richard Till.	

### Latest 3 editions on the website: www.abc-u.co.uk

**Committee Members:** We would welcome more members on the magazine's editorial team. In particular we are looking for people to help with editorial and layout design aspects. If you have an interest in creating articles or other aspects of this magazine why not contact us to discuss the ways you could help.

**Articles:** We are always pleased to receive articles for inclusion. Write about what matters to you in Thaxted. We also want to include items such as births, weddings, etc. We do need to be told about events and interesting happenings, as we do not always know of them.

### Advertising Information

All colour and monochrome adverts are charged at the same rate.

These 2024 rates have risen to reflect the current printing costs.

- Full page portrait -£140 for 3 issues £50 for a single issue
- Half page landscape £80 for 3 issues £30 for a single issue
- Quarter page landscape £43 for 3 issues £15 for a single issue
- Quarter page portrait £47 for 3 issues £17 for a single issue

Please apply to Emma for all information. Contact details as above.

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Animal bedding: shavings, hay, straw, hemp etc. Chicken feeds: Marriages, Copdock, etc. Layers pellets, mixed corn, mash, crumbs - feeders





and drinkers.

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