# Sandon Voice

Quarterly from St Andrew's 75p for non residents December 2025















## Special Christmas Services and Events

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thursday | 18th Dec 7:30 pm | Carol Service | Howe Green Chapel |
| Sunday | 21st Dec 6:00 pm | Lighting the Christmas Tree | by Church |
| Sunday | 21st Dec 6:30 pm | Carol Service | in Church |
| Tuesday | 23rd Dec 7:00 pm | Beer and Carols | in the Crown |
| Wednesday | 24th Dec 4:00 pm | Crib Service | in Church |
| Thursday | 25th Dec 10:00 am | Christmas Day Communion | in Church |



## Sandon Handbells

We are hoping that we can have a small band play say a couple of carols on the newly refurbished handbells at the Beer and Carols event at 7 pm on 23rd December in the Crown.
Beyond this hopefully a band can form.
If you would like to try this then do contact Judy, judy@cecil.family.clara.net

Country Court

Our family, caring for yours

## Greenwood Court Care Home

**Sunday 14th December**
**5 pm till 7 pm**
Greenwood Court Care Home is inviting folk to their Christmas Fair and Light Switch On.
Please let them know if you plan to attend by ringing 02088 212 018.
Several from the church visit twice each month. They would love to see you.





## Letter from the Wardens

A short piece about Christmas and then some thoughts about the ongoing vacancy.

If you come to the Carol Service either in the Howe Green Chapel or at St Andrew's Church you will hear in the last biblical reading the words from the beginning of St John's gospel.
Like the beginning of the book of Genesis it begins with, "In the beginning … " and begins to open up Jesus as the Word, as the Son of God. By the end of chapter 1 of John's gospel, Jesus has been given 7 different titles showing how he completes many prophecies in the Old Testament. There are many intriguing links which are certainly worth following up. Here is one "Jesus says, 'What do you want?' They said, 'Rabbi' (which means 'Teacher'), 'where are you staying?' 'Come,' he replied, 'and you will see.'"
That is something that applies now. Jesus is inviting us to come and see where he is. That does sound abstract but it is also very real. We might dare to take a plunge and ask Jesus for help, for wisdom, for forgiveness. We can be sure He will hear.

About the vacancy, the time with no priest, here is a further update: The Archdeacon of Chelmsford, The Venerable Jonathan Croucher, met with the PCCs of both Sandon and Boreham recently and jointly agreed a profile as the basis for the appointment of a priest. This can be seen on the church website, sandon-church.info.
Further, it was agreed to seek applications for this post, namely a half-time post shared between the two parishes. So already quite a thin spread. What also emerged is that the diocese has had no applications for several other priest posts. There is a shortage across the country. So there are no promises on the outcome or timescale, but conceivably some progress.

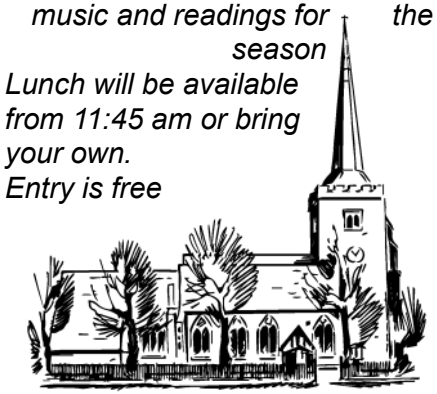
In that context, perhaps we can learn something from a piece of work that a group called the Bible Project have recently produced. It is about the Wilderness and what we can learn from that and from being in the wilderness. They say that, "in the Bible, the difficulty and danger of the wilderness challenges humans to trust God and listen to His voice."
Continuing, "When we discover the beauty in this place of scarcity, we can see how the wilderness points to God as the provider of every good thing." The wilderness is the opposite of a garden which is teeming with life and resources. It can be a testing ground with our vulnerabilities, where God invites us to trust in His provision and protection. The Israelites are recorded as struggling to trust God, as they went through the desert, as they long for a sense of security. But the wilderness can be a place of refuge. There are promises from God in scripture about the wilderness too, for example in Isaiah 35:1, "The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom."

*Andy and Richard*
*Church Wardens*



***St John the Baptist Church, Danbury***
*2025 Monthly lunchtime concerts in the church*
*Fridays at 12.15pm*

*12th December*
*Christmas Extravaganza – music and readings for the season*
*Lunch will be available from 11:45 am or bring your own.*
*Entry is free*



Just Pampered

ESTABLISHED 2007
19 CHURCH STREET, GREAT BADDOW, CHELMSFORD, CM2 7HX
BEAUTY AND WELLNESS TREATMENTS FOR ALL

Skincare Facials, Microdermabrasion,
Galvanic and High Frequency,
Reflexology, Indian Head Massage,
Lash Lifts and Tinting,
Threading and Waxing Hair Removal,
Swedish and Deep Tissue Massages,
Maternity Treatments,
Natural Nailcare, Gel Polish,
Footlogix Footcare
and much more

Dual treatment room available

FREE PARKING, OPEN 7 DAYS, EVENINGS AVAILABLE
GIFT VOUCHERS FOR ANY TREATMENT OR VALUE

www.justpampered.co.uk
Call 01245 471888 WhatsApp 07570 493774

**The Claydon Clinic**

*Physiotherapy*
*Sports Injury Rehabilitation*
*Acupuncture*
*Pilates*

www.theclaydonclinic.com
Tel/fax 01245 401255

Email. theclaydonclinic@btinternet.com
Old Southend Rd,
Howe Green CM2 7TB

## Memory Of Steam

Those last days of steam I remember well
At North Weald bridge there standing
With dad watching the push and pull
Smoke billowing as it went under, enchanting.
Steam arising from under our feet
Lost in smoke, what a thrilling treat,
As though floating amongst the clouds
The train under puffing loud.

No car for us so transport, trains
London stations of smoke filled air
Blackened steel and slamming doors
The sights and sounds I remember there
The excitement of the annual holiday journey
More awaited than the seaside to me

Train to Clacton never quite the same
As journey to the Devon coast
Holidays I shall n'er forget
Summer long distance steam I loved the most
Door window open head outside
The thrill of speed the steam of the ride.

To Paddington cross London Town
Then steam and sandwiches cocooned sat we
To Barnstable, all change the call
For local train to Braunton, near the sea
Bus ride then to beloved Croyde Bay
Journey tired after the longest of day

Those mem'ries carved in steam and chuffs
The chug of engine, whistle blows
The sounds as train track crossed the points
The feeling left, a warming glow;
A breathing beast, steel named on the plate
No ride on diesel could e'er equate.

*27th September.2025*

*Richard Simmonds*

*Written 200 years to the day since the first commercial train service on the Stockton to Darlington Railway*






## At Peace on the Broads in September 2025

Seems an odd time to be reading about holidays but there you are. Maybe I'm just a bit odd wanting to sit on a boat on the Norfolk Broads on what has been, a wild and windy day, writing this article.

I don't know what any of you aim to get out of a holiday. We go to do as little as possible, with as little effort as possible, and relax. Or at least that is always the intention.



We blunder around on a boat, which we have done on and off since before we were married (although back then it was with a group including parents, an aunt and cousins in a rather larger boat) and enjoy the sights, sounds and smells around us.

We discarded our passports many years ago having decided that getting away from it all without flights was preferable to going abroad. The closest we have got to going abroad since then has been to visit Shetland and even that included a boat, albeit an overnight ferry from Aberdeen to Lerwick.

The Norfolk Broads is our place of preference. However sometimes we miss the Broads out for year to use our rather tiny caravan at greater length.

This year has been entertaining. There have been a few bashes and crashes (not us)! Also episodes of high wind, thunder and lightning, rainbows, beautiful sunsets and occasional inadvertent swims albeit with a lifejacket on!!

Other people seem to have a different view of the world to us. Boats are on the river as early as 6:30am and sometimes trying to tie up in the almost dark. If you follow recommendations to see all of the Broads that is what you have to do. Our ideal day is to wander along, moor up and watch the world go by. 30 gallons fuel goes a long way when you do the sort of distances we tend to!



A new thing this year has been recording bird songs and listing the species that have been heard. However that is a story for someone else.

Is this the holiday for everyone? No. It can be cold and very wet! We like the outdoors and you can't avoid it on a boat of any type. Sooner or later you have to be outside, even if only to go under a bridge. If it's wet you get wet. One time many years ago we got up one morning to find the ropes frozen to the mooring post. However that was rather later in the year.

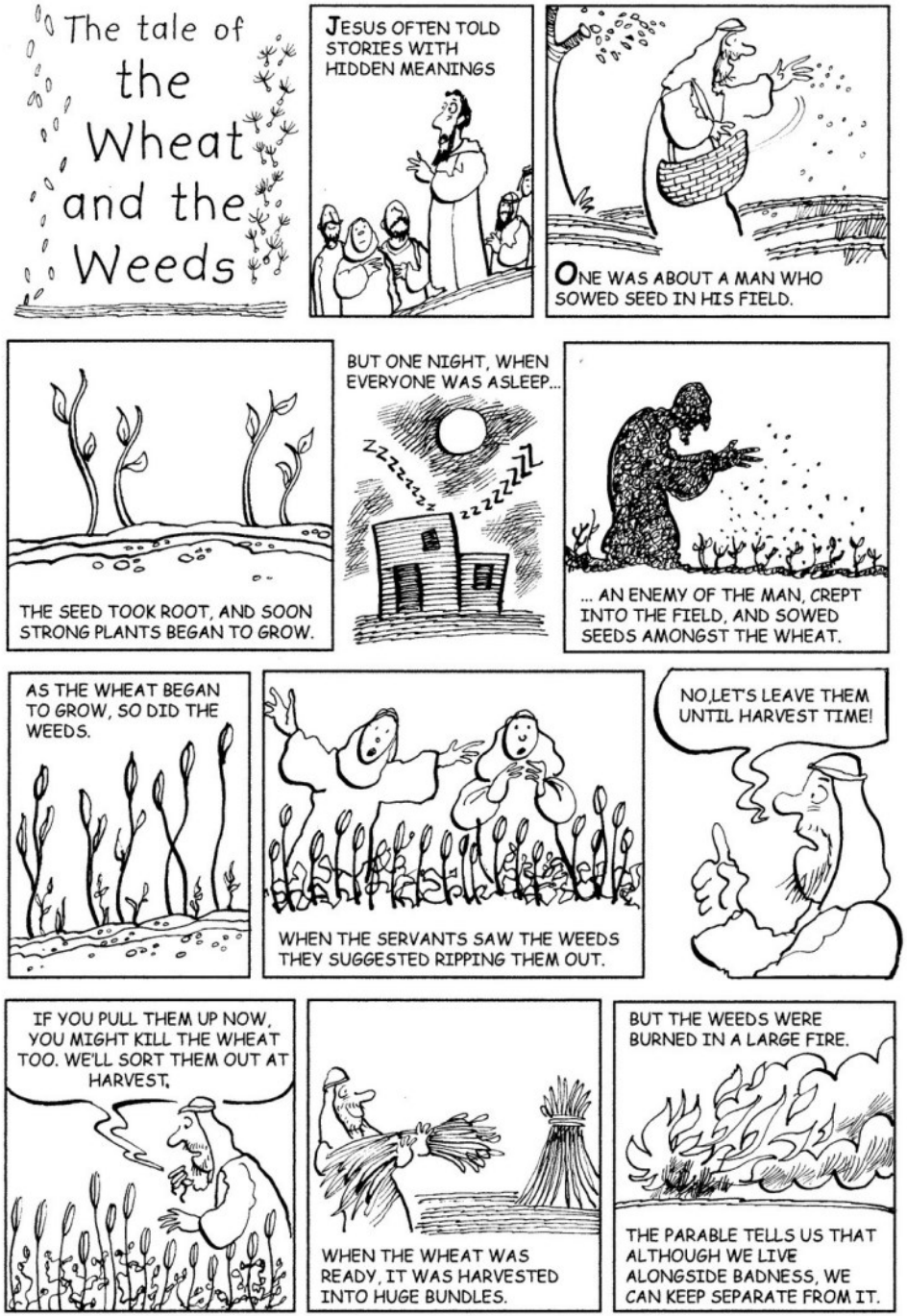
There are far bigger more luxurious boats than the one we hire. It's old and made of wood in the traditional old Broads style so it can go everywhere there is to go, so at the end of the holiday we head upriver under the tightest bridge and enjoy ultimate peace and quiet for a few days knowing no one else can get there. The most peaceful end to the most peaceful of holidays!

Will we be back? I am sure we will. Maybe next year, maybe the year after, or of course, maybe both!

*Andrew Horne*

**Our Church is open!**
The church is open for quiet contemplation and prayer every day from about 8:30am to 5:00pm (exact times will vary).








## WI Report

Sandon WI didn't hold a meeting in August, so a seaside trip to Walton-on-the-Naze was arranged, and although the coach wasn't full, the spirits of all the ladies and partners who attended were very high. The sun was shining, and the sea was inviting when we arrived.

People hurried to find their spot on the beach or walked into town to see what was available. Most ladies did have a quick paddle in the sea, which may have been the first for some this year, while for others, it was straight in for a swim while topping up the magnesium. The sea was calm and not as cold as some had expected, and the beach was golden and beautiful.

Whether enjoying fish and chips out of the paper or dining in the local restaurant, the choice was up to each individual, along with their preference for tea or coffee. It was a lovely day—long enough to enjoy, but short enough to keep it fun. A great time was had by all! *Julie Johnstone*

Editor's note: Neither I nor the proof reader, also a former science teacher could understand the reference to topping up the magnesium. So I asked chatgpt, an AI engine, '"Topping up the magnesium" refers to the idea that seawater (especially saltwater) contains magnesium, and that swimming in it allows your body to absorb some through the skin - a popular wellness belief (though the scientific evidence is mixed)' came the reply.













## Archbishop Designate, Sarah Mullally, sets out her hopes for the Church

Shortly after the announcement of her nomination as the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Sarah Mullally delivered an address at Canterbury Cathedral, reflecting on her calling, the challenges facing the Church, and her hopes for its future.

Rooted in her early vocation as a nurse and shaped by her ministry in London, she spoke of “washing feet” as a guiding image of Christian service, and of finding hope in the quiet faithfulness of churches, chaplaincies, and communities across the Anglican Communion.

She addressed the Church’s responsibility in safeguarding, the need to confront power dynamics, and the importance of standing against hatred and antisemitism.

She said she would seek to be “a shepherd who enables everyone’s ministry and vocation to flourish,” and expressed her desire to nurture confidence in the Gospel. “Held fast by the Lord’s hand,” she concluded, “please pray for me as I will pray for you.”

## Thank Yous

We have received thank you messages from Chelmsford Foodbank for our harvest donations as below.

Also from Christian Aid for donating £220.40 as part of the Church’s aim of giving 10% of its income.

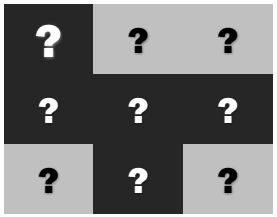
Thanks are implied and were explicitly expressed by Bishop Qampicha and Bishop Rob for Sandon’s contribution to the Diocese of Marsabit. It has an annual budget of 25 million KES of which 40%, that is about £59,000 comes from abroad. Sandon is clearly a key player.

And thanks are offered to all who have helped in the church, with cleaning, and in the churchyard. Recently I heard them described as the church fairies.

**Thank you all.**






**QUIZ**

**When: Saturday 24th January 2026**

**7.15pm for 7.30pm start**

**Where: Sandon Village Hall**

**Bring your own nibbles and drinks**

**Raffle**

**For church funds**

**Come and have some fun**

**Butts Green Garden Centre & Café**

Mayes Lane
CM2 7RW
Gifts - Plants - Food
Open 9:30 am till 5:00 pm
Tel: 01245 223524
for reservations

Christopher THE LOCKSMITH

ARE YOUR LOCKS BEHAVING BADLY?

We Value Old Fashioned Customer Service
A Local Trusted Family Business Since 1989

- Specialist in UPVC & Wooden Doors
- No Call Out Charge
- No Fix No Fee
- All Work Fully Guaranteed
- 10% Senior Citizen Discount

For More Advice & Help **Call Christopher:**
07772 111 222

www.christopherthelocksmith.co.uk

GROSSMORE DOORS

What we do:
Installation, service, and repairs to…
- Electric Rolling Garage Doors.
- Patio Awnings.

Established for 30+ years.

Authorised retailer of SeceuroGlide and Luxaflex products.




For more information, visit
https://www.grossmoredoors-essex.co.uk
Or call us on 01245 475999

## Church Services — St. Andrew's, Sandon

*Services currently planned online via Zoom are shown in italics.*
Also, we hope to say Morning Prayer in church at 8:30 am each morning Sunday to Thursday ie 5 mornings per week.

## December

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Tuesday 2nd** | 9:30 am | Said Communion - Revd Carol Ball |
| **Wednesday 3rd** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |
| **Sunday 7th** | **Advent 2** | |
| | 10:00 am | Sung Eucharist - Revd Hugh Dibbens |
| **Tuesday 9th** | 9:30 am | Said Communion - Revd Mark Pape |
| **Wednesday 10th** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |
| **Sunday 14th** | **Advent 3** | |
| | 10:00 am | Sung Eucharist and Baptism<br>Revd Carol Ball |
| **Tuesday 16th** | 9:30 am | Said Communion - Revd Carol Ball |
| **Wednesday 17th** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |
| **Thursday 18th** | 7:30 pm | Carol Service<br>at Howe Green URC Chapel |
| **Sunday 21st** | **Advent 4** | |
| | 10:00 am | Agape Meal |
| | 6:30 pm | Festival of Carols |
| **Tuesday 23rd** | 9:30 am | Said Communion<br>Revd Keith Anderson |
| **Thursday 25th** | **Christmas Day** | |
| | 10:00 am | Christmas Sung Eucharist<br>Revd Keith Anderson |
| **Sunday 28th** | **Christmas 1** | |
| | 10:00 am | Morning Worship |
| **Tuesday 30th** | 9:30 am | Morning Prayer |
| **Wednesday 31st** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |

## January 2026

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Sunday 4th** | **Epiphany** | |
| | 10:00 am | Sung Eucharist - Revd Hugh Dibbens |
| **Tuesday 6th** | 9:30 am | Said Communion - Revd Carol Ball |
| **Wednesday 7th** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |
| **Sunday 11th** | **Baptism of Christ** | |
| | 10:00 am | Worship Together |



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Tuesday 13th** | 9:30 am | Said Communion - Revd Mark Pape |
| **Wednesday 14th** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |
| **Sunday 18th** | **Epiphany 2** | |
| | 10:00 am | Sung Eucharist<br>Revd Dr Jonathan Holmes |
| | 3:00 pm | Afternoon Worship<br>at Howe Green URC Chapel |
| **Tuesday 20th** | 9:30 am | Said Communion - Revd Carol Ball |
| **Wednesday 21st** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |
| **Sunday 25th** | **Epiphany 3** | |
| | 10:00 am | Morning Worship |
| **Tuesday 27th** | 9:30 am | Said Communion<br>Revd Keith Anderson |
| **Wednesday 28th** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |

## February

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Sunday 1st** | **Presentation of Christ** | |
| | 10:00 am | Sung Eucharist - Revd Hugh Dibbens |
| **Tuesday 3rd** | 9:30 am | Said Communion - Revd Carol Ball |
| **Wednesday 4th** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |
| **Saturday 7th** | 10:30 am | Coffee Morning at Howe Green URC |
| **Sunday 8th** | **2nd before Lent** | |
| | 10:00 am | Worship Together |
| **Tuesday 10th** | 9:30 am | Said Communion - Revd Mark Pape |
| **Wednesday 11th** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |
| **Sunday 15th** | **Sunday before Lent** | |
| | 10:00 am | Agape Meal |
| | 3:00 pm | Afternoon Worship<br>at Howe Green URC Chapel |
| **Tuesday 17th** | **Shrove Tuesday** | |
| | 9:30 am | Said Communion - Revd Carol Ball |
| **Wednesday 18th** | **Ash Wednesday** | |
| | 3:00 pm | Ashing - Revd Carol Ball |
| | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |
| **Sunday 22nd** | **Lent 1** | |
| | 10:00 am | Morning Worship |
| **Tuesday 24th** | 9:30 am | Said Communion<br>Revd Keith Anderson |
| **Wednesday 25th** | 8:30 pm | *Night Prayer* |

# Saint Andrew's Parish Church Contacts

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rector | Vacancy | |
| Church Wardens | Richard Cecil*+<br>Andy Horne*+ | 224747<br>475279 |
| PCC Secretary | Judy Cecil*+ | 224747 |
| PCC Treasurer | Nick Bobeldijk*+ | 471756 |
| Safeguarding Officer | Alison Read* | 474858 |
| Electoral Roll | Liz Bobeldijk | 471756 |
| Bell Ringing | Mike Worboys | 224612 |
| Tiny Tots | Alison Read* | 474858 |
| Flower Arranging | Lesley Worboys | 224612 |
| Organist | Cathie Horne* | 475279 |
| Choir | Gill Haddington | 529305 |
| Magazine Editor | Richard Cecil*+ | 224747 |
| Parochial Church Council Members | as * above and Colin Bryan+, Christine Mennie+, Janet Terry+ and Lisa Wiseman | |

Authorised to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion
As + above and David Farrar, Valerie Grimwood, Gill Hodge and Michael Puffett

## Regular Events see pages 18 & 19 for full details of worship.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sundays | 10:00 am | Morning Worship/Communion |
| Tuesdays | 9:30 am<br>7:45 pm | Morning Worship/Communion<br>Ringing Practice |
| Wednesday (Zoom) sandon-church.info | 8:30 pm | Night Prayer |
| Thursday (Zoom) compasschurches.org.uk | 8:30 am | Compass Churches Morning Prayer |
| Thursday | 3:00 pm | Choir Practice |

Zoom services links can be found at the websites just prior to the service.



## St Andrew's, Sandon

www.sandon-church.info
Editor Richard Cecil
Advertising Claire Jefferies
Distribution Manager Alison Read

Copy for March's magazine by 10th February 2026 please.
magazine@sandon-church.info

We commend to God's care at their funerals:
19th August Chris Mann
20th August Pat Salmon
5th November Jane Marshall

And at the interment of:
2nd October
Sydney Stuart Mackay (Ashes)

We congratulate on their marriage:
20th September
Stephanie Williams and Samuel Abbott

## Howe Green URC



The Autumn always brings a flurry of events, for which we give thanks. We had our harvest service in September when Matt and Stacey came from the Southend Christian Fellowship and Believers in Recovery. We were able to celebrate the wonders of harvest and hear some testimonies. We had a local leader from Christ Church, Graham Handscomb, led our service in October. Our November service was taken by one of our members.

Our big event for December is our 9 Lessons and Carols by candlelight service which is on 18th December at 7.30 pm. We would love for everyone to join with us and celebrate Jesus' birth. This will be followed by refreshments.

We are going to join with St Andrews for our December service on 21st December.

Our other Church services are on: Sunday 18th January and Sunday 15th February at 3 pm.

A date for your diary will be our next coffee morning in the new year on Saturday 7th February 10:30 am.

*Jane Clark, Secretary*



## Lent Course

We plan to run a Lent Course during Lent.
This will be on Tuesday mornings starting on 24th February,
then 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th March.
The course material has yet to be decided and suggestions are to be welcomed.


A family business established 3 generations ago
PENNACK
ENGLAND
T. PENNACK & SONS
FUNERAL DIRECTORS
1-3 Maldon Road, Great Baddow, CM2 7DW
PERSONAL SERVICE
*anytime*
01245 471157
National Association of Funeral Directors Est 1905
NATIONAL SAIF INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS



chelmsfordplumbingandheating.co.uk | sales@chelmsfordplumbingandheating.co.uk
CHELMSFORD PLUMBING & HEATING
01245 478588
A trustworthy family run business specialising in Gas, Oil, LPG, Electrical, Plumbing, Air-con and Renewables.
Boiler Installs, Servicing & Repairs
New Heating Systems
Plumbing Repairs
Electrical Services
Air-con & Renewables
- All calls are answered personally
- Confirmed bookings given
- No job too small!
- Work covered by 12-month guarantee





safe
OFTEC
NICEIC APPROVED CONTRACTOR
REFCOM F-GAS CERTIFICATED
RECC RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSUMER CODE
MCS CERTIFIED




## Anytown

*16th August 2025* *Richard Simmonds*

The sun rose early over Anytown
It cast its glancing rays
Forming sharp shadows at early day
Unfortunately missed by those abed
Heads pillow soft lie instead
In feathered down
In Anytown.

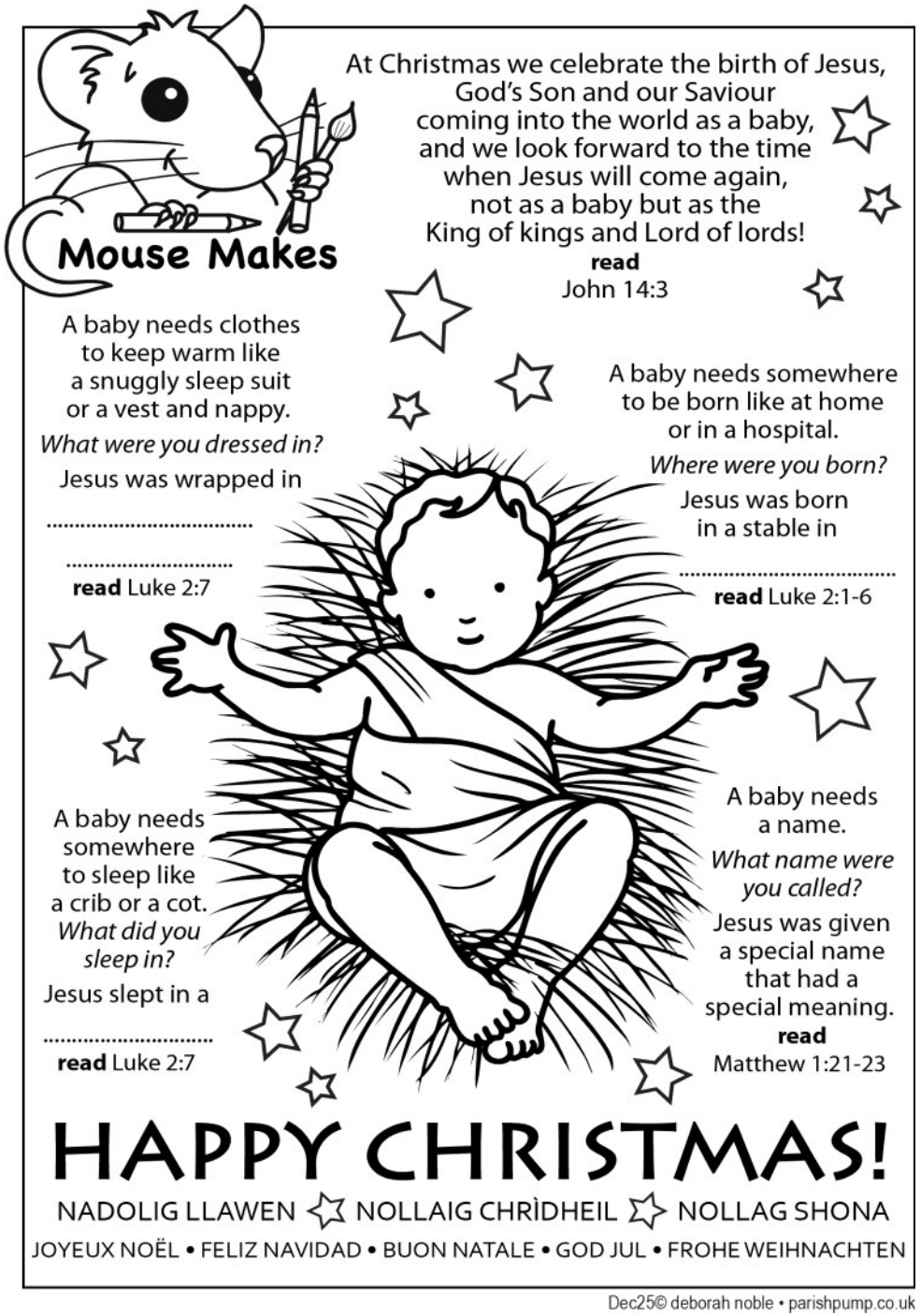
The waves and tide were always quiet, in Anytown
They were always at their lowest ebb
When all the folks were tucked in bed
The tired sea, never a sound
On the shores of Anytown

The morning papers, late they came in Anytown
Arriving as lunch was served
But few were worried, few unnerved
In the slow slow sleepy streets
Where even the noisy lorries sleep,
Where cats and dogs lie around
In Anytown

Some folks arrived, bought a house in Anytown
Came from the city so they said
Her a housewife, him well read
He got up early for morning jog
Woke their sleepy, shaggy dog
Ran the sleepy streets, the untouched ground
Around Anytown

Slowly the jog was once a week ‘round Anytown
He was comfy lying thinking in his bed
His wife suggested jog instead
He would pretend to be deep asleep
Out of him, not just one peep
He’d turn and lose himself in feathered down
In Anytown

So the people lived their sleepy lives in Anytown
Houses never were up for sale
And days passed before they got e mail
Life was lived at a slower pace
Everyone knew their neighbours face
The jogger, cats and dogs still slept sound
In that sleepy place called Anytown.






## A Journey in Marsabit with Bishop Qampicha, Bishop Rob and Mama Sue.

Richard and I set off to visit Marsabit in Kenya, really with not much idea of what we were embarking on. It so exceeded our rather vague expectations. Our friend Thomas met us at Nairobi airport and we stayed with his family overnight in Richard's tucal – you will have to ask Richard for the story behind that name!

Then off 245 km to Isiolo in a hired 4 x 4 with Thomas driving. We met Qampicha on the way – he was going to Nairobi for a medical appointment after feeling unwell. (Thankfully all was resolved quickly and he made his way back to Isiolo the next day).

We pressed on meeting Bishop Rob and Sue at an amazing restaurant at Nanyuki – where we stood astride the equator – the Trout Tree lives up to its name -it is built around an enormous tree growing in a deep valley where trout are farmed. Ironically that day trout were off the menu! But we had delicious tilapia fish, vegetables and mango juice. We briefly met Rob and Sue and friends Peter, Vicky and big John. There were thunder and rain while we were there – all quite awesome in its real sense. Then to Isiolo for the night at the Bomen's hotel.

We started visiting churches and schools the next day, using the tarmac main road but also many unmade very bumpy tracks to outlying villages.

Each visit with many introductions and greetings and great hospitality. Often milky tea, watermelon, boiled eggs for breakfast – one day we had 3 breakfasts. Lunch often rice, cabbage, beans, goat or chicken, with water or tea.



The service at Daaba, pronounced Da-aba

We shared in the dedication of a new parish – Daaba – with much singing, dancing, colour and exuberance during a 3-hour service, followed by a meal together. We looked round a new vicarage which was not quite finished for the new vicar James. A plaque records our presence at the inauguration, naming Sandon Church.

Every church we visited welcomed us and we introduced ourselves with translations into




local languages of Swahili and Boran.

We shared in a confirmation of 40 young ladies and one young man



Some of the confirmation candidates in such a bleak landscape. So different yet slightly giggly girls sharing knowing glances and full of sing!

and communion afterwards, near Kargi, out in the desert or bush. The journey on dirt road was horrendous and worse on the way home as the service took so long it got dark. Sandon has supported Kargi parish over several years. On our first 'day off' we got up early to visit a school and then took a picnic to Marsabit national



The new church at Murub just off the road to Kargi

park – a wonderful, forested area, full of wildlife with 2 lakes in volcanic craters. We sat watching animals and birds visiting the water: zebra, buffalo, baboons came, as well as a fish eagle which caught a huge fish which it struggled to drag to shore for a feast.

We travelled north to make more visits and see churches and schools around Sololo and Moyale near the Ethiopian border. Quite tense in this area as Islam is a strong presence. We stayed a night at Moyale church guest house; part of a church compound containing a school, church and rented out homes and business accommodation. Then back the next day south to Marsabit town, where we attended St Peter's cathedral for a long service followed by a Harambee. A great way to raise funds – rather like Children in Need with much shouting,



cheering and blowing bubbles to celebrate gifts. A gift box was placed at the front and cash and pledges were thrown in, each gift being acclaimed with dancing and singing.
At the end of 10 days, we said our goodbyes and headed further south again to Nairobi, 700km from Moyale.

After a sleep, we visited the Nairobi game park – getting very close to lions, rhino, zebra, buffalo, gazelle. giraffes and ostrich with hippos and warthog in the distance. We had lunch in the restaurant being watched by baboons hoping for some titbits. The next morning very early, Thomas took us to Jomo Kenyatta Airport to catch the 7:15 flight to Abu Dhabi. Good flight but delayed by 15 minutes so when we arrived at Abu Dhabi we missed our connection to Heathrow. We are told we were rebooked on 02:45 flight and have a room at the Hilton for 12 hrs with food. Pretty good compensation but what a contrast after Marsabit. Good bath, relax and dinner before the taxi collects us to go back to the airport for the flight home. An amazing trip, such a privilege to share in a growing and thriving diocese with such wonderful faith-full and generous people. A huge thank you to Bishop Qampicha, his wife Safia and also Bishop Rob Martin and his wife Sue who guided us around the diocese. A big thank you to our friend Thomas who drove about 2000km and a lot of that on very difficult unmade tracks.

*Judy Cecil*

## How much do you spend on Christmas gifts?

How much are the other shoppers spending? According to various retail polls, we tend to spend according to the depth of our relationship with the person.
It is estimated that we spend on average:
Friends/colleagues, £10-£20 each
Extended family, £25 to £50 each
Immediate family, £50 to £100 each
Our children, a £400 + each

The crucial thing is to set a budget ahead of time and to stick to it. Christmas is NOT worth crippling your finances for months to come. A rough rule of thumb is to spend no more than 1-to-2% of your annual income on Christmas. So for example, if you earn £25,000, keep it to between £250 and £500.

So, shop around, compare prices, and look out for discounts. Limit your 'gift-giving circles' – you don't have to give everyone you know a present!

## Farming Update

After the most disastrous harvest on record, protein levels were exceptional in the wheat harvest, however the quantity was not good. The milling wheat is being sold for bread. The farm has a milling contract with Warburtons. The price of wheat remains low. Grain is being sold in preparation for emptying the shed ready for lambing which is due to start in late January.

Oil seed rape is being grown on the farm after a 4-year break. The farm stopped growing oil seed rape due to flea beetle attacking the stem of the crop, which in turn leads to reduced yields. Bird scarers are being put out daily to help with pigeon damage/control.

Acorn poisoning in sheep has proved a challenge this year. Fortunately, we have suffered no deaths. This is caused by the high tannin levels in the acorns; Oak trees have produced a high crop this year due to the dry weather. Symptoms would include bloating and thirst. Treatment for this is to move the sheep to another field and ensure access to water is maintained, plus the use of antibiotics.

The 72 new ewe lambs purchased in September from Hawes Livestock market in North Yorkshire are doing well. These will be introduced to the breeding flock in September next year. They are currently too immature to go to the rams this season.

Winter haylage has been tested for protein and dry matter. This year's winter feed, although short nationally, has proven to good quality due to cutting in the first week of May when sugar levels were high.

Fly tipping and coursing continue to be an aggravation, with farmers being responsible to cover the cost of removing the rubbish. We continue to await with anticipation for the forthcoming budget.

*Gillian & Charlotte*

Tiny Tots Pre School

We meet in the St Andrew's Room on the second Wednesday of the month 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm so come along.
Further information
Contact: Alison 01245 474858 or e-mail: tots@sandon-church.info



## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Each year the days between 18th January and 25th January are allocated as a time to pray for Christian Unity. As I have read the material some interesting facts have emerged. The basis for these 2 dates is the dates when the church remembers 2 key figures in the early church, namely St Peter and St Paul. The conversion of St Paul is marked on 25th January and it used to be that St Peter was marked on 18th January in 1908, when the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was inaugurated. Oh, and by the way, this is different in the southern hemisphere where part of January tends to be a holiday!

Material is prepared each year by different organisations from around the world. I had never heard of the organisations and so it is refreshing to hear of different aspects of potential unity. Which of course is not the same as uniformity. Christian Unity is always around the person of Jesus Christ.

For 2026 the material has been prepared by the Armenian Apostolic Church. Of the church the notes say, "The Armenian Apostolic Church, recognised as one of the world's oldest Christian communities, has played a pivotal role in shaping the spiritual and historical identity of the Armenian people for nearly two millennia. Established in the early 4th century, with roots tracing back to the Apostolic era, this venerable institution transcends religious organisation; it embodies national resilience, cultural heritage, and spiritual fortitude. In addition to offering spiritual guidance, the Church has safeguarded Armenian traditions, language, and values, especially during periods of adversity and foreign domination. In contemporary times, particularly amidst challenges such as the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the displacement of the Artsakh population, the Church continues to serve as a source of strength and solace for Armenians. Today, it stands as a beacon of faith, unity, and continuity for Armenians worldwide, providing insights that resonate within the broader global Christian community."

Chelmsford Christians are putting together a program of worship in many different denominational churches across Chelmsford and hope that you will support some of these services. Further detail will be in our weekly email as it emerges.

*Richard Cecil*

## Sweet Potato and Sage Tart

Ingredients
250g shortcrust pastry,
750g sweet potatoes,
120 ml sour cream,
3 eggs,
2 tablespoons chopped sage,
1 tablespoon honey,
2 teaspoons ground cumin,
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg,
cracked black pepper,
extra sage leaves.

Roll out the pastry and place in a 23cm tart tin and refrigerate until required.
Peel and chop sweet potatoes in a saucepan of boiling water until soft, drain well and place in a food processor.
Add sour cream and process until smooth.
Stir through the eggs, chopped sage, honey, cumin, nutmeg and pepper.

Spoon mixture into pastry shell and sprinkle over the extra whole sage leaves.
Bake in pre-heated oven at 200 C for 35 minutes until the pasta is golden and the filling set.
Allow the tart to rest for 5 minutes before serving.

*Narelle Arnold*

## Words

Pictures too awful to be seen
We anaesthetised can slow become
Starvation declared ‘midst Gaza’s scream
Quieter than the savage gun
The death of innocence there on our screens
Think, think of the children, caught there in between.

Words they seem as useless dust
The World, its leaders shed them without pain
The end to this catastrophe, a must
To cease the deaths of the poor and lame.

Persecution whoever of
Abhorrent to all of right mind
We stand with all who suffer wrong
The innocents, the starving and the ‘blind
Who have no voice, no words or song
We are but one world to which we all belong.

*Richard Simmonds*
*20th August 2025*



## Bernard White – A larger Than Life Sandon Character

Throughout his life Bernard always ploughed his own furrow and was never afraid to be different. After marrying Penelope (aka Pen) at Shenfield Parish Church on 22nd July 1961, the couple boldly purchased scrubland on which they built their family home – and so *Gibcracks* was born.



Bernard was a proud Sandon resident and a regular contributor to *Sandon Voice*. He was father to Clare and Lucy, and a loving Grandpa, Uncle and Great Uncle, remembered by all his family with deep affection and much laughter.

Professionally, Bernard spent at least 25 years with Ford, where he eventually became Head of a Planning Department. After leaving Ford, he founded his own – ironically named – company, *Pirum Brevis Ltd (*by his own admission he was short and pear shaped), and went on to work with Canewdon Consultants, a role he greatly enjoyed.

Outside of work, Bernard loved the sea and was an enthusiastic sailor. In later years, sailing gave way to music, as he devoted countless hours to ferrying his daughters to rehearsals and concerts. He also took to the stage himself, delighting in the patter songs of Gilbert and Sullivan, where he discovered his true metier.

Bernard was also an incorrigible raconteur, always ready with a tale – whether or not one was sought. His larger-than-life personality, enduring sense of humour and countless stories will remain forever in the hearts of his family and all who knew him.

*Claire Greenwood*
*Bernard’s daughter*

## Who was the Real Virgin?

A ten-year-old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible. Then one day she floored her grandmother by asking, “Which virgin was the mother of Jesus? The virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?”




# Keeping the county warm

Contact BFS for prompt delivery of your domestic heating oil direct from our local Danbury Fuel Services depot. You'll find no better service, no better value.

BfS Fuel Services

**T 01245 425251**

**www.bfsfuelservices.uk**