



Sitlington Parish

Incorporating Middlestown, Overton, Netherton & Midgley

SPRING 2026



In this issue:

- The future of Hartley Bank
- Netherton Scarecrow Walk
- Sports at Denby Grange

COXLEY NEWS: information for contributors

Coxley News: Launched in 2007, Coxley News, Coxley Players and the Scarecrow Walk all operate under the wider community project umbrella of Coxley Live. It covers Sitlington parish (Netherton, Middlestown, Overton & Midgley).

Issues:

Spring (March, April, May) – deadline around 15th January

Summer (June, July, August) – deadline around 15th April

Autumn (September, October, November) – deadline around 15th July

Winter (December, January, February) – deadline around 15th October

Articles: We love to hear from you! Parish groups and events have priority, each group may have up to two pages.

Advertising: covers all printing costs, so takes up half of each issue.

Charges: One-off layout fee if needed, £10. A quarter page - £20; half - £35; full page - £65.

Annual paid in advance £240 full page, £120 half page, £60 quarter page.

Formats such as pdf and jpg are accepted, please check with Wendy. We don't include flyers or inserts as they are time consuming and add extra weight for our team of volunteer distributors.

Distribution: 2,600 homes in Sitlington, all delivered by volunteers. Join the distribution team! Contact Joan (07734) 872215 for Middlestown/Overton and Wendy via wendy.coxley@talktalk.net for Netherton/Midgley.

Editors: We are volunteers too. We may edit content for clarity, accuracy and length. All editors' decisions are final.

Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Your District Councillors On Call



District Councillors: Samantha Harvey, Andy Nicholls, Jordan Bryan
are prepared to visit you at home when you need them

Call: Councillor Harvey 07471 141556 Councillor Nicholls 07887 790863
Councillor Bryan 07787 850025

Coxley News team

Editorial: Shirley Jones, Wendy Woodhouse, Helen Moretti, Pete Fearnside, Joan Fearnside.

Design and Production: Helen Moretti.

Advertising: Wendy Woodhouse.

Delivery: Cast of many but **we would love to hear from you if you can help!**

Editorial comment

Welcome to Spring!

There's lots of dates for your diary in this issue, including the Scarecrow festival, 4th and 5th July. Go on - do a scarecrow! It's books and movies this time, more information inside.

If you're feeling energetic (spring should be in the air after all), check out what's going on at the fabulous sports club in our parish at Denby Grange. Or if you'd like to warm up for Wimbledon, Slazengers' tennis club is having an open day on May 10th.

We are so lucky to have these and other community-led groups and amenities on our doorstep. There are exciting developments afoot at Hartley Bank in Netherton - if you go to the Parish Council's consultation on April 21st at 7pm at the village hall you can have your say. And if you go a bit earlier, you'll meet the 'Help with Essentials' team - a hub for anyone struggling to tide themselves over with everyday items.

Finally, we love a small win. No seat at the bus stop? One reader took action, so hopefully by the time you read this, you'll be able to sit down while you wait for the 231. Send us all your news, views and events for the summer issue of Coxley News which will be delivered at the end of May/beginning of June by April 17th please.

Contact the Coxley News team by

E-mail: coxley.158@btinternet.com **Phone:** 01924 276545

Adverts

Email: wendy.coxley@talktalk.net

How to Contact the Parish Council

The contact for the parish council is the clerk, Mrs Julia Talbot.

(07771 113258) clerk@sitlingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Parish Office, Stevenson House, 139 Netherton Lane, Netherton, WF4 4HQ

To book Netherton Village Hall contact Parish Clerk.

Cocktail Corner

A White Rabbit to celebrate spring!

For 2 servings

- 80 ml gin
- 50 ml amaretto
- 50 ml double cream
- 2 tsp lemon curd
- 1.4 tsp vanilla past
- (edible flowers to garnish)



Method

Put the gin, amaretto, double cream, lemon curd and vanilla paste into a cocktail shaker with a handful of ice and shake until the outside of the shaker feels very cold. Strain into two small cocktail or coupe glasses and garnish with edible flowers before serving.

The Crescent

This year the street party was a little different, firstly the date was set in November and secondly, it would take the form of a bonfire party. Each household gave a £5 donation towards costs. Yes, we did have a bonfire, fireworks, music from DJ Robbie and a pie and pea supper. Mrs Sue Smith's garden was taken over for the event and she also made the pies and cakes. The weather was good, a little chilly but dry and clear.

Thanks to the organisers for all their hard work and to helpers on the night who made sure everyone was safe, fed and had a jolly time.

A first but not a last, I'm sure.





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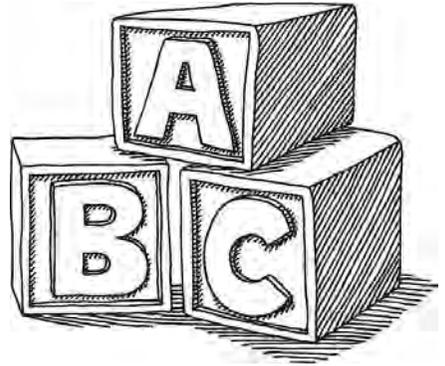
We welcome Families/Carers to our toddler group, based in Netherton at the Methodist Church.

Monday mornings 09:00 - 11:00 am, £1 per head

There will be refreshments and snacks for the children.

The morning will include playing, singing, story time & a chance for you to unwind with a coffee/tea and a nice chat with new people

Any queries, please message the group,
Lisa 07969 853522 or Lorna 07827 767974



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Railcards, Ramblings and Remarkable Place Names

I got a text message recently saying I'd managed to save over £250 on my train journeys since buying my 3 year railcard last year. That prompted me to book some more destinations, some of which I'll have been on by the time this goes to print. So, as I write, on Sunday I'm going on the train to Mytholmroyd to walk round their annual Lego exhibition (I know, I know.. what a loser!) In February I've booked to go to the Locomotion Museum in Darlington again but this time to meet up with an old mate and later in the month I'm heading to Leyland to take a look round the British Commercial Vehicle Museum which I saw advertised somewhere recently and which I never knew existed. Then in March there's 3 of us going back once more along the Settle to Carlisle line to stay 2 nights in the Crown Mitre hotel. The one full day we're up there we have booked tickets on the Carlisle to Newcastle line which I believe is just as stunning as the Settle journey. It runs just South of Hadrian's Wall so it should be! We're meeting an old soldier on our arrival and I would think a couple of beers in Geordieland will be in order before we head back.

Somewhere in between these trips we also plan to go to Kelham Island in Sheffield (a regular excursion) - I've just renewed my annual pass at the Emergency Services Museum and there's a new exhibition inside of 'Sheffield in the Blitz' that I want to see. Oh, and also to frequent one or two pubs whilst there ha ha.

Right.. here's a bit of general knowledge I've decided to share with you...I was wondering where the name Mytholmroyd came from and looked it up.. the town is so named because it was a "settlement where 2 rivers meet" - these being the Hebble and the Calder. Here's a few more originations closer to home:

Horbury - a "fortified place on muddy land"

Netherton - a "lower settlement"

Overton - "upper farmstead"

Sitlington - a "steep/slope settlement"

Flockton - "Floki's farmstead"

Ossett - a "fold frequented by blackbirds"

Wakefield - "Waca's open field"

Pontefract - a "broken bridge" over the river Aire

Castleford - a "fort by the ford" again by the river Aire

Fascinating stuff, what an amazing Country we live in!



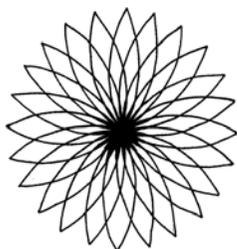
Middlestown Primary

At Middlestown Primary Academy, we continue to develop a love of reading culture for all children across school. This starts with our youngest children in our new Little Hands Pre-School to our Year 6 who are reading young adult stories with links to the topics that they are learning. In March, we will continue to celebrate reading through World Book Day and by having a Scholastic Book Fair in school.

In March, the children will celebrate British Science Week and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths). The theme for this year will be 'Curiosity: What's your Question? Activities will include experiments, listening to visiting speakers from the science world as well as looking at how science impacts our lives on a day-to-day basis. Please remember to follow the school on Facebook to find out what we have been doing.

Our Year 6 children will attend their annual residential to Robinwood Activity Centre to take part in activities such as canoeing, giant swing and climbing. Year 2 will visit the Yorkshire Wildlife Centre linked to their topic on African plains and Year 1 will have a Victorian themed workshop where they will look at old toys and experience what it would be like in a classroom over 100 years ago.

The weather will (hopefully) start to improve and the Eco-council will be busy planting vegetables and wild flowers in our extensive grounds. Chicken eggs will arrive in Early Years Foundation Stage so that the children can watch the eggs hatch in an incubator and understand the full life cycle. Our older children will also be taking part in a range of sporting events whilst representing the school, in sports including cricket, athletics and benchball.



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From Screen to Street: Film, TV and

Spring/Summer '26 Style

Film and television have always influenced fashion, but for spring/summer '26 the connection feels especially close to home. Rather than chasing catwalk trends alone, designers and shoppers alike are taking cues from characters, costumes and stories that feel emotionally resonant. Clothes are no longer just about looking good; they're about *belonging to a mood*.

On UK television, shows like *The Traitors* have popularised a softer, heritage-inspired look.

Tweeds, oversized knits and practical outerwear, once reserved for countryside walks are now everyday staples, worn casually in towns and cities. The appeal is comfort, familiarity and clothes that feel reassuring rather than showy.



Cinema, meanwhile, is nudging fashion in a more romantic direction. Literary adaptations such as *Wuthering Heights* and other period-inspired releases have renewed interest in floaty fabrics, sheer layers and subtle historical details.

These influences are filtering into spring collections through light dresses with lace trims, soft tailoring and a focus on texture rather than bold prints.

Rather than copying costumes outright, designers are borrowing mood — blending nostalgia, escapism and wearability. The result is a spring/summer wardrobe that feels gentle, expressive and personal.



As screens continue to shape our tastes, SS26 fashion proves that what we watch doesn't just entertain us — it quietly influences how we choose to dress.

Santa round the village

Santa, his elves, Tractor driver John, the Snow Queen, Rudolph and even the Grinch want to say a massive thank you to all the people of Netherton who came out to see them and to everyone who donated money.



This year's collection was a record breaker with £1358 raised for Wakefield Hospice!

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Netherton Walking Group

Autumn was a very colourful season for the walking group, then winter suddenly hit and conditions underfoot changed from one extreme to the other.

Our Christmas meal at the Kaye Arms went well, as did our charity Christmas cake and coffee morning, when we raised funds, split between Netherton School and Cancer Research. We managed to still walk over December. Walks are sometimes local, other times further afield. Next week is local, whereas the week after is around Anglers Rest Country Park and Walton. Walks are usually between 5 and 6 miles, depending on the start point we meet at the village hall at either 9.00 or 9.30 on a Monday morning.

If you'd like to join us, please contact kathgibbs7@gmail.com to establish the time of the next walk.

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Netherton and District Women's Institute

2026 – wow! Another year older. How the tempus fugits! It's a bit foggy today, but fairly mild with the promise (or threat) of colder temperatures at the weekend with some snow possible. My trusty snow shovel is reclining by the back door just in case so it probably won't be needed. I hope you all had a lovely Christmas and wish everyone a happy and peaceful new year.

Going back to November where our speaker was Jenny Fenwick on Mary Quant. One particular story she told us was about a Mary Quant dress purchased years ago which she rediscovered in her loft and which went on to be almost the star of the show in a recent exhibition at the V and A Museum in London. Her talk was fascinating.

Our first speakers in 2026 were Tina and Kev from the Recovery and Wellbeing College. One of the workshops they run, which aim to improve wellbeing through learning, is a craft workshop. They had brought along everything needed to make a bookmark with a sort of appliqué heart with embroidery silks. We very much enjoyed making this as we had not had a "hands-on" meeting for quite some time.

Bronwyn Harrison is our February speaker. Bronwyn is an author with her debut novel "Lost at Sea" set in 18th century Bristol. That's on the 10th. Should be interesting to learn how her 30 years in the police force has influenced her writing.

The wonderful Lizzie Jones and her husband are joining us on the 10th March to tell us all about the Winter Queen who was Elizabeth Stuart and briefly Queen of Bohemia (that's what Google tells me!) Lizzie might put me right on that though. Lizzie is always entertaining and full of interesting historical facts. Not to be missed!

Vicky Birks from Temple Spa Beauty Products is our April speaker on the 14th. Could do with a bit of beautifying after the winter. Make us ready for spring sunshine and balmy breezes. Roll on summer!

On the 12th May we have Veronica Bird OBE who is an ex prison governor. Really looking forward to hearing what she has to say.

June 9th sees us welcoming Richard Share who is a jeweller. Time to dig out your diamonds and pearls for a possible valuation!

We are having a tasting evening in July courtesy of one of our members. Probably shouldn't have much tea that night – that's the 14th. But visitors still welcome.

Hope there is something to whet your appetite in all that information. If there is, we would love to see you at a meeting. Second Tuesday in the month at Trinity Methodist Church in Netherton at 7.15 pm or thereabouts. £2 on the door with light refreshments. Just give me a ring if you want to know more or just have a chat – 07790 199257 or 01924 275276.

Emley AFC Home Fixtures

March

Saturday 14 3pm Heaton Stannington

April

Saturday 4 3pm Redcar Athletic

Saturday 11 3pm North Ferriby

Saturday 25 3pm Newton Aycliffe

Fixtures subject to change. For updates visit emleyafc.co.uk or follow Emley AFC on social media.



Panto Date for Your Diary

This year's panto will be held on 27th and 28th November at Netherton Sports and Social Club.

Rhubarb and Ginger Pavlova

Ingredients

- 4 large egg whites
- 200g caster sugar
- 1 tsp cornflour
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger

For the poached rhubarb

- 250ml ginger beer
- 1 tbsp sugar
- Small piece fresh ginger
- 440g rhubarb, cut into inch-long pieces
- 400ml double cream
- 30g pistachios, roughly chopped

Method:

1. Heat oven to 140C/120C fan/gas 1. Line a large baking sheet with baking parchment. Whisk the egg whites in a clean bowl until they just make stiff peaks. Add the caster sugar, 1 large spoonful at a time, whisking well between each addition, until your meringue is thick and glossy. Add the cornflour, vinegar, ginger and a pinch of salt and whisk to combine. Using a large metal spoon, pile the meringue in a circle on your parchment. Bake for 1 1/2 hours until the paper pulls away easily from the bottom of the meringue, then turn the oven off and let the Pavlova cool completely. It can even be left in the oven overnight.
2. For the poached rhubarb, pour the ginger beer into a large saucepan with the sugar and ginger. Bring to the boil, then drop in the rhubarb. Cook for 3-4 mins, depending on the thickness of your rhubarb, remove from the heat and leave the rhubarb to cool in the syrup. Discard the fresh ginger once cooled.
3. When you are ready to serve, whisk the cream until it is just holding its shape. Then smooth on top of your meringue. Pile the rhubarb on top, lifting it out of the syrup with a slotted spoon, then drizzle over some ginger beer syrup. Scatter pistachios over the top and serve.

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Contact Marco Vercelli

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e-mail marcovercelli@googlemail.com

News From Trinity Methodist Church, Netherton

Our Christmas and Advent services started with a United Service with St Andrew's and St Luke's on Advent Sunday, 30th November. This was led by Colin Ride and was an opportunity to meet up with our Anglican colleagues as we worshipped together.

This was followed by the Christmas Lunch Stop on 3rd December when we were put in the festive mood by a visit from children of the Netherton School choir.

A feature of our Christmas preparations by members of our church family and friends in recent years was repeated by a "One Card For All" display. This year donations, in lieu of purchasing individual cards for everyone, were made to the Book Trust charity. This topical cause develops the positive effect of reading with a child from birth. It helps families to discover the lifelong benefits of sharing stories together. £93 was donated by friends who looked at the display over December, and we are grateful to Mary and Tony Pickard for promoting this idea.

Our minister Thomas led the candle-lit carol service on 21st December, when he reminded us that there being no room for Jesus in the inn had relevance in the world today.

Groups of children from Netherton School revisited our church on 8th and 9th January to visit "Prayer Spaces", a display prepared by our Circuit Family and Children's Workers.

We would love to see you at all or any of our regular activities, which are as follows:

Sunday Worship every Sunday at 10:30 for about an hour, followed by the chance for a chat over a cup of tea or coffee.

Knit & Natter Group meets every first, third and fifth Monday at 1:30pm in church.

Chapel Cafe every last Saturday in the month, 10 until 12. Come and enjoy the company with a changing menu of tasty snacks every month. If you wish to use the openness of Chapel Café to promote a charity, we can supply you with a stall from which you can advertise and raise money.

Film Club on the third Friday of each month at 7:30pm (doors open 7:15). Admission is free (donations appreciated), with refreshments on sale. In addition, there is an occasional Film Club Extra. Please contact Colin for details of what films are coming up.

Trinity Lunch Stop every first Wednesday of each month at 12 for 12:30pm. Booking is essential through Carole and Andrew Shaw.

Bible Fellowship on Wednesday evenings, generally the second and fourth, but please check with Colin for exact dates, times, and details.

Trinity Methodist Friendship Club on the afternoon of the third Wednesday of the month from 1:30pm until 3:30pm. Come along to share in various activities or just to chat and meet friends. Contact Carol Smith (07940 864708) for further details.

Coming up on Saturday 25th / Sunday 26th April is our **Gift Day** and **Chapel Anniversary**. Check out the church website nearer the time for further information.

For further information about any of the above contact: Sandra & Colin Ride 01924 271553, Alan Wood 07399 194736, Carole Shaw 01924 275414, Christine Hewitt 07931 353082.

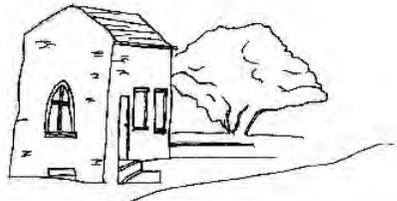
Friends of Hartley Bank

Hartley Bank is currently closed until Easter but if you are taking a walk down Balk Lane, between the showers, take a look in the Pavilion window to see the plans for the proposed rebuild and give your thoughts and suggestions to the Parish Council. Looking forward to greeting you again in the spring.

Colouring Competition Winners

Congratulations to Hannah, 9 and Isla, 4 both of Overton who won the Christmas colouring competition. They each won a £10 book token.

Coxley Engine House
Coxley Lane
Middlestown
WF4 4PU



Events:

Easter Egg Hunt 6th April 1-4pm 12:30pm till 5pm

Denby Grange CAC Bowling Club

The 2026 season is almost upon us and our bowlers are eagerly anticipating dusting off their woods and getting back onto the green as the season starts again in March.

The winter has seen ongoing work around the green to repair and improve the facilities, much of which couldn't have been done without the support of our advertisers who deserve a mention: LW Plastering, Carpets Direct, The Spiced Mango, Eric Box Funerals, Thornhill Insurance Brokers, DBL Plumbing, Holmes & Sons Decorators and The Window Medic.

Denby Grange CACBC has a long history dating back to 1902 and over the years has punched well above its weight, given we're a village club based at the sports ground Highfield Crescent, Overton. With players of all ages (yes, this is not just a game for retired folk!) and sexes we compete across many leagues primarily in the Wakefield & Heavy Woollen areas. Our games are played either on an afternoon or evenings and spectators are always welcomed.

That said, we're always looking to attract new players whether you've played before or not. With that in mind, if you'd like to give it a go keep an eye on local social media for details of an open day when you can come along and try your hand. We look forward to seeing new faces and who knows, there might be some, as yet undiscovered bowling stars out there!

Dave Wright Bowls Chair 07832 270796

Please be seated...

A delighted resident writes:

"I've just had a reply to a request that I had made to West Yorkshire Combined Authority about putting some form of seating in the bus shelter at Hall Croft, Netherton (opposite the bottom shop) saying:

'I can confirm that an order has been placed for seating at this stop. I don't have a timescale for this, but it should be within the next few weeks, our contractors are just clearing a backlog following the Christmas holiday period'"

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Sitlington Parish Council



Dear Residents,

The Parish Council held a public consultation for the rebuild of the **Hartley Bank** pavilion on Saturday 6th December 2025.

Hartley Bank – A Brief History

Hartley Bank pavilion and community field was formerly part of Hartley Bank colliery. It operated from 1841 to 1968, was owned by the National Coal board from 1947 and become part of the NCB Barnsley area. The colliery employed 560 men, 460 of them working underground with an output of 250,000 tons- the pit had an expected life of at least 40 years.



In 1975, Netherton Cricket Club received a grant from Wakefield Council to use the site and as part of the grant conditions, the Parish Council became the fifth trustee of the site. This arrangement only came to light in 2019, when Netherton Cricket Club approached the Parish Council to take over ownership of the pavilion and field.

Shortly after, the Friends of Hartley Bank group was formed. They have organised several successful community events — including a Jubilee Gala, wreath-making workshops, and a regular coffee stop — all helping to build a strong local community. However, following a burst pipe and subsequent refurbishments, the pavilion has continued to operate but remains in poor condition.



Hartley Bank – The Future

The Parish Council has agreed to rebuild the pavilion on its existing footprint as refurbishment would be costly. This will improve the facility for the benefit of residents. We have been working with an architect to produce design options for residents to review as part of a public consultation.

The Council will be seeking grant funding to support the rebuild.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

We are holding a further meeting to consider the interior and parking and the facilities we can offer.

Pavilion consultation to be held on Tuesday 21st April at Netherton Village Hall 7.00pm.

Contact details: Mrs Julia Talbot, Parish Clerk. Parish Office: 07771113258, email: clerk@sitlingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Don't forget we have a website; the website has lots of information relating to the Parish Council. www.sitlingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Check out the Parish Council on:
www.facebook.com/Sitlington-Parish-Council

Netherton Village Hall

The Parish Council is the sole trustee of Netherton Village Hall. It is run by a management committee and has admin support from the Parish Office.

You can now view availability and book on the village hall calendar if you visit the website. <http://www.nethertonvillagehall.co.uk>

It will give you lots of information about the hall and classes we run. It is also an excellent space for children's parties.

The table top sales will also be returning to the village hall. Watch out for dates on Facebook and on the notice boards.

For Booking enquires please contact us at the Parish Office - details above.



Denby Grange Collieries Athletic Club

Off Highfield Crescent, Overton, Wakefield WF4 4RA

We continue to improve facilities in your local community hub available for use for all. If you haven't already seen our new modernised and licensed pavilion – you really should come and see....warmer, brighter, extended (inside & out), we are much more than a sports pavilion.

On a slightly negative note – please make sure you pick up your 'dog deposits' - we have dog bins at all four sides of the grounds. The grounds are private land and we could prevent access for all walkers, but we want to include, not exclude anyone. I know the majority are great but please pick up after yourselves – it's a hazard!!

Cricket News

Denby Grange CC has senior teams starting in the Huddersfield Cricket League in the Alliance Divisions 3 and 4 on Saturday 18th April (weather permitting) playing every Saturday. Come and watch or get involved - new players and supporters are always welcome.

JUNIOR CRICKET!!!!!!

We are into our 9th year of offering junior cricket here at Denby Grange since the junior section was reformed back in 2018, and this season looks set to see our biggest offering yet.

All Stars

We will again be running the England and Wales Cricket Board's All Stars cricket programme up at our club during the months of May, June and July. All Stars Cricket provides boys and girls aged 5-8 years old with 8 weeks of non-stop fun. The activity and game-based programme is suitable for all skill levels, providing your child with the foundations to begin a lifelong love of physical activity and cricket, whilst making friends in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Children will also receive a backpack containing a cricket bat and ball, a personalised t-shirt and cap.

Sessions will run on Friday evenings, starting in early May.

Girls' Cricket

Introduced last year, our girls-only programme will expand this season to include teams at U11 and U13 age groups. Playing a mixture of softball

festivals and individual friendlies against local teams, we now provide girls in Y3-Y8 the opportunity to play cricket.

[Sessions are also on Friday evenings, starting in early May.](#)

Age Group Cricket

We will be running mixed teams for the Under 9 and Under 11 age groups. These teams will play a mixture of friendly matches against other clubs and softball tournaments. The older children will have the opportunity to take part in hardball cricket fixtures - ideal preparation for their journey into league cricket in future seasons.

Sessions are also on Friday evenings, starting in early May.

Interested In Joining?

Any new player can attend the first session of the above programmes FREE of charge. Visit our website below to find out further details of each programme and to book your child's place.

denbygrangecc.play-cricket.com

For more information, contact Paul Johnson on 07736 832846



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Mysteries

'Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.' Carson

A warm sun, a splash of rain, and Nature works its mysterious magic once again. Welcome, spring; welcome, warmth; welcome, longer days and shorter nights; welcome, garden. There's much to do. Spring is a busy time. Your soil should be ready now for planting, but watch out for late frosts. Frost can do much damage to tender plants.

Changing the subject, in the 1920s, the word 'mystery' was increasingly beginning to be used to describe crime stories, 'detective stories.

It's just over 50 years since the death of Agatha Christie. Known as the 'Queen of Crime', Christie relentlessly pursued her murder mysteries through 66 novels, each with its own twist in the tail. Her years working in pharmacies during two world wars gave her intimate knowledge of medicines and poisons – arsenic ('Finessing the King'), cyanide ('A Pocket Full of Rye, 'Sparkling Cyanide'), digitalis ('Appointment with Death'), morphine ('Sad Cypress'), poppy juice ('Death comes as the End'), strychnine ('Passenger to Frankfurt'), ricin, thallium, curare - which she frequently used to great effect in her works.

Christie's own life was full of drama. *Grieving over the death of her mother, and shocked by her beloved husband's confession that he loved another woman, on December 3rd, 1926, Agatha Christie kissed her daughter good night, then set off in her Morris Cowley, and headed into the night. In the morning the car was found abandoned, nose-first in a hedge, but there was no sign of Agatha.*

A nationwide hunt began – even the Home Office demanded updates. There was national near-hysteria over her disappearance. Did Christie try to make it look as though her husband, Archie, had murdered her? The mystery surrounding her disappearance more than rivalled any mystery in her novels.

11 days passed, with no leads to her whereabouts. People were desperate to know what had happened to her. Then, one morning, out of the blue, a young musician working at The Old Swan Hotel in Harrogate recognised the solitary guest who had registered under the name of Teresa Neele. (Strangely, Christie had chosen the name of her husband's lover.)

It was at The Old Swan Hotel that Christie's identity was eventually confirmed by her erring husband, and she returned to something approaching a normal life. (As it happened, Archie Christie went on to divorce Agatha and marry Teresa.)

Christie loved gardening. For someone so deeply immersed in violent death and mayhem, Christie's garden at Greenway House in Devon was, to her, a haven of consolation and peace. After a turbulent personal life, this greatest of English crime writers deserved a tranquil retirement.

Far away from this tragic side of life, we are so lucky if we have a garden (only 19% in some parts of Leeds!) or allotment plot to enjoy. (Nationwide there are now over 157,000 people waiting for plots.) In our wonderful English spring, if you are one of the lucky ones, go into your garden or to your plot and enjoy every minute of your time there. As Carson said at the beginning, you are '*among the beauties of the earth*'.

(Discerning Readers of this magazine will have noted that no reference in the above article has been made to THE TRADING HUT on this occasion, the place to go for your gardening needs. There are often too many advertisements in magazines, so I thought I would not mention THE TRADING HUT.)

Jay Whittam Spring 2026

Anyone for Tennis?

Fancied trying tennis but never had the opportunity? Used to play back in the day and looking to dust off the old racquet? Want to get more active and involved in a social sport?

Slazenger's Tennis Club is just down the road in Horbury and is having an open day on May 10th, ready for the new season. There'll be coaching sessions organised and members to meet. Put the date in your diary and check the club's Facebook page for more information nearer the time.

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/SlazengerSportsSocialClub>

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The fastest road in Wakefield?

A642 New Road between Horbury Bridge & Middlestown

An appeal to all road users to take care travelling through the 'Low Lane' crossroads.

Many pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and youngsters, (some with special needs), cross the A642 at the Low Lane crossroads, at all times of day, halfway up the hill between Horbury Bridge & Middlestown. Sadly, local residents living around the crossroads have had to witness many serious (& minor) accidents over the years, one with a horse, two with overturned cars, and most of the many others involving speeding vehicles, one of which in years gone by landed upside-down in the bus stop.

Historically, the road used to be a 60 mph zone, but in recent years it was reduced to a 40 mph zone. However, unfortunately this didn't make much difference, and many drivers are driving in excess of the speed limit. A good number of motorcycles and high-performance cars are travelling at what looks and sounds to be well in excess of 70 mph. In particular, those individuals intent on driving at those speeds tend to do this when they are travelling 'up' the hill, accelerating through the Low Lane crossroads, often on the wrong side of the road whilst overtaking other vehicles that are already overtaking parked vehicles. We cannot think of another road in Wakefield where the speed limit is abused so frequently and by so much. It often sounds more like a racetrack than a rural, residential area.

A recent phenomenon over the last two years has also been the tendency for low powered scooters to be fitted with noise-enhancing exhausts, waking up residents late into the night and from about 4.30am in the morning onwards. Other vehicles can also make an extremely loud noise when 'violently accelerating' at the Low Lane crossroads as they travel up the A642 hill.

In the interest of everyone's safety, we should therefore like to urge all pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists and motorists to take extra care through this crossroads, as it is very unsafe. Also, if you happen to know anyone who enjoys travelling at high speeds or making a loud noise through this crossroads, perhaps just 'have a word with them'.

Good luck everyone, and please take care.

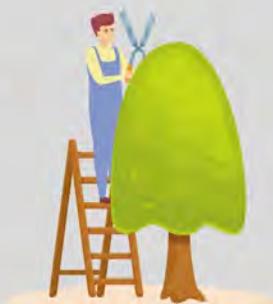
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The logo for Eric F. Box Funeral Directors Ltd. features the word "BOX" in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the text "Eric F. BOX (Funeral Directors) Ltd." is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, underlined.

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As we head into February, our thoughts turn towards Lent, and just before that, to pancakes!

On Shrove Tuesday (17th February) St Andrew's will have their frying pans at the ready – do come along for a pancake between 5-6.30pm. There'll be savoury and sweet toppings and some children's crafts to enjoy as well.

Lent starts with Ash Wednesday (18th February). There'll be a service of Holy Communion (with optional ashing) at 7pm at St Luke's. For those who'd prefer a daytime service, St Mary's Horbury Junction (Millfield Road, WF4 5DU) have a service at 9.30am.

Some people think about Lent as being a time for some 'spiritual spring cleaning': a chance to give a bit of time to reflection, to think about whether you have the right balance in life, a time to ask some questions about the meaning of life and maybe to think about God. I sometimes meet people who tell me they are meaning to give church a try – but they're too busy. I also have lots of conversations with people who say they sometimes pray, and that it's helpful – but it's hard to find the time. Lent can be an opportunity to make the time and to give something new a go – come along to church, open up a Bible if it's been left on a dusty shelf, challenge yourself to get praying. We have Lent booklets to help people with daily readings and we'd love to welcome you to church or to offer you some suggestions about prayer apps to try – just get in touch if you'd like some help.

Our usual Sunday services continue: 11am each week at St Andrew's, and at St Luke's 10am on the 1st and 3rd Sunday each month and 11am on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. Visitors are always welcome – just come as

you are and we look forward to welcoming you.

When we reach Holy Week, we'll be remembering the events leading up to Jesus' death and then on the Sunday celebrating his resurrection.

Maundy Thursday: Joint Communion Service at St Mary's Horbury Junction, 7pm followed by a time of prayer until 9pm

Good Friday: 10am Stations of the Cross at St Luke's
2pm Good Friday Reflective Service at St Andrew's

Easter Sunday: 10am Easter Communion at St Andrew's
11am Easter Communion at St Luke's

Do get in touch if you'd like to know more about either of our churches. We are always happy to arrange christenings or weddings, and our vicar Hannah can help support you if you need to arrange a funeral, whether you would like a service at church or prefer to hold the funeral at the crematorium.

As fairly small congregations we work hard to maintain and care for our buildings. We are grateful for support from others who value the churches in our villages. If you would like to give a gift to help with our costs then you can use this QR code to find our online giving page. Many thanks.





Master the menopause!

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Want to learn how to master your menopause?

Come join us...every 3rd Monday of the month at Lupset Health Centre or 3rd Tuesday at Ossett Health Village

5.30pm-6.30pm

(you don't have to be a patient to attend)

For more info contact Sheena

07543315239

A Pint of Durham History in the Market Place

I was in Durham recently and visited an interesting pub right in the centre of the city, the Market Tavern, unsurprisingly located in the Market Place. This is an old, narrow pub with a long history. Apparently, the pub was here in the market from the 1850s when the market was founded. In 1853, Durham Council declared the water here was unfit for human consumption, they had controversies about water quality back then too. Of course, throughout history the solution to poor quality water has been to drink beer. That's what they did in medieval monasteries too. So, it was decreed that "customers could only quench their thirst from the excellent ales serves in this public house."



It became a popular meeting place for Durham miners after 1870, a connection which is maintained to this day, as the pub is decorated with many National Union of Mineworkers posters and banners. The beer served there today befits this heritage. Double Maxim is very much a traditional English ale. Now brewed by the "Double Maxim" company, it was originally brewed in the North-East in 1901. The strength was increased in 1938, and the name "Double" reflects that change. This famous North-Eastern beer was imperilled in 1999, when the Vaux brewery was closed, but, fortunately for real ale lovers, was saved by the creation of the Double Maxim company by ex-Vaux employees to keep it going. Quite the history lesson today. This, anyway, is a fine traditional pub, all oak panelling and history, with good beer and food, and a nice atmosphere. The market outside is also well worth perusing, with its cheese, biltong and fine soaps stalls. If you ever find yourself in Durham, this is the pub to visit.

Fun at Ossett Flower Club

The last few months have certainly been fun filled!

December started with a delicious Christmas Meal at the Capri in Horbury Bridge. We booked the cafe and had the room arranged in a 'U' shape so we could chat easily. As usual we finished the evening with a 'fun quiz'.

Our club night was a workshop where we were shown how to create a lovely Christmas design within a book. This was a table arrangement for the home or could be given as a gift to a friend.

The Flower Arranging Class made an 'S' shaped table arrangement using fresh and artificial materials. Find 'Ossett Flower Club' on Facebook to see photographs of our work.

January was a social event where we enjoyed a 'Beetle Drive' and buffet. This always creates hilarity!

February was an introductory talk on bees by 'the Honey Florist' Jo Worrel followed by a demonstration using artificial flowers – a first for us.

We now look forward to our Spring events:

Monday 9th March is a flower arranging demonstration by Karen Longbottom

Monday 13th April is a slide show about suitable plants for our gardens by Sarah Hopps. She runs garden tours and will bring a range of plants to sell.

Monday May 11th is a workshop. We send out a list of what to bring and provide expert support to ensure you have a lovely design to take home.



Useful Flower Tips:

Daffodils really shout spring, but they release a sap into the water which is toxic to tulips especially. If you want to add them to other flowers then cut the stem end and leave the daffs in clean water for several hours. Then pour off the water and wipe the stems. The sap should have drained out. Recut the stems, then use a clean vase and fresh water for your flowers.

Tulips are unusual in that they continue to grow in a vase of water. They also follow the light. This creates an interesting effect, but they can be recut and returned to the vase if you prefer them shorter.

We always welcome visitors to our club meetings.

Venue - Ossett Central Club on New Street Ossett WF5 8BH

Cost - Visitors £8 per meeting Time - starts 7:15 and finishes 9:30

For more information contact our chairman (hazelbell45@hotmail.com)

Our Flower Classes are held on the 3rd Monday of the month at a cost of £10. Please contact Kal (karolinatunningley@gmail.com) to book a place. Beginners are very welcome as we have experienced people to help you create a lovely design.



I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host, of golden daffodils
Beside the lake
Beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

William Wordsworth

Netherton Scarecrow Walk



Thank you everyone who provided feedback on the scarecrow walk recently. It was very useful to hear what so many of you thought. Having reviewed all of that we're pleased to announce that the Scarecrow Walk will be going ahead on the weekend of **4th and 5th of July 2026**.



This year there will be a theme which will be: **Books and Movies**, so whether you're thinking Hogwarts, superheroes, classic novels or cult films, this is your chance to get creative. We're aiming for a minimum of 25 scarecrows, and entries are welcome from individuals, families, friends, workplaces and community groups.

Work is progressing behind the scenes on the "winners" bench. We're just waiting for the final go-ahead from Wakefield

Council and so we hope to be able to unveil something very soon.

It's free to take part so get in touch to register.

We have a brand new email address, so please add us to your contacts. It's nethertonscarecrows@gmail.com

You can also contact us in the usual ways:

Message on our Facebook page

www.facebook.com/

[NethertonScarecrowWalk/](https://www.facebook.com/NethertonScarecrowWalk/)

Via our website www.coxleylive.org

Email nethertonscarecrows@gmail.com

If you're looking for inspiration, you'll find lots of photos of past scarecrows on our website or our Facebook page.

