

YOUR

JANUARY 2026

ALMHOUSE

MAGAZINE

2020





Children's Carolling and our Annual Carol Service

Review and more photos on page 8.



Carol Service Readers:

Back Row: Jan Nokes, Kate O'Brien, Nigel Davis.

Front Row: Revd. Jemima Prasadam, Emma

Halford, Margaret Goddard, Amani Orr Ewing.



Out and About Review by Richard Yardley

The Christmas Outing

Out and About went by mini bus which was kindly arranged by Richmond Charities to the Adrian Hall Garden Centre in Feltham. We enjoyed a very good Christmas shop and many other items on sale, and were also entertained by the jazz band of polar bears. We made good use of the coffee shop which also did meals. Before returning home, and later that day, we all enjoyed the Eloysia String Quartet in the Chapel of St Francis at Hickey's.



Our Slide Show on 8 January

Come and see some of the places around London that the Out and About group has visited over the past few years with a slide show on Thursday 8 January at 2pm in the Chapel of St Francis, Hickey's. Tea, coffee and cake provided.

Welcome to our new resident:
Graham Fletcher,
Wright's Almshouses.

Farewell
It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to: John Cliff,
Houblon's Almshouses.
RIP

Readers' articles and photos.
If you would like to contribute to our next issue, the deadline is **16 January**. As a guide on word-count, a half page is about 170 words. **Please submit your contributions and/or photos to your Scheme Manager.**

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Dates for Your Diary

Wednesday 21 January
Film Club
2pm in The Chapel of St Francis
see page 9

Monday 26 January
Burn's Supper
5pm in The Chapel of St Francis
see page 9

January
New classes: Yoga, Zumba and Meditation
see page 10

Forthcoming Out and About Group Days

Thursday 8 January.
Slide show in the Chapel of St Francis at Hickey's, 2pm.

Wednesday 14 January.
Visit to the **Museum of the Order of St. John.** Meet at Richmond Station at 10am.

Tuesday 10 February.
Visit to the **Orchid Festival in Kew Gardens.** Meet at Richmond Station at 10am. at Kew Gardens.

Letter from Emma

Dear Residents,

Happy New Year!

I hope in the last couple of weeks you have had the opportunity to spend your time doing things that make you happy. Whether that is catching up with friends and family, watching some good TV, eating and drinking your favourites, or simply doing nothing. I hope you are recharged and ready to go for another year.

We have a new face on the team for the new year. Many of you will have met Lynsey at the Christmas lunch. Lynsey has joined as a Scheme Manager, replacing Lorraine. She will be working closely with Debbie, and I know you will make her welcome.

I always start the year with good intentions — a diary that I will write in every day and not allow to get creased, tons of vegetables that I will eat religiously, new books I must read, skills I must learn. By February the diary is looking a little dog-eared, the vegetables have lost their virtuous flavour, some books you just can't finish, and frankly what was I thinking when I thought I could learn to ice skate (seasonal anyway).

So, this year I will start small — just one thing, and when I've got to grips with that, another thing, and so on. This year we would like to offer all your usual favourites on the Activities front but try some new things to see how you like them. Following feedback from residents we will be arranging some basic first aid courses, some more coffee mornings and offering more information and support from our benefits advisor and representatives from other local organisations who can make things a little easier or clearer. Watch out for details on the Activities Leaflets and from your scheme managers. Try something new and keep your own suggestions for events, activities and services coming.

2026? I'm ready. One small thing at a time...



Emma Halford

All the best

Emma

An Enchanting Evening



by Lorna South

What a truly enchanting evening some of us enjoyed in early December when we sat in the Chapel and listened to another delightful performance by the Eloysia String Quartet.

We were treated to a very melodious selection of classical Christmas music interspersed with some carols which we were invited to sing along with. And while the music was indeed beautiful, the whole occasion was significantly enhanced by a flickering multitude of candles which seemed to fill the Chapel against a backdrop of a towering, twinkling Christmas tree.

And then of course there were the delicious mince pies which we tucked into and some very mouthwatering mulled wine which had been arranged on tables stunningly adorned and looking very stylish.



Thank you so much to the very gifted ladies of the Eloysia String Quartet who again provided us with such an entertaining evening.

But a very big thank you is also due to Scheme Managers Linda and Jo who organised the event and looked after us throughout the evening as well as decorating the tables so beautifully beforehand.

Remembrance Day Service

by Norman Bramfitt

On Sunday 9 November the annual **Remembrance Day Service** took place in the Chapel of St Francis.

Due to the illness of our own Chaplain the service was conducted by the Rev Katherine Rouse.

It was a lovely service with a recording of the last post and readings by David and myself.



The service lasted approximately 45 minutes at the end of which we felt that we had shown our respect to those who had given their lives for their country.

The flag is the property of Jenny Ruff, it was her father's who got it in Burma at a prison camp he helped liberate.

A Newbie's Perspective: Our Christmas Lunch 2025...

Words by Eve Mainoo
Photos by Mick Tinson

How lucky I am to now be a beneficiary of The Richmond Charities. The formal invitation for our Christmas lunch arrived with a specimen menu from the Richmond Hill Hotel.

A day before the lunch each resident received a Christmas card from Emma and the management team, with a gift card together with a tube of chocolate biscuits!

Emma opened lunch with a welcome, and Derrick our chaplain offered a prayer before the proceedings.

The charity organised transfers to and from the venue with the aid of scheme managers.

There were tables of ten, each hosted by a Trustee.

In Emma's Christmas Letter to residents, she'd said that the theme this year would be "all things Strictly" and that, of course, a bit of glitter and sparkle would not go amiss!

Two professional dancers opened the lunch with a rendition of the Argentine Tango, and there were prizes for Best Dressed Gentleman and Best Dressed Lady.

Later on, we were invited to join in some popular dancing – twinkle-toed residents obliged... After which Emma announced the names of the 'Good Neighbours' winners, awards for organisers of residents' activities, the winner of the 'Candy Cane' quiz, and the winner of the table quiz.

I was amazed at the friendliness and welcome by all and the eagerness of everyone to get to know me. And finally thank you to the wonderful couple who drove me home to my front door.



Our Christmas Lunch 2025...





Children's Carolling and our Annual Carol Service

by Derrick Thompson

The final week's countdown to Christmas got off to a great start as eighteen children from Marshgate School, in their bright yellow jackets, paraded along to Houlton's almshouses to sing Christmas carols. When we arrived there the gate opened as if by magic and in they went to be met by residents standing around their doors and listening from behind their half doors.

After a round of applause from the residents and a loud shout of "We wish you a merry Christmas!" from the children, it was on to Church Estate for a repeat performance, only this time there were residents standing on their balconies to watch and listen. The last stop was at the bungalows behind the Chapel of St Francis where more residents came out to listen or listened from their doorways.



Children Carolling at Church Estate



Children Carolling at Houlton's

At each stop the children sang loud and clear and could be heard very well!

The final stop was in the Chapel for a quick hot chocolate and the presentation of traditional Christmas stockings. These were prepared by residents and contained an apple, an orange, some chocolate coins and a small toy, a bit like Christmas stockings residents had received when they were children.

Later that same day was our Annual Carol Service with the theme *Stars in the Night*. Readings and carols all had references to the stars on the first Christmas night and were presented by residents, Trustees and Chapel attendees. The Choral Scholars from St Mary Magdalene's church, Richmond, helped with the singing of the carols as well as singing some beautiful carols on their own.

On arrival everyone received a silver or origami star. During the service they were invited to write on it any hopes, fears or dreams they had for Christmas and the New Year. This was done as we listened to *It's Just a Dream Away*, words by resident Steve Harbord set to music and recorded by his friend Pete Dymond. After the service the stars were collected and added to the Chapel Christmas tree.

A collection for the Children's Society was taken while we sang *Away in a Manger* with a total of £150 being raised.

The evening was rounded off in the usual way: mulled wine, mince pies and the new addition of hot chocolate!



Film Club
**Downton
Abbey**
The Grand Finale
**Wednesday
21 January
at 2.00pm**
*in The Chapel of
St Francis*

The return of the global phenomenon follows the Crawley family and their staff as they enter the 1930s. When Mary finds herself at the centre of a public scandal and the family faces financial trouble, the entire household grapples with the threat of social disgrace. The Crawleys must embrace change as the staff prepares for a new chapter with the next generation leading Downton Abbey into the future.

Director: Simon Curtis

Writer: Julian Fellowes

**Actors: Hugh Bonneville, Jim Carter,
Michelle Dockery**

Rating: PG. Runtime: 2h 3m

**IMDb: 7.3/10, Rotten Tomatoes: 91%,
Popcornmeter 96%!**

Refreshments during the interval.

Debbie's Things to Do in January

 January gardening focuses on planning new plants; pruning dormant plants (e.g. roses); cleaning your tools; starting seeds indoors for spring; mulching borders, and clearing your path. It's a key month for ordering summer bulbs!

 January offers a mix of cozy indoor activities like museums, cultural events, films.

 Start a spring clean with winter cleaning and decluttering.

 Embrace the new year with self-care, exercise and new habits such as Veganuary or Dry January.



Burns' Supper

with the Traditional Address to a Haggis!

Monday 26 January 2026
**The Chapel of St. Francis,
Hickey's Almshouses**
5pm for 5.30pm start

**Haggis (or Sausage), Neeps and Tatties
Oatcakes and Scottish Cheddar
Scottish Drinks!**

Wear something Tartan!
Ticket Only (free) Event
 Tickets available from your Scheme Manager in January

 **The Chapel of St Francis**
Service Times: January 2026

Sunday 4 January Epiphany Sunday	10.30am Holy Communion Followed by refreshments.
Sunday 11 January	10.30am Holy Communion.
Sunday 18 January	10.30am Holy Communion.
Sunday 25 January	10.30am Holy Communion.

All are welcome to join us.
 Morning Prayer, most Tuesdays at 10am.
 For more information email Chaplain Derrick:
 d.thompsonrichmondcharities.org.uk
 07796 619697

Three Mind and Body Classes for the New Year



ZUMBA

with Clare

New sessions begin:
Monday 5 January
at 11am
in The Chapel of St
Francis, Hickey's

What is Zumba?

Classes typically consist of Latin-inspired songs, starting with a slower warm-up song, building intensity throughout the workout, and ending with a cool-down song. Even if you're not a strong dancer, the choreography is repetitive and designed to be built upon, so most people will catch on to the moves as they go.

You don't need any special dance skills but those that have natural rhythm may pick up on the moves faster. Still no one is keeping score, so just dance and have fun!



YOGA

with Claire

New sessions begin:
Friday 9 January
at 10:15am
in The Chapel of St
Francis, Hickey's

How hard is this yoga?

This is a gentle chair-based yoga practice to calm, rebalance and ease the body and mind.

The classes will be totally accessible to ***all levels of ability*** and all will be welcomed and supported with a range of modifications to suit individual needs.

The 60-minute classes will always be guided with warmth and empathy and will include nourishing stretches, guided breathing exercises and deep relaxation techniques.



MEDITATION

with Deborah

New sessions begin:
Tuesday 20 January
at 11am
in The Chapel of St
Francis, Hickey's

What kind of meditation?

The inner guidance, dedicated meditation sessions help promote health and well-being.

Sessions have been very successful with wonderful positive feedback from participants.

If you feel you would like to take part, why don't you come and join in with our next course starting in January.

Your journey begins from within.

Are you ready to join her?



No need to book — just turn up! Everyone is welcome!
All dates are advertised in the Monthly Activities Leaflet.

New Healthy Eating Group for The New Year

We are thinking of a having a group meeting for tips and advice on healthy eating and would like to gauge interest from residents and see if this is something that would be of interest to you.

Please let your Scheme Manager know if you would like to take part.



Calling All Creatives!

We are so organised this year that we are even starting to think about 2027!

Richmond Charities Calendar

This time next year we would like you all to be in possession of a **Richmond Charities Calendar** — something created for you, by members of our own community.

We will need 14 photographs or pieces of artwork — one for each month and a front and back cover. We would love it if the photographs and artwork came from you.

The theme is ‘community’, and you can take a photograph or produce your own drawing or painting depicting what community means to you.

Entries should be shared with your Scheme Manager and will be judged by a panel. The 14 winning entries will be used to create our 2027 calendar.

Winning contributors will be treated to a special creative outing once the results are announced.

The small print:

- What we need from you: a photograph or piece of artwork depicting what **community** means to you. Any size.

- **Deadline for submission: 30 September 2026**

Rules:

- Your contribution must be your own work
- If you are taking photographs that include people you must have their written permission to submit the photograph to the competition
- If you are taking photographs of buildings, please respect the privacy of others by not taking close ups of windows and doors without the occupier's permission

Good luck!

And thanks in advance for helping us celebrate our community throughout the year.



Your Richmond Good Neighbours

Interview with Anne Speak of Richmond Good Neighbours

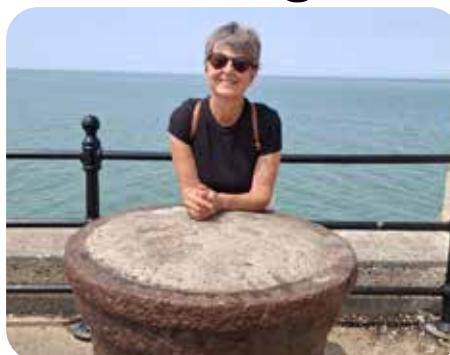
by Mike Townsin

I was asked to meet Anne, who runs the charity *Richmond Good Neighbours*, because Emma, our Chief Executive, felt that many of our residents, and particularly the more recent ones, may be unfamiliar with this remarkable service.

But first a bit about Anne herself. She joined eight years ago as Director although, as she says, “I do everything!”. Anne brings to the job broad experience of life out there – she was involved in local politics which meant finding a lot of volunteers, crucial because volunteers are at the heart of what RGN does – and she previously had a career in retail fashion as a Merchandiser for House of Fraser and BHS, a job requiring exceptional people skills, essential to the art of persuading people to become volunteers. Also, as she says, the loss of her mother to dementia nine years ago has made her cherish being

“so closely involved with a charity which mitigates social isolation by bringing communities together”.

RGN has been operating for nearly 50 years, providing shopping support, befriending visits, social activities and transport for medical appointments or events for people living independently,



Anne Speak



RGN volunteers at Kew Gardens



RGN Ukulele band



Tea at the Cambrian Centre

but perhaps isolated, in the heart of Richmond: in short

“doing what a good neighbour does when you have nobody else”.

The service is primarily aimed at people of 75 and over who can be in need of either emotional or practical support – sometimes both. So, volunteers are recruited with this in mind, whom Anne tries to match with the particular needs of her clients; it is also a service which often fills the gap which social services don’t have the time and financial resources to fulfill – she points out that

“care costs are high and carers often can’t provide the emotional and intellectual engagement with the resident, meaning RGN’s volunteers are a life-line for many”.

The “matching” also requires her 35 regular drivers, out of her 100 or so volunteers, to have suitable, easy-access cars with room for wheelchairs – minis too small and Chelsea tractors too big!

Anne’s final message was this:

“We have always supported almshouse residents and would love to help more of yours at The Richmond Charities”

Please contact us through your Scheme Manager; or on 0203 538 4060 or 07940 758698.

Chaplains Chat

with Chaplain Derrick

**'And so, this is Christmas,
and what have we done?
Another year over, a new
one just begun'!**

So sang John and Yoko in 1971 and once again it is the beginning of a New Year, and on the world stage once again we are praying for peace in the world.

I wonder what a 'New Year' means for you? The 'same old same old' or a time of new beginnings? For our newer residents there has recently been the new beginnings associated with living in a new place with different bus routes and different shops to get used to. For some residents and readers there is the new beginning associated with a change of health, for better or worse, or the beginning of a journey of grief. Not all new beginnings feel good.

And So This Is Christmas; And What Have We Done? Another Year Over; A New One Just Begun; And So Happy Christmas; I Hope You Have Fun; The Near And The Dear Ones; The Old And The Young.

John Lennon

During Christmas (it's not over until February 2nd!) we celebrate the new beginning of the life of the baby Jesus. A reminder that all over the world there are new lives being born every moment of every day. There is always new life, and new joy, somewhere.

In his life Jesus had several names given to him, one being 'Emmanuel' meaning 'God with us', and my prayer for you, in this New Year of 2026, is that whatever beginnings you face you will find joy and know that God is with you.



BOOK GROUP

The Greatest Story Ever Told

With gripping storytelling and raw honesty, Bear Grylls retells the gospel through the eyes of those who knew Jesus best— Maryam (his mother Mary), Ta'om (Thomas), Shimon (Simon Peter), Yohanan (friend) and Maryam of Magdala (Mary Magdalene). Their first-hand encounters bring the story to life with intensity, warmth, and deep reverence. At the heart of it all are Jesus' own words, taken directly from the Bible,

letting the greatest story ever told speak for itself.

In each session we will watch a short video from Bear Grylls and Andrew Ollerton (Bible Society) and share in discussion about one chapter of this five-chapter book.

Book Group Dates at *The Chapel of St Francis*

6, 13, 20, 27 January
and 10 February 2026

Time: 2pm – 3.30pm
Refreshments provided!

Advisory

Possible Council Tax Reduction – Check Your Eligibility

What is happening?

Richmond Council is contacting residents who may be eligible for a Council Tax Reduction. The Council say that the scheme can reduce Council Tax bills by up to 100% for those on low incomes or certain benefits.

How can you check if you are eligible?

The Citizen's Advice Bureau in Richmond can help residents to check whether they might be eligible for a Council Tax Reduction.

It is worth checking with an advisor at Citizen's Advice to see if you could benefit from a reduction.

They can be contacted on **0808 278 7873** (Monday – Friday 10am – 1pm) or online: www.citizensadvicerichmond.org

Residents can also use the Council's **online calculator** to check eligibility in around 10 minutes.

Where to apply: Applications can be made online at www.richmond.gov.uk/benefits, or you can call **020 8891 1411** to request a paper form.

If you need help completing an application can contact the Council's benefits team by calling **020 8891 1411**, emailing benefits@richmond.gov.uk, or using the online contact form.

For other support and additional information:

Visit the Richmond Cost of Living Hub (www.richmond.gov.uk/services/cost_of_living_hub) for help with household bills and local services.



No Time for Tears

A Poem by Steve Harbord

I've stumbled through the shadows, thunder and the rain.
I've had my share of heartaches, and my share of pain.
The world once tried to break me, that's how it appears,
But now I walk in sunshine, I've got no time for tears.

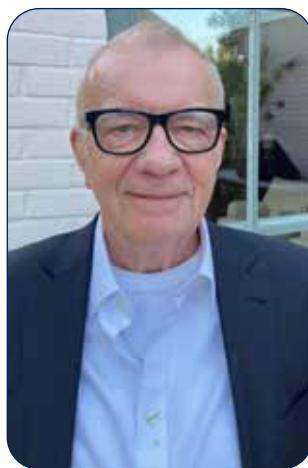
I've danced in all the ruins, where dreams just fell apart,
Then built from the ashes that were burning in my heart.
It seems I'm always facing my monsters and my fears,
But I'll just keep on smiling, I've got no time for tears.

The loved ones that have gone now, like stars up in the sky.
But love will never vanish, it just somehow learns how to fly.
Sometimes their names I whisper, I hope that heaven hears,
I smile through the silence, I've got no time for tears.

So here's to all the dreamers, the lost ones and the strong.
Try to find the courage when everything goes wrong.
One day you'll be looking back, 'cos time just disappears,
Only then you'll realise there's no time left for tears.



Trustee File



Mike Townsin

If you ever watched *Mad Men*, a US TV drama series about advertising, that was my life for forty-odd years until retirement in 2009. It featured a fictional ad agency based in New York's famous Madison Avenue – hence *Mad Men* – in the '60s and 70s.

In the late '60s I joined the London office of Young and Rubicam, the world's second largest ad agency, as a trainee, ended up as CEO and spent the rest of my career in the profession, latterly based in Hong Kong as the Media Director of Grey Asia Pacific, another global US agency, overseeing 28 offices, across 16 countries from Islamabad to Beijing to Auckland – happy days!

I can best describe my life in advertising from this magazine extract about my erstwhile boss Ed Meyer, legendary founder of Grey. I was the man in the lift...

"There was a time when entering 777 Third Avenue meant entering a myth. The revolving doors sighed as if they knew who you were, or at least who you pretended to be. The marble lobby smelled of ambition and re-cycled air-conditioning. If you were lucky you were headed to the private floor of Ed Meyer, emperor of Grey Advertising, a man who led the place like a controlled explosion... That was Grey: loud, paranoid, magnificent. You didn't just work there; you got baptised into it... An ecosystem of heretics and geniuses".

My generation of admen was incredibly lucky to have been around at the creative height of the industry – remember Beanz Meanz Heinz; Happiness is a cigar called Hamlet; Heineken Refreshes the Parts etc..., Marlboro Man, Coke... Teach the world to sing; Hello Tosh got a Toshiba; Cadbury Fruit and Nut Case; the Oxo Family; KFC Finger Lickin' Good. Award winners all, at the Cannes Advertising Film Festival.

Now I'm lucky again – to be part of this wonderful charity and community, an award winner in its class too!

New Staff Member



Lynsey Clements

New Scheme Manager

I joined the Richmond Charities as a Scheme Manager in December

2025 — what a lovely time to join!

I'm really looking forward to getting to know the residents and becoming part of this warm and welcoming community. In my role, I'll be supporting the smooth running of the almshouses and offering day-to-day support wherever it's needed.

I have worked in health and social care for over 16 years, and I am passionate about helping people feel safe, respected, and supported. My experience has given me a strong understanding of person-centered care and the importance of building positive relationships.

I've lived locally since I was born and feel deeply connected to the area. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my three children, listening to music and being involved in the community as much as possible.

I am absolutely delighted to be joining such a respected charity, and I look forward to contributing positively to the lives of our residents now and in the future.

I look forward to spending time with you all!

Lynsey



Vitamin Alert

by Mike Townsin

Over the last year we have listed all the main vitamins and minerals.

We conclude our monthly report with this list of the others: -

- beta-carotene
- chromium
- copper
- magnesium
- manganese
- molybdenum
- phosphorus
- potassium
- selenium
- salt
- zinc

Information on the sources, benefits and how much you need of these can be found on the NHS website under Vitamins and Minerals.

Consult GP or pharmacy if in doubt.

Your Defence Against Winter Infections

As winter sets in, the risk of respiratory and gastrointestinal viruses increases, but experts highlight several practical ways to reduce illness. **Vaccination** remains one of the strongest defences, with flu jabs and COVID-19 boosters recommended for those eligible.

Hand hygiene is essential: washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds helps prevent viral transmission from contaminated surfaces or close contact.

Vitamin D supplementation is widely encouraged in winter due to limited sunlight, supporting overall immune function. Multivitamins can help, but a balanced diet is generally more effective. Vitamin C can play a modest supportive role depending on baseline levels.

Diet quality plays a significant role in immune resilience. Experts recommend plenty of protein, fibre-rich foods, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Foods that support gut health such as live yoghurt, sauerkraut, kimchi, and kombucha are highlighted because the gut microbiome is closely linked to immune functioning.

Regular moderate **exercise** supports immune activity and manages stress. Sleep is another major factor: 7–9 hours of quality rest each night helps regulate immune responses. Stress management techniques such as mindfulness, deep breathing, and light exercise are also recommended, as chronic stress can weaken immune defences.

Hygiene and environmental measures contribute to reduced viral spread. Using and promptly disposing of tissues when coughing or sneezing, washing hands afterward, **ventilating indoor spaces**, and routinely disinfecting frequently touched surfaces all help. Experts note that fresh air circulation can limit the concentration of airborne viruses.

Finally, if symptoms of illness develop, staying home when possible, helps protect others and limits further transmission. Combining vaccination, good hygiene, adequate sleep, and a balanced lifestyle offers a good strategy for navigating winter infections.

Extract from BBC article.

Vitamin C and the Common Cold:

Why food based sources may be more helpful to reduce symptoms of a common cold

by Gennie Thompson

Vitamin C has long been linked to supporting bodies fight off colds – it supports white blood cells (your immune defenders), helps repair tissue, and works as an antioxidant. What many people don't realise is that Vitamin C from whole foods works very differently from the isolated, lab-made form (ascorbic acid) which is common in supplements.

Whole-food based, natural Vitamin C comes in a complete package with supporting compounds such as bioflavonoids (natural plant antioxidants), co-factors (nutrients that help Vitamin C work), and minerals. These help the body absorb Vitamin C properly and use it where it's needed, something synthetic vitamin C can't always do on its own.

Research shows that people with a diet naturally rich in Vitamin C have shorter colds and less intense symptoms,

alongside stronger immune responses and shorter recovery times when they do catch a cold.

A 2017 review in *Nutrients* found that diets

high in Vitamin C-rich fruit and vegetables correlate with lower rates of respiratory infection and faster healing. In contrast, taking synthetic

Vitamin C only showed small, inconsistent benefits. It might be sensible to conclude **Vitamin C is most effective and beneficial in its natural food-based form.**

How to Boost Vitamin C Naturally



- Include kiwi, berries, oranges, red peppers, parsley, broccoli, papaya, or kale daily.

- Add whole-food powders like acerola (a type of cherry that contains around 50-100 times more vitamin c than oranges), rosehip, amla, or camu-camu to a smoothie or dish if you want an easy top-up.

- Pair Vitamin C foods with zinc-rich foods (pumpkin seeds, beans, lentils) for extra immune strength.

- Aim for one Vitamin C-rich food at breakfast and another at dinner.

What Can Block Vitamin C absorption in our bodies?

- High sugar intake (sugar competes with Vitamin C to enter your cells).

- General pollution and smoking (as it increases Vitamin C demand in our bodies).

- Stress (raises cortisol, which uses up Vitamin C).

- Overcooking vegetables/ fruits (Vitamin C is heat-sensitive).

Whole-food Vitamin C won't give you instant results, it is not a quick fix or magic remedy.

However, it will provide a steady daily support that supports your immune system, stay resilient and working as well as it can, especially during cold and flu season.

And the Good News is...

Curated by Mike Townsin



Northumberland's Kielder Forest to Pudsey Leeds.

• An American couple with a combined age of 216 have been declared the oldest married couple in the world. Eleanor and Lyle Gittens, 107 and 108 respectively, met at a college baseball game in 1941 and married in 1942.

• A decorated plate was stolen from Gonville & Caius College Cambridge over 100 years ago by student George Wimbush after he joined in 1908. In the 1960s his widow passed the plate to a family friend who, now 85, decided it should be returned.



Gonville & Caius College plate



George Wimbush

• A quick-thinking American three-year-old saved his mother's life by unlocking her phone and calling a neighbour saying, "Help Mommy, help Mommy". Having seen such things on TV she used her mother's phone's face recognition system to open it.

Wit and Wisdom

Curated by Mike Townsin

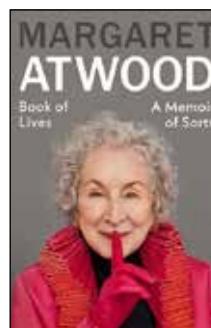


• A diplomat who says 'yes' means 'maybe', a diplomat who says 'maybe' means 'no', a diplomat who says 'no' is no diplomat. *Talleyrand*

Portrait of Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754 -1838)

• It's unfortunate this has happened. No. It's fortunate this has happened and I've remained unharmed by it. *Anon Stoic*

• We regret not what we do but what we don't do. *Julie Burchill, British journalist*



• A divorce is like an amputation: you survive, but there is less of you. *Margaret Atwood*

Margaret Eleanor Atwood is a Canadian novelist, poet, literary critic, and inventor. Age 86.

• Man is distinguished from all other creatures by the faculty of laughter.

Joseph Addison, British writer



James Harold Wilson, Baron Wilson of Rievaulx. (1916 – 1995)

• I know what is going on. I am going on. *Harold Wilson*

• The best way to teach your kids about taxes is by eating 30% of their ice cream. *Warren Buffet*

• Patience is a minor form of despair, disguised as a virtue. *Ambrose Bierce, US author*

• The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up and speak in public. *George Jessel, US actor*

Miscellany

Curated by
Mike Townsin

- Donald Trump is the first US president in 168 years not to have a pet in the White House.

- The way treetops avoid touching each other as they grow is known as 'crown shyness'.



Photo: Tom Cowey

- The Queen used to take a monogrammed kettle with her on all foreign trips.

- The first bendy straws were designed for use in hospitals.

- In Arab countries poetry competitions get better TV ratings than football matches.

- When Churchill visited the US during Prohibition, he got a doctor's certificate for an unlimited supply of alcohol.

- 52% of Americans think God is doing a good job.

- There is only one person in the UK called Mr Baubles

- Postmen were originally given smart uniforms to stop them loitering in ale houses.

On This Day...

curated by
Debbie Flaherty

3

January
1888

US inventor Martin Stone received a patent for his invention of an artificial straw, made by twisting paper into the shape of a tube.

8

January 1947
British rock star David Bowie was born.

13

January
1942

An ejector seat was used for the first time in history during WWII. Helmut Schenk, a German jet fighter pilot, escaped from his faulty aircraft by activating the system.

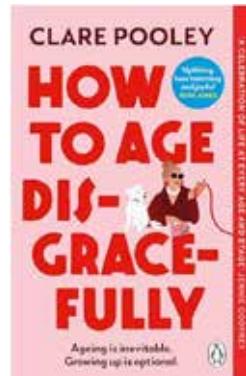
20

January
2009

Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th president of the USA.

Page Turner

How to Age Disgracefully
by Clare Pooley



Review by Amani Orr Ewing

This book is both a heartwarming and a humorous read. Like her previous book The People on Platform 5, it follows a group of diverse

characters who are thrown together through circumstances, who would not normally have picked each other as friends. Naturally there are initial barriers to them becoming friends, but adversity forces them to come together as a group. But don't be put off, this is a very funny book.

The action is set in a suburb of London where a community centre and a day care nursery share the same premises. We would all recognise it, and the familiarity adds to the book. When the local council decide to sell the building to a developer to fill the hole in their budget, naturally there is consternation, but also a sense of inevitability and powerlessness. But one of the ladies who uses the community centre is not going to stand for this. She has a dark past and is more formidable than anyone would have thought. She embarks on a plan to recruit her fellow citizens, to make the council see sense, or at least their point of view. There follows a series of operations organised with military precision that are both audacious and funny.

The characters are likeable and amusing and all have an interesting if somewhat surprising back story. This is a book to read if you want a good laugh and to bring out the community spirit.



Brain Exercises:

Anagrams: Winter

Winter Warmers: favourite dishes for cold days

1. headline tooth = toad in the hole
2. gate poetic.....
3. feb sweet.....
4. encashed mace.....
5. perished Shep.....
6. assuage escaroles.....
7. cello chinocrin.....
8. phoebe toft.....
9. knicker macho.....
10. ratten shopaholic.....
11. belove upstage.....
12. sagas unashamed.....
13. hifi sep.....
14. claw.....
15. east nanobots.....

Competition Winners

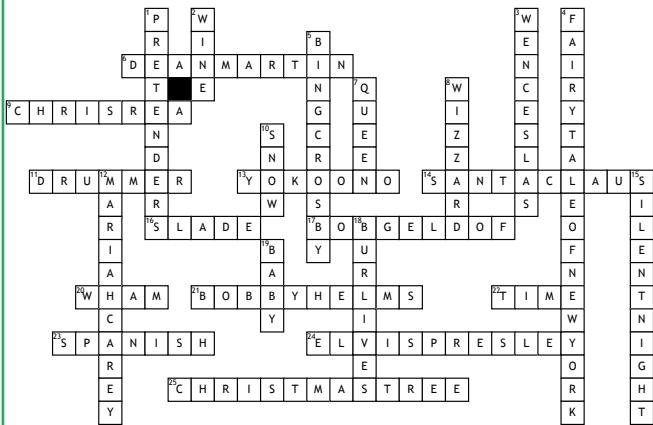
Thank you to everyone who sent in entries for the December competitions.

Picked at random, our £10 M&S voucher winners this month are:

Crossword — Norman Bram

Congratulations!

Answers: Crossword. Christmas Songs. December Issue.



Cryptogram HINT #2. U decodes to L.

National Puzzle Day

by Chantal Richards

National Puzzle Day, celebrated each year on 29 January in the UK, is a chance to enjoy and appreciate the many benefits of puzzles such as jigsaws, crosswords, word searches, and Sudoku. Taking part in these activities helps keep your mind active, supports memory, strengthens cognitive skills, and encourages problem-solving.

As usual, I have created some games for you here in the magazine: *Winter Warmer Anagrams*, a new game called *Cryptograms* and there is a new quiz from a resident called *Television Quotes*.

Online Games

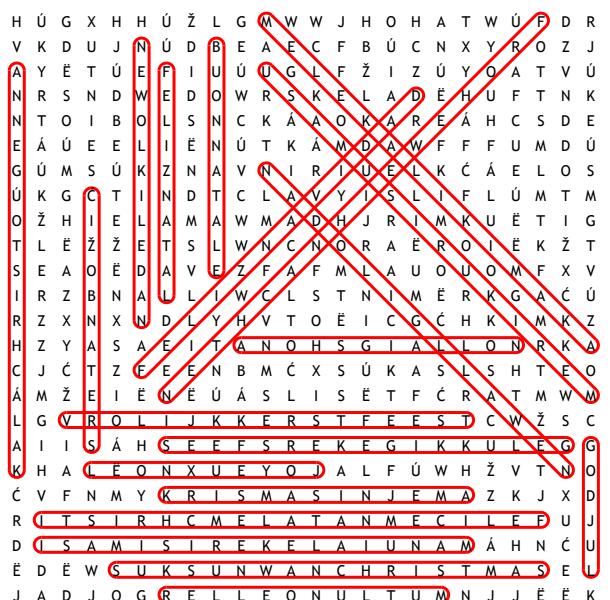
If you like playing puzzle games online — on your computer or on your phone — I have gathered some good options here for you. They are free, no log-in to remember, no app to install. Also they are designed to be low stress games with a choice of difficulty levels:

Sixty and Me: <https://games.sixtyandme.com>
Free Card games (Solitaire, FreeCell, etc.),
jigsaws, brain games, chess — many suited to
over 65s.

The Independent Puzzle Page: <https://puzzles.independent.co.uk/games>. Daily Sudoku, word puzzles, Mahjong and more.

Lichess: <https://lichess.org> Free online chess — very popular, ad-free, all skill-levels welcome.

Answers: Wordsearch. Happy Christmas. December Issue.



CRYPT^oGRAMS

What is a Cryptogram?

For thousands of years, leaders and military planners protected their secrets with simple-substitution ciphers – codes that replace each letter with another letter to make a message look like nonsense.

For a long time, this method worked well, because most people couldn't decode it.

But over time, others learned to break these codes using patterns in language and letter frequency, making the old system unreliable for real security.

Although these ciphers are no longer used to protect sensitive information, they live on today as enjoyable word puzzles – found in books, newspapers, and many websites.

Here is a cryptogram for you to solve:

UOK UOMZX UMPK YGPKGIK UZMKY UG

DBU Q YQXXVK GI EGB, EGB YOGBVX

QXPMU EGB'ZK Q OGZYK.

Hints for solving a CRYPT^oGRAM:

- Analyze **letter frequency**: Count how often each symbol appears in the cryptogram. The most frequent symbol is likely “E,” followed by “T,” “A,” “O,” “I,” “N,” and “S”.
- Find **single-letter words**: These will be either “A” or “I”.
- Solve **short words**: Look for common two and three-letter words.
- **Two-letter words**: Common ones include “of,” “to,” “in,” “is,” “it,” and “as”.
- **Three-letter words**: The most frequent are “the,” “and,” “for” and “was”.
- Look for **double letters**: Look for repeated letters in a word, such as “oo,” “ee,” “ll,” or “ss”.
- Identify **common letter combinations** (digraphs): Look for patterns like “th,” “sh,” “ch,” “qu,” “ing,” or “er”.
- **Pencil in guesses**: Write your educated

guesses in light pencil, as you'll likely need to erase and change them as you progress.

- **Use apostrophes**: Look for apostrophes, which often indicate a contraction ending in “s,” “t,” or “d,” or a possessive ending in “s”.
- **Work backward and forward**: If you successfully identify a letter, go through the entire puzzle and substitute it everywhere. Then, look for new patterns that have emerged and try to solve them.
- Check your work: If you find a mistake, go back and correct it. It's often necessary to backtrack and try a different substitution.

Hints for solving THIS CRYPT^oGRAM:

There are 3 clues in this magazine if you want some help.

Hint 1: is on page 17

Hint 2: is on page 20

Hint 3: is on page 22

The quote will appear in next month's magazine! Good luck!

Your chance to win a £10 M&S Voucher! Try cracking the code to reveal the quote.

Please submit this page to your Scheme Manager, or place in the suggestion box **before Friday 16 January**. Name:

Quiz: Television Quotes

Can you guess the Programme? The Name of the Character? The Persons Name?

1. “It’s goodbye from me and it’s goodbye from him.”

Programme.....
Person.....
Person.....

2. “Betty!”

Programme.....
Character.....
Person.....

3. “I don’t believe it.”

Programme.....
Character.....
Person.....

5. “Just like that.”

Person.....

6. “I’ve started so I’ll finish.”

Programme.....
Person.....

4. “Lovely Jubbly!”

Programme.....
Character.....
Person.....

8. “Nice to see you. To see you nice.”

Programme.....
Person.....

9. “I have a cunning plan.”

Programme.....
Character.....

7. “Listen, I will only say this once.”

(French accent)

Programme.....

11. “Can I have a P please Bob?”

Programme.....
Person.....

12. “Get outta my pub!”

Pub name.....
Programme.....
Character.....
Person.....

10. “It’s a no from me”

Programme.....
Person.....

14. “Don’t panic! Don’t panic!”

Character.....
Person.....

15. “Ooh, you are awful but I like you”

Character.....
Person.....

13. “Stupid boy!”

Programme.....
Character.....
Person.....

17. “The Bouquet Residence. The lady of the house speaking.”

Programme.....
Character.....
Person.....

16. “I’m free!”

Programme.....
Character.....
Person.....

18. “And finally.”

Programme.....
Person.....

Poetry Corner

by Nigel Davis

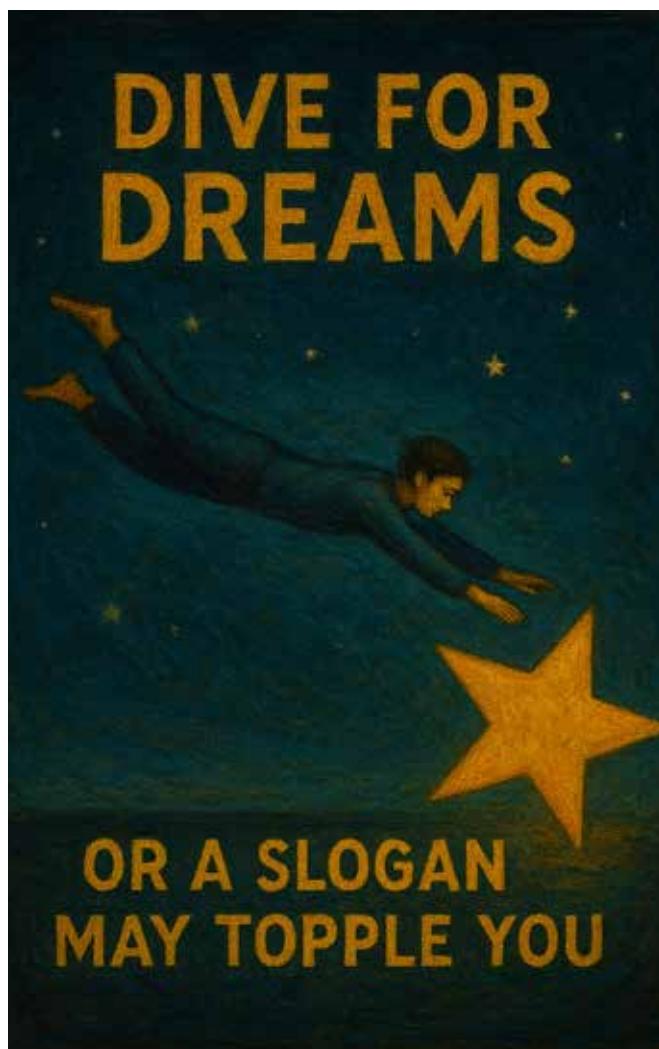
It is the New Year, so let's look forwards, not backwards – and let's do so positively.

Here is a lovely positive little poem, by a Poetry Corner favourite, ee cummings (1894 - 1962). It is in its way a motivational encouragement to get the most out of life, to back ourselves, to have faith. In some ways, it rather reminds me of the political slogan, which I rather liked, of the Barak Obama Presidential campaign in the USA a few years ago: "Yes you can".

But, as the poem tells us, it all goes deeper, a lot deeper, than mere slogans. As usual with this poet, he dislocates conventional grammar, words and word structures (imagine "diving" for dreams!) to make us concentrate on what he is trying to say; but it is all done so naturally that the poem becomes one of complete simplicity.

"Live by love though the stars walk backward". Isn't that just wonderful?

A great poem, in my view.



Untitled poem by ee cummings

dive for dreams
or a slogan may topple you
(trees are their roots
and wind is wind)

trust your heart
if the seas catch fire
(and live by love
though the stars walk backward)

honour the past
but welcome the future
(and dance your death
away at this wedding)

never mind a world
with its villains or heroes
(for God likes girls
and tomorrow and the earth)

20

20