Westcott Village Magazine

October 2026



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Westcott has a population of over 2,000 and this is the only magazine written specifically for the Westcott area by the people of Westcott. It is hand delivered, free of charge, to every household and further copies are available at the church, local shops, pub and doctor's surgery.



If you have any articles, photos, letters, etc that you think we may like to feature in the next issue, please email the Editor on:

editor@westcottmag.com

But please note, publication will always be subject to space and at the discretion of the Editor.

Copy deadline for **November** issue:

8th October 2026

This magazine, published by the Church in Westcott, is printed on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) accredited paper from a sustainable source. The views expressed are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Church, Editor or Westcott residents.

Cover photo - *Local Albino squirrel enjoying the beech mast harvest* by Edward Bennett

FROM THE EDITOR



Autumn is well and truly underway now, even though the grass has greened up quite nicely as I write this!

This month Surrey Hills All Saints School has one of its open days on 7th (p39), which coincidentally is the same day as the Village Coffee Morning, but the former starts at 8am and the latter is 10.30-12 so you could make both if one is required after the other!

There is the second Music Mingle on 24th October following the success of the previous one at Easter, this one featuring Rev'd Tim Armstrong on the triangle (with others), see page 33 for all details of times and tickets. If you're feeling arty, WESTfestivity has an art competition this year (p41) so put your thinking caps on and get creative!

There are a few requests for help this month, the Hub needs volunteers for the Wide Awake Club in the mornings (p45), Westcott Church needs people to join the unlocking team (p8) and the U3A Dance2B Fit class needs a new instructor on Tuesday mornings at the Village Hall, see page 57 for details if you think you might be able to help with that one.

The village only manages to have so many different groups running for everyone because people are prepared to give up their time and volunteer - the more that do, the less each person has to do and the easier it is, so if you find you now have a bit of free time and have benefitted in the past from any of these groups, maybe you could pay it forward.

Have a great October, get outside and enjoy the autumn sun and changing colours, it'll make you feel better!

Cath
editor@westcottmag.com

Where did October get its Name?

Originally the ancient Roman calendar was based on lunar cycles (unlike our current calendar which is based on solar cycles), and so only had 10 months. October was the eighth month and its name translates as "the eighth month" in Latin. In 451 BC the two months of Ianurarius and Februarius were added to the beginning of the calendar, making October the 10th month and its name less appropriate.

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BACK TO BASICS

I enjoy doing lots of distance running events. Many of the ones I have done recently are full of razmataz. They have all the bells and whistles – music pumping, fancy kit, corporate sponsors, blinged up finishing straights and impressive custom medals for those who cross the line. It is all good stuff. However, my favourite events to run in are probably the traditional Lakeland Fell Races.

Fell Races take place as a key side event to the Agricultural Shows which have formed a core part of Cumbrian life for well over a century. Your entry fee into the Fell Race is covered by paying a few quid to attend the show and they take place against the backdrop of the showing of sheep and other livestock. Other than a short safety talk, there is minimal build up. You line up with the mandatory safety equipment in a bumbag or backpack and are sent out to see who can get to the top of the local fell and back again the quickest. You can pick your own route to the check point – local knowledge counts for a lot – and your main audience are the local Herdwick Sheep who remain stubbornly uninterested in proceedings. The top runners may not look like your traditional athletes – the greats of the sport have largely been farmers – but they are insanely fit and staggeringly courageous as they sprint down bogland and scree full tilt. Being involved in these events fills me with a joy and satisfaction which the modern commercialised world of distance running simply cannot match. There is something about the way in which all the noise is stripped away which makes it all feel a lot more real.

I find the same is true when it comes to my Christian faith. I love different forms of worship, and traditions, and liturgies, and beautiful buildings. It is all good stuff. It can all enrich and enliven the thing itself. However, to mistake the extras for the thing itself would be like thinking that trail running is all about who has the best GPS watch – whether they actually set foot on the trails or not. Being a follower of Jesus may well include these things, but at its heart it is about being known by Him, seeking to know Him in return and doing our best to follow his direction and teaching. It is simple, and beautiful, and challenging. I wouldn't have it any other way – despite the fact I all too often get distracted by the extras.

It can be easy to mistake all the razmataz for the thing itself. I have encountered more than one runner who can talk for hours about equipment but struggles to run in practice.

...FROM THE CHURCH IN WESTCOTT



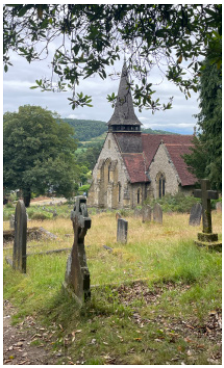
If you find what you have observed about the razmataz of faith off putting – the style of music, hypocritical-religiosity, the people who call themselves Christians – then please don't mistake that for the possibility of a God and the simplicity of following Jesus. It may just be what you have been looking for all along.

And while I am on simplicity and agricultural shows – I want to acknowledge that it has been another hard year for our farming community.

Thank you to all of you who work producing food and caring for the land. We will be celebrating you and thanking God for the food we have at our Harvest Service at 10.15am on October 11th – you are all very welcome to join us in a moment of simple thankfulness as we share breakfast together and reflect on the gift of the harvest.

Every blessing,
Revd Tim

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DATE	THEME	8:30AM	10:15AM
4th Oct	Trinity 18	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
11th Oct	Harvest	Book of Common Prayer Communion	20-20-20 with Breakfast
18th Oct	Trinity 20	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club
25th Oct	Trinity 21	Book of Common Prayer Communion	Communion with Sunday Club



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Debt advice: Paul Stacey (paulstacey88@gmail.com)
Holy Trinity Pastoral Assistants: Mark Shakespeare (01306 888010)

For help, or more information, please contact

Tim Armstrong, Vicar: vicar@westcott.church
or visit www.westcott.church










Floodlighting

The October floodlighting has been sponsored by Sarah, Jane and Simon to mark their father's centenary: Donald Bradley born 26/09/1926.

If you would like to sponsor the floodlighting, please contact Sarah Massey at admin@westcott.church (Suggested donation of £75 to Westcott Church Funds.)

Dorking Local History Group

This autumn, Dorking Local History Group is offering a programme of live and Zoom talks. These fascinating talks are free to members, but non-members are also welcome. October's talk is:

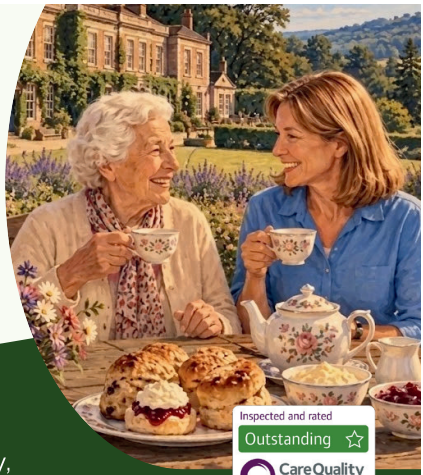
'History of Leatherhead stations, the RCTS Library' by Andy Davies - Andy is the Railway Correspondence & Travel Society's Archivist. He will introduce you to the various stations at Leatherhead from 1859 to today, and will describe the history of the RCTS Archive and Library. Monday 5th October, Dorking.

All Dorking talks are held at Crossways Community Baptist Church, Junction Road, Dorking, RH4 3HB. Doors 7pm for 7:30pm start. £2 at the door for non-members. For further details of talks and other activities - or to join DLHG - go to https://dlhg.org.uk.

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The full moon this month falls on 25th October and is known as the Hunter's Moon

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The Development Project

The project for the new Village Hall is gathering pace and our project manager is preparing vital work needed before the land sale. This works includes detailed construction drawings, liaising with building regulations and finalising the internal layout. Later this year he will prepare a tender pack so that construction companies can bid on the building contract. The Furlong Road site with planning consent for 9 houses will be placed on the market in the next month.

For the foreseeable future the current Village Hall is very much open for business, and will remain available for bookings of events and parties, as well as hosting the regular activities.

Update on the Plans

The internal design fo the new hall is nearly finalised and plans can be viewed on our website. The hall will be light, bright, warm (or cool), inviting and able to host three groups at any one time.

The main features will be:

- A main hall, slightly larger than the current one
- A modern, fully fitted kitchen
- Two storage rooms, with the potential to use one as a green room or bar/ buffet
- A lift to the upper floor
- WC facilities on ground floor and upper floor
- Two smaller meeting rooms on the upper floor, both with a kitchenette
- Energy-efficiency features: heat pump, solar panels, EV charge points

Website

The Village Hall has a new website design. Take a moment to look at westcottvillagehall.com where the latest news and events are included, and details on how to book the hall.

Fundraising

As explained in earlier editions, we are in a fund raising phase and many residents of the village have generously donated towards our financial goal of £35,500. This money is needed to pay for the project manager's current phase of work, and at the time of going to print, we have raised £32,000. If we reach our goal we have received a very generous offer to match fund the entire sum by a further 100%. If you would like to donate, its not too



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late - please find the JustGiving link on our website - or email us at info@westcottvillagehall.com. We would be delighted to drop by and discuss the project in more detail. We would like to express our warmest thanks for all the generous offers of help that we have received so far.
Other events over the next few months focussing on raising funds include a walk and Westfestivity on Saturday November 14th.

Walking Challenge: The Six Mole Hills Challenge
On Saturday October 10th an intrepid group of Westcottians, are hiking the *6 Mole Hill Challenge,* a 26 mile marathon walk to raise funds for charities. Please get involved by walking or by donating to this amazing group of people. We believe many of them have chosen the Village Hall as their designated charity – a big thank you to both walkers and donors! Follow this link to the donation page https://www.justgiving.com/page/wvh-sixhill?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

Thank you for all your support.

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GARDENERS' CLUB AUTUMN SHOW REPORT

Autumn Show - Saturday 5th September



Moby the marrow was over 100lbs

BBC Radio Surrey's gardening expert Jean Griffin returned to Westcott's Village Hall to judge the horticultural exhibits at the Autumn Show, alongside other judges for flower arranging, handicrafts and home produce. Despite obviously difficult gardening conditions this year, some fabulous exhibits were on display including a stunning array of dahlias, beautifully hand-crafted items (including a best in show winner), a bumper crop of tomatoes and Surrey's largest ever marrow.



Jean Griffin judges the dahlias

The winner of the Club Challenge Cup, for the highest number of points in the Show, was Kay Meldrum with 87 points. Janice Carter came second place with 47 points and Annette Watlow scored 36 points in third. For her combined efforts across both our Summer and Autumn Shows, Janice Carter was awarded the annual RHS Banksian Medal, this in addition to her best in section rosettes for Roses and Home Produce. The best exhibit was won by Angela Deloford for her handmade bracelet and Herbie Armstong won the Bennett Cup for maximum points in the children's classes.

The winners of the various classes were:

Dahlias: Kay Meldrum
Chrysanthemums: Kay Meldrum
Roses: Janice Carter
Other Cut Flowers: Kay Meldrum
Pot Plants: Annette Watlow
Vegetables: Kay Meldrum
Fruit: Sarah Massey
Flower Arranging: Sheena Salmon
Home Produce: Janice Carter
Handicrafts: Angela Deloford
Children's Classes: Herbie Armstrong

Rosettes for Best in Section went to:

Dahlias: Kay Meldrum
Chrysanthemums: Kay Meldrum
Roses: Janice Carter
Other Cut Flowers: Sheila Hedges
Pot Plants: Annette Watlow
Vegetables: Matt Peskett
Fruit: Annette Watlow
Flower Arranging: Sheena Salmon
Home Produce: Janice Carter
Handicrafts: Angela Deloford
Children's Classes: Herbie Armstrong

Thomasine Burnap picked up the Robinson Salver for her winning vegetable collection box and newcomer Sally Croft was awarded the Autumn Novice Cup for several point winning entries across multiple classes.

Matt Peskett

www.westcottgardenersclub.org.uk

WESTCOTT PHOTOS



Both of these beautiful sunset photos were taken by Andrew Lewis from his garden



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Milton Heath seems to have been common land since medieval times but this photograph taken in 1890 shows that the scenery has changed since the end of the 19th century.



At that time, it was open heath land, comprising mainly heather, gorse and a few pines. Since then, the cessation of grazing has allowed the growth of birch and other trees to form the present woodland; helped no doubt by the fact that kindling and logs are no longer essential to fuel stoves and open fires.

The Nower adjoins Milton Heath and at the end of the 19th century was an integral part of the Bury Hill Estate, extending over 49 acres and comprising pasture, parkland and woodland. Although privately owned, the Barclay family had always allowed public access and The Nower, was a popular weekend resort for the people of Dorking and from further afield. However, by permitting, and in many cases encouraging, public access, the true ownership of the woodland was sometimes overlooked and, in the winter of 1905, notices were erected advising that *'Mr Barclay regrets having to close the Nower from December 1st until further notice.'* A report in the Dorking Advertiser explained that this course had become necessary in order to preserve Mr Barclay's rights *'owing to an erroneous idea that has become current and has been published that the Nower is public property.'* The closure was only temporary and the Nower was certainly open in early March 1909 when it was rumoured that tobogganing at the Nower would be prohibited because of the number of accidents, only for Mr Barclay to issue a rebuttal the following week. But by then the snow was fast disappearing.

In 1931 any doubts about ownership were resolved when Col Barclay formally gave The Nower to the people of Dorking with the request that it be *'kept in its own rough beauty'* free for public use for all time. The handover took place on 22nd July 1931 and was quite an occasion. The ceremonies began with a Council lunch for Col Barclay at The White Horse, followed by the formal transfer of the deeds on the Nower with entertainment afterwards. There were lots of speeches, music by the Dorking Town Band and dancing displays by the local schoolchildren who then had a picnic tea. Afterwards everyone enjoyed sideshows and dancing to the Dorking town Band,



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and there were swings, coconut shies and a balloon race organised by council officials. The weather was fine and everyone had a great time.

The Chairman of the Council was Miss F.M.Douglas (the Council's first woman chairman) and in her speech she '*wondered if Col Barclay had ever realised the degree of thankfulness felt by cottage mothers of Dorking who send their children to the Nower and know that they will be in perfect safety there'*. However, it wasn't always so safe; Col Barclay said in reply that at one time he had a miniature range there for his troop of Surrey Yeomanry, but some bullets passed unpleasantly close to people on the top and it had to be given up!

The area was put to military use again in the World War II and there is a photograph of several hundred men of the Dorking Home Guard parading on the Nower in the 1940s – this picture can be seen on the front cover of David Knight's book *Dorking in Wartime*. Canadian troops were billeted in Bury Hill House and the remains of trenches and a brick wall used for assault course training can still be seen on Milton Heath.

The Bury Hill Estate was broken up in 1952 and it was suggested that Dorking Council should purchase Milton Field and construct a 'Festival of Britain' trail to the Nower pavilion. This was not pursued but the Field was eventually acquired by the Urban District Council in 1957 for £750 to ensure that there should continue to be unrestricted access from Dorking to the Nower.



We do not know the origins of the pavilion which gives such fine views across to Leith Hill and back to Dorking and the North Downs but when the pavilion was refurbished by the Council in 2002 the cladding had to be removed from the central pillar and this revealed some interesting graffiti carved on the inner core. Most were simply initials but one boldly carved name stood out 'William Jeater - Jan 9 1870'. The Jeater family were prominent Westcott tradesmen - builders, plumbers, painters and decorators in the late 19th and early 20th century. They were also proficient on the sports field and the Local History archive holds references to exploits on the cricket field as well as prize-winning plumbing awards and examples of public service.

The two houses on the road that bisects Milton Heath – Bracken Cottage and Old Bury Hill Lodge – were the outer

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and inner lodges to Bury Hill, each originally equipped with a gate to control access along the 'Drive' to the mansion. The track leading down from Old Bury Hill Lodge, illustrated in the following engraving by James Duffield Harding, was the original approach to the house, later called Rock Lane. In the north facing bank of the lane can be seen the ice house, constructed in about 1808, to store winter ice from Bury Hill Lake to preserve food and help prepare desserts during the summer.



The Bury Hill Second, or Inner, Lodge.

New to Westcott? Then you need to buy the recently published History of Westcott. Cost £7 and available from the Hub, Nisa or Dorking Museum. Westcott Local History Group has an excellent website westcotthistory.org.uk or via the Village Association website westcottvillage.com

John Clachan

Westcott "Baby Meals"



The village of Westcott has a long and proud tradition of providing "baby meals". It's a welcome respite from the chaos a new baby brings and a pretty unique service! Our volunteer cooks buy, cook and deliver a hot main meal, for the family (for free!) for two weeks.

In August we catered for 3 different families (I've says it before, babies are like buses in Westcott, nothing since October last year then 3 come along at once!!). We were delighted to cook for Carla & Tom Gill and big sister Riley who are adjusting to life with baby Benji! As I write we're just starting our rota to cook for Niamh and Kaine whose baby Sapphire arrived earlier than expected in July.

If you're living in Westcott and expecting a baby or know someone who is, PLEASE get in touch, we'd love to help!

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ABINGER NURSERY

October brings us all things leafy, beautiful colours of brown, orange and yellow and big fat shiny conkers! Just opposite us on the green and in the churchyard are the trees full of treasure and we wait patiently until they fall plonk to the ground! Pockets stuffed full to the hilt and leaves crunched and kicked about we certainly make the most of the nature around us on our forest school walks. Get out your wellies and try it!



The vegetables we eat are suitably orangey too and there's not an October where we don't rustle up some scrumptious soup. We love chop chopping up the autumn veg and giving it a good old mix together. The best part? Eating it of course! With a big wedge of homemade bread guaranteed to full up the hungriest of tummies. (and we have a lot of hungry tummies!).



Pumpkin season is upon us and we are old hands at carving and decorating - so much so that we have taken things a step further! We melt crayons and drip them all over the bumps to make wonderful works of art. Another trick is to get a stash of buttons out and pin them all over. It is very satisfying!

The photos we have provided are of our amazing sports day pirate swashbuckle as we had gone to print before they were available but thought you'd still like to see them! Enjoy!

If you would like to join our nursery family please don't hesitate to get in touch - we currently have spaces available for an immediate start. We have cooking and forest school on a Wednesday and French lessons on a Thursday. For more information or to book a show around call 07842 978823 or email abingercommonnursery@gmail.com We can't wait to meet you!

Kate Fairbrass

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MUSIC MINGLE

Following on from the success of our first community concert at Easter, we are delighted to invite you to join us for a second concert at Holy Trinity Church in Westcott on Saturday 24th October between 4-6pm. Everybody is welcome. For the enjoyment of audience members, parents with young children are invited to take advantage of either the quiet creche area at the back of the church or the Lady Chapel area via the step-free access entrance.

This event has been made possible by funding from Mole Valley Arts Alive 2026 and the Westcott Village Association, and by the generous support in kind received from Westcott church and Westcott Village Hall. It is free to attend, with donations being welcomed from those who can contribute to the costs of holding this event. We propose making a modest donation to both the church and to support the Westcott Village Hall fund from any surplus, whilst retaining some funding for a string orchestra concert next spring.

Rehearsals are underway, and local musicians will be playing pieces by Mozart, Faure, Prokofiev and an arrangement by Vaughan Williams with a local connection. The concert celebrates the clarinet and piano and will include strings, as well as featuring our guest soloist the Rev'd Tim Armstrong playing the triangle, (which has its own story which we will share on the night)!

As we grow, we want to create links with the wider artistic and creative community in our area, and we have commissioned Celine Marks to create the original artwork for this event. Artwork by pupils at Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School will be on display.

It would help the organisers if you could reserve your tickets via Eventbrite in advance: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/music-in-westcott-tickets-1998947282131 or via the QR code below.

We look forward to seeing you and performing for you. Please join us afterwards for a chat and light refreshments.

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Imogen Hartridge

Dorking Group of Artists October Exhibition 2026
Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6AA

Open to the public: Friday 9th October, Saturday 10th October 10:00 – 17:00, Sunday 11th October 10:00 – 16:00



Pauline Allbeury

Do join the Dorking Group of Artists for our next exhibition at Denbies Wine Estate from 9th to 11th October, and enjoy a perfect autumn day out! As one of Surrey's largest art groups, we are showcasing around 200 vibrant, new pieces created by our local members and professionals, displayed in Denbies Gallery and adjoining Suite. Whether you are looking for a framed masterpiece or a budget-friendly unframed painting, there is something to suit every taste and budget. The paintings should appeal to every taste, featuring different subjects and styles and covering a wide variety of media. It is the perfect opportunity to find unique, thoughtful Christmas gifts ahead of the holiday rush. Admission and parking are completely free. Come for the art, and stay for the day to enjoy Denbies' brilliant café, restaurant, shop, and vineyard tours.

Why not consider joining us? For more information about our activities, exhibitions and how to join see wwwdorkingartists.com follow us on Instagram Dorkinggroupartists or get in touch at contact@dorkingartists.com



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Angela Hall, Chair, Dorking Group of Artists
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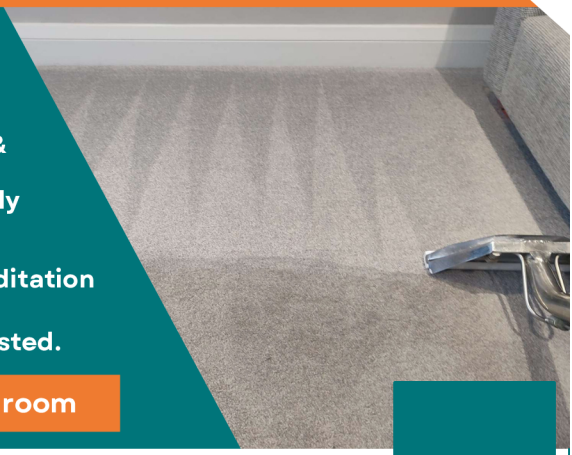
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It has been wonderful to begin a new academic year. We are delighted to welcome new families into Reception and across the school and we are also thrilled to welcome four new members of staff too. Over the summer holidays, our entrance was reconfigured and I wish to thanks the whole staff team who have taken great care in creating a welcoming and stimulating environment for the children to thrive.



The new academic year brings lots of exciting developments at Surrey Hills School - from the introduction of a revised approach to the teaching of handwriting, weekly forest school for all infant children, whole class instrumental tuition for our juniors and the introduction of a wider range of extra-curricular activities - including design engineering and gymnastics. We are looking forward to sharing the exciting learning and enriching opportunities the children access in the coming months. Please follow us on Instagram or Facebook for regular updates. Across the autumn term, we will be hosting tours for prospective parents and we would be delighted to show you our school or at an alternative time to suit you, if these are inconvenient.

Kelly Frost
Headteacher

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WEST festivity 2026



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Please write your name & contact number (and age if under 18) on the back of your Artwork.



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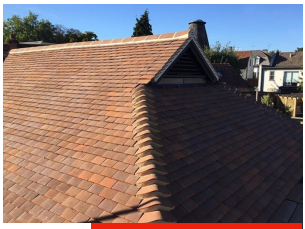
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The WVA has agreed to fund the purchase of a Defibrillator & CPR training device for use by St John Ambulance trainers to run courses in Westcott at the Village Hall. The courses are free to attend and will provide practical hands-on instruction to build confidence in life saving techniques.

Those attending will learn how to recognise cardiac arrest, deliver CPR and use a defibrillator safely and effectively. We are fortunate in Westcott to have two defibrillators which are funded by the WVA, one located outside the Nisa Village Shop and the other in the old telephone box on the corner of St Johns Road and The Burrell. Please look out for the training dates and sign up to attend.

Following the success of the inaugural Music Mingle event in the Spring the WVA is pleased to be offering support to the next Music Mingle event being held at Holy Trinity on the Saturday 24th October. These free to attend music events are organised by a group of local volunteers and feature some of the professional musicians who live in Westcott.

We're already looking forward to WESTfestivity being held on Saturday 14 November at the Village Hall and Holy Trinity. The WVA will be



running their usual Christmas themed tombola with all proceeds this year being donated to the Village Hall development project. As always, we are grateful for any donations of Christmas goodies for the tombola such as food, drink, decorations, small gifting items etc. Details of where to drop your donations will be published nearer the time or you can send an email to contact@westcottvillage.com and we will arrange for someone to pop by and collect from you.

If you have a community event planned or a community initiative which needs some funding support the WVA would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact Magesh Ramakrishnan the WVA Treasurer with details of your proposal, emails should be sent to treasurer@westcottvillage.com

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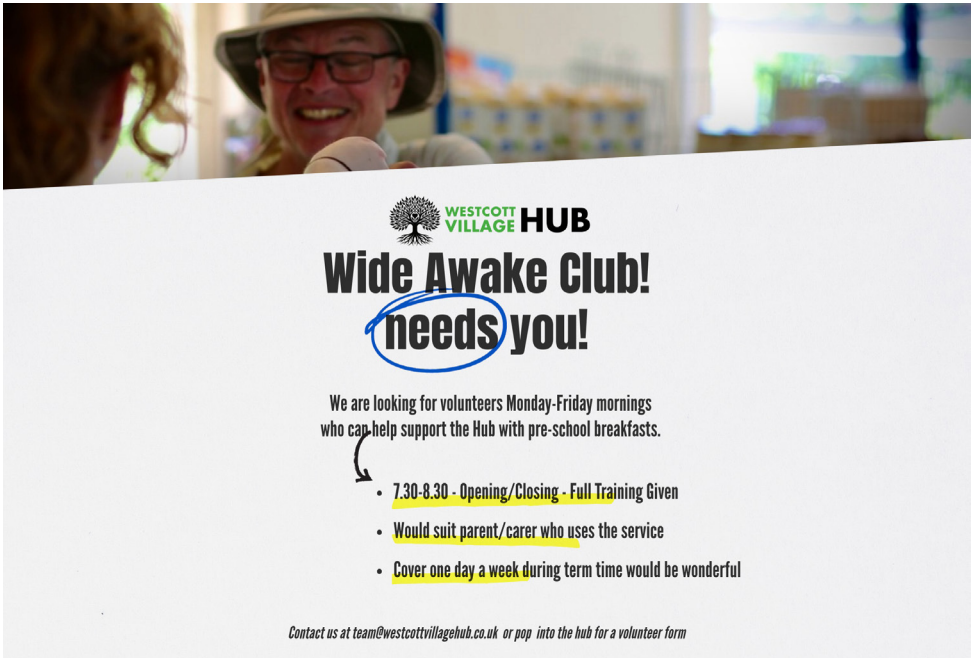
Tuesday 13th October 2026

Brothers of the Brush: Sian Walters



After our hot and hopefully relaxing summer break, Dorking Arts Society is back with a new and exciting series of lectures. Starting this October, *Brothers of the Brush* looks at the artist monks in 15th century Florence. These were men who lived an austere and cloistered existence and yet rose to become some of the most successful and highly respected artists of their time. Lecturer Siân Walters looks at the lives and works of these extraordinary artists including those whose paintings delight us still - Fra Filippo Lippi, Lorenzo Monaco and Fra Angelico.

The lecture will be held at Denbies in the Denbies Suite starting at 10.30. Refreshments are available from the Conservatory Restaurant. For more information and details of the forthcoming programme, please visit www.theartssocietydorking.org.uk



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Dorking: Cycling capital of England: The last day to catch our Cycling exhibition is Saturday 17th October, after which our temporary exhibition will focus on Strawberry Studios South.



Between 1972 and 1976, the band 10cc released four albums and eight singles, with two reaching number one in the UK charts. These were all recorded at Strawberry Studios Stockport, but the studio's success made it difficult for the band to book recording time. So, 10cc bought the old Pavilion Cinema on Dorking's South Street, and converted it into a state-of-the-art recording studio. The name of the band's album *Deceptive Bends* is taken from a sign that member Graham Gouldman passed on the A24 at Mickleman. This exhibition explores the story of Strawberry Studios South and the talented artists that recorded there, including 10cc, Paul McCartney, and Stevie Wonder. The exhibition will open on Thursday 22nd October.

Walking in Dorking: Our last guided walk of the year is our Family Walk - explore different building materials in Dorking with a kids worksheet. Tuesday 20th October, 2pm. Please see http://dorkingmuseum.org.uk/guided-walks-around-dorking/ for details and bookings of scheduled walks (please book in advance) or for private group bookings.

Halloween Ghost Walks: Join us for



a historic Halloween Ghost Walk to celebrate the spookiest time of year! Meet the ghosts of Dorking whose spirits are said to haunt the town: the boy soldier, the murdered monk, the drunken duke, and the murdered policeman. Saturday 31st October, walks at 6pm and 7.30pm from St. Martin's Churchyard, Dorking. Please see http://dorkingmuseum.org.uk/guided-walks-around-dorking/ for details and booking.

South Street Caves: As of now our final caves Open Day of the year on 3rd October is fully sold out, but why not get together a group for a private booking? Cave tours will reopen in March of next year. For details and bookings http://

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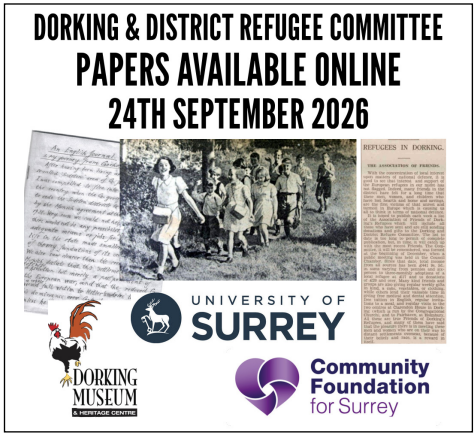
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dorkingmuseum.org.uk/south-street-caves/ or for private group bookings, e-mail caves@dorkingmuseum.org.uk to arrange a date.

Family Activities at Dorking Library: Autumn Magic Craft Extravaganza: What will you create to celebrate the colours of Autumn? Will it be a pinecone hedgehog? Or a conker cobweb? In conjunction with Arts Society Dorking, as a part of Arts Alive. Saturday 10th October, 10am-2pm. Family Learning Festival: Come and play a classic game with your family during half term. Did your family play the same games? Tuesday 20th October, 10am-12pm. Dorking Library, St. Martin's Walk. Free, materials provided and children must be accompanied.

Dorking Refugee Committee papers: The Museum's archive team and the University of Surrey launched the Accessing Refugee History in Surrey Project in September. Led by Professor Constance Bantman and Dr. Beth Palmer and funded by the Community Foundation for Surrey, the team has created a digitised and publicly accessible archive of the Dorking Refugee Committee's records. These records contain powerful stories of those escaping Nazi persecution, and of E.M. Forster and Ralph Vaughan Williams' support of the committee and refugees.



Volunteering Opportunities: The Museum depends on its team of enthusiastic volunteers to keep this important part of the community alive. If you have a spare few hours a month and would like to get involved, check out our range of flexible roles here: https://dorkingmuseum.org.uk/about/volunteer-opportunities/

Dorking Museum, 62 West Street. Thursdays 1pm-4pm, Fridays and Saturdays 10am-4pm, free entry. www.dorkingmuseum.org.uk. Visit dorkingmuseum.org.uk/digital-guide/. 01306 876591.

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3rd at 12.00, lunchtime concert at St Martin's church
3rd at 7.30, soprano and lute at St Martin's church, £25, 01306 740619
10th at 5.30, Dorking Chamber Orchestra at St Martin's church
17th at 9.30-5.00, LHMF Come & Sing at St Martin's church, £30
24th at 12.00, lunchtime piano recital at St Martin's church
24th at 4.00, Musical Mingle at Holy Trinity church, Westcott, free, 07304 027835
24th at 7.30, soprano and guitar at St Martin's church, £25, 01306 740619

The new season for the Dorking Concertgoers begins with two concerts held in St Martin's church. First is a recital by the soprano Elin Manahan Thomas, a leading performer of baroque music with Elizabeth Kenny, one of Europe's finest lute players. Their wide-ranging programme will include songs by Dowland, Purcell and Handel. The second concert is given by Bibi Heal with guitarist Amanda Cook. They are well known for their imaginative and expressive programmes, and this concert, entitled *Nature v Nurture*, will explore the beauties of mother nature alongside the follies of human nature. This month's lunchtime recital at St Martin's is a concert entitled *Family Harmony*. Given by Rebecca, Nicholas, Eloise, Beth and Eve Yates, it is a recital for voice, trumpet and bassoon. Their programme will include music by Purcell, Bach and Handel. The concert is free, with a retiring collection in aid of the William Cole Church Music Trust. Later in the month, there will be a second lunchtime concert given by the renowned pianist Roman Rudnytsky. He is an international American concert pianist of Ukrainian background, whose programme will no doubt be a treat to hear.

Westcott musicians will be holding a second 'Music Mingle'. This is an opportunity to enjoy some classical music in a relaxed format, especially suitable for those who might experience barriers to attending a traditional concert. Entry is free, with donations invited, and there will be light refreshments with an opportunity to meet the players. The music will include Mozart's lovely clarinet quintet. The Dorking Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Morley, has a programme including with Mozart's *piano concerto no.24 in C minor*, Beethoven's *Egmont overture*, Schubert's *Tragic symphony*, and an overture by Fanny Mendelssohn.

The Leith Hill Music Festival is holding a Come & Sing day, led by the inspiring festival conductor Neil Ferris, together with three distinguished composers: Cecilia McDowall, Joanna Forbes L'Estrange and Joanna Gill. Singers will learn three new pieces written especially by these composers, along with a new piece by Will Todd. The day will culminate with an informal performance of the music at 4pm (open to audience, price £10). Tickets can be booked through the LHMF website.

Ian Codd

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Life is Collaborative

Designers often look to the natural world for inspiration and problem-solving – from burrs stuck in a dog's fur providing the idea for Velcro fastenings, to the Japanese Shinkansen bullet train whose nose replicated the shape of a kingfisher's beak in order to eliminate the 'boom' noise when entering tunnels.



This summer has been hottest since records began in 1884, according to provisional data from the Met Office. Rainfall was generally scarce, with drought declared in Wales and more than two-thirds of England, and wildfires caused devastated landscapes from Dunwich Heath, Suffolk in the east to the Brecon Beacons in the west. Human-induced global heating is impacting lives here and now and conflict over resources is increasing.

What, then, might the natural world teach us about how to best face the challenges that are mounting up before us? *Rare Earth* on BBC Radio 4 this week asked – is nature all about survival of the fittest or do we all need to work together? The term 'survival of the fittest' is commonly associated with Darwin's theory of evolution. This term was in fact coined by the polymath Herbert Spencer and did not appear in the original 1859 publication of *On the Origin of Species.*

However, Darwin was persuaded to incorporate the phrase into the fifth edition, published a decade later. At a time when empire, industrial revolution and capitalism were in the ascendancy, the idea of 'survival of the fittest' took on a life of its own! Superiority and domination were lauded and the phrase was advocated as a means of justifying economic inequality, colonization and racism - misrepresenting Darwin's intended meaning.

Darwin used 'fittest' to refer to members of a species whose traits give them the best chance of surviving and reproducing in their specific environment. Thus, in certain contexts, camouflage, flexibility or cooperation might be more "fitting" than size or strength. Modern evolutionary biology continues to provide new insights into our understanding of 'fitness'. In her book *The Symbiotic Planet: A New Look for Evolution*, Lynn Margulis writes about the symbiotic relationships prevalent in nature which '*aren't just chance partnerships; they're vital connections that have played a big role in how species have evolved over time.*' For example: bees' mutually

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beneficial relationship with flowering plants, whereby bees collect nectar and pollen for food while transferring pollen between flowers for their reproduction, or oxpecker birds who remove and consume ticks from large mammals, such as elephants and buffalo, reducing tick-borne disease. Additionally, they alert their hosts to nearby predators.

Research carried out by Suzanne Simard, ecologist and author of *Finding The Mother Tree*, popularised the idea of the 'wood wide web'. This showed how trees receive and exchange nutrients and information with each other via a network of soil fungi mycelium, which connect the forest community. In return the forest provides the fungi with energy-rich carbon, via photosynthesis. Life collaborates for mutual benefit.

While the competitive side of nature is often visible and compelling – male red deer locking antlers to compete for mating rites; lions and hyenas competing for prey - cooperation is quieter and slower, yet fundamental to the thriving of interconnected and interdependent life on our planet. Theories of evolution remind us that life is not static, it is constantly revealing itself. We are part of the natural world – we are shaped by it and we are



constantly shaping it in return. While attention-grabbing headlines highlight conflict, disasters and stoke division, more positive stories, of communities coming together to adapt to changing circumstances and myriad acts of caring and kindness, go under the radar. Yet these are the stories that are perhaps more deserving of our attention and that may be key to our 'fitness', not just to survive, but to thrive. For stories of positive action being taken visit https://www.antidotelive.studio/action

Jakki Phillips

For a fully referenced version of this article with links to further information please visit https://greenwestcott.org/blog

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Our ‘Dance 2 B Fit’ group comprises people of mixed abilities and ages, and we dance low impact routines, to modern and popular music. It currently includes some seated exercises, and light dumbbell routines for extra toning, balance and muscle strength – but are open to some change according to your own thoughts.

If you have a ‘fitness’ background or previous experience of teaching low impact toning exercises and a flare for incorporating dance/exercise routines to music, and might be interested in bringing your expertise to this established class - then D&D U3A would love to hear from you.
You will need to be a qualified/registered instructor, with the appropriate certificates, have your own insurance, and we will ask you to draw up your own Risk Assessment for the class.

For more information please contact Diane on 07799580906 or email groups@dorkingu3a.org.uk.

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The Barn Swallow (Hirundo rustica)



Adult Male Barn Swallow

In late summer and early autumn, Swallows, or to give them their full name, Barn Swallows, can be seen and heard in large numbers, chattering away on overhead wires in preparation for migration. The term Swallow is still sufficient to identify this bird here in UK, but nowadays with our more extensive travelling and knowledge of birds of other countries, the more specific name of Barn Swallow is often used. For example, another European swallow occasionally seen in the UK is the Red-rumped Swallow. Worldwide, however, there are 17 swallow species in the same genus as our swallow, Hirundo (means 'swallow' in Latin), as well as other swallows of different genera.



Juvenile Barn Swallow

When the swallows gather on the wires, the juveniles can be recognised from adults by having a paler reddish throat and a shorter tail which extends to about wing-length (See attached photos). Adults have darker red throats and longer streamers to their tails, with males on average 18% longer than females. In fact, the length of the adult male's tail is important in its breeding success. Female swallows prefer to mate with males with longer tail streamers in the assumption that they will pass on better genes to their offspring. Swallows mate for life, though either sex will seek a new partner in the event they lose their existing one. The shorter tails in juveniles are considered by biologists to be very close to the "aerodynamic optimum" for natural flight, whereas adult tails have evolved to greater length due to sexual selection.

These swallows migrate 6,000 miles all the way to southern Africa on a perilous journey over the Sahara Desert. Many birds unfortunately perish on route. Ironically, therefore, the juveniles could be considered better equipped aerodynamically to make this journey than their parents.

See more on our activities and photos or if you're interested in joining below Facebook: RSPB Dorking and District Instagram: @rspb_dorking Website: https://group.rspb.org.uk/dorkinganddistrict/

Rob Carr

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