

The Tandridge Independent

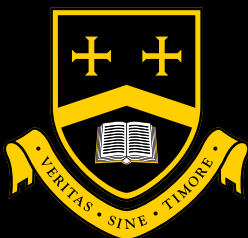
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FREE

No.212 - Dec 2025 - Jan 2026

Established 2006



THE CATERHAM FAMILY OF SCHOOLS



MULTI AWARD-WINNING EDUCATION



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Multi Award-winning Education



Named best Independent Senior School by the *Times Educational Supplement*, Caterham School was also shortlisted as 'best of the best' UK schools by Tatler's *UK Schools* guide. Caterham is an ambitious, high achieving and friendly school where pupils can be themselves and build lifelong friendships whilst gaining top grades which open the doors of opportunity at top universities in the UK, US and globally. Caterham pupils benefit from breadth of opportunity, wellbeing and fun and gain crucial life skills becoming problem solvers and innovators, ready to adapt to a changing world. Caterham's unique approach to education and wellbeing has been recognised through multiple national educational and innovation awards.

FAMILY OF SCHOOLS



Caterham is a growing family of schools that each share the same values, ambition and drive for excellence for our young people. Each school retains its own character and community but benefits from the strength of being part of an award-winning group.

Renowned Surrey prep school The Hawthorns School joined the group at the beginning of 2025 and Sussex based Copthorne Prep joined the group in late 2023. Pupils at schools within the family benefit from a smoother transfer up to the senior school as well as support and extension across the academic and co-curricular provision.

Caterham Senior school will continue to welcome pupils from a wide range of prep and primary schools across the South East.

CATERHAM SCHOOL

ISI inspection:

First and only UK school to gain three key areas of strength

Caterham's latest ISI inspection report saw the school become the first and only UK school to gain three Key Areas of Strength in an inspection. The key areas of national excellence identified by the Inspectors were:

1 The culture enables pupils not to worry about what others think about them, to be ambitious and to be thoroughly respectful of each other. This is a significant strength.

2 Teaching engages and generates intellectual interest and ambition among pupils at a high level. This is a significant strength. As a result, pupils develop a strong love of learning for its own sake.

3 Pupils' knowledge, understanding and application of technological skills are a significant strength of the school.

This is the result of decisions made by leaders to focus on and resource this area. The quality of pupils' digital work is extremely high. The highly effective and adaptive use of technology is woven throughout the entire curriculum. Technological skills, including coding and the use of artificial intelligence, are taught through the technology curriculum, which provides pupils with skills for life beyond school that are applied across all areas of learning.

Ceri Jones, Headmaster, said: "Of course, our focus here at Caterham remains on continuous improvement. We will continue to be reflective as an organisation and ambitious to ensure that Caterham continues to provide the best possible education we can for all our pupils at all times.

Top Exam Results Secure Bright Futures

Outstanding 2025 A Level results have secured bright futures for Caterham School pupils with over two thirds of all grades the top A* and A grades and almost a third the top A* grade. 92 per cent of all results received were at A* to B grades, once again securing Caterham's position as a UK 'premier league' school.

This year's stellar results opened doors of opportunity at leading UK, US and global universities. 82 per cent of pupils achieved their first-choice university AND course and 100 per cent their university of choice. All Caterham young medics (10 pupils) secured their place at medical school for an impressive third year running representing a school record. A dozen pupils now join the long line of Caterham pupils studying at Oxford

and Cambridge Universities. Places at prestigious US and overseas universities have been secured across a range of subjects including politics, dentistry and film.

In summer 2025 Caterham pupils opened envelopes which revealed 92 per cent of all GCSE grades at 9 to 7 and 50 per cent at the top grade 9 – smashing all school records! Over three quarters of all grades are at the top 9 and 8 grades. Over half the year group achieved a 9 in English and maths, with one in four pupils also taking further (Advanced) maths, and over half them securing a grade 9. The average grade achieved by a Caterham pupil is 8.2. Today's phenomenal results represent a 50 per cent increase in the top 9 & 8 grades versus 2019; the last set of results clear of any Covid adjustments.

caterhamschool.co.uk



The Tandridge Independent

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Established 2006

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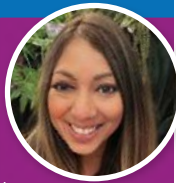
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Welcome to the December issue!

Hello and welcome to the December edition of the Tandridge Independent!

And here we are again... another year is almost over. It's incredible to think that it has been six years since I first put my stamp on this free community newspaper. It's been a steep learning curve, but if an international pandemic can't stop you then nothing can!

Our team has changed since we started but every member has contributed towards the brand establishing itself and growing, so I would like to say a big thank you to them all. Without them, and their expertise, knowledge and ideas, the business would not have developed the way it has.

I'd also like to thank Rosalind, who has worked with me from the beginning and without whom it would not be possible to publish the paper. Her talent and support are invaluable and I have never worked with someone who has as much patience and understanding as she does with me. No matter what the idea, she will consider it rationally before attempting to reign me in and advise me of a more practical, less impulsive way of achieving my goal!

Talking of growing the TI brand, we held our second networking event in November. It was great to see local businesses come together to support each other and I'd like to say thank you to Bayou, Melissa and the team at the Well Life GP Clinic in Oxted for the opportunity to use their lovely space. If you would like to come along to our next event, which will be held in the new year, email us on newsdesk@tandridgeindependent.com.

Our Independent News Hour radio show also returns to the airwaves in a couple of weeks and we have a fantastic line up of businesses and residents (as well as a celebrity or two!) scheduled to take part. Follow us on Instagram (@the_independent_newshour) for more information, and please contact us if you would like to be one of our guests!

We love being able to celebrate the achievements of local people, and this month's paper is no different. We've got nine-year-old Ruby from Godstone, who successfully auditioned for a part in English Youth Ballet's recent production of Swan Lake at The Hawth in Crawley, and Caterham's Rashid Amassoul, who won two gold medals at the Taekwon-do World Championships in Italy in October. Congratulations to you both.

We are also pretty partial to sampling the district's incredible range of food and drink when we can. Godstone's Flower Farm held their fabulous food fair recently (see page seven) - breakfast with our columnist Farmer Patrick on a Sunday morning, followed by stocking up on fruit, vegetables and baked goodies, has become a bit of a habit recently!

We've got an amazing competition for you this month, and we make it so easy for you to enter! All you need to do, to win a night's stay at the wonderful Nutfield Priory Hotel & Spa, is email competition@tandridgeindependent.com or follow us on Instagram (@tandridgeindependent) and like our competition post when you see it.

As always, thank you for reading our newspaper. We are the only local, free newspaper in the district and we really appreciate your support and feedback too.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and I hope you have plenty of festive fun in our community!

The Tandridge Independent - your news, your community, your paper.



Louise D'Costa

Welcome to the December issue!

Hello!

2025 has been a different kind of year for us at the Tandridge Independent. Keeping a newspaper up and running is no mean feat, especially in the current financial climate. We are lucky to have solid support from the fabulous businesses who advertise with us, but rising print prices, plus numerous other overheads, have made it even tougher in recent times. So much so that both Louise and I took on second jobs at the end of 2024. These ensure we both have a steady income that pays the ever-increasing bills but, more importantly, that we can keep the only free local paper in the area going, for the benefit of the Tandridge community.

This has stretched us even further than before: between work, family and producing the paper, we've been rushed off our feet in 2025. Inevitably, this has given us much less time to research and write as many in depth articles as we would ideally like to - but we're still pretty proud of everything we have achieved this year, despite the challenges!

Looking ahead, the news that there are big changes coming to Surrey's local district and borough councils has given us something to think about. Come April 2027, Tandridge District Council, along with the other eleven councils in the county, will be replaced with just two: West Surrey and East Surrey.

There are obviously plenty of questions that this issue raises, but for us, one of the biggest is: what happens to the paper's name?! Given that we will continue to cover the area's news and events, but that the district of Tandridge will no longer exist - do we change it, or keep it as a nostalgic reminder? We'd love to know what you think: tell me on rosalind@tandridgeindependent.com!

We're taking a well-deserved break over Christmas, but will be back in the new year, working on February's paper. As always, if you've got a story to tell, or a local issue to highlight, get in touch via newsdesk@tandridgeindependent.com.

Have a wonderful Christmas, and we'll see you in 2026!

Rosalind Brookman



This month's competition Win a night's stay at Nuffield Priory Hotel & Spa

NUTFIELD PRIORY
HOTEL & SPA
NUTFIELD, SURREY



Please note that by entering the competition you are agreeing to your name being published on our website, paper and socials if you are a winner. Your email will also be added to our mailing list. You can ask to be removed at any time.

T&C's apply (see website)
Donated by: Nutfield Priory hotel

To enter our draw please email your name
to competition@tandridgeindependent.com

The closing date is Friday 19th December
and the winner will be announced
on Friday 26th December 2025

News In Brief

Election results

By-elections were held in November to elect one district councillor for Lingfield, Crowhurst and Tandridge and one district councillor for Westway in Caterham on the Hill.

Alan Schmidt, Lingfield & Crowhurst Residents, was elected as a councillor for Lingfield, Crowhurst and Tandridge. Martin Redman, Liberal Democrats, was elected as a councillor for Westway.

Godstone Neighbourhood Plan

Tandridge District Council is asking for your thoughts on its recently published Godstone Neighbourhood Plan. The plan, which was submitted to TDC by Godstone Parish Council, is now in a consultation period, which ends at 11:59 on Sunday, 4 January 2026. After this date, it will be sent to an external, independent examiner for consideration and, if approved, will then go to a public vote. You can view the plan at tandridge.gov.uk/godstone or at the council offices in Oxted.

Shape the future of our roads

The county councils of Surrey and West Sussex are asking for help to shape early proposals for transport improvements along the A22 and A264 corridor between Godstone, Copthorne and East Grinstead. These improvements are aimed at making travel safer, more reliable and better connected and include journeys by car, bus, bike and on foot. Feedback is wanted from people who live in, work in or travel through the corridor: complete the survey at a22-a264.commonplace.is by 23 December.

Looking out for vulnerable people

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service recently launched their 'You're their person' campaign, asking everyone to look out for vulnerable people this winter by referring them for a free Safe and Well Visit. These are designed to help people stay safe in their home and include checking or installing smoke alarms, discussing escape routes, offering tips on reducing the risk of fire, plus wellbeing tips such as home security, fall prevention and signposting to other local services if necessary. Book a Safe and Well Visit at surreycc.gov.uk/safeandwell.

Emma B's Stir-up Sunday benefits food bank

Virgin Radio presenter and Tandridge resident Emma B held her annual Stir-up Sunday event on 23 November, bringing in a large number of donations for Caterham & District Foodbank.

The woman-only evening, which took place at the Lambing Barn on the Priory Farm Estate in Nutfield, centres around the centuries-old tradition of spending the last Sunday before advent 'stirring up' your Christmas pudding. Emma's guests were invited to take up a spoon and stir her bowl of pudding mix, as well as to bring donations of food and feminine hygiene products.

This year, Emma was joined by special guest Mark Wogan for a relaxed interview and Q&A session about Christmas cooking. Mark has worked in the hospitality industry for more than 35 years, beginning as a commis chef for Antonia Carluccio, and co-founding Homeslice Pizza with his brother in 2013. The pair also have a media company, and Mark, who is the son of Sir Terry Wogan, regularly contributes to TV and radio programmes on the subject of food, as well as hosting his podcast Spooning, where he interviews celebrities about their food loves and hates.

Project manager of Caterham & District Foodbank Robin Gwynne said they have received significant donations from Emma's event.

"Caterham & District Foodbank hugely appreciate the ongoing sup-



port from Emma B and everyone attending this event again this year, adding to that from previous years. We're delighted that two of our trustees were able to be there, including our current chair Gemma.

The support we receive from many local organisations and networks, as well as individuals seen and unseen, makes our ongoing work possible. Last year we provided emergency food support for about 100 people

per week (40% of whom were children), and we expect that demand to continue."

To donate to the food bank, visit caterham.foodbank.org.uk.

News In Brief

Tandridge Local Plan

Tandridge District Council is preparing a new Local Plan, which will guide planning decisions in the district, such as where new homes are built, access to schools and GPs, protection of green spaces and support for jobs and transport. They will be carrying out the first public consultation in early 2026 - you can sign up for the Local Plan newsletter, and receive updates at tandridge.gov.uk/signup.

Tackling pavement safety

TDC are asking for residents' views on their proposal for a Public Spaces Protection Order for Caterham Valley, aimed at stopping vehicles, including motorbikes, e-scooters, mopeds, cars, lorries and buses, from mounting and parking on pavements along several roads in the area. You can view and respond to the survey at tandridge.gov.uk/consult. It takes a few minutes to complete and will close on Wednesday, 31 December.

Farmer Patrick says

By **Farmer Patrick**

Flower Farm

It's Chriiiiistmas! Obviously, you have to say that as though you were Noddy Holder singing his famous Christmas hit song from the 70s... or rather, should I say, his lifetime pension!

Most Christmas songs aren't actually written at or near Christmas time at all: they're generally written much earlier on and recorded in the summer, along with a Christmassy video. Finding Christmas decorations near Abbey Road studios in mid-July would have been no mean task, and I have an image in my head of Mr Holder heading off to his aunt's loft to dig out her fake fold-up Christmas tree bought from Woolworths in 1972. (1972 was a monumental year, not only for the downfall of Ted Heath's government, but far more importantly - in my view - for my arrival on this planet!)

The reason I have chosen to talk about Christmas songs in my opening words is because writing and recording a Christmas tune is not dissimilar to running a farm shop with a huge emphasis on Christmas. Christmas is the once-a-year special occasion for many people from all walks of life, for many reasons. And for this, food is a major centrepiece of the festivities. Food is for sharing,



eating, enjoying, trying to put on a good show, and for most of us - something to look forward to. (For some people of course - most notably reluctant teenagers - it means having to endure unwanted elderly relatives, who every year make the same comment about 'oh my, how you've grown' and 'ooh, interesting hair cut', etc. etc.)

Obviously for many, Christmas centres around the fatted bird, and our turkeys start their journey with us much earlier in the year too. They

arrive at a day old, way back in July, and then we look after them until December when, as we're all aware, they move on from this earth, so to speak. But it's not just turkeys, we also need to raise pigs to make sure we have enough hams. And then, as we draw closer to Christmas, the fun begins for all of the farm team. Pigs in blankets to make (by the thousands), bacon to cure, hams to cook, Christmas cheeses to prepare, pies to make, mince pies to bake (again, by the thousands), stuffing to mix,

sausages to make, and so the list goes on. Oh, plus tinsel and slightly tatty looking baubles to dig out from the loft above the shop and, of course, the inevitable battle with a reluctant set of Christmas lights. Will they, won't they...?!

Christmas orders for the shop are already flying in, and we're all beginning to get in a Christmas mood. In just a few weeks, the fruits of all our hard work will be borne out, and hopefully they will contribute to a wonderful Christmas for you.

However, even over Christmas the farm doesn't stop. There are still chickens, cows and sheep to feed, and if it's cold, burst water pipes to fix etc. I'm not going to touch very much on farming this month, other than to say that I wish every farmer up and down the country and across the world a jolly festive time.

May I also take this opportunity to wish all you readers a very happy Christmas, wherever you're spending it, even if you have to endure dear old Aunt Mildred and her dodgy breath and silly comments at inappropriate moments.

I'm sure we will see many of you in the next few weeks in the shop or the bistro. You may even be coming to our famous Christmas party. If not...make sure you put it in your diary for next year.

Happy Christmas!



(Photo credits: Matthew Cuzen)

The Oxted & District branch of the Royal British Legion commemorated Remembrance Sunday in November with a parade, attended by serving members of the armed forces, veterans and branch members, as well as 150 Explorers, Scouts, Cubs and Beavers. A service was then held at St Mary's Church, led by branch chaplain Reverend James Ashton. Afterwards, the branch marched back to the War Memorial at Master Park, where they were joined by more than 300 people for a two-minute silence and a wreath-laying ceremony.



(Credit: Ben Garner, English Youth Ballet)

Letter from Claire Coutinho, MP for East Surrey

November offered us a chance to remember all those who gave their lives in service to our country. I was honoured to join veterans, local volunteers, our emergency services, and Father Peter O’Connell in Godstone for a beautiful Remembrance Day service. While living connection to the world wars may be fading, it’s our duty to never forget the sacrifices our brave servicemen and women made so our nation could triumph in the face of tyranny. We will always remember them.

It’s been a remarkable year for my family with the birth of my son, but the journey was not straightforward; becoming a mother left me in a medical coma and almost killed me. I’m so grateful to the brilliant doctors and nurses who saved my life. My husband and I sat down on the This Morning sofa a few weeks ago to tell our story – I have shared the clip on my Facebook page.

Back to the constituency: our farmers make sure we have brilliant British food, but it’s often bloody hard work – so it was great to sit down with local farmers and the NFU recently. Farms are not

just beautiful fields or places for the government to put solar farms; they provide food security, and many have been in the same hands for generations. The government’s intent in destroying our rural way of life through their Family Farm Tax is wrong and based on an ignorance of how farm finances actually work. The Conservatives will back our farmers and scrap this pernicious tax if we win the next election.

At the meeting we also discussed the soaring numbers of unauthorised traveller sites in Tandridge. These sites are being set up on Green Belt land without planning permission, and like locals I’m becoming increasingly frustrated. I met with Surrey Police and Tandridge District Council and am working with colleagues in Westminster to press for national change. I organised a letter to the home secretary, calling for a task force to support local councils in tackling illegal encampments. I will always act to protect our countryside and ensure fairness for all residents.

We also received confirmation that Surrey County Council and

all district and borough councils in Surrey will be abolished and replaced with two unitary authorities – East Surrey Council and West Surrey Council. Next year’s May council elections will take place. My main concern has been the shadow of other councils’ debt. When I wrote to the government in May, I made clear East Surrey residents should not pick up the bill for towns they don’t live in, left by councillors they did not elect. Whilst some debt will be written off, billions remain, and I will continue to press Ministers to make sure any debt burden incurred elsewhere in the county is not placed on the residents of East Surrey.

As I wrap up this month’s update, I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year, and to thank you for the many wonderful conversations I’ve had with constituents on the doorsteps, in the community and in my many surgeries throughout 2025. It’s the privilege of my life to be your MP, and I’m here to work for you. If you need help, please never hesitate to get in touch on claire.coutinho.mp@parliament.uk or 0207 2195972.

Ruby sparkles in Swan Lake

Ruby Thurman-Long, 9, who lives in Godstone, has had the opportunity to experience life as a professional dancer after winning a part in English Youth Ballet’s recent production of Swan Lake at The Hawth Crawley.

The young ballerina auditioned alongside more than 190 other dancers at The Hawth in June, and was told on the day that she had won a role in the production. She then went through an intensive rehearsal period, which involved 60 hours of training over 10 days, set up to mirror a professional dance environment. This included daily company warm-up classes and a rotating schedule across three studios, with each session ending in a full company run-through.

Ruby, who attends Godstone Dance Academy, then danced alongside eight international principal artists and 99 other local young dancers in

three performances at The Hawth on Friday, 31 October and Saturday, 1 November. She loved her time with English Youth Ballet. “I made lots of friends and had so much fun!” she says. “I loved the costumes and the whole experience was amazing!”



Claire Coutinho MP

Member of Parliament for East Surrey

It is an honour to be re-elected as your Member of Parliament. Since first being elected in 2019, my team and I have worked on over 22,000 constituency cases, helping local residents find solutions to both local and national issues.

If you ever need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact my office on claire.coutinho.mp@parliament.uk

Claire

CONTACT ME

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📘 @claire4eastsurrey

✉️ Claire.Coutinho.MP@parliament.uk

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Christmas at Godstone Farm

Book now, last few slots available

A very Merry Christmas from Godstone Farm!

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godstonefarm.co.uk



Christmas colouring competition

Caterham Festival is running a Christmas colouring contest, sponsored by Pinks Funeral Directors, for children aged between three and nine years old, with prizes for the three winners.

You can download the colouring template at caterhamfestival.org. Entries should be handed in to either JJ Browne & Son, 10 Godstone Road, Caterham Valley, or Pinks Funeral Directors, 18 Raglan Precinct, Caterham on the Hill, by 12:00 on Friday, 19 December.

We are recruiting!

Facilities Coordinator

As our Facilities Coordinator you will oversee the maintenance, safety and operational efficiency of our premises. You will play a vital role in the running of The Westway which includes managing various facility related projects, health and safety management, operational compliance, and space planning and utilisation for hirers.

Apply today! Closing date: 08/12/2025
(Subject to applications, closing date may close early)

 01883 347230
info@thewestway.org

We are recruiting!

Volunteer Coordinator

As our volunteer coordinator it will be your responsibility to develop, support and celebrate The Westway's volunteer community. You will ensure volunteers feel valued, confident and equipped to play an active role in the life of The Westway Hub. You will be central to building an inclusive, welcoming, and sustainable volunteer programme which reflects our values.

Apply today! Closing date: 08/12/2025
(Subject to applications, closing date may close early)

 01883 347230
info@thewestway.org

Cohabiting - get to know your rights



By **Seema Midha**

EJ Coombs Solicitors

More couples than ever are choosing to live together without marrying. While relationships have evolved, the law has not kept pace. In 2025, unmarried couples in the UK still have far fewer legal protections than married couples or civil partners. Understanding the risks, and knowing how to protect yourself, can make a huge difference.

There's no such thing as 'Common Law Marriage'

A widespread misconception is that living together for a certain number of years gives you the same legal rights as a married couple. This is not true in the UK.

Scenario: Emma and James lived together for 12 years and bought a flat in Emma's name alone. When they separated, James discovered he had no legal claim to the property, despite contributing to the mortgage and bills for over a decade. Without a cohabitation agreement, years of investment and effort can be lost.

This is why it's essential to understand that cohabiting does not create automatic legal rights, and planning ahead is critical.

Cohabitation laws across the UK

The legal protections available to unmarried couples vary depending on where you live:

England and Wales

Cohabiting partners have very limited rights. Property stays with the person named on the title, and there is no guaranteed financial support on separation. Inheritance is protected

only if there is a will.

Scenario: Alex moved in with Sam and helped pay for renovations to Sam's house. When the relationship ended, Alex could not claim reimbursement for the money spent because the property was solely in Sam's name.

Scotland

Some legal mechanisms, such as cohabitation agreements and claims under family law, provide slightly more protection, but these remain narrower than the rights of married couples.

Northern Ireland

The legal position is similar to England and Wales, leaving cohabitants exposed unless they take proactive steps.

Proposed reforms and what they could mean

Lawmakers have recognised that cohabiting couples need more protection. Current discussions focus on:

- Allowing partners to claim a share of property or assets built up during the relationship.
- Giving cohabitants certain inheritance rights if a partner dies intestate.
- Recognising caregiving responsibilities, particularly when children are involved.
- However, no reform has been implemented, and there is no confirmed timeline. Couples must continue to protect themselves in the meantime.

Practical steps to protect yourself

- Cohabitation agreements

These agreements can set out how property, savings, and responsibilities will be shared.

Scenario: Lucy and Mark bought a house together, but only Mark's name was on the title. They signed a cohabi-

tation agreement specifying that Lucy would have a 40% share if they ever separated, protecting both parties.

- Wills and estate planning

Without a Will, a partner who dies intestate may leave their estate entirely to family members, leaving the surviving partner with nothing.

Scenario: Hannah and Tom lived together for years. Tom passed away without a Will, and Hannah was left with no legal claim to the house or savings. A properly drafted Will would have ensured she was financially secure.

- Legal advice

Consult a family or property law specialist when buying property, taking out joint loans, or raising children together. Legal advice can prevent disputes and clarify rights.

- Clear communication

Discuss finances, future plans, and expectations early. Being transparent reduces misunderstandings and protects both partners.

How can we help

Living together does not automatically give you the legal rights of a married couple. There is no common law marriage in the UK, and without proper agreements or planning, cohabiting partners may find themselves unprotected.

By taking proactive steps - drafting cohabitation agreements, making wills, and seeking legal advice - couples can safeguard their finances, property, and family arrangements.

Understanding the law and planning ahead ensures that your relationship is secure, whatever the future holds. Contact us today on 01883 343 460 or via our website ejcoombs.co.uk to arrange a fixed-fee confidential appointment.

A taste of local at Flower Farm

An array of local food and drink was on display at Flower Farm's Christmas Tasting Day at the end of November.

Farmer Patrick Deeley gave his visitors the opportunity to try an array of Flower Farm's own produce, including marmalades and chutneys, breads and pastries from the bakery, and honey made by the farm's 500,000 bees. They could also buy stout and ale as well as food and gifts from a variety of other local businesses.



Photo credit: Flower Farm



All December

A Magical Christmas at Godstone Farm!







BOOK HERE!

Jingle all the way to Godstone Farm for a festive farmyard day out!

Celebrate the season with a magical visit to Father Christmas! Share Christmas wishes in his cozy grotto, choose a gift from Santa's Toyshop, and enjoy a whimsical walkthrough with festive fun. Enjoy entry to our amazing Christmas Show, an interactive performance adding extra sparkle to your visit!

So much included...

- A visit to our Christmas Grotto!
- A toy from Father Christmas' Toy Shop!
- Entry to our interactive Christmas Show!
- Enjoy our Cookie Decorating Experience!
- PLUS all the usual fun on the farm!



godstonefarm.co.uk



Dreaming of a green Christmas

By **Cllr Catherine Sayer**

Leader of Tandridge
District Council



Tandridge
District Council

Household waste is estimated to increase by around 30% during the festive period, with packaging, excess food and unwanted gifts all contributing to the pile. Plus, many common festive items, such as wrapping paper with glitter or foil, tinsel or Christmas cracker toys are not easily recycled through standard household collections and often end up in landfill.

If you'd like to have a greener Christmas and recycle as much as possible, here are a few suggestions:

Food waste

Any food you can't eat or freeze, please pop it in your green food caddy and not in your recycling or rubbish bins.

Wrapping

Extra cardboard? If it doesn't all fit in your recycling bin, cut it up and place it next to your recycling bin in a cardboard box or a clear plastic bag. Keep the extra box or bag light and not too tall so crews can move it safely.

Avoid glittery or foil wrapping paper, as it cannot be recycled and must go in your rubbish bin. Use less sticky tape if possible. Christmas cards and envelopes can be recycled, but avoid

those with glitter, foil or batteries.

Batteries, lights, electrical

Many decorations, toys and gadgets come with batteries and these shouldn't go in your household bins. Batteries can cause fires if mixed with rubbish or recycling. Just put them in a small, tied bag next to your food caddy.

Broken or unwanted Christmas lights can be recycled. Place them in a tied carrier bag next to your food caddy on your collection day.

Christmas trees

If you have a real Christmas tree, you can recycle it at our Community Recycling Centres at either Bond Road, Warlingham or Chaldon Road, Caterham, or by cutting it up and composting it at home.

Member of the Green Waste Club?

You can recycle your tree by cutting it up (maximum trunk 10cm diameter) to fit in your bin and ensure the lid closes.

If in doubt, visit our recycling and



rubbish web pages for more information: tandridge.gov.uk/recyclingandrubbish.

Waste collections

Garden waste collections will not take place in the weeks starting 22 December or 29 December 2025.

Recycling and rubbish collection changes over Christmas, following

the bank holidays. You can check your dates at: tandridge.gov.uk/checkmybinday

Usual collection day

Thursday 25 Dec
Friday 26 Dec
Tuesday 30 Dec
Wednesday 31 Dec
Thursday 1 Jan

Holiday collection day

Saturday 27 Dec
Tuesday 30 Dec
Wednesday 31 Dec
Friday 2 Jan
Saturday 3 Jan

Friday 2 Jan
Tuesday 6 Jan
Wednesday 7 Jan
Thursday 8 Jan
Friday 9 Jan

Tuesday 6 Jan
Wednesday 7 Jan
Thursday 8 Jan
Friday 9 Jan
Saturday 10 Jan

If you have any comments/questions, please get in touch at: Cllr.Catherine.Sayer@tandridge.gov.uk
Have a wonderful and green Christmas!

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The Tandridge
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oxted@wellife-clinic.co.uk
Tel: 01883 338336

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Cobham KT11 1AA
cobham@wellife-clinic.co.uk
Tel: 01932 391883

Travel Smarter: magical Christmas markets

By **Kim Cooper**

KC Travels



I am originally from Glasgow but I did a wee trip to Edinburgh for a travel event in August this year and was reminded how beautiful the city is, not to mention how friendly the residents are!

There are several ways to get to Scotland from down south: you can drive, you can take a scenic train journey or you can fly, which I'd recommend, especially if you're only visiting Edinburgh for a few days. I flew with Easyjet, which is quick and easy. A taxi from the airport into town costs about £25 but you can also get a bus which is obviously slower, but cheaper.

There are plenty of hotels available all over the city, but if you're looking to visit all the famous sites then there are a few areas you might want to look at. Grassmarket is full of cosy pubs, shops and restaurants. From there, you can head to Victoria Street (which is Harry Potter heaven), which then leads you up to the Royal Mile, right in the heart of the action.

Not far from there is shopper's paradise the West End, also home to some lovely hotels, including the historic Waldorf Astoria, and great spots for food and drinks. Also worth looking at is Dean Village, Morning-side and Haymarket. From a personal point of view, I can point you towards the gorgeous Virgin Hotel Edinburgh, which is in the Old Town: a wonderful location, a very comfortable bed, a great bar and amazing service!

At this time of year, Edinburgh might just be one of the most magical places in the UK, with a variety of Christmas markets, funfairs and festive attractions nestled in between the Old Town and the New Town. Here are my top picks!

East Princes Street Gardens

This traditional market is right in the



centre of the city, and has a fantastic view of the castle and the Scott Monument. It's free to visit, and there are approximately 70 stalls full of the best local and international produce and gifts, as well as food and drinks to sample while you shop.

The market also has Scotland's largest ferris wheel, the LNER Big Wheel, as well as the 80m Around the World Star Flyer - both of which offer stunning vistas of the city's skyline!

West Princes Street Gardens Family Funfair

If you're in Edinburgh with family this festive season, head to West Princes Street Gardens. Again, it's free to enter and is packed with funfair rides and attractions, food and drink stalls and some 'warming zones' where you can take the chill off with a hot chocolate or mulled wine. The Ross Bandstand is also worth a visit to take in their family-friendly live performances and shows.

George Street West

and Castle Street

From the end of December until just after New Year, George Street hosts an ice rink with sessions to help everybody enjoy the delights of skating, including relaxed, toddler and late night disco sessions. It gets really busy, so pre-booking is a must.

There is another warming zone here so, once you've been round the rink, you can grab a hot drink or treat from the stalls, before jumping on one of the traditional fairground rides or visiting Castle Street's Christmas market. You can also take part in a festive workshop, making wreaths, Christmas decorations or even sculpting something out of ice. And, if ice is your thing, you could then head along to the Polar Ice Bar, where the tables, chairs and glasses are made out of it!

St Andrew Square Winter Garden

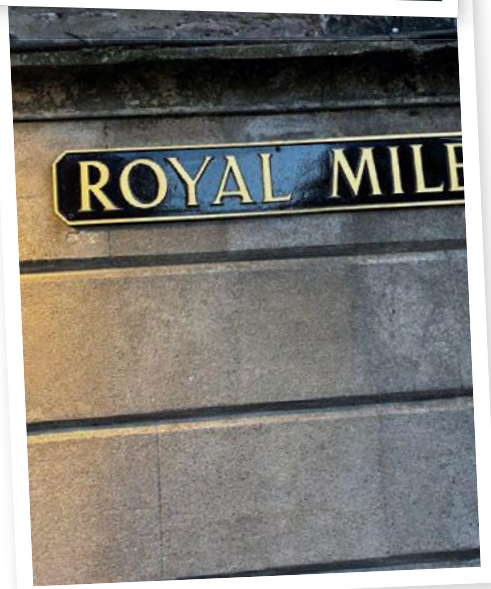
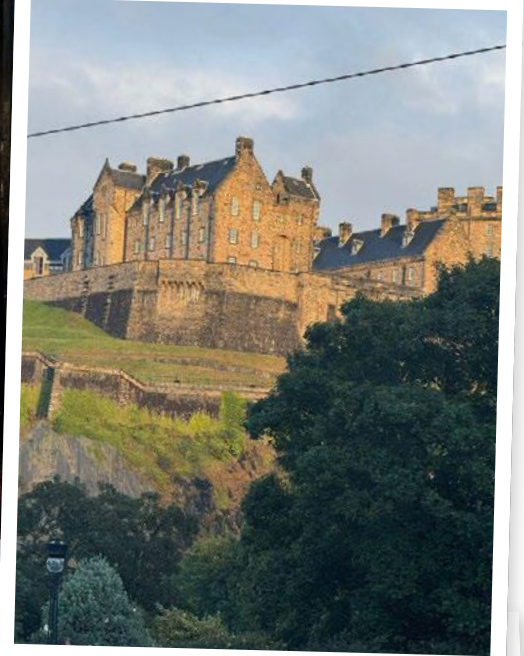
Close to Prince's Street you'll find the St Andrew Square Winter Garden, along with the UK's largest illumina-

ted Christmas tree trail - 450 of them to be exact! The money raised from this gets distributed between local charities.

As you can imagine, all of the above get extremely busy, with weekends especially crazy. Experiencing them at night is lovely, but I always say if you want to really have a proper wander and visit the stalls, head there during the day.

Whether you're a shopper, a history lover, a Harry Potter fan, looking for a romantic or family break, or simply wanting to get into the festive spirit, Edinburgh is the perfect city to choose, with a wide range of hotels to suit every budget.

If you'd like me to help you arrange a Christmas trip to Edinburgh, or you would like to know more about the benefits of running a travel business, email me on kimcooper99@gmail.com, or message me on 07788202441, and I will send you a free information pack.



You can find me on Instagram at @kc.travels, and I also have a podcast called 'Freedom to Fly'. Have a look for it on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

Tandridge Past: The Hoskin Arms

By **Peter Connolly**

Curator, East Surrey Museum

With Christmas fast approaching, I looked through our archive for something festive for this month's piece. December is popular for social events - parties, dances, concerts etc. - and a search through our database came up with a number of mementoes of past events - one of which was a ticket to a dance at the Hoskins Arms in Oxted in December 1954.

The Hoskins Arms Hotel originally stood at the corner of Station Road West and Church Lane, and was the brainchild of Charles Hoskins Master, Lord of the Manor of Oxted. In January 1874, Charles purchased a controlling interest in the Friary Brewery of Guildford. In 1886, Charles used his influence with the brewery to build the hotel to

serve the 'new' part of Oxted. By 1889 the hotel had developed into a hub for a wide range of social activities, with tennis courts, a bowling green, bicycle track, quoits and stabling for horses.

By the early 20th Century the hotel had become a regular venue for shows, dinners, auctions and other events, and even hosting Oxted's first cinema from 1913 until the Plaza opened in 1929 in Station Road West. By the late 1950s it had become simply The Hoskins Arms, with a public lounge and a cocktail bar, and the extensive grounds had been redeveloped.

The Friary Brewery was acquired and absorbed into the huge Allied Breweries conglomerate in the 1960s, and the original brewery site in Guildford was demolished and redeveloped into the Friary shopping centre in 1974. A similar fate befell the Hoskins Arms: the original

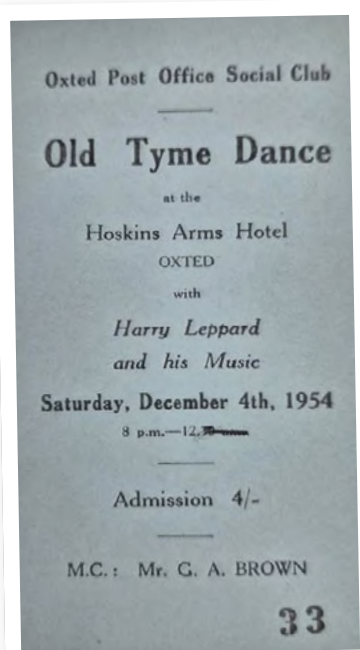


building was demolished in 1974, and replaced with an unusual hexadecagonal three-storey building, featuring two bars, a coffee shop, a restaurant and 12 hotel rooms.

But the new building did not last, and the pub closed in 1993, future uncertain. Shortly afterwards, the

pub was badly damaged in a disastrous fire, as the photo shows. The building was subsequently demolished, and replaced by a similar-shaped block of apartments that still stands on the site.

Visit eastsurreymuseum.com for more information and opening times.



Staying well this December: simple steps for a healthier winter

By **Dr Amit Seyan**

Well Life GP Clinic, Oxted



As December arrives, shorter days and colder weather can affect our health in ways we often overlook. With more time spent indoors, winter viruses spread more easily, whilst reduced daylight can impact mood and energy levels.

Prevention starts with simple habits. Washing your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds can prevent one in five respiratory illnesses. Maintaining a balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables helps your body function normally, whilst staying hydrated and getting seven to eight hours of sleep each night provides a solid foundation for well-being. Research shows that even modest sleep restriction can impair immune cell activity.

Winter can affect mental health too. Many people experience lower motivation and fatigue during darker months. Some develop seasonal affective disorder (SAD), which affects approximately two million people in

the UK. Regular outdoor exercise, maximising exposure to natural daylight, and maintaining a consistent sleep routine can help. However, if low mood persists, it's important to speak with your GP, as SAD may require treatment similar to other forms of depression.

Digestive discomfort often accompanies festive celebrations. Richer foods and disrupted eating patterns can lead to bloating or indigestion. Eating mindfully, moderating portion sizes, and taking a short walk after

meals can help your body cope better with seasonal indulgence.

December is also a good time to consider your overall health. If you haven't had routine checks recently or have specific concerns, your GP can advise on what's appropriate for your circumstances.

With thoughtful habits and timely professional advice when needed, you can enjoy the festive season whilst looking after your wellbeing.

Visit welllife-clinic.co.uk.

Oxted & District History Society lecture - The Spanish Civil War

By **Stuart Paterson**

In November, Professor Tom Buchanon, an author and academic from Oxford University, gave an interesting lecture to the Oxted & District History Society on 'The Spanish Civil War'. In 1931, King Alfonso fled Spain for Britain, to be replaced by a republic. In 1936, a centre-left government was elected, which led to a rebellion by elements of the armed forces, commanded over by General Franco. A three-year civil war ensued. The rebels received help from Nazi Germany, while Britain and France led a group of neutrals, who decided not to intervene.

There was no proper democratic culture in Spain. The constitution, drawn up in 1931, was divisive. The fascists were rebels but so were the Catholics and monarchists. Soviet Russia, however, supported the Republic. Fascist Germany had no qualms about supporting Franco and the rebels. They sent Junker aircraft to bring Franco's army from Morocco to

Spain and helped bomb Republican targets. Meanwhile, Stalin provided advance war material to the Republic.

After the Munich agreement, however, Stalin gave up helping the Republic. James Matthews wrote two books about the civil war. He says that the rebels were better organised and disciplined than the Republic. The lack of a liberal tradition in Spain led to mass executions by both sides: 150,000 by the rebels and 50,000 by the Republic. Both sides wanted complete extermination of the other side.

The next lecture to the Oxted & District History Society in its 2025-26 lecture season will be on Tuesday, 2 December at 8pm at the United Reformed Church, Bluehouse Lane, Oxted.

Dr Ellena Matthews will speak on 'Home Front Heroism: Civilians & Conflict in Second World War London'.

The society's membership fee is £20 for the whole 2025-26 season, with a visitors' fee of £5. More details about the society are at oxteddisthistorysociety.com.

CALLING SURREY BUSINESSES

To advertise in the next edition of The Tandridge Independent call **01883 818 191** or email: advertising@tandridgeindependent.com



HAMMOND'S

RESTAURANT | WINE BAR | COURTYARD

NEW YEAR'S EVE

7:30 - 8:00 | Arrival, glass of champagne

8:00 - 8:30 | Canapés and cocktails

8:45 - 9:30 | Live music with Molly Moonshine

10:15 - 11:00 | Live music with Molly Moonshine

11:00 - 01:00 | Party tunes

MENU - Buffet served from 8:30pm

- Selection of savoury bites
- Braised beef cheek bourguignon / Dauphinoise potatoes
- Medley of seasonal vegetables
- Paneer curry / Pilau rice
- Onion bhajis and naan bread
- Chocolate brownie fingers
- Filled profiteroles
- Fruit platter
- Artisan cheeses

£70

UPCOMING EVENTS

17 December | Christmas with Molly Moonshine

6 January | New Year quiz and chilli

31 January | Gourmet dinner night

OPENING HOURS

22 and 23 December | 12 - 11pm

Christmas Eve | 12 - 10.30pm

Christmas Day | Closed

Boxing Day | Closed

27 December | 12 - 11pm

28 December | 12 - 6pm

29 December | Closed

30 December | 12 - 11pm

New Year's Eve | 12 - 6.30pm open to the public.
(7.30pm - 1am ticketed event)

New Year's Day | 11 - 6pm



Birthday celebrations for the Salvation Army

By **Judy Baker**

Caterham Corps Salvation Army

Caterham Salvation Army Church celebrated 128 years of worship and care in the community of Caterham in November. It was

a joy to welcome Staines Corps Young People's Band to play for us and worship was led by Major Val Mylehreest.

We meet on Sunday mornings for a 10:30 service at the Westway Centre in Caterham and all are very welcome!

Rashid brings home the gold

A Caterham resident became a Taekwon-do world champion in October, after representing England at the ITF Taekwon-do World Championships in Jesolo, Italy, an event which attracted more than 1,400 competitors.

Rashid Amassoul, who was already a European Taekwon-do champion, won two golds and a bronze in the veteran male adult individual sparring and patterns categories, as well as gold as part of the England veteran sparring team, of which he was captain.

"I started Taekwon-do in 2014 after

taking my son to a local school," says Rashid. "While I was watching him, I was asked if I wanted to have a go, and I thought 'what the heck, I'll give it a try!' I was hooked from day one. I really enjoyed the discipline and the training, but I never thought that I would one day be world champion."

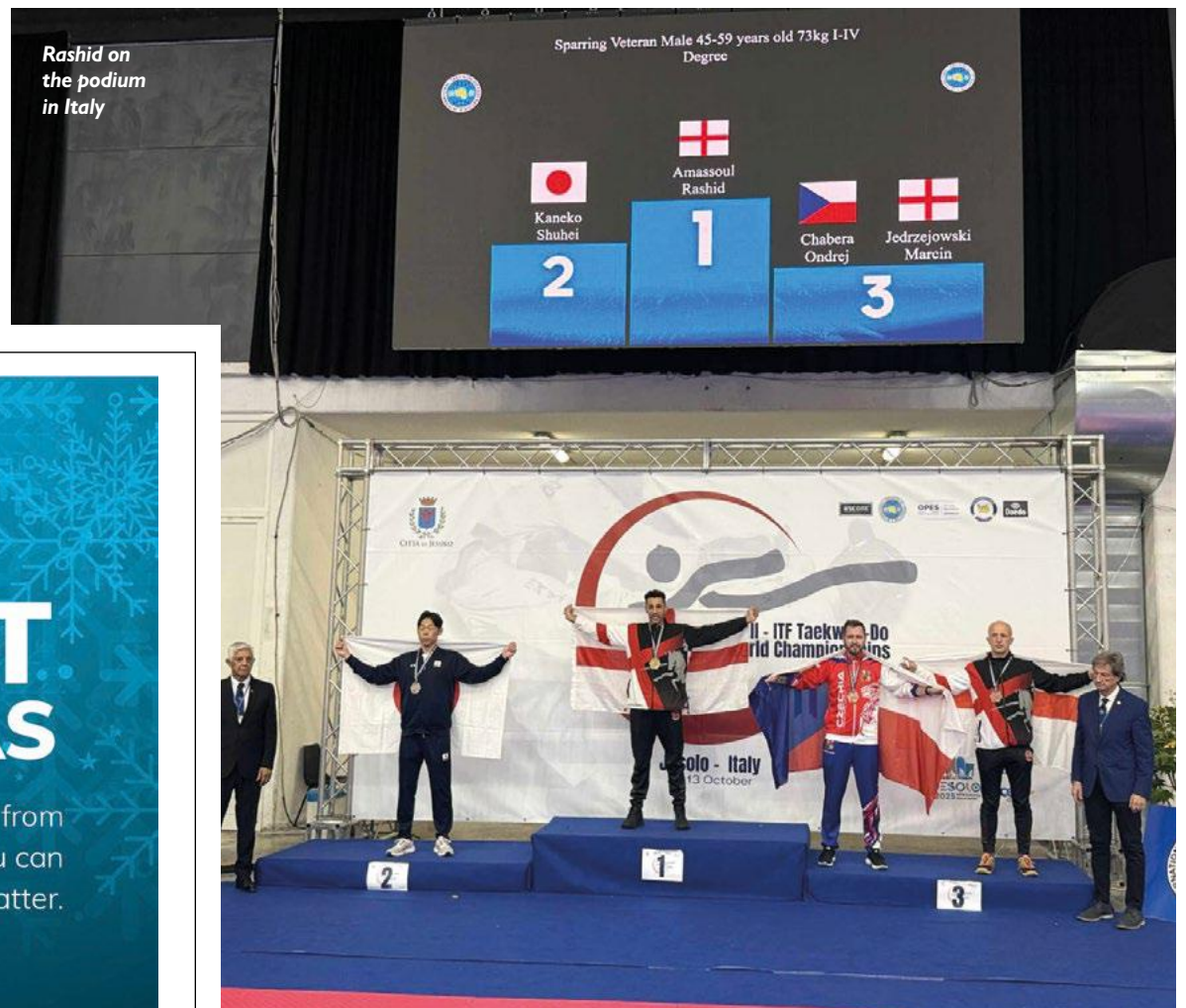
He started training with the England team in 2017 and qualified as a black belt in 2018. His first call up to represent England was in 2020 for the European championships, although these were cancelled due to COVID.

"Since then, however, I have represented England at three European

Championships, winning gold at each competition, which was amazing in itself."

Rashid is also the main instructor at Redhill Taekwon-do, and hopes he can inspire more people to take up the martial art through his achievements. He is grateful to those around him, saying, "I would like to thank all those that have supported me so far."

Redhill Taekwon-do is open to people of all ages and abilities. The club trains at the YMCA East Surrey Community Centre. You can find out more by searching 'Redhill TKD' on Facebook.



Rashid on the podium in Italy

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Be aware of fake repair firms

Tandridge District Council is warning its tenants to be on their guard if somebody calls them or rings their doorbell offering to check their homes for repairs needed.

TDC has been made aware of private law firms using 'pushy tactics' to persuade tenants, which can include older and vulnerable people, to make housing disrepair claims, sometimes promising quick compensation.

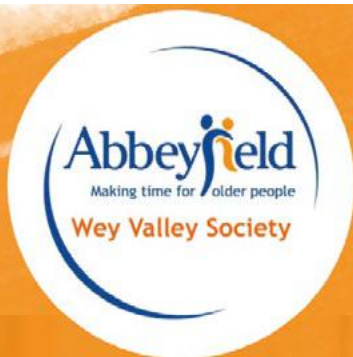
The council states that using these firms can have risks, including poor advice leaving the tenant liable for costs, hidden fees they didn't agree to, and overall stress and confusion, delaying actual repairs.

They have issued the following warning signs

to look out for if somebody contacts you:

- No official council ID or a letter of authority
- Asking you to sign paperwork on the spot using pressure tactics such as 'sign today or lose your chance'
- Claiming there is a surveyor 'in the area today'
- Making promises which sound too good to be true
- Calling persistently until you sign up

Tandridge District Council's official surveyors are Savills, Corgi Technical and Delco Fire: none of whom require tenants' signatures. You can call the council to verify any surveyor or other contractor before letting them into your property.



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people*



*Celebrating 40 years of care in the
local community*



At our libraries

Libraries play a vital wellbeing role

Research by national charity Libraries Connected has shown that Surrey libraries are delivering at least £900k of value through their support of mental health and wellbeing, in the forms of weekly arts and crafts sessions for older residents, volunteering opportunities and initiatives to reduce loneliness.

Data, which was collected over 12 weeks this summer from 42 of Surrey's 52 libraries, as well as 11 other south east library services, calculated the monetary value of these activities, including NHS savings, productivity gains and the personal value placed on improved wellbeing. Visit librariesconnected.org.uk/news for more information.

Make a gonk

Oxted Library is holding a craft session where you can make a gonk or a book-folding cracker on Thursday, 11 December from 10:30 - 12:00. It's £2 per adult, with all materials provided. You can book at the help desk or by emailing oxted.library@surreycc.gov.uk.

Christmas crafts

Children aged five and over can visit Oxted Library on Saturday 6, 13 or 20 December between 14:30 and 15:30 and join in their Christmas craft making sessions. There is also a pop-up Father Christmas-making session on Christmas Eve, between 10:30 and 11:30. Each session costs £1.50 per child.

STEAM activities

Under fives are invited to take part in Oxted Library's STEAM activity session on Friday, 19 December, from 11:30 - 12:30. They can build snowball sculptures, paint a giant junk Christmas tree, explore rolling and stacking challenges and finish with a 'wow' experiment. It's £2 per child and you can book at the help desk or by emailing oxted.library@surreycc.gov.uk.

Further afield

Redhill Library is hosting Christmas craft events for children aged 5 and over on 2, 9 and 16 December, between 16:00-17:00. £1.50 per child - no booking required.



Girlguiding news: gifts and good intentions!

By Sue Corrance

Girlguiding Godstone division commissioner



Welcome to the season of good cheer, a time to celebrate the past and make plans for the future. Our young people and our adults have achieved so much, challenging ourselves to do our best: first sleepovers and camps, celebrations, qualifications, awards, as well as the 'every week' stuff of being part of a unit.

In Godstone division we are proud to inspire 583 girls across 40 units. We do that with:

- 44 leaders, including two newly qualified (yay!)
- 11 leaders in training
- 2 new residential qualifications
- 2 new first aid trainers
- And a partridge in a pear tree (not really)

But recently we have lost:

- Warlingham: two units and the much-loved guide barn
- Woldingham: all units, endangering our share in the scout and guide hut
- Caterham Rangers are on hold, waiting for the Guides to reach 14 years old



Chelsham Guides at their recent indoor camp at Little Acres in Epsom

• Trefoil Guild (adult-only Guiding): only Caterham remains, having lost Warlingham and Oxted.

Since records went digital, we have closed 42 units including Bletchingley, Blindley Heath, Crowhurst, Dormansland, Godstone, Hamsey Green, Tandridge and Tatsfield.

While our remaining units are mostly healthy, we must consider that some adults are running multiple units. 12 leaders hold roles in four or more units, and one runs an incredible SIX units.

They do it because they love it, but

it worries me that if any of these wonderful ladies were to retire or move away, it is highly likely that we will be forced to close those units. You do the maths.

Girlguiding gives the gift of confidence to girls and women of all ages. That includes our adult volunteers as well as our youngest Rainbows.

Hence our plea: make Girlguiding part of your good intentions this new year. Will you visit a meeting, explore the

activities we offer, try a few sessions as a helper?

You don't have to be a craft genius or an expert at tying knots. We love people with a teachable heart, a listening ear and a caring nature. And I would love someone to help me apply for gift aid!

Talk to me, at GodstoneDivision@gmail.com or visit Girlguiding.org.uk to find out more. I can't wait to meet you!

Ramble with East Surrey Walkers

By Chris Myers

How about this for a Christmas present – a promise to start walking in our glorious green countryside? Call it an early New Year's resolution if you like.

To get started, I'd like to recommend your local branch of the Ramblers: East Surrey Walkers.

Three reasons: One, we're local two, we're friendly, and three we organise something for everyone - 50 guided walks for all abilities from three to 10 miles, every three months, on most days of the week. Many are in the Tandridge area, as this is our home turf.

We also love to talk, if you can manage that without stopping – something my old dad never mastered!

We are all sorts, all ages, male and female who share a love of the great outdoors, exploring and, of course, the chat.

Please don't think you need all the latest costly walking kit... you don't. You can see from our picture that most of us favour practicality over fashion.

Our programme includes ambles: easier and shorter walks which are great for newcomers or those getting fit. Our start time is normally 10:00. Our leaders are all experienced and we try to provide a nominated backmarker to ensure we all keep together and no one drops out without warning.

Dogs are welcome on leads.

If you're interested, your first step should be to check out our programme at east-surreywalkers.org.uk or scan our QR code.

There is no need to book... just turn up and join us.

You're welcome to come on a couple of walks before thinking about becoming a member.

Our walks are colour-coded:

Blue: Easy/amble (about 1.5 miles per hour)

White: Leisurely (2mph)

Green: Moderate (2.5mph)

Purple: Strenuous (3.5mph)

All these walks are circular, so we finish where we start - often near a pub that does good food.

Here are a few of our December walks. (There is no Christmas or Boxing Day walk planned, though I cannot promise that some dedicated types won't turn out on the 25th.)

• On Monday, 1 December, we've an 'easy amble' starting in Old Oxted at 10:00. Park at the end of Old Godstone Road, past Bushey Croft. Walk to Tandridge Church and back via the golf course, Broadham Green and Oxted Mill.

• For mud-lovers, this 10:00 walk on Sunday, 14 December from Woldingham is recommended. Park in the car park in Church Road, just a couple of hundred yards to the north



of the railway station, which is free on Sundays.

• Our last planned walk before Christmas is on Friday, 19 December around Reigate Hill. Park and meet at Margery Wood National Trust Car Park at 10:00 (free for NT members) or park on the road. Walk along Reigate Hill via Colley Hill and a loop around Gatton Park before retracing our steps back to the car park. There is the opportunity to use the facilities at Wray Lane Car Park.

Happy Christmas walking.



Whyteleafe shines in 2025: a year of community spirit and progress!

By **Dr. Marcus Jones**

Chairman, Whyteleafe Village Council

As 2025 draws to a close, Whyteleafe stands proud, transformed by the incredible efforts of its vibrant community. This year has been a testament to what can be achieved when residents, volunteers, churches, and the village council unite with purpose and heart.

From the Whyteleafe Community Hub's food bank and garden volunteers, to the tireless litter pickers, every corner of our village has felt the impact of kindness and care. The summer fete at the Rec was a joyful highlight, thanks to the dedicated events group which brought neighbours together in celebration.

Our churches played a vital role too. Both St Luke's Church on Whyteleafe

Hill and the Whyteleafe Free Church, Godstone Road, offered spiritual and social support: the Free Church with its Friday Lunch Club and St Luke's Church where the transept hall has become a cherished weekly gathering place for friendship and free refreshments.

Nature flourished under the hands of the Whyteleafe Garden Group, who collected over 5,000 donated tulip bulbs that were lovingly planted by a record number of volunteers. The village bloomed with daffodils, vibrant troughs at our railway stations and high street, and the serene Jubilee Garden.

A major win came with the substantial grant awarded to the village council to refurbish the play area at the Rec, promising a magical space for children to play and develop for years to come.

Whyteleafe is fast becoming a model



village - proof that when councils, charities, churches, and residents collaborate extraordinary things happen. As we celebrate these achievements, let's carry this momentum into 2026, continuing to uplift one another and care for our elderly, lonely, and young.

Everyone on the village council wishes you a joyful festive season. Be a kind neighbour, share a smile, and let's keep making Whyteleafe even more special.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

Email: cllr.m.jones@whyteleafevillagecouncil.gov.uk
Website: whyteleafevillagecouncil.gov.uk

Annual CHRISTMAS Light Switch-On

The Whyteleafe Tavern
Saturday 6th December from 4pm

- LIGHT SWITCH-ON 5PM
- GIFTS FROM SANTA 5:15 PM
- CAROL SINGING
- POST YOUR LETTERS TO SANTA
- MULLED WINE & MINCE PIES

We are also collecting for the Whyteleafe Food Bank. Please bring any festive donations.

In collaboration with

FOR GOD SO LOVED...

www.oakhall.church/christmas
181 Chaldon Road, Caterham, CR3 5PL

Jack & The Beanstalk
Thursday 4th December - (5-7pm)
Get ready for a treat for all the family! Saltmine Theatre Company presents a retelling of Jack and the Beanstalk, bursting with dazzling effects, incredible costumes, and a cast of colourful characters.
Tickets are available on our website!

Children's Nativity Service
Sunday 14th December - (10.30am)
Our Morning Service will feature the BLAST Kids group re-telling the story of the very first Christmas. This service is for all ages, so bring the whole family and settle in to hear the wonder of the Christmas story!

Youth Carol Service
Sunday 14th December - (6pm)
Our Youth Carol Service is a chance to hear the good news of Christmas with a modern, upbeat vibe. This service will be led by the young people of Oakhall Church.

Family Carol Service
Sunday 21st December - (3pm)
Join us as we count down to Christmas with a joyful, familyfriendly service filled with fun games, festive songs, and a celebration of the true meaning of Christmas.

Carols by Candlelight
Sunday 21st December - (7pm)
Experience the wonder of Christmas at our Carols by Candlelight service. With uplifting modern and classic carols from our community choir and band, as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus.

Christmas Nativity Trail
Monday 22nd December - (2-4pm)
Come along and join us on a short trail together as we take a closer look at the real events of the Christmas story. Starting at Oakhall Church and followed by hot chocolate!
Book on via the website!

Christmas Eve Midnight Service
Wednesday 24th December - (11.15pm)
'Twas the night before Christmas...
Celebrate the imminent arrival of Christmas Day with a relaxed, reflective 45-minute service, that gets to the heart of this special season.

Christmas Day Service
Thursday 25th December - (10.30am)
An all-age 45-minute service, reminding us that Jesus' birth brings great joy for all people!

What's On

Tandridge Handicraft Society

On 19 January 2026, the Tandridge Handicraft Society will be hosting a talk by Dr Paula Redmond on therapeutic knitting. Dr Redmond will explore the many benefits knitting has to offer for our mental health.

The doors will open at 13:30, and the talk will start at 14:00. Visitors are welcome - £7 entry, including tea and biscuits.

The society meets every Monday at the Woodhouse Centre in Oxted RH8 9HT (the postcode for satnav is RH8 9JQ). Further details are available on our website tandridgehandicraftsociety.org.uk or by contacting Jenny Beal on 01883 620730.




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Saturday 21 February 2026

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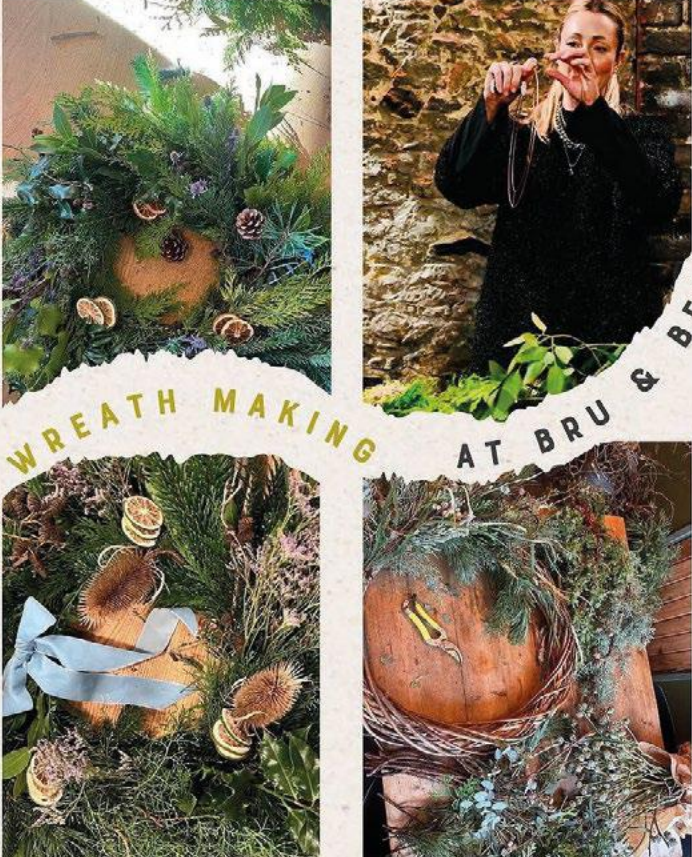
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- Candles - [@pomonaandcens](https://www.instagram.com/pomonaandcens)
- Xmas decorations - MarbleMoon Home Decor
- Hot pies & sausage rolls - the Bull Inn
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New Year's Resolutions: goal setting tips



Credit: @george.captures

By Jack Kavanagh

Race update

In November, I competed in the second round of our Surrey Cross Country League. I was pleased to take the win again and to lead my team home. As a team we placed 7th out of 10, which is a huge step towards staying up in the division this season, with just two more races remaining.

A week after that, I had a GB Trial Race in Liverpool. Unfortunately, I didn't get the result I was looking for and did not make the European team that travels to Portugal next month. When setbacks like this happen, I think it is best to allow myself to feel the disappointment and review what happened but then move on and leave it in the past. It has made me more determined to succeed in my next race.

Goal setting

As the new year arrives, you may want to create a resolution that is meaningful and will last. For this month's article, I would like to focus on goal setting and share how I go about it.

I have always been a huge believer of giving myself something to aim for, and have enjoyed doing this from a young age. Back when I was playing football, my Dad would help me decide on a target of how many goals I would try and score in the season. And when I was at school and university I used to write down the grades I wanted to get. As we know, life doesn't always go the way we want it to, and having a target does not necessarily mean that you can always achieve it, but it is a great way of keeping you focused when difficulties come your way.

There are many sportspeople who receive professional help to set their goals. I do this with Nicky Forster, (nickyforster.com) who is a goal-setting coach and athlete

mentor. He helps support my life away from the track, to ensure I am performing at my best when I'm on it. We plan, assess and review my goals, breaking up my big objectives for the year into smaller ones that we can monitor as the months pass. We even like to go one step further if we can, by turning the small goals into daily habits.

Short, medium and long term

When setting goals, you need to start with the big picture: what is it that you ultimately want to achieve? The time frame for this is up to you - one year, two years, four years etc. Having long-term goals reminds you that you have more to give and to keep pushing forwards.

Medium-term goals can act as checkpoints. They are good pausing points to see if you are on track to achieve your big picture. They can be useful ways of seeing if you need to adjust the things that you are doing, or to re-position your long-term goal if you feel you are not quite on the right track. It is okay to do this!

Short-term goals are the little pieces of the puzzle that make up your big picture. These allow you to feel like you are progressing well and to make the journey towards your main goal feel less overwhelming.

Here is an example using somebody who has never run before, but would like to start.

To begin with, their short-term goal could be completing the Couch to 5K programme - a great way to ease into running gently. Looking ahead, a medium-term goal could then be taking part in a 5km Park Run, a free event which caters for all runners, from casual runners to advanced. They are located all around the country but some of my favourites are close to Tandridge at Squerryes (Westerham) and Reigate Priory - both of these are friendly and supportive.

Park Run also has their own



motivation system, with Milestone t-shirts available when runners/walkers have completed either 25, 50, 100, 250 or 500 Park Runs. So, in this example, our new runner's long-term goal could be to take part in 25 Park Runs and get the t-shirt!

Make your goal visual

I have always liked the thought of a visual reminder of your goals. Back when I was chasing selection times to get into the England team, I would write the time I needed onto a whiteboard in my bedroom. It was placed directly above my bed, meaning I would see it as soon as I woke up, reminding me of what I was working towards.

On the days when it is cold, dark and wet outside and your legs are achy, a simple visual reminder of what you want to achieve really helps. Recently, I have been using a beanie as my motivation (yes, a beanie) - one I have had for six years but never yet worn! It has a GB flag on it and I told myself six years ago that I can put it on once I have represented Team GB.

Whatever your goal is, find a way to make it visual: it acts as a great reminder of what you are working towards and what you can do!

Follow me on Instagram - @jack_kavanagh0 - for updates, running tips and more.

Leafe keep up the pressure on leaders

By **Greg Barber**

Leafe ended October with an impressive League Cup win away to AFC Croydon, in a highly entertaining encounter. Croydon took the lead in the 11th minute through Noah Wilson, before skipper Helge Orome levelled the score on the half hour. One all at half time, but it could have been more. Leafe almost settled matters with three goals in 16 second-half minutes, from Dan Bennett, Georgi Steads and a Ryan Gondoh penalty, but two late Croydon strikes by David Bremang made Leafe sweat a little in injury time. However, it finished 3-4 in Leafe's favour.

Next was Leafe's chance to renew old rivalries at Merstham at the beginning of November, and it was obvious that it was a local draw as 900 fans were in attendance at The Moat-side. Merstham opened the scoring early, with Sam King knocking home a low cross. Their lead lasted less than a minute, as Mannie Mensah latched on to a long ball and headed the ball over ex-Leafe keeper Rob Tolfrey, equalising in the 8th minute. Both teams created chances, and Merstham thought they had taken the lead again later in the half, only for the flag to go up for offside.

Leafe took the lead in the second half, with Bennett's shot curling beautifully past the keeper, and Jordon Johnson then making it three in the 71st minute. They could have won this by more had it not been for Tolfrey making several fine saves.

Away again the following Tuesday, this time to VCD Athletic. A fairly comprehensive 4-0 win for the Leafe, with goals from Bennett and Moses Emmanuel scoring either side of an



Eniola Hassan brace.

Home to Crowborough Athletic on Saturday, 8 November, and although Leafe more or less dominated the play they only managed to go into the break at half time one up through Mensah. Bennett made it two a few minutes into the second half, before Jamie Mascoll scored the third in the fifth minute. Gondoh made it four eight minutes later and Corey Holder popped up to score the fifth. Then came an absolute joke of an injury time, which saw another three goals in as many minutes (one from Gondoh and two from Emmanuel), to finish off the rout and give Leafe their biggest ever win.

Another home game on Tuesday

11th, with Leafe welcoming Erith Town to Church Road. A fast-paced first half saw Leafe take an early lead, with Hasson on target. Erith battled hard and got their reward on 38 minutes, when Jerome Jayaguru latched onto a weak clearance and smashed the ball home off the underside of the bar from 20 yards out. However, Leafe struck back with a move straight from the kick off: Mensah drifting inside and passing the ball low into the net, restoring Leafe's advantage at half time.

The second half was nearly all Erith as they put Leafe under severe pressure, levelling it up in the 83rd minute with a Jacob Connor strike. Rather than settle for a point Erith went for

the win, which they looked to have sealed when they scored again in the 89th minute. No name here, as the scorer couldn't be identified on the night!

Leafe looked to have suffered a rare home defeat, but deep into injury time they were awarded a free kick on the edge of the box. Despite a long wall, Mascoll smashed it low and under the hapless keeper, much to the relief of the home crowd. Got away with one there!

Saturday 15th saw Leafe travel to Ashford United in Kent and the travelling fans were rewarded with some scintillating Leafe football that saw them three up after twenty minutes. Orome opened the scoring, poking home after an intricate move, with Emmanuel making it 2-0 two minutes later and 3-0 not long after that. Ashford started the second half in better form, and chances were coming and going at both ends before Gary Lockyer pulled one back for the hosts. Gondoh restored the three goal advantage in the 75th minute, Lockyer got another for Ashford in injury time, but Leafe ran out 2-4 winners.

Bigger fish opposition in the League Cup on the following Tuesday night as Leafe travelled to Burgess Hill, who are doing very well in the Isthmian Premier league. This was going to be a good, hard test for Leafe and so it proved, as the Hillians put the pressure on Leafe and took the lead on 22 minutes through Ben Pope. Leafe slowly got back into the game and equalised just before the break, with Orome scoring from a nice move after the Hillian keeper misplaced a pass.

Leafe started the second half in the ascendancy but couldn't quite

find the clear cut chance they needed. Burgess Hill defended deep and in numbers, breaking quickly in attack, and that is exactly how they got the winner on 70 minutes, a quick break finished by a superb curling shot from Luke Gambin: a deserving match-winning goal. Leafe matched the Hillians all the way but just couldn't get the equaliser. However, there is no shame in losing a close game against good opposition a league higher.

Herne Bay were the visitors to Church Road on 22 November, and they shocked the Leafe faithful with a third-minute strike through Alfie Broomfield. Only seven minutes were needed to get back on level terms though, with a Bennett goal coming in the 10th minute; Mensah then put Leafe ahead five minutes later with a lovely run and a shot that slid the ball under the keeper. After that frenetic start the game settled down and Leafe had to work hard before Stefan Illic and Emmanuel put it to bed in the 77th and 82nd minute respectively, finishing 4-1 to the home side.

Leafe are second in the league as we go to print, so still well in the hunt for another promotion.

Just two homes games before the end of the year:

- Saturday, 6 December - v Sheppey United (KO 15:00)
- Saturday, 27 December - v AFC Croydon Athletic (KO 15:00)

Leafe away days are now covered by Leafe Radio, so those who can't make the trips can listen in - it's a little bit of commentary and a lot of irrelevant football chat. Head to Leaferradio.mixlr.com!

All that's left is to wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Setbacks galore - but spirits remain high

By **Chloe Robertson**

Vice-captain, Oxted WFC

We have had a few changes since our last update: our manager had to step down due to medical reasons, so we are currently managerless. We have had support from players and friends - a big thank you to Steve Payne for all his help! - which we are really grateful for, but we would now like to reach out to anyone in the community with coaching experience who would be interested in taking over at Oxted WFC. We'd love to hear from you, so please get in touch for further details - our email address is at the bottom of this column.

We have also been plagued by a lot of injuries, leaving us without key starting players. This has been hard to navigate but we have remained positive and stuck together.

We played top of the league Carshalton on 2 November which we knew would be a tough game anyway, but even more so with all the disruption we have recently had. Carshalton had been beating teams 11-0 and 14-0, so when the game ended 5-0 to Carshalton, we weren't too disappointed! Everyone worked hard as a team and managed to keep the scoreline relatively low. Players' and Manager's Player of the match was our keeper Georgia Taylor-Smith.

We were then away to Croydon WFC in the Surrey Divisional Cup on 9 November - unfortunately it wasn't our day and with crucial players out (including our keeper!) the game finished 2-0 to the opposition, and we exited the cup. Our Player's Player of the Match was Stacie Taylor and the Manager's Player of the Match was Kayleigh Stenning.

On the 23rd November we faced Croydo

again, in the league this time, and despite every player putting in a shift and working hard, we missed some key chances and Croydon won the game 1-0, after a well-taken free kick went in. Our Players' Player & Manager's Player of the Match was Amy Potkins.

At the time of writing, we face Manorcroft away on Sunday, 30 November and we are hopeful that we will claim the three points this time!

We are currently sixth out of 10 in the table. So, despite all our changes and challenges, we are doing okay in the Surrey Premier Division and will remain working hard.

Once again, please get in touch if you or anyone you know may be interested in taking over the role of first team manager - email us on oxtedwfc@yahoo.com. And follow us on Insta: [@oxtedwfc](https://www.instagram.com/oxtedwfc).





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Tes Shortlist Caterham Prep as Best Independent Prep School - for the second year running!

Caterham Prep was shortlisted for the 'Independent Prep School of the Year' award in the 2025 Times Education Supplement (Tes) School Awards, the 'Oscars' of the education world.

Being shortlisted for the second consecutive year once again places Caterham in the top eight prep schools in the country, and follows on from the senior school's win as Tes' Best UK Independent Senior School.

Caterham's groundbreaking work in digital and innovation was also shortlisted for Tes' Best Use of Technology award, recognised for its development of teaching and AI learning assistant RileyBot and EDGE curriculum.

Ben Purkiss Headmaster said: "To be shortlisted again is a huge achievement which is shared by everyone here. It is a wonderful recognition of the ongoing innovations and progress here spanning the curriculum, wellbeing, digital provision, sport and co-curricular offer to ensure that our pupils gain the very best education.

The Tes Schools Awards recognise the very best UK teachers and schools across early years settings, primary and secondary. An expert panel of judges comprised of leaders in education selected the shortlist from a huge number of entries across the country.

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outdoor classroom, within our own woodland, there is something to spark curiosity in every young adventurer. Activities are led by our Head of Outdoor Learning, and involves some time in our woodland yurt! Each session concludes with group story time, perfect for winding down after all the excitement.

There is no charge to join the group although we kindly ask families to reserve your place in advance. Sessions take place in all weathers because a little rain never spoils our fun!

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This autumn our focus has been on Rosenshine's principles of instruction, which provides a bridge between research and classroom practice. They link to countless effective teaching strategies which are rooted in cognitive science and are considered 'best practice' in education.

Some of the cognitive science that underpins Rosenshine's principles of instruction are:

Retrieval practice asking children to recall information previously learnt, rather than recapping it for them. The process of retrieving learnt information strengthens children's memory of it, enabling it to be stored as long-term, secure memory. Therefore, improve learning retained and their ability to recall and retain, strengthening them as learners.

Cognitive load theory avoiding overloading children's working memory, so they can focus on assimilating new learning and securing it in long-term memory. We put in scaffolds and support to help children beyond the primary learning focus of a lesson, enabling them to target their attention on new learning.

Growth mindset the belief that skills, abilities and intelligence can be developed. Growth mindset means we encourage children to know that finding something difficult is a positive part of learning, and that working through challenge is beneficial for developing long-term resilience.



Keeping these principles and their grounding in research in mind helps ensure our lesson design and delivery maximises pupils' learning potential.

Congratulations to Year 6 - Offers and Scholarships

Many congratulations to our Year 6 pupils who secured and accepted offers and highly competitive scholarships, ranging from academic to music and more, to Caterham School in September 2025.

Now as part of the Caterham Family, our pupils benefit from early offers and a smoother transition to Caterham School, whilst retaining the choice and preparation for the senior school of their choice.

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Many congratulations to our pupils on their senior school results 2025 with an outstanding 122 offers from 22 different independent and grammar schools. Year 6 pupils received 17 early offers to Caterham School.

32 per cent of The Hawthorns School's Year 6 and 8 leavers gained scholarships or awards. In total, 22 pupils received an impressive 38 awards across a range of areas: Academic, Advanced Award, All-Rounder, Art, Chess, Dance, Drama, Headmaster's Awards, Music, and Sport.

We are particularly pleased that 17 per cent of our leavers secured academic scholarships, a testament



to their efforts and the strength of our broad and balanced curriculum and the dedication of our teachers.

National Swimming Triumph

The Hawthorns School celebrated an historic performance at the IAPS National Swimming Finals 2025 at the

London Aquatic Centre, competing against swimmers from 220 schools.

The U13 girls' team reached both the Medley and Freestyle relay finals, placing 15th and 11th nationally and breaking the one-minute mark in the Freestyle relay. The U10 girls made an impressive debut, winning silver in the Freestyle relay, while Morgan added a bronze in the 50m Butterfly.

The U12 boys dominated their events, taking gold in both relays. Alex placed 14th in Backstroke, and Oscar and Harry won individual golds in Butterfly and Freestyle, each setting new IAPS record times. The team also secured the national age group cup outright, having shared it last year.



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Whole School Open Morning:

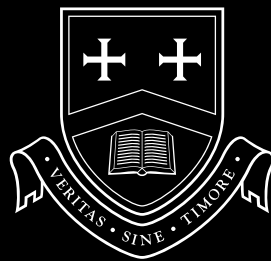
Friday 6 February
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