



Toft Village Calendar

Produced and Distributed by St. Andrew's Parish Church

January 2024



EDITORIAL

Oh Dear. Looks as though we are about to be levelled -up. In case you missed it in other, lesser outlets, here is the news: The Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (Prop: M. Gove) has announced its intentions for this county. And pretty grim reading they make, too. 150,000 new houses are to be foisted on us within the next fifteen years or so. It's so we can realise our potential, you see, and unlock growth.

Let's take a closer look at that '150,000' figure. It means 20,000 more than the entire number of houses that currently exist in both Cambridge and South Cambs put together. It means fifteen times bigger than unlovely Northstowe is planned to be. It is bigger by far than Milton Keynes. Or Norwich. And all this is, of course, on top of those of us who already live here. Still, they promise that it will have "beautiful new buildings, rich parkland, concert halls and museums" and, looking around us at the to-die-for charms of Eddington, Cambourne, Great Kneighton and the rest (all of which promised broadly the same), who can possibly doubt it?

The 'unlocking of potential' bit deserves a quick squint, too. What it means is 'lots more science parks and grimly monolithic laboratories'. As is well-known, all you need to do for a successful science park is to freight in loads more people - anyone will do - and Bob's your uncle. It's astounding that so few other parts of the country do it. As of now, our current weedy contribution to Science-Park-utopia is around seven thousand people working in one hundred and seventy companies. So, around forty people per firm. To soak up an additional 200,000 people - a pretty conservative estimate - a further five thousand similarly sized enterprises will need to spring up. If anyone can pull off a miracle like that, it's a government department. On that much, at least, I'm sure we can all agree. You might feel that there are other areas of the country that would benefit from and even welcome this level of investment and that it's about time we stopped perpetuating the myth that to succeed, you need a 'CB' postcode. You would probably be right. But I imagine that argument has already been made and lost, somewhere.

As of now, there seems to have been little specific planning as to the actual whereabouts of all these new dwellings, nor any indication that the necessary infrastructure - roads, water, schools etc - will accompany them. No doubt that will come. However, with that many houses to be shoe-horned into a diminishingly finite area it seems a fairly safe bet that pleading 'conservation area' status is not going to cut the mustard. So, if you have a favourite view, or a walk you enjoy, I'd start making the most of it whilst you still can. It doesn't look as if it will be here much longer.

Oh - I nearly forgot: Happy New Year!

Why don't you think?

Diary entry, Sunday 10 December 2023

Pouring with rain, so went for a short walk by the allotments and back down through Toft Wood. Noticed two drinks cans thrown into bush behind one of the benches, so crawled under the hawthorn to pull them out. When I shook one of them, as well as leaves out came a small, pointed shivering nose: a tiny shrew. It had got into the tin, but because of the angle of the ring-pull, it couldn't get out - who knows how long had it been trapped in there?

Opened up the gap and the tiny creature shot out and away into the grass. Shrews have a very short life at the best of times - why would anyone want to shorten that short life?



PLEASE: think before you chuck your tins and bottles into the hedge - and preferably don't do it at all. (There's a bin within 200 metres of that spot.) It's likely these were teenagers having a quiet evening drink on a fine night - so if you're a parent, perhaps have a word with them, explaining the reasons why no one should throw rubbish unthinkingly:

Small animals and insects can be trapped inside them (see above).

Glass bottles can cause a fire when the sun shines through the glass onto dry vegetation.

Rubbish is unsightly, particularly in such special places as our lovely Toft Wood.

- Katherine James

DIARY DATES

TOFT FRIENDSHIP CLUB

[Over 50s Club].

The January meeting is our post Christmas lunch on January 4th and has to have been pre-booked.

Sewing, Knit and Natter

Our next meeting will be on 31st January at 10.30 in the Methodist Chapel.

For further details please contact Sally 262895 or Lucy 262498
New members welcome!

The Parish Council

Monday 8th
January, 7.00pm in
The People's Hall.
All Welcome.

MINISTRY TEAM**THE CHURCH IN TOFT**

St. Andrew's Parish Church

Team Vicar:

Rev David Newton 01223 665654

Assistant Curate: Revd Barnabas Leeke
07787 800 888Lay Minister: Barbara Preece Tel:
263466

Churchwardens:

Ann Mitchell 262516

John Quenby 263949

Methodist ChurchMinister: Revd Charity Nzegwu
01763 241803

Stewards:

Diana Tebbit 01223 263557

Stephen Acklam 264055

Mrs Pat Morton 264010

SERVICES OF WORSHIP*7th January* 8.30am Holy Communion
(BCP) – Rev Prof Michael Reiss11.00am Covenant Service at the
Methodist Church – Rev Charity Nzegwu*14th January* 11.00 am Morning
Worship, St. Andrew's – Rev. Robert
Dolman*21st January* 8.30am Holy Communion
(BCP) – Rev Prof Michael Reiss11.00am Morning Worship, Methodist
Church – Mrs Cathy Michel*28th January* 11.00am Holy Communion
- Rev Prof Michael ReissThere will be morning prayer at St.
Andrew's every Wednesday at 9.15 am
(about half-an-hour)Also on Wednesday evenings at
8.00pm, via zoom a service of compline:
ID: 899 215 191 or follow the link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/899215191>Zoom services available at 11.00am
MEETING ID: 823 1147 3640**Feeling Blue?**

Christmas is over: All the leftover turkey is finally gone, the decorations have all been packed away and the tree is out with the green bin. We start another year and put Christmas 2023 behind us.

For many this is the worst time of year. There's not much to look forward to in the coldest months of winter and, though the days are slowly getting longer, even spring feels a distant prospect. The third Monday of January (the 15th in 2024) is known by some as 'Blue Monday' and thought to be the most depressing day of the year.

Thankfully in Toft there will be the Warm Hub at the Methodist Chapel from 10.30-12.30 every Monday, including the 15th. If you need a bit of cheering up there will be a warm space, hot drinks, games and most importantly friendly company. This human contact can make all the difference and I am so grateful to all the volunteers who make it possible to keep this going.

We can all do our bit by watching out for each other, looking out for neighbours who may be struggling or just in need of a friendly 'hello'. This time of year doesn't have to be depressing, the festivities might be over and the scales tipping a little too far in the wrong direction, but it can also be an opportunity to get out for a brisk walk with a friend, volunteer for something new in 2024, or give a call to the new acquaintance you made at a Christmas celebration.

All of these are good resolutions to start 2024 with, but let's also resolve not to pack the Christmas message away with the decorations for another year. Jesus came to show us that there is a better way to live with each other and in tune with God, the Christian church has been trying (and unfortunately often failing) to get it right for 2,000 years, perhaps this year you can help?

God bless,

- Barnabas

Simple Sewing, Knit and Natter.

Our sale was extremely well supported in the Methodist Chapel in November, and by a stall at the Wednesday cafe in December. A cheque for £575 has been sent to the Arthur Rank Hospice. For further information please contact either Lucy (262948) or Sally (262895).



THE CHURCH IN TOFT DIARY

Cambridge Sustainable Food coordinates emergency food provision efforts in the city in partnership with Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance. The Alliance represents over 25 organisations working on poverty alleviation in the city.

Please keep giving into the boxes in the porch or in the shop and the food will go to CSF

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**CAMBRIDGE WOMEN'S REFUGE** – I took two car loads of presents to the Refuge – not quite as much as last year but nearly - and they are so grateful – thank you

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As we mentioned last month Revd. David Newton has been appointed as Diocesan Director of Ordinands. This means he will be talking to people who think they are suited to train for the ministry; he will help them make the right decisions and move forward with their training. We have had a great 6 years with him and offer our prayers and good wishes for his new life, for himself and the family.

If you need help or support please contact the Churchwardens, Ann Mitchell or John Quenby or the curate Rev Barnabas Leeke

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**THE WARM HUB is back on January 8th &**

**EVERY MONDAY 10.30-12.30**

**At the Methodist Church**

*Come and join us for chat, games, friendship*

*and refreshment, all for free.*

*We would love to see you there, you'll be*

*guaranteed a warm welcome. Feel free to bring a friend*

### TONY DRIVER 1935 – 2023

As reported briefly last month, Tony died a few short months after Thelma. Tony was born in Cambridge and brought up by his Mum. He attended St. Paul's Primary School and then St. Georges Secondary School in East Road. When he left school at 15 he began work for the University Press as a delivery boy, working his way up in CUP bindery in Shaftesbury Road. He was a dedicated and conscientious worker and was bitterly disappointed when CUP dropped its retirement age from 65 to 60.

Another area of his life of great importance was sport, being a useful footballer representing the county as a schoolboy and playing for Cambridge City from aged 16 for 60 appearances. He also played squash, golf and bowls!

Family was his other great passion. Meeting Thelma, when still a delivery boy, they married when Tony had done his national service and their marriage lasted almost 68 years. They lived on the then new Fen Estate in Chesterton, where sons Paul and Phil were born. They loved to dance. Some 30 years ago they came to Toft where, in spite of being townies they have been happily settled, joining in village life. When Thelma needed to be cared for in a home, Tony visited the Community café and the warm hub. His family grew to include grandchildren and great grandchildren. His death short months after Thelma's perhaps now sees them taking to the dance-floor together for a quick waltz.



**Toft Parish Council**

Clerk: Ben Stoehr (clerk@tpc.toft.org.uk)

30 West Drive

Highfields Caldecote

Cambridge, CB23 7NY Tel: 01954 210241

| Councillors       | Phone         | E-mail                          |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Chairman:</i>  |               |                                 |
| Martin Yeadon     | 263663        | cllr.yeadon@tpc.toft.org.uk     |
| Emma Darbyshire   | 07763 463234  | cllr.darbyshire@tpc.toft.org.uk |
| Elaine Miles      | 262255        | cllr.miles@tpc.toft.org.uk      |
| Stephen Collinson | 07521 912734  | cllr.collinson@tpc.toft.org.uk  |
| Christine Watson. | 07730 941946  | cllr.watson@tpc.toft.org.uk     |
| Rebecca Harris    | 07796 176 333 | njharris262@gmail.com           |

*The Council is your locally elected Council at the first tier of local government. Meetings are open to the public and are usually held on the first Monday of each month (excepting August) at the Toft People's Hall in School Lane starting at 7.00pm.. The Council's website can be found at: <https://tpc.toft.org.uk>*

*Notices of meetings and agendas are published on the Parish Council Noticeboard near the bus shelter together with minutes, which can also be viewed at [www.toft.org.uk](http://www.toft.org.uk). Among other things, the Council considers local planning applications for the planning authority, the South Cambridgeshire District Council; provides the local recreation area, the People's Hall, litter bins, dog waste bins and the bus shelter; arranges for local verge cutting on behalf of the Cambridgeshire County Council and works with that authority to ensure the maintenance of local footpaths.*

**Next Meeting: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January, 7.00pm in The People's Hall. All Welcome.**

The Parish Council met on 4th December 2023 at 7.10pm preceded at 7.00pm by the William Eversden Charity Meeting (Allotments Charity).

Apologies were received from Cllr. Collinson who is out of the parish and we had been notified that Cllr Watson would be arriving late.

There were no declarations of interest or written requests for dispensations for either of the two meetings.

The main business of the William Eversden Charity meeting was to consider the quotations that had been received for the clearing of the path through the allotments and the installation of rustic steps to give greater access to the bench leading from the allotments on the western side. It was agreed that we would go ahead with the clearing of the path but would seek other quotes for the steps as those received were considered too expensive.

The date of the next annual general meeting and ordinary meeting is fixed at 13th May 2024.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm and was followed by the Parish Council meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

After consideration, the Council agreed to put forward a bid to make the whole village, including the High Street, a 20mph zone. In the meantime, Cllr. Darbyshire is to write to Comberton Village College asking them to request the school buses do not speed through our village.

The proposal to purchase owl/bat boxes was agreed and is an on-going project. Cllr Darbyshire has made contact with a new "Men's Shed" that is starting up in Comberton and will liaise with them regarding the building of these boxes. It was felt that alongside the village-wide "Wildlife Survey" that is to be carried out in January,

enquiries could be made as to which non-residential buildings in the village might be able to put up a box. Cllr. Miles to contact Ann Mitchell regarding St. Andrew's Church.

The purchase of the musical equipment and the new climbing frame is going ahead and will be installed once the quotation for the surface onto which these will be fixed has been received and accepted.

It was agreed to go ahead with the most competitive quote for the refurbishment of the play equipment.

Cllr. Harris reported that the grass cutting during the year had been acceptable and she will continue to monitor it during 2024.

Regarding the LHI meeting which Cllr. Yeadon attended he is still awaiting a recording of the meeting to be sent and this item is to be tabled at the next meeting.

A quote for clearing the new small plot by the Green has still not been received. It was agreed that we would take up the offer from South Cambridgeshire District Council for "a free large potted tree" which could replace the dead tree on the green outside No.4 High Street, subject to being able to select an appropriate variety.

The meeting of the Bourn Brook held on 2nd December at TPH had been well-attended by parishioners and it was felt that monitoring the Brook was generally met with enthusiasm. The Parish Council looks forward to receiving a formal proposal by the organisers to see how it might be of support.

It was considered that we were not in a position to make any comments on the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment.

The six free trees scheme has already been considered and agreed that the PC will apply for one large potted tree.

The finance report was considered and the payment of bills accepted.

There were no play inspection reports to consider.

There were no urgent matters of risk to health and safety.

The budget for FY2024 was considered at length and the Parish Council is pleased to report that the Precept for the village remains the same.

There were no comments regarding the tree works applications.

There were no village maintenance issues.

Cllr. Darbyshire reported that Highways have re-organised their procedures and that any outstanding requests for improvements will be considered by them in the next financial year. Regarding the overgrown hedge along Brookside/Church Lane which has been reported by Cllr Darbyshire, she reported that Highways informed her that it is the responsibility of the landowner whom they are trying to contact and she is awaiting an update.

It was noted that regarding the refurbishment of TPH, a notice had been put into the Calendar inviting residents to send in ideas for "improving and extending the current layout" and "expressions of interest in joining a project team are invited - details on Hall website or email [hallupdate@toft.org.uk](mailto:hallupdate@toft.org.uk) by 10th January. improving the current layout and usage.

Cllr Miles reported that Highways had informed the landowner regarding an overgrown hedge in the Snickert. Regarding three damaged gates in the village :- leading into long meadow from Miller's Road; entering Ann Mitchell's field and entering the Meadow from Church Road, Cllr Miles had been informed earlier in the year by Highways that there was no budget left in the current financial year to fix these. She is to write requesting that these are treated as a priority in the next financial year particularly as two of the fields accommodate livestock at times during the year.

Cllr. Watson reported that the Defibrillator session had gone extremely well and was well-attended by parishioners.

Cllr. Miles informed the meeting that an article regarding the Wildlife Survey had been included in the December issue of the Calendar and that a short survey would be delivered to every household in the New Year. The results will enable the mapping of the wildlife we have in and around the village and how it is supported. This will tie in with the owl/bat box project and, hopefully, the Bourn Brook monitoring.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

# Bourn Brook Monitoring

**Many thanks to all those who turned out on a dreary Saturday in early December for the meeting about Bourn Brook – the turnout was excellent.**

Our speakers were representatives from the voluntary organisation Cam Valley Trust and the Countryside Regeneration Trust (CRT), which are involved in monitoring streams in the Cam Valley catchment and regenerating parts of the Bourn Brook in recent times. The talks addressed the state of the Bourn Brook and provided valuable advice on what we could potentially do to monitor its water quality and biodiversity and help keep the stream healthy in the future.

Measurements by CVT volunteers in recent years have shown that on occasion there are unacceptably high levels of pollutants in the water of Bourn Brook that are attributable to the Sewage Treatment Works at Bourn (BSTW). Anglian Water were taken to court about these pollution events and fined. An upgrade of the BSTW facilities, which will hopefully help address the problem, is now being planned for 2024.

The news of this pollution threat, together with upcoming major local housing developments in the catchment and the increasing impact of more uncertain weather patterns clearly gives grounds for concern for our future environment. Hopefully the water quality of the Brook will improve when the upgrade work is completed but this incident illustrates the need to pay closer attention to our local stream environment and to the activities of our water companies.

There was a substantial turnout for the meeting and lively discussion with the three speakers. Many of the attendees afterwards indicated an interest in being involved in a Toft volunteer group. This suggests we can and should keep our eyes (and noses) on the various inflow pipes and ditches along the course of the Brook as it wends its way through our parish towards the River Cam.

Groups such as CVT have many calls on their time across all the Cam Valley catchment streams so help from volunteer groups such as ourselves could help considerably in both facilitating more regular and wider ranging monitoring of our Brook and educating the wider Toft community.

We have already established our own dedicated page on the Toft Village website <https://toft.org.uk/bourn-brook/> where we will be able to load relevant data that everyone can view as well as permitting us to add our own observations and thoughts. We are also pleased to hear from Parish Council representatives at the meeting that there is support for the proposed project.

On January 18th at 8pm there will be an informal get together of all interested individuals to exchange ideas, including the information we garnered from the CVT and CRT speakers, to draw up a plan of how we could proceed with this project. Please get in touch by email or phone for more info.

Cynan Ellis-Evans and Jane Tebbit  
email: [jane@tebbitdesign.co.uk](mailto:jane@tebbitdesign.co.uk) or tel. 262309





## TOFT SOCIAL CLUB NEWS

A Happy New Year from everyone at The Club – we hope you had a good Christmas break and we wish you a happy 2024.

**Film Night** is Saturday 20th, and we will be showing the 2022 film “Death on the Nile” starring Kenneth Branagh, Annette Bening and Tom Bateman. Branagh plays Hercule Poirot, whilst on vacation aboard a glamorous river steamer turns into a terrifying search for a murderer when a picture-perfect couple's idyllic honeymoon is tragically cut short. Set against an epic landscape of sweeping Egyptian desert vistas and the majestic Giza pyramids, this tale of unbridled passion and incapacitating jealousy features a cosmopolitan group of impeccably dressed travellers, and enough wicked twists and turns to leave audiences guessing until the final, shocking denouement. Doors open at 7:30pm and the film starts promptly at 8:00pm. Annual Film Club membership is now due for 2024, and remains at £12 for the year, or evening membership is £2.50.

**Toft Art** is on Thursday 4th – if you would like to find out more, either pop along or contact us at [art@toftsocialclub.org.uk](mailto:art@toftsocialclub.org.uk). Doors open at 8pm.

**Food on Friday** returns in January on Friday 5th - we'll have Sausage and Mash with Onion Gravy - a trio of top quality sausages with creamy mashed potatoes and homemade onion gravy. Doors open at 7pm. We operate on first come, first served – so come early to avoid disappointment!

**Toft Quiz Night** is on Thursday 11th - teams of up to 6, just £1 per team member. Cash prizes! Doors open at 8pm.

**Carpet Bowls** is on Friday 12th, doors open at 8pm – come along and give this family friendly game a go.

The regular **Open Mic Music Night** is on Saturday 13th, with will feature a mix of performers offering music and words. Free entry – doors open at 8pm.

**Table Tennis** is on Thursday 18th – come along and get some exercise and fun!

**Toft Bingo** is on Thursday 25th – cash prizes – all welcome, doors open at 8pm.

The Club is always open every Thursday and Friday from 8pm, and many Saturday evenings. There is always a warm welcome where you can enjoy a drink and meet up with friends. If you are having a “dry” January, don't forget we stock a wide range of soft drinks and zero alcohol beers, ciders, wine and gin.

We have 2 live events set for 2024 – **The Galliard Trio** on 23rd March and **Smith and Brewer** on 3rd May – details and tickets on the website.

*Your Committee is:* : Martin Sebborn (Chairman), Roger Thorogood (Vice Chairman), Gill Collett (Treasurer), Sonia Cox (Secretary), Koran Collett, Ron Gouldstone, Liz Tomes, James Nairn, Brian Roberts, Angela Unsworth, Jean Stewart and Katrina Holmes.

Keep up to date here:

[www.toftsocialclub.org.uk](http://www.toftsocialclub.org.uk)

**FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/ToftSocial>



A few of the lovely Christmas Trees that brightened up St Andrew's this year.

## NEXTDOOR TOFT

Nextdoor Toft is a social media site for Toft village. It is part of a nationwide platform for local issues to be discussed, posting helpful information for Toft residents, finding local tradespersons, borrowing things, offering to help with things, asking for help with missing pets, for sale and free, etcetera. It is also possible to post to Toft only, Toft AND nearby villages or to a much wider audience across Cambridgeshire (or even further afield). Well over half of the village are members of Nextdoor (including some of our friends in The Birdlings), so it's a great way to quickly get in touch with large numbers of people if you want to - or an individual by private message.

Here's a 'good news' story from December 2023.

Thanks to the generosity of a Toft neighbour who posted on Nextdoor Toft, the Methodist Chapel in High Street, Toft, is now home to a sturdy walker and a wheelchair (not self-propelling). Annie Wilkinson- and her family have donated these mobility aids for the use of the church AND for the wider community of Toft. If you live within the village and have short-term need of either of these, please let Pat Morton know (on 01223 264010). You're welcome to borrow either of them free. Annie is keen for them to be a village resource, so don't worry about having to hire them from elsewhere. Now THAT is neighbourliness. Thanks, Annie !

If you're not already a member and would like to join, please contact Jackie Morton at email:

[jem.wickets@btinternet.com](mailto:jem.wickets@btinternet.com) and she will send you an invitation to join.

I hope you had a happy and peaceful Christmas and, on behalf of Nextdoor Toft, all the very best for 2024 !



**toft  
historical  
society**

The Historical Society is organising an exhibition and audio-visual event on **Saturday, February 3rd** in the Methodist Chapel (am) and the People's Hall (pm). The theme is "Toft Celebrates" and we are looking for your help in providing photographs, newspaper articles and memorabilia various to illustrate our celebrations of both local and national events.

These could include, for example, VE/VJ Days, 777, Spring Feast, Fireworks, the Millenium, and Royal events.

Any items should ideally be brought to the People's Hall on Saturday afternoon (2-5 pm) January 20th or can be delivered at other times to either Ann Mitchell ( 20 High St) or Cynan Ellis-Evans (65 High St).



The **Toft Community Cafe** was packed on the Wednesday before Christmas. Santa visited a record number of children enjoying 'Funtime' and handed out gifts; all the customers including our guests from Home Meadow were treated to mulled wine and mince pies, and the busy kitchen helpers practically sold out of all their cakes, scones, sausage rolls and soup. Members of Toft choir gave a beautiful rendition of popular carols, and also sang the Cafe's own version of The Holly and the Ivy (penned by Gill Pugh):

[Please note, the Cafe reopens after its Christmas break on January 10th 2024, at our usual time of 10.30am to 1.30pm.]

The Coffee and the Cake  
(to the tune of *The Holly and the Ivy*)

1. The coffee and the cake  
When they are both home-made  
Of all the Cafés that are round about  
The Schoolroom makes the grade.

**Refrain:**  
*O, the brewing of the tea  
And the warming of the soup  
The sausage rolls and the cheese scones  
Sweet chatting in a group.*

2. We make a lot of friends  
And have a lot of fun  
The kitchen space is a bit small  
But we get everything done.

**Refrain:**  
*O, the brewing of the tea  
And the warming of the soup  
The sausage rolls and the cheese scones  
Sweet chatting in a group.*

3. Lynn makes us lovely sponges,  
As good as anyone's,  
And Katherine's biscuits are wonderful  
And so are Libby's buns.

**Refrain:**  
*O, the brewing of the tea  
And the warming of the soup  
The sausage rolls and the cheese scones  
Sweet chatting in a group.*

4. We sing along at Funtime  
Head, shoulders knees and toes  
We welcome young and old ones  
And their enjoyment really shows!

**Refrain:**  
*O, the brewing of the tea  
And the warming of the soup  
The sausage rolls and cheese scones  
Sweet chatting in a group.*

5. The Hall is nice and warm  
You don't need a vest  
Of all the Cafés that are round about  
This one is the best

**Refrain:**  
*O, the brewing of the tea  
And the warming of the soup  
The sausage rolls and the cheese scones,  
Sweet chatting in a group.*



Happy New Year  
and thank you to all  
who contributed to the  
Christmas greetings

**£457**

was raised for  
St Andrew's Church

# The New Farming Year Plough Monday

Plough Monday marks the traditional start of the agricultural year in England although, in practice, there was no work undertaken on that day. Local traditions can vary, but Plough Monday is generally the first Monday after Epiphany (January 6th) so it will fall on January 8th in 2024. It has particular associations with eastern England, especially East Anglia. References to Plough Monday date back to the late 15th century and it was widely celebrated well into the early 19th century. Young ploughboys were often promoted to ploughman on this day. In Toft, a ploughboy's initiation apparently involved his colleagues tapping on the toe of his shoe with a stone. In other villages it could involve the boy kissing a plough horse's backside!

Dressed in clean white smocks and decorated with ribbons, the ploughmen and boys dragged a "plow" (plough) through the village and collected money. There was the threat of ploughing up the doorstep of anyone refusing to give money to the revellers. Some revellers put soot on their faces, to hide their identity from future employers.

The tradition of Molly dancing is particularly closely associated with Plough Monday celebrations. The last of the ploughmen would be dressed as a woman and often called the "Molly" or the

"Fool", although, in our local area, they were apparently more often called the "Bessie" (?) and they carried a wooden spoon/soup ladle to collect money from households and watching crowds.



In mediaeval times, the day before Plough Monday was referred to as Plough Sunday. A decorated plough would be brought into the local church (particularly the Catholic, Lutheran, and Anglican traditions) where prayers were sought for the blessing of human labour, tools, the land and, of course, a bountiful harvest. In many parishes a "plow light", (candle) was kept burning in the local church all year.

By the mid 1900's Plough Monday was instead being celebrated in some villages (including Toft) with supper for the farmworkers at a local inn. A record for Toft from 1937 describes the farmworkers of the village walking over to Kingston for a supper of salt beef, carrots and potatoes at the, now long gone, Chequers pub, followed by much singing of traditional songs. Plough Monday celebrations had largely ceased by the 1950's but there has been a revival in some communities in recent decades - most notably the Straw Bear Festival now held each year in Whittlesey, near Peterborough. A man dressed head to foot with straw leads, with his keepers, a parade of morris men, molly, clog and sword dancers, performing around the town.

**Toft People's Hall** & **Toft Social Club** are proud to present

Toft People's Hall Saturday 23rd March 2024 at 6pm

# *The* Galliard Trio



*An evening of Classical Music  
including a light supper*

Tickets £15 including Light supper, Lasagne Alfredo or Lasagne Verde (vegetarian).

Doors open 5.30 pm Concert starts 6.00 pm Meal follows at c.7.00 pm

## Coming to Toft People's Hall in 2024

# SMITH AND BREWER

<https://smithandbrewer.com/>

# May 3, 2024

All tickets available online from December 1:

<https://toftsocialclub.org.uk/tickets.php>

**Wheellie Bin Collections For January**

(N.B. This schedule may be subject to change)

**Black Bin:**

Thurs 11th Jan

Thurs 25th Jan

**Blue/Green Bin**

Thurs 4th Jan (Blue ONLY)

Thurs 18th Jan

**Notice to Advertisers**

**Advertisements** are published quarterly. Copy for inclusion in the next available edition of the Calendar **must** reach us by 17th January 2024 at the *very latest*. Advertisements will **NOT** be published unless full payment has been received in advance. Please note: *We are currently unable to accept PDF file types.* Quarter-page adverts MUST be Portrait-style, half-page adverts MUST be Landscape-style. In the first instance, advertisers should contact **Jean Verney** at:

**calendaradstoft@gmail.com** to discuss their requirements.

**✂ USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS**

Alcoholics Anonymous: 0845 769 7555  
 Anglian Water (for sewage): 08457 145 145  
 (Emergency number for burst water pipes: 01223 706050)  
 Ashcroft Veterinary Surgery: 01954 210250  
 Bourn GPs' Surgery: 01954 719313  
 Cambridge AIDS help-line: (01223) 508805  
 Cambs County Council: 0345 045 5200  
 Cambridge Dial a Ride 01223 506335  
 Cambridge Water: 01223 706050  
 Care Network Cambridgeshire 01954 211919.  
 Citizens Advice Bureau: 0844 848 7979  
 Comberton GPs' Surgery: 01223 262500  
 Comberton Village College: 01223 262503  
 Community Warden (Age UK CAP) 07812 495997  
 County Councillor 07968 264637  
 CVC Community Education: 01223 264721  
 District Councillor: 01954 210040  
 Household Waste/Pest Control: 0345 045 0063  
 Lifespan Health Care, Family and Child Team: 01223 264460  
 Member of Parliament: Phone 01223 603677  
 Meridian Primary School: 01223 262423  
 Police: 101 (Emergencies: 999)  
 (Local Beat Officer is PCSO Sam Kennedy)  
 Road/Pothole Reporting: 0345 045 5212  
 Street Lighting: 0800 7838 247  
 Street Cleaning: 03450 450 063  
 South Cambs District Council: 01954 713 000  
 South Cambs Fire and Rescue: 01480 444 500  
 Toft Car Scheme: 07790 171710  
 Trading Standards: 0345 0455206  
 UK Power Networks (Emergencies): 0800 31 63 105

Looking for something to do over these dark, damp January days? On our doorstep are some of the country's best museums. Here's our pick of the best - and they're all free to visit!



The Fitzwilliam Museum

<https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/>

Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

<https://sedgwickmuseum.cam.ac.uk/>

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

<https://maa.cam.ac.uk/>

Cambridge Science Centre

<https://www.cambridgesciencecentre.org/>

Whipple Museum of the History of Science

<https://www.whipplemuseum.cam.ac.uk/>

Museum of Zoology

<https://www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/>

Museum of Classical Archaeology

<https://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum>

**T**he Calendar is always pleased to receive contributions from readers, advertisers and fund raisers. We reserve the right to edit, amend, abridge or otherwise butcher any submissions to accord with technical or editorial requirements, or sometimes just on a whim. We do not normally accept anonymous contributions or those using pen-names.

Contributors are asked to note that all text formatting is removed from items on receipt. Consider **plain text files** as your first choice where possible. **Please avoid proprietary file types (e.g. PDF, PUB, DOCX, XLS etc) unless you feel it essential. Graphics (if you must) are best submitted as PNG files.** Many thanks.

*And, finally...*

Please remember that contributions for the next issue of the *Calendar* must reach the Editor, Michael Walker, **by 20th January**. Many thanks to all who contributed to this edition. Email: [calendareditor@toft.org.uk](mailto:calendareditor@toft.org.uk) Post: 33 Egremont Road, Hardwick, Cambridge CB23 7XR Telephone: 01954 211346