

# TOFT VILLAGE CALENDAR

March 2025



## DIARY DATES

**The Parish Council**  
The Parish Council  
will meet on  
Monday 3rd March.

**Toft  
Friendship  
Club**  
[Over 50s Club]  
12th March, 2.30 Toft  
People's Hall.

**Concert**  
**Sound of the Sirens**  
Doors open 19.30  
Saturday 22nd  
Toft People's Hall.

**Last Warm Hub**  
on March 24th.

**Mothering Sunday**  
30th March  
The theme is  
'Coming Home'.  
St Andrew's Church  
11.00am

## EDITORIAL

I was mass-deleting some email messages the other day when it occurred to me how emails are incredibly disposable and how, in many ways, we take them for granted. We do not now invest anywhere near as much time in drafting an email as we would have in the past for a handwritten letter. Intuitively, I don't consider an email or, for that matter, the outputs of various messaging apps as the equivalent to a letter. In this busy modern world, we all, of course, appreciate the convenience of both email and messaging and I certainly would not be without the former. In a matter of seconds one can communicate with someone on the opposite side of the planet and they can respond just as quickly. In contrast, a handwritten letter or note takes time to compose and implement, so requires focus and then takes at least a couple of days to travel from the hands of the writer to those of the recipient. But it does say something about the regard with which the writer holds the recipient of the letter that they have gone to such effort.

Whilst never a regular or particularly competent letter writer myself, I have always been appreciative of receiving a well-structured and thoughtful letter. I am also deeply envious of those writers with that particular knack, especially if it is written in a good hand. If, like an email, these letters had been typed in some uniform font, part of their appeal would certainly have been lost. Handwriting has character, and you can also be sure that the letter was specifically written for you.

Sadly, postal mail these days is predominantly bills and junk mail, and the cost of a letter or a card continues to climb, as illustrated by the steady decline in the numbers of handwritten Christmas cards delivered. It would seem that the art of the handwritten letter is increasingly being abandoned in the face of electronic convenience, but who doesn't still enjoy physically receiving such a note or letter? A handwritten letter can certainly be torn up if you wish to destroy it, but even this act is more intentional than simply dragging an email into the recycling bin with the press of a button or the swipe of a mouse. There is a more tangible quality about something crafted by hand rather than via a keyboard so maybe it isn't too late to revitalize the craft of letter writing. If you send a letter once in a while, you will probably also receive one.

## New hedge behind Queen's Platinum Jubilee Tree

A native hedge has been planted along the fence at the back of the fastigate copper beech, which was planted in 2022 to commemorate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This hedge is a mixture of hawthorn, field maple, hornbeam, rowan and dog rose, which should keep our local wildlife happy! Our grateful thanks to the small group of enthusiastic helpers who made this happen.

*Our PC Chair (left) planting the  
50th and final sapling*



**MINISTRY TEAM**  
**THE CHURCH IN TOFT**  
**St Andrew's Parish Church**

**Assistant Curate:**

Revd Barnabas Leeke 07787 800 888

**Lay Minister:**

Barbara Preece Tel: 263466

**Churchwardens:**

Ann Mitchell 262516

John Quenby 263949

**Methodist Church**

**Minister:** Revd Charity Nzegwu

01763 241803

**Stewards:**

Diana Tebbit 263557

Stephen Acklam 264055

Mrs Pat Morton 264010

**SERVICES OF WORSHIP**

**2nd March**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)

Revd Prof. Michael Reiss

11.00am Holy Communion, Methodist Church

Revd Charity Ngewzu

**5th March ASH WEDNESDAY**

12 noon Holy Communion & ashing – Dry Drayton –

Revd Clare Coates

7.00pm Holy Communion & ashing – Barton –

Revd Claire Robertson

**9th March**

11.00 am Holy Communion, St. Andrew's

Revd Priscilla Slusar

**16th March**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP)

Revd Prof. Michael Reiss

11.00am Morning Worship, Methodist Church

Mrs Cathy Michell

**23rd March**

11.00am Holy Communion, St. Andrew's

Revd Barnabas Leeke

**30th March**

11.00am MOTHERING SUNDAY, Methodist Church –

Mrs Barbara Preece & Mrs Cathy Michell

There will be morning prayer at St. Andrew's every Wednesday at **9.30 am**.

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 on Sundays

**MEETING ID: 823 1147 3640**

# MARCH, LENT AND MOTHERING SUNDAY

Do you give up chocolate, alcohol, even social media for Lent, much of which is in March this year? The 40-day period we call Lent comes from an old English word meaning 'lengthen' because the days start to get longer as we approach summer. For Christians it is a time of reflection and of asking for forgiveness, beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending with Easter. Traditionally, the day before Lent begins is a time for feasting and celebration. All the luxury foods that won't be eaten during Lent are consumed. Given that those foods include eggs, milk and fat – ingredients for pancake batter – it is clear why it became traditional to make pancakes! In the UK, the day is known as *Shrove Tuesday* – the word 'shrove' is derived from 'shrive' meaning to forgive. In many parts of the world, the day is known as *Mardi Gras* ('fat Tuesday' in French) and is marked with a carnival. The fourth Sunday during Lent is Mothering Sunday, which has evolved over the years from the time when people would return to their 'Mother Church' during Lent to when those in service and apprenticeships went home to their mothers with gifts such as hand-picked flowers. By 1938 it was claimed that Mothering Sunday was celebrated in every parish in Britain and in every country of the Empire.

1st March marks the meteorological start of spring and 20/21 the astronomical start of spring. The name of March comes from *Martius*, the first month of the earliest Roman calendar. It was named after Mars, the Roman god of war and an ancestor of the Roman people through his sons Romulus and Remus. His month *Martius* was the beginning of the season for warfare! And already visible on our verges and in the churchyard, the March flower is the daffodil.



**Mark Catley**

We very sadly have to report the recent death of Mark Catley. A very popular character in Toft, Mark was well known for his long and active role with the Comberton Baptist Church and his involvement as a member of both Toft Choir and Toft Barbershop Quartet. We send our condolences to Julia and the rest of the family and will be providing a full obituary next month.



# CHURCH IN TOFT DIARY



## Joys and challenges - lessons from the early church

During Lent, on Wednesday mornings 26th March, 2nd, 9th and 16th April from 10.30-12 noon we will meet at 24 Mill Lane for a chance to chat, share ideas and discuss these lessons.

All are welcome. You do not need to be a churchgoer in Toft or anywhere else - we would be delighted to see you. Coffee & cake!

## Mothering Sunday

30th March - The theme is 'Coming Home'. This is a service for young and old - there will be simnel cake and posies. Do come.

## Friendship Club

12th March, 2.30 Toft People's Hall. Our challenge this month is 'Guess What' led by Peter Barker and Ann Mitchell.

As ever, if you are 50 or over, you are most welcome - we look forward to seeing you.

## The Warm Hub

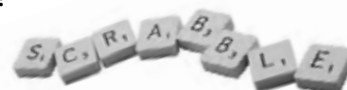
Every Monday from 10.00-12.00 at the Methodist Chapel in High Street.

Everyone is welcome at any time. Coffee, tea and biscuits are served.



Come and join us for chat, games, friendship and refreshment.

The scrabble board awaits!



We would love to see you there.  
You'll be sure of a warm welcome.  
Do bring a friend.

**Warm Hub will finish this session on March 24th.**

## Keith Collett: A celebration of his life



Toft People's Hall was full to capacity on Saturday 8th February for an event to celebrate the life of the late Keith Collett. Barbara Preece led the event and delivered a homily to Keith, painting a touching and often humorous picture of a true countryman. Keith's brother, Koran, reminisced about their childhood and younger years, Russell Sewell, Keith's farming companion, read a beautiful prayerful poem and Toft Historical Society showed a short video of interviews with Keith talking about his early years as a farmhand.

Keith's daughter Helen sent the following thank-you message:

'A sincere and heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended. The wonderful atmosphere created by so many of you who came to celebrate his life, sharing stories and tales, was a real tribute to the affection with which he is remembered and something from which we will take great comfort. He would have absolutely loved it but been genuinely humbled to think everyone came just for him!

Thank you everyone for making it such a memorable and happy occasion.'

# TOFT PARISH COUNCIL

## Who is on the Council?

The Parish Council is comprised of a Chair and Deputy chair and five other councillors, all of whom are volunteers. Currently these members are:

|                | Phone        | E-mail                                 |
|----------------|--------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Chair:</b>  |              |                                        |
| Martin         |              |                                        |
| Yeadon         | 263663       | <i>cllr.yeadon@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>     |
| <b>Deputy:</b> |              |                                        |
| Elaine         |              |                                        |
| Miles          | 262255       | <i>cllr.miles@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>      |
| Emma           |              |                                        |
| Darbyshire     | 07763 463234 | <i>cllr.darbyshire@tpc.toft.org.uk</i> |
| Rebecca        |              |                                        |
| Harris         | 07796 176333 | <i>cllr.harris@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>     |
| Sarah          |              |                                        |
| Tebbit         |              | <i>sarahilic01@gmail.com</i>           |
| Christine      |              |                                        |
| Watson         | 07730 941946 | <i>cllr.watson@tpc.toft.org.uk</i>     |

In addition, there is a Clerk, employed by the Parish Council, who takes minutes at the meetings, deals with all the administrative matters and advises on legal matters and points of order and is the Responsible Finance Officer. This is currently:

Ben Stoehr 01954 210241 *clerk@tpc.toft.org.uk*

## What does the Parish Council do?

The Parish Council represents the residents in Toft and aims to support the welfare and interests of its residents and businesses. In addition to being involved in the general duties and concerns of the Parish, such as building and tree management applications, proposed changes to land usage and wider issues in South Cambridgeshire that might impact on the village, each member has responsibility for specific areas. These cover matters relating to Toft, such as, Highways, Health and Safety Issues, Footpaths, Lot Meadow, The Recreation and Playground area, The Allotments, Climate Change, The People's Hall, the Defibrillator and Welcome Packs.

## How often does the Parish Council meet?

The Parish Council meets on the first Monday of each month, unless it is a Bank Holiday, when the meeting is deferred to the following Monday. The Parish Council does not meet in August. The Agenda for the upcoming meeting is posted on the Parish Council noticeboard, next to the bus stop near the green and at the Birdlings at least three days before the meeting takes place. All members of the public are welcome to attend Parish meetings which, under normal circumstances, take place in The People's Hall.

## Where can I find out what has happened in a meeting?

Every month the approved Minutes of the meeting

are put on the Parish Council noticeboards as soon as possible after the meeting has been held and a summary of the meeting is posted on the Toft Community Facebook page and printed in the Calendar in the following month's edition.

If you have any issues or concerns relating to the Parish, and are unable to attend a meeting, please contact one of the Parish councillors listed above, who will raise the matter, on your behalf, at the next Parish Council meeting.

## The PC met at 7.00pm on 3rd Feb 2025.

It was good to see four members of the public in attendance. One member expressed her concern about speeding on the High Street and the state of the drain outside Beldam's Close. The Chair explained just how much the PC had done to reduce speeding in the village and to get the drains cleared, without a lot of progress. The PC is to continue to push for a 20mph limit throughout the village.

Councillor Darbyshire sent her apologies to the meeting.

Four tenders have been received for the Grass cutting contract. It was agreed to take the lowest cost as the contractor was known to the Clerk as being reliable. Cllr Harris agreed to meet with the contractor to discuss particulars of our needs.

Cllr Yeadon reported that Tricia and Cynan Ellis-Evans had volunteered to plant the hedging around the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Area, as this would be a considerable saving to the Council compared to getting a contractor to carry out the work, and so, with a few other volunteers, that is what happened.

The County Council are proposing improvements to the Cycleway between Toft and Comberton, including introducing a 40mph limit on the road. The PC is to respond giving its support to the proposals. The CC is yet to commit to the proposals but this is, at least, the first stage.

Finding Fitness is a company making climbing frames and they say they have managed to secure funding from sources such that they can install equipment without cost to the PC. Cllr Watson is to investigate further and come back to the PC to report.

During the month the new bench has been installed at the top of Mill Lane Drift overlooking the valley. It's a great place to sit to take in the landscape. Also the rowan tree donated by the District Council has been planted in the Rec.

Cllr Miles reported to the PC on plans for the Hedgehog Day in June, as reported in the February Calendar.

8th May is the 80th Anniversary of VE Day and it was agreed that the PC would support the celebration, which will include lighting of the beacon and the raising of a special flag. More details on this will follow.

**Date of next meeting: 3rd March**

# Nature Diary

In the most recent Calendar, we proposed the idea of starting a Nature Diary where, each month, people can write about animals, plants or natural phenomena that they have recently observed in and around Toft. Contributions of as little as 50-100 words would do and this is a first offering.

## THE SHAPE OF TREES

It's in January and February, when the leaves have fled and all that remains is the stark skeletal outline of every tree, bush and hedge, that their elemental shapes can best be seen. Outlined against a pearly winter sky or a low white sun, each tree displays its individual character: the black upturned buds of ash, delicate hanging boughs of birch, the spiny tangle of a hawthorn hedge, the sturdy twisted strength of an isolated oak.

From the dense bulk of a hedge, branches like witches' brooms lift skywards, offering an airy perch for cackling rooks in their early pairings. The odd tree here and there is enrobed in a dark blanket of ivy, providing shelter for small creatures through the winter. Elsewhere on taller trees the dots and commas of mistletoe punctuate the landscape. Seen from high up on the ridge, together these icons create clear lines across the landscape, marking centuries of constancy and change.

But soon there'll be a shift in the air and our view will transform. As the sun casts its ever-strengthening warmth and light, faint traces of silver, green, russet and pink will emerge as growing haloes around each bush and tree – a harbinger of spring at last.

*Katherine James*



## THE HEDGEHOGS ARE (almost) COMING

In March and April, hedgehogs will begin to emerge from hibernation, having potentially lost a third of their body weight over winter. It can take them a few hours or even a few days to adjust to being active again and they may appear a little disoriented for a short time. Naturally, they will be extremely hungry but there will still be a shortage of their natural diet of earthworms, ground beetles, slugs, caterpillars, earwigs and millipedes. So, this is the perfect time to start putting out supplementary food such as meat-based wet dog or cat foods, or dry cat/kitten food. Specially-made hedgehog food is also widely available. Those resembling pet food with a high meat content are most suitable. A shallow bowl of water is also extremely beneficial.

To make a simple feeding station make an oblong shape with bricks or logs open on two sides (see below). Then cover it with a plastic lid or a piece of wood weighted down with another brick. This will keep the food dry and deter any pets you might have. The entrance needs to be a minimum of 13cm. square and the structure wide enough to take a dish of food and a hedgehog! The water bowl can be placed outside.



Caution: Do not feed hedgehogs bread and milk as they cannot tolerate lactose and will suffer from gastric problems. Feed mealworms sparingly as they will gobble them up and get full but they do not have any nutritional value for hedgehogs.

Also, we humans are coming out of hibernation now and are ready to tackle all those jobs in the garden. Please be careful not to disturb any hibernating animals in log and leaf piles and be extremely careful about using a strimmer without checking there is nothing still asleep in the long grass.

Let me know if you see a hedgehog. You can put a note through my door, 11 Miller's Road, or email me: elainemiles3@gmail.com or telephone 01223 262255 so I can start to create a map of where our hedgehogs are.

For more information about hedgehogs, visit the charity, Hedgehog Street, at <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/>



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
*Working together to improve community safety*



**Wildlife Trust for  
Beds, Cambs  
& Northants**

## Help your local community – become an on-call firefighter!

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service is looking to recruit more on-call firefighters to help local communities by responding to emergencies.

On-call firefighters are a vital part of your fire and rescue service. They respond to a wide range of incidents, from fighting fires and attending road traffic collisions to rescuing people and animals in need. They also respond to medical emergencies.

In addition to responding to emergency incidents, on-call firefighters support their communities by providing a range of safety advice, helping people to keep safe in their homes.

Being an on-call firefighter has many benefits. As well as being paid an annual wage and for the time spent at incidents or training, there are also opportunities to develop first aid skills and heavy goods vehicle driving qualifications.

Find out more about becoming an on-call firefighter by visiting our website: <https://bit.ly/CFRSOnCall>

## Local events March

**Saturday 8th, 9.30-11.30, Nature and Natter: outdoor art for adults (Cambourne)**

**Monday 10th, 9.30- 12, Monthly Meander: guided walk for adults (Trumpington Meadows)**

**Friday 14th, evening, Youth Rangers: toad patrol**

**Saturday 15th, 10-12, Wild in the Meadows family session: tools and sticks (Trumpington Meadows)**

**Tuesday 18th, 11-12.15, Seasonal Stroll: guided walk for adults (Trumpington Meadows)**

**Come and chat in person at the Cambourne Volunteer Fair on the 22nd at The Hub, Cambourne. [www.wildlifebcn.org/get-involved](http://www.wildlifebcn.org/get-involved)**

*www.wildlifebcn.org/get-involved*

## Toady reminder

March is a time when amphibians are moving to and from their breeding pond. Please look out for them on the roads. Let us know if you find large numbers getting run down.

Local enquiries: [Rebecca.Neal@wildlifebcn.org](mailto:Rebecca.Neal@wildlifebcn.org)

Facebook: [@BeccaBadgerWTBCN](https://www.facebook.com/BeccaBadgerWTBCN)

General enquiries: [cambridgeshire@wildlifebcn.org](mailto:cambridgeshire@wildlifebcn.org)

[@wildlifebcn](https://www.facebook.com/wildlifebcn) [www.wildlifebcn.org](http://www.wildlifebcn.org)

# The **SCHOOLROOM** Community Café

## Why not join us at our Schoolroom Community Café?

Our Schoolroom Community Café is run by volunteers as a non-profit-making enterprise. We're open every Wednesday from 10.30am to 1.30pm (we close only over part of the Christmas period). The Café is for everyone to enjoy, whether living in Toft or anywhere else: to share a drink and perhaps a piece of cake with friends, or maybe enjoy a bowl of homemade soup at lunchtime.

The Café is a safe environment for both adults and children. It's held in Toft People's Hall, originally the village school – hence our Café's name. The Hall is a warm and friendly space and everyone is very welcome. You can choose to sit in the cosy interior, or in better weather, take your drinks and food outside to our paved courtyard.

All our cakes, biscuits and soup are locally made, and we aim to cater for most special dietary needs. Our prices are exceptionally low, and as a new venture we're aiming to offer a weekly 'Special', which may include sausage rolls, bacon butties or quiche – and there's a great choice of drinks, hot and cold. We can do take-aways too!

## Funtime for Little Ones

Those who care for babies and toddlers may like to come and join us on Wednesday mornings too, at our half-hour session of songs, rhymes and stories, for you to enjoy time together with your little ones. It runs from 10.30 to 11am, it's free, and there's no need to book. Afterwards, why not have a coffee and cake or a biscuit in the Café, catch up with your friends and make new ones?

Note: We're always very pleased to hear from new volunteers, to help with serving, baking cakes or making soup.

For details, please contact Gill Pugh: [gill.ppugh@gmail.com](mailto:gill.ppugh@gmail.com)



# Toft - it's a jungle out there!



Moriarty is a toad or, as it transpired, was a toad – quite a large toad as toads go. He lived happily in the vegetable garden, eating slugs and snails – a decidedly 'good egg'. Then one day herself ventured down

to the vegetable patch and observed that the netting protecting her blueberries had entrapped a rather large grass snake. With commendable bravery she set about freeing the unfortunate reptile. In so doing, she noticed that the snake had a prominent bulge in its throat. On being freed, the ungrateful snake coughed up the bulge and she saw to her horror that it was a lifeless Moriarty. So much for kindness!

Many townies have a rather romantic view of the country. The truth is rather different and nothing reflects this better than the salutary tale of Moriarty and the snake. The basic rule of the hedgerows and woods (Toft's jungle) is 'eat or be eaten'. On any balmy summer's night, our bedroom windows are wide open to let in the fresh night air. But not only air enters; so do the sounds from the wood – yelps, screeches, howls and cries, the soundtrack of the remorseless rule of the jungle.

Unbeknown to most, we have royalty down our way – Charles and Camilla, a pair of sleek black crows. They have made our field and copse their territory. They rule with a rod of iron, seeing off the magpies and the like and confining their cousins, the rooks, to their parliament in the trees at the end of the orchard. Their only meaningful adversary is Felix the cock pheasant. Felix would have been born in France, shipped to England as a chick and reared at Kingston Wood to

become a mature game bird. Felix must have had the nous to stray into the village and take up residence. He is quite demanding. He pitches up unannounced, stamps his little feet and expects to be fed, which of course he is. This leads to confrontation with Charles and Camilla – always on the lookout for handouts – and generally ends in a stand-off as they circle each other looking daggers.

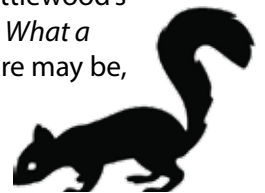
Don't mention badgers! You have your lawn beautifully cut and rolled and then one morning you wake up to find it's a ploughed field. Brock and his gang have dug it all up. At least we have found the answer to the badger latrines, which are strategically placed exactly where you don't want them. Jeyes fluid does the trick.

In 1925, a chunky little Asian deer known as muntjac escaped from Woburn Abbey. Subsequently they spread like wildfire and are now everywhere. Needless to say, we have our very own muntjac, Monty. If we come home in the dark, there he is, lurking by the gate. During the night he gently strolls around the garden, scything off all the buds and flower heads around a height of 18 inches. Infuriating.

Then there are the squirrels, who may look cute, but they rob songbirds' nests and strip the bark off trees, especially the field maple. Herself calls them 'furry rats'.

It's an alternative script for Joan Littlewood's unforgettable theatrical offering *Oh, What a Lovely War*. Murder and mayhem there may be, but I wouldn't swap it for the world.

JW



## March in the Garden from the Garden Wrangler

Growing annuals and perennials from seed is great value and can be underway now if you're growing on windowsills. Hardy annuals can be sown outdoors from the end of March if it isn't too wet.



With the soil warming up slightly, it is also a good time to finish planting or dividing herbaceous plants and shrubs to enable establishment before summer.

Sadly, the weeds are also starting to grow so break the weed seed cycle now and control them with mulching, weeding, spraying (follow instructions on pack) or planting.

## COMBERTON LIBRARY

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library) Tel: 01223 264277

### Coming Up!

**Warm space, your space** - every Wednesday 2.30pm – 5pm.

**"Change and adapt"** is the theme for the **Science Week** event, Friday March 7<sup>th</sup>.

### Weekly activities

**Knit, Sew and Natter** - 10.30am – 11.30am. March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Rhymetime** 10.30am – 11.00am for children aged between 0 to 4. March 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Also **First Steps Library Club**. Free event.

**It's Lego Time** with Duplo - every Saturday from 10.30am. Free event.

### Opening hours (excluding bank holidays etc.)

|           |                                |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Monday    | 10am – 1pm                     |
| Wednesday | 10am – 1pm and 2.30pm – 5.30pm |
| Friday    | 2.30pm – 5.30pm                |
| Saturday  | 10am – 1pm                     |

# Toft Club News

March is going to be a musical month! We are excited to be welcoming **Sound of the Sirens** to Toft on Saturday 22nd. *Sound of the Sirens* are a popular acoustic singer-songwriting duo based in Exeter, Devon comprising of Abbe Martin & Hannah Wood. Tickets (just £16.50) are already selling fast – so don't miss out, get yours now from the website: <https://toft.club/gigs.php>.

We start the month musically with the **Slow Session** on Saturday 1st – this is an evening of music where you can turn up and take part, no matter your skill level. New players are always welcome – free entry. Later in the evening we are treated to some wonderful tunes – so come along to listen! Doors open at 8pm. Bar open as normal.

The music continues with our popular monthly **Open Mic Music Night** on Saturday 8th – an evening of music from our talented local musicians – free entry.

The **Annual General Meeting** will take place on Thursday 20th March. We invite all members to come along. If you would like to raise a matter, please contact us via the website: <https://toft.club/contact> by 6th March.

**Film Night** is on Saturday 15th, when we will be showing something a bit different – an all-action comedy movie from 2024 called *The Fall Guy*. Ryan Gosling plays a stuntman and like everyone in

the stunt community, he gets blown up, shot, crashed, thrown through windows and dropped from the highest of heights, all for our entertainment. And now, fresh off an almost career-ending accident, this working-class hero has to track down a missing movie star, solve a conspiracy and try to win back the love of his life while still doing his day job. What could possibly go right? Doors open at 7:30pm and the film starts promptly at 8pm. Film Club membership is £12 for the year, or evening membership is £2.50.

All our regular events are taking place in March: **Toft Art** is on Thursday 6th, **Toft Quiz** on Thursday 13th, **Carpet Bowls** on Friday 14th, **Table Tennis** on Thursday 20th (after the AGM) and **Toft Bingo** on Thursday 27th.

There is no Food on Friday in March, but it will be back in April.

The Club is always open on Thursday and Friday evening from 8pm, plus most Saturday evenings and there is always a warm welcome where you can meet up with friends and enjoy a drink.

**Keep up to date here:**

Website: <https://toft.club>

Follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/ToftSocial>

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## WELL, WHO DUNNIT THEN?

It's not often that events in Toft are shrouded in baffling mystery but on 25 January, the rank (some of them) officers of The TOFTCOPS force at their Annual Conference held, as always, at Lord Toft's Mansion, were stunned to hear of the death of his Lordship in suspicious circumstances, even as they were debating the law and order of getting their drinks. At least two barristers were discomfited by the unseemly scrum at the bar, where payments were anything but contactless.

Faced with the shocking news, the top brains of the force immediately sprang into action, rounded up the motley crew of suspects, who were enjoying a weekend house party at his Lordship's expense, and began

the interrogation process. It soon became clear that everyone had something to hide, but when TOFTCOPS are around, there's no hiding place.

The shrewd investigators finally winkled the truth out and the wicked murderer was found to be no less a pillar of society than the Revd Will Beedone, brother to his Lordship, driven to avenge his Lordship's stealing his fiancée. The guilty party was condemned to a week in the village stocks, but not before he joined everyone present in a sumptuous supper, where everything except justice was served. A motion was passed by all present at the conference that mysterious murders and good food should become an annual feature of Toft life.





## Spell it out

### Records of people and places

English is known for the irregularity of its spelling. But the vagaries of English spelling can tell us a lot about our history. Spelling was not fixed or agreed until the advent of the printing press in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and it took a long time for standard spellings to become widely accepted and used everywhere.

### Place names

Nowhere is varied spelling more apparent than in the manuscript parish records of Toft and those of Kingston. The table shows how our neighbouring villages were spelt in the births, marriages and burial records at various points over the centuries.

| century   | village                | village                | village   |
|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| 1500-1700 | Caldecoote<br>Caldecot | Cumberton<br>Comberton |           |
| 1700-1800 | Caldecott              | Cumberton              | Long Stow |
| 1800-1900 | Caldicott              | Comberton              | Long Stow |
|           | Caldecote              |                        | Longstowe |
| 1830-     | Caldecote              | Comberton              | Longstowe |

Older spellings often reflected how words were pronounced (many local people still say 'Cumberton'). In the earlier manuscripts, the records seem to reflect the personal spelling preferences of the recording vicar. And over the centuries Toft has appeared on maps as Toftth, Tosta, Thoft, Thofo, Toftes, Tofte and Topht!

### People

Local family names are also subject to variation in spelling. Collett appears as Collet frequently during the 19<sup>th</sup> century records, and the Creek family name has appeared as Creek and Creyk in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Creke in the 19<sup>th</sup>. Basely appears here and there as Basly and Basley. Clark and Clarke, Sparks and Sparkes exist side by side.



Have you seen the fantastic new 'rustic' sign for Lot Meadow by the gate in the High Street? Thanks are due to the Parish Council, who commissioned the Men's Shed group in Comberton to produce the sign. Several sharp-eyed residents have already been commenting favourably on it.

# Friends of the Bourn Brook

## Are flea treatments of our pets poisoning our aquatic habitats?

Are you aware that the veterinary treatments we use to remove fleas and ticks from our pets have also now been found in our rivers and streams? Virtually every water body sampled in recent research across England was found to contain the insecticides Fipronil or Imidacloprid, which are regularly used in flea and tick treatments of pets.



These are incredibly toxic chemicals for insects. It is calculated that the equivalent of one dose of flea treatment for a medium sized dog would kill 60 million bees.

The concentrations of these chemicals found in the tested water bodies regularly exceeded recognised chronic toxicity limits for many aquatic insects that are food sources for both the fish and birds living in and around our aquatic habitats. The presence of these poisons in water bodies is therefore likely causing significant environmental damage.

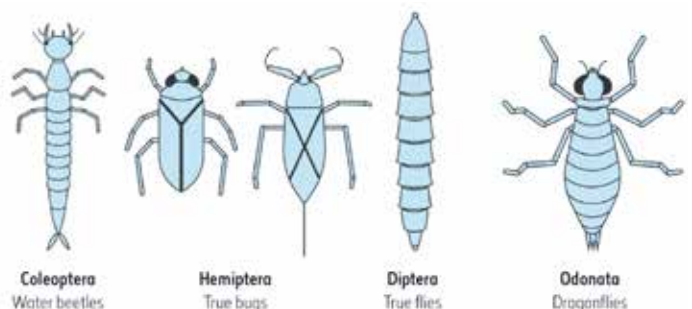
Both chemicals were used in the past on farms, albeit very infrequently, but have been banned in the UK for a number of years. However, they are extensively used in veterinary treatments of pets and there is currently no regulation for their use – you can buy them off the shelf. The highest concentrations measured were consistently found downstream of water treatment plants. This strongly supports the view that sewage from urbanized areas, and that includes villages, was the primary source. Water treatment processes do remove some chemicals and pharmaceuticals from sewage, but many others pass through the system into our rivers and streams.

There are about 20 million cats and dogs in the UK, and around 80% are receiving flea treatments, whether needed or not. Washing of pets at home is already known to flush fipronil into sewers and then rivers, while dogs swimming in rivers is another pathway for contamination. Veterinary guidelines usually state that pets should not be touched at the treatment site until it has dried. However, recent research has shown that these insecticides can be transferred to the owner's hands from the application site for up to 28 days after treatment and then flushed into drains after hand washing.

Six veterinary companies have bought up 60% of UK veterinary practices and they have introduced changes as to how these vets operate. Some companies are apparently pushing their vets to encourage pet owners to sign up to receive flea/tick treatments from the companies every month. Clearly a steady income stream for these businesses but is it environmentally acceptable? Fleas and ticks are more a seasonal than a year-round problem so if an animal hasn't got fleas, why should you need to treat it every month? Vets already encourage pet owners to wash the dog or cat bedding regularly – this is where the flea larvae live. The British Veterinary Association currently encourages vets to consider the likely exposure of an individual animal to fleas (or ticks) when recommending treatments so a solitary house cat might not need any treatment.

## Riverfly Surveys

The Friends of Bourn Brook will be undertaking Riverfly surveys later this year to help assess the health of the Brook by monitoring aquatic invertebrates in the stream. We will be collaborating with the Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency to ensure we get good quality data and will be looking for volunteers. If you want to know what Riverfly surveys are about, there is a short YouTube film on the Bourn Brook page of the Toft Village website (<https://www.toft.org.uk/bourn-brook/>). These surveys are a lot of fun, as well as educational, so keep an eye out for Riverfly dates in upcoming Calendars.



# The Big Toft Breakfast

Local & Fairtrade produce  
**Toft People's Hall**  
**Sunday 18 May**  
**9.00am-12.00 noon**



**Come, eat and enjoy a great big breakfast that does you good...and does good to others**

Organised by the Women of Toft  
Proceeds divided between Fairtrade and Farm Africa

**Toft Big Breakfast 2025 is coming soon!**  
Sunday, May 18th, 2025 from 9:00am to 12:00pm

Please step forward to help as we plan this amazing annual Toft event.

We are looking for people to volunteer to

- bake or make breakfast goods/bread or cakes etc.
- provide Fairtrade goods like oranges or bananas, coffee or tea.
- come on the day to set up or serve food/drink or wash up or cook or clear up.

There will be two shifts for volunteers - from 8.00 to 10.30 or from 10.30 to 1.00.

Email: [linda.hollow@btconnect](mailto:linda.hollow@btconnect) to let us know what you can do/give asap.

For all the people of Toft with all profits being given to Farm Africa and Fairtrade.

Enjoy a delicious breakfast – pay what you can!

Please put the date in your diaries.

## Afternoon Tea

**Longstowe Village Hall**  
everyone welcome

following Fridays: 2.00 to 4.00

28 Feb '25

28 Mar '25

NO tea in

April '25

30 May '25



## COMBERTON ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Our meeting this month will be Tuesday 25th March, when Vince Lea will give a talk on

### The Bourn Brook

Vince Lea is a Conservation Officer with The Countryside Regeneration Trust (CRT).

His role at CRT includes all aspects of conservation. His work includes running a mink-control operation in Cambridgeshire, which, it is hoped, will provide a model for future eradication nationally. Water voles have now returned to the Bourn Brook thanks to the removal of many mink over the last ten years.

The meeting will be at 8pm in Comberton Village Hall.

## BIN COLLECTIONS FOR MARCH

Black Bin: 6th, 20th

Blue Bin: 13th, 27th

Green Bin: 13th, 27th

## NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS

Advertisements are published quarterly. Copy for inclusion in the next available edition of the Calendar must reach us by 17th April at the very latest. Advertisements will NOT be published unless full payment has been received in advance. Please note: Quarter-page adverts MUST be Portrait-style, half-page adverts MUST be Landscape style. In the first instance, advertisers should contact Jean Verney at: [calendarads@aol.com](mailto:calendarads@aol.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 Michael Atkins 07968 264637  
CVC Community Education: 01223 264721  
District Councillor: Lina Nieto 07506 420655  
Household Waste/Pest Control: 0345 045 0063  
Lifespan Health Care, Family and Child Team: 01223 264460  
MP [pippa.heydings.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:pippa.heydings.mp@parliament.uk)  
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

## SOME USEFUL WEBSITE ADDRESSES

Cambridgeshire Constabulary:  
<https://www.cambs.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us->  
Cambridge City Food Bank:  
<https://cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk/>  
South Cambridgeshire District Council:  
<http://www.scambs.gov.uk>  
Toft Shop: <http://www.toftshop.co.uk>  
Toft Village Website: <http://www.toft.org.uk>

## Educating Rita Ratty

Jake Tebbit tells a tale about his father's time at Toft School.

Ken was not the best behaved child and was always up to mischief. He told Jake that he spent a lot of time at the school 'posting' pencils through the floorboards!

When Jim, Ken's grandson, was fixing the wonky floor at the Hall, he discovered a couple of ancient rats nests and low and behold they were made up mainly of discarded pencils. Sadly no messages survived.

The floor of the People's Hall has been repaired and is now fit for dancing, prancing and any fun and games on offer today.



## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CALENDAR

The 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 essential) are best submitted as PNG or JPEG files. Many thanks.

And, finally...

Please remember that contributions for the next issue of the Calendar must reach the Editor by 20 March.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this edition.

Email: [calendareditor@toft.org.uk](mailto:calendareditor@toft.org.uk)

Post: The Gig House, The Old Horse Yard, Comberton Road, Toft CB23 2RY