

Hambleton VALLEY

Group Magazine



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Dec 2025



The Hambleton Valley Group of Churches
"To see our lives and communities transformed by the love of God"



Cover: Christingles. This page: The 'Last Post' by Bobby Howard-Jones at Wild Remembrance, photo Peter Taylor.

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Weekday Services

Wednesday - 9.30am, Zoom

Daily Prayer - 10.15am, Holy

Communion, Turville

Emergencies:

If you are unable to contact the Group
Priests, please get in touch with your
churchwarden. (see pages 26 and 27)

All contributions are welcome, to the
Editor, Penny McLeish

hambledenvalleyeditor@gmail.com

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Please keep articles within 350 words. Copy
deadline is 15th of the month.

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Group Letter

December holds this great sense of anticipation as we as a nation build up to the highlight of the year, Christmas. The shops have been full of it since 1st November (or even earlier), and many people, perhaps especially children, ramp up the excitement sometimes beyond that which is manageable! There is so much going on and so many good times to be had. It is as if half of the year's parties are in the month of December!

Certainly, we have a wonderful selection of services in our churches that are often the best attended ones of the year. Yet I have a bit of a reputation for exhibiting Scrooge-type characteristics at this time. I absolutely do love Christmas, in the sense of the message of the birth of the Christ child, God coming to earth and living amongst humankind in order, ultimately, to rescue us by the supreme sacrifice of Jesus. But I suppose my negativity is down to the over-commercialism of Christmas, the excess of consumption and the surfeit of presents. I have never been good at giving or receiving presents. Thankfully my killjoy instincts are subsumed by my family's pleasure in the exchange of gifts. Recently I read a British Muslim's take on Christmas:



"I peered through living room windows at overstuffed stockings and extravagantly large presents. Every year I felt robbed. People used to say, "Well, you've got Eid," but it doesn't compare. It has none of the collective anticipation, none of the licentious partying, none of the fiscally irresponsible gift giving - at least not in my household. Eid falls on a random weekday, so you nip home for 24 hours painfully conscious of normal life carrying on without you, and stuff your face with biryani while hoping for £20 off your grandad. It's not the same."

Therefore, I keep this picture at my place at meal-times to remind me of all the joys of Christmas, to keep my Scrooge affectations hidden, and to embrace all the festivities, those inside and outside the churches!

Have a Christmas season full of joy, cheer, fun and as much excess as you wish!

Andy

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GROUP NOTES

Dear Friends

After almost 14 years the time has come for me to leave you as I step back from ministry here in the Hambleden Valley. Mark and I will be moving to our own house in the village of Ewelme in 2026 and my last Sunday here will be 1st February – a Group Service in Hambleden where I hope you will join me to say farewell with thanksgiving.

It will be so very hard to leave you all as it has been an immense privilege to live and minister among you during these years and Mark and I thank you for your love and friendship. However, just as God calls us to a place, he also shows us when it is time to go from that place and that time for us will come in the New Year.

While I will not be leaving ministry entirely – ordination is for life – I will take some time out to explore what God may be calling me to do in this new phase of life - and to be just a bit less busy – spending time with my family, who have supported me throughout these years, and also continuing to be a Spiritual Director. We would welcome your prayers at this time of change.

In the meantime, I look forward to continuing to minister here among you, working alongside you over the next three months.

May God bless you.

Rev Sue Morton

All Souls' Service

I'm not too worried about ghoulies or ghosts or long legged beasties or things that go bump in the night over Halloween, but the speed at which it has become such an overtly commercial event is worrying - so much so that it raises the question as to whether or not there is a possibility that All Hallows' Day or All Saints' Day on the 1st November, which also marks the beginning of Allhallowstide, could



become lost in a mass of plastic cobwebs, giant plastic spiders, plastic skeletons and witches.

However, not in the Hambleden Valley. I had the pleasure of attending the Service for All Souls if pleasure is the right word, given the reason that drew me and many others to St John the Evangelist in Frieth on the 2nd November. The service was both solemn and comforting, with thoughtful and touching contributions from the choir and very appropriate readings from both Rev Sue and Rev Andy.

All Saints' Day does conjure up an image of that great cloud of witnesses that have gone before, celebrated in both song and story, but amongst that number will also be those very dear to us, that we hold both in our hearts and minds, and that are sadly no longer here.

To say that it is an occasion to remember those departed doesn't really sit comfortably, as they will never be forgotten by we that are left behind, but it does perhaps offer some comfort in the hope that one day - and the best and wisest of us know not how soon - we might, as William Walsham How wrote, be amongst the *countless host who stream through the gates of pearl* to a reunion, where the years

Continued on page 7

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*Please go to
<https://operahollandpark.com>
for more details and to buy tickets.*

See advert on opposite page



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of separation melt away, and we are once again reunited with the departed, engulfed by warmth, familiarity and love.

Anon

Remembrance Sunday Service

A church service at its best. Great Britain's armed forces are renowned globally for their perfect public ceremonial duties and our two Hambleton Reverends, Andy Storch and Sue Morton and their army of helpers, joined their ranks on Remembrance Sunday.

Stirring and sterling hymns, beautiful trumpeting, sincere, and heartfelt readings, addresses and prayers, were followed by moving salutes as wreaths were laid at the memorial. Hambleton Valley's churchgoers were proud to be there as those 'who gave our today' were named as Rolls of Honour were declared by representatives



from: Turville, Medmenham, Fingest, Skirmett, Frieth and Hambleton. Staggeringly another 16,000 service men and women have lost their lives in conflicts since the end of WWII.

Tragically, some corner of a foreign field, could well be the final resting place for those who fight for and defend our country, our freedom and our values. As always,

Calling all you Valley opera fans



Usually reserved for private weddings and celebrations, audiences are invited to step into this beautifully restored country barn for a special evening of festive storytelling and music. Rackleys offers a magical setting in which to experience Charles Dickens's timeless ghost story. The performance will be followed by a sparkling reception with canapés and the opportunity to mingle and raise a glass with the cast and creative team.

Scored for eight singers and an actor with a trio of piano, double bass and accordion, Will Todd weaves the melodies of traditional Victorian carols and the midwinter chimes

of handbells through each episode of Charles Dickens's seasonal ghost story. Drawn from the much-loved 1848 novella, we meet Ebenezer Scrooge, the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future, and the family and friends whose kindness Scrooge has hardened his heart against, only to understand by their example the meaning of Christmas. A spooky and salutary story for all ages from Opera Holland Park, with a festive happy ending.

Where: Rackleys Barn, Marlow Rd, Cadmore End, High Wycombe HP14 3PP *see opposite page*

When: Monday 15 December

Timing: 6.30pm doors open, 7pm performance, followed by a sparkling reception until 9:15pm

Tickets: £95 per person and include a post-show sparkling reception and mingle with the cast with canapés. To book visit <https://operahollandpark.com/>

GROUP NOTES



photos Peter Taylor

we must care for those they leave behind. Less well known or publicised is the need to care for those who have loyally served in our armed forces and leave after years of unimaginable tension and toil in frequently lethal situations. We, hopefully, will never know what it feels like to hear a bullet, drone or bomb thud into the ground next to us. Today, in London alone, there are ten times more homeless military veterans than we have members of Parliament. Over 6,000 are struggling and in need of support. The contrast of life ready for 'front line' action and, what we might consider as a normal working life, is dramatically illustrated by those former servicemen sleeping cold, lonely, and hungry on pavements throughout our homeland. There is no safety catch on their retirement weapons.

Via our Poppy Appeal and Remembrance Services, we all need to think of these brave people and support and honour them as much as we can. The families of those lost and those who struggle to adjust, having served, deserve our help with their tomorrows.

We will remember them.

Trumpeter: Chris Preston

Wreath laying: Adam Knights, Martin Henderson, Brett Spence and Mark Brown

Chris Howgego and Peter Taylor

Wild Church!

Do join us for Winter Wild Church 2025!

 **Sunday 14th December**

2pm: Wild Nativity.

Northend Common with real animals!
Children (and adults if they wish!) are invited to dress as a character from the Nativity.

 **Sunday 11th January 2026**

3pm: Wild Plough Sunday.

Venue TBC

 At Wild Church we meet outdoors at different venues on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Everyone is warmly welcome!

Wild Church Team:

Rev Sue Morton 07808 517347
or suemorton131@gmail.com

Mary Campbell
grandma.marycampbell@googlemail.com

Magdalena Dabrowska
somd10206@gmail.com



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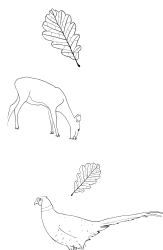


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Wild Church!

Wild Remembrance

Under gentle intermittent showers of beautiful golden leaves, a small crowd gathered. With the leafy ground beneath us uneven and undulating - presumably because of the century-old trench works we were standing on - it gave an almost amphitheatre effect to us all being able to see Rev Sue next to the poppy-strewn table and display of photos and letters from long ago soldiers writing home. We learnt about one of these soldiers, John 'Charlie' Hold, 5th Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, with Rev Sue and Mark reading out his letters helping us to picture his life, starting with his call-to-duty in 1915. Charlie's letters were mostly to his mum, his family, including his sisters, trying to tell them he was doing ok, and occasionally sending socks and vests home to be washed and returned. We felt we were getting to know this young man, so when Rev Sue said "And this is Charlie's last letter" I think most people had a lump in their throats.

We then heard from Adam Knights, representing the Paratrooper Regiment who said that what stood out for him from hearing the letters was Charlie trying to convince his mum he was ok, he wasn't in danger and he wasn't scared. He explained that in truth all

of them would have been terrified, without exception. He then expressed how pleased he was to see so many people gathered there today to remember those who have died. He himself had seen friends die in front of him in similar circumstances so it was a comfort to know that people think of them. When I spoke to my 10-year-old after the event, this is what stood out for him the most - he expressed surprise that British Soldiers are still dying in wars today. This started a whole series of questions from him about war that unfortunately have no answer, but are important to keep asking nonetheless.

Paratrooper Adam then told us more about trenches and how they have been used over the years in different combats and are still used today, it all depends on the weapons and the level of defence built up against the latest ones - or lack of. He said no one likes digging a trench (especially paratroopers) until they are being shot at, at which point it seems the best idea in the world and you speed up pretty quickly.

The beautifully played 'Last Post' by Bobby Howard-Jones saw us into a moving two-minute silence, and after *Jerusalem* there was much chatter about the experience we had all just had, what we had learnt, and how good the cake was. The children all ran off to play 'tag' and 'hide and seek' in the trenches, which seems relatively fitting given they were made for hiding anyway, but this time for more cheerful reasons. All made possible thanks to the efforts of those who

GROUP NOTES AND HAMBLEDEN

dug them in the first place, and what they went on to achieve in the war 110 years ago.

Harriet, William and Laurie

Community Matters report

The food bank operates every four weeks when families come along to the church for the items they need. Because there was one week of school holidays between the last food bank and the next, families were struggling so some 'top ups' were needed and we saw eleven families in all.

Some of the other items we have been able to help with recently are: new and second hand beds and some bedding, a large bottle of Calor gas which will last all winter, logs for a home which only has these for warmth, 2nd hand tumble dryer kindly donated, school transport, travel costs to a London hospital, baby food, donation towards a school trip and help with phone bills.

Recently, one of our families who we have known and worked with for several years had some wonderful news which they couldn't wait to tell us. Having applied for British citizenship and completed a long period of exams and checks this has finally been officially granted, a real celebration and huge relief after such a long period of waiting.

We are already being given items for Christmas which we will pass on to the families at the next food bank and included will be the donated 28 Advent calendars with chocolate in them!

Thank you all once more for your donations. We feel privileged to be able to offer this much needed support and we can only do this because of the kindness and commitment from yourselves and others.

**Blessings,
Judy Taylor**

HAMBLEDEN

Hambleden Cinema



In December we are showing *The Penguin Lessons*, rated 12, starring Steve Coogan. During the 1976 coup in Argentina, an English teacher, rescues a penguin and brings it to his school. His life begins to change when the bird's presence starts to have a positive effect on the school. Please note this screening is a matinee, doors open at 2pm and the film starts at 3pm. We will be serving mulled wine and mince pies, so please come and join in with our festivities.

The trailer;

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt26677014/>

Doors open 2pm, programme begins 3pm. Tickets £8 each can be bought from <https://www.hambledencinema.co.uk> and from Hambleden Village Stores. There will be a bar selling soft drinks, wine, beer and tempting delicious cinema snacks!

Continued on page 17



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Church Services and Events

From The Registers

Holy Baptism

Oct 26 Archie Henry Hugh Vincent Hambleden

Holy Matrimony

Nov 15 Samuel Cranfield and Heather Bainbridge Hambleden

Rest in Peace

Nov 3 Valmai Pickett Cremation

Nov 6 Ilse Mary Eve Private Farewell and Cremation

Nov 16 Dorothy Lumsden Burial of Ashes, Medmenham



Hambleton Valley Prayer Group

We have formed a contemplative listening and confidential prayer group, forming a circle round the valley with God at the centre. If you would like prayer please send a request to the email below:

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CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2025

Pattern of Worship December 2025

Please see below for Sunday services. There will also be Zoom services at 9:30am on Wednesdays with Churchyard Prayers at Fawley at 12noon on Fridays. The 10.15am midweek Holy Communion on Wednesdays is at Turville. There is a Christmas break on 31st December. Please check our website www.hambleden-valley-churches.org.uk for latest updates or contact our administrator Jenny Neagle on 07769 599616 – hambledenvalleyoffice@gmail.com with any query.

Sunday Services

	Fawley	Fingest	Frieth	Hambleden	Medmenham	Turville
30th November Advent Sunday			8am BCP Holy Communion	6pm Advent Candlelit Service	11am Holy Communion	
7th December	4pm Railway Nativity – Fawley Hill	10am Group Service				5pm Carols in the Churchyard
14th December	4pm Carol Service	9am Holy Communion		11am Holy Communion		2pm Wild Church Nativity, Northend
Fri 19th December			6pm Christingle			
21st December		4pm Carol Service	10am Holy Communion	8am BCP Holy Communion 6pm Carol Service	6pm Carol Service	
Wed 24th December Christmas Eve				5pm Christingle Service 11.30pm Midnight Mass		3pm Crib Service 11.30pm Midnight Mass
Thurs 25th December Christmas Day	11am Family Communion	9am Family Communion	9am Family Communion	11am Family Communion		
Sun 28th December			10am Holy Communion			
Sun 4th Jan 2026					10am Group Service	



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Wow!

Church Teas this year have raised over an incredible £7,600! It is impossible to thank everyone by name, but a special mention must be made for the wonderful musical entertainment we enjoyed this year, it brought so many more, and new, people. Thank you

also to those who kindly baked cakes for the freezer throughout the year. We used to use around 9 cakes per Sunday years ago, this year we have been averaging 14, which is a lot of cakes to make every week.

The biggest thank you must go to our wonderful volunteers, some new and some who have been giving up their time for many years. We could not have raised this amount without you – thank you.

Of course, this piece will end with a plea for more help! We had two Sundays we were unable to run the teas due to lack of support. It does not matter if you cannot bake, instead come and serve tea and cake. We also need four gentleman who are willing to help one Sunday in four to put out the signs for the teas.

Fingers crossed!

Penny Wright

penny.hurtley@gmail.com

FAWLEY

Churchyard Clear Up



Sarah Ronan persuaded the tiny Churchyard Maintenance team of Septuagenarians and Octogenarians (we won't be around for



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ever!) with the offer of coffee and brownies to help our annual clear up of the new churchyard where the recent graves were in danger of disappearing under large piles of leaves and prickly nutcases from the beautiful but huge sweet chestnut tree above.

A morning's hard work made a big difference, even shorter if we'd had more volunteers!

Three years ago, lots of children enjoyed helping James Ogilvy plant masses of daffodil bulbs and in previous years we've had some spectacular bonfires which young and old enjoyed.

Hilary Beck-Burridge

Halloween



The signs had been there for a while. If you found yourself wandering down the footpath at the Roundhouse into the woods towards Hambleden at the end of October, you might have seen a skeletal foot poking out of the hedge. But as the big day dawned, pumpkins, cobwebs, spooky skeletons started popping up all over the village and the old phone box on the green was invaded by a dancing skeleton. Fawley, it appears, is starting to acquire a bit of a reputation, for



the place to be at Halloween.

This year the Halloween trail was better than ever, with a wealth of places to stop and trick or treat. Forty or so children started off at The Pink Cottage where they were greeted by Harry Potter himself, stirring a cauldron of Hot Toddy for the parents while fearless trick or treaters had to brave a lucky dip of slimy worms to retrieve their treasure. On foot, bicycle, scooter and pony, intrepid trick or treaters followed the trail, taking in The Invisible Pub, The Spooooooky Phone Box and the Haunted Well on the green. Parents were rewarded with a fortifying Blood Vin Chaud, before those on horses trotted off to Burroughs field for a spot of handy pony fun.

As Halloween music blasted out on the green, skeletons, witches, ghosts and gothic princesses scoured the green for sweets while patient ponies nibbled gently on autumn grass and an impromptu game of football started. It was clear that here, community is as strong as ever. These are the days that etch happy memories on the brains of little children, the times they'll look back with nostalgia. The children and the parents had a ball - thank you to all those in the village who made it happen.

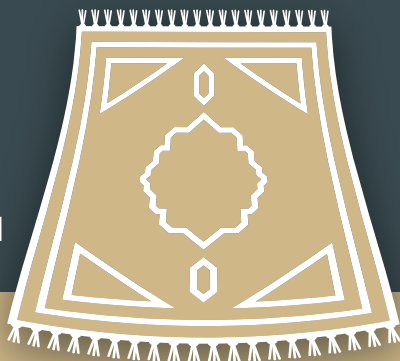
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Fawley Christmas Fair – 6th December 11am-2pm

You are all invited to the fabulous 2025 Fawley Christmas Fair. Start your Christmas shopping and help protect the planet at the same time with stalls for pre-loved fashion and accessories, affordable Christmas gifts from the 'present drawer', recent books, gorgeous home-made Christmas decorations, and our very popular baking stall with cakes, jams, puddings and pastries. Take part in our raffle to win one of our special beauty and food hampers and enjoy a lucky dip for children.

Enjoy mulled wine, coffee and tea while you shop and help us raise money for our beautiful church. Thanks to all those who are volunteering their time and talents – it does take a village!

Julia Ogilvy

FRIETH Frieth School Football



Our school football team put on a fantastic display in their match against Claytons, finishing with a well-earned 1-1 draw. The players showed great determination, teamwork, and sportsmanship from start to finish. It was especially exciting to see so many debutants taking to the field for their very first match. They rose to the challenge brilliantly, contributing energy, confidence, and enthusiasm throughout the game. The whole team played with excellent spirit,

supporting one another and working hard in every position. Their positive attitude and commitment should be applauded.

Netball



Our netball team played a fantastic match against Widmer End, showing determination, teamwork, and real skill on the court. It was a competitive and fast-paced game, with both teams giving their all, but Frieth maintained strong momentum throughout and secured an impressive 10-2 victory.

A special well done to Tabby, who was awarded Player of the Match for her outstanding performance. Her focus, agility, and smart decision-making made a real difference to the team's success. Congratulations to the whole squad for a well-deserved win!

Eco Council



Our Eco Council have been busy! After receiving a letter from MP Emma Reynolds praising their speeding posters, the children were interviewed by the Henley Standard. They also enjoyed an inspiring day at the Greener Henley Showcase, exploring brilliant eco-ideas from other schools and sharing our Coca-Cola recycling project. They've come back full

FRIETH AND TURVILLE

of enthusiasm and new plans for Frieth. Watch this space for some green magic!

Osprey Assembly



Ospreys performed wonderfully in their class assembly, presenting a vibrant and engaging celebration of everything they have learned about the Ancient Egyptians. The children confidently showcased their knowledge through a lively combination of dance, drama, writing, and art, bringing history to life for their audience.

Martin Gosling
Headteacher

TURVILLE

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CHURCH AND VILLAGE ACTIVITIES AND CONTACTS

HAMBLEDEN VALLEY GROUP OF CHURCHES

Rector: The Revd. Andy Storch,
07811 430898, Revandystorch@gmail.com

Associate Priest: The Revd. Sue Morton,
01491 639286, suemorton131@gmail.com

Director of Music: Jo Hutchins
07909 608654 johutchins27@gmail.com

Organist Emeritus: Christine Wells BEM,
01491 571588, c@wells.vnworks.net

Group Treasurer: Stephen Sidders, 01491
639271 stephensidders@sky.com

Group Administrator: Jenny Neagle, 07769
599616, hambledenvillageoffice@gmail.com

Weddings and Blessings: Jenny Neagle,
07769 599616,
hambledenvillageoffice@gmail.com

Tea Club: St. Katharine's, Parmoor,
Tuesdays, 3 - 4.30pm
Wendy Duerden, 01491 638297,
wendy.duerden@techademic.net

Barney's Toddler Group: Frieth Village Hall,
Currently suspended

Hambleden Valley Garden Club:
Meetings October-March on the first Tuesday
of the month, Frieth Village Hall.
Clair Honnor 07773 387195

Website:
www.hambleden-valley-churches.org.uk

FAWLEY (ST MARY THE VIRGIN)

Churchwarden:
Vacant

**Clerk to Fawley Parish Meeting and
Village Hall booking:**
David Burton - davidburtn83@hotmail.co.uk

FINGEST (ST BARTHOLOMEW)

Churchwardens:
Brian Barnes, 01494 882613,
brianbarnes346@gmail.com
Jill Dean, 01491 638678,
jill@sundawn.uk.com

FRIETH (ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST)

Verger: Judy Hunt, 01494 882227,
ajh.claypit1@btinternet.com

Village Hall Bookings:
website www.friethvillagehall.org
email friethvillagehall@gmail.com
Tel 01494 880737

Frieth Natural History Society:
Mary 01494 881501, Andy 01494 881586,
FNHS2023@gmail.com

Frieth Village Society: Caroline Walker
01494 882333

Frieth Cricket Club: Ben Smiley
friethcricket@btinternet.com

Frieth Lunch Club: meets on last
Friday of the month at the Yew Tree Pub.
Judy Hunt, 01494 882227
ajh.claypit1@btinternet.com

HAMBLEDEN (ST MARY THE VIRGIN)

Churchwarden:
Vacant

Deputy Churchwarden:
Vacant

Bell Ringing: Fri 6.45pm practice, Helen or
Karen, hambledenbells@mycomputer.email

Village Hall Bookings: Jamie Baker,
01491 410669, www.hambledenvillagehall.org

Pilates: Mondays 11 – 12 Fran Presho,
07951 019594

Bridge Club: Fridays 1.30 – 4.30
Frances Cugnoni, 01491 576409

Hambleden Social and Sports Club:

Open daily from 8pm Pat Eldridge, 01491
576067

Tennis Club: Heather Symons, 01491
577344, heathersymons16@hotmail.com

Tennis Coaching: Chris Marshall,
07801 999230, chrismarshall20@hotmail.com

MEDMENHAM (ST PETER AND ST PAUL)

Churchwarden:
Vacant.

Village Hall Bookings: Emma Tentori,
07759 014396

Uniformed organisations:
1st Danesfield Scouts, Cubs and Beavers: leader Nick Currie,
enquiries@danefieldscouts.org.uk

Medmenham News:
medmenhamnews@icloud.com

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Village Hall Bookings:
Bookings via the website:
skirmettvillagehall.org
Other enquiries:
skirmettvillagehall@gmail.com

TURVILLE (ST MARY THE VIRGIN)

Churchwarden:
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Bell Ringing: Wed practice,
Rachel Wallace, 01494 883025
rachel@markjwallace.com

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TURVILLE NORTHEND

Village Hall Bookings:
David & Susan Faragher 01491 638960 or
07563 903678, davidfaragher@fastmail.fm
smfaragher@fastmail.fm

Yoga: Tuesdays 7pm, Andrea 07496 281341

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Hambleden: Parish Clerk Lorna Coldwell
01494 881483, clerk@hambleden.org.uk,
www.hambleden.org.uk

Medmenham: Parish Clerk Carole Burslem
01494 449215, mpc.clerk@gmail.com

Turville: Parish Clerk Lorna Coldwell,
01494 881483, turvilleparishcouncil@gmail.com,
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