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QUARTERLY JOURNAL

The Winkleigh Society

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Winkleigh Society Report

The posties tea went down a storm at Fiona's Farm shop. This is the most enjoyable event we host all year where we get to treat and thank our loyal foot soldiers. (See page 16)

Following the sorting and cataloguing of the **Winkleigh archive** [thank you Barbara Jenkins] and after taking advice from **Devon Conservators** the Winkleigh Society has purchased a bespoke archive storage cabinet. However it came flat-packed and more than one pair of hands was required to assemble it. Paul Skinner and Barry Jenkins took on this complex task in the Community Centre but fortified with coffee and biscuits the final result was worth the effort. The old wooden wardrobe was taken out, demolished and it was added to the bonfire pile at the sports centre.

POST OFFICE HAND - MADE SIGN. This has now been kindly taken down by **Robert Baker** and we have arranged to take it to **John Butler's** (the original maker of the sign) workshop in Bideford where he will carry out repairs or re-build it. John's parents ran the Post office for many years and he grew up there. When his parents retired and moved away John put his talents to work and carved a unique sign for the Post office as a tribute to them and out of affection for the village. As it is unique to Winkleigh (and as a society we champion local distinctiveness) we decided to champion its preservation.

AIRFIELD REMEMBRANCE SERVICE. The most complex occasion that we co-ordinate each year taking place at R.A.F. Memorial on Winkleigh Airfield went very well with over 70 people attending and representatives from the military, local and district representatives laying wreaths at the memorial site. See separate report.

Penny Griffiths and Margaret Miller



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Welcome

TO OUR AUTUMN EDITION

The last issue of 2025 and I'd like to extend a sincere and huge thank you to all of the 40 or so volunteers without whose help DW wouldn't have landed on your doormats this year. My thanks also go to the businesses and service providers who have supported us with advertising and sponsorship and also to our designer Becci Arscott and our printers Deltor Communications Ltd.

I love Christmas but I hate the fact that the starting gun for it seems to go off earlier each year. This year it has been full speed ahead from the beginning of November with some retail outlets starting in September! I was never keen on "Wombling Merry Christmas" but my dislike of it increases every time I go into a shop, garage, garden centre or pub only to have my aural faculties assaulted by my enemies from Wimbledon and I now have a pathological hatred of it and them! I would vote for December 1st being the start date and Christmas Carols being the music of choice in public spaces. Reading that back makes me sound like Scrooge but I really am not - well maybe a little bit which I'll sort out via a New Year's resolution.

It just leaves me to wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Peter Hopkinson

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PRESS SNIPPETS

North Devon Journal Oct 30

Hospital redevelopment starts at North Devon District Hospital after an award of £22.7 million from the Governments new hospital programme. Phase one is rebuilding of staff accommodation.

Crediton Courier Oct 9

Former Bishop of Crediton has been named as the first female Archbishop of Canterbury. Rt. Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dame Sarah Mullally will be the 106th person to hold this role. She will be installed at Canterbury Cathedral in March 2026.

Okehampton Times Oct 16

Okehampton Town Council has voted to fight for a community banking hub. This was after a packed public meeting protesting that the last bank in Okehampton Lloyds is to be closed.

North Devon Journal Oct 16

South West consumers would pay more for higher welfare food. This new survey was carried out by You Gov on behalf of the RSPCA. Spokeswoman Charlotte Thomas said 'Every Time You choose a higher welfare product you help ensure farmed animals live better lives.'

Okehampton Times Oct 16

Hikers on Dartmoor have discovered a rare fungi that emits a putrid smell of rotten flesh It is the rare Devil's Finger Fungus, also known as the Octopus Stinkhorn. It is vibrant red and pink. The smell of rotting flesh attracts insects which go on to spread the spores.

Penny Griffiths

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WINKLEIGH

Parish Church News

The nights are definitely drawing in and the days getting shorter. In the church our thoughts are turning towards Advent and Christmas. Advent is the four Sundays in the run up to Christmas and each week we light an extra candle on our Advent ring. It is no accident that as the days shorten and darken, the light of the Advent ring increases as we look forward to the birth of the light of the world – Jesus Christ who came to dispel all darkness, bringing with him hope and love for all. The birth of the baby in the manger is a significant event in the life of the church and our lives as Christians. A symbol of God's extravagant love for all humanity, made real in the midst of the world. It is so easy when tangled in the tinsel and wearing Christmas jumpers, deciding on food and struggling with the present buying, to forget that the birth of Jesus is the real reason for our celebrations. However much we might think that this is an issue of the modern world, it is worth noting that St Francis of Assisi was having concerns that people had forgotten the true meaning of Christmas in 1223!

His solution was to stage a re-enactment of the original nativity scene in a local cave to help people visualise and reflect upon Jesus' birth. Thus, nativity scenes as we now know them were created. Many of us have nativity sets in our homes, symbolising not only birth of Christ but memories of Christmas' past and those we love. Nativity sets vary hugely in style and often reflect local culture, customs and dress. Some sets have been passed down through generations or carry memories of a holiday. All of them providing a chance to pause and reflect in the busyness of Christmas preparations.

If you are looking for an opportunity to pause and reflect, we will be holding a Nativity Festival on Saturday 13th December 1:00pm-4:00pm in All Saints church. There will be lots of different nativity sets on display and refreshments will be served. We are also delighted to have the Ashreigney handbells playing for us at 3:00pm-3:30pm. Do come along and if you have a nativity you would like to loan us for the afternoon, please let me know.

We will also be holding a number of services over the Christmas period to which all are welcome – dates are in the diary pages or look out for our posters and flyers.

I hope you all have a very peaceful and blessed Christmas.

Revd Helen Blaine

01837 83710 or Revhelenblaine@outlook.com



BEWARE! We have received reports of an email purporting to be from Winkleigh Online; the gist of it click on this link to access a report or something like this. Apparently several people in Winkleigh have also received the same email.

Winkleigh Online do not send out emails. This is obviously a phishing scam or worse.

All Saints Church *Flower Ladies Group*



A big thank you to everyone that attended our 'Coffee Morning' on Tuesday 7th October when we had a 'grocery hamper raffle' and a 'bring & buy' stall available. All funds raised during this event went to ongoing group funds.



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NEWS FROM THE Winkleigh Methodist Church?



Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to our **Harvest Celebration Lunch** – what a great success it was! Thank you to those of you who sold the tickets and to each and every one of you who bought one as well as thanks to everyone who generously made and gave the food we all enjoyed. It was wonderful to see the Village Hall full and to hear lots of chatting and laughter. A good community get-together with time to acknowledge the hard work of our farming community in ploughing the fields and scattering the seed and to give thanks that it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand! An amazing profit of £1,026 was raised! This will be split between the Devon Air Ambulance and the Farming Community Network (FCN).

It seems that harvest celebrations and the half term holiday are only just over yet it is time to begin preparing for Christmas! We would love to see you at either of the following events:

- **The Big Sing (carols) followed by seasonal refreshments at 6.30 pm on Sunday 21 December at Winkleigh Methodist**
- **Christmas morning celebration – a short service starting at 10.30 am at Winkleigh Methodist**

Our regular activities continue

Sunday worship begins at 11 am each Sunday – everyone welcome

Tea & Puddings – our popular community event (fourth Sunday in the month). Thank you to everyone

who supports this either by providing a delicious homemade pudding or by coming along to eat, drink and chat. The next one will be on 23 November 2025, followed by a short break during the winter. We'll let you know when it will resume again!

For more detail about church life or prayer requests please contact any of the people below, or any other church member, and we will be do our best to help you. Alan and Fiona Marshall 01837 83809 / Pam Down 01837 83674

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From your **Devon** **County Councillor**

Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin

It's been a busy few months as your county councillor, with a Full Council meeting in early September marking a packed start to the Autumn. We agreed our new Strategic Plan, setting out a vision for a Devon where everyone thrives, and I presented my first report as Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, answering questions from fellow councillors at County Hall.

Standing Up for Devon's Farmers

I used this opportunity to champion our farming community. Council agreed we would write to Government ministers, seeking an audience with them urgently, and highlighting major concerns- including proposed changes to family farm taxation, the sudden closure of the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme, and the loss of support for farmers' mental health. We also called for fair trade deals, and the embedding of farming and food in the school curriculum. Farming is at the heart of Devon's identity and economy, and I'll continue working with the NFU and others, fighting to ensure agriculture has a sustainable future.

Protecting Rural Services

We've been speaking out strongly against South West Ambulance Service's plans to phase out the fire co-responder scheme. We are concerned the decision puts rural lives at risk, and the Council has urged the Trust to reverse it.

We also encouraged residents to respond to the Government's Post Office Green Paper consultation and we responded from the council too,

emphasising how our post offices are not only vital for the local economy, but also serve as social lifelines in rural communities.

Supporting Children and Communities

I'm proud that Devon County Council voted to back the Smartphone-Free Childhood campaign, supporting in principle the introduction of a countywide ban on smartphones in schools from 2026, to help safeguard children's wellbeing and learning. We also passed a motion reaffirming that Devon stands against hate, sending a clear message that our county is a place of tolerance and respect. At the other end of the age range, it was a real joy to attend the opening of Winkleigh Primary School's new Early Years provision, offering childcare from 9 months old - the first school in Torridge to do so! This is such a boost for local families and offers a brilliant start in life for our youngest children.

New Youth Fund- Places to go, Things to do

One of the most exciting new initiatives is our Devon Youth Fund - designed by young people, for young people. Local youth groups can apply for up to £3,000 to create new activities and opportunities for young people aged 11-25. Applications are simple, match funding isn't required, and it can even cover staff costs. Please spread the word to anyone who might be interested! www.devon.gov.uk/communities/places-to-go-things-to-do-youth-fund-guidance/

Rural Crime, Highways and Local Issues

Following the recent break-ins at the allotments and football club, I've been in contact with local police and the rural crime team, and shared details with Winkleigh Parish Council about a new CCTV grant fund for towns and villages.

I also recently met with a Winkleigh parish councillor to discuss ongoing highways concerns- including the need for improved pedestrian walkways, reduced speed limits, and better infrastructure to keep residents safe. I'll continue to work with the Parish Council and Devon Highways to push for improvements.

Health and Wellbeing

Many residents have written to me about the loss of NHS dentistry locally, particularly in Great Torrington, where patients (including children), have been automatically moved from NHS to private care. I've contacted our MP and the NHS Integrated Care Board to press for urgent solutions.

Finally, it was fantastic to join this year's Farmwise Devon event at Westpoint- seeing hundreds of children learning where their food comes from and getting inspired about farming and the environment. It was absolutely buzzing, and I was so pleased that children from Winkleigh primary school were able to take part in Farmwise this year too. Events like this show just how important it is to keep food and farming education alive in our schools.

Thank you, as always, for getting in touch and sharing your views, it's a privilege to represent you all.

Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin

County Councillor for Torrington Rural & Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs

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Winkleigh Airfield Remembrance Service

Remembrance Service – 8th November 2025

The tradition of holding a remembrance service at Winkleigh Airfield continued this year on 8th November 2025. This annual event honours those commemorated by the memorial stone, which has stood as a symbol of remembrance since its placement on the airfield on 12th May 1995. By tradition Flags of the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Poland and Norway were flown at the service in recognition of all those that were stationed at R.A.F. Winkleigh.

The Memorial Stone

The memorial granite stone was established on land generously donated by Mr and Mrs Ron Cottey. Its installation was made possible through the financial support and assistance of Torridge District Council. The stone was unveiled during a grand opening ceremony, attended by many dignitaries and distinguished guests of the time.



High Flight

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings.
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of wheeled and soared and swung.
High in the sunlit silence, hov'ring there
I've chased the shouting winds along and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark nor ever eagle flew
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee, Jr



VE80 Commemorations; Post Airfield Service

Supported by the Parish Council who arranged refreshments and held in the village hall along with a display of memorabilia by Stephen Leahy, a display by the Ace-Archaeology group and a beautiful poignant poem written and read by Tony Aston. Tony also gave a short slide show of many Winkleigh fallen heroes of two World wars. The event took us back to the 1940's with the sounds of Trevor 'Mr Piano Man' tinkling the ivories with evocative tunes.

The day once again could not have been such a success without those tremendous volunteers both at the airfield and at the hall who we thank once again.

Steve & Shirley Leahy




Parish Council Chair Greg Goldsworthy laid a wreath during the Act of Remembrance at The Church of All Saints on 9th November


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Below is a poem that Tony Aston wrote earlier this year for the launch of his book, "The Last School Bell", which tells individual stories about all those former pupils of his old school in the Midlands, who were killed in World War II.

WE WERE THERE

When Britain vowed to join the fight
On the soil, in the air, on the sea
We were there for the call to take arms
To help set our brothers free

In metal tubes we flew and fought
Through lights and exploding flak
We were there and became some of the many,
Who never made it back

When the skins were wrenched from our tins on the sea
By the wolf packs bursting with ammo
We were there as the waves took total command
Death awaiting, expectant, below

On the beaches and along the cliffs
In the face of burning lead
We were there, deep in the red bloody sand
We never made the beachhead

Through Italy, Belgium, France and more
We fought through day and night
We were there as Hitler's men
Killed thousands of us in the plight

As victory hovered on the streets of Berlin
We could only see from beyond
But we were there in the minds of our pals
Because nothing could break that bond

Today, we remain at attention and ready
Our names carved clear in the wood
And you are there for all of us.
Because we died for the greater good
And if what we gave has, in some small way

Contributed to making you free
We'll be there for you, now and forever
Don't forget us, don't let us just be
When you read our names inscribed on the wall

Stand for a moment, and listen
Because we are still there, with our stories, and our tales
And we are more than the names that are written

You are the future to take our names forward
Such that people never forget
That we were there, we made our mark,
And sadly, we paid our debt.

Tony Aston 2025

Posties' Tea Party



Distinctly Winkleigh's annual Posties' Tea Party was held at Fiona's Kitchen & Farm Shop at the end of November when those who give up their time to distribute DW met to chat and enjoy a fine spread of sandwiches, cakes and pastries.

Winkleigh Society Vice Chair, Margaret Miller, thanked the Posties for their help over the last year and Fiona and her staff for providing a great spread. There were 25 people there and all went home heavier than they arrived – it was a good tea party!




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The Festive Season

When we cast our minds back over the last century or so we discover we are still much influenced by the two World Wars and the colossal changes that have taken place since the Victorian Era. So too would those of the Georgian and Regency period harked back to the centuries prior and been influenced by the Puritan era of the Republic when festivals such as Christmas and Easter were discouraged, even banned in 1664, no day off, no carols sung, no feast, no dancing, no celebration! and not re-established until the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660. Even the name Christmas was changed to 'Christ-tide' in order to lose any inference of the 'mass' of the Roman Catholic Church.

However, by Georgian and Regency times many of the old traditions for Festivities including Balls, Parties and feasting for the Christmas Season were re-instated with a vengeance! Evergreens were brought indoors in abundance (as they had in Pagan times) in the homes of rich and poor, Bay, Rosemary, Holly, Ivy, Pine branches, Mistletoe and the 12th Night Yule log. The first Christmas tree was introduced to the Christmas Table by Queen Charlotte, but the tradition of decorated Christmas trees in houses countrywide and the exchange of cards did not happen until the Victorian era.

Christmas began on December 6th, St. Nicholas' Day, when small gifts were exchanged, such as embroidery, books and wooden toys. The Winter Solstice (Pagan 'Yule') December 21st was also St Thomas' Day (which has since moved to July 3rd) celebrating resilience and hope in the face of darkness. It was another charitable day, poor women of the village would go "a-Thomasing" visiting the houses of their better off neighbours requesting food or other provisions to help them through the winter. The Yule Log would be brought into houses on Christmas Eve, the beginning of 'Christmastide'.

Christmas Day was a day for Church and a festive meal with family and friends followed by games such as Charades and Snapdragon. Roast meat and vegetables for those that could afford it, with Wassail Cup being taken over by Punch (often made by the host) Plum Porridge and the (initially Tudor) tradition of a Mincemeat pie containing meat with dried fruit and spices, originally an oblong shape representing the Manger but gradually diminishing in size and shape to the mince pies of today and the plum porridge becoming Christmas pudding.

St Stephen's Day followed Christmas Day, another charity day where servants, tradesmen and the poor received boxes (perhaps leftovers from the Christmas tables of the rich) alms given to the poor as in the carol 'Good King Wenceslas'.

12th Night, 6th January, The Feast of the Epiphany celebrating the Magi visiting the Christ Child, was the official end of 'Christmastide'. A piece of the old Yule Log was used to light the new Log and all the decorative Greenery was burnt. The old year gone, the new one started. Everything cleaned and ready for Spring. The Festive Season was over.

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ACE Archaeological



It's been another busy year for ACE!

Even though we haven't done our main Moistown dig this year, we've all been busy with other things.

We started off the year with some test pitting. This is where we excavate a small patch of land looking for any archaeological finds. This is a quick way of discovering the history of the land in preparation for other things. This year we did test pitting at Stourtown and various places on the Moors.

We've also been busy contour surveying at Moistown. Contour surveying is where we use tape measures to look at the geographical features of the land-this can help identify things like wall remains under the ground without having to dig.

At time of writing, we've just had our AGM. This is something we do every year in order to catch up on the events of the year now that any finds have been processed, and to plan events for the next year.

Furthermore, we had a talk from Ian Bishop about the upcoming Routes project. The Routes project is a look into the possible Roman Road between Copplestone and Bideford and looking at how it has evolved.

This is an interesting project and really helps to give an insight into our local ancient history!

This year we had some talks from Andy Crabb about the finds from this year's test pitting (details of which can be found on the website) this is lovely to hear as an update from all the things we've been doing throughout this year and to get an idea into the steps taken after we have excavated it.

Next year has been planned so we are looking forward to a year filled with more test pitting and getting back to our Moistown dig in Winkleigh during the summer. All of the dates for next year have now been put up onto the Website so if anyone is interested, regardless of skill or experience, please get in touch because we'd love to have you there!

It's been a Wonderful year and we hope to have another great year of archaeology in 2026!

Hazel Worsnop (November 2025)
acearchaeologyclub.wordpress.com

And on Facebook 



SUN FLOWERS AND ICEBERGS

Half listening to Radio Devon I heard a feature about an exhibition on at Westpoint in Exeter which caught my attention. It was the Van Gogh Immersive Experience which has been touring internationally. Immersive experiences were new to me but create a multi-sensory environment which allow you to feel that you are actually participating in an event rather than just observing it as in a more traditional exhibition.

The experience at Westpoint started with a walk down a corridor edged with large boards. The background was provided by brush strokes which were recognisably Van Gogh's and the foreground told parts of his story. The most famous part is the cutting off of his ear and I had not realised what a significant role Gauguin played in this episode. The other thing that is well known about Vincent Van Gogh is that he was isolated and unsuccessful during his life and only became valued and celebrated after his death. I am never sure whether to find his posthumous success inspiring and hopeful or, really, truly tragic. Mostly the latter, I think.

After the corridor, visitors entered an ante room to acclimatise to the immersion and then went on to the great experience itself. The art is projected on to the walls, the ceiling the floor. Squiggles writhe and develop until they become recognisable as some of the most loved paintings of all time but also as some which are lesser known. This surely befits an artist who was not truly commercial. One image morphs into another and his numerous self-portraits were of particular interest to me.

A quick lunch at the highly



recommended Westpoint café and then on to a second exhibition which was happening at the same time.

This was Titanic.

At first glance it had little in common with Vincent but it is in fact another story which endlessly fascinates and resonates because of its complexity, misfortune and heroism.

Visitors to this exhibition were given an individual ticket with the name of their real life passenger and their class on before they boarded the vessel. I was Anna Sofia Nysten who travelled third class. On the back of my ticket was Anna's story. She was born in Sweden and aged 22 when she sailed on the Titanic to join her half-sister in New Jersey. On the night of the sinking, Anna was in her cabin when she heard a terrible jarring noise which caused her to get dressed and grab a basket containing food and clothing. She



escaped into a lifeboat and was picked up by the Carpathia going on to survive until she reached the age of 87 in 1977.

The exhibition consisted of a mixture of things including one of the real life deckchairs. Apparently, quite a few of these survived as they were thrown

overboard in the hope of providing something which would float that people could cling on to in the water.

The most poignant exhibit for me was a short piece of film showing some of the first class passengers who were enjoying a lavish dinner oblivious of their fate. I wondered how many of them survived. Statistically it would have been more women than men.

Also noteworthy was a magnificent and detailed model of the ship with tiny cars being hoisted into the hold for the voyage. It is hard not to be moved by the hopes and dreams people had for their lives in the new world. So, well done Westpoint for providing us with a great day out, good merch buying opportunities and a chance to reflect on the fickleness of fate.

Claire Crafer

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GARDEN NOTES

To Coffey



This is a time of cold and of wet, of practical muddy steps but also of planning. Whether you use modern scheduling tools like the RHS app where you can add each of your own plants, websites where they tell you the frost dates for your area and so the plant and harvest times for the various crops and plants selected, or the traditional method of looking in your Hessayan book (other books are available but the Dr H “expert” series have set the standard since they were first published) and using your own notebook and experience. This is a time for planning and dreaming, for ordering seeds and bulbs, browsing catalogues and working out quite how many plants you can realistically fit in and manage. Happy garden dreaming (and Xmas/new year) to you all.

DECEMBER

- Check your winter protection structures are still securely in place
- Check that greenhouse heaters are working
- Insulate outdoor taps and prevent ponds from freezing
- Prune open-grown apples and pears (but not those trained against walls)
- Prune acers, birches and vines before Christmas to avoid bleeding
- Harvest leeks, parsnips, winter cabbage, sprouts and remaining root crops
- Deciduous trees and shrubs can still be planted and transplanted
- Take hardwood cuttings
- Keep mice away from stored produce
- Reduce watering of houseplants
- Check all xmas plants are safe for any animal companions you have (no lilies around cats, careful to avoid your dog eating mistletoe)
- Save clean and safely store seeds for spring swaps.

JANUARY

- Recycle your Christmas tree by shredding it for mulch
- Clean pots and greenhouses ready for spring
- Dig over any vacant plots that have not been dug already
- Disperse worm casts in lawns
- Inspect stored tubers of Dahlia, Begonia and Canna for rots or drying out
- Prune apple and pear trees (ideal time for restorative pruning of overgrown orchards)
- Start forcing rhubarb
- Plan your vegetable crop rotations for the coming season
- Keep putting out food and water for hungry birds
- Make a polythene shelter for outdoor peaches and nectarines, to protect against peach leaf curl

FEBRUARY

- Find your local seed swaps and bring along your own saved seeds to share and discover new plants
- (Do not harvest cucurbit seeds for second generation plants, they can revert to toxic strains)
- Prepare vegetable seed beds, and sow some vegetables under cover
- Chit potato tubers (best bought from registered suppliers to avoid serious risks of disease)
- Protect blossom on apricots, nectarines and peaches
- Net fruit and vegetable crops to keep the birds off
- Prune winter-flowering shrubs that have finished flowering
- Divide bulbs such as snowdrops, and plant those that need planting 'in the green'
- Prune Wisteria
- Prune hardy evergreen hedges and renovate overgrown deciduous hedges
- Prune conservatory climbers such as bougainvillea
- Cut back deciduous grasses left uncut over the winter, remove dead grass from evergreen grasses





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Winkleigh Flower & Produce Show



As the current organisers of the Winkleigh Flower & Produce Show, we would like to say a big “Thank You” to everyone who supported this year’s event, in whatever capacity. We are particularly grateful to Ali who kindly relieves us of the burden of providing refreshments, and to all the local companies who generously donate draw prizes.

The number of entrants increased very slightly compared to last year, and despite some testing weather conditions, the standard of home grown flowers, vegetables and fruit was good. All the cookery classes were well represented - there are many talented folk around! You can see some photos on the facebook page.

The cup for the highest scoring Winkleigh resident was awarded to Maggie Reed, and the judges chose Liz Hill’s “An Arrangement to Attract Wildlife” as ‘Best in Show’. The Children’s Cup was won by Albie Jones.

We are pleased to report that, once again, a monetary donation will be made to the Fair Working Group.

In response to various requests, we are hoping to reinstate some adult craft classes next year, so please enter and show us that it’s the right decision!

We would also really like to see more entries in the children’s section - if anyone has ideas for encouraging this we’d love to hear from you.

Next year’s show is provisionally set for Saturday 29th August, and we hope to publish the schedule in good time for the planning of planting and crafting. (If you are able, check the fb page occasionally).

We hope to see lots of you there!

Many thanks from Flick, John, Rachel, Ronnie & Wendy



WINKLEIGH

Friendship Club



The Friendship Club hosted their final talk for 2025 in the Community Centre on Oct 30th.

A large crowd came to see Andrew Sinclair who together with his wife Diane run the Sculpture School in Bondleigh.

Andrew is one of the world's leading award winning sculptors. He has been working on commission for over 35years.

He gave a fascinating demonstration of how to sculpt a human foot. With his unique technique his knowledge of anatomy was amazing and everyone learnt a great deal about their feet!

The afternoon was described as fascinating, interesting, knowledgeable and enjoyable.

The afternoon ended with the usual tea/coffee and homemade cakes.

Marcia Butt

Chairperson

Winkleigh YFC Distinctly Winkleigh Update

Since the last Distinctly Winkleigh Article, the club has had its AGM, meaning a new set of officers for the year. I'd like to wish Amber, James and Lily the best of luck for the year ahead.

The YFC year has kicked off to a very good start. The club has been busy getting its float painted ready for carnival season. At the time of writing this, we have so far taken part in Okehampton, South Zeal and Dolton carnivals, coming well-placed against other floats.

The club has also taken part in pillar decorating at Exeter Cathedral, as part of the yearly harvest festival. Well done to all who helped.

As we lead up to Christmas, there will be various dinner and dances & balls for members to attend, it's always a busy time of year in the YFC calendar.

More details for events will be released in the next article, once the agenda has been set for the year ahead.

For more information about our club or membership, feel free to call me on 07498 972991 or find our Facebook group – Winkleigh YFC.

Tim Laarveld

Secretary



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TEN TORS

Sarah Cowle espouses the Ten Tors



We often hear about children doing 'Ten Tors', but there are a lot of people who don't really know what it is, or what it involves. As a parent of three girls who have all completed the Ten Tors Challenge of various distances, I'm a

huge supporter of the event and can whole-heartedly recommend it.

The Ten Tors challenge is described as..."an annual event which is completed on Dartmoor and organised by the British Army. Teams of six must navigate routes of 35, 45 or 55 miles." The 2400 participants start early on Saturday morning and must finish their route by late afternoon on Sunday. The routes vary in order to stop teams simply following the ones ahead, and will take them to ten nominated Tors on Dartmoor.

Children can now start the 35 mile challenge in Year 9 (usually 14 years old) and have until they are 19 to complete all three distances. I've seen boys and girls of all shapes and sizes complete the event and their looks of pride (and relief) at the finish line is something that makes everyone watching



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feel good for the rest of the day.

Teams have to carry all their own equipment, food and supplies to last the two days, and rely on each other to navigate the correct route safely and efficiently. Their route cards are stamped through each checkpoint and there are plenty of army members ensuring they are adhering to the rules and are competing safely. If the army feel that a child is struggling to compete, then they may feel the need to stop them at any point.

Ten Tors is considered a 'challenge' for good reason. It's a real test of endurance, both physically and mentally, and it provides a large spectrum of highs and lows. It can bring out the best (and the worst) in each child, but it gives them the opportunity to find skills and strengths that they never knew they had.

In order to compete, children should have plenty of training on Dartmoor beforehand to prepare them for the challenge. There will be early starts and it's possible they will be training in snow, hail, pouring rain through to blazing sun. However, with the right clothing and training it's something that they all seem to get used to.

Now that you have some background on Ten Tors, you can understand why I was immensely proud when all three of my girls completed the challenge this year. Evelyn (Year 9) did 35 miles,

Esmae (Year 10) did 45 miles and Jocelyn Cowle (Year 12) did 55 miles. It was an intense and emotional day for us all, but worth all the time and effort it took to get them all over the finishing line.

We did it with a wonderful organisation called SeaMoorExplore, but there are many other organisations you can do it with, eg. Chulmleigh School, Cadets and some Scout groups.

We are so lucky to have Dartmoor so close to Winkleigh and learning navigation skills provides an opportunity to enjoy Dartmoor safely all year round.



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WITCHES

and witchcraft



Writing this as I am around Halloween and All Souls Night put me in mind of witches and witchcraft who have a poor press in history, legend and literature. The truth is far from the stereotype of the wicked witch. Throughout history women have always been healers. They were the freelance, unqualified doctors and anatomists of their communities. For centuries women were doctors without degrees, barred from books and lecture halls, but learning from each other, and passing on experience and skills. They were called “wise or cunning women” by the people, witches or charlatans by the authorities.

The suppression of female healers by the establishment was a political struggle, in that the status of women healers rose and fell with the status of women generally. It was also a class struggle, in that, women healers helped the poor and male healers served the rich. The suppression of witches marks one of the opening struggles of male conquest over female agency, which began with the creation of a medical profession which only admitted males and was firmly under the protection and patronage of the ruling classes and the church.

The age of witch-hunting spanned more than four centuries, from the 14th to the 17th century, and affected most of

Europe and was essentially a ruling class campaign of male terror directed largely against the female peasant population. Witches represented a political, religious and sexual threat to the Catholic and Protestant churches alike, as well as to the state. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries there were thousands of executions, usually live burnings at the stake or hanging. Historians have estimated the total number killed to have been in the millions; of these, women were 85 percent of those executed. The most virulent hunts coincided with great upheavals: mass peasant revolts, the outbreak of the black death, war, the rise of Protestantism, and the onset of capitalism.

Witch hunts are often wrongly portrayed in film and books as disordered violence by poor, ignorant, illiterate people, when in fact they followed well-ordered legalistic procedures, initiated, funded and carried out by the church, who followed a rule book on how to conduct a witch hunt called *Malleus Maleficarum* or “Hammer of Witches”, written by the reverends Kramer and Sprenger, the sons of Pope Innocent VIII. For three centuries this sadistic tome was the guidebook for every judge and witch-hunter. Matthew Hopkins was

the notorious, self-proclaimed, *Witch Finder General*, whose career flourished during the English Civil War. Unleashing a four-year reign of terror in the south east of Britain, he and his accomplice John Stearne hanged more women accused of being involved in witchcraft, than in the previous 160 years.

Hopkins and Stearne would travel round the countryside drumming up accusations, they posted a notice to require that if any person knew of a heretic or witch, they had to report it or face excommunication as well as a long list of secular punishments. Once, one witch, was exposed, Kramer and Sprenger gave detailed instructions on how to use torture, starvation or beatings to force confessions and further accusations.

The crime of witchcraft covered a multitude of supposed sins ranging from political subversion and heresy to vulgarity and blasphemy. Three central allegations emerged throughout the

history of witchcraft in Europe: Sex crimes against men, second, they were accused of being organised and third of having magical powers affecting health, including healing and medical skills.

First, consider the charge of sexual crimes: The Church associated women with sex, and all pleasure in sex was condemned, because it could only come from the devil. Witches were supposed to enjoy copulation with the devil and they in turn infected men. Lustfulness, in either man or wife, was blamed on the female. Indeed, sexism was elevated to a point of principle. "When a woman thinks alone, she thinks evil."

What made the authorities even more concerned was that the women were organised, as they meet in small groups locally and in bigger groups at festivals and village fairs; trading knowledge, herbs and potions and acting autonomously and collectively. This led to most ridiculous accusations of all. The witch is not only

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accused of cavorting with the devil, committing sex crimes against men and sedition, but also of helping and healing. Witch-healers were often the only medical practitioners and midwives for a people who had no doctors and no hospitals and who were bitterly afflicted with poverty and disease. On Sundays after mass when the sick begged the clergy for assistance and they were told "You have sinned and God is afflicting you. Thank him; you will suffer so much the less in the life to come. Endure, suffer and die."² Talk about double standards, the Church was not against medical care for the rich, the real issue is about control; male upper-class healing under the auspices of the church was acceptable, women healing in a peasant subculture was not. If the poor could fend for themselves, they were less dependent on God and in turn the church.

Many of the herbal remedies developed by witches still have their

place in modern pharmacology. They had pain-killers, digestive aids and anti-inflammatory agents. They used ergot for labour pains at a time when the Church held that pain in labour was the Lord's just punishment for Eve's original sin. Ergot derivatives are the principal drugs used today to hasten labour and aid recovery from childbirth. Belladonna – still used as an anti-spasmodic – was used by the witch-healers to inhibit uterine contractions when miscarriage threatened. Digitalis, still an important drug in treating heart ailments, is said to have been discovered by an English witch.

The witch-healer's methods were a threat to the Church, for the witch relied on her senses rather than on faith or doctrine, she believed in trial and error, cause and effect. Her attitude was not religiously passive, but actively inquiring. The Church, by contrast, discredited the value of the material world, and had a profound distrust of the senses. There was no point in looking for natural laws that govern physical phenomena, for the world is created anew by God in every instant.

For eight long centuries, from the fifth to the thirteenth, the anti-medical stance of the Church had stood in the way of the development of medicine as a respectable profession. Then, in the 13th century, there was a revival of learning, initiated by contact with the Arab world. Medical schools appeared in the universities, and more and more young men of means sought medical training. The church imposed strict controls on the new profession, and allowed it to develop only within the terms set by Catholic doctrine. University-trained physicians were not permitted to practice without calling in a priest to aid and advise them, or to treat a patient who refused confession. By the fourteenth century their practice was in demand among the wealthy, as long as

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they continued to take pains to show that their attentions to the body did not jeopardize the soul. In fact, accounts of their medical training make it seem more likely that they harmed and imperilled the body with their dubious practices: such as cupping and blistering.

Such was the state of medical “science” at the time when witch-healers were persecuted for being practitioners of “magic.” It was witches who developed an extensive understanding of bones and muscles, herbs and drugs, while physicians were still deriving their prognoses from astrology.

The establishment of medicine as a profession, requiring university training, made it easy to bar women legally from practice. With few exceptions, the universities were closed to women and licensing laws were established to prohibit all but university-trained doctors from practice. Their first target was not the peasant healer, but the better off,

literate woman healer who competed for the same urban clientele as that of the university-trained male doctors. For example, Jacoba Felicie an upper class, intelligent, literate woman who was accused of practicing medicine in the 14th century, in Paris, not because she was incompetent but that as a woman, she dared to practice at all.

The partnership between Church, State and medical profession reached dangerous heights in the witch trials. The doctor was held up as the medical “expert,” giving an aura of science to the whole proceeding. He was asked to make judgments about whether certain women were witches and whether certain afflictions had been caused by witchcraft. In the witch-hunts, the Church explicitly legitimized the doctors’ professionalism, denouncing non-professional healing as equivalent to heresy

The distinction between “female” superstition and “male” medicine was

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made final by the very roles of the doctor and the witch at the trial. The process immediately established the male physician on a moral and intellectual plane vastly above the female healer he was called to judge. It placed him on the side of God and Law, while it placed her on the side of darkness, evil and magic. He owed his new status not to medical or scientific achievements of his own, but to the Church and State he served so well.

Witch hunts did not eliminate the lower-class woman healer, but they branded her forever as superstitious and possibly malevolent. Before the witch hunts began, women's health and reproduction were in the hands of women. Following the panic that witch hunts caused in society, men now made decisions about women's health, fertility and reproduction; controlling their bodies and making decisions for them. The panic that spread also served to isolate women from other women for fear of being accused of being in a devilish coven. This isolation lead in turn to the dismantling of the spaces that were exclusive to women: the sick room, the still room and the herb garden. Whilst fear of accusation separated them emotionally and socially and intellectually from each other. The demonisation of women effectively limited their power and influence and control over women's bodies, for many centuries. It is no wonder then that some modern feminists consider witches to



be a symbol of female empowerment. However, those modern-day women who self-identify as **white** witches are doing their ancestral sisters a disservice as the use of the word white implies that those in the past had evil intent.

¹Malleus Maleficarum, Reverends Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger

²Jules Michelet, Satanism and Witchcraft.

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Since leaving Winkleigh, it has been a bit of a roller coaster. We have not been successful with 2 funding bids to the heritage lottery fund which would have ensured that we could have carried on employing our two young trainees and a shipwright, so we are now totally reliant upon volunteers to complete the necessary work to get her sailing again. But in the last two years, despite not securing any grant funding, we have managed to raise nearly £80,000 by our own efforts, and if we can continue to do that, we will see her completed within the next two years which is our aim.

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volunteer work force, which is great, but we do need more help if we are to reach our goal of getting her sailing by 2027, particularly behind the scenes, with marketing, social media and website management. If you can help Britannia make some waves, please get in touch. We would love to hear from you. Our website is britanniasailingtrust.org, or contact Vicki or Sam on 01837 680036, or just pop down to the Quay (Tuesday to Thursday) and say Hello!

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FROM CRIME FIGHTER TO BOOK WRITER



Tony Aston

I have lived in the village of Winkleigh, with my wife Kay, since 2016, having moved here from the south-east of the country. I was coming up to retirement and we decided that where we were living was too busy and too expensive.

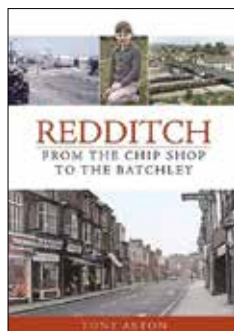
For 55 years, from 1970, I was employed, in one form or another, in the fight against criminals. For the first 25 of those years I was a police detective in the Midlands. Crime came in many forms, from thieves and burglars in the early days to becoming involved in more major crime in later years. I accepted a 6 year secondment to New Scotland Yard in the mid-80s, during which time I became involved in the fight against the IRA both on the mainland and across the water.

I retired from the police force (or service as it is now referred to) in 1997. Only being in my mid-40s, I was far too young to retire completely. I spent the next 20 years working in the grey areas of counter-espionage, striving to protect highly classified British information, assets, material and security-vetted people, against the far-reaching tentacles of state-sponsored foreign intelligence agencies, primarily from China and Russia, attempting to

infiltrate the UK Defence Industry. I finally retired properly in 2017.

I had, over many years, had a desire, a yearning, to write and I made several efforts to pen a number of novels, though never published, but now found I had more time to dedicate to a new career. At the time of my retirement, my sister-in-law was creating our family tree and it occurred to me that, often, all you get when doing this, is a date of birth and date of death, with a little dash in the middle. I thought how wonderful it would be to have a written record of lives behind those dashes, so I decided to write my childhood memoirs of growing up in the Midlands in the 1950s and 60s, so that my children, their children, and so on,

would be able to read exactly what life was like at that time. I had no intention to get it published until Pauline, my brother's wife, suggested that it might be something I might consider.





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This gave rise to my first book, “Redditch – From the Chip Shop to the Batchley”, published in 2022.

My second book, “The Bomber and the Weathervane”, tells the true

story of how an old, beaten-up, metal weathervane, found in a salvage yard and fashioned in the shape of a wartime Lancaster bomber, led to the identification of a Lancaster which was shot down over Germany in early 1944, all souls lost, to the weathervane being dedicated as a formal war memorial by the International Bomber Command, to family descendants being traced in the UK, Ireland, South Africa and Canada. Families were brought together for

commemoration services in the UK, at the crews’ graves in Berlin, and at the crash site of the aircraft 100 miles south-east of the capital, where German authorities donated a stone and plaque to commemorate the crew.

Since then, I have published my father’s lifetime memoirs, “This Is How It Was”, and “The Last School Bell”, which tells the individual stories of all those former pupils at my Redditch grammar school who were killed during World War II and who appear on the school Roll of Honour board.

I am hoping that my first novel, “Hanukkah to Hell”, will be published in the coming months. This is a 3-way story, set in WWII Austria, about a Jewish family imprisoned in an Austrian death camp, the rise of a Nazi officer who became camp Kommandant, and the US 11th Armoured Division that eventually liberated the camp.

Much of my time these days is now spent with fingers on keyboard, and I am loving every minute of it – researching, writing, editing, re-writing (several times), proof-reading and (hopefully) publishing. I couldn’t, however, do any of this without the wonderful support given to me by Kay.

I am reminded of a conversation I had with author, Jeffrey Archer, at an event in London a few years ago and I never forget something he told me – when you get to the end of a story and you write “The End”, that isn’t the end at all. It is merely the end of the first draft and many of his books, he said, might run to a dozen or more drafts before being considered ready for publication.

So, that is a potted history of how, and why, I became a published author. It would be lovely if anyone would like to purchase any of my books which are all available on Amazon platforms. Signed copies, however, are always available directly from me

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1966 and All That

If you are English and old enough, 1966 will have a special meaning for you. Yes, that was the year that England won the football World Cup. For many, hearing that date causes a broad smile and an 'I remember...'. I too remember 1966 but for a very different (though connected) reason. It was the year that I qualified as a midwife.

For most of that summer I was living in an Oxfordshire village in the house of the village midwife. I was a student she was my mentor. Together we cared for the mothers and babies in their homes in the village and surrounding area. When we were not actually out and about we were waiting for the phone to ring and spent the time watching the football matches on television. Her house, her television and her choice of programme. So I watched too.

When we were with a woman in labour - usually upstairs in a bedroom - father downstairs, sometimes with friends or the grandfather, watching football, we would exchange frequent progress reports on both the labour and the match. My love for midwifery lasted longer than my interest in football, in fact for the next thirty four years.

During that time I worked in three different countries, eleven different hospitals and numerous clinics and private homes. So many mothers, fathers and babies who allowed me to be part of their most intimate family moments. It hadn't been my original intention, which had been to just take a basic six months midwifery course, then get back to nursing as a senior sister in the intensive care unit where I had been for the previous two years. However, I was unprepared for the depth of feeling, the honour and privilege experienced



working with pregnant, labouring and postnatal women and their babies. My previous experience in intensive care was really helpful when caring for very small and pre-term babies in their incubators.

My introduction to premature babies was in a hospital where the senior paediatric consultant didn't approve of the new-fangled incubators. She believed that they were breeding grounds for infection. 'Her' babies were nurtured in cots in a 'hot room'. The necessary humidity was created by draping a terry-towelling nappy from a bowl of water on a chair to a bowl on the floor below. A wonderful hot, damp environment as like a mother's womb as could be created. Of course this was wonderful for the tiny babies and they did really well there but can you imagine what it was like for us, the staff wearing uniform and a gown and mask for an eight hour shift. We were working in a sauna and it was exhausting. The day after Miss S. the wonderful but old fashioned paediatrician retired, we were delighted to see four brand new incubators wheeled in.

My next move was to join the PMRAFNS the nursing branch of the Royal Air Force. At that time there were five RAF hospitals in UK as well as those in West Germany (as it was then), Cyprus, Hong Kong and Bahrain. I had six great years in the service caring for both service wives and civilians. I also was fortunate to be seconded to the Midwife Teacher's Training College and became the first RAF midwifery tutor and so responsible for the obstetric training

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of student nurses in UK and Western Europe. It was also a course that would later determine the direction of my career.

One of the memorable maternity units for me was in a small cottage hospital in Wales where the medical staff were the local GP's. The midwives for the six bedded ward made the twice daily post natal home visits on their way in to the hospital for their shift, or on their way home at the end of it. So the continuity of carer was ensured, better for the midwives and certainly better for the mums and babes. Being such a small rural unit several of the midwives there had actually delivered the mothers themselves. While I was there, mostly working the night shift and the only qualified nurse on duty, I also had to cover for the two wards and the A&E department so quite a lot of variety.

One of the biggest differences between maternity care then and

now is the use of ultra sound scans. Because that technology was not yet known and Xray was considered unsafe in pregnancy, much about the developing fetus was unknown. Its gender was hidden as were any physical malformations so there was no warning when such things occurred. Maturity was occasionally miscalculated with the unexpected arrival of a premature baby instead of the full term one. Undiagnosed twins could also take us all by surprise. We had to be prepared for anything and to appear unshocked in order to help and support the parents.

When I eventually retired it was after thirteen years involvement in the training of the next generation of midwives and seeing the development of the graduate programme as Director of Midwifery Studies at the University of Surrey. I loved my career and am grateful for the joy (and yes, sometimes sadness) and the privilege of those working years.

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Countryfile

*Or flocking fieldfares, speckled like the thrush,
Picking the berry from the hawthorn bush,
That come and go on Winter's chilling wing,
And seem to share no sympathy with Spring.*

excerpt from March by John Clare
(13 July 1793 – 20 May 1864)

There's a pair of birds from the thrush family which visit the UK in winter and some of them come to Devon.

Most will have arrived by now and will be around until April time. You may see them if you go out for a walk around here, though you're unlikely to see them visiting a garden, unless your garden is very large and open and the weather is snowy.

They eat berries from the hedgerows and trees, with hawthorn a particular favourite and worms from damp soil, so the walks around the footpaths in the fields of local villages with traditional hedges really are a likely place to spot the Redwing and the Fieldfare.

Both look similar to Mistle and Song thrushes but have characteristics you can use to tell them apart. The first main difference is that they hang around in flocks, often with the two birds mixing together.

Redwings are smaller and have a red flash under their wings, Fieldfares are larger with white under their wings and a grey cap and rump, otherwise they are

both very much classic thrush type birds with speckled pale chests and browner upper body.

Flocks can be seen scattered in the grass in fields, taking off to perch in nearby trees and hedges when people come by: giving a great opportunity to compare their underwings.

Their conservation status was previously of the highest concern - the IUCN red for both, that is Critically endangered: facing an extremely high risk of extinction, and in urgent need of help. In a slight reprieve, the redwing have recently shown a small improvement in numbers which is hoped will continue, so it has been moved to the amber list, the Fieldfare is still red listed though.

Given they have both been seen in fields of Mid Devon it really is worth taking that walk and seeing if you can spot these rather special birds.

To Coffey



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FitSteps 6:30pm and 7:30pm Sports Centre
Yoga 6pm Village Hall

2nd Monday of each month bar January
Church Wives Group, Village Hall 2.30pm-4.30pm

TUESDAY

Yoga 9.45am Village Hall
Free 'Sewcial Crafternoon' at Catkin
Blooms 1:00-3:00pm
Badminton 7:00pm Village Hall
Family History Group every 3rd Tuesday
10.30am-12.30pm

WEDNESDAY

Mini market & charity coffee morning

9:30am-10:30am Community Centre
Tap Dancing 7:00pm Village Hall
Youth Club 7:00pm-9:00pm Sports Hall
Kung Fu 6:30pm-8:00pm & 8:00pm-9:00pm Community Centre

THURSDAY

Winkleigh Art Group 10:00-14:00
Community Centre
Chi Kung 10:30 Village Hall
Tiny Tots 9:30-11:15 Sports Hall
Therapeutic Pilates 7:15pm Village Hall
Tai Chi 19:30-21:30pm Sports Centre

FRIDAY

Youth Club 7:00pm-9:00pm Sports Centre
Therapeutic Pilates 9:30am
Short Mat Bowls 13:45-16:15 Sports Hall

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12th Movie Night "Love Actually"
6.30pm for 7pm Village Hall

13th 1:00pm-4:00pm Nativity Festival All
Saints Church

14th 4:00pm Nine Lessons and Carols
All Saints Church

Christmas Eve - 5:00pm Crib Service -
11:30pm Midnight Mass All Saints Church

Christmas Day - 9:30am Christmas
Eucharist All Saints Church

JANUARY

16th Movie Night "Downton Abbey –
Grand Finale" 6.30pm for 7pm Village Hall



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MARK'S GYM OVERVIEW

Rachel Goldsworthy



Marks Gym, a Fitness Facility located at Winkleigh Airfield, provides a range of services designed to support the health and wellness of the local community. Their aim is to create a space where everyone feels comfortable and welcome whatever their goals, age and ability.

The gym is owned and operated by Dave and Jack. Their leadership and commitment have contributed significantly to the success and reputation of Mark's Gym in this area and the whole South West. The name Mark's Gym is a commemoration to Dave's best friend Mark who sadly passed away, with whom originally he was going to open the Gym of their dreams.

On a recent 'Open Day' 17th October, I went along to meet Becky from Mid-Devon Sports Massage who is a Personal Trainer and Admin Manager now based at the Gym. Becky is a certified Soft Tissue Therapist and is qualified in sports massage and Rehab, for pre-existing medical conditions, including cancer.

Completely unlike some gyms back in the heyday of the 1980's (being "poser's paradises" of mirrored walls and sweatboxes smelling of last night's hamburgers and the school cloakroom whiff of plimsoll feet) this modern gym is ultra clean, temperature controlled, with a calm' focus' atmosphere. It is also so huge a space as to be able to offer whole rooms of cardio equipment, Strong



Man/Woman gear as well as a mixture of fixed pin and plate resistance and free weights. I felt that areas are designed in such a way as to be welcoming, not 'over-powering'.

Mark's Gym is not affiliated to any one particular supplier, so like a Pub 'Freehouse' it can mix and match from a whole range of the best top class equipment possible and much is customer driven. Think 'Jungle Gym' for Adults!!! Functional Fitness in a Fun Environment.

All ages can apply for membership, there is no upper age limit, but under 18's must be accompanied by an adult. Everyone can choose their own particular interests, attend classes on

a pay as you go basis, receive tailor made help and instruction as necessary and the Gym is open 24/7 with a personalised entry system.

There is a range of flexible membership options available, and no annual or joining fee, nor cancellation fee. Watch out for their Open Days when they have visiting Sports stars: Strongman, Coaches and, as on my visit, a Pop-up Sauna and Plunge Pool outside!

You can find Mark's Gym at **Unit 2 Bedwells Yard The Airfield Winkleigh EX19 8EZ**. Further details are on their Facebook Page [f marksgym.winkleigh](https://www.facebook.com/marksgym.winkleigh) Or you can phone **07701 313715** or **Becky, Mid Devon Sports Massage 07809 025795**

Autumn Adventures & Hidden Hazards for Pets



As the leaves change colour and the air takes on that autumn crispness, many of us look forward to long countryside walks. But while autumn brings plenty of joy, it also comes with a few hidden dangers for our four-legged friends. Here's what to keep in mind to help your dog enjoy the season safely:

Seasonal Hazards to Keep in Mind

Keep an eye out for these common autumnal hazards whilst on your walk:

- **Acorns & Conkers** – These seasonal favourites may look harmless, but they can be toxic if chewed or swallowed, potentially causing vomiting, diarrhoea, or even more serious complications.
- **Wild Mushrooms** – Autumn is peak mushroom season, and while some are harmless, many are extremely poisonous to dogs. They're often hard to identify, so it's safest to steer clear altogether.
- **Mouldy Leaf Piles** – Damp, decomposing leaves can harbour mould and bacteria that may irritate your dog's skin or respiratory system.
- **Harvest Mites** – These tiny orange bugs thrive in grassy areas during late summer and autumn. They can latch onto your dog's skin, causing intense itching and discomfort. These can be very difficult to avoid but if you suspect discomfort please get in touch with us so we can help you treat it.
- **Yew Berries & Beechnuts** – Bright and tempting to curious noses, these natural treats are toxic to dogs and should be avoided.

Fireworks Season: Helping Your Pet Cope

With Bonfire Night and other seasonal celebrations, many dogs experience stress from loud bangs and flashing

lights. You can help by:

- Creating a **safe, quiet space/den** where your dog can retreat and feel secure.
- Playing **soothing music or white noise** to mask sudden sounds.
- Asking us about **calming products or anxiety support**—chat to us about products that can help your pets during this time.

Chemical Cautions

As temperatures drop, antifreeze and rodent bait become more common around homes and garages. Both are **extremely toxic to dogs and cats**, even in small amounts. Be sure to:

- Store chemicals securely and out of reach.
- Clean up any spills immediately.
- Keep an eye out for signs of ingestion, such as drooling, vomiting, or unsteady movement—and contact us immediately if you're concerned.

Let's Keep Tails Wagging This Autumn

With a little extra awareness, autumn can be a magical time for you and your dog. Whether you're crunching through leaves, exploring woodland trails, or snuggling up after a long walk, we're here to help you make the most of the season—safely and joyfully.

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to get in touch. We're always happy to help.

Warm wishes,



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SCHOOL NEWS

Winkleigh Primary School's
Autumn Term Report by Head
of Teaching & Learning William
Slocombe.

What a fantastic start we've had to the 2025–2026 academic year here at Winkleigh Primary School! It's been wonderful to welcome back all our families and to greet our new starters across the school — including our brand-new Owls (Reception) class. Our youngest learners have settled beautifully into life at Winkleigh, enjoying their thoughtfully designed learning spaces and taking part in engaging Forest School sessions with Mrs Rowcliffe.

On Tuesday 30th September, we celebrated the Grand Opening of our new Under 2's provision. We were delighted to welcome parents, carers, governors, early years advisors, and members of the press to mark this exciting milestone — enabling us to now welcome children from 9 months of age. Mrs Fenemore and Mr Slocombe were invited to speak with John Acres on BBC Radio Devon to share our news with the wider community. Our Under 2's unit is already thriving, with numbers growing rapidly as word spreads!

Across the school, learning has been in full swing — from Year 3's exploration of Ancient Egypt to Year 6's map reading and topography studies. Learning at Winkleigh extends well beyond the classroom, and this half term has been filled with exciting trips, events, and achievements, including:

- Years 5 & 6 enjoying an adventurous day at River Dart Country Park, tackling high ropes, caving and balance beams.



- Years 5 & 6 Tag Rugby Teams taking first place at a local tournament hosted here at Winkleigh.
- Cake sales across Reception to Year 3, raising valuable funds for resources and trips. With other year groups to follow.
- Grandparent Lunches for every class from Nursery to Year 6. Huge thanks to Kealley and Rachel for the delicious roasts!
- Years 1–3 exploring the village as part of geography and RE, with thanks to



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Our bespoke curriculum blends academic, social, and vocational learning to help each pupil thrive.

If you're passionate about supporting young people, consider joining our team and making a difference at Acorn School.



Due to our success and growth, we also have a number of vacancies. Scan the QR code to learn more.





Reverend Helen for her insights on the church and Christian calendar.

- Year 4 visiting the Eden Project alongside friends from Class 2 at Kings Nympton.
- Year 3 attending the Farmwise event at Westpoint, discovering how food travels from field to fork.
- Year 1 visiting RHS Rosemoor, learning about artist Andy Goldsworthy and planting “pea people” as part of their art and science work.
- The whole school turning green for “Just One Tree Day” on 17th October, raising funds for global reforestation and supporting our sustainability goals.
- Key Stage 2 pupils competing in the Stephen Shield Cross Country event in Torrington, running fantastically in each of their races representing the federation brilliantly.
- A wide range of enrichment clubs, including running, violin, choir, gardening, and festive crafts.
- Years 5 & 6 representing Winkleigh at a Tag Rugby festival at QE School, Crediton alongside their similar aged peers from the local area.
- Our Harvest Service at All Saints Church — a lovely occasion, with thanks again to Reverend Helen for welcoming us.
- Year 3’s visit to Exeter Cathedral and Pizza Express, joining Class 2 at Kings

Nympton for a fantastic experience and a train ride!

- Football teams from Years 5 & 6 competing at Bow Primary School, Halwill Primary School, and the Utilita Cup in Exeter.
- Year 5’s trip to Morwellham Quay, stepping back in time to explore life in the Victorian era.

It’s been a truly action-packed half term — full of learning, laughter, and community spirit. As we look ahead to the second half of the autumn term, we’re excited for what’s to come: skateboarding workshops, gardening days, a whole-school history day, Christmas dinner, raffles and games, festive performances for EYFS and KS1, our Carol Service, and much more!

Thank you to all our families and friends for your ongoing support. Together, we make Winkleigh Primary School a wonderful place to learn and grow.

WINKLEIGH *Village Hall*



I am writing this report just days into taking over the chair of the Village Hall Committee. The new Committee are indebted to the resigning members Tony, Kay and Julie for their service of the past 6 years and we will continue to manage the Hall mindful of their legacy. The new Committee elected at the AGM on 29th October has some familiar faces. Ian Whitehead as Deputy Chair, Tony Kennard as Treasurer, Jane Beresford-Smith as Market Manager and Booking Secretary, Beverley Cook taking a multi-task position assisting Ian and Jane as required, and new Committee member Jenny Leighton as Committee Secretary. Not to forget, Committee members Dr Serbar Babaeski and Ian Bishop. I must not forget our cleaner, Linda Millership who keeps the Hall wonderfully clean and tidy, and Paul Beer, our gardener. May I also say we will always welcome any volunteers to join us as Tony Aston has previously mentioned. We will welcome anyone with fresh ideas to keep us on our toes. If you are interested, please contact me.

As a newcomer to Winkleigh 14 months and counting, Jenny and I have come to understand how important the Village Hall is to the Community with 40 bookings already for November, which shows it is a much loved facility for the Village and with Christmas looming, we look forward to a busy festive season.

Tony Aston, departing Chair, has left some very large boots for me to fill, but I hope to get to know Winkleigh and the surrounding areas better and with the new Committee justifying the Committees' faith in me.

Allan Leighton

Chair - 07794017790

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Chulmleigh College

by Neil Payne, Headteacher

INTRODUCTION

It is a real privilege to be asked to write for Distinctly Winkleigh. My name is Neil Payne, and I am the Headteacher of Chulmleigh College, having taken over this role from Michael Johnson who retired from teaching at the end of August this year. Although I am new to this role, I was Deputy Headteacher at Chulmleigh from 2014 until this academic year in addition to being Head of RE many years ago at the school. I therefore know the school well and know the area.

Chulmleigh College is the designated secondary school for pupils aged 11-16 living in Winkleigh Parish. Although parents have a free choice of where their children attend secondary school, Devon County Council provide free transport for children living in Winkleigh Parish to Chulmleigh College as their designated secondary school. Residents will have doubtless seen the three buses that Devon County run from or through Winkleigh. At any one time there are 150-180 pupils from Winkleigh at Chulmleigh College of our 750 pupils. We are very proud of our link with the people and Parish of

Winkleigh.

EXAMINATIONS RESULTS 2025

Chulmleigh College is well known for the standard of education and examination results. Indeed, since 2015 the College has recorded examination results well-above the national average. Since 2018, Chulmleigh College has been recorded as one of the top 3% of schools nationally for GCSE results and is consistently amongst the highest performing schools in the county and South West region more widely.

GCSE results do not just happen in Year 11. The quality of primary education is also key and without the work that goes on in primary schools such as Winkleigh Primary – these results would just not be possible.

I summarise the key performance indicators laid down by the Department for Education below alongside national and county averages.

*Grade 5 is comparable to a B-/C+ on historic grades

**The English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) is the government's 'gold standard' curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Pupils must

MEASURE	NATIONAL AVERAGE	DEVON AVERAGE	CHULMLEIGH
Attainment 8 (average grade across best 8 GCSEs x 10)	45.9	45.3	54
Grade 5* (at least) in English and Maths	45.2%	45.9%	61.4% of pupils
Entering the English Baccalaureate**	40.5%	37.2%	86.9%
English Baccalaureate Average Point Score (average grade)	4.08	4.01	5.24

enter each of the following subjects at GCSE level to be entered into the (Ebacc) – English, Mathematics, two Sciences, a Modern Foreign Language and either History or Geography.

Although we can point to results and talk about the College, the human story behind results such as ours is that our 16 year old children have the widest amount of choice possible as they progress to further education or training. The law provides that our children must stay in education until the academic year of their 18th birthday. The foundation Winkleigh children receive from Mrs Fenemore and her team at primary school and then from Chulmleigh College is key in giving them every chance to succeed in later life.

WORK EXPERIENCE 2026

– WB 13TH JULY

Year 10 pupils will be embarking on work experience this summer. Everyone at the College is excited to see this programme return for our pupils and we hope this will inspire and focus our pupils as they approach the final year of their secondary schooling.

Work Experience can be challenging



Mr Payne with former Winkleigh Primary School pupils. *Back row:* Daniel Rhodes (Deputy Head Boy), Betsy Lill, Bryn Gillespie, Lucy Lassam & Emily Illman *Front row:* Marshall Lill, Thomas Lassam, Connie Seabridge & Archie Gresswell

to organise in rural areas, and we therefore are appealing to local businesses and organisations to offer work placements for our 150 Year 10 pupils over this week. The placement is supported by the College and also Devon County Council. In addition to providing a valuable experience for young people, we know many pupils become employees or volunteers with their placement, benefitting local business and young people alike.

If you feel you could offer a work placement this summer, we would be delighted to hear from you please email – admin@chulmleigh.devon.sch.uk if you can help.

LOOKING AHEAD

Schools are naturally and quite rightly very busy places. Although we look forward to Year 11 starting their mock exams later in November, Year 9 are also on the cusp of their own examination week, which gives us an important insight as we approach the GCSE Options process (where pupils can tailor elements of their curriculum).

We had two very successful trips to

Iceland and Italy over October half term and everyone at the College now looks forward to our summer enrichment activities week for Year 7 – 9 as well as international trips to Paris and skiing in spring 2027.

Everyone at Chulmleigh College is determined to offer our young people the very best opportunities and we look forward to everything that is to come this year

– which we are certain will be another hugely successful academic year at the College.

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DISTINCTLY WINKLEIGH

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

The Winkleigh Society publishes Distinctly Winkleigh quarterly at the end of **March, June, September** and early **December**. Copies are available free of charge to all homes and businesses in the Parish (many hand delivered, others available from village shops).

Please email Articles to **articles@distinctlywinkleigh.co.uk** and Adverts to **adverts@distinctlywinkleigh.co.uk** One-off posters for community 'not-for-profit' events are free of charge.

Please ensure that any images you submit are of the highest possible resolution and that all articles and images are copyright-free. All articles submitted for publication may be subject to editing, primarily for space or layout reasons.

Note also that it takes only 500 words to fill each (A5) page without any images.

Please be aware that the views expressed in submitted material are not necessarily shared or endorsed by the newsletter team or The Winkleigh Society. Furthermore the Society does not accept any responsibility for the accuracy of any information, goods or services advertised in adverts or articles.

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