

HEMINGFORD ABBOTS PARISH MAGAZINE NOVEMBER 2025



**Parish Church Notices
Women's Institute News
Parish Council Update**

Hello!

I once heard a fellow priest ask this question, “have you ever tried archery blindfolded?” The congregation were as you might expect suitably stunned by such a question. “No” came the quizzical response. “Oh,” said the priest “you really don’t know what you are missing!”

Joking aside, the fear of missing out is a real present one in our society. In a world that wants everything right now we can be forgiven for struggling to be patient. In a society that lauds wealth, status and power we can feel as if those are the things we should be striving for ourselves, and often sadly, to the exclusion of all else.

When we follow the pattern of the world around us, we miss out on so much of what God has instore for us. He calls us to a different way of living, a simpler way that is more concerned with neighbourly love than with meeting selfish desires.

The archer unable to see will inevitably miss their target, likewise how many arrows have we shot to find that they too have missed the mark? What have we allowed to blindfold us when we have let loose the string and sent the arrow flying? How many of us instead take time to consider carefully all that is around us and make an informed move.

And I choose this topic for this week because I fear we often miss opportunities in the winter months, especially when it comes to community. We start to prepare our houses for the colder weather, we go out less and spend more time maybe in front of the fire with a good book, and we interact somewhat less than we did in the warm summery months. We lose some of the naturally occurring moments of connection that we get when we ‘bump’ into one another. And yet, the importance of community only grows in this time.

Church is a wonderful way of engaging in community and is a space where all are welcome, loved and cared for. We have been given this gift from God that we should live life in partnership with one another.

Pray therefore this month that we might grow stronger as a community, do better in caring for one another and may serve our village.

Tim

Church Services

St Margaret's Church Hemingford Abbots		St James' Church Hemingford Grey
9:30am All Saints' Service 6pm All Souls' Evening Service	2nd Nov	Joint celebration service at St Margaret's
8:30am Book of Common Prayer 10:30am Remembrance Sunday	9th Nov	10am Remembrance Sunday
	12th Nov	10:30am Mid week Communion
9:30am Holy Communion	16th Nov	10am Service of the Word
8:30am Book of Common Prayer 9:30am Matins	23rd Nov	10am Holy Communion
	26th Nov	10:30am Mid week Communion
6pm Evensong	30th Nov	10am Service of the Word
St James Morning Prayer 9.15am Monday & Wednesday in church		
St Margaret's Morning Prayer 8.00am Tuesday & Thursday on Zoom		
Monday to Friday - Night Prayer at 9pm on <u>Zoom</u> <i>A short service of quiet reflection & prayer</i>		



All Souls Hemingford Parishes

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council Report

October 2025

Hello everyone,

The Parish Council continues its efforts to represent the parish with regard to the latest planning application for 'Change of Use' for Hemingford Park (25/01248/FULIChange of use from dwelling (Use Class C3) & agricultural land to a wellness centre (Class E) and wedding and events venue (Sui Generis) with guest sleeping accommodation and parking).

You may remember that this application was scheduled for consideration at HDC's Development Management Committee meeting on September 15th - but after a letter of objection was submitted on our behalf by Buxtons solicitors, the item was withdrawn from the agenda until our legal arguments could be properly considered.

The application was then rescheduled for the DMC meeting of 20 October – but again following a further letter from Buxtons solicitors raising additional legal questions (this time regarding the Lawful Development Certificate for the new track), it was deferred for a second time. We expect it to return for the next DMC agenda for November.

On other matters, our clerk has contacted Highways to discuss the poor state of some of the roads, especially around the flyover on the A1307 near the former Little Chef: we hope to have the opportunity to walk the village with a highways officer before the end of this month.

There is now a fifth proposal relating to the pending local government reorganisation, which would leave Huntingdonshire District Council as a single unitary authority. A final submission from the six Councils involved needs to be made by November 28th 2025.

We continue to be grateful to our colleagues at Houghton and Wyton who are regularly sharing the water quality readings for the river, taken near the bridge on Meadow Lane.

Marcus Whewell

Chair

Remembrance Sunday

Family Service



St Margaret's Church, Hemingford Abbots
10.30am, Sunday 9th November

You are invited to an all-ages
Service of Remembrance
followed by coffee and refreshments

Lest we forget

a short concert of words and music
for Remembrance

**Wednesday 12th November
at 8pm**

**St Margaret's Church
Hemingford Abbots**

presented by

Tapestry Singers

Free entry, with a retiring collection for St Margaret's Church

www.tapestrysingers.org.uk



CHURCH NOTICEBOARD

If you would like to talk, or need prayer, our Rector Rev Tim May would be happy to speak with you on 07871 523249. If you would like a regular email with church news for both St Margaret's and St James' and including links to join online services please sign up on the St James' website:

<https://churchbytheriver.org.uk/wp3/>

and scroll down to the Signup on the left

DECEMBER MAGAZINE

The magazine will be published as a PDF and distributed by email. Please submit any articles by the morning of **Friday 21st November**

Please help by providing copy as A4 with 16pt font. When using Word please set the language to 'English (UK)' and be consistent with the format of dates. Images do not need placing in separate boxes. Right-click images and select Format/Square. Thank you for taking the time and effort to contribute to the magazine. Please send articles, advertisements and notices directly to: Rachel Winton, admin@churchbytheriver.org.uk or deliver to the Rachel in the Parish Office at 33, High Street, Hemingford Grey.

CHURCH CLEANING

10th Nov - John Hyde and Judith Clark

24th Nov - David Wordsworth

Eco Tip - November

Take an audit of your individual or household carbon footprint and repeat each year to see if you can reduce it! There are lots of ways to do this, from switching energy suppliers to changes in your diet. Some great tools to use are available, for example the carbon calculators provided by Climate Stewards at climatestewards.org/carboncalculators, and Creation Care creationcare.org.uk, offers a specific resource for households giving ideas and helping you track your progress. As you look at different areas of your life, offer each area or action to God as an offering.

Hemingford Handbook being updated

It's over two years since we produced our first Handbook, and now stocks are running low. This gives us the chance to include new organisations and help offered in our community. It also allows us to correct omissions... sorry Bowls Club, you're in the next edition. If you have a club or organisation you'd like us to include, please let us know asap. You can find an electronic version here [https:// www.hemingfordhub.co.uk/copy-of-volunteering](https://www.hemingfordhub.co.uk/copy-of-volunteering)

New trustees wanted

We've achieved so much since we set up our small community hub in 2018. We're now a thriving charity looking for some special people to join us as trustees to help us create even more useful community clubs and services. If you'd like to talk to us about what's involved and how enjoyable it is to make a difference to this wonderful village, please contact us through email or call us on the number below.

HUBCLUB EVENTS 3pm at the Pavilion

Nov 5th	Have a go art with Chrissy Wilson
Nov 12th	Seated exercise
Nov 19th	Diana Boston from the Manor talking about historic houses
Nov 26th	Seated exercise
Dec 3rd	Cards and Games and tech advice
Dec 10th	Seated exercise
Dec 17th	School's Christmas Concert - 2pm Parish Centre
Jan 7th	Seated exercise

Sign up to receive updates by email and WhatsApp. Contact us to receive direct.

(subject to change)

Tel: 07308 035416 **Email:** hemingfordhub@icloud.com

Web: www.hemingfordhub.co.uk **Registered Charity No:** 1194706

WI

The Giggly Pig Sausage Company



Our September speaker, **Tracey Mackness** of the Giggly Pig Company took to the floor to tell us about her extraordinary route to being a pig farmer, having her own butchery and pig farm, selling to countless farmers markets and events.

Farming was not in Tracy's family but trading was and her family operated fruit and vegetable stalls in many locations around Essex. From a very early age Tracy helped her parents in market trading and thought that would be her career. However, her father, to fund a gambling addiction, resorted to crime and spent time in prison. Eventually her parents divorced and the market trading business was sold leaving Tracy without the job she always thought she would have after school.

Tracy left school without any qualifications and in her own words was a 'good time girl'. At 22, without ever having a proper job, she had an opportunity delivering cars which turned into being trained as a service quality manager and at last having a career.





A series of unfortunate relationships, marriages and divorces and bad choices resulted in a conviction for abetting drug smuggling and Tracy was sent to prison for 10 years. Highpoint Prison gave her the opportunity to learn a trade and she became a gym and aerobics instructor, taking 52 courses.

The option to move to an open prison in Kent was offered although initially Tracy was not enamoured with life there. But the opportunity to work outside on the farm proved the turning point and pigs became the distraction. More courses on pig husbandry, a grant from the charity 'Women in Prison' for a sausage making course and the future was becoming clearer.

A part time job in a butcher's shop as part of her rehabilitation, a loan from a boyfriend, a chance meeting with an owner of a derelict piggery set the wheels in motion.

She was the winner of 'Trading Places', a competition run by Barclays and the Sun newspaper for people who have turned their lives round. Winning £5000, a computer and free advertising for a year, the most important result was the publicity including appearing on Countryfile, The One Show and other tv and radio shows.

Today Tracy has 600 pigs, 12 vans, her own butcher shop and sells at about 25 farmers markets each week. She often goes into school, colleges and prisons to relay her amazing story of how a life can be turned round with determination, hard work and a bit of luck.



Sue Crafer

WI Secretary 07738 549598

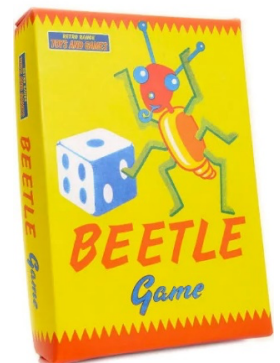
sue@crafer.co.uk

Carolyn Purdie

WI President

Next Meeting... Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday 5th November when we will be running a Beetle Drive. Looking forward to a fun social evening playing this old party game!

Sue Cook



Safety Tip

When somebody unknown calls at your door, take time to check their identity. Do not let them into your house. If you feel pressurised by a cold caller have the confidence to say no. Legitimate builders do not call door to door. Never pay upfront for goods or services you have not received. Consider fitting a peep hole or chain on your door, but only fasten the chain when you are about to open the door.

If you think you have been the victim of fraud report online at www.actionfraud.police.uk or phone 0300 123 2040.

November Village Lunch

Tuesday 18th November 12.30 for 12.45

The November Village Lunch is on Tuesday 18th November in the Village Hall.

As usual, we assemble at 12.30 and lunch will be served at 12.45.

Pam Bartlett is leading a team of cooks and helpers – and at the time of this notice going to press, they have yet to finalise the menu. But as with each team leader, each month, we can look forward to a delicious home-cooked two course meal. More details nearer the time will be posted on the village Whats App and the Community News email.

It was good to see October's lunch so well supported. All village residents and past residents are very welcome. If you are new to the village – why not come along and join us?

Bridget Flanagan

tobridget@hotmail.com

07760131725

Recipe: Roasted pumpkin and herb farinata

Prep: less than 30 mins

Cook: 30 mins to 1 hour

Serves: 4–6

Ingredients

250g/9oz gram flour

500ml/18fl oz warm water

400g/14oz small pumpkin, sliced into slim crescents

1 red onion, cut into 8 wedges

2 fresh rosemary sprigs, leaves picked and roughly chopped

5 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 lemon, juice only

10 fresh sage leaves, roughly chopped

15 pitted green olives, roughly chopped

salt and freshly ground black pepper

green salad and fried halloumi (optional), to serve



1. Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6. Whisk the gram flour and water together in a mixing bowl until no lumps are visible. Cover and set aside for up to 24 hours at room temperature, or at least while the vegetables are roasting.
2. Toss the pumpkin, onion and rosemary together with 1 tbsp olive oil in a 20x30cm/8x12in roasting tin. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to the oven and cook for 25 minutes, turning once, until the pumpkin is tender. Remove from the oven and pour over the lemon juice. Turn the heat up to 220C/200C Fan/Gas 7.
3. Stir the remaining olive oil, sage and olives into the gram flour batter and season generously with salt and pepper. Pour the batter over the vegetables before returning to the oven to cook for a final 25 minutes. Remove when the farinata is puffed and golden. Serve alongside a dressed green salad and halloumi, if you like.

On Wednesday 22nd October a service of Thanksgiving for the life of David Yeandle who died on the 22nd of October was held at St Margaret's. The two eulogies that were delivered at the service are published below

Eulogy by Nicholas Yeandle

To sum up my father, David Yeandle, I would say he was a kind-hearted, generous and friendly man, someone who got along with people from all walks of life. He could always hold an interesting conversation, with his distinctly satirical yet subtle sense of humour. He built and maintained so many friendships over the years, and I think the number of people here today, as well as your own memories of him, say more than words ever could.

Since the news spread of his passing, our family has been deeply touched by the many messages and cards that we've received – each filled with such heartfelt and fond memories, that we will always cherish.

But it may also come as no surprise when I say, he was a man of precision. He was particular in the best possible way – with a keen eye for detail, especially when it came to grammar and the English language.

Today I have the task of delivering the second part of his Eulogy. And as I write this, I can't help but smile when thinking about him, reading through his fully prepared funeral plans, which he had aptly titled "Funeral Instructions". A thorough set of plans that he had refined and revised over many years, long before he was unwell. He had carefully chosen the hymns, the reading, and had even written a "profile" to be used as the basis for a Eulogy.

So I feel it only right that I share his words as he intended them to be heard. But I also want to offer my own reflections, to share who my father was through my eyes, and what he meant to me, to our family and to his many friends. I hope in doing so, that I will make him proud.

David Yeandle was born in Cambridge, on 27th February 1955, and was called David because he was due to arrive on St. David's Day, but he upset the plan by appearing 2 days early.

He was baptized in All Saints' church, St Ives. His parents lived in High Leys, St Ives, where he spent five years of his life before the family moved to Hemingford Grey. He attended school in Hemingford Abbots, where his grandmother was headmistress and his mother the infant teacher. The close family bonds and sheltered village life were thought not to be in his best interests, so he was sent to the Perse Prep School in Cambridge, aged 9. Being one of only four new boys made the first term tough, but he soon made friends and settled into the routine of long journeys to and from Cambridge, either with his father, Paul, who taught Quantity Surveying at what is now Anglia Ruskin University, or on the wonderful old railway line from St Ives.

His best friend, Rupert, was the son of the Professor of Italian at Cambridge University, and through frequent visits to their house, David gained an early insight into academic life – and an ambition to study at Cambridge and become an academic himself.

The family later moved to Hemingford Abbots when David was at the Perse Upper School. He had a strong connection with the church, mostly attending St Margaret's church, Hemingford Abbots, where he sang in Miss Unwin's choir and took the solo in *Once in Royal David's City* at the annual carol service – an experience that he found nerve-wracking! However, it gave him a lifelong love of church music and the Anglican Church. He also worshipped at All Saints', where his favourite service was the Easter Vigil, with the lighting of the Paschal Candle. This strengthened his Anglo-Catholic leanings.

He was confirmed by the Bishop of Ely in 1970 and became a regular communicant after that, serving at Hemingford Abbots for the early Holy Communion each Sunday, as well as singing in the choir for Matins and Evensong.

At school, David excelled at languages, and opted to study German in the third form. His German teacher, Stanley Mitchell, of whom he was very fond, was a graduate of Jesus College Cambridge, so it seemed the natural place for David to apply.

As a boy, he learned the violin and became leader of the school orchestra, but he also had a great passion for the organ. He practiced at home on a reed organ, and spent many happy hours playing it with friends. On hearing David playing hymns so frequently, the gardener next door once asked when the collection plate would be coming round.

After spending six months living and working in Cologne, immersing himself in the German language and culture, David went up to Jesus College in 1974, where he spent three happy years as an undergraduate, reading German and French, and singing in the Chapel Choir. He stayed on to do research into medieval German and obtained his PhD in 1982. As a choral scholar, David had to sing four services a week, including full choral settings of Evensong and Anthems. He had singing lessons with Nigel Wickens and sang regularly as a cantor in the Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge, which encouraged his love of Latin liturgy.

In 1983, David married Manuela, in Germany, first in the registry office and the next day in the pretty village church in Erzhausen. The reception, a gift from Manuela's very generous father, was held at the Frankfurt Kempinski hotel and the happy couple honeymooned on the island of Mauritius.

Manuela and David had first met in 1977 while he was teaching at a language school in Cambridge, after graduating, and they kept in touch thereafter. Their only son, Nick, (that's me of course!) was born in 1991, when they lived in Godmanchester, having moved back to the Huntingdon area, after living in Cambridge and Eltham, South-East London.

After a gap of twenty years, David took up organ playing again in 1994, now living at the Long House in Hemingford Abbots, having moved there in 1992. He first helped at St Margaret's, then at All Saints', St Ives, and also at Brampton.

His debut at St Ives was entirely unplanned – when the scheduled organist did not turn up one Sunday, David volunteered to play the hymns, and I, aged three or four, sat beside him on the organ bench! A moment that I distinctly remember, when I notoriously pressed one of the keys during a period of prayer, much to my father's horror, and the surprise of the congregation as a piercing high note broke the silence!

My father was truly passionate about organs. He found a second-hand electronic organ with a full pedalboard for practice, which he bought on All Saints' Day 1995, and kept in the bedroom. He devoted much of his time to improving the organ at All Saints', even hosting the renowned Organ Builder, Robin Winn, from Bath, for several weeks over successive summers while upgrades were carried out.

These were fond times that I shared in, as we all worked on the project together.

Over the years he traded his way up to a very advanced digital organ – always found second hand at a good price. He even dreamed of having a real church pipe organ at home; those who know our family home – a bungalow with high sloped ceilings – will understand why he thought this might just be possible! He measured ceilings and even visited churches with organs for sale, to see if a full rank of sixteen-foot pipes might fit in the bedroom – quite where the bed would go was apparently a less important consideration. Much to my mother's relief, none of them quite fitted. That said, he did partly fulfil that pipe dream (pardon the pun) when he acquired a small chamber organ with eight-foot pipework, which took pride of place in our living room for many years.

He served for over ten years as Organist and Choirmaster of All Saints' and sat for many years on the Ely Royal School of Church Music Committee. During that time, he enjoyed singing in the large RSCM choral festivals at King's College Chapel and often helped organise them. He wrote several hymns, some set to music by the Cathedral Precentor and sung at festivals, most notably *Saints of Ely*, first performed at Ely Cathedral for the 900th anniversary of the diocese. It later found its way into the King's School hymn book – something of which he was quietly very proud.

Although my father was often seen as a serious man – particularly in his professional life – he never took himself too seriously and was comfortable in his own skin. That was one of the wisest lessons that he taught me when growing up.

He was well-known for his sense of humour, particularly when he was with his cousins! Not a moment would go by before the reminiscing would begin – with old family stories and jokes that would have everyone roaring with laughter. They would recall holidays in Cornwall together, the quirks of past family gatherings, and the wonderfully excentric nature and mannerisms of their beloved relatives.

One example of his inability to take himself too seriously, to which George, Kate and Jenny will be able to testify, was on the golf course. A sport that he enjoyed playing, but he never quite mastered

the game like others in the family! He always seemed to find it too amusing to be competitive about it. One story that was often told, was of a competition at the rather prestigious Trevose Golf Club in Cornwall, when his opening shot from the first tee didn't even make it beyond the road that crossed the course, immediately in front of him. He laughed about it for years afterwards – as did everyone else!

I had a very happy childhood, filled with wonderful memories of time spent with my father. I can still picture sitting on his lap as he drove the ride on lawn mower, going on cycle rides across the Houghton Meadow and through the thicket path to St. Ives and fishing together on the riverbank – or fly fishing for trout.

My parents shared many happy holidays together over the years, often joined by my grandparents on both sides. With their love of sunshine and the sea, they travelled frequently. In the 1980s to Canada and North Germany and then in the 90s, after I came along, to Spain. In 2005 they bought a holiday villa in Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands, where they spent several months each year, happily escaping the British weather in the winter months. My father loved the Spanish language and proudly obtained an A grade at A-Level Spanish, which he studied at evening classes in 2000.

Some of my most joyful childhood memories were spent cruising on the river Ouse, on my parents' beloved boat Orcades. They were so proud of her, and cared for her with great affection. Looking back through our photo albums, there are countless memories of friends and family enjoying picnics on the boat – moments that capture the essence of our family life.

Despite Peter's musings about the potential, he and his colleagues might have had in business, it is clear to me that he wasn't a businessman at heart. He preferred the reassurance of a steady salary to the uncertainty of business life. He did, however, have an excellent eye for a bargain. We spent many Saturday mornings together searching for hidden gems at the local car boot sales, which we would restore and sell on eBay for a small profit. He often grew rather nervous whenever I mentioned any new ventures I was involved in – especially those carrying any hint of financial risk! Even so, he was always supportive, and always encouraged me to pursue my own path.

He taught me so much, both academically and in life, often offering quiet, thoughtful advice that would stay with me long after. Yet, for all his scholarly achievements, he never pushed me to follow in his academic footsteps. Instead, he gently encouraged me to find my own way, guiding me with patience and understanding.

Although his parenting style could sometimes be described as “hands-off”, it was clear how deeply he cared about me and how much he wanted the best for me. From the moment I was born, he spoke fondly of long nights looking after me, so that my mother could rest. He even took a sabbatical from work, giving him precious time with his new family – though I’m sure he managed to fit in plenty of research as well!

He loved technology and computing – I have fond memories of us building my first computer together – entirely from components, and then installing the operating system. Though he would later admit not keeping up with the latest technologies and trends in computer building, he remained an avid user of technology, spending many happy hours at his computer, emailing friends and colleagues, doing his research, and in later years, writing his novels.

Taking early retirement in 2010 gave him the opportunity to begin a new chapter in life – teaching part time at Cambridge, which had always been a life-long ambition, and later taking up writing as a novelist. Writing brought him immense joy and a renewed sense of purpose. A proud and exciting moment came earlier this year, when he had a private audience with the best-selling novelist Jeffrey Archer, who gave him encouraging and constructive feedback on his work.

But perhaps the proudest day of all for me was in 2017, when he was awarded the Freedom of the City of London for his lifelong service to the City – an honour that reflected not only his professional achievements, but the respect and admiration he inspired in so many people, and the unwavering support that he gave to so many of his students over the years.

My father was absolutely delighted to become a grandfather when our son, Anthony, was born in March this year. It brought him such joy to spend time with us all together as a family, and he was always

so kind and generous with Anthony. He immediately welcomed Lucija into the family with open arms, and extended that same warmth to her family when they visited in May and were hosted by my parents. We shared a truly joyful day in August for Anthony's christening, surrounded by so many family members and friends. It's a day we all look back on with great happiness, and, inevitably, with sadness too, as none of us could have known then, how unwell my father would become in such a short time.

I would like to conclude with a final memory, a boys' day out with me and my father: a voyage on our beloved Orcades, along the river Ouse. We had set off early, determined to see how far we could travel in a day. I am lucky enough to have a video recording of that day, and on the tape, I can hear my younger self asking an endless stream of questions. It's abundantly clear from his voice, his patience, and how he showed great interest in my intrigue, taking the time to respond and explain every little thing, just how much he loved and cared for me.

I admired my father dearly, and will always be grateful for the sacrifices he made, the lessons he taught, and the love and laughter he gave so freely.

Eulogy by Peter Hutchinson

I would like to pay tribute to another side of David's life: as an academic – that is, as a teacher, as a scholar, and as a university administrator.

My first meeting with David was in the centre of the academic world: Cambridge University Library Tea Room. A marvellous place for relaxing, for what we would now call 'networking,' and for the best cheese scones in England. David enjoyed all three. He was there because he had had an excellent undergraduate career and was now researching under the most fearsome member of the Department of German, Dennis Green, a figure who was to feature in a completely different guise in several of David's later novels.

David was a dedicated and inspired research student, and I still remember reading the examiners' reports on his PhD dissertation, a

commentary on Wolfram's *Parzival*. One of them complained that it didn't actually have a 'thesis' to it, but that scholars would *feast* off it for many years. They did so once it was published, *in Germany*, that mark of distinction that all English Germanists aspire to. By this point David had already secured his post King's, and he was there to inspire a succession of undergraduates, medievalists in particular. He was remarkably conscientious in his lecture preparation, unlike certain other members of the Department of that time, but he, John White, and Michael Beddow offered some of the best undergraduate teaching that was available in London as a whole. He was also highly active as a PhD supervisor, and I was actually the external examiner for a dissertation he supervised together with John White. It was an excellent piece of work, on the language of East German in modern fiction, the PhD was thoroughly deserved. David later told me that the student presented him with a case of champagne as a token of her gratitude. I myself regularly got warm words for my work with research students, but I never got a case of champagne.

Despite a heavy teaching load, David remained highly active in research. He wrote two more books, both in German, and a range of articles on aspects of medieval literature – not to mention those on Old High as well as modern German language. A phenomenal range. He was also active as an editor.

If I ever had my time again, I would make a mess of the first administrative job I was given, and so I would never be asked again. But David was willing to turn his hand to anything the job presented, and so his burden in administration was considerable and constantly growing – from the very start he was involved in every aspect of the Department's work and its profile, preparing departmental timetables and handbooks, acting as chair of exam boards, trouble-shooting in general.

One area in which he was able to excel was in harnessing the computer to administrative tasks. The Head of Department, Roy Wisbey, had been a pioneer in literary and linguistic computing, and David was an eager follower; Michael Beddow too was an early adopter, and the three of them represented a formidable technological trio, the strongest in London German by far. If those three had set up their own company in that period, they would have become multi-millionaires. David was regularly called upon to advise struggling colleagues and to serve on College and University

computing committees, and he was to produce the first-ever computerised line-by-line bibliography of a literary work, the same text on which he had written his PhD.

David was promoted to a Readership in 1992, and then, in 2002, at a rather young age, to a Professorship. The inaugural lecture of newly elected Professor can be a tedious affair, but imagine how David must have stirred things up with his title: 'Are German Nouns Over-sexed?' We do not usually associate Medievalists with comedy, but David had a deep, mischievous side that never came out fully until the fiction he was to write in retirement. It was largely hidden in his academic work, and I fear I have to admit that his inaugural engagement with oversexed German nouns had a sobering sub-title: 'Gender Assignment to Foreign Imports to German: A Diachronic and Synchronic Perspective'.

'Retirement' for an academic often means 'doing for nothing what you used to be paid for', and David's love of his subject meant that he did just that. He continued to write on aspects of medieval German literature and the German language, but he was also to publish a book on a fascinating Victorian clergyman, as well as an article on Church music.

I didn't get to know David well until he retired and started working part-time for the German Department in Cambridge. He much enjoyed attending our informal dinners, and it was during one of these he expressed his concern that there had been no obituary published on one of his former teachers in Cambridge, and could we not collaborate in producing one? The man in question was difficult, prickly, and had upset virtually every member of the department at some stage, so there was not just apathy, but actually hostility to producing an obituary. Yet David had a strong sense of loyalty, and he persuaded me it should be done. It was, and our discussions on this project led to lunches together and thoughts about other enterprises: about fiction, above all, which was to prove a major source of satisfaction in his last years.

David had been one of the first to be appointed to a new body whose role was to examine the research of every university department in the country and suggest a research rating for it. His experiences here had intrigued him, and he used them as the basis for his first novel, the ironically entitled 'Great Minds'. He was initially uncertain, but I

wholeheartedly encouraged him, since he was enjoying the work so much and he had a shrewd eye for characterisation, he could spin a very good plot, and he could effortlessly tie complex ends together. All David's novels have a comic dimension, and apart from one, they satirise his twin loves: the church and the university. As if in revolt against the shackles of strict academic enquiry, he gave his imagination full rein and indulged in glorious whims of fantasy. A number of commercial publishers expressed interest in the manuscripts but unable to commit to publication, so in order to save himself negotiations and time he simply self-published on Amazon. He had done this already with his autobiography, the splendidly entitled 'It's all academic now'...

I should like to conclude with an anecdote that shows David's considerable skill as an editor, and which also reveals his unstinting generosity. I myself have been involved in much desk-top publishing over the years, and when a barrister friend of mine completed a substantial manuscript on aspects of criminal pleading, I offered to put it into publishable shape for him. It was a powerful document, and I was pleased to have been involved. I mentioned this to David, who said he'd be happy to see whether there was any way in which he could improve the volume...And so he plunged himself into every aspect of the text, starting with the font. Why had I bothered? David took over, with characteristic enthusiasm, care, and marvellous attention to detail. It was particularly satisfying to me to learn that David and the author later discovered they were distantly related. And I am very pleased to see him in the congregation today.

David and I shared a strong commitment to our families – he regularly sent me pictures of his, often at meals – but in other respects we were poles apart. And yet we got on splendidly, our email exchange was constant, once comprising an exchange of risqué limericks on matters Germanic, and our meetings, especially with another retired Professor of German from London, Martin Swales, were a constant source of laughter. Martin is sorry he cannot be here today.

I shall remember David above all for his sense of humour, his dedication to his subject, and his general love of life and his church. Despite the setbacks in his health, he never complained. In all these respects, he was a clear model.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Abandoned cars

01480 388297

Fly tipping

01480 388640

[https://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/
forms/Operations/
New_Street_Cleaning_1.html](https://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/forms/Operations/New_Street_Cleaning_1.html)

Highway Faults including Potholes

0345 045 5212

[https://
highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.g
ov.uk/](https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/)

Faulty and broken streetlights

K&M Lighting Services

01480 395806

*Where possible please quote street light
number on plaque on the street light and
the location.*

Illegal signs/graffiti

0800 7832220

Refuse & recycling helpline

0800 3896613

<http://huntingdonshire.gov.uk/>

**St Ives & District
Neighbourhood Policing Team**
dial 101

ABBOTS VILLAGE HALL

Stuart Prosser (Chairman)

Margaret Cloke (Treasurer)

Jenny Desborough (Bookings & Hall Mgt 07720 309992)

Beryl Lager (Health and Safety)

Chris Nicol (Parish Council Committee Liaison)

Rie Hargreaves (Trustee)

We All Need Friends – Please Be One of Ours!

If you are interested in becoming a friend of the Village Hall, and are willing to give a couple of hours a month, on an occasional basis to help with leaflet dropping, setting-up the hall etc. – please call: **Stuart Prosser, Chairman 07892 682389**

HEMINGFORD ABBOTS VILLAGE CONTACT LIST

CHURCH

Rector	Rev Tim May	07871 523249
Priest	Revd Canon Brian Atling Revd Judith Bolton	493975 370036
Family Service	Janine Hamilton	390505
Churchwardens	John Hyde Daniela Spilca	07722 587759
Deputy Churchwarden	Judith Clark Pearl Muspratt	
Bellringers	Sharon Williams	830766
Flower Guild	Bridget Flanagan	465370
Magazine	Parish Office Team admin@churchbytheriver.org.uk	467250
Treasurer	Brian Atling	

For weddings see churchbytheriver.org.uk/weddings

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Parish Council Website: www.hemingfordabbots.org.uk

Chairman	Stuart Prosser	07892 682389
Bookings	Jenny Desborough	468956
Bridge Club	Chris Nicol	300185
Village Lunch	To be confirmed	
Women's Institute	Maria Needham	07730 556870