

WINTER 2025

OUR PLACE WYE

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Send your articles to

newsletter@ourplacewye.org.uk



Laura Starley, administrator of Our Place Wye, writes: As 2025 draws to a close I have been reflecting on the year as we all tend to do. I am very proud of the things Our Place Wye has achieved. In addition to producing these newsletters, we have hosted a gathering for the community's volunteers (in May), held 24 Community lunches, launched a Carers' Group at Brambles Care Home, hosted a Community Fair (in September), maintained our Wye Sensory Community Garden, planned another Christmas Street Party (to take place first Friday in December), coordinated moderation on the Facebook group, and campaigned to keep our Community Warden in the village one day a week. The quote 'If you want to change the world, go home and love your family' always rings so true for me. I would expand this and include 'your community'. If we can all play a part and cherish our community then we are hopefully playing a small part in creating a better future in times that can feel so uncertain.

Our Place Wye wishes everyone a peaceful and calm Christmas season and a Happy New Year!

VIRTUAL LUNCH

Rachel Jackson

We met with the Jewellery Designer to hear about her creative journey and what inspires her.

Please tell us a bit about yourself, and what brought you and your family to the area

Andy and I live with our two children at the top of the hill in Hastingleigh where I design from my jewellery studio. Both from small towns in the north, we spent our 20s & 30s building creative careers in London.

After 20 years of playing and working hard, and two small children later, we went in search of new adventure and a new dream home - a restoration project with holiday lets, and we've never looked back. We love the rich creative community here, the nature and the many brilliant schools. Still being able to get into London easily is a huge bonus too.

How did you first get into jewellery design?

I was travelling around the world collecting different types of jewellery - as mementos of the places I visited, and people I met; wearable time capsules that marked different chapters in my story. But it was South America - Argentina and Brazil that stole my heart and where the seeds of my jewellery career were sown. I was obsessed with the antique markets in San Telmo, Buenos Aires and the religious iconography and symbolism across jewellery and art.

In Brazil, following a chance connection at Carnival, I lived with a



Rachel launched her popular jewellery business in 2009

magical family in Sao Paulo for three months, and this is where I learnt my craft. Before I left, the family gifted me an amulet pendant filled with salt and a handwritten note that said "For love & protection wherever you go". This is now our signature and best selling design - an amulet necklace filled with your choice of meaningful gemstones. It's the ultimate personalised gift for all ages.

On my return to London, I was hit with the news that one of my Brazilian family had died in a tragic accident. This was an epiphany that life can be short, and I left my career in music to make a start in jewellery. I signed up at Central St Martins, set up a market stall in Spitalfields and the rest is history.

What is your proudest achievement?

Creating a jewellery capsule for Liberty of London. Liberty have the finest curation of jewellery in the UK, quite possibly the world, and it's every designers ambition to be stocked there.

What advice would you give to young or aspiring women starting a creative business?

When it's something you love, you naturally give your heart and soul so you must make sure you look after yourself. Build in work/life balance from the start and only work with people that fill your cup.

If any figure alive or dead could wear your jewellery who would it be and why?

Stevie Nicks and Florence Welch because they're true artists with a unique point of view, and this takes bravery! I love their symbolic song writing and of course their iconic style which blends bohemia with rock 'n' roll. They are amazing female role models, paving the way for other artists and they would look amazing in Rachel Jackson jewellery!

What are you having for lunch today?

Eggs!

How do you look after yourself and stay calm during busy periods?

Ha, I can have a lot on! I regularly need to break things up by getting out and about, to see and feel other things. I'm often in London at a gig, show, exhibition or seeing friends. I'm extremely grateful to have some incredibly supportive (and fun) female pals.

www.racheljacksonlondon.com

[Instagram@racheljacksonjewellery](https://www.instagram.com/racheljacksonjewellery)



Rachel's new collection. Her jewellery is available online and in store at Selfridges.

WYE CHRISTMAS STREET PARTY 2025

Alice Wilkinson, Organiser

This year sees the return of one of Wye's favourite winter-time traditions, with the 28th Christmas Street Party, on Friday 5th December from 6-8pm, now organised by Our Place Wye. It's an evening for the village to come together in anticipation of Christmas and enjoy the lights on Church Street, carol singing and music from local choirs and groups.

There will be fairground rides, stalls offering games, a lucky dip, mulled wine and street food from curries, burgers and mince pies to homemade cakes and goodies from a range of local businesses, groups and societies.

Father Christmas will be saying hello, with sweets for those who've been good!

One of the highlights will be the Grand Raffle to raise money for community projects. Local businesses have generously donated an array of wonderful prizes, from Afternoon Tea for two at Eastwell Manor, a stunning wreath from East Kent Flowers, a private magic lesson from Wye's very own Étienne Pradier to vouchers for local restaurants and pubs and lots, lots more.

For tickets, come along to the Farmers' Market in November, or look out for them on sale at the pubs at the end of November and start of December and on the night. We are also looking for volunteers to help with setting up and clearing away on the day.



Our Place Wye 28th Wye Christmas Street Party

6pm-8pm
Friday 5th December
Church Street Wye

- ★ Street Food
- ★ Mince Pies & Mulled Wine
- ★ Grand Raffle
- ★ Stalls
- ★ Father Christmas
- ★ Children's Lucky Dip
- ★ Fairground Attractions
- ★ Carol Singing by the children of local schools

★ Fun and Games for all the Family ★

Profits from our annual Christmas Street Party go to community initiatives identified by Our Place Wye
Working to keep the Heart in the Village

If you are able to help please contact
Alice at christmas@ourplacewe.org.uk
or call her on 07976 354 683.

COMMUNITY FAIR BRINGS WYE TOGETHER

On Sunday 7th September, Our Place Wye hosted a Community Fair. The idea was to showcase all the clubs and societies in the village for residents to come and chat, sign up, explore or even volunteer. We also wanted to give children some free active fun and hosted a bouncy castle and bungee trampolines for them to enjoy.

One Resident said 'Massive well done organising it all, several people I've spoken to since have made a point of how well they thought it went and mentioned people signing up to clubs and societies which is great. I think the kids all had an amazing time too!'

Along with all the clubs and societies thanks to *Caffeine and Fizz* for coming and serving drinks for everyone and Mary and Penny for selling ice creams on a lovely warm September day. We hope to do this again next year!



The Sun shone for the Fair!



Over 250 people came in to speak to the clubs in Wye and see what was on offer



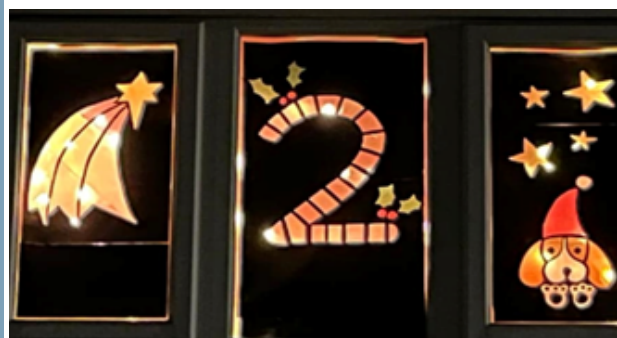
Thankfully the arrows didn't have any spikes

ADVENT WINDOWS 2025

For the sixth year running, we will be continuing a village Living Advent Calendar for Christmas 2025

If you would like to take part, you just need to decorate one of your home's windows for Advent. We will organise the windows to 'open' on different days throughout Advent. You'll be given a date to 'go live' and be asked to include that number in your window. We would like to include as many people as possible so you could open on the same day as your neighbour. Whilst there are some very arty creations, do not be afraid to give it a go. It is all about the taking part!

If you would like to take part please email admin@ourplacewe.org.uk by November 24th.



WYE ABROAD -

A new column focusing on Wye residents working overseas. Local resident Nigel Poole tells us about his work in Afghanistan.

'You are welcome to visit in peace and security', said the Taliban official. 'Come and live here,' said another.

In August, I paid my first visit to Afghanistan since 2014-2018 when I was in and out of the country, working on food and nutrition. It was true that security was very much improved. After all, those who were previously the fighters are now the government.

Afghanistan has a rugged beauty: varied regions from the tropics of South Asia to the deserts of Western Asia and the plains of Central Asia, all topped by the westernmost snow-covered extensions of the Himalayas. But this geography comes with striking fragility: it is not the risk, but the reality of earthquakes, increasing temperatures, floods and drought, and shrinking glacial resources that are extremely worrying.

I was visiting on behalf of a British organisation Afghanaid that has worked there since the 1980s. In August I saw the differences made in the lives of rural people of the north-eastern Province of Badakhshan through investments in land terracing, tree planting, infrastructure and skills development. A



Clean water and sanitation facilities improve health and boost school enrolments..

British government-financed hydroelectric plant was still functioning perfectly after more than twenty years and was managed and maintained by the same man who had been trained at the outset.

But beneath the surface, the tension is palpable. A UN official in Kabul summarised the changes within the country since 2021: 'You can go now to any place in Afghanistan... but the space for women and girls remains very challenging'. Dozens of decrees have been issued that curtail the rights of women and girls in education, employment, appearance in public spaces, travel, and restrictions on the internet and social media. The tension creates a sense of hopelessness as social and economic poverty bite, and the past gains to health, food security and nutrition go into reverse.

Afghanistan has been especially hit by global aid cuts in 2025 because donor countries and organizations cannot agree whether or not to engage with the

government. This autumn, the people are less equipped than ever to cope with the rigours of the coming winter. And the demands are being exacerbated by more than 2 million returnees, expelled by Iran and Pakistan. What can one do? Afghanaid hangs in there: we don't compromise with the government, but we do support the people.

To find out more about Afghanaid please visit www.afghanaid.org.uk/



The financing from the UK Government has provided sustainable hydroelectricity in Badakhshan.

SANTA RUN 10AM
(fancy dress optional)

- Fun for the whole family
- £6 to take part which includes
 - Free hat and medal for the kids
 - Free entry to the Christmas Fayre

Fun Run Book Here

CHRISTMAS FAYRE & SANTA RUN

Sat 13th Dec
Lady Joanna School

Santa's Grotto Book Here

CHRISTMAS FAYRE 11AM

- Entry £2 adult/ £1 Child
- Winter Wonderland
- Santa's Grotto (£6)
- Festive Games
- Food and Drink

We are grateful for the support of the following local business sponsors: Canterbury Cider, Meade Home Improvement, New Flying Horse, Sawyers, Sealey Cleaning, Spacemaker Architects, Ticketyboo, Tickled Trout, Musika, Wye Beauty, Wye Farmers' Market, Hobbs Parker, The Vault Hair and Beauty, Embrace Yoga With Me, Genesis Landscaping, Wye Coffee Shop, and The Bowl Inn Hastingsleigh.

If you would like to become a sponsor please contact admin@ourplacewye.org.uk

Thanks to Our Place Wye funders:



EVENTS AND LISTINGS

Find out what's happening in Wye and surrounding areas over the coming months.

DECEMBER - MARCH

- Thurs 27 Nov, Tickled Trout charity quiz night, 7pm
- Fri 28 Nov, Christmas on the Farm, Canterbury Cider, Bilting Grange Farm, 5-9pm
- Sun 30 Nov, Advent Carol Service, Wye Church, 6.30pm
- Mon 1 Dec, Wye Parish Council Meeting, Reece Pavilion, 18:45 - 21:30pm
- Mon 1 Dec, Wye Arts presents 'From Time to Time'. Wye Village Hall, 7pm (members only)
- Fri 5 Dec, Wye Street Party, Church Street, 6-8 pm
- Sat 13 Dec, Lady Joanna School Christmas Fayre and Santa Fun Run, the Primary School, from 10 am.
- Sat 13 Dec, Handcrafted Community Sale and Meet Santa, Wye Village Hall, 10 am-3pm.
- Mon 15 Dec, Wye Arts presents *David Bowdler The Good Sax Guide*, Wye Village Hall, 7pm, £5 members non-members £7
- Weds 17 Dec, The Big Band Collective Concert, Wye Church, 8pm
- Sat 20 Dec, Christmas in the Crypt (Christmas Market event), Wye Church, 9am - 12pm
- Sun 21 Dec, Christmas Carol Service, Wye Church, 6.30pm
- Weds 24 Dec, Crib Service, Wye Church, 4.30pm
- Mon 5 Jan, Wye Parish Council Meeting, Reece Pavilion, 18:45 - 21:30pm

Please note the Tickled Trout will be closed from the 5th-8th January

OUR PLACE WYE CARERS' SUPPORT GROUP

Held at Brambles Care Home, This group is open to all unpaid family and friends who care for someone:

Tuesday 2 Dec - 11am, Tues 6 Jan- 11am

Tues 3 Feb - 11am , Tues 3 Mar - 11am

email: admin@ourplacewye.org.uk for more info

- **Wye Farmers' Market** will take place as usual on the first and third Saturdays of the month.
- The **Options Club** meet in Wye Church every Monday for board games, chat and coffee.
- **Wye Community Choir** meets every Tuesday, 7.30 pm in the small village hall.

EVENTS AT LUCKLEY HOUSE

Little Chequers, Wye, TN25 5DY

Open to all Wye Residents:

Mon 2-4pm - Knit and Natter

Tues 2-4pm - Darts and Board Games Group

Weds 10-11am - Coffee Morning

Weds 7-9pm - Bingo

Thurs 8:30 am - Breakfast Club

Sun 10-11 am - Coffee Morning

Contact them on [01233 812665](tel:01233812665) or drop in for further info

OUR PLACE WYE COMMUNITY LUNCH

Wye Village Hall, £5 for two courses, tea, coffee and biscuits.

12:15 for 12:30 serving. To book message or ring: 07395433939

Please do this before the day of the actual lunch.

Open to all Wye Residents:

Dec 3, 17

Jan 7, 21

Feb 4, 18

March 4, 18

NB: Dec 17 is the Christmas lunch



Please make use of the pink bin at every Farmers' Market! This is the place to recycle all your old electrical equipment - computers, toasters, lights, kitchen gadgets etc!

If you have any upcoming events or articles you wish to be added to our next Newsletter please email: admin@ourplacewye.org.uk

BUS TIMETABLE:

WYE, LITTLE BURTON, ASHFORD

Mondays to Fridays except public holidays

Wye Church	1040	1140	1240	1340
Little Burton Clarke Crescent	1048	1148	1248	1348
Sainsbury's Bybrook Retail Park	1056	1156	1256	1356
Ashford Park Street	1104	1204	1304	1404

ASHFORD, LITTLE BURTON, WYE

Ashford Park Street Stop C	1014	1114	1214	1314
Sainsbury's Bybrook Retail Park	1022	1122	1222	1322
Little Burton Clarke Crescent	1030	1130	1230	1330
Wye Church	1038	1138	1238	1338

SCARECROWS TAKE OVER WYE CHURCH

Gail Fleming, Organiser

On Saturday 20 September 2025 Wye residents were invited to attend and indeed participate in the Scarecrow Competition held at St. Gregory and St. Martin's Church, Wye.

A small committee put on the event to bring villagers and local people together to celebrate their community and lift the spirits as summer makes way for the autumn. Canvassing for support and entries included the organiser pushing Wurzel Gumidge around Wye in a wheelbarrow while dressed as Aunt Sally, which in itself was a spectacle to behold.

The event was extremely well supported by local businesses and households, who generously provided a combined number of 23 auction prizes, and the committee were somehow able to



The Auction is full swing with Mr Biggins, he also judged the Scarecrows

persuade national treasure and "I'm a Celebrity" winner, Christopher Biggins, to preside over both the judging of the scarecrows and to conduct the auction itself, which he did in his own inimitable and impeccable style.

The range and variation of scarecrows, which included a six-foot papier mâché banana which travelled to Wye by train, made for a difficult decision for Mr

Biggins, and it's fair to say the quality of all entrants deserves credit. The auction itself raised £1,778 for charity, going to the Wye Village Hall, which supports many local initiatives and benefits the whole community.

There is an Instagram account [@wyescarecrowfestival](#) that showcases the event for those unable to attend and the committee would like to express heartfelt thanks to all those who provided entries and the auction donors and buyers who gave so generously.



First place went to The Wooden Spoon Preserving Co

DELIGHT YOUR EARS THIS CHRISTMAS!

Stevie Bouttell

Once again this year, Wye Village Community Choir will be presenting a Christmas concert. As with previous years, there will be mix of music from the choir, selected readings and, of course, lots of well-loved carols for the audience to sing along with. Light refreshments will also be provided.

Musical Director Caroline says "We've had great responses to our previous Christmas concerts, and we're very much looking forward to singing for the village again. This year, thanks to a generous grant from Our Place Wye, we are able to offer everybody free entry! It looks like being a great night, and we hope that lots of you will come



along and make it a really special occasion".

The 40-strong choir was formed in 2022 and regularly sings at village events. They meet to rehearse every Tuesday evening during school term-time. Membership enquiries are welcome.

Please join us on Thursday 11th December at 7pm for our Christmas concert or contact Stevie on: 07821 009854 for further information.



Father Christmas will be at the above event from 10am-3pm. To book a slot please email: handcraftedcommunitykent@gmail.com. Ticket prices are £6 plus booking fee of 25p.

HISTORY LIVES HERE - BE PART OF WYE'S HISTORY

**Jonathan Timms, Secretary,
Historical Society**

History is all around us, but it is easy to walk by without noticing. Wye was important from early times because of its fordable crossing point on the River Stour. Bridge Street is part of an ancient trackway leading to Dover and France in one direction and linking with important sites like Stonehenge in the other. There is abundant evidence of Roman and Saxon settlements. The undercroft dates from around 1290 and we are lucky enough to



have another 139 listed buildings and monuments within the parish boundary. Wye College was founded at about the same time as Christchurch College, Oxford and Trinity College, Cambridge. The alms house charity dates from 1562 and is still going strong. Have you ever wondered why is the Parish Church half medieval and half in the style of Sir Christopher

Wren? Why do so many old Wye houses have chimneys set off-centre? Join Wye Historical Society and find out. Our new season of monthly talks started on 2 October, running through to April and covering topics of both local and wider interest. You will walk through Wye with eyes freshly opened. You could also support our plans for the future by helping us make our wonderful archives more accessible to the public.

Wye Historical Society hold talks on the first Wednesday of the month at Lady Joanna Thornhill Primary School.

For further information please contact:
jnjtimms@gmail.com, 07986 603129 or
[check out wyehistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://checkout.wyehistoricalsociety.org.uk)

A CUPPA WITH... Penny Wilcox, Trustee at Wye Under Fives

**Please introduce yourself and explain
your role at Wye Under Fives'
preschool.**

My name is Penny, I am a neonatal physiotherapist, a proud (yet knackered) mum to three angels (I wish), I like swimming and baking and am the current Chair of the trustees for Wye Under Fives. Wye Under Fives is a pack-away preschool that operates out of the village hall during term time and is a charity – something a lot of people don't realise! The preschool is run by our wonderful manager Mel and her fun, caring, creative play team. As it is a charity, there is a committee of trustees made up of volunteers, half of which should be parents of current preschool children. Currently we are a small committee of five but on the look out for more!

**What inspired you to get involved
as a Trustee?**

I started as a trustee in 2022, I am an advocate for giving back to the community by volunteering and being a trustee ticked that box! I felt I had



Penny often reads to the pre school children

transferrable skills, being a paediatric physiotherapist and am passionate about ensuring all children have the best start in early years whether through health or, with the case of Wye Under Fives, education. Being a trustee, I can influence the priorities of preschool and contribute to the overall governance of the setting. With pride, I can see the amazing work the team do, providing a fun setting full of joy and learning for each of the individual child- based on their needs and interests.

**Describe your role as a Trustee and
what the role involves day to day**

The dry, yet vital part is attending the committee meetings where we discuss all manner of objectives from the state of the finances to safeguarding, from fundraising to new equipment. We now also have a fundraising team so I liaise with them about the plans for events and help spread the word on socials.

The fun part is heading into the setting to see how the team are, meet with the manager and, quite frankly, play with the children.

**What is your favourite memory from
your time as a Trustee?**

My favourite memory is when the well known cat Ralph, wandered into the setting much to the delight of the preschool children. There were shouts of "we have a preschool cat!" Ralph nonchalantly walked around as I tried to keep a hoard of 3 and 4 years olds from simultaneously trying to catch, pet or chase him.

What's your favourite tippie?

Amaretto Sour – especially at Christmas.

**How can local people support or get
involved.**

We would welcome anyone, a parent or someone from the community who is passionate and wants to get involved from a strategic level as a trustee. However support can also be given through our fundraising activities or donations – we hold small cake sales but also the yearly wreath-making evening and many other events.

Contact information: Wyeunderfives.co.uk
or Committee@wyeunderfives.co.uk



COMMUNITY CORNER

Capturing local sights, special moments and the charm of our village in pictures from the Our Place Wye Facebook Page:



Left: Wye Walkers on Sparrow's bridge enjoying an Autumn walk



Left: Tamzin Denny sharing a full September moon over Wye



Right: 1 Chequers Park hosting a wonderful array of cakes for McMillan coffee morning



Teddy's being launched from the Church tower at the Teddy Bear parachute extravaganza



Storm Amy took one Teddy on a detour over the building work at the old college

WHAT MAKES WYE WYE - WYE W.I. 108 YEARS ON!

**Gillian Tucker,
President Wye W.I.**

Wye Women's Institute was formed in 1917, two years after the National Federation was formed and two years before the East Kent Federation. On Thursday June 18th 1917 a group of women met in Wye and were addressed by Mrs Watts from the Agricultural Organization Society. After this it was decided to form a Women's Institute. Fifty members were immediately enrolled and the first committee meeting was held at the Principal's House at Wye College, on June 19th. The President was Mrs Dunstan and the chair she carved for the the WI is now housed in the Parish Church.

The purpose of the early institutes was to enable countrywomen to help with the war effort by preserving



Wye WI members in 1922 pose for a photo

fruit and vegetables and becoming more self-sufficient. Mrs Dunstan, wife of the Principal of Wye College started Wye Jam Factory with the WI members when the fruit season began. All helpers were paid 4d per hour as it was run on commercial lines. The jam was made in a giant copper pot. Six and a half tons of jam was made that year and the fuel costs were only £2.

In October the meeting was held in Olantigh Towers where Mrs Loudon held a demonstration of darning and mending. There is still a photograph of the members at that meeting, other meetings were less serious including music and dancing.

The WI has progressed over the years. There were 150 members at one time, catering for all sorts of interests: drama, art groups, theatre visits and trips in addition to talks. We continue today, though not with so many members. We meet on the second Wednesday in the month in the Reece Pavilion. Please come along ladies, we are a welcoming, friendly, supportive group.



The caravan run by Wye WI towards the end of World War 1. The caravan would have travelled locally for meetings. The principal, Mrs Dunstan is second from the left.

For further information about the W.I and to attend a meeting please contact: Jill Tucker Wyld at jillie.wyld@gmail.com