CRATFIELD NEWS

October 2026



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Second and Third Concerts

Saturday 10th October, Piatti String Quartet – Mendelssohn, Purcell, Dvořák, and Edmund Finnis
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Saturday 14th November Tamsin Whaley-Cohen (violin) and Huw Watkins (piano) Beethoven, Schumann, Debussy and more.
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SMITH AND WARD FOUNDATION

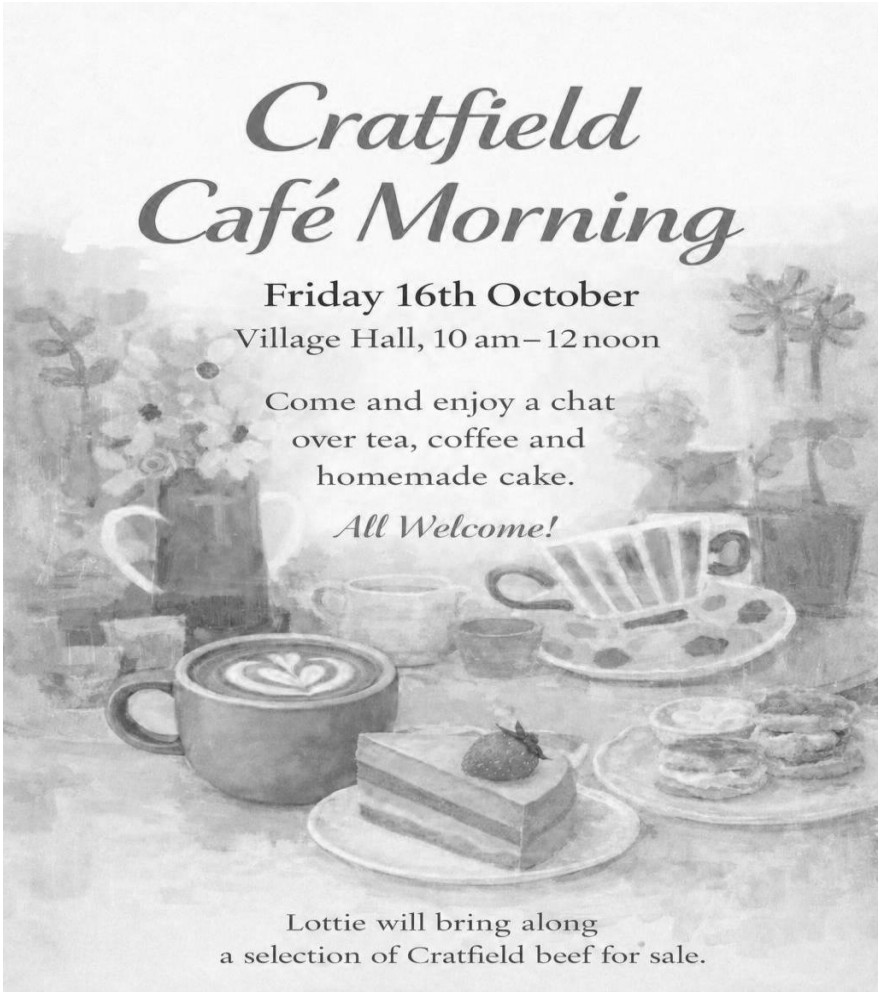
The Smith and Ward Foundation offers financial assistance to those up to the age of 25 who are undertaking further education or job training and who have attended All Saints CEVA Primary School, Laxfield for not less than 2 years. The trustees offer grants towards travel, books or equipment to those attending further education, college, university, or training.
Please contact Di Wingfield – tel 01986 798880 – email wingfieldlive@aol.com for an application form
Completed forms should be returned to Mrs. D. Wingfield, Sunnyside, Laxfield IP13 8EA by 31st October 2026

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL

This year the start date for collecting for the Poppy Appeal is October 15th, so you may expect one of us to be knocking on your door from that time onwards. Cratfield is one of the villages belonging to the Fressingfied and District Branch of the Royal British Legion and I am pleased to say is always one of the most generous in their donations. We look forward to being able to keep up the standard.
Many thanks in advance Sue

CRATFIELD MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

A big thank you to everyone who joined the Macmillan coffee morning in the village hall on September 18th. It was another wonderful Cratfield event, full of good cheer and generosity. Between us we managed to raise a really impressive £302.17 for this important charity. So many, many thanks to all the generous bakers and raffle prize donors, as well as to the volunteers who made it happen, organising, serving and washing up. - and, above all to those who came and ate cake, drank coffee and supported the cause!



A Penny for them…





When considering the displays for the 800th year anniversary since Henry III allowed a market to be held in Laxfield, I became focused on the penny coin and its history. The Roman denarius coin gave us the ‘d’ for penny before the advent of decimal ‘New Money’, which changed it to ‘p’ in 1971. There had been silver pennies since Saxon times and this Henry III silver ‘short cross’ penny shown here is contemporary with the Laxfield 1226 Market. There were 240 pennies in a pound although the only available coin was a penny. The idea of a pound was then just a means of counting money – there was no pound coin or any other coins although we know halfpennies and farthings were formed by cutting the penny in two or four pieces. There is now evidence that during Henry’s reign some experimental smaller denominational coins were produced. The ‘long cross’ penny, so called because the cross reached the edges of the coin, was introduced in Henry’s time too.

In 1797, when George III was on the throne, silver was replaced by copper. The large, heavy penny was called a ‘cartwheel’. The idea was that it would be more difficult to forge.

In 1860 during Queen Victoria’s long reign, the metal was changed again. This time to bronze and the coin became smaller and thinner. It was called a ‘Bun Penny’ to reflect the queen’s hairstyle. Later in Victoria’s reign, in 1895, an older veiled queen was shown on the penny and it
became known as the ‘Veiled Head Penny.’

I expect many of us remember the penny from 'Old Money', pre-decimalisation, with Brittania proudly depicted. She had appeared on the penny since 1672 when Charles II was king. But the figure had featured on Roman coins c119 AD.

In 1971 there were no longer 240 pennies to a pound but now 100. Decimalisation had arrived, reflecting many other foreign currencies. The penny reverted to being a small coin again.

However, the penny is still deeply rooted in our language…

It cost a pretty **penny**

In for a **penny**, in for a pound

Spend a **penny**

Look after the **pennies** and the pounds will look after themselves

He is a bad **penny**

Penny wise, pound foolish

And the **penny** drops**…**

Pennies from heaven

A **penny** saved is a **penny** earned

Not have a **penny** to your name…

Two a **penny**

And I am sure **for two pennies** you can think of many more!

Laxfield & District Museum forthcoming events in Laxfield Village hall:
Saturday 17th October *Coffee Morning with local displays of finds by David Steadman, detectorist, and Sutton Hoo Historic Textile Group demonstrating Saxon skills.*
Saturday 24th October *Museum Ceilidh*

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The Battle of Virgin Gorda

Even in the best regulated circles, there occurs the occasional uncharacteristic disaster; this tale is of one of them. During my time as a Fighter Controller in the fourth Ark Royal,[1] there occurred the Battle of Virgin Gorda, a bit of throwback to the runs ashore of "the good old days" so fondly recalled by ancient mariners and growing in the telling. Happily, I saw this only twice, in my career and such things just don't happen `since women started to go to sea.

In February 1972, whilst exercising with a combined fleet of RN and USN ships, Ark Royal was granted a two-day stand-off in the British Virgin Islands and anchored off the island of Virgin Gorda – noted for very expensive and exclusive homes for the very wealthy and "entitled.". Each watch[2] was to be granted an afternoon of beach leave (in naval slang, a banyan) there. An officer was sent to Tortola, the capital, to hire a small landing craft and acquire a vast quantity of beer to be sold on the beach to the members of the crew and then supervise the proceedings.

It so happened that I was the Officer of the Day on the first day as several hundred officers and sailors were ferried ashore to the beach. A-s OOD I (a young Lieutenant) was the Captain's deputy, responsible for the safety and conduct of the ship for 24 hours. In mid-afternoon, somewhat lurid tales started to drift back of rather bacchanalian orgies.

Now you need to know that, in those days, sailors were allowed to buy up to three 10 ounce cans of beer a day.[3] However, for some reason, no-one had thought about limiting the amount on shore. It soon became clear as boat loads of sailors drifted back, some indeed being carried back by their messmates, that a lot more beer than the official entitlement had been consumed. Around 800 people had gone ashore, and a very large proportion of them, including a surprising number of junior (mainly Fleet Air Arm) officers, had clearly over-indulged by a considerable margin. It wasn't long before I had around 150 beer-soaked people in what was euphemistically called "protective detention", being watched over by their mess mates for safety, and causing me and others a great deal of admin work over the next few days in laying charges and hearing cases. Worse still, a trail of litter and minor damage had, unsurprisingly, greatly upset the wealthy and entitled residents. All in all, it was one of my liveliest duty days. After the Captain had given the officer in charge of the banyan a short, sharp and very formal "interview without coffee," the next day's banyan was conducted rather differently. Happily, I went off to play cricket in Tortola and so, to my relief, did not have to get involved in a much calmer Day 2.

The next day, we sailed to recommence our exercises off Puerto Rico. As we were having lunch, the ship started to vibrate heavily and accelerate to full speed. Soon afterwards a helicopter took off. It transpired that the Admiral in command of our

group of ships had received an angry signal from the Governor of the British Virgin Islands who had been telephoned by furious residents of Virgin Gorda. Consequently, the Admiral had ordered our Captain to report to him on board the Flagship in his full ceremonial uniform. He had left by helicopter as soon as we were within flight range of the Flagship – this was, of course, a very public and formal reprimand. When the Captain returned, we all kept out of his way for some time.

Naturally we junior officers never discovered what was said at that interview – it was never "leaked" nor was anyone going to tell us. However, when the whole fleet anchored off Virgin Gorda again, a couple of weeks later for a fleet regatta and welcome break from the demanding exercises with the US Navy, Ark Royal was not there. Instead, we were ordered to remain at sea for further intensive flying training, supervised by the Admiral's staff. And the officer in charge of banyans (whose proper job on board Ark Royal was, rather ironically, as the Damage Control Officer), left the ship soon afterwards and was never seen again. A "medal" was "struck" on board however, indicating participation in the Battle of Virgin Gorda, although it was never worn on any official occasions!

Jeremy Blackham

1. Stories about the fourth HMS Ark Royal can be found in Cratmags April 2022 to July 2022.
2.Ships' companies are normally organised for both administrative and operational purposes into two "watches" – port and starboard. In this case each watch was given one day off for the beach party. The "watch on board" would be quite sufficient to take the ship to sea in emergency.
3. Until 1969 it was two cans but after the abolition of the free rum ration, they were allowed to buy three. At sea few sailors ever bought their full entitlement.

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Be the spirit of love and warm friends sweet,
May the trick that you are asked to do,
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VILLAGE HALL UPDATE - October 2026

CRATFIELD POP UP PUB - Friday 2nd October

The nights have started to close in, the leaves are turning and the 30 plus degree temperatures are, we suspect, behind us for the year. These are all excellent reasons, if you need any, to head to the **Cratfield Pop Up Pub**, 2nd October, 6pm-10pm, to reflect on the change of season with like-minded (or otherwise!) neighbours and friends.

And we are delighted to say that **Cratfield Kitchen** will be back this month to serve up Judith's customary range of delicious meal options to hungry pop-uppers from 6.30pm. Arrive early to avoid disappointment!

Do join us for a pint of local beer, glass of wine, cider, G&T, soft drinks etc., with or without food. There aren't many better Suffolk ways to spend an October Friday night.

Remember it's cash to purchase food but the bar accepts card and cash payments.

INDOOR BOWLS AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Just turn up at the door and join the friendly regulars for carpet bowls at the village hall, 7pm on October 13th and 27th /// November 17th and /// December 8th. No prior experience needed. Suggested small donation for use of the hall.

Village Hall Events - dates for the Diary:

CRATFIELD TALKS – Saturday 10 October 2026 "Cratfield Wildlife 2"

Paul Taylor returns to share more wonderful pictures captured around Cratfield. "Cratfield Wildlife 1" was a tremendous success so reserve your tickets (£6 per person, to include light snacks) via cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com.

COFFEE MORNING WITH THE SUFFOLK RURAL COFFEE CARAVAN – Friday 16th October 2026, 10am-12 noon

Meet fellow villagers and others from the surrounding area for tea, coffee and cake on Friday 16th. This month our coffee morning is held in conjunction with the Rural Coffee Caravan, an incredible local charity which supports those living in rural areas with practical advice and assistance. It is a great way to meet other people living around Cratfield - as well as an opportunity to taste some very impressive local baking. Any contributions for refreshments are entirely voluntary. around Cratfield - as well as an

opportunity to taste some very impressive local baking. Any contributions for refreshments are entirely voluntary.

CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP – Saturday 7th November 2026, 2pm

Join the very talented Kirsten and enjoy a fun and relaxed afternoon creating your own Christmas Wreath. Booking via k_asbury@sky.com. £55 per person to include all materials and seasonal refreshments.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT RETURNS – 14th November 2026

Paul will be putting together another excellent evening of music so save the date!

CRATFIELD CHRISTMAS FAIR – Sunday 6 December 2026

Always a popular event, the Christmas Fair returns on the first Sunday of December 10am-1pm. Invitations will be sent shortly to invite stallholders to reserve a space for just £10 per table. If you are interested in running a stall, or would like further information about doing so, please contact us by email (cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com) or message the village's Facebook page. We aim to provide as wide a range of offerings as possible, avoiding duplication when practicable, with preference given to tables of those who have joined us at the fair in previous years. As usual, we anticipate there will be a fabulous range of goods on offer - as well as refreshments served up by our team of friendly volunteers - so make sure you save the date.

CRATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 100 CLUB – TIME TO RENEW!

Subscriptions are due for the club's 2026-2027 season. For just £12 for the year subscribers are in the draw to win *£15, £10 or £5 prizes* each month! So, if you have lost the form enclosed with May's magazine you can get a new one by contacting helenjerry@outlook.com, for a chance to be part of this wonderful village effort. *Don't forget – you have to be in it to win it!!!*

CRATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 100 CLUB – OCTOBER WINNERS

This month's 100 Club winners are: first prize (£15) number 80 – Robert King; second prize (£10) number 67 – Chris Betts; and 3rd prize (£5) number 46 – Sue Seabon. Draw by D Britton. Many congratulations to the winners!

VILLAGE HALL FOR HIRE! Don't forget our hall is available for hire for a very reasonable price! For any future booking enquiries please contact us on cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com

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- Signing-up via **ourwatch.org.uk** gets you official Alert email messages from **Suffolk Constabulary**. It's not social media. You can reply if you saw or heard anything regarding local incidents, crimes, appeals, etc. You can also help the police by disclosing whether you have CCTV or Video Door-Bell technology for the purpose of intelligence gathering.
- Under the tab **Find your local NW**, use the postcode search to join a local scheme. More members mean a greater partnership with the Police and a stronger, more aware community with confidence to report issues. If no scheme exists, create and submit a new one for your community. An expert volunteer gets in touch with you.
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Westray and Papa Westray: Part 1.



Westray (18.2 sq. miles, Pop: 550)

Westray and close neighbour, Papa Westray, are the most north-westerly islands in the Orkney group and, at the time of the first known settlements (3,700 BC), it is believed that the two islands were joined.

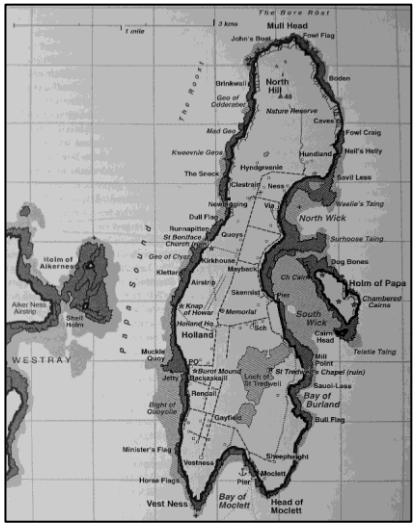
There is much to see at Westray for those interested in history and nature: the hills and sea-cliffs are impressive and beautiful, with vast quantities of seabirds, including razorbill, kittiwake and puffin, to name just a few. In the spring, primroses festoon the island, including the exceedingly rare primula scotica which is found on the north coast of Scotland, the Orkney islands – and nowhere else.

Another rarity is the Orkney vole, also found here. This mammal exists solely on 8 other Orkney islands and, although it is absent from the British mainland, DNA analysis indicates that these creatures were introduced by Neolithic man via trading routes with (what is now) Belgium. *(Neolithic man operated a bartering system across surprisingly sophisticated trade routes with other countries. It is thought that originally the voles were stowaways, concealed in animal fodder.)*

On another historical note: The English Civil War came to a head with the execution of King Charles I in 1649: Oliver Cromwell then took over as Lord Protector, driving the remaining Stuarts to live in exile in Europe. Set up in 1688, the Jacobites were a political movement whose main cause was the restoration of the House of Stuart to the monarchy. They launched several armed rebellions against the British, reaching as far south as Derby before retreating: however, led by “Bonnie Prince Charlie” (Prince Charles Edward Stuart), this culminated in the Jacobites’ decisive defeat and notorious bloodbath at Culloden in 1746 when many survivors were hunted down and killed after the battle.

As a group, the Jacobites were not supported everywhere: in fact, Westray was the only Orkney island to support them and, using the island’s large network of west-coast caves – in particular one called “Gentlemen’s Cave” – a number of lairds hid in these caves through the entire winter following Culloden, for fear of further reprisals.

On a different note, the celebrations following a wedding on the Northern Isles are legendary and I myself have seen a ferry arriving in the early evening discharging a vast number of pedestrians (not a single car!), all bedecked in party gear, ready to dance and/or drink the evening away! Noltland Castle on Westray holds an unofficial record for a party which lasted for 3 months nonstop! (Alka Seltzer was yet to be invented.)



Papa Westray (3.5 sq. miles, Pop: 95)

An island with the prefix of “Papa” is an old Norse term meaning “island of priests.” This goes back to the early Viking Age when Norse Vikings discovered local Christian hermits, monks, or priests living there.

Papa Westray has a long history going back to early Christianity, and even further back than that: a site named Knap of Howar contains two stone houses which date back, unbelievably, to *3,700 BC*. They are intact to roof level, including basic stone furniture and door lintels, and are thought to be the oldest preserved domestic buildings in northern Europe.

My stay on Papa Westray had a number of unusual things about it. Firstly, I was collected by an island car. Island cars, it seems, are exempt from any laws whatsoever, provided they stay on the island and do not stray onto the mainland. The car collecting me was an estate car, but was missing its entire tailgate! (I saw another car, on a different island, deposited at the quayside. I couldn’t be sure whether it was a joke ‘art installation’, or whether it was actually functional. Everything that could be removed was gone, leaving a vehicular skeleton: the car had no bonnet, no doors and no bootlid! This island humour reminded me of a joke bus stop on the Shetland Ises which has every conceivable luxury going, including a sofa, curtains, table, vase of flowers and a TV. What’s more, it’s maintained by the Council!)

The other odd thing on Papa Westray was my accommodation: it was the local school, which doubled up as guest accommodation. The ‘lounge’ was a converted classroom with a TV but I felt dwarfed in such a large room! My hostess cooked me some supper and then left to go home, once we had agreed a time for breakfast the following day. She and her husband had come to the island from Devon but she was obviously sad that her family were now so far away that they could seldom visit. Life on an island may sound idyllic to some, but it isn’t always a bed of roses.

There is, however, something that makes Westray and Papa Westray very different. Unique in fact. Unique in the whole world! More next month, with apologies for this blatant cliffhanger!

Next month: Part 2 **Andrew Weight**

Cratfield Parish Council

All meetings are held in The Village Hall, Manse Lane, Cratfield, IP19 0DJ

Meeting Dates 2026

Tuesday 13th January 2026 at 7.30 pm

- Tuesday 10th March 2026 at 7.30 pm
- Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 7.30 pm – Annual Parish Meeting & Annual Parish Council Meeting
- Tuesday 14th July 2026 at 7.30 pm
- Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7.30 pm
- Tuesday 10th November 2026 at 7.30 pm

Agendas (3 days before the meeting) are on the noticeboards & website:

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Mace

Letter from the Vicar

Dear Friends,

I read a quote the other day which said*, 'Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after the other'* and I could not help but reflect upon it in relation to the churches in our benefice. And I realised at Forest Church the other Sunday, that perseverance in delivery eventually does pay off. We need to find a place where we can meet on a regular basis to celebrate creation and the beauty of the world given to us by God, and Forest Church is one of the many platforms upon which we may deliver this. Perseverance is important in terms of encouraging people to come to church and joining together in worship. Perseverance is important in recognising that we need to find new ways of worship, and I hesitate to say this, our services don't need to be only on Sundays and neither do they necessarily need to be in the church as Forest Church bears witness!!

Here she goes again! Church is not the building! It is our communities and how they live, learn and work together. Dare we step into the unknown? Dare we launch new ways of worship that enable young people to bring their parents to church? I wonder? W

rev.chrissiesmart@gmail.com – 07803 134301

P.S. I have no intention of discarding anything that is currently carried out in our churches… just looking for the green shoots that will encourage growth.

October Services Cratfield

Sunday October 11th	Sunday October 25th
Isaiah 25:1-9 Phil 4:1-9 Matt 22:1-14	Levit 19:1-2, 15-18 1Thess 2:1-8 Matt 22:34-end
9.00am Village Worship	9.00am Holy Communion

BENEFICE SERVICES

October	Sunday 4th	Sunday 11th	Sunday 18th	Sunday 25th
Bedfield	9.30am Holy Communion		11.00am Morning Praise	
Brundish			11.00am Holy Communion	
Laxfield	10.30am Harvest Celebration	10.30am Holy Communion	9..30am Chatty Church	6.00pm Hartismere House
Monk Soham	11.00am Family Service	11.00am Morning Prayer	11.00am Holy Communion	
Tannington				
Wilby	6.00pm Harvest Service	10.30am Village Worship/Celtic		10.30am Holy Communion
Worlingworth		11.00am Let's Celebrate	11.00am Morning Prayer	11.00am Morning Prayer

Tuesday 27th Holy Communion 8.45am Laxfield
Saturday 31st Laxfield 4.00pm All Souls Service

DIRECTORY:

Local Officers:

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All information must arrive at the latest by 20th of the month
Advertising rates per annum: Full page £60, Half page £30, Quarter £20
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