



DECEMBER 2025 DOWER HOUSE NEWSLETTER



The Dower House Christmas Fayre



During November we held our Christmas Fayre for all to enjoy. This year we opened again to the public which was wonderful to see so many of our fellow neighbours.

Our lovely ladies from Knit & Natter rescued us again with plenty of Christmas knitted tree decorations, wine bottle covers, gloves, hats and many more lovely saleable items. They are such talented knitters; we are so grateful for them for all their produce. A special thank you to Jean, whose sewing is exceptional. Jean has helped us over many years and this year she ran a

book stall and lots of her sewing produce, including a bear that she raffled. It was wonderful to see one of our residents win!

On the day of the Fayre, we had a chill start however the dry encouraged neighbours to leave their warm homes. Our conservatory became a tearoom with homemade cakes, tea & coffee. The cakes were home made by our cooks, a coffee & walnut, Lemon drizzle all proceeds to our charity.

We were joined by 2 members of the Air Ambulance volunteers offering helicopters for a small donation who chatted to all and clearly showing their compassion for the charity.



The dining room was filled with homemade Christmas decorations, cards, hats, scarfs, gloves, raffle prizes to be won, including win the Bear! A large bric-a-brac stall with almost NEW items donated by family, Residents & Staff.

Residents enjoyed having some quiet time to browse the Fayre before the public & staff were permitted to enter. We are pleased to announce that our total for the day was in the region of £450. A special 'Thank You' to everyone who contributed to one form or another in making the day a success.

We now look forward to our cheque presentation in January. The home has raised over £2,000 for Hampshire & the IOW Air Ambulance.

Ben's News



Now that Christmas is around the corner the garden is almost ready for a winter rest, the borders are ready for a final cut back the weeds and the leaves are packed tight into the compost bays ready for next year's mulch. As the winter goes on the garden lies dormant waiting for some warmer days.

Over the next month Terry and I will start the winter tidy up with most of the leaves down and the hedges all cut. We will turn to the borders and shrubs, pruning, cutting back and eventually mulching all the borders and patio gardens. There are many perennials that need dividing so we will split and replant to fill in some of the gaps elsewhere in the garden and next year the borders will be fuller and have more blooms to enjoy. As we work our way around the garden, we are always free to say hello and are happy to chat so please say hi, and if it's a nice crisp winters day please come out and enjoy the sun and all the busy birds finding worms and berries, amongst our tidy border and shrubs.



Terry and I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year, let's all hope for a bit of winter snow and some lovely frosty mornings.



Forthcoming Events



Speaker Freda Bates – Christmas Customs around the
World

Pippa & Marlyse playing the Violin & Flute

Yoga Class with Vikki

Residents Christmas Party

Princes Mead School Choir

Hannah Spires Christmas Show on the Saxophone

Westgate School Rock Choir

Kings worthy Primary School, Singing Christmas Carols

The Dower House Carol Service with Rev Lis Chase &
Helen Bradish

Lorna & Olga Therapy Dog Visit

Sarah Hobbs Christmas Show

Holy Communion Christmas Service

Matrons Christmas Tea Party with Drinks

New Years Eve Drinks Party & with Matron & Celia

THE HISTORY OF THE MINCE PIE



One should eat a single Christmas pie, every day,
from Christmas eve until the 12th night!

In the Tudor period they were rectangular, shaped like a manger and often had a pastry baby Jesus on the lid. They were made from 13 ingredients to represent Jesus and his disciples and were all symbolic to the Christmas story. As well as dried fruit such as raisins, prunes and figs, they included lamb or mutton to represent the shepherds and spices (cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg) for the Wise Men.

It was only later, post Reformation, that the mince pie adopted a round shape.

A Tudor Christmas feast would include several different types of pie. The pastry crust of a pie was called a coffin and was often made just from a mixture of flour and water and used mainly for decoration. Small pies were known as chewets and had pinched tops, giving them the look of small cabbages or chouettes. The earliest reference to a small mince pie as a 'minst pye' rather than a chewet occurs in a recipe from 1624, called 'For six Minst Pyes of an Indifferent Bigness'.

It's hard to know exactly when meat stopped being included in the mince pie. In the Medieval and Tudor period, the meat of choice for a mince pie was lamb or veal. By the 18th century it was more likely to be tongue or even tripe, and in the 19th century it was minced beef. It was not until the late Victorian period and early 20th Century that mince pies dropped the meat and had all fruit fillings (albeit with suet).

Even today there are traditions associated with mince pies. When making the mincemeat mixture for the pies, for good luck it should be stirred in a clockwise direction. You should always make a wish when eating the first mince pie of the season and you should never cut one with a knife.

We all ask the question where did mince pies get their name?

The reason mincemeat is called meat is because that's exactly what it used to be: most often mutton, but also beef, rabbit, pork or game. Mince pies were first served in the early Middle Ages, and the pies were quite sizeable, filled with a mixture of finely minced meat, chopped up fruit and a preserving liquid.

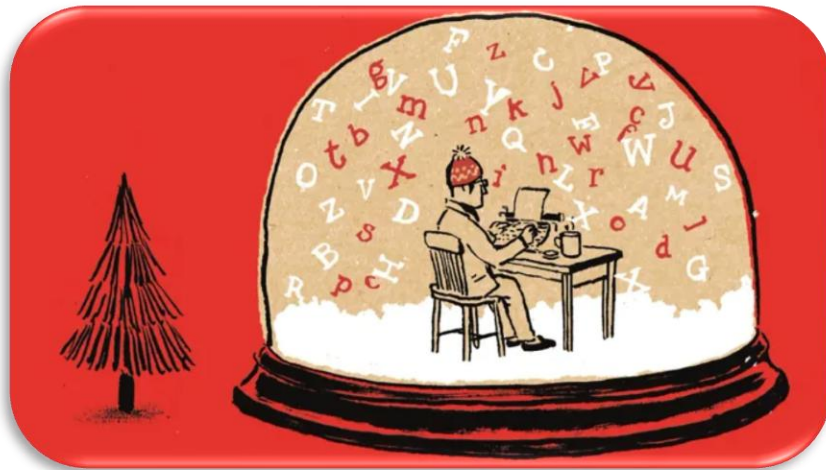
Why do we only eat mince pies at Christmas?

Mince pies were originally made to celebrate Jesus. They were oblong in shape to represent the manger that Jesus slept in as a baby and have a 'pastry baby Jesus' carved into the pastry.

How many mince pies are eaten in the UK?

If you love mince pies, then you're not alone. In fact, the UK eats nearly 800 million mince pies each year.

A CHRISTMAS POEM WRITTEN BY A RESIDENT



Baubles packed in boxes, stuck back in the attic
Shut away for yet another year
Christmas with the family was really quite traumatic
Who said it was the season of good cheer?

But now it is all over I can see the funny side
Of all their little quirks and funny ways
There were a few bad moments when I thought of cyanide
But that was in my alcoholic haze

Auntie May and Uncle Fred arrived on Christmas Eve
Mum and Dad had come the day before
By Christmas morning I was wondering how soon they could leave
I felt already I could stand no more

Mum was in the kitchen making loads of her mince tarts
Auntie May was making cups of tea
The kids were in hysterics 'cos of Uncle Freddie's farts
And Dad had knocked the fairy off the tree

In the midst of all this mess I dropped the turkey on the floor
Which didn't do its skin a lot of good
To make things worse, my Mum had caught her finger in the drawer
And dropped her blood on all the Christmas food

Then they all beetled off to dish out tots of warm mulled wine
And left me in the kitchen on my own
With them out of the way I found that everything was fine
I always work much better on my own
But things did not work out so well, the turkey wouldn't cook
I'd got the timing right this time, I know

I opened the oven just to have another look
And found the gas was sputtering on 'low'

CHRISTMAS POEM CONT.



So, two hours later awake them up from their repose
We'd all imbibed a pretty fair old bit
And as Dad carved the turkey a strange smell passed by my nose
I realised what I'd done and threw a fit

For them beneath the parson's nose, I saw a plastic bag
With giblets in for everyone to see
How could I have forgotten them. I felt my shoulder sag
And everyone turned round and looked at me

'Now there's a thing', said Uncle Fred, 'that should improve the flavour
A bit of turkey liver should be good'
I said, 'I am so sorry' and my voice began to waver
I'd tried so hard with all the Christmas food

'Let's have a drink', said my old man. 'And I propose a toast
To my dear wife, the cook, my better half
She's really done us proud and has produced a splendid roast'
And we finished dinner with a right old laugh

And then we all sat down again to listen to the Queen
'Oh, isn't she lovely' said my Auntie May
I looked around at all of them and, as is their routine
They'd nodded off, and they were well away

I guess it's pretty much the same with families everywhere
We like to keep to customs that we know
It's nice to see them all again and show them that we care
But really quite relaxing when they go

And every year as Christmas looms, I'll say the same old thing
And probably continue to complain
Then I'll relent and come the day, I'll soon be in the swing
And get our Christmas going once again.

Birthday fun!

Mrs Foulds received an unusual birthday gift from a member of her family.

During the summer The Dower House held an open day with Mill Farm Cottage Animal Experience. Mrs Foulds loved stroking and holding the rabbits and therefore thought it an ideal occasion to have the Rabbits come into the home. She absolutely loved it!

Along with a homemade birthday cake and lots of staff members singing happy birthday she said, "it's the best birthday I've ever had"!!



Tea Tasting Session

We all love a cuppa tea; however, do we ever try something new! Our tea tasting session compiled of 8 different teas. Each was judge by its look. Was it dark, orange, yellow? Then by smell. Was it fruity, strong, weak no smell? And finally, by its taste. Scoring each one as we went. The conclusion! We were all in Favor of the Red Berry & Flower had a great look, smell and taste.



Making Christmas Wreaths

In the build up to Christmas we thought it would be a good idea to make some Christmas Wreaths. Our team of volunteers enjoyed pulling up their sleeves and rolling out the dough. We found it quite difficult to make the dough long enough to make the wreaths due to its elasticity. Here are our final creations before baking. In our next craft session, we will paint the wreaths enabling residents to hang in their rooms.



Wreaths are said to represent the wheel of the year. This correlates with modern-day reasoning to hang a wreath outside across each of the seasons. The word 'wreath' is said to come from the old English word 'writhan', 'to twist', as in a circle or wheel.



The circular shape, with no beginning or end, symbolizes eternity, everlasting life, or the endless nature of God.

WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER

Every Monday at 10.30 Knit & Natter with our ladies from Inner Wheel

Every Tuesday morning Keep Fit

Monday 1st 3pm Its time to put up the Christmas Decorations, do come and join me!

Tuesday 2nd 3pm Final day for Decorations

Wednesday 3rd 11am Yoga session with Vikki

3pm What the papers say

Thursday 4th 3pm The Word Game

3pm Games of Scrabble & Rummikub

Friday 5th 10.50am Princes Mead School Singers

3pm Freda Bates 'Christmas Customs around the world'

Tuesday 9th 11:30am Keep fit with Matron

2.15pm Kingsworthy Primary School Children Singing

Wednesday 10th 11am Advent reflections with Helen Bradish

3pm Christmas quiz

Thursday 11th 11am The Word Game

3pm Visits to Winchester Christmas market (weather permitting)

Friday 12th 11am Games of legs

4pm Lorna & Olga Therapy Dog room visits

MONDAY 15th 6pm CHRISTMAS PARTY

Tuesday 16th 2pm Westgate School Rock Choir

3pm Room Visits

Wednesday 17th 11am Yoga with Vikki – Last session

3pm CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE WITH LIZ AND HELEN

Thursday 18th 11am The Word Game

3pm Hannah Spires playing Christmas Tunes

Friday 19th 11am Games

3pm Sarah Hobbs Christmas Show

Monday 22nd 3pm Pippa & Malyse (Violin & Flute Duo) Christmas tunes

Tuesday 23rd 3pm Brian Budden Christmas tunes of the Piano

4pm A CHRISTMAS TOAST WITH CELIA & MATRON

Wednesday 24th 11am The Word Game

Thursday 25th Christmas Day Lunch Celebrations with Ellie & Celia

Monday 29th 3pm New! Jonathan Prag playing the Guitar

Tuesday 30th 11am Keep Fit

3pm Afternoon Chats

Wednesday 31st 11am Holy Communion

3pm New Years eve celebrations with Matron & Celia. Join them for Fizz & Nibbles