

The

HONITON

Flyer

GRATIS

WINTER 2025

THE **FREE AREA GUIDE** ABOUT HONITON **FOR HONITON**

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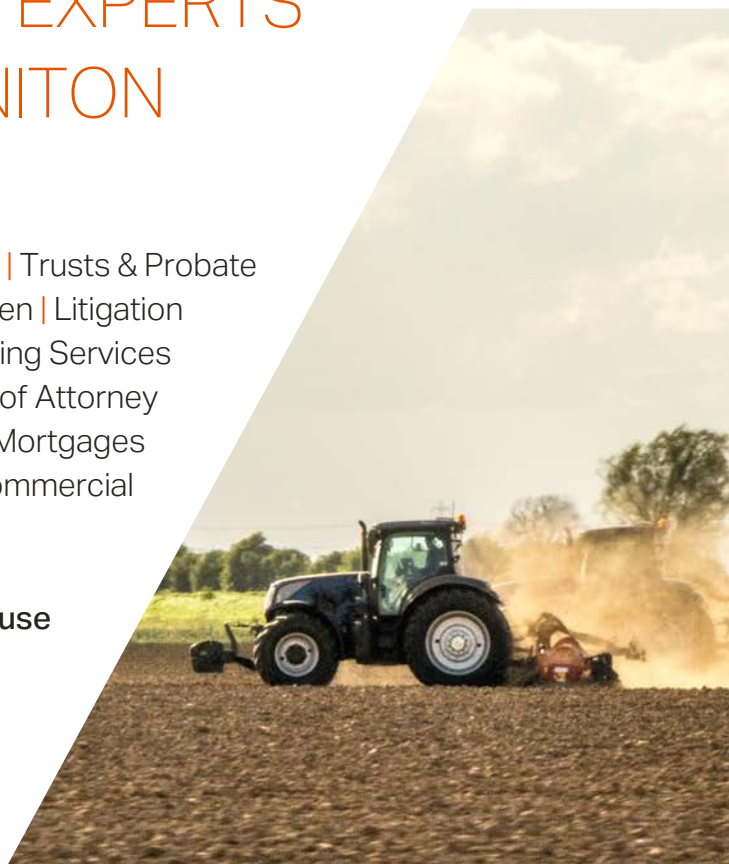
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Well, our photographer struck lucky on Honiton Carnival night, taking a photo of the winning float – Sid Vale with Havana Nights, which features on our front cover for Winter 2025

Here is a summary of main results from Carnival Secretary Karen Wilson:
email honitoncarnival@gmail.com

Best Overall Entry: HAVANA NIGHTS by Sid Vale CC stole the show with its electrifying choreography, music, and costumes.

Best Local Float: INTERGALACTIC CIRCUS by Next Generation JCC wowed with its futuristic theme and lighting.

Best Comic Float: DON'T FLY WITH US by Nunsford Nutters CC brought laughter and won the Royalty Award.

Best Under 16s Float: RODEO RASCALS by 1st Colyton Brownies led the Under-16s category.

Other news: On **Page 12** we have details from The British Legion of the 2 Remembrance Events in November: Looking ahead to 2026, find details of "Feast of Fiddlers" at The Beehive on 28 February, on **Page 18**, and other events at The Beehive on **Page 19**.

Find our useful maps of Honiton and surrounding area on **Pages 20 & 21**. On **Pages 22 & 23**, local historian Terry Darrant investigates the phenomenon of the high number of centenarians we have seen in Honiton! One remarkable lady – Edith Calvert – lived to the remarkable age of 111 years!

Honiton Lions have another update of their fundraising successes on **Page 26**. On **Page 28**, local musician "Yvonne" tells us about her musical experiences during 2025. The Friends of Honiton Station bring us good news of improvement in the local rail services, on **Page 30**. Then, Honiton "University of The Third Age" have a great article of their events for 2026, on **Page 32**.

On **Page 34** Honiton Town Council have provided us their report on the Christmas Lights event on Saturday 15th November.

We have a great selection of advertisers in this edition, offering a huge variety of products and services. I hope that you will give them a try, when you next need their products or services.

And a big "thank you" to all our contributors who write the articles, and help make The Honiton Flyer such a success!

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

Anthony Bucke. EDITOR. Friday 21 November 2025
Email: honiton@theantiquetourist.com

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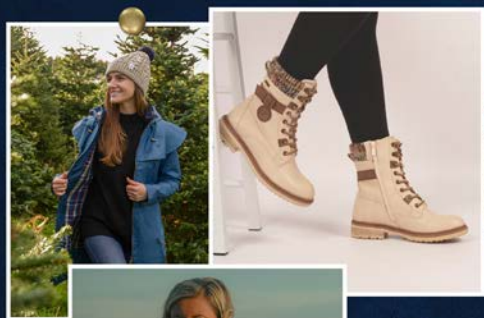
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HONITON REMEMBRANCE

On Sunday 9th November Honiton remembered after a hastily unscheduled change to the normal service. More than 450+ were squeezed into St. Paul's Church, to remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The foul weather sadly postponed laying wreaths at the war memorial and instead were laid at the church altar. As always, the youth groups of the town

were well represented in the congregation, along with many Veterans, Dignitaries and members of the public. Our thanks goes out to the Clergy of St. Paul's Church who let us in with only a few hours notice.

But on the morning of Tuesday 11th November Honiton returned to remember at the war Memorial in Honiton for a short act of remembrance.

Some 20 businesses took part in a Remembrance Shop window competition which was won by Brainwave in Lace Walk. With the Devon Air Ambulance in second place and Roger Hemming Estate Agents in third place.

The Royal British Legion has lots planned in 2026 so follow us on Facebook at @Royal British Legion Honiton



www.branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/honiton



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Festival of Snowdrops

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Garden Nursery and Café open 10am till 5pm Wednesday to Sunday. Admission £8.50 for adults, children under 16 free. Visit www.eastlambrook.com for full details.

photos courtesy of James Ingram



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What began as a one-off special concert in Nettlebed on Valentine's Day 1994 has grown into a much-loved annual tradition. Thirty-one years later, Feast of Fiddles continue to delight audiences with their trademark mix of virtuoso musicianship, infectious energy, and good humour.

This unique band of friends puts on a show of huge dynamic range – from gentle, haunting melodies to full-throttle folk-rock anthems – performed with passion and joy.

This year's line-up features an extraordinary gathering of talent: Phil Beer (Show of Hands), Garry Blakeley (Band of Two), Marion Fleetwood (Trad Arr, Sandy Denny Project), Mark Jolley (Banter), Tom Leary (Joe Brown), Simon Swarbrick (Merry Hell), and legendary drummer Dave Mattacks, along with long-time members Hugh Crabtree, Martin Vincent and Dave Harding.

"We've had a sad year following the tragic death of Ian Cutler in June and the retirement of Brian McNeill at the end of the Spring Tour. But, we go on!" says founding member Hugh Crabtree, who first brought the band together back in 1994. "Mark Jolley, who covered for Ian two years ago, has joined the band and an ever-reliable alumnus – Phil Beer – will also join us for



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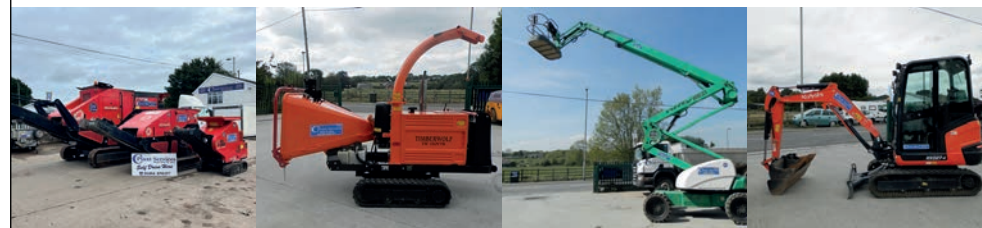
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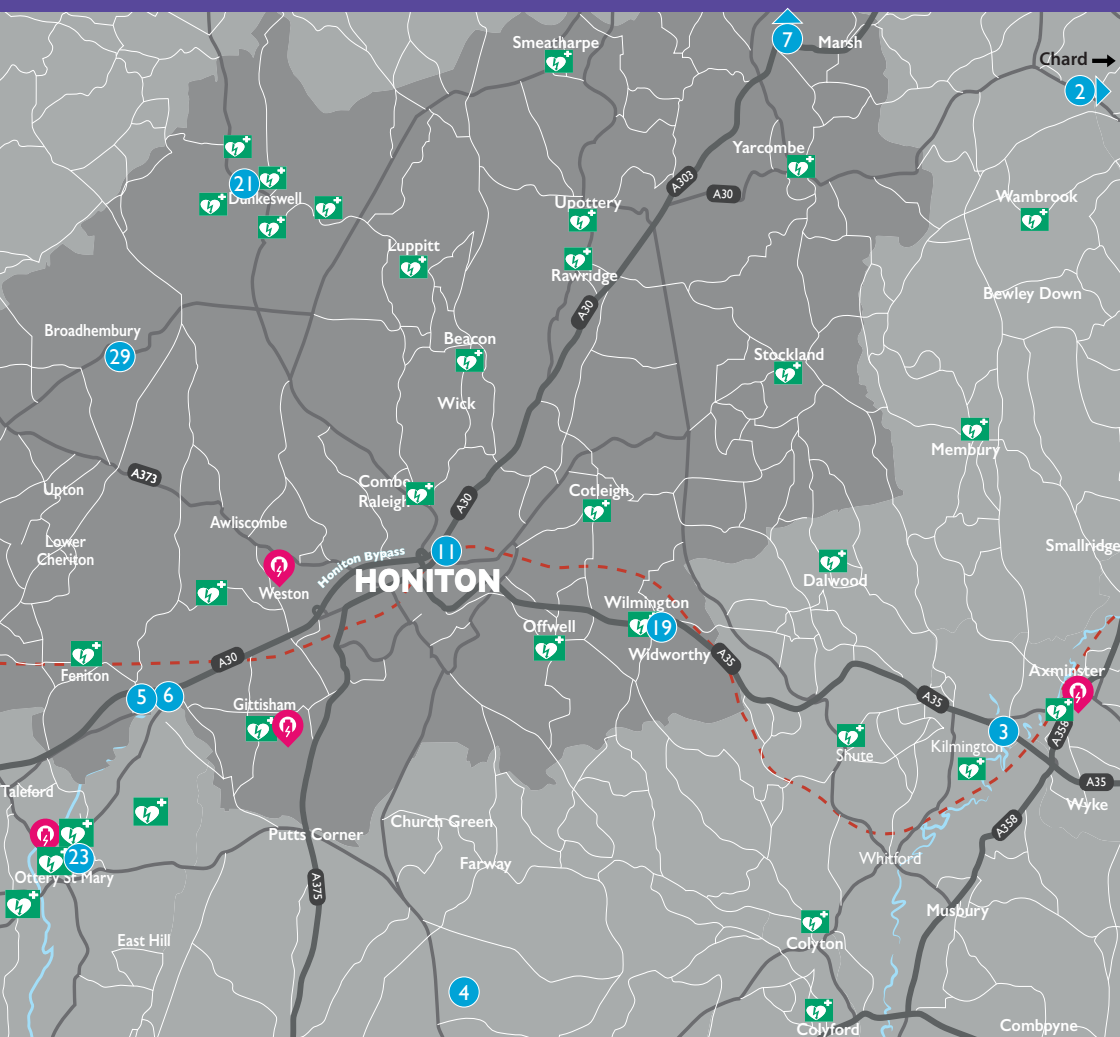
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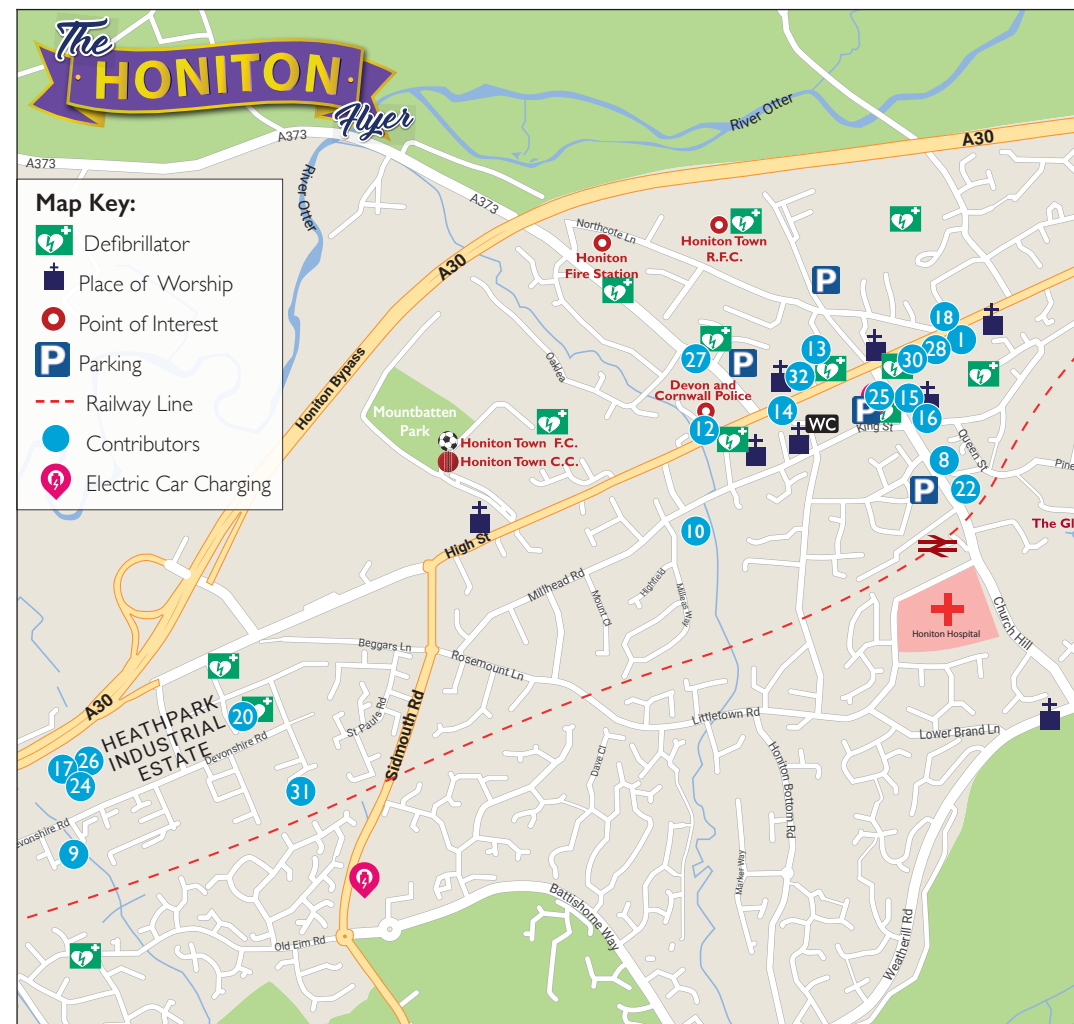
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THE FREE AREA GUIDE ABOUT HONITON FOR HONITON

Longevity in Honiton

Death, apart from taxes, is the only guarantee in life. Today the average life expectancy in the UK is 82, which many of us will be lucky enough to reach; a few less will be luckier and go beyond that age, however, very few of us will see our centenary. At the time of writing, according to *oldestinbriatin.org*, the oldest person in the country, and in fact the world, is super-centenarian Ethel Caterham, aged 116 and, perhaps more interestingly, the 67th is a 107-year-old resident of Honiton.

Over the past few centuries, one would have had a 'good innings' to reach their 70s, some made octogenarians and once or twice in

a generation a fortunate individual would reach their 90s. Whilst more common in modern times to become a nonagenarian, it is still a great rarity, even today, to get your telegram from the King, but going back in time there were people, in Honiton and the surrounding area, who outwitted the Grim Reaper for a lot longer than most.

Perhaps the most famous and oldest example of these is Thomas Marwood; physician to both Elizabeth I and James I. He travelled to settle in Devon at the age of eighty, marrying his second and third wives at the respective ages of 87 and 94. It was his son who built Marwood House and he died in 1617, at Honiton, at the grand old age of 105. Only a few decades later, in 1653, a certain John Hill was listed in the parish records as "aged 103 or thereabouts"! Whilst a Peter Pearce left this world aged 99 in 1695, the next Honiton centenarian was not to be seen again until 1788 when local man John Hussey passed. The next such example in the town was not until 1867 when Charlotte Pike died aged 104. Longevities such as these were so rare at the time that the clerk actually made a point of writing their age in the register when only the date of burial and name were usually required.

Obviously, such long lives were even rarer in the smaller communities of



*Mrs Mary Sprague
who died aged 102 years*

the surrounding villages, but there were still some notable individuals. Elizabeth Mitchell of Gittisham reached her centenary in 1830, and only a year later Buckerell put to rest Ann Marks who was an amazing 106. Mrs Marks' age was so unprecedented that the vicar not only re-wrote the age in words on the ledger but also added the comment "leaving more than 100 descendants".

Moving on into the twentieth century we come to Mary Sprague whose age, at the time, made her a local celebrity. She appeared on national newsreels, whilst being visited by the Mayor, Juanita Phillips, on her 101st birthday. Her secret to longevity was, as

she put it, "early to bed, early to rise and no 'faddy' feelings". A native of Kilminster, Mrs Sprague reminisced how she had walked the 25 miles from the village to Exeter to celebrate the taking of Sevastopol during the Crimean War in 1855. She passed away, in the town, the following year aged 102, being noted as "the only centenarian to have lived in the district within living memory".

The last and perhaps most astonishing was that of Devon born Emily Calvert, whose residency in Honiton actually broke national records for the town for a few months between 2004 and 2005. After losing her husband, in the 1960s, she moved to Honiton, from Northern Ireland, where she passed away on 13th January 2005 aged 111 at which time she was the oldest living person in England, having held the title since June 2004.

So is it **genes or regimes** that give one the potential to reach an age that Methuselah would be envious of? Presumably all you can do is either go for a jog, and knock that extra glass of wine on the head, or simply cling on to the fact that there was that second cousin on your mother's side who lived to be 96!

*Article by Terry Darrant
photos by Allhallows Museum*



*AI generated image of Thomas Marwood,
who died aged 105 years.*

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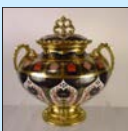
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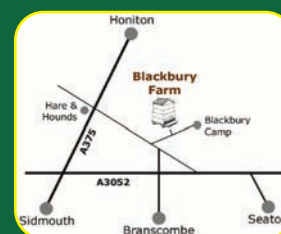


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AN UPDATE FROM HONITON LIONS

As Christmas is now near Honiton Lions have been continuing our charity work right through the autumn.

We were very proud to offer **£1,000 donation to TRIP**; which we presented on 21st October, as well as **£500 to Operation Rudolph**.



If there are any charities, community groups in Dunkeswell, that are looking for funding, we are actively looking for such proposals as a thank you to the people of the village for their great support during our **annual raffle which raised over £2,000**. Simply send us a brief letter with a description of what your group does and what you would like the monies for and we will consider it.

Several of us visited Childrens's Hospice South West at Little Bridge House on 13th October and found it an amazing place that is definitely worth a visit. Afterwards we all enjoyed lunch at The Castle Inn at Lankey also well worth a visit if you are in that part of Devon.

Visit our website for More information www.honitonlions.org.uk/
Facebook: www.facebook.com/HonitonLionsClub/

We are fundraising for Devon in **Sight** and **Exeter Leukaemia Fund** at **Tesco**, Honiton on **23rd and 24th December** and we would greatly appreciate for any donations you can spare at this festive time



We will be holding **another barn dance in the New Year** so keep a look out on our Facebook page and website for more details.

We are also planning **another 'Mole Day'** so if you or anyone else has one of these skin blemishes that you'd like to get advice on all will be welcome: more details to follow.

As always if you would like to find out more about Lions Club International and in particular the Honiton Lions Club please give president **Brian Richards** a call on **01404 43738** or **07966 173828** or brian.richards@honitonlions.org.uk.



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Sax-Yvonne – Saxophone with Soul

I am Sax-Yvonne - I play my saxophone out and about, usually Honiton and Sidmouth. I'm sure many of you reading this will have heard me, plenty will have stopped for a chat.

2025 started with a busking fundraiser, in memory of my brother, Rick, who had Motor Neurone Disease. I raised money for the MND association. The people of Honiton were very generous and donated £83. I plan on doing this again in January 2026. If anyone would like to join me, let me know.

I have become a regular busker in Honiton on Tuesdays, entertaining the market goers and stall holders, either outside the bed shop, or St Paul's Church. I love chatting with people in between tunes, and have formed connections with some of the stall holders, local people, and workers.

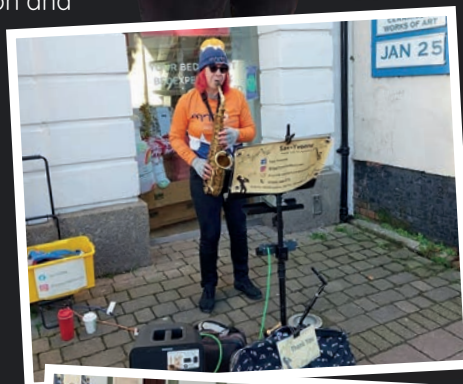
I played in St Paul's Church for their musical thanks. It was great. Such an attentive audience, you could have heard a pin drop. They all joined in with percussion and a sing-along at the end. It was a joyful event, followed by a well earned cream tea.

I have played in a local care home, Sunningdale House, and a nursing home. These sessions are transformative. The residents benefit immensely from the music. It helps reduce anxiety, builds focus, memory, concentration, mobility, social interactions, and more. More local care homes are getting in touch for me to come and play. I offer three different options, tailored to the suitability of the setting.

I have performed at private events; birthdays, anniversaries, in pubs, at outdoor events in East Devon. I am playing at an art exhibition launch in Sidmouth in November, and have a couple of local Christmas bookings. There is always room for more.

I enjoy playing here and feel a valued part of the community.

For any booking enquiries, or any comments, please email Yvonne.Saxophone@outlook.com



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The Friends of **HONITON** Station

WHAT MAKES A BETTER RAILWAY?

Here at The Friends of Honiton Station one thing matters above all: working with the railway community to help create a more successful railway. But that supposes that everyone agrees what that looks like. More frequent trains obviously, but that counts for little if they are cancelled or delayed.

Our friends at the campaign group Railfuture were brave enough to suggest what makes a successful railway. First and foremost is reliability. It is ironic that the reduced timetable introduced in August has actually been more reliable, with fewer delays. When the service returns to normal, everyone wants to see the same reliability maintained.

South Western Railway has worked hard to ensure there are enough seats on our trains. With most now running with six carriages, even peak time services are much improved.

Fares need to be value for money and simpler to understand. That said, we all need to do our bit as well.

The number of times I have stood behind people queuing at Honiton to buy a ticket, and the staff member has asked if they have a Railcard, only to hear them say no. Any local travelling wholly within Devon and Cornwall can buy a Railcard that gives them 30% off all journeys after the morning peak. And there are a wide range of National Railcards offering the same discount. The Senior Card for older travellers is great value.

Passengers want to see journey times cut, better links between trains and buses, and easier connections when changing from one train to another.

Customer service is crucial, and here is where Honiton really hits the spot. Customers expect service to be helpful and efficient, with staff ready to go the extra mile to help passengers. Our staff at Honiton do that and more.

Nationalisation will soon bring those responsible for train and track back together, meaning the industry will be structured in a way that encourages people to work together, to put the customer first. But with that comes the need for renewed investment. We all know that money is



very tight at the moment. But investment in public transport is vital, to get people out of their cars, reducing congestion and cutting emissions.

As a perfect example, improving the line between Honiton and Exeter, which is supported by our local MP Richard Foord, local councils and a range of campaign groups including ourselves, would be a valuable investment in all our futures.



To read the latest issue of the Friends of Honiton Station newsletters, or for more information, visit www.friendsofhonitonstation.org.uk.

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Honiton u3a Learn, Laugh, Live

After a record-breaking 2025, Members of Honiton u3a are looking forward to kicking off the new year with a wide range of knowledgeable speakers and a record number of Interest Groups to choose from.

With over 40 Interest Groups, Honiton u3a's 330 members can select from a wide range of activities, from history, languages and nature appreciation, to walking, writing and wine tasting. There are book groups and a chance to learn and practise a wide variety of craft skills. Other groups cover music, art, card games and photography.

Groups like u3a provide friendship and the sharing of experiences which improve wellbeing, and help older people to live a more fulfilled third age.

Honiton u3a encourages its members to develop and share their interests, to try something new and to socialise with like-minded people.

The Chairman of Honiton u3a, Richard Spoerry, said: "Honiton u3a has enjoyed a very successful year with a record number of members and the establishment of new activity groups. We are always delighted to welcome new members."

The first General Meeting of 2026 is at The Beehive on Wednesday January 21st, when Alex Leger will give a talk entitled "Blue Peter: Working with the Military". Alex was a producer on the popular and iconic children's TV programme for many years, working with the legendary editor Biddy Baxter and many of the presenters who have

become household names.

On Wednesday February 11th, Honiton u3a will be welcoming Ian Williamson who will be talking about walking the length of Hadrian's Wall. A member of South Somerset Ramblers, Ian walked the 84 miles from Wallsend to Bowness over 5 days.

Doors open for these talks at 1.30 p.m. and the meetings start at 2 p.m. Honiton u3a warmly welcomes non-members to attend one of its monthly meetings, to sample what it has to offer and to meet members of the Committee and other u3a members.



To find out more about **Honiton u3a**, and how to join, go to their website: honiton.u3asite.uk

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CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS SWITCH ON

On Saturday 15th November, hundreds of excited townspeople flocked to Honiton Town Council's inaugural "Christmas Tree Lights Switch On" event. After the demise of the Honiton Chamber of Commerce earlier in the year, Honiton Town Council stepped in to ensure this popular town event would continue.

The fun kicked off at 4.30pm with carols from St Paul's Church choir to set the festive mood, followed by a visit from popular Disney princesses with some theme tunes sung by Lydia Bails. Townsfolk both young and old enthusiastically joined in all the singing.

This was followed by Honiton Town Band playing Christmas classics, as the excitement built. It was the ideal moment for some to pop across the road to visit the hot food stalls that attended for the evening.

At 5.30pm the new Town

Crier Caroline Kolek performed her cry, followed by the vicar Reverend Tracey Voysey blessing the tree. Honiton Town Mayor Andrew Pearsall announced the winners of the shop Christmas Window Display competition: runner up was 4 You From Me, with the top prize being scooped by newcomers to the High Street, Honiton Hardware with their fabulous snowy scene of Christmas bears!

The Deputy Mayor Lucy Wakefield then had the task of announcing the prestigious title of "Honitonian of the Year". This was awarded to Mark Rich who has spent the months since the demise of the Chamber of Commerce setting up Honiton Business Network (CIC), which currently has over 90 members. Mark also presides over the accounts for several local community groups as well as actively supporting the CUB and Honiton Carers Group.

Now it was time for the main event and with hundreds joining in the countdown, it was 3 - 2 - 1 and our "Honitonian of the Year" pressed the button and illuminated our beautiful tree. At nearly 30 foot we think it's one of the best trees Honiton has ever had, and a big thank you to Combe Garden Centre for supplying it.

As the "oohs and aahs!" fell away there was a burst of music and a tinkling of bells which heralded the arrival of Father Christmas and his elves in their illuminated sleigh. Father Christmas took up residence in his specially built grotto and met all the queuing families, posing for photographs and handing out gifts to every child. Waiting children enjoyed the music and snow and we hope all left happy and feeling festive.

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