North Rode Newsletter

December 2025
January 2026

What's on in North Rode
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As we head into the festive season, in December we look forward to the Toy Service and our annual Carol Service which is guaranteed to put you in the Christmas mood. As the next newsletter won't be until February, this is a bumper edition with another historical article about the Railway in North Rode from William Cumberlidge and a fascinating account from villager Ron Barton on his life as an air traffic controller.

Happy Birthday!

We wish very many happy returns to Norman Bebington, who will be 95 on the 8th January 2026.

With Sadness...

We are saddened to hear of the recent passing of Michael Sefton of Bullgate Lane. Our thoughts are with his family.

The Toy Service

All are welcome at our Toy Service on 7th December at 11:15am. Donations of presents can be left in the porch or a church pew before the service.



Carol Service – 14th December

We hope that you are able to come along to our cosy candlelit carol service at 6:30pm on Sunday 14th December.

Everyone is welcome, young and old to herald in the Christmas Season and sing along to your favourite carols, played by our wonderful organist Geoffrey Knight. The service will be followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the pews.



Congratulation Will and Fathia

Shirley Tudor-Evans has just returned from Bali following the wedding of her son Will and Fathia who will shortly be coming over to spend Christmas at The Whittle with their son Olix. Friends and relations from the UK and the US flew over for the 2-day celebration and Helen Lever was one of the 50 who bravely took up the offer of paragliding on the morning before the ceremony! Shirley informs us that whilst she was tempted to take to the skies, common sense prevailed in the end and said she would leave that for the birds!





Christie Coffee Morning – Feb 4th

Get your 2026 New Year diary out! Winnie Bullock is organising a 'Cuppa for Cancer' coffee morning in aid of The Christie Charity in February. Please come along and support this worthy cause at Eaton Village Hall on 4th February – 10:30 to 2pm.



Knitting and Nattering

Fancy trying something new? Joan-Marie Williams is organising a North Rode Knitting/Crocheting group for anyone interested in meeting up. The aim next year is to make poppies for a display in the village. It will be open to both novices and experienced knitters or crocheters. If interested, please contact Joan-Marie Williams on williamsjoanmarie@gmail.com



The Rector's Letter December 2025

For many people, Christmas and New Year will be a time of mixed emotions. This year I have conducted more than thirty funeral services, and I know many families will be gathering around the dining table acutely aware of who is missing. Whether we are experiencing bereavement, illness, loved ones struggling with health challenges, or financial pressures, sometimes it's hard to "*keep calm and carry on*."

However, the central message of Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in the Bethlehem cattle shed, is the message of hope. Every Christmas Eve, and at carol services, we hear these words from St. John's Gospel, "*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness shall not overcome it.*" Sometimes, when we look at our personal circumstances and then look out at the wider world, sources of hope seem slim and beyond our grasp.

This year marked the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Recently, I found myself in conversation with an elderly lady who remembered Christmas Day 1940 during the height of the Blitz in London. As the bombs fell, she and her family sheltered in the tunnels of the underground alongside hundreds of other people. When I asked her what she could remember she replied, "*Mum got hold of a chicken, cooked it on a paraffin stove, and somehow fed eight of us, but the best bit was the music and dancing and everyone singing carols*!"

Christmas is a powerful reminder that hope shimmers all around us. It just doesn't always look like we expect it to look. Wishing you every blessing for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours ever, Colin

North Rode Services

December 2025/January 2026

Dec 7th Advent 2	**11.15 am Toy Service** Holy Communion (CW)	Led by: Sidesmen: Reading:	Revd Anne Freestone Shirley Tudor-Evans Bronwen Bebington Diane Lowe
Dec 9th Tuesday	**2.30 pm** Daintry Hall Nativity		
Dec 14th Advent 3	**6.30 pm Carol Service**	Led by: Sidesmen: Readings:	The Rector Bullock family TBA
Dec 21st Advent 4	**11.15 am** Holy Communion (BCP)	Led by: Sidesman: Reading:	The Rector Louise Jackson Blanche Royle
Dec 24th Christmas Eve	No service at North Rode	**Gawsworth**	**11 pm** Midnight Mass
Dec 25th Christmas Day	No service at North Rode	**Gawsworth**	**10 am** Holy Communion
Dec 28th Christmas 1	**10 am** Holy Communion (BCP)	**Gawsworth** Led by:	The Rector
Jan 4th Christmas 2 Flowers: Shirley Tudor-Evans	**11.15 am** Holy Communion (CW)	Led by: Sidesman: Reading:	Revd Anne Freestone Sharon Oldfield Mary Hobson
Jan 11th Epiphany 1 Flowers: as last week	**11.15 am** Holy Communion (BCP)	Led by: Sidesman: Reading:	The Rector Bronwen Bebington Anne Lever
Jan 18th Epiphany 2	No service at North Rode	**Gawsworth**	**10 am** Holy Communion **4 pm** Evensong
Jan 25th Epiphany 3 Flowers: Brenda Lomas	**11.15 am** Holy Communion (BCP)	Led by: Sidesman: Reading:	The Rector Lynn Petts Geoffrey Petts
Feb 1st Candlemas Flowers: as last week	**11.15 am** Holy Communion (CW)	Led by: Sidesman: Reading:	Revd Anne Freestone Anne Lever Charles Baxter

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http://www.northrodechurch.org.uk



North Rode Remembers

St Michael's was decorated splendidly for the Remembrance Sunday service on 9th November and well attended on the day. Hellen Watson from Hurdsfield led the service, which was punctuated by the crystal clear notes of the Last Post, played at eleven o'clock by Robert Heath on the bugle and followed by two minutes silence. Flags from the commonwealth were on display inside the church and complemented the many displays of poppies around the village and church, made by villagers and organised by the parish council, and the splendid 'Tommie' guards of honour made by Malcolm Lowe.







Marton School

Dear Friends

As we approach the festive season Marton School is full of excitement, preparation, and plenty of wonderful 'family' moments to share.

We are delighted to celebrate the success of our recent School Book Fair. Thanks to the fantastic support from our families and community, the fair generated an impressive 50% profit for the school. This means we can continue to invest in high-quality books for our classrooms and, importantly, for our much-loved Birthday Club, which ensures every child receives a special book to celebrate their big day. Thank you to everyone who helped make this possible.

Our Christmas preparations are now well underway, with children and staff busy rehearsing for our seasonal performances. The school is filled with singing, storytelling, and school feels very special indeed. We look forward to welcoming families to share in these magical moments very soon. We are also incredibly proud of our school choir who will be performing at the Congleton Christmas Light Switch-On. It's an honour for the children to take part in such a joyful community event, and we know they will represent Marton School wonderfully.

Our Friends and Family (PTA) is once again running the ever-popular Christmas Shop, giving children the opportunity to choose and purchase their own gifts for their friends and families. It's always a highlight of the school year and brings much excitement (and a few surprises!) to everyone at home.

Our Little Seeds Pre-School will be holding a special festive session on 3rd December, complete with a visit from Santa himself. We look forward to welcoming our youngest members of the community for a morning of Christmas crafts, stories, and sparkle.

As the term draws to a close, we would like to send our warmest Christmas wishes to all our parish friends, along with prayers for prosperity and good health in the New Year. Thank you for your continued support and kindness throughout 2025. We look forward to seeing you all again in January as we begin another exciting term together.

With warmest wishes from all @ Marton

Mrs Nevin Deakin, Headteacher

North Rode WI Report December

Secretary Pam Robinson writes

North Rode WI November Meeting

The November WI Meeting was opened by the President Diane Lowe and a welcome was also given to our WI Advisor Susan Leicester. Thanks were given for table flowers to Diane Lowe, for cakes by Jackie Spooner and Diane Lowe and for the Raffle by Pam Robinson. Minutes of the October Meeting were read by the Secretary Pam Robinson and approved.

The Christmas Lunch is to be held at the Legs of Man on Tuesday December 9th and payments for the balances were given to our Treasurer. Meeting at 12.15 pm for 12.30 pm. We are holding two Coffee Mornings in 2026, one in April and one in September. Volunteers for the Cake Stall etc will be asked for during the next Meetings. After the Business Meeting, Diane Lowe opened the AGM welcoming Members plus Susan Leicester. Jackie Spooner read her first Annual Financial Statement after our previous Treasurer Margaret Aitchison had moved away from Congleton. This was approved by the Members.

Pam Robinson Secretary read out the Committee Annual Report – it has been a very varied year. 2025 had been a difficult year as Margaret Aitchison had moved away, Sandie White had not been able to come to our meeting due to ill health and in September we lost Lillian Cellario, a long-standing Member of North Rode WI. The report was adopted by the Members. Diane Lowe thanked all the Committee Members for their hard work during the past year and presented the Secretary and Treasurer with some flowers as a thank you. Diane also thanked other members who helped in any way with the various WI jobs.

The Raffle prizes were won by various members. Pam Robinson presented Diane Lowe with the Competition Cup for 2025, and Hilary Trueman was second.

A vote was taken by Susan Leicester for the President and Diane Lowe was elected President for another year. After all the business members were able to enjoy a Fish and Chips meal plus delightful cakes and tea. The next Meeting is our Christmas Lunch on 9th December.

In January we welcome Tom Morrison of Berry Fresh Bakery who will be demonstrating making Jams and Chutneys. This Meeting is on Tuesday 13th January at 2pm.

All visitors are made very welcome to Eaton Church and Community Hall 2pm in the Winter Months and 7.30pm in the Summer Months.

North Rode Parish Council Report

Huw Williams
Chairman North Rode Parish Council

Cheshire Devolution The parish council was given an excellent summary of Cheshire Devolution's progress by Steve Purdham, resident in the village and Chair of the Cheshire and Warrington Business Advisory Board. The potential benefit for our region though additional funding was explained along with how as a region, having a Mayor will enable our region to compete for funds against other regions such as Greater Manchester. The election for Mayor will take place in 2027, alongide elections for Ward Councillors. It was good to see some villagers attend the meeting to listen to the presentation.

Well Renovation and Bulb Planting The renovation of Church Lane Well is almost complete following a working party organised by the Parish Council in early November. In addition, we have purchased daffodil bulbs and planted these around the village to improve our surroundings. Details and pictures are in the following article. We will now be concentrating on our plans for the Well Dressing next year at the end of August/Beginning of September and will be looking for volunteers to join our organising committee in spring 2026.



Cheshire East Consultation Cheshire East is looking to engage closer with town and parish councils and Cllr Williams attended a networking meeting with Cheshire East, covering a devolution update, budget consultation, enabling communities update and a transport consultation. Cheshire East are encouraging Parish councils to have action plans. Those of you who came to our last AGM will have noted that our aims for the coming year were outlined. We will be looking to gather feedback from residents on what you think that we as a parish council should be doing for the community in the future.

Polling Station We are discussing with Cheshire East the possibility of moving the North Rode polling station from Eaton back to North Rode. This is in part due to our village joining Bosley in moving to a different Ward to Eaton in 2027. Our new ward councillor will also cover Sutton, Langley, Wincle and Wildboarclough.

Precept The parish council voted not to increase our parish precept for the coming year. This means we have not increased our precept for several years and our precept is just about the lowest in the whole of Cheshire East. The precept is based on our predicted need and covers costs of the clerk and maintenance of defibrillators etc, and we take into account required reserves and bank balance. Precepts are reviewed annually and form part of your council tax. We do not own any property or land or provide any services.

Next Council Meeting
Our next parish council meeting will be held on Thursday 6th February, at Daintry Hall at 7:30pm. All villagers are welcome to come along.

NB: The original North Rode village sign has been used to create a Christmas version used on the front cover of this newsletter and also the 'North Rode at Christmas' image on the last page. We are considering producing Christmas Cards for next year based on this. These would be sold to raise funds for village events. If you would be interested in these cards, please let me know.

Well Renovation & Bulb Planting



In preparation of our first North Rode Well Dressing, now scheduled for August/September next year, renovation work was arranged by the Parish Council and carried out at our Well on Church Lane. The well was in a sorry state, filled with silt, obscured by growth and with a cracked main lintel stone. The well site and embankment were cleared, the broken lintel secured, and the silt removed during October. We were kindly offered a replacement lintel stone by Peter and Rose Brocklehurst of Ladderstile Farm.

On 8th November a small working party formed by Cllr Huw Williams, Cllr Mark Bullock, David Shaw and Ian Crewe undertook work to remove of the damaged stone and replace with the new lintel.







It was decided at the last Parish Council meeting to purchase a large sack of daffodil bulbs and plant these along Church Lane well bank and around recently installed village signs all around our parish. This will help improve the appearance of our already pretty village at springtime. The bulbs were planted up on 23rd November by Cllr's Bullock and Williams and their volunteered spouses Sue and Joan-Marie! We will have to wait until spring next year to see how well this went.





Ramblings of an Old Controller

By Ron Barton

I was born in 1946 a mile or two from newly opened London Airport at Heathrow and soon became fascinated by aeroplanes.I remember seeing the Bristol Brabazon when I was 4 or 5 years old. It looked enormous to me. As I grew up my interest in aviation developed and aged 17 and fed up with A levels I got a job as an air traffic control assistant.



I was based in the control tower at Heathrow and my first job was as a noise monitor.I enjoyed watching the planes and using radios and tape recorders to analyse the noise readings. I could see it was a bit of a dead end job if I wanted to progress so I applied for a posting to the air traffic control centre then situated at Heathrow. In a year or two I was encouraged to apply for promotion to air traffic controller.



I succeeded and went off to the College of Air Traffic Control at Bournemouth Airport. With my bright yellow licence I was posted to Manchester to begin the real training on the job. I started training as an aerodrome controller in the tower at Manchester controlling the runways and taxiways.One person did that job in 1969 now there are three.I got off to an auspicious start,the first aircraft I controlled at Manchester was a BEA Vanguard bound for Heathrow. Whilst taxiing out to the runway we received word that there was a bomb on board.It turned out to be a hoax but I thought “is this what it’s like to be an ATCO?”

Early on in my career I encountered the Red Arrows. They were displaying at Woodford aerodrome less than 5 miles from Manchester Airport and one of them went off course. The approach radar controller spotted this and told me to stop all departures. I incurred the wrath of a BEA Viscount captain when I told him to stop his take off run. As the Red Arrow Gnat shot over the runway in front of him he said “I see what you mean!” The next encounter was when they were to display at Barton aerodrome where they couldn’t land on its grass runway. They were coming in to land at Manchester to refuel and when on very short final approach the wind swung around 180 degrees. I warned them of this and they elected to go around but instead of doing it in an orderly way they proceeded to beat up the airfield at very low level while making red white and blue smoke before landing from the opposite direction.



I also trained to be an approach radar controller at Manchester which I enjoyed immensely. The amount of traffic in the1970's was nothing like it became later on but we had a lot of light aircraft to fit in with the commercial traffic which was a challenge. Light aircraft doing 90 knots ahead of jets that would fall out of the sky at that speed could be tricky.



Odd incidents stick in your mind more than run of the mill daily traffic and I remember a quiet Friday afternoon the day before the Woodford Air Show in the 70's. An RAF Buccaneer inbound to Woodford was encouraged by us to do a fly past at Manchester which he did along the runway at about 20 feet and 500 knots. Having really enjoyed this we asked Woodford if the De Havilland Mosquito inbound following the railway line from Crewe would like to do the same. I spotted him over Jodrell Bank and thought that he wasn't lined up to overfly the runway and soon realised that he was pointing at the control tower. He shot over the roof of the tower very close and very loud as our boss arrived in the control tower and shouted "who the hell organised that?"

In 1975 a control centre was opened on the fourth floor of the tower building where we relocated approach control to work alongside area or en-route control. I went back to Bournemouth to get my area control ticket and then spent many years doing all the disciplines in air traffic control. We eventually controlled up to 28000 feet from just South of Carlisle down to Birmingham and from Hull in the East almost to Northern Ireland and to the boundary with Dublin ATC. As traffic increased it became difficult to keep proficient in all the operating positions so I ended my 35 years controlling traffic on the airways around Manchester.



Emergencies were always fairly rare but I remember when training on approach radar having two aircraft calling Mayday i.e. an emergency. They were both running out of fuel having tried to land in the South of England in snowy conditions. On another occasion a BA Trident from Aldergrove to Heathrow did an emergency descent over Cheshire when a passenger suffered a heart attack, losing 24000 feet in one 360 turn on to final approach over Knutsford. The only major disaster while I was at Manchester was the British Airtours Boeing 737 which caught fire on its take off run. The controller in the tower who called out the fire engines was one of my best trainees.



When positioning an elderly Boeing 747 which had declared an emergency due to a suspected fire in the baggage hold, I had to instruct the Airbus ahead of him to go around. The pilot said "He's behind me why do I have to go around?" to which I replied "He's very fast and on fire". "Going around" was the response.

I ended my time at Manchester in 2004 after over 35 years there when I can honestly say I enjoyed nearly every minute. The camaraderie in ATC was great, you could feel the buzz in the Ops. room when it was busy and when it was quiet you could chat with colleagues who became your friends, although many conversations never got finished when the radio burst into life!

NB: Ron has lived on Church Lane in North Rode since 1987

North Rode Railway Station Recollections

Following on from the fascinating recollections of William Cumberlidge from his time as clerk to North Rode Parish Council, we now present further recollections from his work at North Rode Station, where he started work as a Junior Clerk and Messenger on 6th May 1914. These notes were found in parish council records. H. Williams

North Rode Station and District, 1914 to May 7th, 1962



Written by W. L. Cumberlidge – Clerk to the Parish
North Rode Station showing milk churns on the South Bound Platform, probably empty and awaiting collection

I was appointed junior Clerk and telegraph Messenger on 6th May 1914.

The following was the staff at the station in 1914.

Station master	G. W. Kennerley, Railway Station
Clerk	T Birch, Church Lane
Jnr Clerk and Messenger	W L Cumberlidge, Hurdsfield
Porters	J Kennerley, Bosley
Signalman	J Forester, Railway Cottages
Signalman	G Pickford, Railway Cottages
Ganger	W Pickford, Railway Cottages
Lengthman	T Davenport
Lengthman	H Trueman
Lengthman	W Knott



The monthly takings at the Station were between £600 and £700 and the following was mostly the traffic that was dealt with:-

Milk Traffic

This was bought to the station from an area of about 3 square miles (parts of Bosley, Marton, Gawsworth, Buglawton and Eaton, an average of about 60 churns of milk each day was forwarded to Manchester and Longsight, each farmer having his own milk retailer. During the summer months it was not unusual for telegrams to be sent asking for no milk to be sent the following day – the telegram being delivered from North Rode Station by the Messenger Clerk. Other traffic was dealt with as follows: -

Silica Rock

From Ashton and Holmes quarries. 4 horses and carts were employed to bring the rock to the station, they made 4 journeys a day and each load averaged 2 tons, making a daily total of 30 tons which was forwarded to Oughty Bridge and Wadsley Bridge in the Sheffield area. The rock was ground into a paste and used for the lining of furnaces.

Peat Moss

Peat moss sidings between North Rode and Macclesfield came under the supervision of North Rode Station. The peat was ground into a powder and forwarded to Liverpool for Dan Wilkie & Co and Elder and Fife Ltd, who shipped it to the Canary Islands for the use in packing grapes, tomatoes and bananas. The traffic was seasonable and was forwarded for about six months of the year – an average of 3 wagon loads per day.

We also forwarded Polo ponies to various parts of the country and always has one or two horse boxes on hand. This was caused by Mr Midwood having two Polo Stallions. We also forwarded cattle to Leek and various other places, also potato traffic to F Tallon at Leek.

Inwards Traffic

We received a fair amount of granite chippings for the repair of roads, and this was carted by various farmers to the place where the roads were being repaired. We also received 2 or 3 wagons of cattle for Mr W Ford, Cattle dealer (Bramhall Hill Farm), the cows having come from Ireland. Traffic also received included Ale grains, Cattle feeding food for the various farms in the district.



North Rode was the junction for the Churnet valley Line (now closed), and we had a lot of passengers changing for this line, which ran to Leek, so they could attend Leek market, which was held every Wednesday. After the 1923 strike, the traffic began to fall off, the last farmer to send his traffic by rail was Mr A Clayton of Rode Hall Farm.

When the station was closed the receipts did not average 10/- per day and the loss was caused by road transport. Looking back to 1914, it is with great regret to think that the Station had to be closed down as North Rode had no future use for it.

I trust that what I have written will let future generations have some idea of what the life in the village was like. It had it's own cricket team which was paid for by Mr Midwood, who presided at The Grange. The estate was owned by the Daintry family but they sold it and most of the estate was bought by the farmers occupying the farms with the exception of Yew Tree Farm, which was bought by the Cheshire County Council and converted into three small holdings.

Above, you will see a photograph of North Rode Station (which is now pulled down) also a photograph of the Station master, Mr G W Kennerley. I should like to thank Mr H Kennerley for the photograph of the station, he gave me the negative to have an enlargement made, also Mrs Kennerley who sent me the photograph of Mr G W Kennerley and informed me that it was one I had taken when I worked at North Rode Station.

Things to Do Nearby This Christmas

Carol Service at the Inn
Harrington Arms, Gawsworth
Mon 22nd December

Harrington Arms Gawsworth
Carol Service
In aid of East Cheshire Hospice
Monday 22nd December 7.30pm
ALL WELCOME!

Festive Lights
Biddulph Grange Gardens
6th to 28th December



On 6, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27 & 28th Dec
Book on the National trust Website

Twilight Market
Macclesfield Market Place
11th December – 2-8pm



Christmas Tree Festival
St James, Gawsworth
6th to 14th December

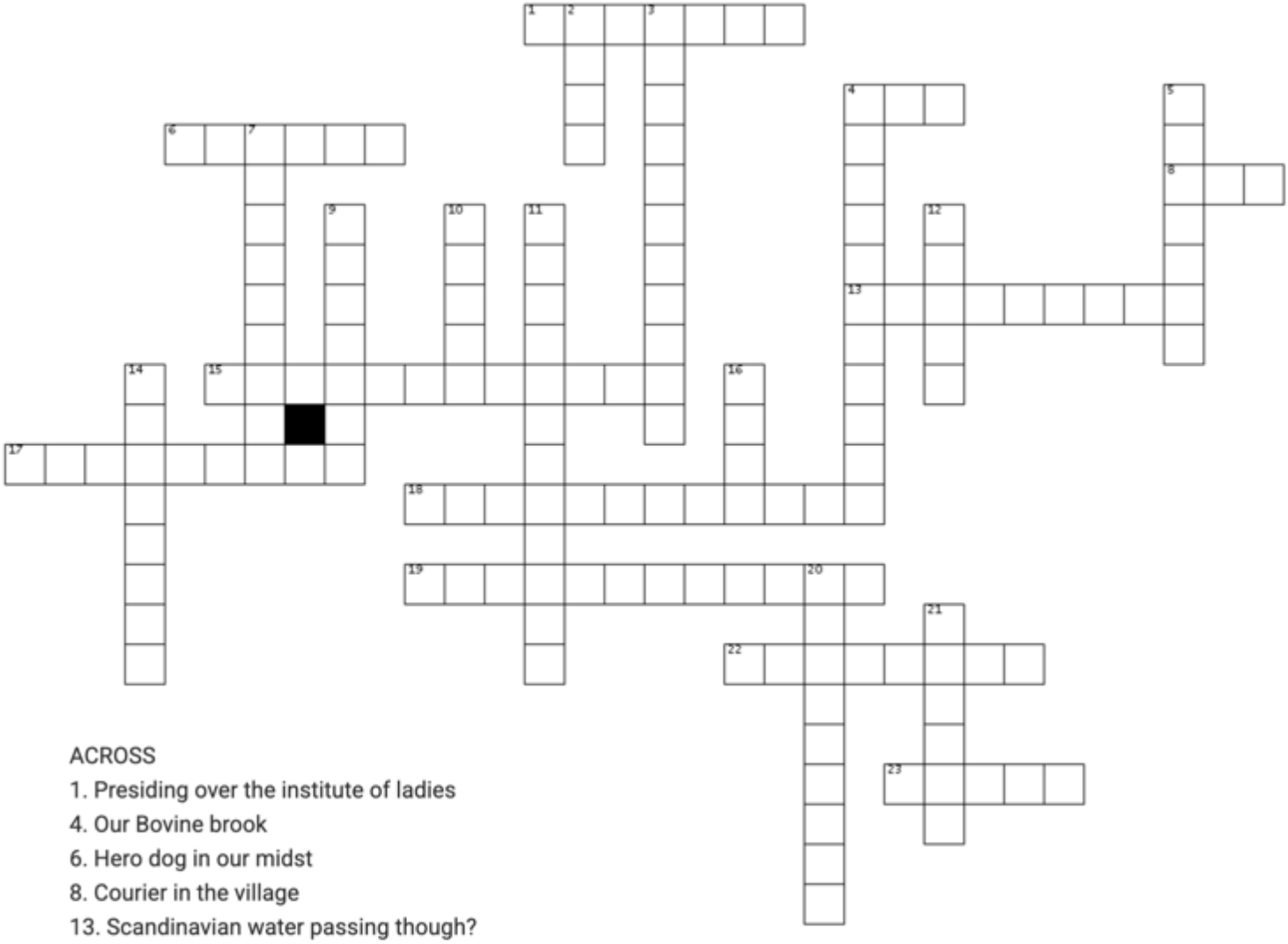


Elf Hunt
Brereton Heath Nature Reserve
13th December to 4th January
9am to 4pm



A Merry North Rode Christmas to you All!

Here's a test of your local knowledge of North Rode people and places and perhaps also how well you read our newsletters! The answers will be posted in the Church at the Carol service and in the next newsletter.



ACROSS

1. Presiding over the institute of ladies
4. Our Bovine brook
6. Hero dog in our midst
8. Courier in the village
13. Scandinavian water passing though?
15. Your children may well go here to learn
17. 1914 Station Master
18. Maybe bulls but definitely boats here
19. It was our only pub
22. Ever present hill in our sight
23. Nearest neighbour

DOWN

2. Domesday village name
3. Logs in abundance at this farm
4. Clerk with a tale
5. Valley of our past railway
7. Our Church's Saint
9. The original estate owner
10. There's 12 in this flight
11. Fireworks and lights on this hill
12. This many village signs at our borders
14. No place to put your money on this road, despite the name
16. Church Lane recent watery renovation
20. Nearby pub and farming implement
21. Big man from the Manor with his own carriage

