

Mendip Times

FREE

*Celebrating life on
the Mendips and
surrounding areas*

OUR
20TH
BIRTHDAY
YEAR!

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 8

JANUARY 2026



HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!

Local people, local history, local places, local events and local news

Supporting Families, Youth & Housing

As we begin a new year, there's no better time to step into a role that truly changes lives. Working in Early Years means shaping the foundations of children's futures.

EARLY YEARS IS NOT JUST A JOB, IT'S A VOCATION

Here at YMCA Dulverton Group, we believe every family should have the support they need to develop and lead more fulfilling lives. We recognise the lifelong impact we can have on a child's love of learning and how they view themselves and the world around them.

- Would you like to be the reason a child falls in love with learning?
- Would you like to join a team that turns play into purpose?
- Would you like to help tiny hands create big dreams?

You could be part of a child's journey of discovery, wonder and investigation. Helping shape the confidence they will carry with them for life. Early Years is a career filled with joy, creativity and purpose, where every day brings something new.

A snapshot into the impact our teams have had over the last 12 months;

- Served **160,294** meals to our children
- Changed **73,184** nappies
- Over **35,000** hours of care provided to children within our settings
- Created **4,165** daily posts and shared with parents
- Carried out **4,236** detailed observations to track children's learning and development
- Carried out **140** 2-Year checks.

If you think you would like to join our progressive and nurturing team, or have a chat to find out more information, please contact Kelly Bowden via email: kelly.bowden@ymca-dg.org or telephone: **07702676715**



YMCA DULVERTON GROUP

Over the past 12 months, YMCA Dulverton Group has continued to serve our communities through its early years delivery, youth work, day camp programmes, housing and homelessness work and social enterprise. In each area of our work we believe in providing spaces where everyone feels they can truly belong, alongside positive opportunities for contribution. By adopting this approach we believe individuals will thrive and communities will be greatly impacted.

A highlight of a few of our stats over the past 12 months

- Provided **313** homes for individuals or families at risk or experiencing homelessness every night in our Housing work
- Provided **256** people out of the job market with an opportunity to re-engage through training
- Safely observed over **21,000** sleeps for babies or toddlers.
- Provided over **75,000** occasions of support contact
- Drank over **100,000** cups of tea whilst having a chat about things that matter the most, to those we serve.
- And formed a new connection with so many of you.

We are extremely grateful for the support the local community show our work and would like to say a sincere thank you.

Should you want to find out more about YMCA Dulverton Group, our mission and values, please email info@ymca-dg.org

Wishing you, and yours, all the very best for 2026.

JOIN NOW!

Scan the QR code to explore what vacancies we have available.



Scan the QR code to view our settings on Daynurseries.co.uk and read our fantastic parent reviews.

Welcome

WE'VE been enjoying visiting Christmas events across the area, revelling in the warmth of communities coming together for the festive season.

We have photos from many, including the Mendip Christmas Fair, which raised more than £18,000 for Children's Hospice South West.

The wassail season starts in January to make sure there's a decent cider apple harvest - we can promise our full support! See our What's On guide.

Another Mendip tradition - caving - is fondly remembered by Maurice Hewins, who is finally hanging up his helmet at the age of 87.

The New Year will see the launch of a major new trade show at the Bath and West showground - we have a preview. Nick Green says 2026 will also bring fresh concerns for farmers about low milk prices.

Sue Gearing has a New Year walk overlooking Chew Valley and Blagdon Lakes. Jane Paterson reports on efforts to support a young rider injured in a fall.

With all of our regular contributors and features, may we wish you a healthy and happy New Year!

February 2026 deadline:
Friday 16th January
Published: Tuesday 27th January

Editorial:
Steve Egginton steve@mendiptimes.co.uk
Mark Adler mark@mendiptimes.co.uk
 Advertising:
advertising@mendiptimes.co.uk
Lisa Daniels lisa@mendiptimes.co.uk
 What's On listings:
Annie Egginton annie@mendiptimes.co.uk
 Accounts: accounts@mendiptimes.co.uk
 Publisher: **Mendip Times Limited**
 Coombe Lodge, Blagdon, Somerset BS40 7RG
 Contacts: For all enquiries, telephone:

01761 463888

or email: news@mendiptimes.co.uk
www.mendiptimes.co.uk



Design and origination by:

Steve Henderson

Printed by: Precision Colour Printing, Haldane, Halesfield 1, Telford, Shropshire TF7 4QQ

Copyright of editorial content held by Mendip Times Ltd. and its contributors. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the express permission of the Publisher. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the publisher or its associates.

Front cover: Former Wells firefighter David Grey and Bruce the dog at the Wells Santa Run. Photo by Mark Adler. See page 25.



25

Festive fundraising – helping the homeless

54

The golden age – exploring Mendip's caves



61

What the Dickens? – Fayre steps back in time

76

Top of the league – and celebrating 150 years!



Plus all our regular features

Environment	6	Wildlife Chris Sperring MBE ..	41
Farming Nick Green	10	Walking Sue Gearing	42
Crossword	12	Outdoors Les Davies MBE	44
Food & Drink	14	Gardening Mary Payne MBE ..	46
Arts & Antiques	20	Health & Family	56
History	24	Homes & Property	64
Charities	25	Riding Lucy Counsell	72
Business	26	Sport	74
Community	36	What's On	78

Nurture nature forever

with a gift in your Will

Somerset Wildlife Trust is working to protect the local wildlife and wild places you love both now and in the future.

A gift in your Will today could continue this work tomorrow and also inspire the next generation of wildlife lovers.

To find out more, please visit somersetwildlife.org/legacy or call Legacies Manager, Lucy Marsh on **01823 652441**.

If you have already pledged a gift to protect the wildlife on your doorstep, thank you.



**Somerset
Wildlife Trust**

Registered charity number 238372



**western
skips.**

Part of:



**pennys
waste
management.**

Don't just Skip it, Recycle it
this Christmas!

Booking available 24/7

Use code:

MENDIP5

For 5% off (*December bookings only*)

01761 241 387

www.pennysgroup.co.uk
info@pennysgroup.co.uk



Mendip to get a new lake!



An artist's impression

MENDIP Activity Centre has received full planning permission to construct a new purpose-built accessible watersports lake on its 250-acre site in Churchill. It says it marks one of the most significant developments in the organisation's history.

The lake will be created in a quiet section of the centre's open grasslands, designed to sit naturally within the existing contours, hedgerows and tree lines.

It says the project places a strong emphasis on accessibility, sustainability and environmental enhancement. The plans include a gently sloping accessible beach, extensive native planting, a wetlands area and hedgerows, all contributing to a measurable biodiversity net gain.

Once completed, the lake will introduce non-motorised watersports to the main site for the first time. Guests will be able to take part in kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, raft building and open water swimming.

David Eddins, CEO of Mendip Adventure, said: "For nearly 40 years, we've worked to make outdoor adventure accessible to everyone and this new lake takes that mission to an entirely new level."

John Turner, CEO of Visit Somerset, said: "This is a truly exciting development for Somerset's visitor economy and a shining example of how tourism, accessibility, and environmental stewardship can work hand in hand."

Christmas trees

THE Dorothy House Christmas tree collection has been running since 2017 and has collected 32,500 trees and raised more than £500,000 for the charity.

Registration is now open and will close at midnight on Monday, January 5th. Trees will be collected from Friday, January 9th until Sunday, January 11th in the following postcodes: BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4, BA11, BA12, BA13, BA14, BA15, SN11, SN12, SN13, SN14, SN15, SN16, BS31, BS39 & BS40. Anyone interested can register their tree.

www.dorothyhouse.org.uk

Hoard gets new home in Somerset



The Chew Valley Hoard

SOUTH West Heritage Trust is to receive a £993,345 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver an ambitious two-year project to celebrate the Chew Valley Hoard and mark the 1,000th anniversary of William the Conqueror's birth.

Thanks to the grant, a new gallery will be created at The Museum of Somerset in Taunton dedicated to the permanent display of the collection. The award will also support improved access and visitor facilities at the museum, housed in Taunton Castle.

Comprising 2,584 silver coins, the Chew Valley Hoard is the highest-value treasure acquisition on record and comes from the period of turmoil immediately following the Norman Conquest.

Communities will get their first chance to see coins in the South West at a special touring exhibition at the Roman Baths Museum, running from January to March 2027. From spring 2027, a special exhibition will open at The Museum of Somerset, offering the public a unique opportunity to explore the remarkable story of the hoard and its discovery.

The project includes a dynamic two-year community engagement programme featuring activities, exhibitions, learning opportunities and events that will open up wider public access to this remarkable archaeological discovery.

The project is timed to coincide with international plans in 2027 to commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of William the Conqueror's birth, highlighting the Norman Conquest and its lasting impact on the nation's history.

South West Heritage Trust Chief Executive Sam Astill said: "We are tremendously grateful to have received this support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, audiences will have the chance to explore this national treasure through an exciting and diverse programme of engagement activities.

"This award also signifies a major investment in the museum's future, helping us improve access, broaden participation, and ensure this remarkable collection can be enjoyed for generations to come."

For details, visit: swheritage.org.uk

Nature's recovery



HEAL Rewilding, based at Witham Friary, is launching a fundraising campaign to raise £7,500 to support repeat habitat and species surveys, including in newly created wetland areas.

It says this will build scientific evidence of how rewilding boosts biodiversity. Aviva's Community Fund will match every donation – up to £250 per supporter – until January 6th.

The charity aims to establish 48 rewilding sites across England, saying it wants to give nature room to recover while creating places where people can reconnect with the natural world, learn, heal and be inspired to act.

Since buying its first site, the 460-acre former dairy farm at Witham Friary three years ago, it says the farm has undergone an extraordinary transformation, with wildlife returning at a remarkable pace.

Details: www.healrewilding.org.uk

Saving energy



A NEW initiative has been launched at Peasedown St John Primary School to help save energy. The school's eco-team has been researching where the building's electricity comes from and exploring different ways that the school can save energy.

Their first action has been to create posters which will be placed next to light switches, reminding everyone to switch off and save.

The school is also paving the way in reusable energy use with their ground-source heat pump and solar panels.

Details: www.psjprimary.co.uk Facebook @psjprimary

Encounters with nature

A COLLECTION of personal wildlife stories and insights gathered over half a century has been published by Tony and Faith Moulin from Yatton.

Their new book is illustrated with over 100 colour photographs and 31 memorable and poignant encounters on the North Somerset Levels and Moors in Yatton and Congresbury.

They were inspired by voluntary work on the Strawberry Line, which ultimately led to the foundation of Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group (YACWAG) – a registered charity and community organisation that has been evolving for the last 26 years.

Chris Sperring MBE has written the foreword to *Encounters with Nature* and says that Tony and Faith are the “beating heart” of YACWAG.

Despite the present challenging times for nature, the book has a consistently positive theme showing how action to support nature leads to hope for the future.

Tony said: “We wanted to record and share our memories and



insights about our local natural environment.

“Working with others we have learnt so much and achieved so much and our hearts are full of gratitude for the richness YACWAG has brought to our lives.

“The fact is, however, that what we have done here in Yatton and Congresbury could be replicated anywhere. We hope this book will be an inspiration and bring hope to all who read it.”

It costs £12.95. See Chris Sperring, page 41.

Details: send name, address and phone number to moulins68@icloud.com

Community award for woodland



Lisa and Oliver Frost, charity trustees with their certificate

A CHARITY which runs Combe Hill Wood, near Street, will start 2026 on a high after winning silver in the Royal Forestry Society Excellence in Forestry Awards.

Ninesquare Trust had entered in the Community Woodland of the Year category and its 25 hectares are open to the public. The trust was established in 1995. Its aims are to benefit the people of Street and the surrounding area, with a commitment to supporting projects with a particular focus on education and the environment.

Combe Hill Wood boasts a diverse range of habitats. The wood has been a mixed site of woodland, wood pasture, grazed grassland and scrub for several hundred years with trees of all ages and very many species.

It also sits on the Polden Way, a signed, off-road footpath of around six miles, which runs right through Combe Hill Wood and beyond.



The woodland boasts several stunning views over the surrounding countryside

For details, visit: www.combehillwood.co.uk

Ancient woodland under threat



(Photo courtesy of Chris Davies)

AVON Wildlife Trust says development proposals in the North Somerset Local Plan threaten the future of critically important sites for nature. It is objecting to the current proposals and is urging the council to re-think its approach.

North Somerset is facing unprecedented development pressures from housing development and associated major infrastructure.

The trust says in the current proposal, more than a quarter of the identified housing capacity has been earmarked for Green Belt land, which it says poses a huge risk to nature's recovery across the region.

Chief executive, Leah McNally, said: "Avon Wildlife Trust is working with communities, farmers, landowners, and partner organisations to secure nature's recovery across the region.

"We believe that it is possible to have development in harmony with nature, but the draft North Somerset Local Plan does not currently meet this requirement.

"The UK Government is currently failing spectacularly on its manifesto commitments to protect nature and the housing quota for North Somerset is yet another setback and an undoubted challenge for the council."

The trust says one site that will be affected is Weston Big Wood, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) managed by the trust. It says under the current proposals, a development of 500 houses would be built within critically important buffer zones that were put in place to protect it.

It says the ancient woodlands have developed over centuries and are now amongst the most fragile and rare of all landscapes in the country.

It is part of the Gordano Valley nature reserve stretching from the Severn estuary, through Portbury Wharf Nature reserve, along the Gordano Valley to the Somerset Levels and Mendips and is of "national strategic environmental importance".

Do foxes suffer sour grapes?

MY home is close by the wooded slopes of Mendip, from where I have heard the unnerving cries, barks and shrieks of foxes throughout November, December and into January. Though sounding horrific this is normal behaviour.

Foxes are crepuscular being about usually at dawn and twilight. They are searching for a mate, defending their territory or creating a new territory in which to bring up a family. The gestation time is 52 days, so cubs are born in March or April with an average of four or five cubs.

Foxes are very territorial and within their territory have several temporary sleeping and hiding places called lairs, but to give birth they build more substantial dens that have several entrances for safety.

The cubs (kits) stay in the den for about three weeks usually in March feeding on milk. In April and early May they start to emerge and explore together around their den.

Between four and six months the cubs are taught hunting and hiding skills whilst still living in the family group. Once the cubs are about two months old the mother will have to leave them at



dusk or dawn to hunt for food, sometimes in broad daylight, and this is when trouble comes for fox and poultry keepers.

Their distinctive black turds or scats can be seen around poultry

houses. Foxes are completely opportunistic looking for an easy meal. Maybe an owner has forgotten to shut up the poultry. Jumping a six-foot fence is no problem and foxes can squirm through pig netting.

Fortunately, they are omnivorous eating a wide variety of foods such as small mammals like mice, rats, rabbits, garden birds and their eggs, insects such as spiders, beetles and earth worms plus fruit and nuts in season and carrion

With such availability of food, the fox is reluctant to be out in daylight unless it is desperate to feed fast growing cubs. My photo shows this. First at about 9.30am the fox is looking out for danger but then decides to enter the goose house. They are already out. In this case the fox was unlucky.

Despite this threat through May and June especially I have a respect and liking for foxes. They have been persecuted relentlessly for many years, so their numbers have declined by almost 50% in rural areas.

This is because of loss of habitats, a big loss of the rabbit population through disease and the indiscriminate killing of cubs and foxes by various legal (and illegal) means such as shooting, trapping in certain snares, blocking dens and poisoning.



There are no strict laws protecting foxes to encourage biodiversity as for badgers and deer (there is a close season) yet badgers have killed more chickens at my home than foxes. They are so strong. They can break down doors and pop holes.

People often say that foxes kill all the hens they see and then leave them. I'm not sure. More likely the fox intends to return, drag the chickens away to store underground for times of shortage but he/she was possibly disturbed. They are unlikely to use up energy just for fun!

It seems sad that foxes and their cubs may be killed all year

round. They are protected from abuse and cruelty by the Wild Mammal (Protection) Act 1996, but it must be difficult to enforce. Meanwhile many foxes have found more food and safety in urban areas.



There is much folklore concerning foxes. This is perhaps because foxes until recently were a common sight in the countryside. A traditional name for a fox is Reynard a name first used in medieval times. It means "strong in decision".

In the medieval story, "Reynard the Fox" is depicted as a sly, amoral and self-seeking character but is still a sympathetic hero whose cunning is a must for survival. The story revolves around this cunning and deceitful fox.

He stands trial for a series of offences against other animals. He is intelligent and resourceful but also stands as a moral lesson against the consequences of deceit and the importance of honesty.

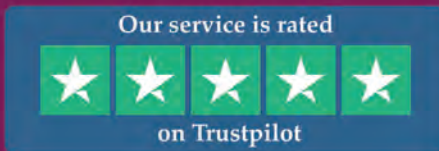
My title began when I wondered what the expression "sour grapes" meant. It means disparaging something that one cannot attain. The expression comes from one of the ancient Greek fables of Aesop "The Fox and the Grapes" and is about a fox that cannot reach some grapes.

Instead of admitting defeat or asking for help, he announces that they are sour anyway.

DIANA REDFERN

We Are Main Agents For Big Brands

As an award winning independent travel agent, we offer the widest choice of holidays and are proud to be a main agent for many incredible brands.



VOTED 'THE BEST TRAVEL AGENT' IN THE SOUTH WEST & WALES

01749 671660
18 High Street,
Wells, BA5 2SG
wells@milesmorgantravel.co.uk

**miles morgan
travel**
www.milesmorgantravel.co.uk

01225 486 800
8-9 New Bond Place,
Bath, BA1 1BH
bath@milesmorgantravel.co.uk

The Russets

Care Home at Sandford Station

Set within the beautiful and tranquil grounds of the Sandford Station retirement village sits The Russets, a care home offering personalised care within an atmosphere of warmth and kindness.

- General nursing care
- Specialist dementia care
- Comfortable, spacious rooms with en-suite facilities, WiFi and air conditioning
- Easy access to beautiful secure gardens
- Dedicated clubhouse for activities and entertainment

To find out more please call our Admissions Team on 0117 919 4270. Sandford, Winscombe BS25 5AD
www.stmonicastrust.org.uk/russets



St Monica Trust

Registered Charity 202151



Low milk prices causing concern



With **NICK GREEN**

NOW is the time of year many farmers start planning for the next 12 months. Autumn sown arable crops are already in the ground and growing but there is still room for “tweaking the inputs”. For grassland farmers relying on grass for feeding their livestock now is the time to think about what fertiliser they might need for the coming season, how many acres of grazing, silage or hay they need to feed their animals and how much land they might want or need to set aside for nature.

Farms vary enormously and those farmers responsible for their land understand what it is capable of producing given an average year. In and around Mendip there is a wide range of land types and topography which influences what farmers can do.

If you compare the lush alluvial fields of the Wrington Vale with the harsher areas of the top of Burrington Combe they are two very different land types. The fields in the Wrington Vale will grow enough high quality grass to feed a high producing dairy cow an acre per year.

The land at the top of the Combe would barely feed a quarter of the same sort of cow. Indeed, the land is so exposed and barren, you wouldn't even try and keep a dairy cow in this area. This is

why we see free ranging ponies and low input beef cattle grazing these areas. They make very good use of the lower quality and lower yielding grasses.

One big issue for dairy farmers to consider about their grassland inputs for 2026 is how much they are likely to be paid for their milk. This influences what they can afford to do when producing feed for their cows.

To put this in context, a year ago, dairy farmers were being paid about 45 pence per litre for their milk with some making minimal profit but the majority just breaking even. As of January 1st, many dairy farmers are being paid less than 35 pence per litre and unlikely to be making any profit at all.

Just as any other business, farmers are always looking at their cost of production and how they can reduce it. Fertiliser and the cost of applying it is always something any non-organic farmer considers. This year, if the milk price stays as low as it is now, many will stop using fertiliser altogether.

This might reduce the cost of production in the short term but it also means the farm won't have enough feed to cater for all their animals and some will be culled early. It seems we are entering the trough of a dairy farming cycle with little likelihood of it improving in the first half of 2026.

Whilst we are part of a global economy a lot of the reason for low milk prices in the UK is as a result of the lack of processing facilities. Perhaps those who buy the milk from farmers and the Government need to take a longer term view just like farmers to enable a secure future for our domestic food supply.

Nick Green is Farms Director for Alvis Bros Ltd based at Lye Cross Farm. As well as the business, he is involved with a number of local and national farming charities.

Cattle returns to common



CATTLE are now to be found back on Felton Common near Bristol Airport, nearly 30 years since cattle and sheep were regularly seen there exercising the ancient rights to graze.

A spokesman for the commoners said: “The reintroduction of cattle to Felton Common using virtual fencing technology is important for a number of reasons.

“Some of the ancient limestone grassland has been swamped by bracken and brambles in the absence of cattle making parts of the common virtually inaccessible and presenting a significant wildfire risk with the build-up of dead bracken fuel load.”

It's not clear how this might affect Bristol Airport's runway expansion plans, which would involve siting landing lights on the common.



RH WINDOWS

BESPOKE JOINERY SPECIALISTS

THE CHEW VALLEY'S LONGEST
ESTABLISHED WINDOW
COMPANY WITH A REPUTATION
BUILT ON QUALITY AND
SERVICE

FOR CONSERVATORIES,
ORANGERIES, WINDOWS AND
DOORS IN HARDWOOD, UPVC
OR ALUMINIUM

www.rhwindowsltd.co.uk



rhwindowsltd

Telephone: 01761 452171

John Hodge

SOLICITORS

...providing legal services locally since 1777

- Accident Claims
- Divorce, Family and Children
- Attorneyships and Court of Protection
- Employment Advice
- Commercial Property
- Probate and Estate Services
- Conveyancing
- Wills, Trusts and Tax Planning
- Dispute Resolution
- Debt recovery

"Large enough to know what they are doing but small enough to care" – a client



Tel: 0800 097 8611

www.johnhodge.co.uk | e-mail: mailbox@johnhodge.co.uk

YATTON | WEDMORE | WESTON-SUPER-MARE | CLEVEDON | BRISTOL

Update from Tessa Munt MP for Wells & Mendip Hills



Happy New Year! I'm looking forward to working with you and for you in 2026! I really enjoyed UK Parliament Week last month, visiting schools and youth groups across the area. I love talking with students, teachers and leaders and taking their questions. I look forward to many more visits in 2026 - both here and when schools and

other groups come on trips to Parliament.

On Budget day, my colleagues and I stood with farmers to protest against the family farm tax, and voted against it in Parliament - along with several other proposals which simply won't work for local residents. I'll continue to press Government to drop their unfair taxes which will have a devastating impact on residents and businesses in this area. As ever, if you have any concerns or anything you'd like to talk to me about, please write, call or come and see me. I'll be at the following locations:

Monday 19th January from 09:30 to 10:30
at Congresbury Community Café

Friday 23rd January from 08:00 to 09:00
at The Mendip Pantry, Chewton Mendip

Friday 23rd January from 10:00 to 11:00
at The Market Kitchen Café, Churchill

Friday 23rd January from 11:30 to 12:30
at The Coffee Bank, Winscombe

Friday 23rd January from 13:30 to 14:30
at The Note Warehouse, Yatton

Friday 23rd January from 18:00 to 19:00
at The Brewer's Arms, Banwell

Saturday 24th January from 09:00 to 10:00
at The Bluebird Café, Wedmore

Saturday 24th January from 11:00 to 12:00
at The Hive Craft Café, Shepton Mallet

Saturday 24th January from 13:00 to 14:00
at The Lamb Inn, Axbridge

Friday 30th January from 08:00 to 09:00
at Edelweiss Café, Cheddar

Friday 30th January from 11:00 to 12:00
at The Hub Café, Village Hall, East Brent

No appointment is necessary - it's first come, first served. If you can't come to meet me, I'll come to see you.

I know that for many, the transition into a new year can be difficult, and the cold weather and dark evenings linger heavily. However the new year affects you, I wish you peace and happiness for 2026.

Thank you.

TESSA

You can contact me:

Call: 01934 440639 (answerphone outside office hours)

Email: tessa.munt.mp@parliament.uk

Post: Tessa Munt Freepost (you won't need a stamp!)

The Mendip Mindbender

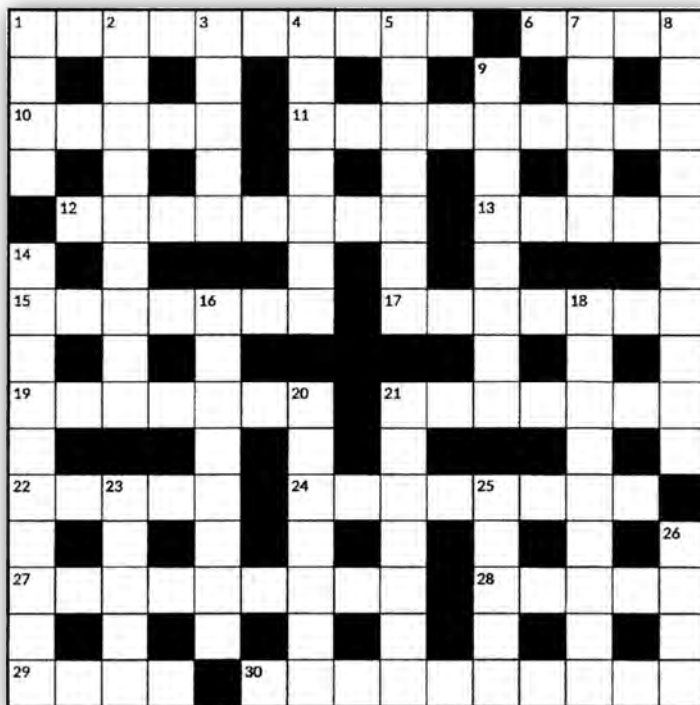
ACROSS

- 1. Clearly something for the New Year (10)
- 6. Give up without starting from scratch (4)
- 10. Susan tickles middle for a lark (5)
- 11. Legendary Kings Arms endlessly set in stone (9)
- 12. Indian's radio not working (8)
- 13. Where Howerd was once upset (5)
- 15. Common flower found near Tobermory (7)
- 17. Unfortunate mishap with Hotel in village (7)
- 19. Lad gone astray somewhere in Ireland (7)
- 21. Champ with a hundred in attendance on Mendip (7)
- 22. Vegetables around beginning of recipe bears fruit (5)
- 24. Smooth car arriving at home of Cidermaker (8)
- 27. Special delivery (9)

- 28. Half-a-dozen disappearing from inconsequential hearing (5)
- 29. Sounds like one's blown in from Scotland, perhaps (4)
- 30. Wild hair, seller is outrageous individual (10)

DOWN

- 1. Wander (4)
- 2. Predicament (9)
- 3. Clear (5)
- 4. Musical effect (7)
- 5. Exotic blooms (7)
- 7. Forbidden (5)
- 8. Aggravation (10)
- 9. Winter road hazard (5,3)
- 14. Old Somerset District Council (10)
- 16. Highly pleasurable (8)
- 18. Imprecise (3,2,4)
- 20. Italian dish (7)
- 21. Essential (7)
- 23. Church passage (5)
- 25. Islamic edict (5)
- 26. Slight (4)



By Fairlight
Cryptic Clues are in italics

This month's solution can be found on page 74

JOHN MARTIN HOLIDAYS

Tel: 01761 417629

www.johnmartincoachholidaysbath.co.uk
Email: info@johnmartincoachholidaysbath.co.uk

<p style="text-align: center; color: blue;">Landlover's Cruise Llandudno</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: blue;">26 Feb - 2 Mar 5 days - £545</p> <p>Stay at the superb 4 star Tynedale Hotel & enjoy a fantasy cruise visiting 'Jamaica' 'Greece' 'Germany' 'Thailand' & with themed dinners, entertainment each evening, plus so much.....</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: purple;">Easter on the Isle of Wight</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: purple;">3 - 6 April 4 days - £449</p> <p>Staying at the 3 star Royal Esplanade Hotel in Ryde and visiting Osborne House, Queen Victoria's favourite residence. Also includes Sunday Lunch & Hot Cross Buns</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: green;">Killarney & Ring of Kerry Ireland</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: green;">19 - 25 April 7 days - £849</p> <p>At the 4 star Killarney Towers Hotel, discover the stunning southwest coast of Ireland, also includes Dingle Peninsula, Lough Leane Cruise, Jaunting Car Ride and live hotel entertainment</p>
<p style="text-align: center; color: purple;">Secrets of Buckinghamshire</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: purple;">8 - 11 May 4 days - £425</p> <p>Bletchley Park - Hughenden Waddesdon Manor Discover these often overlooked secret places, all have their own impressive stories and a special place in our country's history</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: orange;">Cantering Around Cambridgeshire</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: orange;">14 - 18 May 5 days - £599</p> <p>From the 4 star Belfry Hotel discover Newmarket and unique National Stud Farm, Imperial War Museum Duxford, historic University City of Cambridge and its Botanical Garden</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: blue;"><u>All holidays includes</u> Dinner, Bed & Breakfast Excursions Coach Travel</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">NB. Single rooms not available on all holidays</p> <div style="background-color: #e0f0ff; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">2026 Holiday & Day Trip Brochures Available Now</p> </div>



Galhampton Shop & Country Store

Animal Feeds and Bedding
Timber Supplies
Tools | Hardware | Gardening
Workwear | Logs and Gas
Local Food | Home Essentials

Open 7 days a week
Mon-Sat 7.30am – 5.30pm | Sun 10am – 4pm
01963 440464

*Family-run, rural country store
on A359 between
Castle Cary and Sparkford*

Fir Tree Business Park, High Road,
Galhampton, Somerset, BA22 7BH
sales@galhamptoncountrystore.co.uk



SHOEMAKERS MUSEUM

Museum, Café and Shop
Open daily 10am-5pm

Step inside a brand new museum celebrating 200 years of shoemaking. Telling the remarkable story of Clarks, the stories behind our favourite shoes, the Somerset people behind the brand, and the global impact they created.

Join our team of volunteers!

Make your 2026 resolution to take a leap and be part of a wonderful team of volunteers. Offering a warm welcome to visitors, varied roles helping in the galleries, gardens, education and events. If you feel you have a few regular hours to offer get in touch.

27 January: Meet the Team Day

Come and meet the team and discover more.

Find out more: shoemakersmuseum.org.uk

Email: hello@shoemakersmuseum.org.uk

Shoemakers Museum, Clarks Village, Street, BA16 0BQ





With KATY BEAUCHAMP

January – a time for comfort food

If ever there was a month requiring some recipes that are reassuring yet offer a tasty twist to liven the palette and the senses then January certainly fits the bill.

POTTED GARLIC PRAWNS



These pots of deliciousness are great served with toast

These are a cross between a prawn cocktail and a paté to enjoy with toast! You could describe them as a prawn “mocktail”.

METHOD

Mix the prawns with the yoghurt, tomato and chilli sauces, half the lemon zest and juice and press into individual dishes. Gently melt the butter with garlic and rest of the lemon juice and zest. When cool pour over the prawns, leave to set in the fridge and serve with toast or crackers.

INGREDIENTS

(Serves four)

- 250 gms chopped cooked prawns
- 100 ml plain yoghurt
- Tbs tomato sauce
- Tbs chilli sauce
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 130 gms butter
- Tablespoon chopped garlic
- Salt and pepper
- Handful of chives or dill to garnish

ONE TRAY SAUSAGE BAKE



A warming one-tray bake

This is a one-tray bake that makes a quick and easy supper. Note: I cooked mine in a thick ceramic dish and it took forever, so I advise a roasting tray instead!

METHOD

Put all the vegetables and sausages in a roasting tin and give it a mix and season. Add the apple sauce and mustard to the gravy and give a good mix and pour over the sausages. Cover with foil and bake in the oven at 180°C for 45 minutes. Remove the foil and carefully try to move the sausages and potatoes to the top of the dish. Bake uncovered for a further 29-30 minutes and add the green beans, cheese and cranberry sauce.

INGREDIENTS

(Serves four)

- 600g potatoes chopped into wedges
- 150g chopped carrots
- 200g chopped leeks
- 8 sausages
- 300mls gravy
- Tbs apple sauce
- Tbs grainy mustard
- Handful cooked green beans

FOREST FRUIT SHORTCAKE



Shortcakes that are delicious hot or cold

METHOD

Combine all the filling ingredients in a bowl and set aside (there’s no need to defrost the berries).

Mix the shortcake ingredients together to make fine breadcrumbs and then squash them to form a dough (I used a splash of milk to help mine along). Press half the mixture into a tray, so it’s about 1cm thick, prick with a fork and bake at 180° for 20 mins.

Remove from the oven and spread over the berry mixture, pick pieces from the rest of the dough and blob all over the top and then back into the oven for a further 15-20 mins. Delicious hot or cold!

INGREDIENTS

(Makes eight slices)

- For the filling**
- 400g frozen forest fruits
- 3tbs cornflour
- 60g sugar
- 150g jam (any type of berry will do)
- FOR THE SHORTCAKE**
- 220g butter
- 120g sugar
- 320g plain flour



NEWS FROM MYRTLE FARM

We hope you all had a wonderful festive season and found time to enjoy a cider or two by the fire. As the year comes to an end, we're looking ahead to 2026.

THATCHERS COMMUNITY ORCHARD PROJECT

This year we will be giving away 500 apple trees to community groups across the country. Now in its sixth year, our Thatchers' Community Orchard Project is looking for 50 organisations doing great things in their neighbourhoods. Each group will receive 10 apple trees, enabling them to sow the seeds of their own community orchard.



Martin Thatcher says, "These orchards offer a place for communities to come together, to learn, to share, to connect with wildlife and reflect on the world around them, all while contributing to biodiversity and creating habitats for wildlife. That's something my family and I truly value, and we love that we can share that with others."

If you think you and your community could benefit from planting, growing and tending to a small orchard, why not apply? Applications open on 26 December 2025 and run until Monday 2 February 2026. Applying is easy – simply go to our website and fill in the application form.

THATCHERS TALENT OPEN DAY

Get inspired and join our growing apprentice family. Come along to our Talent Open Day on Saturday 14 Feb 2026 to find out more about our apprenticeship opportunities here at Myrtle Farm.



Learn how our cider is made, meet the skilled apprentices working in a variety of roles across the business, and speak to the training providers and Talent Team who will be on hand to answer your questions.



TO FIND OUT MORE, SCAN
OUR QR CODE



From our family to yours, we wish you all a very happy 2026.

EST. 1904
THATCHERS
— THE FAMILY CIDER MAKERS —

Thatchers Cider Company LTD, Myrtle Farm, Sandford, Somerset, BS25 5RA
Tel: 01934 822862 Visit: www.thatcherscider.co.uk



STAY | FLY | FISH

Cobbs of Cheddar and Winscombe invite you to the historic Dolaucothi Arms - the perfect place to escape

All rooms en-suite from £80 a night B/B
Evening meals available

Explore the forests, mountains and coast

Book a bird of prey experience or guided fishing trip



All enquiries: 01558 821435



No. 1 • HIGH STREET • CHEW MAGNA



KELLY'S RIB-EYE WINS TASTE OF THE WEST GOLD!



Mobile: 07878 241104

Shop: 01275 332417

 kellysbutchery



Located at: -
Chew Hill, Chew Magna
BS40 8SB

Come and discover our range of exotic animals and learn some amazing facts along the way.

December 25 opening times
10am to 4pm Tuesday to Sunday
CLOSED from 25th Dec 25
REOPEN on 3rd Jan 26
January 26 opening times
10am to 4pm Wednesday to Sunday



Wednesday's 12-8pm
MID WEEK ROAST
£9.95

Friday's 5-8pm
FISH or STEAK
MIX & MATCH 2 FOR £28

Thursday's 5-8pm
PIZZA or BURGER
MIX & MATCH 2 FOR £20

Sunday Lunch
12-4 pm

LIVE MUSIC 10th JANUARY 2026

Tables can be prebooked on 07711 893964

Use Our Restaurant without paying admission to the park

10% Off Main Meals ~ Tuesday to Saturday with this advert
Offer ends 31st January 2026



Queen Street Deli Wells Limited wish all their customers a very happy New Year and very best wishes for 2026.

Queen Street Deli has been in existence in various forms for over 32 years. It has become one of the cornerstone shops in Wells, going from strength to strength with its aim to provide quality deli products. Call in soon to see our selection of artisan cheeses and local produce! Mel, Lydia, Sarah, Bridget, Tracey, Maddie & James are always happy to help or advise.

14 QUEEN STREET • WELLS • SOMERSET BA5 2DP

WILD FOOD

New Year leftovers!



With
ADRIAN
BOOTS

PICTURE this. Christmas is all but done, you have eaten all the mince pies and the last of the chocolates (even the dark ones), watched the same Christmas movies again and the decorations are finally down. The place looks bare in comparison and to add insult to injury, it looks bare outside too. The middle of winter is a notoriously tough time for finding wild food.

So at this time of year I tend to forage inside - for stored/preserved ingredients! There is more than frozen turkey leftovers to consider, so how about a spot of boozy or indeed alcohol-free creativity with a forager's store cupboard twist?

All of these drinks follow the same basic principles. Add ingredients to your selected bottle of spirit, a few tablespoons of sugar and give it a good shaking until all the sugar disappears. Leave it for as long as you can (at least three months) then decant (and strain if needed) the liquor:



1. Blackcurrant and mint vodka: Frozen Blackcurrants or a dollop of blackcurrant jam, dried or fresh mint if you have it, a drop of mint flavouring/dash of Crème de Menthe if not.
2. Honeynut whisky: Nooo, not the single malt! Only use the blends. 1-2 handfuls of bashed (unsalted) mixed nuts, four spoons of honey. No sugar needed.
3. Dried fig or date sherry:

Leftover sherry from trifle making? Just add chopped figs or dates, the combination produces an interestingly jammy fortified wine. We call it "FIGJAM" because I'm very pleased with myself for creating it.

4. Dried apply brandy: Cut up plenty of dried apple rings or apple shavings, add a dash of Balsamic vinegar, dried sage, and plenty of sugar with this one.

5. Quince jelly gin cocktail: Known as "The Quinsy" because of what it does to the back of the throat. Add a glug of cider vinegar (trust me) to gin and a nice dollop of quince jelly. Serve with a sprig of rosemary, ice, cherry on top.

So there you have it, what better way to start the New Year than by using up what might otherwise be discarded or forgotten Christmas leftovers? I now have to think of what to do with the leftover Turkish delight. Hmm . . .

Adrian Boots is a Landscape Ecologist and expert forager running wild food forays, events and activities. Please visit: www.hedgerowcottage.co.uk for more information or email him at: hello@hedgerowcottage.co.uk

GARDEN FOOD

Tales from a smallholding



With
KARIN
SHAW

HAPPY New Year to all. For those reading this in January, I hope everyone had a lovely Christmas.

We were due to spend our Christmas Day with my son, daughter-in-law and two grandsons. My son and I have this wonderful arrangement where I grow Christmas dinner and he cooks it.

So, on the menu was goose from this last year's hatching, our Dexter beef, sausages and bacon for pigs in blankets made here from our pigs, as were the ham and paté for tea.

Of course, all the vegetables came from the smallholding right down to the horseradish for the sauce!

January is the month I set aside for "cleaning". The greenhouse gets a good inside brush and wash down, as do the pots and seed trays. The polytunnels likewise get a good clear out and clean and the raised beds inside are topped up with well-rotted manure (kindly supplied by the Dexter



Food for now and the future

cows!)

I clean and sharpen the gardening tools. It is so much easier once work starts in earnest to have the tools ready to tackle the jobs.

Mind you, there is inevitably the wheelbarrow that comes out of the shed with a flat tyre!

Some vegetable growers would be looking to pop garlic and early broad beans in the beds towards the

end of the month, but down here on the moors the water table is too high and past experience has shown that the seeds just rot.

I therefore start all the early items off in pots in the greenhouse and plant out a bit later when the ground is drier. I do seed early carrots, spring onions, radish and hardy salad greens in one of the polytunnels as the raised beds are well drained.

This results in a tasty crop by mid to end April. Such a treat after winter greens and last year's assortment of veg from the freezer.

Karin and partner Andy run a smallholding on the edge of Glastonbury. Karin can be found selling produce at Glastonbury Country Market, held each Tuesday (9.30m-12.30pm) in Glastonbury Town Hall

New Source Roadshow showcases Somerset's finest

HALE Events – the team behind leading regional trade shows such as The Source and Expowest Cornwall – is launching an exciting new event in 2026. The Source Roadshow will take place on Wednesday, February 25th at the Bath & West Showground, bringing Somerset's vibrant food and drink scene together under one roof.

This one-day event is strictly Trade Only, designed for the South West market and offering a must-attend sourcing opportunity for local buyers, chefs, hospitality operators, retailers, and distributors. With 100+ exhibitors, the Roadshow provides a dedicated space for businesses to connect, discover new products, and explore fresh ideas.

Despite Somerset's rich food and drink heritage, the county hasn't had its

own dedicated trade show – until now. The Source Roadshow fills that gap, giving cafés, restaurants, farm shops, delis, and catering businesses the chance to meet a fantastic mix of suppliers and producers, right on their doorstep.

And it's not just about food and drink – expect to find innovative equipment, EPOS systems and essential business services too.



From local artisans to major suppliers, the exhibitor line-up promises something for everyone. Confirmed names include Wyke Farms, Barber's Farmhouse Cheesemakers, The Newt in Somerset, Baboo Gelato, Somerset Spirit Co. and more.

"We're thrilled to bring a trade show to Somerset for the first time," says Mike Anderson, MD of Hale Events. "This event is about strengthening the local food and drink economy – connecting businesses with producers, suppliers, and support organisations. Visitors can expect inspiration, practical solutions, and expert advice, all under one roof."

Conveniently located for buyers from Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset and beyond, the Source Roadshow is free to attend for trade buyers.

For full details on visiting or exhibiting, go to sourceroadshow.co.uk

YOU'RE INVITED

FOOD | DRINK | SERVICES | EQUIPMENT | TRADESHOW

THE source

ROADSHOW

25 FEB 2026 SHEPTON MALLET

REGISTER NOW AT
sourceroadshow.co.uk

NEW FOR SOMERSET

Café's anniversary



THE Strawberry Line Cafe at Yatton Station celebrated its 15th anniversary with a cream tea for the group who originally set it up. It gives paid employment and work experience to young adults with additional needs.

THE RIVERSIDE INN CHEDDAR

Discover our new menu!

2026
is with us!

January blues?

Get out of the cold and thaw out with a plate of hot food and a glass of something warming and delicious!

Meet with family or friends, or enjoy a relaxed meal for two - all with a friendly welcome.

***30% off main courses during January**

Simply present this voucher to a member of our team to redeem the offer.

Valid 2nd to 31st Jan 2026, Monday to Saturday. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer.

***25% off a Sunday Roast in January**

Simply present this voucher to a member of our team to redeem the offer.

Valid 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th Jan 2026 from 2:30pm. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer.

The Riverside Inn
01934 310730 | info@riversidecheddar.co.uk
riversidecheddar.co.uk

WEST COUNTRY MEADERY & THE BEEKEEPERS CAFÉ



Bee Keeping Experience Days Available
To Book

www.west-country-honey.com

HANDCRAFTED
MEAD – from
HIVE TO GLASS

FRESHLY BREWED
COFFEE, TEAS
& BREAKFASTS

7 Chancellors Pound, Redhill, BS40 5TZ

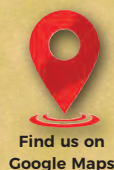
07749 059345

TASTE, RELAX, DISCOVER—ALL UNDER ONE ROOF

Frankie
Howerd's
Community

CAFÉ

Open to all + Hub



Find us on
Google Maps

Sevier Road, Loxton, Axbridge, Somerset BS26 2XE

Open Wed-Sun
9.30am-3pm
Ample parking

Cyclists, Walkers
& Dogs welcome

Serving Breakfast, Ice Creams, Cakes, Lunches

Private party bookings available

All our profits go to The Frankie Howerd OBE Trust

TEL: 01934 244362 • www.frankiehowerdhubandcafe.weebly.com

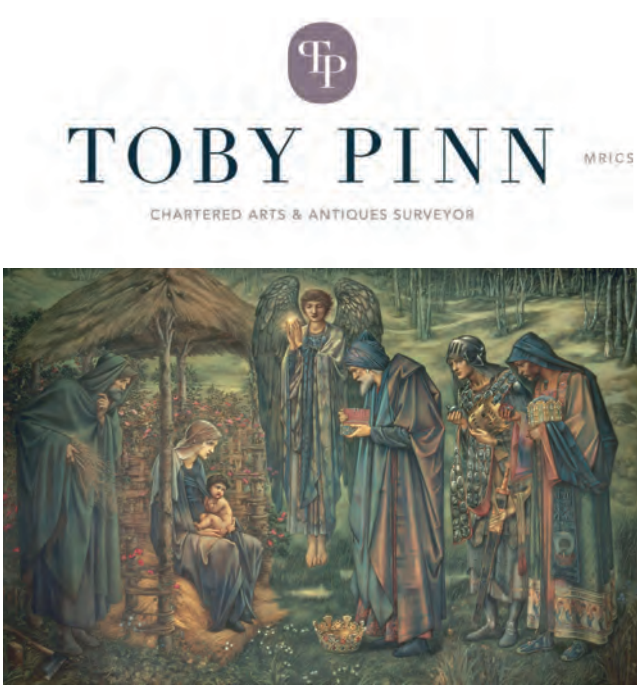
Value judgements

“IT is preoccupation with possessions, more than anything else, that prevents us from living freely and nobly,” the words of philosopher Bertrand Russell.

The Christmas and New Year period is a time when many of us pause for a moment to appreciate what we have and to spare a thought for those less fortunate. The value of family, friends, the importance of good health will be at the top of many people's list.

For the blessed amongst us, these intangibles are the most important things in our lives. Understanding the value of your tangible possessions is for many, the first step towards living freely.

If you would like to take stock of all that you own, allowing more time to focus on the important things, enquire about a certified valuation of your home contents at www.tobypinn.co.uk



TOBY PINN MRICS
CHARTERED ARTS & ANTIQUES SURVEYOR

RICS certified valuations of fine art, antiques, jewellery and personal property for:

Probate | Insurance | Auction | Inventory | Family & Matrimonial Division

RICS Regulated by RICS **tobypinn.co.uk** **RICS** Registered Valuer
Tel: 0117 2517251

Channel Court Business Centre, 8 Hill Road, Clevedon, BS21 7NE (by appointment only)
Toby Pinn Ltd REG No: 13117748 VAT No. 368362861

Turnip prize

THE winner of this year's Turnip Prize, Wedmore's spoof art award, was "Bitter & Twisted", a twisted can of bitter, chosen because of the least amount of effort it took to create it.



Creating a real buzz



Jody next to the new mural

A NEW nature-themed mural has appeared in Frome in the Mary Baily Field.

Featuring busy bees pollinating flowers and plants, the mural is the work of aerosol artist Jody Thomas, commissioned by Frome Town Council.

Councillor Mark Dorrington said: "Thanks to Jody for creating this fantastic new mural, brightening the park and bringing sunshine at the darkest time of the year!"

Jody Thomas is a Bristol based artist and designer who has exhibited in New York, Singapore, Hong Kong, London and Bristol.

For details, visit: <https://www.jodyart.co.uk>



Swan Artworks
Bespoke Picture Framers

COMMENDED FRAMER

www.swanartworks.co.uk 01761 415224 swanartworks@gmail.com
Unit 18 Old Mills Trading Estate, Paulton, BS39 7SU

Nostalgia pays off: the growing value of Steiff bears



With HENRY MICHALLAT

STEIFF bears have enjoyed enduring popularity at auction for more than a century, but in recent years their appeal has only grown stronger. Collectors around the world remain captivated by the brand's nostalgic charm and childhood classics. Founded in 1880 by Margarete Steiff, the German company quickly became synonymous with high quality soft toys, and its iconic "Button

in Ear" trademark, introduced in 1904, has since become a hallmark of authenticity.

This combination of heritage and identifiable branding has helped Steiff bears retain remarkable resale value, often outperforming other collectable toys on the secondary market.

One major factor behind their popularity at auction is rarity. Early Steiff bears, especially those produced before WW2, were handmade in small batches from materials such as mohair and wood-wool stuffing.

Their survival rate is relatively low, making well-preserved bears highly sought after. Unique features such as long snouts, hump backs, hand-stitched noses, or particular shades of mohair

can drive interest sharply upward. Bears with provenance, those once owned by notable collectors or documented in historical archives, command even higher bids.

Auction houses have capitalised on this enthusiasm by hosting specialised teddy bear sales, where Steiff nearly always dominates the catalogue.

Limited-edition modern Steiff bears also perform well, particularly those produced in collaboration with artists, luxury brands, or commemorating significant anniversaries. While these newer bears may not reach the astronomical figures of their early 20th-century counterparts, they appeal to buyers seeking both affordability and to start their own collections.

Another reason for their enduring success is emotional resonance. For many bidders, Steiff represent childhood memories. This sentimentality, combined with the quality of the bears, creates a powerful incentive to acquire and preserve them.

Steiff bears routinely feature in all levels of our sales and prove popular around Christmas time and into the New Year. Recent examples include early golden mohair teddy bear selling for £1,800, Man from Mars or Humpty Dumpty selling for £850, and a modern Noah's Ark, complete with animals, selling for £460.

Now accepting consignments of Steiff and other Teddy Bears for the 29th January Sale and 12th March Specialist Sale



info@clevedonsalerooms.com
clevedonsalerooms.com
01934 830 111



Rolex - 18ct gold Oyster Perpetual Day Date bracelet watch, ref. 18038
Sold for £7,000



Charles Goldie - (fl. 1855-1879) - Oil on canvas - Joan of Arc
Sold for £3,800



Old cushion cut diamond solitaire ring
Sold for £6,000

CLEVEDON VALUATION DAYS Clevedon Salerooms, every Monday, 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm
BRISTOL VALUATION DAYS* Tuesday 17th February, Stoke Lodge, Shirehampton Rd, BS9 1BN, 10am–3pm

*Join Chris Yeo and Izzie Balmer, as seen on BBC's Antiques Roadshow and Antiques Road Trip, along with our valuation team.

Clevedon Salerooms, The Auction Centre, Kenn Road, Kenn, Clevedon, Bristol, BS21 6TT



ON THE MARKET

Selling exceptional property across Somerset



OAKHILL

8 BED | 6 RECEPT | 5 BATH

Situated close to the popular village of Oakhill, two beautifully presented and highly spacious, detached barn conversions, all within extensive grounds of approximately 14 acres with the added benefit of a beautiful woodland, stream and natural spring and additional outbuildings.

£1,950,000



STRATTON ON THE FOSSE

6 BED | 3 RECEPT | 2 BATH

A distinguished Grade II listed 18th Century Rectory with outstanding potential, set beside St Vigor's Church in the sought-after village of Stratton-on-the-Fosse. The property offers elegant proportions, fine period features, a two-bedroom Coach House, and beautiful established gardens.

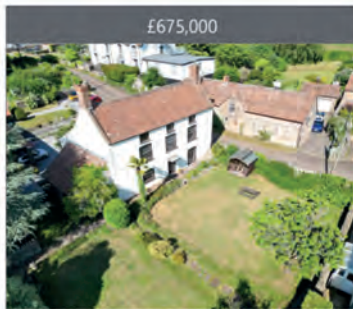
£895,000



£675,000

WELLS

4 BED | 4 RECEPT | 2 BATH



£675,000

WINSCOMBE

8 BED | 3 RECEPT | 1 BATH



£620,000

EAST HARTREE

4 BED | 3 RECEPT | 2 BATH



£530,000

CHEW MAGNA

2 BED | 2 RECEPT | 1 BATH

DELIVERING ACROSS SOMERSET

At Killens, as a family business with strong local roots, we strive to work to the highest standards and are firmly focussed on helping clients fulfil their aims. With a wealth of experience and knowledge, our teams deliver a comprehensive range of property services.



Learn more



Testimonials

"I recently sold my house through Killens Estate Agents and I would definitely recommend them. Everyone in the office was so efficient and wonderfully friendly. They were exceptional with their local knowledge and always having a positive attitude."

Mrs WA, December 2025

Killens

Offices in Chew Magna, Wells, Ston Easton, Mayfair and at the Mendip Auction Rooms

T. 01749 840770

E. office@killens.org.uk

Scan to contact our Agency teams



AT THE AUCTION ROOMS

The Local, Professional Auction House reaching a global audience

Sold Recently



Sold £3900



Sold £3200



Sold £1000



Sold £950



Sold £2300



Sold £1700

Impressive Prices Achieved in December Silver and Jewellery Sale

Over 500 lots of silver, fine jewellery, and watches went under the hammer in December at the Mendip Auction Rooms with a strong online attendance leading to some great prices being achieved.

The appetite for silver continues to be strong with some lovely pieces leading to competitive bidding. A George IV silver milk jug by Paul Storr attracted particular interest selling above estimate at £620 with similar teapots and trophies selling for between £500 and £700.

The jewellery section attracted international interest with strong online participation across both bidding platforms. Standout results included a gold snake bangle achieving £3,900, an 18ct gold bracelet £3,770 and an 18ct gold necklace £1750. There was a lovely selection of rings with many selling for between £500 and £1500.

An elegant selection of watches also drew enthusiastic buyers. A Rolex Oyster Perpetual realised £3200, an 18ct gold full hunter pocket watch £2,300, a 'Richard' gold ladies' watch £1,400, and a TAG Heuer Carrera wristwatch £1000.

The next specialist sale of silver, jewellery, and watches will take place in February and entries are now invited. Items of all values are welcomed. The auction rooms are open for drop-in valuations between 10am and 3pm on weekdays, or photographs can be emailed.

FORTHCOMING SALES

Entries invited

13th January	From Battlefield to the Bookshelf History, Militaria, Books, Coins & Stamps
17th January	Homes & Interiors
27th January	20th Century & Modern Design
10th February	Fine Silver, Jewellery & Watches
14th February	Homes & Interiors
24th February	Fine Art & Antiques

"OUT AND ABOUT" FREE VALUATION DAYS

14th January	10 - 1	Killens, Sadler Street, Wells
21st January	9 - 12	Killens, South Parade, Chew Magna

Testimonial

"Great auction house always packed full of beautiful pieces and bargain finds. Always such a fun place to visit with really friendly, helpful and knowledgeable staff. My favourite place for furnishing my home."

Mendip Auction Rooms, Rookery Farm, Binegar,
Somerset BA3 4UL

T. 01749 840770
E. enquiries@mendipauctionrooms.co.uk

Learn more



Group needs expert

THE Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCART) are looking for help.

They need someone with an archaeology background to advise and assist with interpretation of Geophysical Survey results, both Magnetometer (Bartington 601) and Resistivity (Geoscan RM15).

Vince Russett the former North Somerset county archaeologist who sadly passed away in October had been a member and professional adviser to YCCART and many other local North Somerset research groups since their inception in late 1990s early 2000s. YCCART is now the last active local group with a membership of about 25.

The group's volunteers need someone with professional skills in any of the following: reviewing and advising on survey results, identification of pottery and other artefacts from field walking/excavations or contributing to reports.

If there are any archaeologists retired or otherwise who could assist them in keeping their active local group going contact either their secretary, Janet Dickson jdickson7@sky.com or chairman, Arthur Langley arth.langley@gmail.com

The group meets on Thursday mornings every week with one or two teams out doing surveys or other work, recording the archaeology in and around North Somerset.

Details: www.yccart.co.uk

Village time capsule

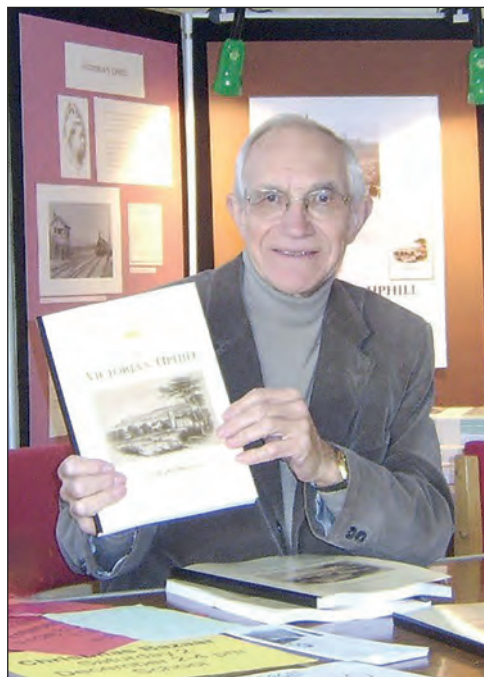


YOUNG children in Compton Dando and surrounding villages have put together a time capsule now placed in a permanent hiding place in the village's 800-year-old St Mary's Church.

Villager and church warden, Clive Howarth, renowned for his unrivalled knowledge of the church, led an exciting tour of the tower and bell rooms, sharing fascinating insights into its rich history.

The evening was filled with activities, including lantern-making inside the church, trips up the clock tower, and a buffet tea.

Uphill's history updated



The late Donald Brown

THE Uphill Village Society has republished *Victoria's Uphill*, published in 2006 by the late author and historian, Donald Brown, with revisions and new photographs. It's a fascinating account of the development of a rural village.

When the hilltop bells of St Nicholas rang in the first New Year of the 19th

century, 144 people lived in 39 houses in Uphill. By the time the bells rang for the birth of Princess Victoria in 1819, the population had doubled to 270 people, still in 39 houses.

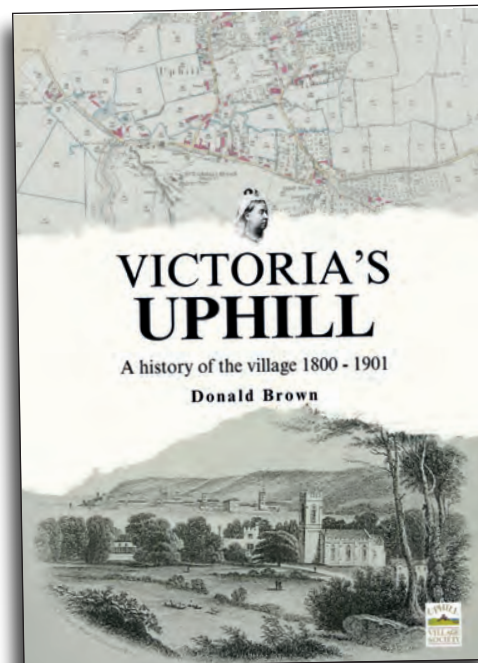
Uphill's railway station was bedecked with flags and flowers when Queen Victoria's royal train passed through on the way to the far South West of her kingdom in celebration of her jubilee.

By the end of her reign in 1901 the population had risen to 518 in 107 houses. By then the outline of today's Uphill had been formed.

The society says: "This

major work is a must for anyone interested in the local history not just of Uphill but also of Weston-super-Mare and provides a compelling insight into the development of a rural community during one of history's greatest period of change."

Copies can be bought at Weston-super-Mare Museum, locally in Uphill or online at uphillvillage.org.uk/shop



Details: 07887 562971 email info@uphillvillage.org.uk

Santa run success

DOZENS of people of all abilities tackled the third annual Santa Run in Wells, raising money for the Winston's Wish charity.

Organised by the Rotary Club of Wells, the cross-country course – either 2.5km or 5km – began and ended at the Bishop's Palace moat.



The warm-up session



Crossing the line at the end of the 2.5km run



Enjoying the fake snow before the start



The event raised money for Winston's Wish



Staff at RM Penny in Ston Easton held a Christmas Jumper Day for charity

Making connections at fair



Sing Your Heart Out

STEPHEN Drink, the new CEO of the Root Connections organisation which helps homeless people in Mendip, helped at the group's Christmas fair in Chilcompton.

The fair, at St John's Church, included more than 20 artisan stalls and performances by locally-based Sing Your Heart Out group.

For details, visit: www.rootconnections.co.uk



CHERYL HUDSON

FUNERAL & CELEBRATION OF LIFE CELEBRANT

Mobile: 07789 004296

Email: cherylhudson8@gmail.com

Unique service

CHERYL Hudson is an independent funeral celebrant and qualified two years ago, with a diploma in funeral celebrancy. Having a loved one die is a very emotional time and planning their funeral ceremony can be overwhelming at such a difficult time.

She says: "I will work closely with you to support and guide you every step of the way to plan, write and lead your loved one's ceremony to celebrate their life. Each person is individual and unique as will be their ceremony."

MOLECATCHER

NO MOLE NO FEE

Telephone
01761 417100

www.mendipmolecatcher.co.uk

Smiley John



Sweep

0781 646 7975

www.smileyjohnsweep.co.uk



Personalised care from your independent local vets

- Neutering
- Pet Health Club
- Microchips and Vaccinations
- Dental Treatments
- Medical consultations and surgery

OPEN TO NEW CLIENTS

To book call 01761 412132 or visit our website: www.midsomervets.co.uk
53 North Road, Midsomer Norton, Radstock BA3 2QE



Marquee Hire For All Occasions
Weddings • Parties • Outdoor Events



- Furniture – new oak cross-back chairs with matching rustic trestle tables
- Stunning starlight linings

- Dance floors for every celebration
- Lighting – vintage, rustic & modern styles
- All the accessories to complete your event



Tel: 01761 221366

www.jgmarquees.co.uk

info@jgmarquees.co.uk

A new year begins



With **OLIVER LUCK**

JANUARY at Aldwick Estate always feels like a moment of reset. Not a pause, but a turning of the page. The land may sit dormant for the season, but behind that restful appearance there is still steady work going on that prepares it for the year ahead. Out in the vineyard, pruning has begun, marking the true start of our journey toward the 2026 vintage.



Pruning is one of the most important tasks in the viticultural calendar. Each cut determines how the vine will grow and ultimately how the fruit will develop. The team in the vineyard looks closely at every vine, choosing the canes that will carry this year's growth and, in turn, the fruit that will later be made into our wines.

It's detailed, careful work. Each cane is selected based on its strength, position, and potential to bear the bunches of grapes later in the year. This is where quality begins, long before the first buds appear. Pruning may be winter work, quiet and methodical, but each decision made now shapes the yield, the health of the vine, and the wine that will eventually return to Aldwick Estate.

Closer to the venue, the gardens are beginning their own subtle preparations. Though still firmly in winter's hold, there is still plenty to be done. Borders are tidied, roses are pruned back much



like the vines in the vineyard, and compost is added to the beds to enrich the soil ahead of spring.

These colder months are when the structure of the garden reveals

itself, the bare framework that will support the colour and fullness of the seasons to come.

Inside the venue, plans are well underway for the year's first gathering. Our Wedding Open Day on January 11th, is the first big date in our calendar and the barns are already beginning to take shape. Some couples arrive newly engaged over Christmas; others come to meet suppliers, explore ideas, and start building their plans.

Many visit simply to gain clarity as they begin their journey towards their special day, whatever time of year they hope to celebrate. Whatever stage they are at, our open day gives them the chance to stand in the space, to imagine their ceremony in the warmth of the barns with the vineyard as their backdrop. It allows them to appreciate the estate in its winter beauty.

For us, it marks the start of a new season, a moment to share what Aldwick Estate can offer, and to help couples make decisions about their future celebrations. As January unfolds, the shape of the year becomes clearer, and another cycle begins at Aldwick Estate.

UBLEY MOTOR SERVICES

Sales – Service – Parts – Repairs

ALL MAKES SERVICING – VEHICLE DIAGNOSTICS, AIR CONDITIONING, MECHANICAL & BODY REPAIRS
Collection/Loan Car by arrangement



MOT TESTING STATION

COMPETITIVE PRICES ON TYRES, BATTERIES AND EXHAUSTS

ACCIDENT REPAIR CENTRE

BREAKDOWN & RECOVERY SERVICE

QUALITY USED CARS

Your peace of mind is our priority



CLEEVE HILL, UBLEY. TEL: 01761 462275

www.ubleymotors.co.uk



www.mendipmemorials.co.uk

New Memorials of all types
Additional Inscriptions
Restoration and repairs
Memorial design service



For a free full colour memorial brochure please call: 01934 708180
or email: info@mendipmemorials.co.uk

Mendip Memorials, Unit 8 Ivy House Farm Business Centre, Wolverhill, Banwell, Somerset, BS29 6LB

www.mendiptravel.co.uk
07786748070 • hello@mendiptravel.co.uk

Mendip Travel your local agent for:

- Cruise (River & Ocean)
- Package Holidays
- Tours, Solo, Group & Private
- Safari
- Hotel stays
- Sporting events
- World Wide Travel
- City Breaks

INCREDIBLE JOURNEYS Touring Champions

Mendip Travel is a trading name of Ginge Tours Ltd, a member of Protected Trust Services (No. 5864, www.protectedtrustservices.com).
All holidays are fully financially protected, with ATOL and ABTA protection provided when required.

Dentistry at Nurture Vets

Nurture Vets are proud to offer newly-refurbished dental suites at both their Wells Hospital and Weston-super-Mare practices

THIS investment, alongside Clinical Director Rachel’s recent achievement of dual postgraduate qualifications in Dentistry and Oral Surgery, reflects their commitment to raising the standard of veterinary dental care for every pet.

A happy mouth equals a happy pet
Just like humans, pets can really suffer when they have toothache or a painful mouth. Getting to the “root” of the problem quickly is key to helping them feel happy again.

Nurture’s experienced veterinary dentists provide individualised care — from routine cleaning to more advanced dental procedures — always delivered with precision and compassion.

A healthy mouth is vital to a pet’s overall

wellbeing. Regular check-ups can prevent dental issues from escalating, contributing to a longer, healthier, and happier life. Nurture know that visits to the vets – or the dentists – can be stressful, so they strive to create a calm and reassuring environment for these visits. Their experienced team aim to make each appointment a positive experience, to build trust and security.

Early detection of dental issues is key to effective intervention. Their vet dentists are skilled in identifying and addressing problems before they escalate, ensuring pets receive prompt treatment to maintain their oral health.

Every pet is unique, and so is their dental care. Nurture develops tailored dental plans to address specific concerns and promote



Getting to the root of the problem

lasting oral health, supporting a pet’s overall vitality.

Both Wells and Weston-super-Mare teams are proud to have the ability to offer digital dental X-rays before dental procedures, allowing them to see below the gum line for a more accurate diagnosis and tailored treatment plan. Continued investment in advanced equipment like this helps them minimise patient risk, discomfort and procedure time.

If you think your pet could benefit from a dental assessment, please get in touch — they’re always happy to help

Proudly Independent Vets



- Key-hole Surgery
- New Dental Suite
- Vet GPs
- 24hr Hospital Care

Call us
24/7

www.nurture.vet

hellowells@nurture.vet 01749 673239

helloweston@nurture.vet 01934 511611



Nurture Vet Hospital,
The Old Engine Shed,
Wells, BA5 2HS
Nurture Vet GP & Dentist
Summer Lane North,
Weston-super-Mare
BS22 6BE



Walking the Mendip Hills at Christmas and New Year – know your rights and responsibilities

THE festive period in the Mendip Hills is one of the most magical times of the year. During Christmas and New Year break, families and visitors take to the hills in greater numbers, eager to enjoy crisp air, sweeping views and the tranquil break from routine.

With this welcome rise in footfall, it is important that everyone using the local network of trails understands their rights and obligations to help preserve the area and ensure safe, harmonious access for all.

The Mendips contain a patchwork of paths and access routes and not all of them carry the same legal rights. The most familiar category is the public footpath. These routes are legally protected rights of way for pedestrians.

You may walk freely along them and take a pram or dog (on or off a lead where appropriate), but cycling and horse riding are not permitted on public footpaths unless specifically authorised by the landowner. Some footpaths cross working farmland, so walkers should keep dogs under close control and always stick to the marked route, even if livestock or mud make this tempting to ignore.

Less well understood is the permissive footpath. These are routes that look like public rights of way but exist thanks to the permission of the landowner rather than by legal right. They are sometimes provided to divert people away from

environmentally sensitive or agricultural areas.

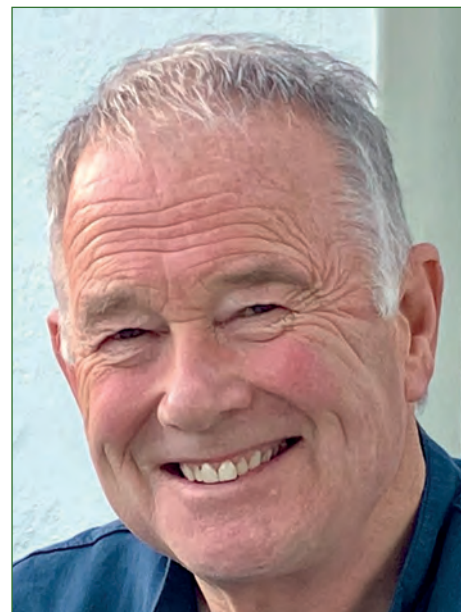
Because they rely on goodwill, they can be closed temporarily or permanently at the landowner's discretion. Visitors should therefore observe any signage, seasonal restrictions or notices that a permissive path is shut, and avoid leaving the route or treating it as an automatic right of access.

The third major category is the bridleway. Bridleways allow access not only to pedestrians but also to horse riders and cyclists. Vehicles and motorbikes remain prohibited. Because bridleways carry mixed usage, extra consideration is required.

Horses take priority, but riders also have responsibilities. When meeting walkers, riders should moderate their pace, warn of their approach in good time and pass safely. The size and unpredictability of horses can make some walkers nervous, so a calm and courteous exchange helps ensure the experience remains pleasant for everyone.

Similarly, the popularity of mountain biking in the Mendips means shared use is increasingly common. Cyclists must give way to both walkers and horse riders on bridleways. Speed should be adjusted to suit visibility and conditions, especially around bends, slopes and narrow sections.

On public footpaths, cyclists have no automatic right to ride unless permission



has been granted – doing so is not only inconsiderate but can damage trails and create hazards for pedestrians.

Above all, whether on two feet, two wheels or four hooves, users should remember a few shared principles: stay on marked paths, close gates behind you, keep dogs under control, never drop litter and show patience when meeting others. The Mendip Hills are precious to locals and visitors alike.

By understanding and respecting the different types of access and by treating each other courteously, we ensure that the hills remain enjoyable, safe and beautiful for generations to come.

EDWARD LYONS

NOW 50 YEARS IN THE CHEW VALLEY

Lyons

Email: enquiries@lyonslaw.co.uk

Website: www.lyonslaw.co.uk • Telephone: 01275 332168

An established and progressive law firm providing a personal and cost-effective legal service for commercial and individual clients.

- Family & Divorce Law ● Co-habitation disputes ● Inheritance disputes
- Wills and Living Wills ● Powers of Attorney ● Administration of Trusts
- Property – sales and purchases ● Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence claims

OFFICES AT:

Chew Magna 01275 332168

Westbury-on-Trym 0117 950 6506

Kingswood 0117 967 5252

ST MONICA TRUST Care Academy

Kickstart your career with an apprenticeship

Looking for a way to earn while you learn? Whether you're a school leaver or looking for a new direction, our apprenticeship opportunities could be your next big step.

We currently have apprenticeship positions available in a variety of fields:

- ✓ Care assistant
- ✓ Gardener
- ✓ Maintenance operative
- ✓ Painter and decorator

Our apprenticeships support you to develop your career in your chosen field and gain hands-on experience, all of which may lead to a permanent position with St Monica Trust after completion of your apprenticeship.

If you have any questions or to apply, please email recruitment@stmonicastrust.org.uk

When you join St Monica Trust you can enjoy a range of benefits, including a generous pensions scheme, 23 days of annual leave pro rata plus bank holidays, access to retail and other discounts, subsidised gym, restaurant, free parking and much more.



An Evening with Cathie & Tricia

To raise funds for



**Headway
SOMERSET**

AS SEEN ON TV
Cathie & Tricia
Race Across The
World Winners!



Join **GoCruise & Travel** for a truly inspiring evening with **Race Across the World winners, Cathie & Tricia**. Hear their funniest moments, toughest challenges, and exclusive behind-the-scenes stories that never made it onto TV!

Enjoy tasty refreshments while chatting with travel experts from **Oceania Cruises** and **Cox & Kings** about incredible bucket-list trips.

**WELLS GOLF CLUB
BLACKHEATH LANE
BA5 3DS**

**THURSDAY
19TH FEB
2026**

7 PM TO 9 PM



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO
SECURE YOUR TICKETS
£5 PER PERSON**



Event Organiser

GoCruise&Travel
Amanda & Peter

Village hall celebration

IT'S 30 years since the current Bishop Sutton and Stowey village hall was first used, before its official opening in 1997.

The management team are planning to run two events in 2026 to celebrate the sterling work the committee undertook in the early 1990s to obtain funding and make this "new" hall a reality.

It replaced a hall built in 1922 thanks to villagers Miss Yeatman and Miss Ward who contributed £400, proceeds from welfare clubs they ran for troops in France during WWI.

Organisers want to track down past committee members from 1990-2015 to thank them for their "foresight and determination" to get this hall built in the days of the old Avon Council.

The local councillor then, Vic Pritchard, was instrumental in obtaining a £75,000 grant from Wansdyke Council.

The first event on Friday, June 5th will be a chance to reminisce with people who would like to recall the village and the efforts to build the new hall.

The second will be a Celebration Dinner on Saturday, September 26th, exactly 30 years since the inaugural event. It would welcome sponsors for this.

The hall is still well used for a variety of activities. Recent refurbishments have included the installation of solar panels. It's looking to recruit new members to its management group.

Details: chair@bishopsuttonvillagehall.com

BISHOP SUTTON & STOWEY VILLAGE HALL

Your Village Hall – The Heart of Our Community!

Looking for the perfect venue for your next celebration, event, or meeting? Discover the charm and versatility of our magnificent village hall!

Why Choose Our Village Hall?

- Spacious with modern facilities suitable for birthday parties, events, meetings and gatherings of all sizes – 122 seated at tables; 155 seated in rows
- Fully equipped kitchen with cooking/heating facilities
 - Lounge/training room/large hall (and stage) with badminton court
 - Accessible location with ample parking
 - Free Wi-Fi throughout the premises
 - Affordable rates and flexible booking options
- Ideal for clubs, fitness classes, fundraisers, and community events
- Opposite the Spar shop for lunch/goodies/fresh food

Book Your Event Today!

Don't miss out – make your special occasion truly memorable. For availability, rates, and bookings, contact us at info@bishopsuttonvillagehall.com or visit our website <https://www.bishopsuttonvillagehall.com>

Your Village Hall – open to everyone, at the heart of village life



Underwood Lamb

Chartered Certified Accountants

Ground Floor, The Old Barn, Lady Farm, Chelwood, Bristol BS39 4NN
01275 332612 ● ulco.com

*Looking to reset your business after a turbulent year?
Pursuing a new business venture or direction?
Daunted by the prospects of the latest Making Tax Digital changes?*

We are always happy to talk and, more importantly, listen to new and established businesses to see how we can help.



Underwood Lamb Professional Services Ltd

From wedding bells to peaceful escapes

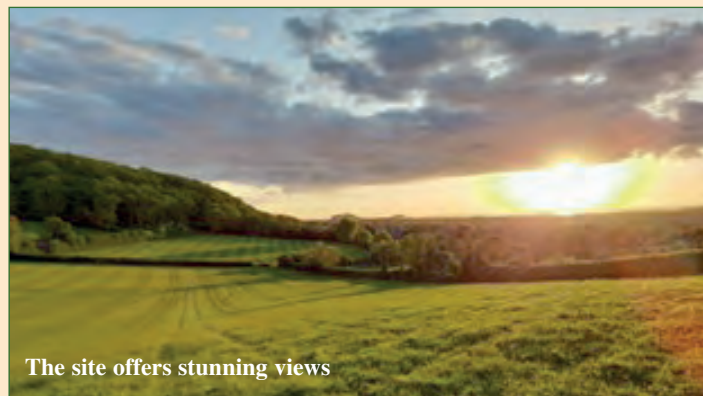
TUCKED away in the sleepy village of Hutton is Walnut Barn Estate – a 50-acre, family-run farm estate with seven beautifully appointed holiday lets that frequently welcome hikers, adventure lovers, wellness seekers and larger celebration groups.

Owned by father and son duo Mark and James Orchard, the nature-inspired self-catering site on Church Lane has been transformed from an ancient, timeworn farmstead into a destination retreat that now sees guests from far and wide flocking for a slice of Somerset countryside.

After a busy year expanding the site with the eco-friendly £1 million purpose-built celebration property Big Oak Barn, Mark and the team are now eager to welcome brides and grooms-to-be looking for a picturesque all-in-one wedding and accommodation venue. Blessed with ancient orchards and lush fields illuminated by golden skies, Walnut Barn Estate is a truly enchanting setting for a rustic farm celebration.

What's more, with marquee hire, floristry, catering options and fully-equipped accommodation for up to 44 guests, everything you need for a seamless celebration can be taken care of.

As for property types, guests are spoilt for choice. Dotted around the site, you'll find quaint glamping retreats, cosy cottages



The site offers stunning views

and luxe celebration houses with log burners and hot tubs. The attention to detail here is second to none, so you can expect extra touches like local farm produce (their Cluck-N-Collect eggs are to die for) and dog-friendly treats from Sir Woofchesters.

With a Silver Green Tourism Award, a recent Gold South West Tourism Self-Catering Award and a glowing collection of 5-star reviews, Walnut Barn Estate continues to shine as one of Somerset's most sought-after rural escapes. Head to Walnut Barn Estate's website to book a stay or enquire about weddings in 2026.

For details, visit: www.walnutbarnestate.co.uk • Tel: 07903 660 004 • Email: info@walnutbarnestate.co.uk

Exclusive Reader Offer

10% off *all* retreats*

BOOKED BETWEEN 1ST JAN
2026 – 31ST DEC 2026

DISCOUNT CODE: 8V011

📞 07903 660 004

🏠 WALNUT BARN, 48 CHURCH LANE,
HUTTON, SOMERSET BS24 9SN



*Excludes wedding bookings | Head to www.walnutbarnestate.co.uk to book and apply code at checkout.

Supporting participation and engagement

AN important aspect of our work at the Mendip Hills National Landscape team is to increase opportunities for people to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape and the activities that shape it.

Through our Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) grant fund, we have supported The Community Farm at Chew Magna with a project every year, for the last five years. It's a great example of support for local farming and public engagement in it.

As well as being an organic farm providing a veg (and groceries) box scheme to the local area, the Community Farm welcomes school children and adult community groups to teach them about what goes in to bringing food onto their plate and to share their knowledge of working alongside nature.

Supported projects have included the restoration and creation of wildlife



(Photograph courtesy of Community Farm)

habitats such as a pond and a network of hedgerows, a polytunnel repair, and a varied programme of education sessions.

Our latest funding will enable them to build on their relationship with Chew Valley School, aiming to get hundreds of pupils (and their families) involved.

Kim Brooks, managing director of The Community Farm, said: "FiPL funding has enabled us to welcome diverse people to the farm, meet their needs, and show the benefits of organic farming and conservation through genuine, supported participation."



**If you have a project in mind, there is still time to apply:
Email: FiPL@mendiphills-nl.org.uk**

Hudson
PLUMBING & HEATING SERVICES LIMITED



BRISTOL
drains Ltd

For a genuine plumbing, heating or drain enquiry, a 24 hour call-out service is available 365 days a year. Please feel free to call us for a no-obligation, highly competitive quotation at fixed hourly rates.

HUDSON PLUMBING AND HEATING SERVICES LIMITED

Tel: 0117 902 5820 • Fax: 0117 964 4666

Email: info@hudsonplumbing.co.uk

Hudson Plumbing & Heating Services is a well-established local business located in the Bristol area.

With over 20 years' experience, we have built up an enviable reputation for quality workmanship, high levels of customer care, reliability and value for money across the building maintenance market.

- Central Heating installation • Shower Room installations
- Wet Room Specialists • Boiler System Upgrades
- Annual Service Contracts • Local Authority Approved
- Boiler Servicing & Repairs • Bathroom installations
- Kitchen Plumbing • Bespoke Adaptations for Disabilities
- Electrical • Building Refurbishments • Extensions •



BRISTOL
drains Ltd

Tel: 0117 940 0074 •

Fax: 0117 964 4666

Email: info@bristoldrains.com

At Bristol Drains, you can be assured of first-class work carried out by our own experienced and professional engineers. Whether you have a blocked drain at your home or your office, you may require a buried drain traced/located – FEEL FREE TO CALL US NOW

- Waste Pipes • Unblocking of Toilets/Sinks/Baths • Water Jetting
- Septic Tank Emptying & Renewals • Drain Repairs and Replacements •
- Gully Emptying • Camera Surveying and Reports •
- Domestic Drain and Pipe Cleaning • Sewer Cleaning

WINSCOMBE FESTIVE NIGHT



Sidcot School choir



Weston brass band



Santa arrives



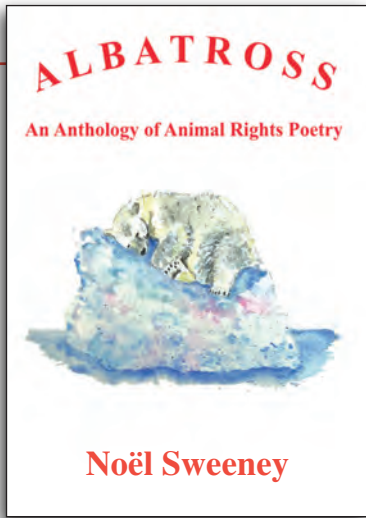
The Rainbow Montessori team



Santa's helper Emma from Sass events



Winscombe cricket club members



Albatross combines the hard-hitting triad of animal rights poetry in *An Animals' Charter*, *Blue-bird Sings the Blues* and *Jungle Judge Justice* within a single volume.

The subjects run the gamut suffered from our subjects from abattoirs to zoos, from trophy hunting to killing kangaroos and from fast fading mist gorillas to the appearance of serial killers.

Noël Sweeney is a practising barrister who specialises in criminal law and human rights and animal law.



www.animalsadvocate.co.uk

FOR A LOCAL PERSONAL INSURANCE SERVICE

Contact NFU Mutual North Somerset and Chew Valley on **01934 861035**

north_somerset_agency@nfumutual.co.uk



NFU Mutual
INSURANCE | PENSIONS | INVESTMENTS



Crafting quality timber buildings and gates since 1912

SPARKFORD
TIMBER BUILDINGS & GATES

Sparkford, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 7LH

Tel: (01963) 440414 | Email: info@sparkford.com | [@sparkfordtimber](https://twitter.com/sparkfordtimber) | www.sparkford.com

Clutton's Jumbles

(Photo courtesy of Becky Bell)



THIS group in Clutton have been organising fundraising jumble sales throughout the year and the last one raised £536 for charity.

One of the organisers, Jenny Bush, said: "There are about 12 of us who get together to raise funds for various charities which are close to our hearts. We have raised between £500 to £600 from each sale."

In November the jumble ladies had their photos taken for the Jumble Ladies calendar, now on sale at Clutton Social Club, price £7.

Their next sale is on Saturday, January 31st, 2pm in Clutton Village Hall and will be raising funds for Clutton Preschool's new build. Sales will be monthly after that.

Save our pub!



EWCBS secretary, Mark O'Callaghan, is pictured at the stall

THE group campaigning to save the Britannia Inn in Wells have been holding regular stalls at the weekly market in Wells in the run-up to Christmas to promote their latest share offer.

The East Wells Community Benefit Society hope to raise enough funds through the purchase of community shares to buy and reopen the Britannia Inn as a community pub. Their latest share offer runs out on January 2nd.

Golden celebration for camera club

MID-Somerset Camera Club celebrated its 50th anniversary with a highly successful presentation by renowned landscape photographer Joe Cornish at Strode Theatre in Street with around 200 people attending.

Adding to the occasion, the club showcased an impressive exhibition of members' work, reflecting the creativity and skill nurtured within the group.



One of Joe's works

The club welcomes new members of all experience for regular talks, workshops and competitions.



Joe Cornish on stage at the Strode Theatre

For details, visit: <https://www.midsomersetcameraclub.org.uk/>

Community feast



MORE than 100 residents took part in the Axbridge Progressive Supper, raising £1,701 for local charities. Starting and finishing at the Oakhouse Hotel, there were 39 hosting pairs across the town.

The annual event will be donating £567 to Cheddar Food Bank, Axe Vale Arts and Friends of Axbridge Church. The money came from the fees people pay to take part and the raffle held on the night.

Co-organiser Anna Dawson said: “We know how much effort all the hosts put into making the evening such a success and we really appreciate all the delicious food, drinks and hospitality given. We hope you will join us next year.”

Details: <https://www.facebook.com/AxbridgeProgressive/>

Dennis's gift



LOCAL resident Dennis James Wood has bought a defibrillator for Margaret Crescent, Burnham-On-Sea, after noticing that publicly accessible defibrillators were scarce in the area.

It was organised through Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance's Life Support initiative. Lyn Staynings, a fellow Margaret Crescent resident, has agreed to help.

She said: “Dennis has a heart problem and after looking around our area to see how many defibrillators are about, which is not that many, he decided to purchase one for our estate, to serve all of the community.

“This generosity really shows how he is thinking of others rather than himself.”

Around a quarter of the air ambulance's missions involve cardiac arrests.

Details: www.dsairambulance.org.uk/defibrillator-packag

Poppy appeal record



Frome's record breakers (left to right): John Rawlins, Jane Norris, Louisa Skinner, Richard Aspray and Dan Norris

THE Frome branch of the Royal British Legion raised more than £48,000 – a record – from this year's Poppy Appeal, organisers have announced.

Led by chairman and appeal organiser, Richard Aspray, the appeal was among many highlights in a busy year for the branch, which also saw Phil Macey creating a link with NHS Somerset to bring the Armed Forces Outreach Service to Frome, as both a drop-in hub at the Key Centre on the first Monday of the month and on every Monday for individual DWP support at the Frome Medical Practice.

Branch community co-ordinator Jane Norris thanked the “ever willing and resourceful Remembrance Team and RBL members and supporters who have helped make the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Commemorations so poignant.”

For details, contact Jane at: jane.norris9@gmail.com or visit Frome Veterans Network on Facebook

Charities under pressure

QUARTET Community Foundation has struggled to cope with demand this year, though it's given more than 1,000 grants worth more than £5million.

But it had to turn down applications worth nearly £3.2million, often only due to having limited funding available.

It says there's high demand for charities' services, driven in part by cost-of-living hardship in communities and squeezed services in the wider landscape.

In its annual report, chief executive, Anna Smith, says: “I know that the voluntary sector continues to face challenges. Charities' 2025/26 budgets have been hard hit by rising salary expectations and NI contributions.

“This is doubly challenged by the growing demand for services - the result of the rising cost of living.”

The chair of trustees, Sue Mountstevens, reported a landmark in the summer when grants awarded reached £80million over the foundation's 37-year history,

George and the Glastonbury Dragon

THREE people who live around Glastonbury have joined forces to create an illustrated children's book to raise funds for the town's iconic Dragon Processions.

George and the Glastonbury Dragon was written by *Mendip Times* contributor Karin Shaw, produced and edited by Vanda Lloyd and illustrated by Amanda Ambles.

The book was launched at Glastonbury Country Market where Karin is a regular stallholder and is one of the organisers of the parades, held in May and October.

The next procession is due to take place on Sunday, May 3rd, marking the 10th anniversary of the event.



Karin at the launch of the book in Glastonbury Town Hall

The books are on sale at the market, held in the Town Hall on Tuesdays, or via Amazon

Community showcase

A GROWING list of small businesses are providing care and wellbeing services to Bath & North East Somerset residents, thanks to a council-backed programme, Community Catalysts.

It held its first showcase event in Keynsham and has supported the growth of 46 small local businesses since its launch and is appealing for more businesses to get involved.

Among businesses taking part in the showcase was Skye from Phoenix Therapeutic Support UK and their therapy dog, Diesel, who help build independence and confidence for people living with mental illness or learning difficulties.

Joining them was Amanda Bachrach, who manages the Somer Valley Strikers Walking Football Group, a women's football team empowering women to be more confident, improve their fitness and make new friendships.

Esme Neale, who runs Enabling You, the most recent business to join Community Catalysts B&NES, said: "Through Community Catalysts, I hope to bridge the gap for care for people coming out of hospital, supporting with companionship and helping them to remain independent in their homes for as

long as possible."

Councillor Alison Born, Cabinet Member for Adult Services at B&NES Council, said: "The council commissions Community Catalysts to help expand the range of care and wellbeing services for residents who need additional support.

"The showcase was a great opportunity to see first-hand how small business are making a big impact in our communities.



Amanda Bachrach, manager of Somer Valley Strikers walking football group

I encourage anyone who is thinking about or has recently set up their own care or wellbeing business to make use of the free help and expertise on offer from the Community Catalyst development programme."

Iris Roberston Davis was looking for local support as she recovered from a knee operation, when she found Verity Elsbury, who runs Chew Valley Care and Support.

She said: "I am very independent. I didn't want to be a worry for my family and wanted to remain active. Verity helped me with my exercises and we hit it off together straight away. It was lovely to welcome Verity, and her smiling face, into my home."

Verity, who started her Community Catalyst care business to balance work around childcare, said: "Offering companionship often improves physical health as well as mental wellbeing as, a lot of the time, physical health can be impacted by anxiety and isolation.

"I am proud of myself to be able to care and be a mother at the same time, something which I didn't think was possible before joining Community Catalysts."

Details: 07443 191851 • email Michael.auton@communitycatalysts.co.uk

Craft workshop



THE monthly craft workshop in Compton Dando attracted 26 people and raised £80 for the village's community association.

The last couple of winter workshops will be held on Saturday, January 10th and Tuesday, February 3rd.

**Details: Harriet Dottridge 07791 832592
email hdottridge@hotmail.com**

Christmas gifts



VOLUNTEERS in Chew Stoke, lead by Mel Jamieson, filled 49 bags with Christmas gifts for the Salvation Army in Bristol and also presented them with a cheque for £500.

Major Christa and Peter Beeldman from the Salvation Army said: "Last year the smiles on the people's faces were heartwarming and their gratitude was immense.

"So on behalf of all these people we say thank you! to everyone who has contributed to make this possible again this year."

WI's centenary

SANDFORD Women's Institute members celebrated their centenary with a social evening at Mendip Spring Golf Club where the dress code was "dress to

impress and wear something gold".

Some 50 members enjoyed a glass of bubbly on arrival after which president, Malorie Newbold, introduced special

guest, Sue Murphy, chair of Avon Federation of the Women's Institute. A delicious three course meal was then served followed by a celebration cake.



BLAGDON



The Rev Katrina Dykes with Pip Riley



Helen Barnes and Tess Collingborn on the plant stall

FROME



Thousands of residents lined the streets for Frome Town Council's annual Christmas light switch on and lantern parade

BISHOP SUTTON FAYRE



A Christmas fayre raised £781.63 for Holy Trinity Church in Bishop Sutton. Pauline Heron (right) is pictured on the cakes and preserves table, with churchwarden, Sandra Edgerton.

BISHOP SUTTON WI



Bishop Sutton and Stowey WI held their Christmas meal at the Red Lion in the village and say they enjoyed every minute

Seeking the lost animals of Mendip



By CHRIS SPERRING
MBE

BY the time this edition of *Mendip Times* is published I will be in darkest, deepest Norway; the area I'm visiting is of similar height to Mendip and beyond, but the animals will

be vastly different.

It will be as though I have stepped into a time machine and was looking at our area in the distant past. The temperature has been known at its extreme to drop below -30°C, yet as I write this in early December the current temperature is +5°C above normal meaning that what is normally -6°C is only -1C, so a mild start, yet winter has only just started.

Some of the wildlife that links this area of Norway to Mendip of the past is still found through Norway and some of them are recovering and spreading.

The European Lynx is the largest member of the cat family in Europe, in the UK they are thought to have become extinct around 450-500AD and they would have taken well to Mendip of the past, my chances of seeing lynx in Norway is remote.

However, I will be finding signs such as footprints, droppings and maybe the leftovers of a kill. Lynx are normally very solitary and keep away from people; they hunt for prey from the size of a roe deer right down to voles and mice.

The last wild grey wolf in the U.K was said to have finally succumbed to extinction around the 1700s.

In the area of Norway I'm staying, I will be the on lookout for evidence of wolf and setting camera traps in known areas to hopefully see them on one of their hunting patrols. The grey wolf in Europe has a different system than you've perhaps seen on American TV programmes in that the pack normally comprises the male and female and pups, I've seen them before in Sweden and in France, where they are now spreading.

Talking of wolf, I cannot help but jump

a species to its one main prey and that's the wild boar. Wild boar would have at one time been an important source of food for the grey wolf in UK and, of course, people as well.

Current estimates say that the last boar in England was seen in either the 13th or 14th century and this large omnivore would have roamed Mendip. As I found when I was in Sweden, when the wolf has left the scene of a kill having filled its needs, then other animals that have been following the wolf will arrive on the scene and help clear the carcass altogether.

The species arriving range from foxes, badgers and weasels to crows, buzzards and, wait for it, great tits! Yes, the small birds flock to the bones, stripping the fat to keep themselves going in sub-zero temperatures. One boar, so many lives.

Some people tell me that the boar is now back on Mendip. I haven't seen any myself, but if anyone has, then I would be keen to know, just contact me on my email below.

But to see boar with ease, we only have to go the Forest of Dean so they aren't that far away and this is where they are seemingly very abundant. In Norway, the

boar is considered a non-native species, yet they are very common next door in Sweden.

Happy New year to all the readers of *Mendip Times*, this is going to be an interesting year for me. I have a book coming out in May but more on that later.

There's another brilliant book out now and I highly recommend it to you, especially if you are interested in ground-up, local nature conservation. I've written about the community wildlife group "YACWAG" many times before, but now Tony and Faith Moulin have released their book "*Encounters with Nature*".

It's a personal story of the rise of the Yatton And Congresbury Wildlife Action Group. This book can also be used as a complete guide to any other small community wildlife groups thinking of forming. The book is the story of the human adventure in making the difference to nature within your own area and all done by real people.

The book is self-published and is only available by emailing moulins68@icloud.com and is priced at £12.95 with all proceeds going to YACWAG.



Norway is at a similar height to Mendip

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ChrisSperringwildlife>

A great way to start the year



START a year of country walking by enjoying this wonderful short and easy dry route high up on the north side of Mendip. It takes in the glorious beech drive of Hazel Manor, a special WW2 air crash monument, the amazing work being done in the woodland, great views and ancient woodland. Much of our circle uses, the Yeo Valley Way. The walk is easy going, easy on the eye and good underfoot and is a mixture of ups and downs, with no stiles. It is a perfect



With Sue Gearing

winter perambulation for man and dog. Almost all the way is firm and mud free.

PARK: In the flat dry car park (free) created by Yeo Valley to give access to their walking and cycling route, the Yeo Valley Way. It lies NW of the B3134 cross Mendip Road. At Nordrach take the road north towards Compton Martin and at Hazel Corner where the Hazel Manor drive starts, bend right and soon reach the car park on the right. Or approach from Compton Martin.

START: Cross the road to the gate onto the well surfaced Yeo Valley Way.

Yeo Valley Way was opened in 2020 by Yeo Valley Farms to provide a great walking and cycling route and has now been well surfaced and provided with gates. It takes us round the edge of the largest woodland area to be planted on Mendip over the last 25 years. As we walk, we get a chance to see the work being done by Yeo Valley Farms to properly care for the wood and make the most of the surrounding area which they own and manage.

Turn left and soon reach Hazel Corner Lodge and the beginning of a drive.

1. DRIVE

Turn right up this magnificent drive lined

with beeches on either side which serves Hazel Manor. (This is also the Limestone Link long distance path).

It was a real tragedy that Hazel Manor itself burned down in March 1929. With only a rainwater tank and a farmyard pond to supply water, the fire brigade was helpless in trying to save a building that went back to Elizabethan times. It was never re-built.

Follow the drive all the way ignoring side turns, going past a farm over left (near the site of the original Hazel Manor) and keep on through gates to where the main track bends right. (You have left the YVW for a while).

Go right a few yards to view the Memorial Stone.

2. MEMORIAL

This memorial is dedicated to the crew of an American Liberator bomber that crashed here in March 1944. Of the crew of ten, five were killed. Take a moment to read the plaque and remember them.

Then return to the bend and go straight on down an unsurfaced track. Come to gate 8 and continue down getting a magnificent view over both Blagdon and Chew Valley lakes.

3. FIELD

A new gate takes you into a field. Go

straight down parallel with the right edge and then make sure you curve left in the field, keeping a large fir on your right and one on the left (don't go down to the gate at the bottom). Follow the path downhill between hedges. It should be reasonably good even after rain. Reach a gate onto the crossing Yeo Valley Way (YVW)

Opened in the autumn of 2020, the YVW is a splendid circle with amazing views of both lakes, Chew and Blagdon. You can follow the whole of the route in this book. See details at the end.

4. YEO VALLEY WAY

Turn right and now simply follow this very easy Yeo Valley Way, as it goes up and down and follows Compton Wood on the left and the Yeo Valley woodland on



2.6 miles, about 1-1.5 hours walking • OS 141 Cheddar Gorge & Mendip Hills West, grid ref 530 561. Postcode BS40 6LP. What3words; sing.dinner.reverted



the right.

Compton Wood is a large belt of ancient woodland that covers a good swathe of the northern slope of Mendip.

We now follow this route for about 1.5 miles all the way back to the start ignoring any side gates or side tracks and paths. Notice the mixture of trees, the ancient woodland, the beautiful grassy slopes. It eventually turns up right away from the wood and then comes round fairly close to the garden of Whitegate Lodge, to bring you alongside the lane. Follow the Yeo Valley Way back to the gate at the start.

● This walk is a mixture of two routes in the *Yeover Mendip Walks* book published by Yeo Valley Organic Ltd last year (2025), written by myself and Les Davies. One of the 12 walks covers the whole of the Yeo Valley Way.

Copies of the book can be obtained from Yeo Valley Organic Ltd, Rhodyate, Blagdon, Bristol, BS40 7YE. 01761 462798 £9.99 each. If you are having a drink or meal in the canteen they can be bought there too.

In 2001, a syndicate, Will Woodland, began the planting of 500 acres of mixed woodland on the land of Hazel Manor Farm. Predominant species are oak, ash, beech and sycamore comprising 60% of the broadleaved woodland area, the remainder being minor broadleaved species. In addition, several acres of conifers were planted to provide ecological variety and winter colour contrast. The woodland was purchased by Yeo Valley Organic in 2019. It drew up a management plan, working hard in the area to remove the ash affected by ash dieback and install fencing and gates so that the space created can be grazed.

West Countryman's diary



With LES DAVIES MBE

AS always at this time of the year, I sit and wonder where the last year went. Did I fall asleep on the settee and miss it all or is it a case of time travelling even faster as I get older? It's customary on New Year to look back and reflect on the past 12 months, whilst looking forward with commitment to the coming year. That's why January is so named after the two-headed Roman God

Janus, who looked both forward and back.

Having finally got myself fired up for Christmas, it's difficult to feel the same about New Year. Perhaps in my younger day when out to a social gathering it was different. Now I prefer my own company by the fire on what is normally a damp cold night.

That's not to say reflection doesn't play a part or that some outlined plans for the future are not considered. As for New Year resolutions . . . I think I'll give those a miss.

During this past year I feel we have had a glimpse of the future with what seems to have been the driest, hottest summer on record. Those of us who were there, harken back to 1976/77 when we had to adopt a very Mediterranean style of working. Early starts and finished before the heat of the day became too much.

That didn't seem to happen this time, but for the likes of myself who doesn't have a real job, it was possible to seek shelter and do something else. Perhaps this is the future with climate change. We will have hotter, drier summers and wetter, warmer winters. If so there will have to be a lot of adaptation within the natural world.

Adaptation to climatic change is not a quick matter and doesn't happen in a few years. Archaeology has shown us the carboniferous period of around 350 million years ago had an oxygen rich atmosphere capable of supporting plants and large insects. Likewise, there was another period of high carbon dioxide levels where life had been able to adapt.

Such adaptation takes time and providing it's gradual, things are able to cope. Will our climate change be gradual, or have we, the human species, accelerated the process to such an extent that adaptation will be difficult? Hibernation may no longer be needed in the future for those species who need it now.

Our demands on water will increase and our need for food security will also go up. I wonder if anyone in Government realises that agriculture is responsible for our heritage and vital for our survival? Look forward and don't forget the farmer. As the line from a Dionne Warwick song goes "The fool can lose tomorrow reaching back for yesterday" so let's move onto the right way here and now.

One good sign for the future was the Mendip Hills National Landscape team day at Shiphams village hall in late November.



To say it was a great success is in my view an understatement. I don't want to get too excited, but the bringing together of so many local interest groups in one place can only do good when people start talking to each other.

No-one does anything in isolation these days and the theme is partnership working. What I saw on that day was a "nod" to the future of such cooperation within the Mendip Hills. Even a cynical "animal skins and flint knives technology" advocate such as myself was blown away by the virtual reality display as laid on by the National Trust.

Sitting in a chair with a headset on and being "flown" several hundred feet above Cheddar Gorge and Dolebury Hill Fort was incredible; I actually felt the vertigo kicking in. Times are changing and even my comments about living in a telephone box, viewing the world through the safety and security of those little windows, is no longer relevant because telephone boxes don't exist anymore.

January means wassail season when I will be helping to wake the apple trees from their winter sleep and drive away all the negative influences in the orchard. Last year was a huge harvest, where a lot of fruit was left on the ground because it wasn't needed. The winners will be the wildlife and as I have been reliably informed when February arrives there will be little if anything left on the ground.

As for next year's fruit, it's difficult to tell at the moment because so many unknown events can intervene. Have the trees gone through winter in a rested state? Will the blossom period next spring be settled enough for the insects to work? Like life in general, there are so many things that affect the future.

Whatever happens please take time to get out and about next year. I always feel better after a catch-up with the countryside. Next year will have its problems, but exactly what (thankfully) we don't know at the moment. From adversity comes strength and on the whole problems do not last forever.

Finally using my own advice that our past is for our reference and not our residence, here's a picture of me pruning in January 2013 during heavy rain. The looking back bit is don't work in bad weather during 2026.

Have a great New Year and thank you all for your kind comments and support throughout the past year.

Don't forget you can always email me on: Les.davies@westcountryman.co.uk

ASHWICK AND OAKHILL



Members of the East Mendip Gardening Club in a seasonal mood on their stall at the Winter Artisan Market at Ashwick and Oakhill Village Hall

PUBLOW



THE Christmas market in Publow raised £2,395.99 towards the maintenance of All Saints' Church. The monthly market will resume at the church on Saturday, February 7th, 10-11.30am.

Details: Judith Hillman 01761 490324
Janet Smith 01761 490584 • Gillian Wookey 01761 490336

MENDIP CHRISTMAS FAIR



HUNDREDS of people descended on the Aldwick Estate for the two-day Mendip Christmas Fair, which raised more than £18,000 for Children's Hospice South West.



Lydia Kraitman from Glastonbury, cake designer of the year in the South West Wedding Awards



Members of the catering team



There was a huge range of stalls



Kelly Young and Liam, aged eight

New Year resolutions in the garden



With MARY
PAYNE MBE

DO not plant anything that is prone to pests and diseases e.g. escallonia, box, Viburnum tinus and other plants mentioned last month. This will reduce the need for pesticides and encourage a good population of beneficial insects in your garden. Learn what our beneficial insects look like. The larvae of a greenfly guzzling hoverfly could easily be mistaken for a very hungry caterpillar.

Keep your soil in good condition by adding organic matter, this will improve the structure and enable it to cope with extremes of rain, by improving the drainage, and extremes of drought by helping to retain moisture – yes it can do both. We know that the amazing symbiotic relationship between plants and fungi exist in our soils for the benefit of both. We must nurture both.

Do not mow your lawn too close as this may lead to damage in dry conditions and can encourage moss to develop, especially in shady or poorly drained areas. Start with a high cut in spring gradually reducing it but raise it again in periods of dry weather.

Terracotta pots are attractive but are porous, so require more watering than a glazed pot. To overcome this, line the inside of terracotta pots with thin plastic carrier bags (cut the bottom off first) so as not to obstruct the drainage hole. Fill with compost and plant up.

Then trim off the surplus plastic and tuck down the side. This will reduce the evaporation of water through the sides of these porous pots, so you will need less water to maintain them. It also makes it much easier to empty the pots when required. Use slow-release fertiliser granules to add to the compost. These release nutrients in harmony with the plant growth patterns.

Get out to visit gardens, especially those open in aid of the National Gardens Scheme. A record £3,875,596.00 has been donated to good causes by the NGS from garden visits in 2025. You will get plenty of ideas for you own garden and pick up some interesting plants from the plant sales tables, as well as enjoying some amazing cakes!

There will be a number of gardens open in late January for their snowdrops displays. Look out for the yellow posters or go to the National Garden Scheme website.

Local nurseries often have a wider range of interesting plants than garden centres, often at better prices. Yes, the price of plants has increased in recent years, but think of the time it takes to grow them. An average shrub will be at least three years old.

When ordering vegetables seeds look for varieties that resist common pest and disease problems such as leek rust, carrot root fly, and club root on brassicas. Try the runner bean varieties that have some French bean genes in them, such as 'Firestorm', 'Snowstorm' or 'Moonlight'. They are virtually self-fertile and set better crops when conditions are not ideal, especially in dry weather. They look and taste like a runner bean. This hybrid has not involved genetic engineering.

Remember to dead head perennials to stop them setting seed and perhaps becoming a nuisance. It also encourages them to



produce another flush of flowers. In autumn leave some seed heads for the birds to feast on and also, when touched by a hoar frost, will look most attractive.

Check all tree ties before the winter storms and again in the spring. In late mid to late February put your ear on the trunk of a tree, birch work really well as they have thin bark. You will be able to hear the sap rising – AMAZING. Take care not to prune birch, vines, and acers at this time as they will bleed. Unless of course you are making birch sap wine!

Remember to clean the glass in greenhouses. Every drop of extra light is so valuable to overwintering plants and especially young seedlings in the spring. Do not be tempted to sow annuals too early, because of the low light levels. Late March or early April is fine for most things.

The light level beneath a deciduous oak tree in winter is only 52% of the level above the tree. Just the twigs cut out so much light. Once the leaves are fully developed in June the light level drops to 3.7%. This is why many plants fail to grow well in shade.

Mulch is magic. It has so many beneficial effects for your soil and your plants. A 5cm layer will cut out light and restrict weed seed germination. It will protect the surface structure of your soil from damage by heavy rain. It acts as a layer of insulation for less hardy plants.

It helps reduce surface evaporation of moisture during dry spells and, above all, it looks good. The only downside is that birds tend to flick it onto the lawn or adjacent paths in their search for insects, but that is a small price to pay for all the benefits it brings.

Plant the Right Plant in the Right Place. Do not be tempted to buy on impulse, just because you like the look of the plant in the garden centre. Read the label carefully or research the plant online to try to establish whether it is suitable for your garden.

Does it require sun or shade, wet or well-drained conditions, will it grow too big, is it invasive, is it the right colour? The easiest way to make a border look good, is to decide on a colour theme, and stick to it, repeating a colour or plant along a border to add rhythm to the scheme.

Follow these tips and your garden will reward you.

JANUARY GARDEN TIPS

- Check tree ties and stakes. Adjust those that are too tight and tighten those that are not!
- Plant when the weather is mild and when the soil is not wet, sticky or frozen hard. Improve the planting area with well-rotted compost or manure.
- Protect from deer and rabbits where damage is likely. Keep plants weed free and mulch well.
- After frost, check around shrubs and roses for signs of soil upheaval and wind-rock. Firm the soil back down with your feet.
- Root hardwood cuttings this month. Always choose healthy shoots as cuttings. Easy ones to root include Forsythia, Escallonia, Ribes, Cornus and Salix.
- Trim Virginia creeper, Boston ivy, rambling roses and other climbers away from windows, gutters and eaves.
- Cut the side branches off your old Christmas tree and use these to cover tender plants in the garden. This will keep the worst of the frost off and yet allow the plant to breathe at the same time.
- Shred Christmas wrapping paper and mix it into your compost heap.
- Buy hardy plants to brighten your garden in January – Hellebores, Cyclamen, Camellias etc
- Buy pots of snowdrops that are now coming into flower. They establish much easier when transplanted in active growth. Winter Aconites too.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NURSERY

MASBURY, NR. WELLS, SOMERSET BA5 3HA

TEL: 01749 841014 FAX: 01749 841055

www.rockymountainnurseries.co.uk



COME & SEE OUR FINE RANGE OF FRUIT TREES, SHRUBS, GERANIUMS & FUCHSIAS



Visit our MASBURY'S CAFE

Open Mon-Sat 9am-4pm
(Sun 10am-4pm)

SERVING BREAKFASTS Mon-Fri
9-11.15am; Sat 9-11am;
Sun 10-11am; LUNCH 12-2.30pm;
AFTERNOON TEAS
Tel: 01749 841155

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS
WWW.ROCKYMOUNTAINNURSERIES.CO.UK

ALL YOUR GARDENING NEEDS
- SET IN 12 WONDERFUL ACRES -

Ride On Mower Servicing

Annual Service From
£289.99 + VAT

JOHN DEERE

Husqvarna Automower Servicing

Annual Service
£199.99 + VAT

Husqvarna
AUTOMOWER
SERVICING

Winter Servicing

Authorised Service Partners in the South & South West

Handheld Power Tools Servicing

Annual Service
£79.99 + VAT

STIHL

Gator XUV & HPX Servicing

Annual Service From
£299.99 + VAT

JOHN DEERE



www.huntforest.com

Find your local Hunt Forest Group branch at

Green Ore
Green Ore, Wells, Somerset BA5 3ER
Tel: 01934 741 166

Opening hours:
Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.00pm
Saturday: 8.00am – 12.30pm

Email us at info@huntforest.com



TYNING

CHERRY PICKER | LOGS | LANDSCAPING | MAINTENANCE



Hedge Trimming, Gutter Clearing and Repairs, Chimney Repairs and Lining, Bird Cows, TV Aerials and Much More! Commercial and Domestic • **SEASONED HARDWOOD LOGS FOR SALE**
 e-mail: info@tyninglandscapes.co.uk
 website: tyninglandscapes.co.uk • mobile: 07585 956084

What our readers say about us . . .

Just wanted to say thank you for another amazing MT. It's always packed with such diverse topics of interest and has such amazing coverage of small and larger local events – that would otherwise go un-heralded! It's a total joy, from the excellent pictures capturing a great moment and snapshot of humanity to the encouraging features bringing hope in the restorative efforts of communities and nature's own recovery. It puts our local free paper to shame in terms of the showcasing of community events and people's fundraising or community-spirited efforts.
 Sarah Crosse

Mendip Times – *The local monthly magazine*



SPECIALISTS IN LARGE GARDENS

Professional garden maintenance from a company you can trust.

- Qualified Team
- Regular Planned Visits
- Reliable Service

DESIGN - BUILD - MAINTAIN

West Hill, Wells Somerset
hello@westhillgardenservices.co.uk
 01749 321123



Working at height

TYNING Landscapes have a Land Rover Cherry Picker with a 14.5m max height and 6m outreach at 6m high and a Nissan Cabstar with 21m max height and 10m outreach.

Two people plus tools can go up in either basket. They take up other trades or can do some work themselves.

They work with tree surgeons, electricians, roofers, window fitters, exterior cleaners, fabricators, burner installers, chimney sweeps and many more trades.

They do jobs like gutter clearing and repairs, chimney work and repairs, refit slipped or broken roof tiles and flashing. They also sell seasoned hard wood and size graded logs. They are based in Radstock.

A family business

NAILSEA Patio Supplies offers a unique experience of four shops within one – landscaping, building, water gardening and gardening. The family run business is now into its 27th year.

John Marshall and family have been in business for 40 years previously running their own haulage company S & J Transport which is still part of their business. They have been joined by their son, Brian, grandson, Daniel, and granddaughter, Sam.



CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE:
www.nailseapatio supplies.co.uk

OPEN TO TRADE AND GENERAL PUBLIC FOR LANDSCAPING AND BUILDING SUPPLIES, DRIVEWAY BLOCK PAVING, READY MIXED CONCRETE, NATURAL STONE WALLING SPECIALISTS AS BELOW



OPENING HOURS:
 Mon – Fri 7.30am – 4.30pm, Sat 9am – 2pm, Sun 10am – 2pm

NOW AVAILABLE QUALITY PINE SLEEPERS

DELIVERY
 We take the hassle out of getting your purchase to where you need them for both trade and retail customers. We deliver to any area, from small quantities to up to 15 tonnes. We can supply much larger quantities and unlimited tonnage on arrangement.

TRADE ACCOUNTS WELCOME

The Coalyard, Station Close, Backwell,
 North Somerset BS48 1TJ • Tel: 01275 851706
www.nailseapatio supplies.co.uk • email: enquiries@nailseapatio supplies.co.uk

Follow our facebook page for special offers.

Gardeners praised



WESTFIELD Parish Council held its annual Grant Scheme and It's Your Neighbourhood Presentation evening.

It said this year's It's Your

Neighbourhood participants demonstrated exceptional dedication and creativity with their gardening.

Awards were made to: Waterside Valley – **Level 4: Thriving**; Larch Court Allotments – **Level 5: Outstanding**; Westfield Allotment and Gardening Society (WAGS) – **Level 5: Outstanding**; Fosse Way School – **Level 5: Outstanding**; Westfield Primary School – **Level 5: Outstanding**.

Representatives from numerous community groups shared insights into their work and the positive impact the council's grant funding will have on their projects.

The council said: "The evening was a fantastic celebration of community spirit, showcasing the passion, creativity and teamwork that makes Westfield such an amazing place to live and work!"

Tincknell

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

From Frosty Walks to Fireside Warmth: We're here for Your Essential Christmas Needs

ARIAT DEPUIS 1853

The Original MUCK BOOT COMPANY

LE CHAMEAU 1927

SKELLERUP SKELLERUP-HOLDINGS LIMITED

Dry Seasoned Logs

Smokeless Coal

Kindling

Heating Pellets

Flogas Eco Logs

Hotmax Eco Logs

Kiln Dried Logs

and so much more

Visit our stores for all your footwear and heating fuel needs

Christmas & New Year Opening Hours

Christmas Eve 8am-4pm	Monday 29 th Dec 9am-5pm
Christmas Day CLOSED	Tuesday 30 th Dec 9am-5pm
Boxing Day CLOSED	New Years Eve 9am-4pm
Saturday 27 th Dec 9am-4pm	New Years Day CLOSED
Sunday 28 th Dec 10am-4pm	Friday 2 nd Jan 8am-5.30pm

Wells - Glastonbury Rd, BA5 1TH. 01749 683150
 Congresbury - Brinsea Rd, BS49 5JG. 01934 832318
www.tincknellcountrystore.co.uk

www.
**PERFECT
PAVE**.com

*Showroom open 8am-5pm
Mon-Fri 8am-12noon Sat*

*"Passionate and professional
about paving"*

The Showroom, Tarnock, near Axbridge, BS26 2SL

Call us on 01934 740163

Email info@perfectpave.com



Timberwork Buildings

Bespoke buildings to suit you

We specialise in the manufacture of quality standard and bespoke garden buildings to suit your individual needs including:-

WORKSHOPS/GARAGES

GARDEN SHEDS

SHELTERS & STABLES

PLAYHOUSES

Let our dedicated team assist you in your choice whatever your budget... Full design, installation and delivery service available - customise your shed to suit your needs

YOU ARE WELCOME TO VISIT US AND SEE OUR SHOW MODELS – OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

THE TIMBERYARD • SHUTE SHELVE • CROSS • NEAR AXBRIDGE

Tel: 01934 732 396 • www.timberworkbuildings.co.uk • e.mail: info@timberworkbuildings.co.uk

British Council award



PUPILS and teachers at Chew Stoke Church School held a joint worship with their partner school in Uganda, Christian Life School, via video link.

In February Chew Stoke will receive an International School Award for Global Learning from the British Council, thanks to its

commitment to global partnership.

Call to help children with reading in local schools

CORAM Beanstalk, a national children's charity with over 50 years' experience of supporting children to become confident, independent readers, is looking for volunteers in the Shepton Mallet area.

The charity trains and supports community volunteers to encourage children to read by building relationships and create a space where children choose to read and build essential skills.

All partner schools receive a starter pack of Beanstalk Brilliant Books so volunteers can introduce children to a wide variety of resources and help each child to find and explore their own identity as a reader.

Amy Lewis, head of Coram Beanstalk, said: "Reading is such a fundamental skill for children to develop during their early years, but children who find it a struggle and don't have an adult to read with on a regular basis can start to fall behind their peers, which can lead to a loss of confidence and reading enjoyment."

Each volunteer will receive training and will support on average three children for 20-30 minutes, at least once a week.

For details visit: www.corambeanstalk.org.uk
or call 020 7729 4087



Sidcot School is a co-educational Independent Day & Boarding School for ages 3-18. We provide a supportive environment to help your child thrive both personally and academically.







DISCOVER MORE...

Open Morning
30 January 2026

Scan to book ▶









Downside launches new Sixth Form programme

DOWNSIDE has unveiled its new Sixth Form Horizons Programme, a major initiative designed to give students greater independence, ownership and breadth in their learning.

Starting sixth form is one of the most exciting milestones in any student's education. At Downside, it marks a shift towards true independence, with students choosing their subjects, shaping their day and taking a more active role in collaborative, discussion-led lessons.

This is supported by specialist tutors, extensive leadership opportunities, a rich PSHEE programme and a wide choice of A Level and BTEC subjects.

The new Horizons programme builds on this foundation by offering a bespoke Saturday-morning enrichment timetable across five strands: Academic Excellence & Independent Learning; Creative Expression & Inquiry; Life

Skills; Whole Self Development; and Service, Leadership & the World of Work.

Each sixth former can design their own pathway, selecting from modules such as EPQ, public speaking, cookery, first aid, driving lessons, athletic development, fine art, interview skills, charity work and finance and budgeting. The aim is to help students develop the skills, confidence and curiosity needed to thrive both in the classroom and beyond.

Downside's sixth form sits at the heart of a school community known for its strong pastoral care, academic ambition and co-curricular opportunities. The Horizons programme adds a new dimension to this experience, giving students the space to explore their interests, discover new strengths and prepare for life after school.

Students are also enjoying the stunning new sixth form centre which offers plenty of places to work, relax and socialise.

Interim head, Mike Randall, commented: "Our new Sixth Form Horizons Programme represents a bold step forward in how we prepare young people for life beyond school. Sixth form at Downside is a time for genuine independence, curiosity and ambition, and Horizons gives our students the freedom to shape their own pathway while gaining the skills and confidence they need to thrive.

"By combining academic stretch with practical life skills, creative exploration and meaningful leadership opportunities, we are equipping every student to become a capable, well-rounded and compassionate young adult ready to make their mark on the world."

DOWNSIDE SCHOOL



- Co-educational day & boarding school for pupils aged 11-18
- 500 acres of Somerset countryside near Bath and Bristol
- Full daily minibus service available from Bath, Chew Valley, Frome, Castle Cary & villages in between
- Awarded 'Outstanding' in all categories by Catholic Schools Inspectorate May 2024
- New Sixth Form Centre opened December 2024
- Organ, choral, music, art, drama, sports, academic, product design & all-rounder scholarships available + means-tested bursaries

OPEN MORNINGS: 7 March & 16 May 2026

**CALL ISSY HARTNELL ON 01761 235103 OR EMAIL
ADMISSIONS@DOWNSIDE.CO.UK TO FIND OUT MORE**

  www.downside.co.uk | Downside School, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Somerset, BA3 4RJ

UBLEY WINTER MARKET



The catering crew

UBLEY PTA's popular winter craft market returned after a five-year hiatus and was warmly received by everyone who visited it. It raised £789 for PTA funds.



Jo Green selling candles



The team from Chew Magna's Pet Hub

CHEW MAGNA



Chew Magna School choir



Congresbury brass



Crowds listening to the school choir



Soft toy tombola

CHRISTMAS IN EAST HARTREE



THE village's Christmas brunch had nature as its theme with a range of family activities and displays.



Genevieve, aged ten, with Rob Handy and his daughter Aneira, who is nearly two



Nikki Joseph painting the face of Alice, aged eight

THE East Harptree PTA Christmas Market was a great success with Father Christmas making an appearance.



Benjamin having his face painted by Claire Greenhalgh, with Alison Johnson and former head of the local school Carol Wheatley



Janet Parsons (left) and Gail Wolfenden supporting Safe Havens for Donkeys



Pictured (l to r) Lorraine Cullen, Nicola Haigh, Sue Hemmings, Daisy Bowie-Sells and Bernice Roberts



East Harptree's theatre was busy

Maurice Hewins on the “golden age” of Mendip caving

Maurice Hewins, aged 87, describes himself as a recently retired caver “as I can't get underground these days (except for show caves) I still like to talk and write about old times. It keeps the brain active”. These are his memories of caving on Mendip

THE decade from 1955-1965 was something of a golden age for caving on Mendip. Living standards were rising along with car ownership and it became easier for cavers to spend more time at their hobby. The caving clubs had built a series of huts to enable them to spend weekends on Mendip, with a concentration of three at Priddy, conveniently close to the Hunters Lodge.

Also in close proximity to these huts were three major cave systems, Swildon's Hole, Saint Cuthbert's Swallet and Eastwater Cavern. Major discoveries were regularly being made. In Swildon's, cave divers were making steady progress following the stream towards Wookey Hole.

After hours grovelling underground, it was inevitable that cavers would gather at the Hunters, kept then as now by the Dors family, for food, beer and to exchange stories of their adventures.

At weekends cavers would pack the smoke-filled bars and, well lubricated with ale, they sang. A growing repertoire of original caving songs filled the air and these songs were recognised at the time as true folk songs.

I first came to Mendip in 1958 in the back of a canvas-topped lorry with a party under the auspices of Surrey Youth Services. After pitching tents at Manor Farm, we were organised into two groups and led underground by members of the Bristol Exploration Club and The Shepton Mallet Caving Club.

I went to Swildon's and it is sufficient to say that we all found it like nothing we had experienced before, both exciting and frightening at times, especially on the ladder pitches. We came out tired, wet through and a little bruised. For several of the group once was enough, but within a year eight of us had joined the Wessex Cave Club.

My mate John Thomas and I are still members. Now in old age it is encouraging that the same experiences are enjoyed by young people today, even though youth leaders now are so encumbered by excessive regulations. Without doubt the best way to start caving is to approach a caving club.

Of course, the equipment and clothing for caving is always improving, which has enabled explorers to achieve greater discoveries. The lights used today have



Maurice after digging 2018

little resemblance to the bike lamps and torches we used in the 50s. The previous generation often used candles!

Some of us didn't even wear helmets on our first trip, but miners' helmets, made of something resembling compressed cardboard, were available from a firm in Radstock.

The preferred light was a brass carbide lamp which cost seven shillings and sixpence. You could buy carbide from cycle shops, but as the flame often went out under waterfalls, a back-up torch was essential. Rescues as a result of lamp failure, a regular occurrence then, are practically unheard of today

It was quite usual for cavers to wear ordinary old clothes (dry grots), usually covered by a boilersuit, and ex-army boots with studs. The latter have been superseded by wellies. Hypothermia was a constant danger, and it sadly led to two deaths.

A big gamechanger came when government surplus dry suits, known as goon suits, became available, initially at £1 each. These came in two versions, made of orange rubberised fabric, which could be



The Wessex hut at Hillgrove 1961



Surrey cavers 1958. John Thomas is on the left

inflated to increase insulation.

Goon suits were fragile and had to be worn under a boilersuit. The neck sealed type kept the caver dry even when diving sumps and were popular with cave divers, until the wet suit caught on.

When dealing with pitches, lifelines were and still are recommended and some were of hemp, which could become rotten, but synthetic ropes were taking over. The pre-war rope ladders with wooden rungs had almost all been replaced by lighter and safer ones made of wire cable with

aluminium alloy rungs.

One piece of kit not seen today was the knobbly dog, which was used instead of a handline. It was a single length of steel wire, with short alloy rungs, and easier to grip.

Often long queues built up at the 40ft wet pitch in Swildon's and on rainy days rescue call-outs often happened there. All this was to change in 1968, when a huge flood washed out the rift below, opening a much easier free climbable route.

Shortly after this period a major change



Maurice in Goon suit, 1962

occurred, with the advent of single rope techniques. I first saw this employed on the now dry 40ft pitch in Swildon's. I thought the guy was mad, But the method has allowed cavers of today to safely tackle long pitches which would be near impossible on ladders.

This, together with electric lamps with long capacity, special clothing and diving equipment means explorers today are making spectacular discoveries worldwide. It is a far cry from rope ladders and candles of the early days.



Cavers 1961



Lamb Lair

A love of lying



By Dr PHIL HAMMOND

MOST people claim to be truth seekers and to dislike lying, but is that in itself a lie? Why do TV programmes such as “The Traitors” and “Would I Lie to

You” get such high

ratings? The comedian Alan Carr, who won *Celebrity Traitors*, turned out to be a brilliantly lovable liar, and not only did his chosen charity benefit from his ability to deceive, so will his career.

We say we hate lying but we love a good liar, at least in a light entertainment context. Maybe we try to draw a distinction between lying for entertainment and lying to cover up some appalling error or indiscretion, but I doubt it's that simple.

In this age of deliberate disinformation, turbocharged by uncontrolled social media, enough people choose to be lied to (e.g. the benefits of Brexit) and choose politicians who clearly and repeatedly lie to us (take your pick). If we hate liars so much, why do we elect them to have such power over us?

If you believe in evolution, and I do, then we – and other species – evolved to deceive for a purpose, namely, to survive and thrive. There are some fabulous examples of deceit in nature, to kill or multiply, or to avoid being eaten.

Orchids have evolved to mimic the sexual parts of a bee to get it to pollinate for them. A moth that can magically match its appearance to the bark of a tree is less likely to be eaten by a bird or lizard. This in turn triggers the evolution of better eyesight in birds and lizards if they want to avoid going hungry.

Moving up the food chain, studies on monkey and ape brains have clearly found that the more neocortex they have (a mark of intelligence), the better they are at lying for personal gain.

Similarly, the brighter children are, for a given age, the more often they lie.

And not only do more intelligent humans lie more to others to get their way, they lie to themselves to self-justify their behaviour. We deceive ourselves all the better to deceive others.

Being challenged catches less intelligent liars out, but it often helps the cleverest ones become even better at it. And so those who are brilliant at both social deception and self-deception often rise to the top without appreciating what good liars they are. And we don't appreciate it either, which is why we keep on voting for them.

So, what's to be done? There are high hopes that Artificial Intelligence might ride to the rescue and put a halt on influencers and politicians (often men) talking absolute bollocks with complete confidence, but I have my doubts.

Deception is critical to everything from winning elections to winning wars, and if artificial intelligence evolves to be better than human thinking, it will learn to lie better than us and disguise the fact that it is lying better than we can. If politicians cover up their mistakes, imagine how much better AI will be at it.

Lying gets you to the top in politics and also in comedy. The best gags come at us out of the blue, and they are usually made-up nonsense. Comics tell lies for laughs all the time, whilst pretending to tell a true story. We forgive them if they make us laugh.

So perhaps the best strategy for politicians is to assume they're lying and laugh loudly at everything they say, even if it isn't remotely funny. I'm not sure what it will achieve, other than a rapid descent into anarchy, but Question Time will become much funnier to watch. Happy New Year.

Dr Phil has been voted Britain's sexiest comedy doctor 2026 by the readers of *Miniature Donkey Magazine*.

Plop the Raindrop

YOU are probably wondering where I've been. This is what happened. Some time ago I was travelling in a cloud over a vineyard in France when we hit a hillside.

I did what little water droplets do and as the cloud went higher, my mates and I rained down on to the leaf of a vine. From there we dribbled very slowly down into the ground.

This is obviously quite a long process and as more raindrops fell, the deeper we went into the dark, warm earth.

It was actually quite restful, apart from worms and bugs burrowing about hoping to swallow us. I've told you before about being drunk by various creatures.

I never knew that the roots of vines grew so deep. I must have been several metres underground when I got sucked into the plant, a rather fine Merlot, I understand.

Then I ended up in a beautiful juicy grape – there must have been thousands of them, like shiny black pearls, on the plants in just this one area.

Do you know what happens to grapes? They get picked and squished so all the juice runs out. That juice, with me in it, goes into big barrels where it starts to turn into wine.

It's not an unpleasant experience, but for some reason I can't remember much about it. After a while we get put into bottles and can sleep in there for years until the wine is ready to drink.

There's a lot of wine drunk by grown-ups over Christmas and New Year. Even children are sometimes allowed a sip. After being stuck in it for so many years, I can't say I'm that keen.

One Christmas the bottle I was in got opened for Christmas dinner, so I got poured into a very nice crystal glass, reflecting the lights from the Christmas tree.

I got drunk – as did some of the adults – and inevitably I was later flushed down the loo, which is a fairly common experience for me. I won't go into the details.

I wish you a Happy Christmas and New Year.

MENDIP GRANDAD

Phil is speaking to the University of the Third Age in Wells on January 14th



Ask Dr. Hannah

Is Fluoride Good For Us?

Dr. Hannah Pepper (GDC no: 76037) is one of the most highly qualified dentists in the South West, with many years of experience in hospital surgery and in private practice. She runs a dental practice in Wells which takes referrals for gum disease, clear aligners, implants, sedation, oral surgery, root fillings, dentures, and 3D radiography.

How does fluoride help teeth?

Fluoride works by interacting with the enamel outer layer of a tooth which is made of a substance called *hydroxyapatite*. Fluoride exchanges with calcium, making *fluorapatite* which is more resistant to acid attack.

Fluoride also inhibits bacteria from producing the acid that causes decay, inhibits demineralisation and promotes remineralisation of the tooth surface.

When was fluoride first used?

In the early 1900s, dentists noticed a correlation: people who lived in places where there were high natural fluoride levels in the water had less decay.

Studies such as the 1940's study by UK dentist Robert Weaver comparing South Shields (with natural fluoride) to North Shields (low fluoride), confirmed significantly lower decay rates in the higher-fluoride area.

These discoveries led to the addition of fluoride to the water supplies which began in 1964 in Birmingham. The use of fluoride in toothpaste became standard practice in the 1970's. Today only 10% of the population has a water supply with high enough fluoride levels to be effective against decay. The Mendip area is one of those where natural fluoride levels are low, and there is no fluoride added to the water supply.

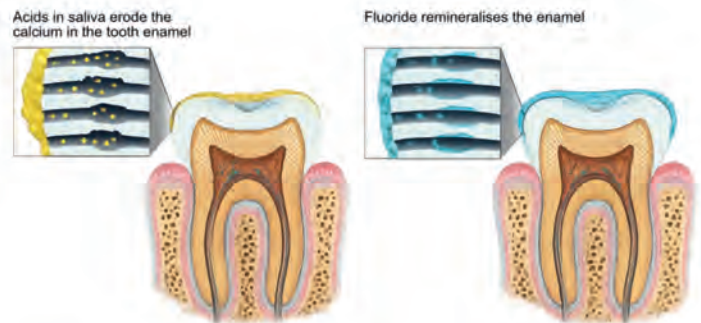
What difference has fluoride made?

Fluoride has been shown to reduce decay by 25-60%. The use of fluoride toothpaste and the use of fluoride in the water supplies has been recognised as one of the 20th century's greatest public health achievements, working at population level and helping narrow public health inequalities. Fluoride is thought to be responsible for a reduction in complete total loss of teeth in the over 65's by 22% since the 1970's.

Are there concerns about fluoride safety?

Social media has made alarming claims about the use of 'medication' in the water supply, and unsafe levels of fluoride.

These claims have been debunked by many studies and over the many years of use fluoride use.



Remineralisation of tooth enamel with fluoride

Do we still need fluoride in our water?

The use of fluoride is supported by the health authorities and its use continues to be monitored. The use of water fluoridation is less crucial now that the use of fluoride toothpaste is universal and it is unlikely that further areas will have fluoride added to the water supply.

Should I speak to my dentist?

Some individuals have a higher risk of decay and for them fluoride can be provided at higher levels by dentists as a prescription-only high-fluoride toothpaste, or as a paste applied to the teeth in the dentist's chair.

What's the bottom line about fluoride?

In summary, for the regulated levels of fluoride used in UK water and dental products, the consensus among major health authorities is that fluoride is a safe and highly effective way to protect teeth and improve dental care equality.

FOR MORE INFO
SCAN HERE



Rock House
Dental Practice

5 Priory Road, Wells, BA5 1SR
01749 674250 www.rockhousedental.co.uk



BROCK & HOULFORD
— EXPERT EYECARE —



ENROUTE

See clearly.
Drive confidently.
Day or night.

Don't let the darkness make you call it a night on driving in the evening.

Special offer
1st October 2025
- 28th February 2026

HOYA
FOR THE VISIONARIES

Westway Farm, Wick Rd
Bishop Sutton, BS39 5XP

01275 332882

www.brockandhouldord.co.uk

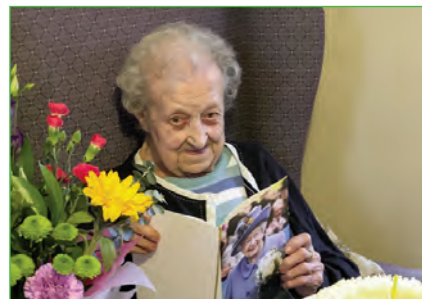
westway@highperformancevision.co.uk



COURT HOUSE

Award
Winning
Care
Home

The Care Home with a difference. We offer all that you would expect from a high quality, family run Care Home set in a Georgian House in the lovely village of Cheddar, Somerset.



You can live your life to the full and choice is our favourite word. Rooms now available with full en-suite facilities and total personal care is offered.

Rated by the CQC as good in all areas

The Manager – Chris Dando • 01934 742131 • chriscourthouse@gmail.com
Court House Retirement Home, Church Street, Cheddar, Somerset BS27 3RA
www.courthouseretirementhome.co.uk

Free prostate cancer tests



Members of the team at the event in Street

and it follows the success of the group's seventh and final event of 2025 which saw more than 300 tests carried out by a team at the Victoria Club in Street. Of these, 77 men were advised to see their GP for further advice.

Local MP Sarah Dyke dropped in to the session and spent time talking to the phlebotomist team, Lions volunteer stewards and members of SPSA. Peter Hopwood, from the SPSA, said: "She was very encouraging about the work we are doing throughout Somerset. Special thanks also to Street Parish Council, Specsavers, The Becketts Inn, Glastonbury and Street Lions, Fondo Lounge and St Dunston's Masonic Lodge for their generous sponsorship of this event."

SOMERSET Prostate Support Association is to hold a further free testing event in February.

The session, in Wells Town Hall on Saturday, February 21st, is open to all men aged 40 and over

FREE PROSTATE CANCER TESTING EVENT



**Saturday 21st February 2026, 10am-4pm
Wells Town Hall, Market Place, Wells, BA5 2RB**

Somerset Prostate Support Association is hosting a FREE event on Saturday 21st February 2026 for men aged 40 and over.

Every year in the UK 40,000 men are diagnosed with Prostate Cancer and around 10,000 die from the disease. Early diagnosis can be crucial to successful treatment.

Appointments take 10-15 minutes and MUST be BOOKED ONLINE, IN ADVANCE. It will NOT be possible to be tested on the day without a prior appointment.

All tests are confidential and are carried out by qualified medical practitioners.

To book your appointment at a time to suit you:-

1. Visit <https://myspatests.org.uk/events/>
2. Register yourself using your email address.
3. Click 'Find an event' - search for SPSA.
4. Select the event, scroll down, choose a convenient time slot and book it.

For any questions regarding the tests please contact Peter Hopwood:- telephone 01458 441669 or email peterhopwood46@gmail.com.

Donations to SPSA for future testing events will be gratefully received either at the event or via spsa.uk where you can donate online.

Bookings for the Wells session are open and are available at: <https://myspatests.org.uk/events/>

Friends Indeed

Making lives better, one visit at a time...

Affordable help, support and good company so that you can continue to enjoy life in your own home

- Shopping & errands
- Cleaning & housekeeping
- Errands and social outings
- Cooking & meal preparation
- Taking you to appointments
- Support after hospital stay
- Respite for family carers

No rushing, no strangers, just real support from someone you'll get to know and trust.

All police checked, referenced & insured

01749

705367 www.friendsindeed.co.uk



Wedmore Dental Practice

Sharing our passion for health....

Now Accepting New Patients

Whether you are looking to protect healthy teeth or completely transform your smile we are proud to offer a comprehensive range of private dental services for the whole family.

General Dentistry

- Check-ups & Hygiene
- Fillings, Extractions, Crowns
- Root Canal & Dentures

Family & Preventive Care

- Children's Dentistry
- Fissure Sealants & Fluoride Varnish
- Hygienist care with plaque & stain removal
- Home Visits Available

Cosmetic & Therapeutic Treatments

- Teeth Whitening & Veneers
- Anti-Wrinkle & Skin Booster injections
- Facial Muscle Injections (Masseter & Temporalis) for Pain & Aesthetic Contouring



Book Your Appointment Today!

01954 713013

www.wedmoredental.co.uk

In the heart of Wedmore, Somerset, BS28 4EG



Live the life you choose at Wessex House.

- ✓ All-inclusive respite breaks
- ✓ Individually-tailored residential care
- ✓ 24/7 hospital standard nursing care
- ✓ Award-winning, not-for-profit care provider



Somerton | TA11 7PB



somersetcare.co.uk
0800 817 4925



Not for profit,
all for you.



WRINGTON DICKENSIAN FAYRE



One of the stallholders



Some of the lanterns



Leading the parade



North Somerset MP Sadik Al-Hassan (left) with fayre organiser Ian Harries



Wrington Explorer Scouts



The Port of Bristol Shanty Men



Congresbury Singers

Double celebration for town amenity

CAMPAIGNERS trying to buy the former Amulet entertainment centre in Shepton Mallet had two good reasons to raise a glass at a gathering in December.

As well as celebrating raising more than £126,000 from a community share offer, the event at SS Peter and Paul Church in the town also saw a cake cutting ceremony to mark the 50th anniversary of the official opening of the building.

Everyone who bought shares has now become a member of The Amulet Centre



A cake cutting ceremony to mark the 50th anniversary of the Amulet opening

Limited, which is the charitable

community benefit society that has been created to eventually own and operate the Amulet.

The building has already hosted a number of pop-up events, including lantern making workshops ahead of the Shepton Mallet Lantern Parade, on Saturday, December 20th.

The first full board of directors of The Amulet Centre Limited will be formally elected at the society's Annual General Meeting, which will take place on Wednesday, January 28th at 7pm.

For details, visit: www.buytheamulet.org.uk

Fatstock Show marks 125th anniversary

FROME and District Fatstock Show saw more than 1,000 cattle, sheep and pigs in the sale rings as it celebrated its 125th anniversary.

Overall show champion was a 646kgs Aberdeen Angus heifer, exhibited by Stuart Perkins of H G Perkins who farm

at Terry Hill, Radstock.

The day also saw the opening of the new Frome Market health hub building, open every first and third Wednesday of the month, offering walk-in access to health and wellness checks for the farming community and their families.



The supreme champion



The reserve champion



Presentations were made to Diana Bourne, from the health hub and Helen Jefferis, from the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance



Guests and some of the team outside the new health hub building

TEMPLE CLOUD



THE Christmas lights went up in Temple Cloud thanks to the Temple Cloud in Bloom team. One of the organisers, Beccy Angel, said: "It's been lovely to see the village lights twinkling again, bringing warmth, cheer, and that unmistakable Christmas sparkle to our community spaces."

The team will be out again on Saturday January 10th, meeting at 10am at Paulmont Rise.



Pictured (l to r) Diane Turner, Anne Wheeler and Beccy Angel

Details: tcibinfo@yahoo.com

WESTFIELD



Westfield Parish Council's Christmas light switch on featured the Westfield Voices Choir and the Midsomer Norton and Radstock Silver Band.

(Photos courtesy of Jenny Short, Norton Radstock Photographic Society)

CHEW STOKE



A TABLE-top sale raised £800 towards heating costs at St Andrew's Church, Chew Stoke. One of the organisers, Hazel Wedlake, said:

"It was well attended by all ages, a cheerful atmosphere prevailed and craft producers made good sales too."



Clare Downey (left) and Hazel Wedlake

PENSFORD CHRISTMAS FAIR



Shane Taylor with his granddaughter Indi

PENSFORD Memorial Hall was busy with a wide variety of stalls, including many selling Christmas goodies. The fair raised £690 for hall funds.

One of the organisers, Karen Lawrence, said: "Thanks to everyone who came along. We could not have done it without you."



The kitchen crew (l to r) Steve Wilcox, Charles Wookey, Sheila Wilcox and Janet Smith



EXPERT GUIDANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR LAND AND HOMEOWNERS

Our team at the Redhill branch is celebrating after winning top honours for customer care in the British Property Awards.

This recognition follows a rigorous judging process where “mystery shoppers” tested our commitment to professional standards. Robert McLean from the British Property Awards noted that winning agents set a benchmark for exceptional customer service over an extended period of time.

Clients have echoed this sentiment, with one reviewer stating: “We would highly recommend GTH. They were absolutely fantastic—going above and beyond to support the process and keep things moving. Proactive, thorough, responsive, and very friendly. Thank you!”

In 2025, we experienced a year of mixed messages in the property market. A key takeaway is that realistic pricing is essential for successful sales. Those who took our advice managed to navigate the changing market effectively. We believe this message will remain vital for homeowners in 2026.

Our auction department has also seen success over the past year, achieving exceptional prices that often exceed vendors’ expectations. In the auction environment,

properties reveal their true market value competitively, making it an effective way to sell land and property.

At the start of the year, there were concerns that land and farms might decline in value due to upcoming Inheritance Tax changes set for April 2026. However, locally, we haven’t seen any value reduction, as demand for land remains high due to limited supply.

With our local knowledge, we can provide valuable guidance on pricing for any property, farm, or land. If you are looking to sell this year, contact our expert team on 0117 203 5577 and experience our award-winning service first hand.



Tom Rawlings
Residential Manager
tom.rawlings@gth.net
0117 203 5577



Robert Baker
Partner & Auctioneer
robert.baker@gth.net
0117 203 5577



Flooring experts

ASHLEY Leisure Services have adopted a “one stop shop” for the delivery of specialist leisure maintenance, repair and refurbishment of squash courts and sports hall floors.

But they also specialise in flooring for a wide range of other areas including domestic homes, commercial businesses, army bases, schools, colleges, universities and village halls.

They are based in Somerset, but are working right across the country.

Wooden Floor Sanding

Rip up your old tired carpet and let us bring your wooden floor to life!



- Latest cyclone dust-free commercial sanders
- We use sports hall commercial-grade sealants for extra durability
- Quick-drying sealants allow works to be carried out within just 1 day!
- Specialising in the installation, refurbishment and repair of all wooden flooring

Restore the beauty - enjoy for years!

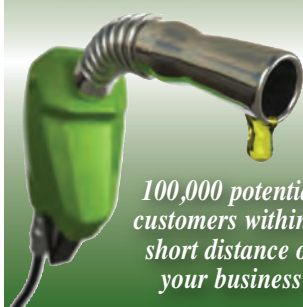
Free Quotations

Call Ashley Leisure Services

01278 497700 • 07974 758294

www.squashcourtmaintenance.co.uk

Mendip Times reduces travel costs



100,000 potential customers within a short distance of your business

P & C Logs

Friendly prompt service from Phil & Colleen at their farm in Charterhouse
Quality seasoned beech and ash hardwood, chopped and split into a variety of load options (with free delivery).



Call Phil on 07734 098323, or Colleen on 07785 250033

QUALITY KITCHEN MAKEOVERS

by simply replacing the doors and worktops

DREAM DOORS®
NEW LIFE FOR OLD KITCHENS



AFTER

BEFORE



MODERN

CLASSIC

TRADITIONAL

CONTEMPORARY

- > Up to 50% less than a new fully fitted kitchen
- > Replacement kitchen doors
- > Cost effective made to measure solution
- > Worktops and appliances
- > Quick installation in 2-3 days by local professionals

5 The Precinct,
Brinsea Road,
Congresbury, BS49 5JG

Call us now for a free estimate:

01934 832361

Checkatrade.com 9.8/10
Where reputation matters

dreamdoors.co.uk

THE UK'S #1 KITCHEN MAKEOVER COMPANY



BESPOKE ROOFING

GENERAL BUILDERS

Dear Homeowner,

Due to the current economic situation and to keep all our staff in full employment, we are offering huge savings on all types of roofing work. From a single tile to a new roof, we also install maintenance free UPVC fascia boards that will not crack or peel and will never need painting.

Bespoke Roofing



- **Complete Overhauls**
- 10 tiles replaced, chimney re-pointed and ridge and hips guttering cleaned out from £945
- **New Flat Roofs**
- Single garage from £1950
- **New Roofs**
- Terraced from £5650 - Re-guttering from £875
- Terraced excluding down pipes
- **Plastic**
- Fascias ~ soffits & guttering
- Three bed semi from £2195
- We also do **Moss Removal** at very competitive rates!



Don't put off fixing a minor roof leak, it can soon become a major problem!
Help support local businesses.

If you are interested in any of our offers, please get in touch

✉ bespokeroofingservices@gmail.com ☎ Bath 01225 805661 Shaftesbury 01747 702116

Or visit www.bespokeroofingservices.co.uk

Excited to see what 2026 will bring

ON behalf of all my team, can I offer you all the very best festive greetings and wish you a happy New Year.

No one can predict what the coming months will bring, but one thing you can rely on is that we will be there to help you every step of the way if you decide the time is right to sell your property and find a new place to call home.

You might not be thinking about it right now, but once the tree comes down and the decorations are put away your mind could start to consider pastures new. And when that time comes you know who to call.

2025 has been a bumper year for us and the number of completions we have achieved has vastly surpassed the competition, confirming us as the agent of choice in the Chew Valley. That is no idle boast, it is confirmed by the statistics that are produced regularly put us at number one by any measurement you choose.

That kind of recognition means we enter our 7th year with a spring in our step and so much enthusiasm, combined with an ever increasing expertise and our renowned promise to employ our “Dedication, Imagination and Delivery” for the benefit of each and every client. We apply our detailed knowledge of the local market and bring an unrivalled level of personal service, regularly going the extra mile when it is required.

Despite some gloomy national stories about the property market, the Chew Valley remains a sought after area. There are so many people who want to share our lifestyle and join our community and they have money they are willing to spend. However, they are not coming with blank cheques.

Therefore it is vital that your property is marketed professionally and prepared with care to look its best. Our photography is second to none and our state of the art website makes it easy for



potential buyers to use and so gives you the best chance of attracting serious offers.

But above all, my number one piece of advice is that you should price your property realistically. So many people are seduced by agents you promise the earth and propose an inflated price in order to secure an instruction. And we have all seen nice houses remain on the market for months on end. That’s not our way. We can provide you with the best and most trusted advice that will deliver the outcome you need and get you moving.

JOANNA TILEY

As we come to the end of our 6th year of selling beautiful homes in the Chew Valley and surrounding areas, we want to extend our thanks to everyone who has been part of our journey.

WE WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY AND PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS!

We look forward to getting you moving in 2026!



www.valentinouk.com

Kitchens - Offices - Wardrobes - Boot Rooms - Bathrooms - Interiors
Project Management - Building - Electrics - Decorating - Flooring - Plumbing - Tiling
Open: Monday- Friday 10am - 5pm Tel: 01761 220033

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Caring for Your Home in 2026

Our Heating team looks after boilers, tanks, servicing and repairs. Our Solar team can help you make the most of renewable energy, and our Electrical team is on hand for everything from small jobs to full rewires and EV chargers. And of course, our Fuel team will continue delivering your heating oil safely and reliably all year round.

enquiries@tincknells.com • 01749 673661 • Tincknells.com



Tincknell Fuels

New Year Re-Solar-olutions – make 2026 the year your energy works for you

JANUARY is resolution season, and while most involve promising ourselves fewer biscuits or more steps, there's one area where people genuinely want follow-through – getting household costs under control. Right now, energy sits top of that list for a lot of Somerset properties.

Solar fits that January mindset because a well-planned system keeps giving back long after the celebrations fade. What determines success is rarely the panels alone, but the thinking behind them. Roof layout, shading, inverter choice, storage size and installation method are the details that determine how smoothly everything runs, and how quickly savings stack up.

Sunlit Solar has been designing and installing Solar PV systems in Somerset for more than 20 years. We take a consultative

approach, discussing options properly, encouraging quote comparisons and explaining the reasoning behind each suggested solution so customers feel informed rather than rushed.

Multiple quotes? Sensible. Lots of questions? Even better. Good solar is built



on open conversations, clarity and trusted workmanship, not rushed decision-making.

Battery storage becomes especially useful in winter when generation naturally dips. By charging overnight on cheaper tariffs and using stored power in the day, households can benefit from energy arbitrage – a practical way to increase self-consumption and reduce running costs through darker months.

If lower bills and predictable energy control are high on your list for 2026, it's a great time to join our Solar & Cider Event on February 5th from 6.30pm at Blackford Village Hall (BS28 4NX). Meet industry specialists, hear from happy customers, ask questions directly to experienced installers and request a bespoke estimate for your own property.

Details: www.sunlit-solar.co.uk and Facebook



emPOWERing
local communities



Contact us to discover the earning potential of your roof.

Local, reliable and ready when you are.
Go green, save money and get in touch.

✉ info@sunlit-solar.co.uk
🌐 www.sunlit-solar.co.uk
☎ 01458 834936

20
YEARS'
EXPERIENCE

Protests part of fundraising run

TRACTOR drivers who took part in a charity run around Frome and the surrounding area seized the chance to make their feelings known about Government changes to inheritance tax and other threats to agriculture.

Hot on the wheels of a nationwide protest in London, the drivers were told of similar protests planned around the country.

The annual run was organised by Frome Young Farmers Club and began from the West Woodlands Showground and went through the town centre before heading to Mells, Vobster and Radstock.

It raised money for Dorothy House Hospice and Hannah's Willberry Wonder Pony.



Some of the team at the driver registration and raffle desk



Heading through Frome town centre



The lead tractors leave the showground



Paul Godden, from Glastonbury, ahead of the start. Paul took part in the London protest



Having a splashing time at the showground



Flying the flag for British farming



WEDMORE BY LAMPLIGHT



Wedmore in Bloom



The choirs from Wedmore First School, Weare and Hugh Sexey



Storm in a Teacup Circus



Carols and lanterns around the tree



Cheddar Vale Lions



Wedmore Guides



Wedmore Scouts

Barefoot is preferable



With **LUCY COUNSELL**

IT has been a quiet month. The weather has put paid to some things and my lack of enthusiasm has put paid to others. I was supposed to go clear round showjumping but the A38 was having drains unblocked and with temporary traffic lights was carnage and so I decided I would just hack out instead rather than sit in traffic getting annoyed and then be battered by wind and rain. Sometimes discretion is the better part of valour.

Instead, this month I thought I would look at horse feet. One of the things which drives me mad in the horse world is how tribal everything can get and horses' feet is one of those things.

On the whole, I want to keep horses barefoot as long as possible. It is the best thing for them and their feet but we know with the modern world, less viable off-road hacking, competing on grass or just feet which don't cope well, then it's not always possible to keep going with this.

It is my belief that £1 spent on the farrier will save £1 with the vet and I am anal about horses' feet. I spend hours annoying my farrier Dom asking questions, discussing the horse's foot, taking photos, trotting up, slow mo video.

Then on top of it all I will fall down internet holes on horses' feet and what we should be doing to maximise angles and prevent issues such as suspensorys and annular ligament damage. I even took the horse to the vets last year for gait analysis so we could increase our data on what she is like and have a baseline for comparison in the future.

Insey has that annoying warmblood issue of one foot taller than the other foot. She has always had it and we have worked very hard to keep the boxy foot under control. What happens is the other foot gets flatter and flatter if we are not careful and the frog shrivels up in the boxy foot as not working as effectively.

If we have traditional shoes on then this problem just becomes exacerbated and long-term I think she would have a huge amount of musculature issues due to uneven feet which would then show up in sports injuries or issues such as sore neck.

I refuse to event without studs as we compete on grass. If you have early times in July, you can often have dewey grass with firm soil and I find a lot of horses struggle in those conditions to get good purchase. Thus, we have a conundrum. Insey's foot does best barefoot, but because of the sport we compete in then we need shoes. I solve it by doing both.

In the winter, as soon as the eventing season has finished, Insey's shoes come off as we are no longer on grass and I use barefoot boots to hack out. Everything we do is on a surface so being barefoot makes no difference.



Flatter foot is nearest. In two months time the feet will look beautiful with nail holes gone and improved foot quality

In fact having no shoes is a lot easier with turnout and not having to worry about lost shoes! I had Sally Bell, from Hoof Help come along, and measure Insey for barefoot boots as having read a bit about barefoot boots had become overwhelmed and I needed guidance. I wanted boots which were as "natural" as possible and did not alter the horse's gait. I ended up with Scoot Boots.

They have been great and really do the job for hacking out. Without boots on Insey can barely make it half a mile when her shoes come off, and you would never know with the Scoot Boots on. They are not totally infallible.

I tend to stop hacking in mud with them because I find they do move a bit otherwise and I don't canter in them because on one hack I forgot to put on the mud straps and they came off so often I was seriously fed up by the end.

If I want a decent canter or a gallop now I go and hire local all-weather gallops where she can be barefoot. Sadly, Insey has a psychological issue with the beach, having been scarred for life by a black bin bag in the wind but that would be another easy option without the need for boots.

For dressage, lessons, arena cross country and showjumping we are just regular barefoot. I know some horses stay barefoot the whole time, but it's just not possible for Insey without the support of Scoot boots and I think having a sore horse is just as detrimental on the musculoskeletal system as poor foot care.

As soon as we get close to wanting to go cross country schooling on grass then shoes go back on and we use heart bars in order to try and keep the frogs working and stop the small flat foot getting smaller and flatter. This season it worked a treat and her feet looked fantastic.

If you had told me a few years ago that I would have barefoot boots, I would have laughed and thought you were winding me up.

If I no longer evented then I would probably keep my horses barefoot 100% of the time. I am now in my second year of doing this and it works well.

Eris will stay barefoot as long as possible, which I am hoping will be until she is five years old. She will then embrace the same winter barefoot lifestyle which Insey has.

Lucy Counsell is a lifelong equestrian with a passion for eventing. She set up the riding club, Equestrian Training South West, served on Area 12 Riding Club committee and has her UKCC2 qualification to coach riding



Equestrian Feed, Supplies & Equipment
Local Stores in Congresbury & Wells



Solidarity at its best



Cath was allowed to see her horses

THE equestrian community has rallied round to help a local event rider who suffered a life changing injury in September. Catherine Fear, aged 27, who lives near Bristol Airport on the family farm, fell off a pony that she was producing and unfortunately the pony fell on top of her and she sustained injury to her spinal cord.

Airlifted immediately to Southmead Hospital,

Cath was operated on very quickly and transferred to intensive care before starting on the long road to recovery and rehabilitation.

Whatever the future holds, Cath is determined to become as independent as possible, with friends and family doing their utmost to make sure no stones are left unturned in a mission to deliver whatever she needs to make this possible.

She is currently in Salisbury Spinal Unit, working hard on her rehab programme and doing well. At the moment she is paralysed from the hips down, but miracles can happen. If anyone can do it, Cath will. She may be tiny, but her level of fight and determination is enormous.

Roger and Karen, Cath's parents, run a family business supplying hay and straw throughout Somerset and beyond. The family business has been in operation since the 1800s and certainly we are all glad they still manage to provide small bales which are so much more manageable for small yards with a one-



person band, as well as looking after the bigger enterprises.

Cath's ongoing needs are going to be both expensive and extensive. Friends have set up a GoFundMe page and the Mendip Farmers' Pony Club party raffle extravaganza and auction raised a whopping sum in excess of £2,500 to swell the fund.

Local businesses have been amazingly generous and individuals have dug deep to do anything they can to help. If anyone would like to contribute to the fund, they can easily do so by using the link to the funding page, which is: <https://gofund.me/2ef684d37>.

Grateful thanks to local businesses who generously donated raffle prizes and especially to Hunter Stables who gave a field shelter which was auctioned at the party. Also Pophams Saddlery at Mark, the Aldwick Estate Vineyard, Yeo Valley, Alvis Brothers Farm shop, Pontispool Equestrian Centre, Mendip Plains Equestrian Centre, Maws Agri near Axbridge and all the families who provided hampers of every description.

Kindness from all quarters has been terrific. Thank you to everyone concerned and not least to the Mendip Farmers for organising such a wonderful party which was enjoyed by all.

JANE PATERSON



An award-winning riding school in the heart of Mendip

**Happy New Year -
Happy New Hobby!**

- ★ Do you or does someone you know want to take up riding, but have never quite got round to it? We now offer riding lesson vouchers – a great way to start the new year with a new hobby
- ★ We can personalise the vouchers and they can be for any financial amount. All vouchers are valid for 12 months.
- ★ Vouchers can be emailed once payment has been received.
- ★ Vouchers can also be gifted forward if the original recipient doesn't wish to take them up.
- ★ (The rider must be within our weight limit and complete a registration form)

Call or email us for more details







**Divoky Riding School, Manor Farm, Downhead,
Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 4LG**
www.divoky.co.uk • Email: info@divoky.co.uk
T: 01749 880233 • M: 07971 207037

Tincknell
COUNTRY STORES
Bringing the Country to Life
www.tincknellcountrystore.co.uk

Equestrian Feed, Supplies & Equipment
Local Stores in Congresbury & Wells

ARIAT CHAMPION Dengie CHATEAU TUBTRUGS Hotline Electric Fencing ALLEN&PAGE BALENO Shires SPILLERS pure

Tincknell
COUNTRY STORES
Bringing the Country to Life
www.tincknellcountrystore.co.uk

Taking the fashion out of cycling



CYCLING
with EDMUND
LODITE

THE question of what to wear when cycling shouldn't be complicated. You'd think the answer would be simple: whatever you like. Yet in the UK, this issue sparks

surprisingly intense debate, revealing a deeper cultural split about what cycling is – and who it's for. On one side sit the lycra loyalists, comfortable in their technical fabrics and aerodynamic helmets. On the other are the would-be everyday riders, quietly wondering why a simple bike ride seems to require a specialist costume.

The paradox is clear: while cycling-specific kit undeniably brings performance and comfort benefits, the perceived need for it may be one of the biggest barriers to cycling uptake in Britain.

For many non-cyclists, exposure to cycling comes filtered through mass media and a background noise of scepticism. When they see cycling events, charity rides, or newspaper photos, the images are almost always the same: a crowd of helmets, high-vis jackets, sunglasses and lycra.

To the uninitiated, it doesn't look like everyday transport – it looks like a uniformed tribe. And tribes, by their nature, are exclusive.

The unintended message is that if you need fluorescent and protective gear just to ride down the road, it must be inherently dangerous. You're expected to visit a specialist shop, spend money, and get kitted up. For many, it simply feels like one hurdle too many – and the car starts to look like the easier option.

When Chris Boardman – a world and Olympic champion – said he'd been

“battered by the cycling community for wearing normal clothes on a bike”, it showed just how strong the pressure to conform can feel.

But it would be unfair – and untrue – to dismiss the need for cycling kit entirely. It exists for good reasons.

Padded shorts make long rides vastly more comfortable, technical fabrics manage heat and sweat, and subtle reflective details can increase visibility without looking like a builder's vest. Performance cycling is demanding; so it's no surprise that dedicated athletes want gear that supports speed, aerodynamics, and comfort.

There's nothing wrong with that. The problem comes when specialist gear is treated as the entry requirement for any kind of cycling. You can be a weekend lycra devotee and also a weekday trousers-and-trainers commuter. The problem isn't the existence of kit – it's the assumption that the uniform defines the activity.

Another source of confusion is our tendency to see cycling as a sport or hobby – something athletic, something you would “gear up” for.

Instead, we should reframe cycling as transportation – simply as a way to get from A to B. As Boardman said, “we need to rediscover cycling as a wonderful utility and a sport, not one or the other”.

In countries with high cycling rates – Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany – this duality is already normal. People ride in work clothes, school uniforms, evening wear, even heels. They don't think of themselves as “cyclists”; they're just people on bikes. Normal people in normal clothes doing normal things: going to work, shopping, visiting friends.

Cycling there is not an identity. It's not something you announce. It's not something you dress up for. It's simply



transport.

If Britain wants to reach that point, it needs to loosen its grip on the idea that cycling is just a sport and form of recreational exercise. It is a mode of transport capable of delivering enormous public benefits: health, mobility, cleaner air, quieter streets, greater independence for children, and more liveable neighbourhoods. When a mode of transport looks like a club you must join, people opt out – and society loses out.

None of this means diminishing the role of cycling kit and those who enjoy it. Cycling's sporting side is vibrant, joyful, and often transformative. The point is simply that cycling is big enough to contain multitudes.

It is a sport, a hobby, a lifestyle, a utility, a way to feel free – and a way to just get somewhere. It doesn't require a uniform. It shouldn't demand allegiance to a tribe. And it certainly shouldn't frighten newcomers away.

If we peel back the misconceptions about clothing and kit, we might discover that the bicycle – the simplest, most democratic of machines – was never the problem. The problem was what we thought we had to wear to ride it.

Now imagine a culture where grabbing a bike is as ordinary as grabbing your keys. A culture where no one is a “cyclist,” but everyone can ride. A culture where the only thing you need to cycle is . . . a bike.

JANUARY CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1. Resolution 6. Itch 10. Antic 11. Excalibur 12. Tandoori 13. Cross 15. Orinoco 17. Shipham 19. Donegal 21. Chewton 22. Pears 24. Sandford 27. Inswinger 28. Trial 29. Gael 30. Hellraiser. **DOWN:** 1. Roam 2. Situation 3. Lucid 4. Tremolo 5. Orchids 7. Taboo 8. Harassment 9. Black Ice 14. Woodspring 16. Orgasmic 18. Hit or Miss 20. Lasagne 21. Essential 23. Aisle 25. Fatwa 26. Slight

Club on target

WELLS City Archers took part in the Somerset Indoor County Championships at Hutton Moor Leisure Centre. Not only did they have the largest club turn-out, WCA took home the biggest collection of trophies and medals.

Gold Men's Recurve: Connor Pinder; Gold Women's U16 Recurve: Clare Hudsmith; Bronze Men's Barebow: Jay Nickholds; Gold Women's Barebow: Mandy Thorpe; Silver Men's Longbow: Richard Gregory; Gold Women's Longbow: Sue Elkins; Team Award: Connor Pinder, Mandy Thorpe and Steve Bassett.

A club spokesman said: "This was an incredible day for the club and is testament to the hard work and dedication of all who took part and the WCA resident coaching team."



The club offers a warm welcome to both new and experienced archers and offers support and coaching for those who want to compete, or for those who simply want somewhere to shoot and enjoy the sport.

Beginners' courses are run several times a year.



Details: Wellscityarchers.com

Successful season



THE Seniors' section of Fosseway Golf Club celebrated another enjoyable season with a presentation lunch at the Centurion Hotel, Midsomer Norton.

Seniors' secretary Alan Jones looked back on a season that had been a good one for the social team with five wins, one defeat and one halved match. The team had also put up a good show in the county Rose Bowl narrowly losing 3-2 to Cricket St Thomas.

The player of the year award for the Roger Tabb Trophy went to

Paul Trigg who had a highly successful season winning the Rupert Moore Championship and the Winter League as well as the Groundsman's Trophy alongside Paul Ellis.

Ellis himself had a good season winning in all four events, a feat equalled by competition secretary Chris Appleton and Shaun Goodwin. Andy Flagg and Phil Winsley each featured three times on the winner's podium while the Joe Hawkins Mixed Puttsomes was won by married couple Graham and Dilys Edgell.

Race night boost for clubhouse renovations



Bryn (left) hands over a cheque for £1,000 on behalf of the trust to club president Dave Cocks

PAULTON Bowls Club held a race night to raise funds for renovations to its clubhouse, in particular for the installation of a disabled toilet.

The event was compered by Bryn Hawkins, chairman of the Somerset Miners Welfare Trust. The coal miners have long been associated with the club since its inauguration in 1922 when the field and bowls club were purchased for £1,000.

A three-foot-high metal miner sculpture donated by the trust is to be installed on the club premises in recognition of the miners who worked to bring the bowls club into being.

Weston flying high



WESTON-super-Mare Rugby Club's Past Players Association held a lunch as part of the club's 150th anniversary celebrations, which was attended by 21 former captains.

The earliest captain at the event was Colin Price (1974/75 season) when Weston played against sides like Exeter, Worcester, Clifton, and suffered a narrow defeat to Bath in the Somerset Cup final

Afterwards the former players watched Weston beat second-placed Tiverton 57-12 meaning Weston go into the second part of the season in Regional 2 Tribute Ale South West unbeaten 14 points clear.

Tucker's runners raise thousands

OCTOBER'S successful Mother Tucker's and Little Tucker's running events organised by Somer Athletic Club raised £1,000 each for the Bowel Movement charity and Moorfields Eye Hospital.

The trail runs began and ended at the Tucker's Grave Inn at Faulkland. Planning has already started on 2026's Mother Tucker's 10km and Little Tucker's 3km, with Sunday, October 4th being set as the date for runners to place on their calendars.

A spokesperson for the club said: "Expanding the events' size in their second year enabled a greater charitable donation. We really appreciated the continued support of Tucker's Grave Inn, B&NES and Somerset councils, the many kind sponsors and the participation of many local runners."

● Somer AC is always keen to welcome new members. For details find them on Facebook or Instagram or email them at hello@somerac.org.uk



The 2025 10km run gets underway



Toby and mum Jess, who run with Somer AC, receive the cheque on behalf of Moorfields



The presentation to the Bowel Movement charity

Charity gig



THE Cheddar Valley u3a's very own rock band, Vintage Cheddar, held a very successful winter dance, raising £500 for the Cheddar Village Hall restoration fund.

Their audience were very animated filling the dance floor and generously donating to the retiring collection.

The band asked to thank Geoff Farnie for his sound system and Ewan McClumpha for the lighting.

It was the last of the band's gigs for this year, time for a rest before next year's campaign raising money for local charities.

Ukrainian choir



UKRAINIAN Soul, a small non-profit Ukrainian community group based in Frome, has been organising concerts and cultural events that introduce local residents to Ukrainian music, traditions, and modern culture.

It says the aim is to build meaningful connections between communities and fostering cultural exchange.

Many people in Somerset may already have seen them at local festivals and community gatherings. On December 13th they were due to hold a Christmas concert in Rode.

Funds raised are sent to humanitarian causes in Ukraine. A similar event last year raised £3,000 to support children who had lost parents in the war.

Details: Svitlo on Facebook

Singers' plans for golden anniversary year

CHEW Valley Choral Society will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2026. It started in 1976 through a group of singers learning Handel's Messiah together at an evening class.

Now nearly 50 years and many concerts later the choir is still performing in venues round the Chew Valley and beyond.

It's planning two special concerts to celebrate the anniversary in 2026 and a workshop where participants can sing extracts from Handel's Messiah.

On Saturday, May 9th, a concert at Publow Church will be celebrating their own history alongside that of the Chew Valley and surrounding areas.

They have been working with some local history groups and others to explore a shared history through music and stories and are promising a really varied selection of music and spoken word for what will be



a different type of event from their normal offering.

On Saturday, June 13th they will hold a Handel's Messiah Come and Sing Workshop, at Bishop Sutton Village Hall, 2-5pm.

They will perform The Messiah on

Saturday, November 28th at St John's Church, Keynsham, 7.30pm.

Rehearsals for 2026 will start on Tuesday, January 29th in Bishop Sutton village hall. There will be a "Taster Session" on Tuesday, January 27th for anyone who is interested in taking part.

Details: www.chewvalleychoral.org.uk • email info@chewvalleychoral.org.uk • Catherine Hunt 07814 098457

MID-SOMERSET AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

WASSAIL

WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY

The Mid-Somerset Showground,
Cannard's Grave Rd, BA4 4GF

Bonfire Lit at 6.30pm

CIDER BAR **£15 A Ticket*** LIVE MUSIC

Includes Hot Food & Traditional Wassail Entertainment

Scan me 

PRE-BOOKING ONLY

MORE INFO: WWW.MIDSOMERSETSHOW.ORG.UK



Wassail returns to Shepton Mallet



Last year's ceremony was a blast

THE Mid-Somerset Agricultural Society will once again host a traditional wassail ceremony at its Shepton Mallet showground

The celebration of orchard traditions

begins at 6.30pm on Wednesday, January 14th with the lighting of the bonfire, setting the scene for an atmospheric evening of folklore, music and camaraderie.

The bonfire and traditional wassail ceremony are free for all but, for those wishing to make a full night of it, tickets are £15 and include hot food and a lively after-dinner programme of music and entertainment. A cider bar will be open throughout the evening, serving locally-produced Somerset cider.

For details, visit www.midsomersetshow.org.uk

Concert at St Mary's Yatton



Jo Harris

YATTON Music Society is hosting a trumpet concert by Jo Harris with piano and organ accompaniment by Daniel King Smith at St Mary's, Yatton, on January 31st to start its spring season.

Their concert will be the first time the society has hosted a solo trumpet concert and the first with both a piano and organ accompaniment, featuring beautiful eclectic music from Telemann to Gershwin.

The concert starts at 7.30pm, tickets £15, YMS members and students £10, accompanied children U-16 free.

Details: www.yms.org.uk

SOMERSET VINTAGE & CLASSIC TRACTOR SHOW

BATH & WEST SHOWGROUND
BA4 6QN

Saturday, January 31st and
Sunday, February 1st 2026

INDOOR STATIC TRACTOR SHOW

Special feature for 2026 Single and Double Cylinder Engine Tractors

RAISING MONEY FOR LOCAL CHARITIES

Saturday: 8.30am-4pm
Sunday: 9am-3.30pm

Contact Mike 07976 535762
If an entry form is needed by post,
please ring Marcie: 01747 822662

www.somersettractorshow.com

WHAT'S ON BATH & WEST SHOWGROUND

18 JANUARY	GIANT FLEA MARKET
31 JANUARY - 1 FEBRUARY	SOMERSET VINTAGE AND CLASSIC TRACTOR SHOW
7 FEBRUARY	YOUNG DRIVER
21 - 22 FEBRUARY	BRISTOL CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE SHOW
25 FEBRUARY	THE SOURCE ROADSHOW

INFORMATION CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINTING.
VISIT BATHANDWESTSHOWGROUND.COM FOR FULL EVENT LISTINGS

Looking forward to next year



THE Somerset & Dorset Railway in Midsomer Norton will close the season with Mince Pie Specials on New Year's

Day, marking the end of a busy season in many ways.

The railway have had a number of successful events throughout the year, including galas, a summer fun day, a haunted Halloween train and Santa Specials.

The railway will reopen at Easter, but that doesn't mean that the station will be quiet. In the coming months there will be plenty to keep the volunteers busy preparing for the new season, maintaining the station and rolling stock.

More volunteers are always welcome. For details, talk to a member of staff or email the railway: general@sdjr.co.uk



Silver Street, Midsomer Norton BA3 2EY



Join us on New Year's Day for the Mince Pie Specials – our last running day of the season

For details and to book: www.sdj.co.uk

Thank you for your support in 2025 and we look forward to seeing you next season

CHRISTMAS AT THE PALACE

WELLS

"Sparkle" Garden Illuminations to 4th January 2026
Festive Decorations, Festive Food & Drink

TICKETS & INFO at:
www.bishopspalace.org.uk or here



Commercial entries cost £25. We're happy to offer entries for non-profit community group meetings and charity fundraisers free of charge. If you feel that your entry fits our criteria for free publicity please state why – and send a succinct single paragraph, in a format that can be copied and pasted to annie@mendiptimes.co.uk

Thursday December 18th

Yatton & District Horticultural Society talk "Ponds & water features for wildlife" by Higgy, 7.30pm, Hangstones Yatton BD49 4HS.

Wrighton Gardening Club Quiz with Scott Arrowsmith, 7.30pm Wrighton Memorial Hall BS40 5QL. Visitors welcome, £3.

Saturday December 20th

Cadbury Saxophone Band festive coffee morning 10.30am-12 Yatton village hall. Free. Details: 01934 830072.

Glastonbury Brass Concert 3pm St John's Church BA6 9DR with singer Harriet Cameron. Tickets:

www.ticketsource.co.uk/glastonburybrass

See Santa on a motorbike in Bruton!

midday in the High St with other unusual vehicles. Free. Details:

santaonwheelsbruton@gmail.com

Sunday December 21st

"Journey of the Magi" professional dance theatre for all, 6.30pm St Paul's School Shepton Mallet. Tickets:

www.ticketsource.com/flock

Puxton Carol Service 3pm at the Church of the Holy Saviour, with mulled wine & mince pies. All welcome. For the Churches Conservation Trust.

Wednesday December 24th

Chew Valley charity tractor run, starts from Chew Stoke, 12.30, passes through villages arriving Chew Valley Animal Park around 4.30pm.

Sunday December 28th

Wessex Stationary Engine Club Christmas Crank Up. Details: www.wessexsec.org

Wednesday December 31st

Henton Barn Dance/Ceilidh: live band, food & drink, 8pm village hall, for Oxfam. Tickets £15 (cash) from the Oxfam bookshop, Wells or £16.95 from www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mid-somerset-oxfam-group-ceilidh-tickets

Thursday January 1st

Priston celebrates New Year's Day with Morris, Mummers and Music! Duck race at 11am, pub open 12-4. No tickets needed.

Monday January 5th

RAFA Mid-Somerset Branch meeting 11am Wells Golf Club, BA5 3DS. Presentation then discussion about plans for 2026. Optional lunch. Details: mailto:rafa.midsomerset@gmail.com or 01458-224057.

Tuesday January 6th

Weston u3a meets for coffee 10am almost every Tues at the Friends Meeting House, 6 High St WsM BS23 1JF. All welcome!

Yatton Local History Society Zoom talk by Brian Margetson "Crossing the Severn" yattonlocalhistorysoc@gmail.com

Wednesday January 7th

Hutton Coffee Morning with Fairtrade stall, 10am village hall, every Wed.

Bristol & West Fly Dressers Guild meets Wednesdays 8pm Redhill Village Hall BS40 5SG. All welcome. Details:

www.bristolflydressers.org

Harptrees History Society "A field through time – every site tells a story!" talk by Nick Roberts & supper, £10. Cash bar. Doors 7.15pm. West Harptree Memorial Hall BS40 6EG. Details and to book:

info@harptreeshistorysociety.org Subject line "Jan Supper".

Sing2breathe for breathlessness – learn techniques for breathing control and improved posture, 1.45-3pm most Wed, Cheddar Catholic Community Hall. Details: Kate: vocalkate@gmail.com 07595 745884.

Thursday January 8th

Chew Valley Death Café meets 12-1.30pm in the Community Library Bishop Sutton. A safe supportive space to talk about life, death and loss over tea & cake. All welcome, or email: bryonyhuntley2019@gmail.com

Congresbury Gardening Club talk: "How to use colour in your garden" by Claire Greenslade, 7.30pm Methodist Hall. Visitors welcome

www.congresburygardeningclub.com

Joyful Spirit Choir meet every Thurs 7pm-9pm, Wrighton Chapel, Ropers Lane, BS40 5NH. joyfulspirithearsals@gmail.com

Wells Scottish Dancers 6.30-8.30pm the Blue School Dance Studio BA5 2NR.

Beginners welcome. Tel 01934 740065 or ann.wellsdancers@gmail.com

Sing2breathe for breathlessness – for breathing control and posture 2.15-3.30pm most Thurs, Priory Health Centre outpatients, Wells. Details: Kate: vocalkate@gmail.com 07595 745884.

Friday January 9th

Keynsham AWT talk by Martin Williamson, "Watercress Farm Rewilding" 7.15 for 7.30pm Baptist Church, High St, Keynsham BS31 1DS. Members £3.50. Visitors welcome £5, incl drink.

Firm Roots cancer prayer & support 2.30-4pm Clevedon Baptist Church, Station Rd. A small friendly local group. See www.firmroots.org.uk or call Kate 07505-580297.

Chew Valley Gardening Club talk by Mary Payne "Success with seeds", 8pm Stanton Drew Memorial Hall. Parking and accessible. Visitors welcome, £5.

Saturday January 10th

Brent Knoll Bazaar, Farmers' Market & Parish Café, 10am-12 Parish Hall, TA9 4EH.

Compton Dando Craft Day: craft in company, 10-4pm village hall, BS39 4JZ. £8 incl lunch. Details: hdottridge@hotmail.com 01761 490445.

Frome Society for Local Study talk by Geoff Rich "The Bath Abbey Footprint project" 2.30pm Frome Memorial Theatre

Assembly Rooms. Visitors welcome, £5. Details: www.fsls.org.uk

Jumble Sale 10am Chew Magna Old School Rooms. Please bring donations of toys, bric-a-brac, clothes, books etc from 3 to 8pm on Friday. For Avon Wildlife Trust. Helpers v welcome! 01275 332482.

Blagdon Wassail, procession to Eldred's Orchard from the village club at 2pm

Sunday January 11th

Priston Wassail meet 2.30pm village green then parade to the orchard. Stay for tea & cake. No guns here!

Clevedon & District Model Boat Club sail at Clevedon Marine Lake, 10am second Sunday monthly. All very welcome to come and join us to sail and chat! Details:

www.clevedonanddistrictmodelboatclub.co.uk

Monday January 12th

Weston Civic Society "Birbeck Regeneration Trust – part 1" the history of the iconic Birbeck Pier and its heyday, 7.30pm, Weston Museum, BS23 1PR. £2 admission. Details: www.westoncivicsociety.org.uk

Winscombe Horticultural Society: "Gardening for pollinators" 7.30pm Community Centre Sandford Rd. Guests very welcome. Refreshments. Details winscombeHS@outlook.com

Nailesea & District Local History Society talk by Philip Ashford: "Mediaeval trade from Pill 1150-1300" 7.45pm Nailesea School, BS48 2HN. Visitors welcome £3. Details: 01275 463479 or www.ndlhs.org.uk

Tuesday January 13th

The Arts Society Mendip talk: "John Singer Sargent: the private radical" by Gavin Plumley 11am Croscombe Village Hall. Not on Zoom. Guests welcome, £10, on request to tasmendip.comm@gmail.com Details: www.theartssocietymendip.org.uk

Shipham Rowberrow & Star History Society: Prof Richard Coates: "The history of local & national surnames" 7.15 for 7.30pm Shipham Village Hall, BS25 1SG. Guests £4. Details: Jan 01934 260784.

Frome Selwood Horticultural Society talk by Mickey Little "Snowdrops" 7.20 for 7.30pm Critchill School, Frome, BA11 4LD. Details: 0777 620 8531 or jane.norris9@gmail.com

Weston-s-Mare Archaeological & Nat.

History Society: "Time gentlemen please" by Baz Hamblin, 7 for 7.30pm. Friends Meeting House, High St. BS23 1JF. Visitors welcome £4 incl tea/coffee.

Clevedon Probus: "The underground war 1914-18" by Jeremy Banning, 10 for 10.30am, Town Council Meeting Rooms, 44 Old St, BS21 6BU. Visitors welcome, £5. Details: www.probusclevedon.weebly.com

Wells Floral Art Club: "Picture this", a demonstration by Lucy Ellis, 2.15pm St Thomas Church Hall, BA5 2UZ. Visitors

welcome £7. Details:

www.wellsfloralartclub.com

Wednesday January 14th

Blagdon Local History Society "Hauteville: how was he connected to Stanton Drew Circle and Hauteville's Quoit?" 7.30pm, Court Lodge BS40 7TQ. Details:

www.blagdonlhs.com

Wells Folk & Barn Dance Club 7.30-9.30pm St Thomas's Church Hall, BA5 2UZ. All welcome: 2nd, 3rd & 4th Wed most months. Details: wellsfdc.co.uk

Kilmersdon Gardeners Club talk by Les Davies "The Somerset cider orchard" 7.30pm village hall BA3 5TD. Visitors welcome £3. Details www.kilmersdongardeners.org

Mendip Storytelling Circle: stories for grown-ups, 7.30pm Ston Easton Village Hall www.mendipstory.org.uk

Mid-Somerset Agricultural Society Wassail 6.30pm the showground, £15. Details: www.midsomersetshow.org.uk

Thursday January 15th

Wrighton Gardening Club talk by Dominic Hamilton "Snowdrops at Painswick Rococo Garden" 7.30pm Wrighton Memorial Hall BS40 5QL. Visitors welcome £3.

Shipham & District Garden Club AGM 7.30pm Shipham village hall, BS25 1SG.

Friday January 16th

North Somerset Quilters talk by Joy Harber "A passion for pineapples" 7.30pm Backwell WI Hall BS48 3QW. Visitors welcome £7. Details Karen 01275 463119

Saturday January 17th

Kilmersdon Wassail meet in the Community Orchard, Ames Lane BS3 5TB. Wassail Queen crowned at 3pm. Free, donations for village flowers. Details: 07773 044285.

Hutton Wassail starts 6pm Moorland Rd then via Walnut Barns to village hall. Live bands, Morris, bar, refreshments. Tickets £10 from The Old Inn or Bleadon Farm Shop.

Sunday January 18th

Bishop Sutton Wassail meet 3pm Bonhill Rd to parade through to orchard clearing for ceremony, drinks and a huge bonfire. W3W: tailed.swells.quoted Disabled parking only, contact Abbi 07742 252723. Entry by ticket (incl a hot dog) from: www.suttontheatre.com after 2nd Jan.

Shoemakers Museum wassail, Street.

Details:

www.shoemakersmuseum.org.uk

Monday January 19th

Timsbury Nats talk by Pete Dyson: "Climate

Footprints" 7.30pm Conygre Hall BA2 0JQ. Visitors welcome £5. U16 accompanied by an adult free.

Winscombe District u3a talk by Timothy Hopkinson-Ball "Machelney Abbey in the C16: a monk's perspective" 2 for 2.30pm New Community Centre. BS25 1JA. Visitors welcome £3.

Tuesday January 20th

Arts Society Mid Somerset talk 'Festival of Britain: art, architecture and design in post-war Britain', 11am Caryford Hall, Castle Cary BA7 7JJ. Coffee from 10.15. Visitors £8.

Wednesday January 21st

Henton & District Gardening Club. Our home-grown 'GQT panel' answer your questions. 7 for 7.30pm Henton Village Hall. Visitors welcome, £5.

www.hentongardenclub.weebly.com

Mendip Gardening Club talk by Greg Morter, The extraordinary story of plant evolution. 7.30pm Ston Easton village hall BA3 4DA. Details: 01761 45365.

Thursday January 22nd

Avon Wildlife Trust "Wildlife of Costa Rica" illustrated talk by Kathy Farrell, 7.45 Chew Magna Old School Room, £2.50.

"The Follies of North Somerset & Bristol" talk by Jonathan Holt, 7.30pm Congresbury Methodist Hall BS49 5JA. Tickets £4 from the library or on the door. Details 01934 426200 or email the organisers: congresburylibrary@gmail.com

Thurs January 22nd to Sun Jan 25th

Hutton: 'Peril in Pantoland' 7.30pm every eve & 2.30pm Sat & Sunday, Hutton village hall, £10 adults, £5 children. Tickets 07838 573229 or huttondramaclub.co.uk

Saturday January 24th

Frome Society for Local Study talk by Keith Browning "Frome Fables" 2.30pm Memorial Theatre Assembly Rooms. Visitors welcome, £5. Details: www.fsls.org.uk

Wells Repair Café 10am-12.30 St Thomas' Church Hall BA5 2UZ. Bring clean, broken items of all kinds; our volunteers will do their best to fix them! Bring leads/chargers. All welcome. Details on Facebook or email repaircafe.wells@gmail.com

Monday January 26th

Wessex Stationary Engine Club meeting 8pm Old Down Inn, Emborough BA3 4SA. Details: www.wessexsec.org

Tuesday January 27th

Wells & District Wildlife Group: talk about

the recent reintroduction of Pine Martens by Johnny Birks, 2.30-4pm Wells Museum.

Details: www.wdwg.org.uk or 07415 350062.

Clevedon Probud: "Civilisations & drinking"

by Ian Selby 10 for 10.30am Town Council Meeting Rooms, 44 Old St, BS21 6BU. Visitors welcome, £5. Details: www.probusclevedon.weebly.com

Chew Valley Choral Society Taster Session! 7.30-9.30pm Bishop Sutton Village Hall, BS39 5XQ. Details 07814 098457 or www.chewvalleychoral.org.uk

Winscombe Folk & Acoustic Club 7.30 for 8pm in the quiet "Room upstairs", Winscombe Club, BS25 1HD. Open mic for music, song, poetry. Every 4th Tuesday £2.

Wednesday January 28th

Backwell & Nailsea Macular Support meeting 1.30pm Backwell WI Hall. Details: Sheila 01275 462107.

Harptrees History Society talk by Prof Richard Coates 'Rails in the Avon Gorge'. Visitors £3. Book from Jan 14th by email: info@harptreeshistorysociety.org Subject line "Jan '26".

Friday January 30th

Whitchurch Local History Society 'The story of the United Reformed Church in Whitchurch' with Brian Edwards, 7.30pm in the URC, BS14 0PQ. Visitors welcome, £4. Details 01275 830869.

Saturday January 31st

Clutton Jumble Sale 2pm village hall, raising funds for Clutton Preschool's new build.

Chew Valley Community Farm Wassail 1pm -3.30pm. Help to wake these apple trees!

Jo Harris & Daniel King Smith, trumpet, piano, organ: 7.30pm, St Mary's Church Yatton, Tickets £15, members £10: www.yms.org.uk

Winscombe Jumble Sale 2pm Community Centre. Raffle & refreshments. Please deliver any donations after 9.30am. Details: 07811 292909.

Midsomer Norton Wassail celebrations, starting 10am from the Island. Free. Details: www.somervalleyrediscovered.co.uk

Sunday February 1st

The Mendip Society Wassail 4pm Burrington village, with mummers, Northumbrian pipes & food. Please book, from January: www.themendipsociety.org.uk/walks-and-events

HAMPER COMPETITION WINNER

CONGRATULATIONS to **Robert Bruce**, of Claverham, the winner of our fiendish Find the Rabbits competition.

Run in conjunction with Ford Farm Cheese, makers of award-winning Wookey Hole Cave Aged Cheddar, we challenged readers to find five golden rabbits hidden within the pages of the December issue of the magazine.

The first name to be drawn was Robert's, who has won a hamper of festive goodies.

● The rabbits could be found on pages 17, 50, 61, 103 and on the Ford Farm/Wookey Hole Cave Aged Cheddar advertisement itself.

Celebrating the annual wassail in Midsomer Norton

MIDSOMER Norton residents and visitors are being invited to join in the town's annual wassail on Saturday, January 31st, a traditional celebration to encourage "good spirits" and bless apple orchards for a bountiful harvest.

The event starts at the new Market Square on The Island, followed by a procession to the Town Park to make a traditional toast and "wake up" the apple trees for a good year ahead.

The wassail celebration is free to attend for everyone and is being run by Somer Valley Rediscovered, Bath & North East Somerset Council and Midsomer Norton Community Trust.

Free activities on offer include face painting and crafty family workshops at The Island from 10am-12pm. Costume such as ivy, green face paint, and colourful bohemian clothes is encouraged. People are also invited to bring along pots, pans, bells and whistles to make a hullabaloo and ward off evil spirits.

The official procession will begin at 12pm outside the Town Hall in the Market Square on The Island. Master of Ceremonies, Trevor Hughes, and the Cam Valley Morris Men will lead the procession to the entrance of the Town Park.

The afternoon's entertainment in the Midsomer Norton Town Park will include a folk play, Morris dancing and the wassail

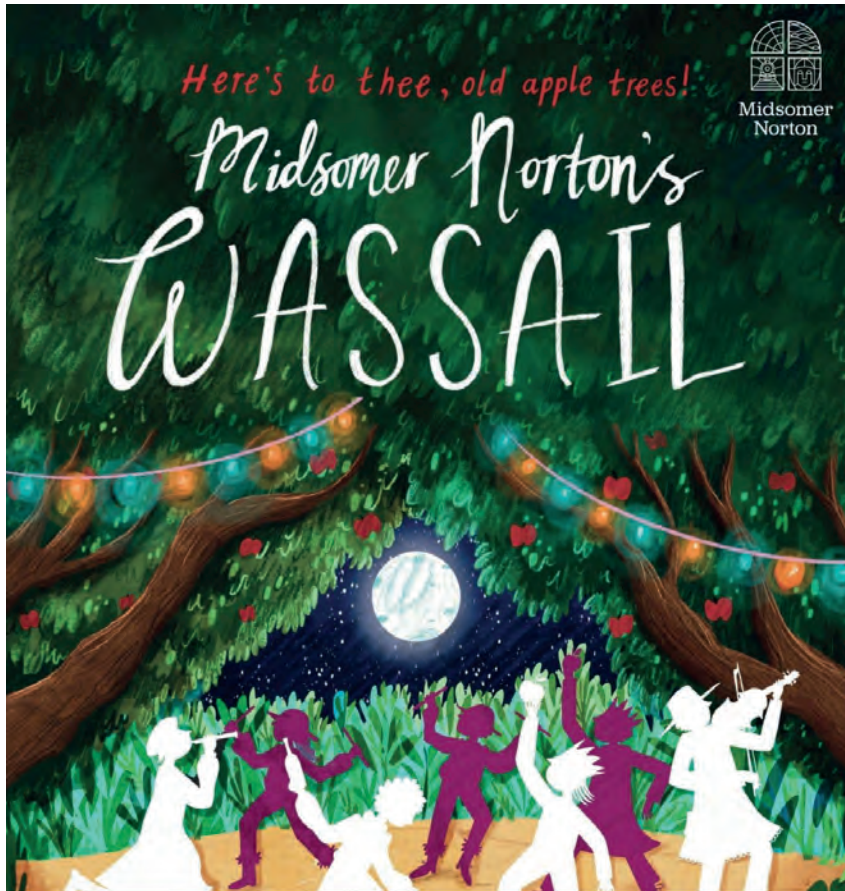
ceremony. Cider and apple cake will be available.

A Midsomer Norton Town Wassail Family and School Pack is available online for inspiration and information about crafting to decorate the high street.

The 2026 Wassail event is funded by West of England Combined Authority, Bath & North East Somerset Council and Midsomer Norton Community Trust.



Details: <https://somervalleyrediscovered.co.uk/event/midsomer-norton-wassail/>



Find out more at

somervalleyrediscovered.co.uk/event/midsomer-norton-wassail/

Wassail

Saturday 31st January

10:00 - 15:00

10:00 – 12:00

Family friendly traditional crafting and face painting at the Market Square, The Island, BA3 2HQ

12:00 – 12:30

Wassail Procession from the Market Square at The Island, finishing in Midsomer Norton Town Park

12:30 – 15:00

in Midsomer Norton Town Park the traditional Wassail ceremony will take place, with Morris Dancing, live music, hot food & drink!



Happy New Year

From



Weston Hospicecare



Looking back on 2024/2025:



2,180

People supported by services



12%



1,122

Patient visits to Day Hospice



16%

It costs:

£6,708,990

to run Weston Hospicecare annually



9%



18%

26,479

Community nurse miles covered to support people in their own home

With only around 20% of our funding coming from the Government, it's thanks to you, our local community of generous and kind supporters that we are able to continue providing free, palliative care services 24/7, 365 days of the year. Thank you for supporting **your local hospice**.

What's coming up in 2026

There are lots of ways you can get involved this year and support Weston Hospicecare. From fundraising events to volunteering, shopping in our stores to playing our lottery, there's something for everyone.

Saturday 10th January

Pines For Pounds



2nd - 6th March

Make Your Will Week



Sunday 31st May

Mendip Challenge



Saturday 21st February

Men's March



Saturday 21st March

Strictly Fun Dancing



Scan here for more information

Head to our website to find all of the ways you can get involved with Weston Hospicecare in 2026.
westonhospicecare.org.uk | Reg. Charity No. 900328



FULL RANGE REDUCED BY OVER 40%

SALE £999
WAS £1877

Table self assembly

AVIEMORE

- 120-160cm extending dining table
- 4 dining chairs with fabric seat pads
- Made from solid & veneered oak



HIGHGROVE
BEST OF THE QUALITY

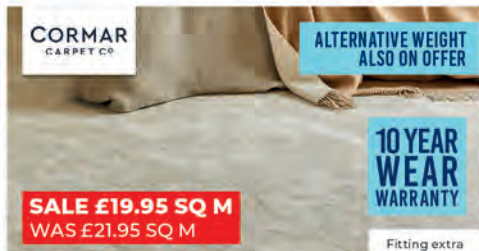
TWO FREE DRAWERS

SALE £729
RRP £960

Excludes headboard & bedding

DALTON 1000 ERGOSENSE

- 135cm double divan set • No-turn mattress
- 1000 pocket springs (in K/S) • Stretch cover
- Pressure-relieving foam • Platform base



CORMAR
CARPET CO.

ALTERNATIVE WEIGHT
ALSO ON OFFER

10 YEAR
WEAR
WARRANTY

SALE £19.95 SQ M
WAS £21.95 SQ M

Fitting extra

FLOORING ONLY AVAILABLE IN STREET

SILKEN SERENITY

- Easyclean polypropylene carpet
- Choice of 16 colourways • Bleach cleanable
- Extra heavy domestic wear • 4/5m widths



FLARE

ALSO SUITABLE FOR
WALL MOUNTING

SALE £649
WAS £689

Some assembly required

SALEHURST

- Freestanding electric fire suite
- Low energy LED flame effect
- Integrated 2kW fan heater • Remote control

ruark

dab+ Bluetooth WiFi

R3S

- SmartRadio with CD player
- Bluetooth 5 receiver
- DAB+/FM/Internet radio
- Available in walnut or charcoal finishes

SEE LIVINGHOMES.CO.UK FOR OUR LATEST PRICE

3 YEAR PARTS & LABOUR GUARANTEE

SOUND & VISION ONLY AVAILABLE IN STREET

Panasonic

ALTERNATIVE SIZES ALSO ON OFFER

TV-48Z90BEB

- 48" OLED SMART TV
- 4K UHD • Fire TV
- Dolby Atmos
- Dolby VisionIQ
- Catch-up TV
- HCX Pro AI Processor
- 'G' energy rating

SEE LIVINGHOMES.CO.UK FOR OUR LATEST PRICE

5 YEAR PARTS & LABOUR GUARANTEE

SOUND & VISION ONLY AVAILABLE IN STREET



FREE SCATTER CUSHIONS

SALE £2339
WAS £3119

Fabric range 'B'

MEMPHIS

- Contemporary corner group • Reversible cushions • Wide selection of fabrics
- Choice of foot colour • Alternative configurations, sofas & chairs also on offer

WINTERSALE

SALE STARTS SATURDAY 27TH DECEMBER

BOSCH

euronics
Sold by us as an agent of Euronics

WAN28258GB

- 1400 spin washing machine
- 8kg load capacity
- SpeedPerfect
- IronAssist
- SuperQuick 15/30
- ReLoad function
- 'A' energy rating

SEE LIVINGHOMES.CO.UK FOR OUR LATEST PRICE

5 YEAR PARTS & LABOUR GUARANTEE

BEKO

euronics
Sold by us as an agent of Euronics

CDFY22309X

- Built-in electric double oven
- 75/38 litre capacity
- Full width grill
- SteamShine clean
- Touch control
- Catalytic liners
- 'A' energy rating

SEE LIVINGHOMES.CO.UK FOR OUR LATEST PRICE

10 YEAR PARTS WARRANTY

LIVING HOMES

High Street
Street
BA16 0EW

01458 445555

22 Phillips Road
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 3UZ

01934 626326

LIVINGHOMES.CO.UK

OPENING HOURS

MONDAY - SATURDAY
9.00AM - 5.30PM
CLOSED SUNDAY

FREE PARKING

AVAILABLE TO CUSTOMERS IN STREET & WESTON

FREE DELIVERY

THROUGHOUT SOMERSET, NORTH SOMERSET & BRISTOL*

*Subject to minimum order value of £200. 'WAS / RRP' charged in-store between 16/11/2025 and 24/12/2025. All offers subject to availability. 0126. E&OE.