

Mendip Times

FREE

Celebrating life on the Mendips and surrounding areas

OUR
20TH
BIRTHDAY
YEAR!

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 12

MAY 2026



IN THIS ISSUE:

- **FARMING**
- **CHARITIES**
- **GARDENING**
- **VALLEY HOARD**
- **HEALTH & FAMILY**
- **SHOW PREVIEWS**

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

Summer Fun!

YMCA SUMMER DAY CAMPS ARE COMING!

Booking is now live for our Summer Day Camps, and YMCA Day Camps are here for you throughout the whole seven weeks of the summer holidays to help with childcare. We're excited to offer children and young people a fun, engaging and supportive environment to learn, play and make new friends during the school holidays.

Week 1

20th July - 24th July (Carnival of Sports)

The programme will celebrate movement, participation and friendly competition while giving everyone the chance to try new sports, develop skills and enjoy being active together.

Week 2

27th July - 31st July (Under the sea)

Participants will explore marine life, ocean habitats, and underwater worlds through themed crafts, games, science activities, and storytelling. The programme encourages curiosity, teamwork, and imagination while supporting learning about the natural world in an engaging, hands-on way.

Week 3

3rd August - 7th August (Outdoor explorers)

Participants will take part in a range of outdoor activities such as nature trails, team challenges, den building, and problem-solving games, all designed to promote resilience, physical activity, and cooperation. Outdoor Adventure at Day Camps will offer a fun, energising experience that inspires curiosity and a love of the outdoors.

Week 4

10th August - 14th August (Animal Adventures)

Animal Adventures will introduce children and young people to the exciting world of animals through fun, interactive, and educational activities. Participants will explore different animals and habitats through crafts, games, storytelling, and hands-on learning, encouraging curiosity, empathy, and respect for wildlife.

Week 5

17th August - 21st August (Farm To Fork)

Farm to Fork week will give children and young people a hands-on introduction to where food comes from and how it

reaches our plates. Through planting, growing, and food-based activities, participants will explore the journey of food from soil to table while learning about healthy eating and sustainability.

Week 6

24th August - 28th August (Myths & Legends)

Myths & Legends at Day Camps will immerse children and young people in a world of imagination, and adventures through creative arts, drama, games, and team challenges.

Week 7

1st September - 4th September (Future Innovators)

Future Innovators will encourage children and young people to explore creativity, curiosity and problem-solving through engaging hands-on activities. Through colourful experiments, creative projects and fun team challenges that tackle real-world problems, the programme will inspire innovative thinking while building confidence, teamwork, and curiosity about how things work.



YMCA

SUMMER DAYCAMPS

We've got you covered for the summer!
Explore • Create • Discover

20th - 24th July

27th - 31st July

3rd - 7th August

10th - 14th August

17th - 21st August

24th - 28th August

1st - 4th September



Reception to
Year Six



08:00 - 17:30



www.ymca-dg.org



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GET IN TOUCH

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Email: info@ymca-dg.org



Welcome

IT'S cheering news that the cancer charity We Hear You has been saved by a big fundraising push; a new charity launched in Cheddar is supporting local organisations.

Our charities section also reports on how some local "snails" ran a half marathon around London and we preview the Chew Valley 10k, which supports local good causes.

As usual our charities and community pages are full of heartwarming stories of how Mendip folk look out for each other.

We've tractors in Meare, runners in Wellow, young farmers in Wedmore and pictures from various other events across the area. We also have a huge guide to What's On next month.

Mary Payne looks ahead to the 100th anniversary of the National Garden Scheme and we feature a garden opening for the first time in Congresbury.

Chris Sperring welcomes the arrival of spring – while Adrian Boots suggests we try eating seaweed!

With all of our regular features and contributors, thanks – as always – to our advertisers who make this possible.

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Front cover: Tabitha Mellor and Spicy, Wedmore YFC winner baby beef (bucket fed). Photo by Steve Egginton. See page 11.

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Stepping out – young farmers' Wedmore show



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A safe bet – race cards raise money for riding charity

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Save our pub

THE East Wells Community Benefit Society campaigning to buy and reopen the Britannia Inn in Wells has now made a formal offer to purchase the pub from its current owners.

The society was set up nearly two years ago and has raised nearly £100,000 which, together with a large donation pledged from a local benefactor, has enabled the offer to be made.

The pub was closed in 2021 after the retirement of the successful long-standing tenants. The owners are currently appealing against Somerset Council's decision to refuse housing on the site.

The EWCBS have formally restated their case to the Planning Inspectorate that the business is a viable one and that the premises should remain a pub and community asset. A decision on whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal will be made in the coming weeks.

The society says its community share offer remains open and the minimum investment has been kept at only £50 to encourage the widest possible participation.

Details: www.savethebritanniainnwells.org

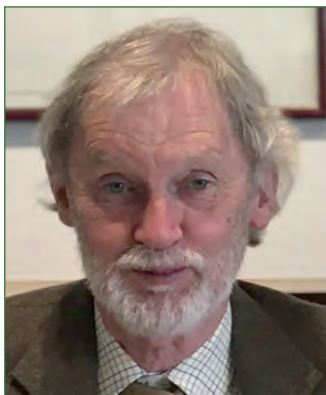
Fire recruits

AVON Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) is recruiting new on-call firefighters in stations across its service including Chew Magna, Paulton, Blagdon, Nailsea, Winscombe and Yatton.

Applicants must live and/or work within five minutes of their local on-call station. The closing date is Monday, May 18th.

Details: www.avonfire.gov.uk

Death of John Prior



THE small village church of St Bridget's at Chelvey was packed for a service of thanksgiving for John Prior, who has died aged 83, with a marquee needed to accommodate those who couldn't fit into the church.

He farmed at Youngwood Farm nearby after a long career running Alexandra Workwear in Bristol with his wife Mary, who

became Lord-Lieutenant of Bristol.

John had been very active in charities, as regional chairman of the Princes' Trust, director of the South West Housing Association and chairman of the Bristol Drugs Project.

He was also treasurer of St Bridget's PCC, overseeing a fundraising appeal which raised £250,000 for the church's restoration.

Pit disaster commemorated



Pictured (l to r): Gary Atterton, chairman of the Bedminster Coalmining Heritage Group, Bryn Hawkins, SMWT chairman and SMWT trustee Selwyn Rees at the unveiling of the plaque

REPRESENTATIVES of the Somerset Miners Welfare Trust were present at the unveiling of their latest "metal miner" sculpture, remembering a coal mine tragedy in Bedminster which killed ten workers.

The seven-feet-high sculpture, by metalworker David Speed of Chewton Mendip, has been placed on the wall of the Jolly Collier pub in West Street, Bedminster, and is the first to be installed on a wall. A plaque was also unveiled.

They commemorate the Malago Vale disaster of August 1891 when underground gas was ignited by a group of miners using naked candles.

Easter arch



THE picture shows the Easter arch at St. Andrew's Church, in Cheddar with Pam Bell (second from right), who put it together, with some of her helpers.

Down on the farm



THE Community Farm in the Chew Valley has been welcoming spring with local community groups helping on the farm, thanks to funding from the Mendip Hills National Landscape and Farming in Protected Landscapes grant.

It says: "In their time here, the groups have got stuck into a variety of jobs to help our field team prepare for the upcoming growing season, as well as enhancing habitats for wildlife, and soaking up the space and beauty around them."

The groups included Refugees Welcome North Somerset, Missing Link, who offer support services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse; Bath Carers and Second Step, a mental health and housing charity.

The farm said: "Your support means we get to keep sharing this special place with groups like these, so a big thank you to all of you for buying our veg boxes, coming to our events and supporting us in other ways."

It's now welcoming volunteers to its Community Farmer Days.

www.thecommunityfarm.co.uk

Axevale festival

AXEVALE Climate Action group are holding a Greening Festival, with free entry, on Monday, May 4th, 1pm, at the Ad Astra cider orchards in Stone Allerton, with stalls, talks and refreshments.

Speakers are Oscar Chambers-Smith on the work of the Beaver Trust, Richard Miller from the Cheddar Hydro project, Alison Uren on The Wildlife of the Avalon Marshes and Charlie and Rachel from A Patch Wilder, Shipham.

Axevale Climate Action, is a local group, based in the villages around Axbridge and meets regularly to discuss the ongoing climate and environmental crises and positive actions that can be taken.

They also arrange regular guest speaker events, which are open to the public, and participate in practical activities like butterfly counts.

**Details: Facebook: Axevale Climate Action
Axevalehello@gmail.com**

Giant litter pick



EMPLOYEES from five quarry companies took part in the Mendip Quarry Producers (MQP) annual litter pick, as part of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean.

Over 30 volunteers worked in coordinated shifts to remove more than 20,000 pieces of litter from over 25 miles of local roads.

Teams from Tarmac, Morris & Perry, Holcim, Heidelberg, and John Wainwright & Co Ltd took part.

Matt Bishop, Safety, Health and Environment Manager at John Wainwright & Co Ltd, who coordinated the initiative, said: "It's incredibly positive to see teams from across the industry coming together to take pride in the environment we work in.

"Looking ahead, we're exploring ways to reduce waste on our roads and build on the success of this initiative."

Spring planting



CHILDREN at Chew Stoke Church School have been planting bulbs and wildflower seeds at Woodford Lodge Memorial Garden at Chew Valley Lake.

Hedgehog Class were invited to take part by Life for a Life who work in partnership with Bristol Water.

Discovering nature



STEP, Ride, Thrive is a project that brings together active travel, nature connection and community health and wellbeing in

Avalon and the Poldens.

From May 18th-31st it is hosting a Discover Nature fortnight, an opportunity for people to get involved with free activities, walks and talks across the 23 parishes in the area and at the Avalon Marshes Centre.

A photography competition will also be running with the theme “Discover Nature in Your Community”.

The project has been running over the last year and is led by the 23 parishes within the Avalon and Poldens Local Community Network. It is funded by a grant from Somerset



Council’s Public Health team and the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC).

There are three main strands – cycling, walking and bus, which includes a pilot extension of the 668 Libra bus from Street and Glastonbury through to the Avalon Marshes Centre, running on weekdays.

The project has also funded a large number of community and school bike repair sessions across the local area, facilitated by the charity On Your Bike.

www.stepridethrive.org

Battery Bill – a UK first for Mendip quarry

A FIVE-year-old from Coleford was the guest of honour at the unveiling of the first electric-powered shunter train to be used in a UK quarry.

Cillian Gallagher, aged five, won a competition amongst local primary schools to name the loco, converted from diesel to electric, to be used in Whatley Quarry, near Frome, as part of owner Heidelberg Materials’ drive to reduce its impact on the environment.

Now called Battery Bill – thanks to Cillian – the Class 08e loco was converted by Positive Traction from a diesel-powered shunter into a fully electric locomotive, powered by six Powerpod battery packs. Its electric engine is emission-free and also noticeably quieter, reducing associated noise for near neighbours.

Anna Sabine, MP for Frome and East Somerset, was also in attendance to learn more about the battery-powered loco and its



Cillian with father Kingsley, sister Aofie and mum Sherree



Daniel Welch, Rail Logistics Manager at Heidelberg Materials, UK

sustainability benefits.

The investment in a zero-emission shunting locomotive is part of the company’s efforts to reduce environmental impact and improve sustainability, while continuing to supply high-quality construction materials used to build and maintain roads, schools and other essential infrastructure.

Vincent Pitt, Area Manager at Heidelberg Materials UK, said: “As a long-standing part of the local area, we’re committed to being a responsible operator and minimising impact on our near neighbours.

“Commissioning the first electric shunter to operate at a UK quarry is a significant milestone and reflects our ongoing commitment to sustainable operations.”

Growing your own plants

THIS month it seems appropriate to look at growing and/or propagating most of our own plants – especially flowers, fruit and vegetables with enough to share. So why do this?

There are a number of reasons to look at ways to live sustainably and thus contribute to lessening the effects of global warming and the depletion of our environment.

One reason is to save the cost of expensive heat and lighting since many plants are grown in very large under-cover nurseries. Another is to save food miles and the emission of greenhouse gases because plants are then transported often from abroad by lorry to individual garden centres throughout the country.

Most of these plants were grown in peat so destroying vital peat bogs that store huge amounts of carbon. Garden centres in England are facing a phased ban on peat, with a total ban on all peat-based gardening products now scheduled for 2030 rather than earlier proposed dates.

It is possible to reduce waste at home by just growing plants when needed. Plastic pots can be recycled many times or other containers can be used such as yogurt pots (with drainage holes) or homemade pots from newspaper that can be planted directly into the soil as needed.

Somerset has a thriving network of volunteer run Repair Cafes now where experts have the skills to repair tools that might otherwise be discarded. This often applies to electrical goods such as drills and propagators.

By propagating our own plants, several new ones can be produced not only to add to our own borders and pots but also to share with others. All are cost free and it is very enjoyable waiting to see how the new plants thrive by our own efforts.

At this time of year almost any herbaceous perennial and grasses can be lifted, divided and replanted as young, vigorous plants. Autumn is another beneficial time too.

First lift the plant including as much of the root system as possible. Some can then be pulled apart by hand into small



plants. Others are tougher and need to be prized apart with a sharp spade or pulled apart with two forks in the middle and back-to-back.

The centre part of the old plant is probably “tired” and can be discarded. The outer edges will be more vigorous and faster growing suitable for replanting or swapping with a neighbour or even selling for yourself or a charity.

Softwood cuttings are a highly effective, low-cost method for propagating perennials including herbs, shrubs, and climbers using soft, flexible young shoot tips without flower buds taken in spring to early summer (April–June) in the morning.

First cut a five to ten centimetre cutting from the plant that does not have flower buds. Make a horizontal cut below a node at the foot of the cutting and a sloping one at the top. Remove most of the leaves especially large ones.

Push the cutting about two thirds of its length into moist, gritty compost. Add a label! Perhaps cover with polythene to prevent too much moisture loss.

Some growers may be interested in the Heritage Seed Library run by Garden Organic at their garden near Ryton near Coventry. HSL is the national collection of heritage vegetable seeds that are not widely available. There is a list of 800 varieties of such seeds that members can swap and share.

Seeds are donated by other HSL members, the public and seed companies that no longer grow them. Seed companies realise that around 90% of growers buy the same seeds every year. The companies themselves have much tighter regulations to follow.

For example, they need a passport so the companies tend to stick to the tried and tested plants to save costs. Passports are mandatory labels required for moving most plants within the UK and the EU to ensure that they are traceable and free from dangerous pests and diseases.

Growing your own plants is not only satisfying but you have the choice of varieties and therefore taste and also whether or not to be an organic grower by not using chemicals particularly on fruit and vegetables.

DIANA REDFERN



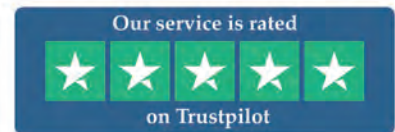
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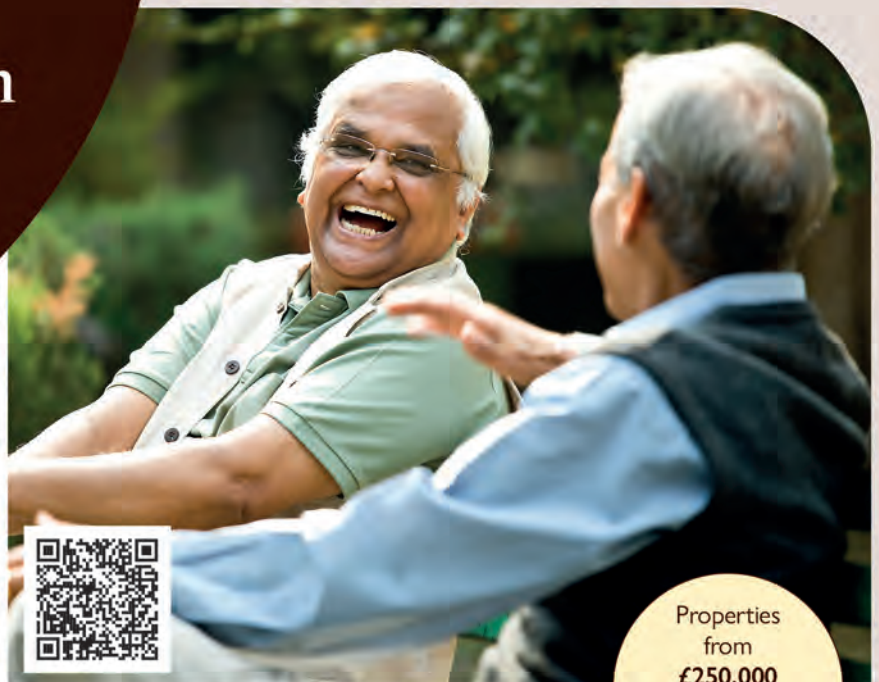
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Spring has been kind to us



With **NICK GREEN**

GEOPOLITICS continue to affect us all with fuel prices remaining stubbornly high due to the Middle East conflict. I wrote last month about the sudden increase in fertiliser prices. These also remain high so farmers are still being challenged with what to do. Meanwhile, on a positive note, our early spring on and around Mendip was just the tonic many farmers needed after

such a dry 2025.

It meant livestock could be turned out to pasture earlier than most years and fresh grass was on the daily menu rather than scarce and expensive silage and hay. We seem to have been lucky in the South West.

I flew into Belfast recently and there was standing water in the fields. The crops in the ground were pale and still waiting to start growing in 2026. Speaking to Scottish colleagues and those from the north of England they said their conditions were similar and spring turnout had been significantly delayed.

Whilst farmers are often in competition trying to sell the same produce to the same customers there is a sense of camaraderie in the industry. With the issues above and many

other challenges there is pressure on farmers. Someone said to me recently it is important that we look after one another.

There are organisations like the Farm Community Network (FCN) where individuals can turn to others in confidence as well as talking to their friends. It is said farmers learn more by looking over their neighbours' hedge and talking to friends in the pub than any other way. This could well be the best way of working out the best way of addressing our current challenges.

The North Somerset Show is being staged on the early May Bank holiday at the showground near Wraxall. As well as being a great day out for farmers and general public, I am sure there will be many conversations about the cost of fertiliser and fuel and what others are doing about it. One answer for many farmers is to turn from food production to managing the environment.

At the moment, farmers can supplement or in some cases replace their farming income by doing environmental works. While this is great for the environment, we are entering a stage in our history where if this work is followed to extremes, we will expose ourselves to potential food shortages. Farmers have been warning about this for some years and it seems now the Government are beginning to realise with everything going on in the world it could actually happen.

Farmers want to produce food but if the carrot is big enough and the challenges too strong many will opt for managing the environment instead. Once they have stopped producing food it will be hard to start again. As the old saying goes, no farmers no food.

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

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North Somerset Show

THE 166th North Somerset Show will take place on Bank Holiday Monday, May 4th at Wraxall, with a variety of attractions in the main ring. Cattle, pig and sheep judging will start from 8.30am, with the grand parade of champions at 3pm.

There will be showjumping all day with a wide variety of horses and ponies, with heavy horses heading to the main ring in the afternoon.

The show runs competitions for blacksmiths, sheep shearers and beekeepers as well as hosting a number of practitioners of traditional rural crafts.

There will be over 260 trade stands and a huge choice of food and drink exhibitors. The show also hosts the North Somerset's Strongest Man competition.

Details: www.nsas.org.uk

Young farmers' show

WEDMORE Young Farmers 92nd show was popular, with entries for cattle, sheep and pigs as well as handicrafts.

Main trophy winners were: Champion Baby Beef, Abe Tinney; Champion Baby Dairy, Harry Brice; Champion Beef and champion of champions, Harry Stamp; Champion Dairy, Kathryn Bell; Champion animal groomed and led the best, Heidi Wall; Champion of both Lamb and Pig at Show, Tabbi Mellor.



The yard was packed



First of the day's winners, Abe Tinney with Mrs Whippy



Judging the sheep



Judging underway



Getting ready for the show ring



Freya Buit with British Blue cross Garry



Admiring the pigs

The Mendip Mindbender

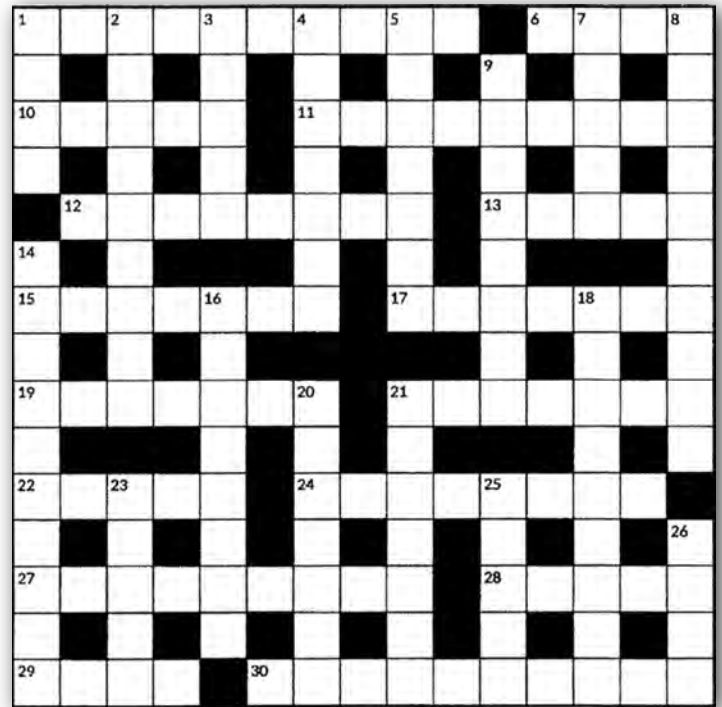
ACROSS

- 1. Famous Bristol jazz venue (3,3,4)
- 6. Likelihood (4)
- 10. Diversion (5)
- 11. *Philosopher analyses sole trait* (9)
- 12. *Intro to new recital playing instrument* (8)
- 13. Take on (5)
- 15. Jotter (7)
- 17. Humiliate (7)
- 19. Bird colony (7)
- 21. Goalscorer (7)
- 22. Hoax (5)
- 24. Deception (8)
- 27. Watching (9)
- 28. *Soubriquet which is central to Muhammad Ali as Cassius Clay* (5)
- 29. *Gaelic verse beginning to disappear* (4)

- 30. Starred (10)

DOWN

- 1. Sizeable (4)
- 2. *Carole sat moving flight* ((9)
- 3. *Plate chicken course* (5)
- 4. Exhausted (7)
- 5. *Interwoven knot tied around cutting nothing* (7)
- 7. As before (5)
- 8. *Wet tear she let out for loved one* (10)
- 9 & 14 Down. *Smash hit for 18 Down* (8,2,3,5)
- 14. See 9 Down
- 16. Birthplace and home of 18 Down (8)
- 18. *Erik Black is 28 Across for player of 12 Across* (5,4)
- 20. *Abominable band from Dorset?* (7)
- 21. *Dropping large shelling can become this* (7)



- 23. *Sanctuary for group* (5)
- 25. *Brown overhead to start motor* (5)
- 26. Employed (4)

By Fairlight
Cryptic Clues are in italics

This month's solution can be found on page 92

Flights over the Chew Valley, Mendips & Somerset Levels



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Clash of the choirs

SOME 320 singers, performers and delighted audience members had a splendid evening at the ninth edition of Wedmore's Clash of the Choirs at St Mary's Church.

It featured the Wedmore Clangers hand bell ringers, The Wedmore Ensemble, singers from Crispin School, Hugh Sexey School and Wedmore First School.

They joined community choirs Joyful Spirit, Street Men, Wookey Choirworks and Joyful Voices, together with the combined Wedmore Isles and Moors Benefice Choir to try to impress the hugely unreliable "CLAPOMETER".



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Update from Tessa Munt MP for Wells & Mendip Hills



Another busy month! I attended the annual Legal Service which marked the appointment of the new High Sheriff of Somerset, Peter Dixon. Somerset's beautiful ceremonial sword and scabbard are kept safely by High Sheriffs during their term of office. I enjoyed a fascinating visit to Lyonsleaf, a local all-female Mendip Hills business producing organic skincare products. Their Founder Vicky and Ops

Manager Cathy were two of several business leaders and entrepreneurs who joined me at my first 'Women in Business Brunch', where my colleague Sarah Gibson, MP for Chippenham, spoke with insight, passion and experience about running a business.

It was good to welcome Tim Farron, MP and Lib Dem Spokesperson for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to my 'patch'. We spent a day visiting inspiring people and projects from the UK Agri-Tech's South West Dairy Development Centre to Cheddar's future hydro power project. Tim spoke to an audience, answering questions from farmers and others. If you'd like to know about future events, please contact me.

My local 'surgeries' are listed here:

Friday 1st May from 08:00 to 09:00

at The Mendip Pantry, Chewton Mendip

Friday 1st May from 10:00 to 11:00

at The Market Kitchen Café, Churchill

Friday 1st May from 11:30 to 12:30

at The Red Cow, Brent Knoll

Friday 1st May from 18:00 to 19:00

at The Pub Night, Ashcott Village Hall

Saturday 2nd May from 08:30 to 10:00

at Coffee #1, Wells

Saturday 2nd May from 12:30 to 13:30

at The Lamb Inn, Axbridge

Saturday 2nd May from 14:00 to 15:00

at The Star Inn, Star

Friday 8th May from 08:00 to 09:00

at Edelweiss Café, Cheddar

Saturday 9th May from 09:00 to 10:00

at Bluebird Café, Wedmore

Saturday 9th May from 11:30 to 12:30

at The Hive Craft Café, Shepton Mallet

Saturday 9th May from 14:00 to 15:00

at The Coffee Bank, Winscombe

Monday 11th May from 09:30 to 10:30

at Congresbury Community Café

Friday 15th May from 10:00 to 11:00

at The Note Warehouse, Yatton

Friday 15th May from 18:00 to 19:00

at The Brewer's Arms, Banwell

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

Thank you,

Tessa

You can contact me:

Call: 01934 440639 (answerphone outside office hours)

Email: tessa.munt.mp@parliament.uk

www.tessamunt.co.uk

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

To keep updated on my work as your MP, find me on Facebook, Instagram, Bluesky and LinkedIn.



With KATY BEAUCHAMP

Summer's on its way – honestly!

The merry month of May is here – well, just about as I write this – and what better time than now to shake off the gloom of winter and look forward to summer days with some ideas to tickle those tired tastebuds.

ROASTED SQUASH WITH GOAT'S CHEESE



Squash and goat's cheese

I had something similar to this when eating out and loved it so much I have made up my own version.

METHOD

Mix the marinade ingredients together and add the squash, I do this in a plastic bag. Leave to marinate as long as possible, even overnight, then spread on a baking sheet and roast for 30 minutes at 180°C until soft and coloured.

Pan fry the nuts, breadcrumbs and salt and pepper until crispy. Mix the cheese and cream together. Dollop on the warm squash and top with nut crumbs.

INGREDIENTS

(Makes 5 starter portions)

One whole squash

→ For the marinade:

One tablespoon each: honey, hot sauce, olive oil, soy sauce and balsamic vinegar

→ Salt and pepper to taste

→ 50g chopped hazelnuts

→ 30g breadcrumbs

→ 250g soft goat's cheese

→ 75mls single cream

PORK TACOS



Easy – but delicious – tacos

These were absolutely delicious and we all ate loads of them!

METHOD

Mix all the ingredients together well in a bowl and spread evenly over one side of each tortilla. Fry them gently meat side down in a pan for about seven minutes pressing them down with a spatula.

Flip them over and add the grated cheese on top of meat and cook for a couple more minutes. Serve folded with guacamole, tomatoes and whatever else you might fancy!

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 4)

→ 4 small soft tortillas

→ 250g pork mince

→ 1 small onion (chopped)

→ Tsp cumin

→ Tsp garlic

→ Salt and pepper

→ Tbs each mayonnaise and chilli sauce

→ To serve

→ Grated cheese and guacamole

HEALTHY SWEET TREATS



Sweet treats for young and old

I wanted to make some sugar-free treats for my grandson but took it a step further and they are dairy-free too!

METHOD

Gently melt the coconut in a saucepan and mix in all the other ingredients. You could add some chopped dry fruit.

Pat them into balls or press them into any moulds you have. Leave to set in the fridge.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE WHITE ONES

→ 70g coconut cream (the hard

→ block type – not the one in a tin)

→ 100g ground almond

→ Drop of vanilla extract

→ Couple tsp honey or maple

FOR THE CHOCOLATE ONES

→ 100g dates, tbs each cocoa

→ powder, peanut butter and

→ honey

NEWS FROM MYRTLE FARM

BRITISH CIDER TIME!

The orchards are in bloom and lighter nights are here, which can only mean one thing - it's British Cider Time! There really is nothing better than a spring evening in Somerset with a pint of cider in hand and the sun on your face.

Fancy making the most of the weather? Why not drop in to The Railway Inn and enjoy an alfresco pint in the garden, or something straight from the station kitchen's delicious charcoal grill - now open every weekend.



EVENTS

🍷 24 April Our friends and Bristol foodie legends, Really Good Burger, are doing a special pop up at The Railway Inn from 4pm- 8pm. Known for juicy patties, local ingredients and no nonsense burgers.

🍷 3 May Join us for live music on Bank holiday Sunday from local favourites, Function Junkies.

🍷 23 May We'll be throwing a Thatchers Summer Session. Expect golden, laid-back vibes, sun on your face and live music in the air. Best of all, the first 50 people will receive a free pint of Thatchers.



INTRODUCING: BLOOD ORANGE 0.0%

If you've visited the farm shop or pub recently, you may have noticed an exclusive new arrival - our fruity favourite, Blood Orange, is now available in an alcohol-free option too!

Packed with sweet, juicy flavour, Thatchers Blood Orange 0.0% is a vibrant, mouthwatering, alcohol free cider made for summer moments. We've used all the expertise gained from 122 years of cidemaking to create a satisfying alcohol free cider that stays true to the Thatchers Blood Orange people know and love.

The limited release has been hugely popular and is now set to hit supermarket shelves any day now! Keep your eyes peeled in Tesco, with other stores coming soon!



BLOOD ORANGE SPRITZ

To mark the launch of Thatchers Blood Orange 0.0%, our expert bar tender has designed a special non-alcoholic cocktail, perfect for impressing friends on a picnic, or with nibbles in the garden.

🍷 50ml Lyres Italian spritz

🍷 75ml Blood Orange 0%

🍷 5ml Lyres classico 0%

Pour into a wine glass filled with ice. Stir and garnish with a slice of orange.



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GARDEN FOOD

Tales from a smallholding



With
**KARIN
SHAW**

WELL, the not-so-good news is that neither Sandra nor Ermintrude, the cows, are pregnant. Therefore, apart from not having any really cute baby Dexters, there is also not going to be any milk and no homemade yoghurt or homemade cream cheese.

So now we have another year to wait. I could try again sooner but as the gestation period for a cow is the same as for

humans, any pregnancy over the next couple of months would result in a birth during the dead of winter.

For a small farm like us, this is not a viable option. We don't have sufficient stock housing to accommodate calving cows and we would need to supplement feed as the grass would not be sufficiently nutritious for a lactating cow.

Unlike commercial farmers, we have the option to have calves at a time suitable for us (and the cows), rather than market forces, so we like to have our babies around May/June. So, we will try again with the girls around August, keeping our fingers crossed; as with most things on a smallholding, there are never any guarantees!

Mentioning "no guarantees", since February, the goose has laid a nest full of eggs on which she is now sitting. Only time will tell how many goslings we get. This is also a very hit and miss affair; some years we've started with five goslings and five made it to maturity and other years we have started with 10 and ended with two. No obvious reasons, so each year we just keep our fingers crossed!

Happy to report that the fruit cage has been repaired and I have been able to get in and clear the weeds and the brambles. Brambles do consider themselves "soft fruit" so take up squatting in the fruit cage over the winter; unfortunately, they rather overtake everything else and therefore need evicting, but not without a fight, as my very scratched arms will testify.

May is the time for most seeds/seedlings to go in the ground so some nice weather is appreciated. Threats of frosts have mostly passed, although I do still keep a close eye on the weather forecasts, ready to throw fleece over the more delicate items. Onions, garlics and broad beans are pretty hardy, as are early salad types, but if you have put in early potatoes, earth up any shoots as they will succumb to a frost.

Early peas which have been sprouting in pots in the greenhouse have also now been planted out, but I re-use the soft drinks bottle cloches to protect them from birds, slugs/snails and a chance late frost, whilst they are still young and tender.

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

WILD FOOD

Hint of the sea



With
**ADRIAN
BOOTS**

COMPARED to last year, this spring has been much cooler and wetter, punctuated by warm spells only to end just as abruptly. Sounds like a normal spring then. This has seemed to benefit the beautiful blossom trees. I don't think you can have failed to notice the fabulous flowering of cherry and blackthorn. Sadly, the blossom show will come to an end and green leaves are bursting forth.

But fear not, I have the suggestion of turning towards the coast and visiting the beach for a well-deserved leg stretch, filling the lungs with sea air, maybe an ice cream or two and... looking for seaweed!

Seaweeds are an algae, very rich in nutrients and considered almost a complete food in their own right and as such have potential health benefits for you. I suppose if one replaces ice



cream with seaweed, it is indeed much healthier for you.

Aka "green laver" or "oyster green", sea lettuce looks a bit like, well, wet lettuce (thus the common name), happily

making identification all the more easy. Sea lettuce (*Ulva lactuca*), has wavy edges and a light to deep green colour. The green pigment comes not from chlorophyll (as in green leaves) but beta-carotene.

It's abundant throughout the UK coastline most of the year, particularly on intertidal rocky shores and shingle beaches. Although normally associated with rocky shores, I have found them with a holdfast on small rocks on shingle beaches and floating loosely along sandy shores.

Widely eaten in Iceland, Chile, the West Indies, Japan and parts of China (and for good reason), sea lettuce is the most tender of our seaweeds and can be boiled, fried or baked. A classic recipe is to dry it out, crush it up to make flakes of green nori.

This can be used as a delicious condiment added to a variety of dishes for a wonderful savoury flavour, the iodine content giving a hint of the sea. Nori sprinkles on your ice cream? Anyone?

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

The Old Station Inn

The Old Station Inn is a long loved destination pub and restaurant known for its quirky interior, great food and fun atmosphere, but it has now been given a new lease of life under the helm of JoJo and Kurt, who are working hard to transform it into a hive of activity for the community and beyond, by introducing events such as Live music every Saturday; Karaoke nights on Fridays; Quiz nights; Texas Hold'Em nights; 1/2 Price Steak nights; and the list goes on.

For those of you who are not familiar with the venue, The Old Station Inn also boasts a stunning Orient Express style Pullman dining carriage, now called "Le Train-au-Rouge", where you can dine in the elegance of yesteryear and where the Prosecco Cream Teas are, judging by the reviews, an absolute must! And if you are looking for a romantic setting, Le Train-au-Rouge is as romantic as it gets.

The Sunday Roasts at the Old Station Inn are fast becoming renowned for their quality and value and well worth a trip.

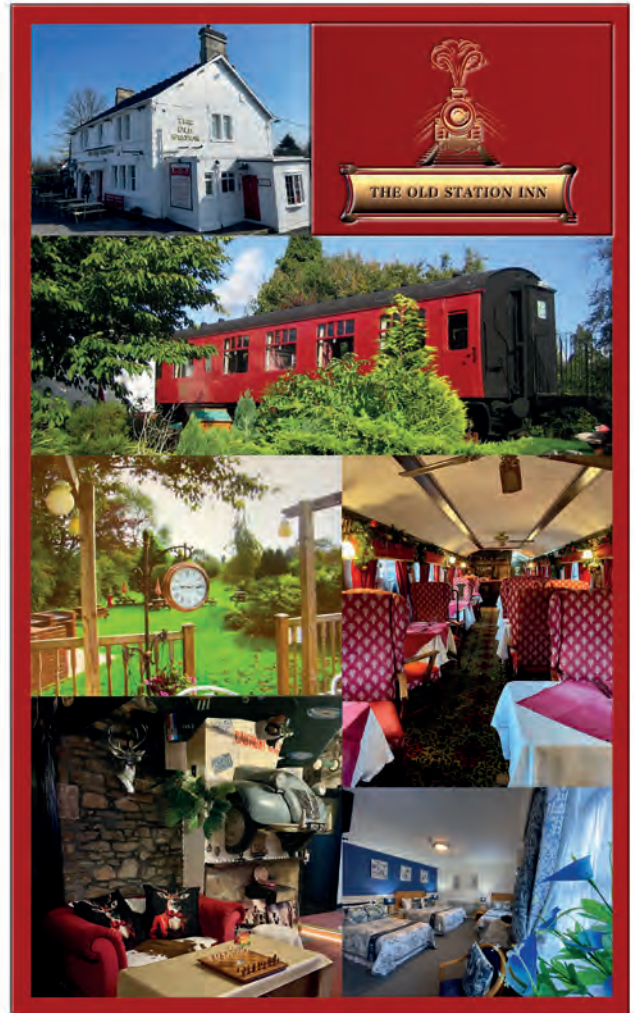
The Old Station Inn has so much to offer and this multi-faceted venue really comes into its own in the Spring and Summer when you can enjoy one of the largest and most beautiful Beer Gardens in the area, as well as the extensive grounds beyond. The list of outdoor live music; Beach Club; and BBQ events for this coming Summer is simply phenomenal and is intended to offer a chance for those who cannot get away to foreign shores to feel like they are on their holidays right here in Somerset!

And for those who wish to stay over, the Inn also offers some lovely en-suite accommodation. Alternatively, you can book a slot for your camper-van and stay over in their extensive car park surrounded by lush green fields. So, let's bring on the Summer and let the party begin!

Wells Road, Hallatrow, Somerset BS39 6EN

Tel: 01761 452228

www.theoldstationandcarriage.co.uk



CALENDAR of EVENTS MAY - SEPT 2026

25% OFF Main Courses

with this Advert
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(expt. 4th & 25th)

REGULAR MONTHLY EVENTS:

EVERY 1ST SUN & 4TH TUE - QUIZ NIGHT - 7PM
EVERY 2ND & 4TH THUR - TEXAS HOLD 'EM - 7:30
EVERY FRI NIGHT - KARAOKE NIGHT - 8:45
EVERY SAT NIGHT - LIVE MUSIC - 7PM - LATE
EVERYDAY (EXPT. MON) - PROSECCO CREAM TEAS



* MAY *

Sat 2nd - 70'S DISCO TRIBUTE - SAT' NIGHT FEVER - GIG!
Mon 4th - "OLD STATION INN" RE-OPENING PARTY!!!!!!!!!!
Sat 9th - JAZZ, BLUES & THE RAT PACK - GIG!
Sat 16th - THUMPING POP HITTERS - GIG!
Sat 23rd - LATIN FUN - RICKY MARTIN/SHAKIRA etc. - GIG!
Mon 25th - ALL DAY OUTDOOR BBQ & LIVE MUSIC PARTY
Sat 30th - SONGS FROM THE MOVIES - GIG!

* JUNE *

Sat 6th - 80'S DISCO FUN- GIG!
Sat 13th - ALL DAY OUTDOOR BBQ & LIVE MUSIC PARTY
Sat 20th - INDIE ROCK - FOO FIGHTERS, KILLERS - GIG!
Sat 27th - ROCKABILLY - GIG!

* JULY *

Sat 4th - COUNTRY & WESTERN - GIG!
Sat 11th - ALL DAY OUTDOOR MUSIC & "CIDER" FESTIVAL
Sat 18th - ALL DAY OUTDOOR "IBIZA" BEACH CLUB BBQ
Sat 25th - ALL DAY OUTDOOR "MYKONOS" BEACH CLUB BBQ

* AUGUST *

Sat 1st - AMERICAN PIE FUN MUSIC NIGHT - GIG!
Sat 8th - NEIL DIAMOND & TOM JONES - GIG
Sat 15th - All DAY OUTDOOR "HAWAIIAN LUAU" BBQ
Sat 22nd - All DAY OUTDOOR "CARIBBEAN" BEACH CLUB BBQ
Sat 29th - All DAY OUTDOOR "RIO CARNIVAL" BEACH CLUB BBQ
MON 31st - ALL DAY OUTDOOR MUSIC, "BEER" & BBQ FESTIVAL

* SEPTEMBER *

Sat 5th - MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS -
Murder Mystery Immersive Dinner - Book now!

Say cheese at food festival

AN ash-coated goat's log made in the New Forest was named Supreme Champion at the British & Irish Cheese Awards 2026.

Dazel Ash from Rosary Goats Cheese rose to the top in a field of more than 600 entries, judged by 60 industry experts, to take the top prize at the 30th anniversary edition of these prestigious awards, held as part of the Food and Drink Festival at the Royal Bath and West Showground at Shepton Mallet.



Dwarfed by the 600-plus entries



The huge range of cheese on offer got the thumbs-up from these visitors



Food campaigner, writer and broadcaster Nigel Barden with Tracey Colley, one of the judges

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Café's extension



Dame Joanna Lumley opened an extension to the Frankie Howerd Café, see page 83.

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SADLERS IN WELLS UNVEILS NEW SET MENU

Sadlers Restaurant Wells has officially launched a seasonal set menu, signalling a fresh chapter for the local favourite. Known for its commitment to local produce, the restaurant's new offering balances sophisticated gastronomy priced at £18.95 for two courses or £24.95 for three.

The new menu highlights the best of the West Country, featuring vibrant starters like Wye Valley Asparagus with Dorset crab and hearty mains such as Chalk Stream trout in a Somerset cider sauce. For those looking for the full Sadlers experience, the extensive À La Carte menu

remains available, offering a wider range of the kitchen's signature dishes.

Beyond the standard lunch and dinner service, Sadlers is positioning itself as the city's premier destination for celebrations. The restaurant also offers a decadent Afternoon Tea and a lively Bottomless Brunch, perfect for birthdays, anniversaries, or simply catching up with friends.

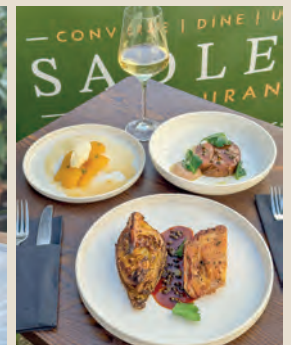
Sadlers restaurant is family and dog-friendly, ensuring that a high-quality meal doesn't mean leaving anyone behind.

For those who enjoy the fresh air, the heated

al fresco seating provides a comfortable outdoor dining option.

Sadlers is open Tuesday through Saturday. Please note our last food sitting times: Tuesday – Friday: 12:00pm – 2:30pm and 5:00pm – 8:30pm Saturday: All-day service from 12:00pm – 9:00pm

Whether you are looking for a quick seasonal lunch, a celebratory brunch, or a refined evening meal, Sadlers Restaurant remains firmly at the heart of the Wells community.



9 Heritage Courtyard, off Sadler Street, Wells, BA5 2RR

For more information please call 01749 681982 or email: booking@sadlersrestaurant.co.uk

Open Tuesday to Saturday for lunch & dinner, drinks, wine and cocktails

Food club seeks support

THE Radstock Food Club supplies around 30 families with a varied selection of fresh vegetables, frozen and refrigerated goods, bread, and cupboard staples.

However, it says food insecurity continues to go under the radar in the area, causing families to put their health and wellbeing at risk - research shows Radstock is in the top 10% most food insecure places in the country.

To help tackle this problem, the club is asking residents and businesses to support it by donating non-perishable food items such as pasta, rice, tins and cereal to help keep up with demand.

Currently it has had to implement a waiting list for new members to ensure those already registered don't go away with less.

Coordinator, Sofia Perkins, said: "Services like ours are about more than



Pictured (l to r) Chris, Kyra, Sue, Ginny and Sofia with Easter eggs they provided for each family

just picking up groceries, they're about dignity, community, and sustainability. We're seeing increasing demand, and with that comes a need for greater community involvement."

Donations can be dropped at the

Radstock Library during open hours, or the club can arrange to collect from nearby locations. Alternatively, monetary donations can be made via SWAN Transport, which took over the scheme last May to be spent on top-up food items.

Details: sofia@swan-transport.co.uk

FIRST PHASE OF TICKETS
ARE NOW LIVE!



EST. 2024

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31st July & 1st August

FRI 3pm - 10pm | SAT 12pm - 10pm

www.wellsbeerfest.co.uk

— HOSTED BY —

THE SHEEP & PENGUIN

Meet the new landlord!

With final preparations underway for the reopening of The Oak House in Axbridge on Friday May 8th, landlord Ray Sparks introduces himself and his plans for the pub.

“HI everyone! I’m Ray Sparks, the new landlord of the Oak House in Axbridge, a place I’ve been proud to call home for the past eight years, having moved here for family reasons it’s truly become a place close to my heart!

With 38 years in hospitality and a background as a qualified chef, I’ve had the privilege of running award-winning real ale pubs. Now, my focus is firmly here in Axbridge.

Many of you may already know me through my role as a town councillor or from volunteering as a steward in the museum. I also support various community groups in Axbridge.

My aim is simple: to make The Oak House the heart of the community – a



Ray is already a familiar face in the town place where everyone feels welcome, can come together, and enjoy great

company.

We will be showing all the action from Sky Sports and TNT Sports in our dedicated sports bar area — the perfect spot to soak up the atmosphere with a pint in hand.

Whether it’s football, rugby, cricket, or more, you won’t miss a second. Big screens, great sound, and even better company.

In addition to a completely transformed pub, we will have seven beautifully refurbished letting rooms as well as a brand new kitchen.

I’m always here to support the town in any way I can, so please do pop in, say hello, and make yourself at home.

Cheers!”

YOUR LOCAL REIMAGINED

We can't wait to welcome you back!

Following a full refurbishment, we are excited to welcome you back for perfect pours, tempting food and a fantastic atmosphere.

RE-OPENING FRIDAY 8TH MAY



FOOD SERVED DAILY



ROOMS AVAILABLE



DOG FRIENDLY



LIVE SPORTS SKY & TNT



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THE OAK HOUSE



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FOOD WITH THIS ADVERT

Race is a winner



Men's winner Joshua Harris

SUNSHINE, smiles and a splash of colour made this year's Wellow Way 10K, 5K and Kids' Colour Run a day to remember as the popular village event returned bigger and brighter than ever.

The seventh year Wellow Way 10K saw record participation, from seasoned runners to first time entrants taking on a new challenge. In total, 230 runners ran the 10K and 5K

courses – the latter a “starter run” for families to run together.

The Kids' Colour Run was a highlight, with around 130 youngsters taking part. In a first this year, parents and siblings joined teachers from St Julian's School to throw colour powder – great fun had by all!

Tom Craggs, Head of Endurance at UK Athletics, started off the 5K and 10K races while – perhaps no surprise – his wife, Georgia Wood, stormed to a new women's course record in 45:20. The men's winner, Joshua Harris, finished in under 40 minutes.

Event organiser Lisa Hunt paid tribute to the army of volunteers and supporters: “This event simply wouldn't happen without our amazing volunteers and generous sponsors – it's a real team effort and something the whole village can be proud of.”

The day raised around £5,000 for local causes, including Wellow Recreation Ground, the Parlour Shop, St Julian's Church and St Julian's School PTA.



The colour run



Heading through the village



The run was also fun!



The start – Georgia Wood (345) was women's winner

Helping the flower of Somerset

DID you know the “Cheddar pink” is the flower of Somerset? As it’s Somerset Day on May 11th let’s celebrate this rare beauty. The Cheddar pink is one of our chosen Champion Species on the Mendip Hills. It’s a little, pink carnation that grows on the rocky outcrops of the south facing slopes. It flowers from late May to July and it’s an indicator of how good those grasslands are for wildlife.

Grasslands are a vital habitat for several of the Mendip champion species including skylarks, small pearl-bordered fritillary, adder, black oil beetle and greater horseshoe bat, which use these habitats for food, shelter and breeding.

Limestone, or calcareous, grasslands are flower-rich environments, which are so important to many pollinators. By supporting habitats with our champion species in mind, we also support a myriad of other species too.

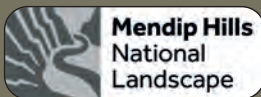
However, lowland calcareous grassland is thought to include some of our most ancient grasslands and as a result in and of themselves also host a diverse suite of botanical species only found in this particular habitat.

Additionally, due to our landscape's mining history, several areas have been "poisoned" with toxic heavy metals, such as lead, which has led to some grasslands consisting of an even



rarer suite of “metallophyte” species that make up what's called calaminarian grassland. There is only an estimated 450 hectares of this habitat in the UK making it truly special to Mendip.

We continue to support farmers and landowners to manage their important grasslands through our Farming in Protected Landscapes grant programme.



To find out more about getting a grant, contact fipl@mendiphills-nl.org.uk



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Cheddar community celebrated



Creator Eleanor Motion (left) with local Tessa Munt who visited whilst the installation was being developed

ST. Andrew's Church in Cheddar has a new art installation, thanks to work by students at the village's Fairlands Middle School and Kings of Wessex Academy.

Called "One tree, one body, one life" it celebrates the importance of community, with portraits and leaves. The portraits are of all the church members and those from local care homes and Messy Church. The leaves were coloured and written by all the students and each one has on it the young persons' thoughts about what is important about community.

Art of spinning



HARRIETTE Dottridge of Compton Dando was recently invited to neighbouring Keynsham's annual Spring Show.

Harriette, who runs a series of craft workshops every winter at Compton Dando parish hall, was asked to go along and demonstrate how to spin wool from the fleece of a sheep.

MARTIN BENTHAM RWA PAINTINGS

Sat 30th May to Sat 6th June 2026 10.00am - 4.00pm
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'Mayblossom at Priddy'

2025 - oil on board - 30 x 74cm



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The fine art of selling



With HENRY MICHALLAT

CLEVEDON Salerooms held their Spring Fine Art sale on Thursday, March 12th. This first quarterly Fine Art sale of 2026 certainly had some treats in store for eager

bidders. One of the most attractive was an oil on canvas by British artist Charles Haigh Wood (1856-1927). "Private and Confidential" showed fashionably dressed young ladies of the era of Jane Austen seated in an interior before a bay window, eagerly discussing the contents of a letter, maybe from a suitor, all rendered in fine detail.

Bidders responded enthusiastically and it quickly wrote off its estimate to sell for a noteworthy £3,400.

The last few months have seen record leaps in the price of gold and the sale saw this trend continue in fine style. Top of the tree in the jewellery section and highest price in the whole sale, was a diamond 18ct yellow and white gold suite, comprising necklace, bracelet, and earrings, weighing 100g gross approx. it sold for £7,000.

The market for pop and rock memorabilia is in rude health and when it comes to big prices, anything connected with The Beatles can inevitably be relied upon to deliver. And so it was that hopes were high for a collection of showbusiness autographs from the 1960s, including the Fab Four, which had been collected by a close friend of the vendor's family who had worked as a TV make-up artist at the time.



Those hopes were certainly not in vain as, after some very spirited bidding, the gavel fell at an equally fab £4,800.

Whilst saleroom tastes have for a while now been geared towards the contemporary, it was the traditional favourite Meissen which shone in the ceramics section. An early 20th century figure "After the Bath", modelled by Robert Ockelmann, sold for £1,900, whilst a figure of a female bowls player after a model by Walter Schott sold for £1,500.

Clevedon Salerooms next Quarterly Fine Art sale for which entries are now invited will be on Thursday June 11th.

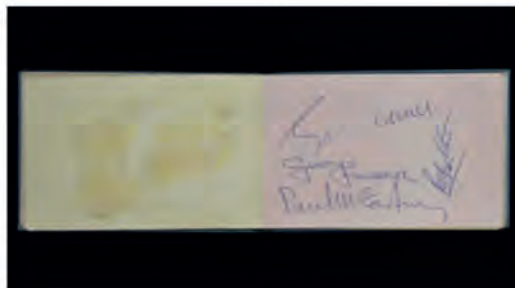
Consigning now for the June 11th Summer Specialist Sale



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Charles I brass lantern clock - William Sellwood, Lothbury, (fl. 1633-1652), circa 1640
Sold for £3,200



The Beatles Interest - Autograph book bearing autograph signatures
Sold for £4,800



Rare 'Black Forest' carved and stained wood hall chair in the form of a bear, circa 1900
Sold for £3,600

CLEVEDON VALUATION DAYS Clevedon Salerooms, every Monday, 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm
BRISTOL VALUATION DAYS* Tuesday 26th May, Stoke Lodge, Shirehampton Rd, BS9 1BN, 10am–3pm

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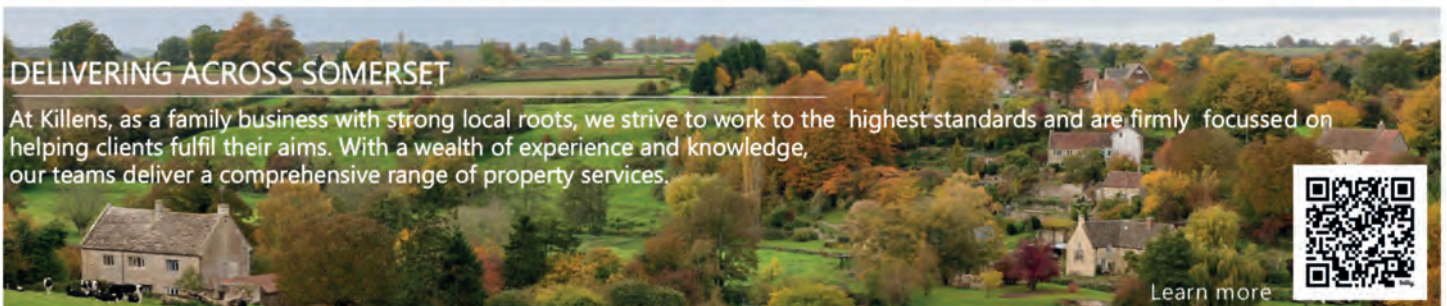
3 BED | 3 RECEPT | 2 BATH



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Luxury Lifestyle Sale Shines with Strong Results Across Every Category

Our Luxury Lifestyle Sale held on 18th April proved another great success, with spirited bidding across silver, jewellery, watches, fashion and handbags. A superb selection of quality pieces attracted interest from collectors, private buyers and online bidders, resulting in any exceptional prices and confirming continued confidence in the luxury market.

Silver once again performed strongly, led by an outstanding six-piece sterling silver hallmarked Garrard & Co. Ltd tea and coffee service in Art Deco style, which realised an impressive £5,800.

Jewellery generated particularly competitive bidding, with standout lots including an Art Deco diamond and platinum panel brooch signed Lacluche Frères, which sold for £4,000. Gold pieces were especially sought after, with an 18ct gold pocket watch achieving £2,650, a 9ct gold belcher link chain necklace reaching £2,600, and a mounted American 1885 gold ten dollar coin suspended from an unmarked chain selling for £2,450.

Further strong results included a wide 22ct gold ring at £1,700, a 9ct front and back oval picture locket with a 9ct gold guard chain at £1,500, and a 1764 George III gold guinea selling for £1,150.

Handbags also attracted excellent interest, with a Louis Vuitton shoulder bag £750, pink Chanel-style quilted double flap handbag selling for £650, while a bright pink Mulberry Bayswater Glossy Goat handbag achieved £600.

Many additional lots sold for over £1,000, demonstrating the depth of demand across all categories.

We are now inviting entries for our next Timeless Treasures sale. If you are considering selling silver, jewellery, watches, fashion or handbags, please contact the auction rooms or visit for a free valuation, Monday to Friday, 9:00am–5:30pm, or email enquiries@mendipauctionrooms.co.uk.

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9th June	Timeless Treasures - Silver, Jewellery & Watches
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14th July	From the Bookshelf to the Battlefield - History, Militaria, Books, Coins & Stamps

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Learn more



Ducks away!

THE centre of Nunney was packed for the village's annual duck race and Easter Parade.

Organised by Nunney Community Association, the event saw around 1,000 ducks released into the brook.

Crowds gather for the start of the race



Dressed for the occasion: releasing the ducks



Going quackers in Nunney

A successful concert

MIDSOMER Norton and Radstock Rotary Club hosted a great evening listening to Cahoots followed by The Original Barn Finds at Chilcompton Village Hall raising money for SENSE UK.





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The first issue back in 2005!

Cat-friendly clinics offer paws for thought

NURTURE Vets, with centres in Wells and Weston-super-Mare, has expanded the number of its cats-only clinics designed to make veterinary visits as calm and stress-free as possible for their feline patients.

As a Gold ISFM-accredited Cat Friendly Clinic, Nurture is committed to providing the highest standard of care tailored specifically to cats. From 7th



Cat Friendly Clinics

April, the Wells branch has been offering Cat Only Clinics every weekday, held in their purpose-built Nurse Hub. With a separate cat-only entrance, dedicated parking and a welcoming receptionist, every detail has been carefully designed with a cat's comfort in mind. Clinic times run on Monday and Thursday afternoons, and Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Nurture says these clinics provide a quieter, dog-free environment, with calm clinical spaces and a team trained in gentle, feline-focused handling. Dedicated cat advocates also help shape how we continue to improve the experience for both cats and their owners.

Nurture is also pleased to offer a weekly Cat Only Clinic at its Weston branch every Thursday from 11am to lunchtime. During this time, the focus is entirely on cats, with additional steps taken to minimise stress and create a



The entrance to the Wells clinic

relaxed atmosphere.

A spokesperson for Nurture said: "We understand that trips to the vets can be challenging for many cats, so these clinics are all about making visits easier, calmer and more positive."

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Spring into summer



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WITH summer fast approaching, Aldwick Estate is full of life, both inside the venue, across the gardens and throughout the land. The team's efforts this month have turned to the wider estate, where the farmland has been given more concentrated attention.



As part of our commitment to the Sustainable Farming Incentive land management scheme, careful efforts have been made over the spring period to make sure that the land across the estate is as rich and diverse as it can be.

Over the next couple of months, more livestock will begin to return to Aldwick Estate, adding to the renewed sense of life that spring has brought. Ewes and lambs from Fern Hill Farm on the Mendips, home of our tenant sheep farmer Andy Wear, have already been welcomed back into homefield, taking full advantage of the thick spring grass.



Grassland management is an important part of the picture at this stage in the year. Because of this Aberdeen Angus cattle, also from Fern Hill Farm, have returned to the fields. They have been brought in to mob graze certain areas more intensively.

Over time this breaks up denser patches of grassland, creating space to enable a more even and diverse sward that will only further increase biodiversity and encourage a stronger display of wildflowers as summer progresses.

Some fields need a little extra work before they can really flourish, particularly where weeds have gained too much ground. Once those areas are treated, some of the land will be lightly fertilised and will then be used to produce haylage later in the season.

A single cut will be taken in early summer so that the fields can then be left for winter bird seed, arable reversion and the further development of herbal lays, all part of the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme that the estate is committed to.

As all this work happens around the rest of the estate, the work continues in the vineyard. The team have concluded tying down the vines in time for the new growth that has already commenced. Tightening anchors and fruiting wires, trellis repairs, followed by bud rubbing makes up the next stage of the cycle of the vineyard, as spring turns into summer.

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Luxury shepherds' hut retreat opens in Chew Valley with a mission close to the heart

A NEW luxury glamping retreat, The Old Cider Orchard, opened in the Chew Valley in March, offering more than just a countryside escape—it tells a story of craftsmanship, resilience, and hope.

The venture, created by renowned bespoke cabinet maker Phil Clark, will eventually feature two beautifully designed shepherds' huts, each built by hand to the highest standard. Known across the region for his meticulous attention to detail, Phil Clark has poured decades of experience into crafting the first hut, creating what he describes as “a genuinely deluxe place to stay.”

Set against the tranquil backdrop of the Chew Valley, the huts blend rustic charm with boutique comfort. Thoughtfully designed interiors, custom-built cabinetry, and carefully curated finishes offer guests a peaceful retreat without compromising on luxury.

But behind the project lies a deeply personal purpose.

The idea for The Old Cider Orchard emerged following the devastating diagnosis of one of Phil Clark's four daughters, who at just 20 years old was diagnosed with stage 4 ALK-positive lung cancer.

The disease is a subtype that often affects younger people with little or no smoking history. In response, the family co-founded a charity called Oncogene Cancer Research in February 2024 to raise vital funds for UK-based cancer research.

A portion of all bookings will go directly to the charity to fund



research and offer hope to other families facing similar challenges.

“Building something lasting and positive felt like the right response,” says Phil Clark. “This project allows us to do what we know best, while giving something back and supporting vital research.”

The family's fundraising efforts extend beyond the retreat. A charity golf day will take place on Friday, 26 June at Tall Pines Golf Course, with opportunities for players, sponsors, and prize donors to get involved. Proceeds will fund the launch of new research and seed grants through Oncogene Cancer Research. To register or help sponsor this event or one of the 18 holes, please contact Jan Clark on 07414 460341.

The Old Cider Orchard is open for bookings and attracting interest from those seeking more meaningful travel experiences – where a relaxing rural getaway also contributes to a cause that truly matters. The site welcomes families and dogs, making it an inclusive destination for all.

This unique retreat stands as a powerful reminder of how creativity and determination can transform hardship into hope offering not just a place to stay, but a story to be part of.



The Old Cider Orchard is documented on Instagram @the_old_cider_orchard, as well as via woodlandchampions.co.uk alongside Phil Clark's bespoke work @philclarkkitchensandfurniture, and the charity's updates @oncogenecancerresearch

New employment rules: practical risks for small employers – and how to manage them

THE recent changes to employment law bring a range of practical risks for small employers, particularly those with fewer than 20 staff. While the underlying aim is to improve fairness and job security, the reality for small businesses is an increased exposure to claims if procedures are not handled carefully. Understanding where those risks lie – and how to address them – is essential.

One of the most immediate risks arises from day-one employment rights. Employees can now challenge dismissals much earlier than before, meaning a poorly handled recruitment decision can quickly lead to a claim. For example, if an employer dismisses a new starter after only a few weeks without a clear reason or process, this could give rise to allegations of unfair dismissal or discrimination.

The solution is straightforward but important: ensure proper recruitment checks are carried out, provide clear written terms and operate a structured probation period with documented reviews.

Flexible working presents another area of potential difficulty. Employees now have the right to request flexible working from the outset and employers must deal with such requests reasonably. A common risk is an informal refusal – for instance, simply saying “that won’t work for us” without explanation. This could lead to a claim.

Employers should instead follow a basic

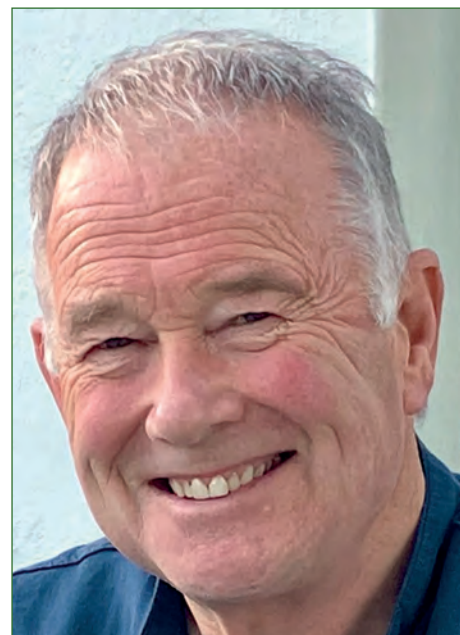
process: meet with the employee, consider the request carefully, assess the business impact and provide a written decision setting out the permitted statutory grounds if the request is refused.

Holiday pay is a further trap, particularly for businesses with casual or irregular workers. Miscalculating holiday pay – by excluding regular overtime or commission, for example – can lead to claims for unlawful deduction from wages. Even small errors can accumulate over time. Employers should review how holiday pay is calculated and ensure it reflects normal earnings, not just basic pay.

Record-keeping is an often overlooked but increasingly important risk area. Employers are required to provide written statements of terms and maintain adequate employment records. In a small business, it is easy for documentation to become informal or inconsistent. However, in the event of a dispute, the absence of clear records will almost always disadvantage the employer.

Keeping simple but accurate records of contracts, hours worked, pay, and key communications can make a decisive difference.

Finally, there is the risk of inadvertently discriminatory decisions. Small employers often make quick, practical decisions – for example, selecting staff for redundancy or allocating shifts. Without a structured approach, these decisions can



unintentionally disadvantage certain groups and lead to discrimination claims, which can be costly and uncapped. Applying objective criteria, recording reasons, and taking a moment to sense-check decisions can significantly reduce this risk.

In summary, the key theme is not complexity but consistency. Small employers do not need elaborate HR systems, but they do need clear processes, basic documentation, and a disciplined approach to decision-making. By taking these steps, they can minimise risk while continuing to run their businesses efficiently.

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We not only provide parking, but we erect barriers and signage and people are able to make use of our toilet and shower facilities. We are also delighted that our tenants share our interest in supporting local events and we have Brock and Houlford and the NFU who are providing sponsorship in what will be the 10k's 14th year.

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Chew Valley, providing a pleasant environment in our business park for a wide range of businesses to flourish, creating jobs and making it easy for their clients to make use of the goods and services on offer.

We are delighted to currently have 14 businesses on site, employing more than 100 people, most of whom live close by. And we have high hopes that more will be joining us in the coming months.

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A one-stop destination for independent shops, eating and wellbeing

WE have all come to know Kilver Court and Gardens as the home of Mulberry and TOAST, but a host of new tenants and a carefully considered re-mastering of the site, mean that there are now many more reasons to visit the iconic Shepton Mallet destination.

Once more under the ownership of the Showering family, whose ancestors first purchased the site in the 1950s, Kilver Court and Gardens is now home to new independent fashion and homewares retailers, a chef-run café, yoga, a pilates studio and a coworking space.

Chef Nick Hampson has taken on the renovated Kilver café, a chic, light-filled space, looking out onto a re-paved courtyard that has parasols and seating for sunny days. A fresh, seasonal brunch and lunch menu, as well as all-day pastries, are served from 9.30 to 4.30, using produce from the gardens wherever possible.

The Wiggly Shed, formerly the garden shop on the courtyard, has now been taken over by innovative garden and homewares brand Makers & Merchants, whose founders have an incredible design heritage, via the Conran Shop and Liberty. Travelling Europe to discover ceramicists, glassmakers and homeware designers, they bring a curated selection of their finds to Kilver Court and Gardens, where they have established their first offline store, alongside their Somerset food and drink ranges.

In the main Kilver Court building you will find a new TOAST Home, a gallery-style Makers & Merchants store and homewares brand Courthouse Interiors. Courthouse's only offline store – the brand holds some 20,000 products online –



the Kilver shop shows traditional British brands such as Mulberry Home and Sanderson alongside a joyfully eclectic selection of light fittings and tableware by leading European brands. With prices ranging from £10 for homewares to £6,000 for a sofa, there is something to suit all budgets and tastes.

Somerset-born brand Coco & Wolf and British fashion retailer NRBY are running pop-ups at Kilver through June 2026. Coco & Wolf's exquisite Liberty Fabric bedding, homewares and apparel are only sold here at Kilver and at the Liberty London store itself, while NRBY has stores in London and Bath. The clothing brand prides itself on sustainable, natural fabrics like silk, linen and cashmere and designs that foreground versatility and durability over fast-fashion.

New to Kilver too is Distil Coworking, a calm, contemporary environment that offers membership and pay as you go desk space for remote working, with free garden access and bookable meeting room and podcast booth as part of the deal. Yoga classes in the ballroom and a state-of-the-art reformer pilates studio, run by A&M Pilates, complete the wellbeing offer, making Kilver Court and Gardens a truly one-stop destination for live, work and play.



See www.kilvercourt.co.uk for up-to-date events and happenings

What the Romans did for Mendip

WELLS and Mendip Museum in Wells is celebrating the significance of the Mendip Hills to the Roman empire by opening a new permanent gallery space.

Visitors can explore displays about Roman lead mining in the Mendip area and see what life was like for the miners, the occupying Romans, and the communities which grew up to support the mining.

The display will show everyday domestic and personal artefacts used by Romans, evidence of Roman buildings in the area, Roman coins, and information about the network of Roman roads.

The museum's curator, David Walker, said: "The Romans were on Mendip just a few decades after they invaded, and when they withdrew just over 400 years later they left a country changed forever. Our new display will reflect on their time here and how life continued after they ended direct rule."

Details: 01749 673477 • admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk

Missing rail links



The author standing in the old track bed at Draycott Station

DRAYCOTT historian Alan Rowntree has written a book exploring why the influential village of Rodney Stoke rejected having a station, which was subsequently built in Draycott in 1870, although earlier plans date back to 1846.

The book also examines why Wedmore, another prominent village, did not have a railway, even

though there were plans in 1863 to build a line direct from Wedmore to Rodney Stoke and in 1896 to build a line from Wedmore to Cheddar.

The book comprises 140 pages, A4 – fully illustrated with maps, plans and photographs. Copies will be available at Draycott Community Shop or from the Strawberry Special, priced £10, from May 9th.

All profits will go to Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance.

Solving a royal mystery



The Royal Arms

INTERNATIONALLY renowned conservators Stephen Rickerby and Lisa Shekede have returned to work at the Church of St Nicholas and the Blessed Virgin Mary at Stowey in the Chew Valley.

Last year they restored some of the church's early 20th century murals painted by Henry Strachey. This time they are working on the church's very rare and fine Royal Arms of James I.

There is a date 1624 in small numerals at the bottom, the year before James I died and the initials CR and the date 1660 above, so the Royal Arms were amended when Charles II came to the throne.

But where were they hidden during the turbulent years of the Civil War and then the Commonwealth, following the execution of Charles I in January 1649?

Stephen and Lisa believe the four

boards on which the Royal Arms are painted could have been taken apart, making it easier to hide.

The couple will return next year to continue working on Strachey's paintings in the chancel. The £490,000 Stowey Revived project has been supported by National Lottery funding.

There will be a chance to see the Royal Arms and hear about their history and restoration at a free open evening on Tuesday, May 5th, 5.30-6.30pm. Places are limited and need to be booked.



Some of the restored Strachey murals

Details: activities.stoweyrevived@outlook.com

Replica roundhouse from the Iron Age

AVALON Archaeology has unveiled a reconstruction of an Iron Age roundhouse that was once a common sight on the Somerset Levels

The new building, at Westhay, is based on evidence from the Glastonbury Lake Village, where Iron Age communities built homes and canoes to thrive in the flooded environment of the Somerset Levels.

Glastonbury Lake Village was occupied for about 150 years at the end of the Iron Age, with a maximum of 20 houses at any one time. It could only be reached by water. Built on wet peat, these waterlogged conditions have allowed the remarkable preservation of wooden structures and objects that do not normally survive, making it the most well-preserved Iron Age settlement yet discovered in the UK.

A team of experimental archaeologists at the South West Heritage Trust worked alongside volunteers to complete the project over 12 months. Members of the public also contributed to the interior decoration at a prehistoric painting workshop. The building also features an authentic bread oven.

Dr Richard Brunning, an archaeologist with the trust, who led the project, explained: “The roundhouse is built with very small roundwood and relies on its woven structure to give it strength, rather like a large upturned basket. The walls are covered in daub, a mixture of clay subsoil, hay and a little horse poo. It is thatched



BBC Somerset presenter Charlie Taylor (centre) opens the new building. He is pictured with (left) site manager Marc Cox and (right) Richard Brunning

with reed and has a clay floor, central hearth and small bread oven.

“The walls are decorated with impressions of ammonite shells and

painted with natural earth colours using milk curds as a binding agent. The patterns are taken from pottery designs from Glastonbury Lake Village.”

Dr Brunning added: “The roundhouse is built with very small roundwood and relies on its woven structure to give it strength, rather like a large upturned basket.

“The walls are decorated with impressions of ammonite shells and painted with natural earth colours using milk curds as a binding agent. The patterns are taken from pottery designs from Glastonbury Lake Village.”

Avalon Archaeology is open every Sunday 10am-4pm and Saturdays during the school holidays.



The interior of the hut



Guests – including volunteers who worked on the project – at the opening



Construction underway

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

Moose group donations

Photo courtesy of Mike Lang



Lodge officials and recipients at the presentation event

BURNHAM-on-Sea's Moose organisation has donated more than £5,500 to local good causes in the last year.

A total of £5,541 was handed over to charity groups and other organisations at a presentation event. Money was raised by running social events throughout the year, including race nights, a harvest supper and a Valentine lunch.

Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance funds were gathered by collection days at various supermarkets. The charity received £3,250.

Burnham RNLI was Lodge 123 president Rita Harris's nominated charity, for a second-year running. Funds were raised by running ticketed events, amongst the members and guests. This year, the RNLI received £1,041.

Other recipients – each receiving £250 – were: Burnham & Highbridge Gateway Club, The Space Cheddar, Burnham Baptist Church Youth Club, Freewheelers EVS, The Waffle Hub, Burnham Methodist Church Refurbishment Project and the Friends of Burnham War Memorial Hospital.

Children's charities join forces



JESSIE May, the Bristol-based children's hospice at home charity, has merged with Children's Hospice South West (CHSW).

It says the agreement brings together two organisations with a shared commitment to supporting children with life-limiting conditions and their families, at a time when children's hospice services across the UK are facing increasing financial pressures.

By joining CHSW as a subsidiary, Jessie May says its services will be preserved and it will continue as a separate charity under the Jessie May name.

It says the partnership reflects a shared belief that collaboration is the best way to safeguard hospice care for children and families and to give services the best possible chance of reaching more families over time, as funding and circumstances allow.

Supporting women

SOMERSET Community Foundation (SCF) has now awarded 28 grants and more than £800,000 to The Nelson Trust to support the establishment and running of Bridgwater Women's Centre.

Since beginning in 1985, The Nelson Trust has grown to be a regional charity that has been supporting individuals experiencing substance use, trauma, or involvement with the criminal justice system.

Andy Ridgewell, Programmes Director at SCF, said: "The Nelson Trust allows vulnerable women to access support and the potential to change their future.

"In rural counties like Somerset, there are additional barriers. Transport links can be limited, communities can be



tight-knit, and stigma can be significant. This can further isolate women and make it harder to seek help

- which is why places like Bridgwater Women's Centre are so crucial for women in the community."

Cancer charity saved from closure

FROME-based charity We Hear You can look forward to a more secure future after reaching a deadline of March 31st to raise £55,000.

Its fundraising efforts were boosted by a 24-hour-long baton relay marathon by dozens of runners around the Frome Showfield led by charity ambassador Rachel Clark, who also ran a marathon by completing a loop of the circuit every hour.

WHY supports people affected by cancer and life-limiting illness. After Rachel crossed the finishing line she said: "I can confirm that thanks to the phenomenal spirit of our community, WHY will remain open."

Lucy Kitchener, CEO of WHY, added: "We are so thrilled to have met our target and none of it would be possible without all the support we received."

Mayor of Frome, Anita Collier (left) paid a visit . . .



Rachel (centre) crosses the finishing line at the end of the event



. . . as did local MP Anna Sabine



The run attracted runners of all abilities



Setting off in front of a TV camera

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

SAS challenge

A DETERMINED team of over 20 staff from Children's Hospice South West at Wraxall will take on one of the UK's toughest endurance challenges, the legendary Fan Dance in the Brecon Beacons, on May 8th.

The 15-mile (24 km) load-bearing march is famously used in the selection process for the UK's Special Forces and is designed to push participants to their absolute physical and mental limits.

The team are raising vital funds for the babies, children, young people and families they support every single day.

Karen Greaves, Head of Care, said: "Our families face mountains of their own, often quietly and courageously, and



knowing that the people who care for them are willing to push themselves to such extremes in their honour is profoundly moving."

They are also looking for two minibuses to take them to South Wales. Visit www.justgiving.com/team/team-cf-2026 matt.norman@chsw.org.uk

Taking aim to support cancer help group

DARTS players took to the oche for 12 hours non-stop at the Wookey Hole Club in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

Members of the Wookey Hole Arrows and friends raised more than £2,000 for the charity.

Some of the fundraisers on a break, whilst others played on



Freemasons' gifts

CONNAUGHT Lodge Freemasons in Midsomer Norton have recently made several charitable donations, including 24 TLC Teddies to Hope House Surgery in Radstock.

They help young children cope with difficult situations and will be used specifically in the Friday morning child injection clinic.

They donated £220 towards a special floor bed for Arlo Cradock, aged three, who suffers from epilepsy and a rare genetic condition.

They are also donating £500 to the Dorothy House Hospice for



Pictured (l to r) Connaught Freemasons with nurses Debbie Williams, Hollie Skese and Lucy Cotterill



Pictured (l to r) Mum, Emma Cradock, sister, Isla-Rose, nan, Carol Heavyside and Arlo flanked by Freemasons Chris Brooke (left) and Chris James (right)

their 50th anniversary funding appeal and £550 to SWALLOW, a local charity that looks after young people with learning difficulties.

Once again, they will be supporting the Guide Dogs Association sponsoring a puppy for the first two years of its training.

Connaught Lodge is one of the oldest in Somerset, having been founded in 1912.

Details: Secretary3573@btinternet.com

Sanctuary seeks support



PEAR Tree Farm Animal Sanctuary, a volunteer-run charity near Wells, is home to more than 80 rescued animals, including pigs, horses, goats, sheep and poultry. Since opening in 2018, the sanctuary has rescued, rehabilitated and rehomed more than 7,500 animals.

However, much of the sanctuary's fencing is now in poor condition, with broken posts and weakened wire creating potential safety risks and it's appealing for financial support.

Emily Williams, who volunteers for the sanctuary, said: "It's something we've managed for as long as we can, but it's now reaching the point where it poses a real risk to the animals' safety."

The sanctuary is aiming to raise around £1,000 to cover the cost of essential materials, while local tradespeople have already stepped forward to offer their labour free of charge.

Details: peartreefarmanimalsanctuary@hotmail.com
<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/ptffencingappeal>

Firewalk highlights a burning issue



Wells Cathedral provided a stunning backdrop to the event

THE hottest fundraiser of the year has taken place in front of Wells Cathedral when 40 people – including the city's mayor and cathedral dean – took part in a firewalk in aid of the eating disorder charity SWEDA.

Shepton Mallet-based SWEDA – South West Eating Disorders Awareness – organised the event which included a performance by the Rock Choir and samba band Samba do Bispo before the walkers took to the embers.

For details about the services offered by SWEDA, visit: www.sweda.org.uk

Bikers for charity

CHRIS Smith (Yogi), Matt Lukins (Nobby) and Rob Smith (Wobbly Bob) from Shepton Mallet and Paulton are riding over 1300 miles to raise money for the mental health charity Mind.

They will be collecting all 13 flags from the Bearded Villains Chapters in the UK over three days from May 3rd-6th.

The Villains aim is: "To unite bearded men of all cultures, races, creed and sexuality in a brotherhood devoted to loyalty, honour and respect towards all people, dedicated to the betterment of mankind through fraternity, charity and kindness."

Chris said: "Back in 2011 my dad and I had a motorcycle accident and struggled really badly with mental health for nearly two years.

"I have got close family and friends who are suffering with mental health. I've also lost a few friends due to mental health. My aim is to support and raise money for such a great charity, to help support people in similar situations."

Ian O'Reilly, Head of Community & Events Fundraising at



Mind, said: "It's a difficult time, with many of us now feeling the impact of the cost of living crisis on our mental health and wellbeing, especially those of us with existing mental health problems. One in four of us will experience a mental health problem in any given year and it's so important that no-one has to face this alone."

Details: <https://gofund.me/9956e5bbf>

All smiles at free family fun event

CIRCUS and theatre performers staged a day of interactive events in Abbey House in Glastonbury organised by the Children's World charity.

The Easter holiday treat was free for families to attend and was aimed at those on low incomes.

Devito's Circus, Tor Theatre and Steve Apelt were amongst the performers at the event attended by Glastonbury mayor Michael White.

Children's World was founded in 1981 to provide educational, creative and social benefits for all children with particular reference to children with special needs.



Tinkerbell and puppet dog Delux from Devito's Circus



Cheers - thank you for a great day of fun



Mayor Michael White presents prizes to winners of a raffle



Children perform a dance routine after a workshop by Angela Laverick from Tor Theatre

For details, visit: www.childrensworldcharity.org

New charity shop supports local groups

HEART of Cheddar is an inspirational new charity which now runs a shop in the village which will plough back any profits into local organisations in Cheddar and the surrounding area.

After its first three months of operation, it's donated £1,800 to local groups Sing2Breathe and the Nest. In the next three it will be raising money for The Space, Prickles and Cheddar Men's Hockey.

Any group in the area can apply for funding and those selected by the trustees are featured in the shop, where buyers of any of the goods donated can add a token to support the group of their choice.

It's based in the former Sue Ryder shop in the village centre, which closed when the charity decided not to renew the lease.

Former manager Rachel Beardsley and eight former volunteers now run it, supported by a strong body of trustees.

Chairman, Gareth Casker, said: "The simplicity of it is very appealing. People donate goods and once we've covered the shop's costs, the profit goes back to local community



organisations, for mental health, child support and so on.

"As well as Cheddar, we welcome applications from Axbridge, Wedmore, Draycott and surrounding villages. So, this is an initiative that can improve the economy and prosperity of the whole area."

Details: hello@heartofcheddar.org

Hike supports mental health

THE Mendip Mental Health Hike will take place on Sunday, May 24th, starting at Uphill and finishing at Wookey Hole, with a fundraising party at the Wookey Hole Inn.

There are six stages and walkers can choose to do one or two stages or the whole 30-mile walk.

It starts at 7am in Uphill and finishes in Wookey Hole

around 7.30pm, with food, drinks and live music.

In previous years the event has raised thousands of pounds for the mental health charity, Heads Up Somerset, which is based at South Horrington.

It hopes to raise at least £10,000 this year.



Some previous runners

Details: <https://localgiving.org/fundraising/MMHH2026>

Water boxes



CHILDREN of Chew Stoke Church School held a non-uniform day which raised £300 for the Chelwood Bridge Rotary Club's water box appeal.

Rotary member, Ken Biggs, former headteacher of Chew Valley School, led an assembly to tell them about the appeal.

Raffle winners



CHELWOOD Bridge Rotary Club has raised £1,234 with the help of 18 local businesses who raffled Easter eggs.

It will be shared between The Great Western Air Ambulance, Wizzybugs and Rotary's Water Survival Box scheme.

Vaishali Patel from Pensford Post Office is pictured with the winners there, Seb Lawrence and his wife Evaley and their children.

Seaside fundraiser

DORSET and Somerset Air Ambulance will hold its new event, Seaside Scramble, at Baiter Park, Poole on Saturday, May 9th.

It's a fun-filled 5K challenge, described as a brilliant excuse for a day out by the coast while supporting a local life-saving charity.

Participants are encouraged to raise £50 in sponsorship.

Details: www.dsairambulance.org.uk/Event/seasidescramble2026

Snails take on London



Janet Parsons (left) Louise Kavanagh and Dawn Scott

JANET Parsons, who lives at Stowey in the Chew Valley, celebrated her 75th birthday by running the London Landmarks half marathon.

Taking part with Janet were Dawn Scott, Karen Harris, Sophie Piddock, Therese Tyson, Louise Kavanagh, Hazel Cameron and Olivia Detheridge, who are all members of the Chew Valley Snails running group.

Janet said: "I started my half marathon training with my friends from Chew Valley Snails before Christmas and we tried to do three short runs a week, gradually increasing our distance.

"As well as running each week we looked at nutrition and hydration, especially the week or two before the event.

"I also found my yoga class at Chew Valley Yoga in Stanton Drew an important part of my preparation."

Janet raised more than £1,000 for the Harvey Hext charity, which supports bereaved children with memory boxes and memory bears.



Trafalgar Square

A Good Friday was enjoyed by all

TRACTORS of all ages and sizes were joined by 4x4s and vintage vehicles on a run across the Somerset Levels which raised hundreds of pounds for the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

Starting and ending at the Railway Inn at Meare, drivers and passengers in around 80 vehicles enjoyed a route which included Wookey and Cheddar.

The run was organised once again by Ivor Sparkes, who is now planning for the inn's annual "Rev Up" of vintage machinery on Saturday, September 13th and Sunday, September 14th.



Elizabeth, aged six and Amelia, four, on board this rare Austin tractor . . .



. . . which was among the vehicles which took part in the run



Off on the long Good Friday run



Luckily for those cabless drivers, the weather stayed fine



Enjoying the view from a trailer

Farewell to Moira



Moira with her daughter and mum

CHEW Magna gave a rousing send-off to Moira Sage and her staff with the closure of the village post office. A search for new premises is continuing.



The crowd outside the Post Office

Oyez, oyez, oyez – and farewell



Len in front of Wells Cathedral

WELLS town crier Len Sweales is planning a special farewell when he retires in May.

The former London Fire Brigade officer will make his last cry at midday on Saturday, May 12 after 25 years in the role.

His successor is Philip Dickson, a former Coldstream Guardsman.

Dragon hits the road



Wells mayor Louis Agabani with author Serin Brown and Somerset Day CEO and founder Nigel Muers-Raby

THE Somerset Dragon began its journey around the county with its first stop in Wells.

A large crowd gathered on the Cathedral Green to see the public unveiling of the two-metre creature. The visit, which included a live reading of *The Tale of the Somerset Dragon* book by writer Serin Brown.

The dragon was originally due to be unveiled in the grounds of the Bishop's Palace but access was blocked due to the Saturday market taking place.

The visit was part of the build-up to Somerset Day on Saturday, May 9th, organised by Passion for Somerset, a not-for-profit Community Interest Company.

For details, visit: www.somersetday.com

Trefoil members clean up Clutton



CLUTTON Trefoil Guild took part in the South West England Region Trefoil Guild litter pick called "Clean Sweep".

Butterflies and blackthorn – signs that May is here



By **CHRIS SPERRING**
MBE

THE lanes of the Mendip area in May are a masterclass in transformation. As the sun lingers longer over the hill and the lower meadows, the landscape sheds the tentative greens of spring.

For the observant, this is a season of frantic beauty. By May, the hedgerows are heavy with the “May-blossom” of the hawthorn, smelling faintly of almond. Below them,

greater stitchwort populates the banks with white and the first of the red champions begin to glow against the deep shade.

This floral abundance provides the fuel for the season’s insects. In the sun-drenched clearings, the brimstone butterfly makes its second significant appearance of the year. These are the “new” adults, having spent the winter as ivy-green larvae or hidden deep within evergreen foliage as adults – one of the longest-lived butterflies in Britain. Their wings, shaped like serrated leaves and coloured a piercing, sulphurous yellow (from which some say we get the word “butter-fly”), are a sign of ecological continuity. They dance around the buckthorn bushes, their larval food plant, weaving through the heat haze in a desperate search for nectar and mates.

High above the limestone crags and village steeples, a piercing, metallic scream cuts through the air. The swifts have returned. Having spent the winter on the wing over Africa, never once touching the ground, they arrive in the area with the precision almost of an expensive watch.

To see them is to witness the quintessence of summer, yet their presence is increasingly fragile. The swift is now on the UK Red List for birds of conservation concern. This decline is a silent tragedy of modern architecture; as old buildings are renovated and “sealed,” the small crevices under eaves where they have nested for centuries are disappearing. In the West Country, community-led “swift groups” are racing to install nest boxes, hoping to

provide a foothold for these masters of the air who, despite their speed, cannot outrun the loss of nest or insect prey.

While the swifts claim the high atmosphere, the open grasslands and coastal heaths belong to the skylark. In May, the Somerset Levels and the high moors are filled with their relentless, bubbling song – a “silver chain of sound” that seems to hang from the sky.

On the ground, hidden among the tussocks of fescue and clover, the stakes are lower but much more dangerous. By May, the first brood of skylark fledglings are venturing from their well-camouflaged nests.

These chicks are tiny bundles of mottled brown feathers, designed to disappear into the earth the moment a shadow passes overhead. Unlike many garden birds, skylarks are ground-nesters, making their young vulnerable to everything from foxes to roaming dogs and silage mowing.

To see a parent lark dropping vertically from the sky with a beak full of invertebrates is to witness a delicate balancing act: providing for the next generation while trying not to lead predators to the secret location in the grass.

As the May evening settles, the air cools, and the “churring” of a distant nightjar might begin on the hill. The South West in May is not just a postcard; it is a living, breathing testament to resilience. From the brimstone’s long-lived patience to the swift’s epic migration and the skylark’s vulnerable nursery, the landscape is a reminder that, while nature is under pressure, its drive to replenish itself remains a powerful, moving spectacle for those who take the time to look up.

The Hawk and Owl Trust Somerset barn owl webcam is live. Visit: www.hawkandowltrust.org.uk then click on “live cameras”. The owlets are now hatching and the fun begins with busy parent owls feeding the young.

● May also sees the release of my new book “*Ghosts of the Night*” published by Harper Collins. No, it’s not about ghosts, it’s an owl book.



Brimstone butterfly



Skylark



Southern heights of Mendip

THIS walk takes you into the flat open escarpment on the southern edge of Mendip where you can enjoy outstanding views. Park at a renowned viewpoint and picnic area (Deer Leap) and then head downhill on paths and the lane to enter wonderful Ebbor Gorge. We stay on the edge of the gorge and then head up across open fields to Priddy (and a pub) before heading south through the flat landscape. Be prepared for the weather up there which can be very changeable and windy. There are several stiles en-route – some quite difficult.

PARK: At Deer Leap free parking on the southern edge of the Mendip plateau. Go to Priddy village and with the green behind you bear right on the Wookey and Deer Leap road, pass the Queen Victoria pub and continue. Start to drop down a little and find the car park and picnic area on the right.



With Sue Gearing

START: *Deer Leap has some of the most breathtaking views in Somerset. On a clear day you can see as far as the Quantock Hills and the Bristol Channel. Glastonbury Tor, the Hood Monument and Nyland Hill are also clearly visible, together with the many small islands of higher ground within the Somerset Levels and Moors.*

A “deer leap” originates from park management in medieval times. It refers to a specialised boundary (or “salter”) designed to allow deer to jump into a protected hunting park but not out. In this case the protected park would have been the Royal Forest of Mendip (not really a forest as we know it but a mixture of trees, shrubs and grassland).

Enjoy the views and then go down through the picnic area on a path which parallels the road. Join the road and cross to a kissing gate (KG). Now bear downhill on the grass, through a patch of bushes and on down. After a KG keep on (aiming for distant Glastonbury Tor). Follow a path to a stile onto the road again and turn left, dropping down. On the way pass two standing stones in the field right.

These “deer leap stones” are said to commemorate an amazing leap by a deer.

1. EBBOR GORGE

Ignore a footpath right and continue to reach a gate and information board about Ebbor Gorge set back on the left. Once through go ahead to a crossing path and follow it left, with the gorge slopes plunging down right. Stay on this path until you reach another gate and sign showing you are now entering a working

farm and leaving the gorge (it doesn't seem like a working farm for quite a while). There is a short steep section to come – the path goes up and then left and winds up. Continue on this in woodland and eventually reach a KG and follow the path along the edge leading to another Ebbor Gorge board.

2. NORTH GATE

Here is a gate by the north entrance of the gorge (a KG might be installed here possibly?) You are now in the open walking away from the gorge and crossing three fields. At the end in the far right corner a KG leads onto Dursdon Drive.

3. DROVE

This is one of several Mendip droves created to allow farmers to drive their animals from the fields to the local markets. They are wide enough for animals to graze but bordered by hedges or walls to stop them escaping.

After several minutes, ignore a footpath going left. Continue ahead. (You have now joined the West Mendip Way).

Reach a byway sign and go left over a cattle grid and head out on the flat and easy track. It eventually passes farm buildings and does a left bend and then right.

4. FARM

Drop down to Lower Pitts Farm and the main Wells Road.

CHOICE:

A. For a flat and shorter walk, and a pub, simply follow the road left to Priddy

village for about 0.5 miles. Here you could turn left a few metres to the popular Queen Victoria pub. Afterwards, go along to the picturesque Priddy village green, keeping it on your right, with the famous thatched hurdle stack. At the end, turn left up the No Through lane and follow directions from **'6. No Through Road'**.

B. Or, for the field and church route, cross straight over the road over a high stone slab stile. Head straight up two fields and then reach a stile (or gate at the side) by East Water Farm. Go straight through and then bear left heading along the full length of the field (ignoring a private stile right).

Up right on the skyline you can see some of the Priddy Nine Barrows.

The barrows are a Bronze Age burial site on Ashen Hill and are designated as an Ancient Monument. Excavations in 1815 uncovered cremation burials and grave goods.

Go down a dip and through a gate and all the way to the end of the next field. There is a large stone step stile to negotiate. Carry on as before, heading for Priddy Church. Descend and below cross the crumbled remains of a stone stile and wood stile. After this, take the path that goes up the bank ahead (not left). It takes you to a stone stile between the village hall and primary school in Priddy.

5. CHURCH

For a visit to St Lawrence church take the path on the right at the side of the school.

The Grade 1 listed church dates from the 13th century, with some rebuilding in the 15th century and restoration in 1881–88. There is a poignant memorial stained glass window in the church dedicated to a local girl, Catherine Gibbons, who died suddenly in 1988. The window depicts her much-loved pony.

From the school and village hall go out and soon fork left downhill to join the main road through Priddy. Turn left. There is a useful high pavement at the side. Reach the picturesque village green with its famous hurdle stack.

This stack is a reconstruction of the original collection which was here to form the pens for the Sheep Fair, moved from Wells to Priddy in 1348 to escape the Black Death. The fair was held annually on the nearest Wednesday to the original date of



OS Explorer Map, Grid reference: ST 519 493. Nearest postcode: BA5 3BA.
what3words: encoding.conspire.tidying. 5.5 miles or a shorter alternative
4.6 miles, between approx 2.5-3.5 hours walking.

August 21st. After the stack was destroyed by fire in April 2013 it was rebuilt by volunteers from the parish in July that year. The last sheep fair was held here in 2013.

It would only be a few minutes' walk each way from here to the Queen Victoria pub if you fancy refreshment. For this, head across the green passing the stack and keep on. Then fork right and soon come to the pub. To continue our walk come back and walk on the road along the top of the green and at the end turn up left on the No Through Road.

For no pub visit, turn right on the road alongside the green (keeping it on your left).

6. NO THROUGH ROAD

At the end of the green go ahead uphill on the No Through Road and over a stile onto the open fields on the south side of the

Mendip escarpment. The next section is nearly a mile. Just keep straight on through several fields passing a big hollow on the way. There are various stiles and gates. Eventually you come to a rather bumpy, scrubby area ahead. Keep on (with it on your right) over another stone stile and stay in this direction getting closer to the edge and enjoying great views.

7. RESERVE

Keep on until nearly at the edge where you reach a metal kissing gate ahead leading into Cooks Nature Reserve. Just before it, go left over another stile (or through the KG and then left through a gate). Now simply follow this track along the edge. Further on take the left fork, pass a reserve for skylarks on the left and continue to Deer Leap parking area.

Queen Victoria, Priddy 01749 676385

West Countryman's diary



With LES DAVIES MBE

WITH the onset of May, we might have reason to hope that some spring-like weather will come our way. However, the reality is likely to be somewhat different.

There is some uncertainty as to why this month is named, but it's believed to be after "Maia" the mother of Roman god Mercury. May heralds the beginning of spring with the appearance of May queens and maypoles in the past.

I don't think any maypoles exist these days, after the last one in London was taken down in 1717. Is it time we reversed that and returned to a very English tradition?

We've had the "blackthorn winter", when the flowers of the blackthorn herald cold weather. Now we have the hawthorn, or "May" to deal with and it still feels cold at times. Old mottos tell of the perils about getting too excited too soon, with "cast not a clout till may be out".

The may referred to here is not the month, but the hawthorn blossom. The clout was an ancient undergarment which people were said to have been sown into for winter. Please remember that this was long before a daily shower with soap, hot water and body deodorant.

Perhaps it should have been more aptly named the "Mingling month of May" and not the "Merry month of May"? Your livestock was equally at risk with the warning of "Shear your sheep in May and shear them all away". These old mottos and sayings were important ways of remembering activities that ran our countryside and social activities in a time when literacy wasn't widespread.

April has shown the earliest display of bluebells I have ever seen. A few adventurous blooms poked their heads out into an uncertain world from sheltered banks and woodland. Almost as if they had found it safe to do so, perhaps they texted every plant in their area on "WhatsApp" or "Instagram" to come and join them.

For a flower that I would normally expect to arrive in May they have made a head start. I remember the blanket of these flowers from my childhood in the small wood at Hales Farm. We all called it the Little Wood but its true name was Abbots Horn which will give you an idea of how long this bit of woodland has been around.

It would have been there during the influential days of Bristol's monasteries and their land ownership. This small piece of woodland was also filled with wild garlic being grazed on by the rabbit population. My grandmother would never cook a rabbit taken from here because the flesh was tainted with garlic. These days it would no doubt be considered something special, but she dismissed it as being the taste of "foreign mucks and messes"!

The cider apple orchards will be in bloom this month. If you stand in one and experience the sight and smell of an early morning, combined with the soporific buzz of pollinating insects, it's a match made in heaven.

This blossom is still at risk from frost damage and another old tale relates to such late frosts in the Vale of Avalon. The story goes that St Dunstan who was the first Abbot of Glastonbury and came from the Baltonsborough area, made a pact with the Devil to destroy the apple blossom so that Dunstan might sell his crop of malting barley for beer.

After a period of haggling a deal was struck and the blossom was indeed wiped out. To this day there are occasions in mid-May when an air frost will roll through the Vale of Avalon wiping out whatever blossom it touches. Still known as a "Dunstan frost" this can take out the corner of an orchard or even worse, go straight through it.

History, mystery, myth and legend it may be, but it's still a convincing and interesting tale of folklore.

Throughout the rest of the countryside life continues apace. Again, caution will be needed as the roe deer leave their young hidden. Once again dog owners need to be aware, just as with livestock, about keeping



dogs under close control. These tiny deer are not orphaned or abandoned, but if they carry a strange scent they will be abandoned by the parent. Life in the wild can be both cruel and heartbreaking, so let us not add to the misery.

Many will be aware of the recent heath fire near Stockhill forest. This took place only a few days after rain and yet caused such devastation. It was no doubt started accidentally by human action and is a timely warning of what we may face ahead if we have another hot dry summer. The plea from the National Landscape Team is please leave the BBQ at home where it can be controlled and open fires are a definite NO!

Don't forget to visit the North Somerset Agricultural Society show at Wraxall on May 4th. I will be commentating in the Countryside Arena so please come over. Likewise, the Royal Bath and West Show takes place from Thursday 28th until Saturday 30th of May. I'm stewarding at the Dulverton Pavilion in the Countryside and Woodland section. Our own National Landscape Rangers will be with me, so come and say hello.

Finally, the countryside we know and treasure today isn't just a result of the field, wood and hill. It's about the people who have worked it and still do today. This month's picture from my family archive is of my grandfather Charlie Tavener having received his long service award at the North Somerset Show in 1981.

He worked at Hales Farm from 1928 until 1982. He is surrounded by his family (including me) that amounts to four generations. In front are his two great grandchildren (mine) and his youngest grandson. Gosh . . . such a long time back!

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

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Each project begins with observation: light, soil, movement, and context. From this, we create living spaces that feel grounded in their setting, where designed planting blends seamlessly with the surrounding environment.

Our approach is guided by nature, not trends. Through layered planting, seasonal structure and carefully selected species, we create gardens with year-round interest while supporting biodiversity – attracting pollinators, birds, and beneficial wildlife.

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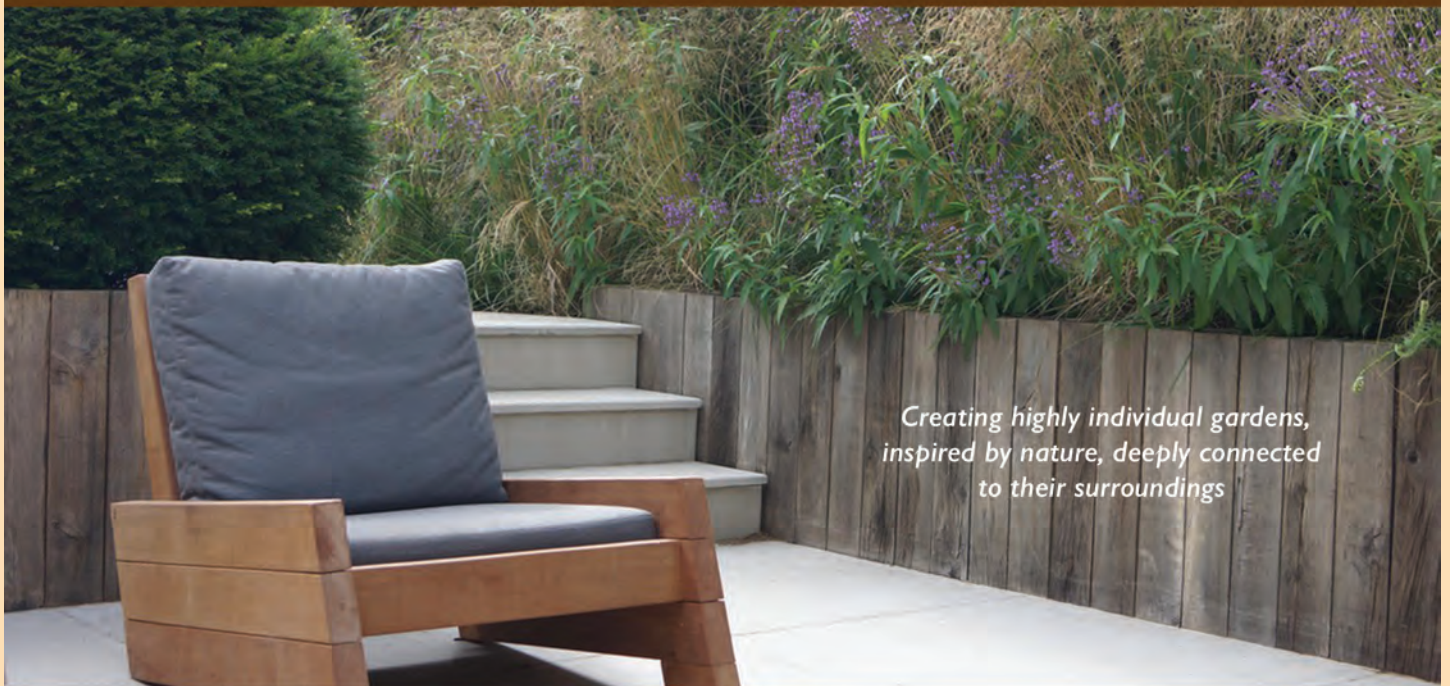
Whether shaping a contemporary outdoor space or a more naturalistic retreat, our goal is to create harmony between



people and place. These are gardens designed to be experienced – spaces for restoration, connection, and quiet discovery. We believe the most successful gardens feel effortless, even though every detail is carefully considered – paths flow naturally, planting connects seamlessly, and spaces invite pause.

With over 30 years of experience in garden and landscape design, Earth Landscapes is celebrating its 20th year alongside the exciting opening of our new studio in Somerset. If you're seeking a garden that feels alive, grounded, and connected to its setting, we can help bring that vision to life.

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With MARY PAYNE MBE

BRITAIN has the best climate for gardening in the world and we can grow an extraordinary range of plants. We are a nation of gardeners and garden lovers and the success of the National Gardens Scheme (NGS) is surely testament to this. The season of garden openings is well underway with over 3,300 gardens open to visit this year in England, Wales, and N. Ireland (Scotland has

its own scheme).

A garden that is open near you can be found by referring to the annual guide affectionately known as the Yellow Book, or through the website www.ngs.org.uk or county leaflets available from many garden centres.

In 1926 Elsie Wagg first raised the idea of open gardens at a meeting of the Queen's Nursing Institute to raise money to support district nursing. The public would be charged one shilling each to visit gardens.

The following year 600 gardens opened and raised £8,191. By 1930, 900 gardens were opening including Chartwell, owned by Sir Winston Churchill and Vita Sackville-West's Sissinghurst.

The first guidebook of open gardens was published in 1932 with details of 1,079 gardens and had a green cover, but by 1949 the colour had changed to yellow and that has become synonymous with the NGS.

After the war, the costs of district nursing were taken under the banner of the NHS, but it was decided to keep raising funds for the Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI). In 1980 the NGS became independent of the QNI, with the aim of fundraising for other nursing and health related charities.

Macmillan Cancer Support has been a long-standing beneficiary and has received £19.6 million since 1984. Other main beneficiary charities include Marie Curie, Hospice UK, Carers Trust, Queen's Institute of Community Nursing, Parkinson's UK and more.

Also supported is English Heritage's Historic and Botanic Garden Training Programme which helps to train the head gardeners of the future, by giving them work experience in their gardens.

Community and school gardens are now included as beneficiaries. An outstanding example is the Skool Beanz Children's Allotment, near Yeovil. This is a children's gardening club run from their own no-dig allotment and will be open for the NGS on September 5th.

King Charles II has been the patron since 2002 and Mary Berry, who also opens her garden, became the president in 2016 (garden visiting and cakes are very closely related!) and last year she handed over the presidency to Alan Titchmarsh.

The health and welfare benefits of gardening are now well recognised and the charity started to support such gardens including Horatio's Gardens. The first of these was created at the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre in Salisbury, in memory of the centre leader's son who was tragically killed by a

polar bear. There are now eight such gardens and more in construction.

Likewise, Maggie's cancer care units are increasing in number and named after the architectural historian Charles Jenck's wife. Since the pandemic, the NGS has published annually The Little Yellow Book of Gardens and Health and even during the 2020 covid pandemic over £2.88 million was donated to beneficiaries.

I opened my tiny garden for ten years for the NGS and received a commemorative trowel for my efforts. I could accommodate four people in the front garden and four in the back garden, at any one time. To avoid being overrun, I instituted a booking system with timed slots, which has since been adopted nationwide.

Refreshments were offered on a DIY basis from an urn in the garage. I printed a leaflet listing all the plants of interest in the garden for each day. When visitors asked about the identity of a plant, I could point to it on the list and it saved me spelling it out so many times.

Health and safety are important and in spite of cautionary signs one visitor managed to fall in my very small pond, displacing a considerable volume of water! Visitors rarely come to count your weeds; the vast majority are delightful and full of admiration for the work involved in preparing the garden.

The golden rules being to dead head flowers, clip the edges and mow the lawn the day before. Needless to say, the weather plays a key role influencing the number of visitors, but many appear to come rain or shine. Much guesswork is required in deciding how many scones or cakes to bake or get out of the freezer!

To become involved by opening your garden you need to contact your County Organiser, who will arrange to visit your garden, ideally at the time of year that you wish to open the following year to assess its suitability and explain what is involved.

They are looking for around 40 minutes of interest in the garden, plus ideally, the opportunity to offer refreshments and plant sales. Tea and cake have become synonymous with an NGS garden visit and the opportunity to buy a plant is rarely missed by visitors.

Next year will be the 100th anniversary of this much-loved charity which has raised £78million for so many worthy nursing and health-related charities. The NGS are planning special events to commemorate their centenary and are looking for new gardens or ideas.

Group openings of two or more gardens in a village are very popular and can also raise money for village projects or charities by a shared donation of refreshments takings, for example.

Contact the county organiser for the Bristol, Bath, S. Glos. area via roxanne.ismail@ngs.org.uk or for the Somerset area on laura.howard@ngs.org.uk

Let us help make 2027 a bumper year for fundraising, whilst enjoying our own and other people's gardens, teas, and cakes.

See page 60.

MAY GARDEN TIPS

- Plant out Dahlias and begonias but protect from late frosts and plant up your hanging baskets and containers. Harden-off annual bedding plants ready to plant out soon.
- Some houseplants can be moved outside for summer this month. Put them in a shady spot until they get used to the brighter light outside and make sure they get watered regularly.
- Citrus plants will benefit from being outside from now until late August. Once acclimatised they will relish the sunshine! Some orchids, such as Cymbidium, are happier outside than in.
- Give some of your border perennials the 'Chelsea Chop'. If you cut some of them back by about half now it will delay flowering but extend the display longer in your garden.
- Start feeding greenhouse tomatoes with a high potash feed, as soon as you can see the first visible tiny fruit. Vibrate flowers regularly to improve fruit set.
- Earth up early potatoes and keep a watch out for late frosts, cover with horticultural fleece if frost is likely.
- Tie in soft new shoots of trained fruit trees and canes. Hoe off raspberry canes that appear between the rows. Check gooseberries for sawfly larvae.
- Sow courgettes, marrows, ridge cucumbers and melons in individual pots.
- Sow turnips, swedes, cauliflowers, leeks and other late winter vegetables now.
- Sow borage, nasturtium and other edible flowers for use in salads.

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Spring show



PROLONGED warm weather worried local gardeners that daffodils were out too early for the Congresbury Spring Flower Show. Daffodil entries were less than last year, but there were more tulips and vegetables.

Queen of the Show was Judy Brook, whose daffodil entries gained her four trophies. Other trophies were won by Jane Hares, (most points in flower classes), Robbie Bacon (photographs), Maggie Bissett (most points in domestic classes).

Young Danielle Fernley won a trophy for the best flower arrangement and Easter eggs were given to Martha Edwards, Margot Owen and Matilda Owen for their fantastic egg decorations.

Garden tidy-up offer



Garden maintenance team members clearing brambles

SWALLOW, a Westfield-based charity supporting local teenagers and adults with learning disabilities, is offering a free garden tidy-up service to older or disabled people thanks to voluntary donations.

The charity's horticulture group enables people to learn about planting, taking care of green spaces and creating havens for wildlife. Its Gardening in the Community project was created as a progression route for the members a few years ago and it enables the gardeners to put all their learning into practice and get paid for their work. Part of the charity's remit includes providing employment opportunities.

Teams of SWALLOW members, supported by trained staff can, offer elderly residents who are struggling to keep on top of their gardens, a free service.

More donations are welcome. For details, contact Nicky on nicky@swallowcharity.org call 01761 414034, or visit www.swallowcharity.org

NGS GARDENS OF THE MONTH – MAY

Yeo Meads

Formally laid out in the 17th century includes a 350-year-old cedar of Lebanon tree which fell in 2007 but is now a living feature and a 150-year-old lime, which is now a folly with a seat inside the base.

Address: Congresbury BS49 5JA.

Contact: Debbie Fortune & Mark Hayward
debbie@debbiefortune.co.uk

Open for the NGS: Sunday May 10th, 11am-4pm.

Admission: £5, children free.

Watcombe

Formally laid out in the 17th century includes a 350-year-old cedar of Lebanon tree which fell in 2007 but is now a living feature and a 150-year-old lime, which is now a folly with a seat inside the base.

Address: Congresbury BS49 5JA.

Contact: Debbie Fortune & Mark Hayward
debbie@debbiefortune.co.uk

Open for the NGS: Sunday May 10th, 11am-4pm.

Admission: £5, children free.

Willow Bend



Newly established small garden, with late spring and early summer flowering, in the style of a plantswoman's cottage garden.

Address: 2, Manor Ride, Brent Knoll, Highbridge TA9 4DY.

Contact: Helen & John Norris.

Open for the NGS: Saturday, May 30th, 1-5.30pm.

Admission: £4, children free. Please pay using cash only.

OTHER GARDENS OPEN FOR THE NGS



To see more gardens open for the NGS, see The Garden Visitors Handbook, or the Somerset County Leaflet, available from local Garden Centres, or go to: <https://ngs.org.uk/>



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Artists and artisans thriving at Middlecombe

It's already a year since highly regarded ceramic artist Karen Edwards opened her new studio at Congresbury's Middlecombe Nursery, becoming the first resident of their "Arts and Artisans Courtyard".

Middlecombe's owners, Isy and Nigel North, have directed tremendous energy and passion into developing this creative hub where highly talented artists and artisans both make and sell a variety of unique items.

Nigel said: "The effort seems to be paying off, as more and more visitors are discovering the studios and the residents have formed a friendly community, which is wonderful to see."

Presently, the arts and artisans' courtyard consists of seven purpose-built wooden studios enclosing a small courtyard style garden quirkily designed to inspire. Karen specialises in frost-proof garden sculptures, planters and plaques, all lovingly handmade in her studio.

Step inside Lilacs 'Til Dawn and you'll discover an array of "gifts from the heart", including prints and cards with a botanical twist. Next door, at Bella Silver, Michelle cleverly repurposes antique silver items as gorgeous jewellery.

High quality leather goods, including belts, hats and bags, are skilfully fashioned at Melrose Leathercraft, whilst neighbour Tanya at Barley and Mabel creates unique art and prints using



Some of Middlecombe's Arts and Artisans Courtyard resident artists, including (l to r) Vicki of Forget-me-Not Florist, Michelle of Bella Silver, Tanya of Barley and Mabel and Karen Edwards

pressed flowers, as well as preserving wedding flowers.

At Enamel Art, Jane crafts exquisite pieces of fine art using vitreous enamel. The most recent business to move here is Out of the Blue. Owner Clare makes one-off botanical cyanotype artworks, as well as prints and cards.

Completing this influx of creative talent is floral artist Vicki who runs Forget-me-Not Florist, offering stylish bouquets and flowers for all occasions.



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School's new head



THE governors of Wells Cathedral School have announced the appointment of James Davies as headmaster. He will take up the post in September 2026.

He joins the school following a distinguished career in the independent sector and is currently headmaster of Halliford School in south-west London.

Its most recent ISI inspection earned the highly coveted recognition of a

“Significant Strength” for the quality of pupil leadership.

Raised in Manchester, James went on to study music at the University of Sheffield and has held the position of Director of Music at a number of prominent parish churches.

He is a Reporting Inspector for the Independent School Inspectorate and a board member and chair-elect of the prestigious Society of Heads.

Alongside his passion for music, James has served for many years as a crew member with the RNLI and now contributes to the organisation’s educational work. A keen sailor and scuba diver, he enjoys spending time at the coast with his trusted Labrador, Bracken, who will also be joining the Wells Cathedral School community.

National award



PEASEDOWN Primary School’s mini-police have been recognised at the High Sheriff Association’s awards in London

They were congratulated for their commitment to improving the local community and working with PSCOs from Avon & Somerset Police.

School headteacher, Ruth Noall, said: “We couldn’t be prouder! The children were asked to deliver a seven-minute presentation on the work of the mini-police and what they’ve achieved in Peasedown St John since the programme was launched over nine years ago. They were the youngest children there and performed brilliantly.”

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SCAN ME!

School playtime

AFTER a week of glorious, uninterrupted sunshine, the clouds stayed away just long enough for Leigh on Mendip School to celebrate the official opening of its brand-new play equipment.

Kerrie Courtier, Director of Primary Education for the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership, cut the ribbon.

She said: "This is an amazing improvement to the school grounds. It will have a huge impact on the children's year-round outdoor play."



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Fundraiser for dad



THE team at Caravan Repairs at Gurney Slade are planning a fundraiser for founder Peter "Fish" Adam who died after a heart attack on Boxing Day 2023.

Money raised will go towards a defibrillator in Timsbury, where he and his wife lived, and the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

The evening on Saturday, May 30th at Timsbury Legion, will include music bingo, additional fun games and a raffle with great prizes. It will start at 7.30pm, though the club is open all day for anyone wanting to arrive earlier.

Daughter, Adrienne, said: "This year, he would have been turning 60. He was the most generous, fun-loving, and genuinely funny person I knew – someone who was always helping others and bringing people together.

"In his honour, I wanted to celebrate his 60th birthday in a meaningful way by raising money for causes that could help save lives.

"We are holding a fundraiser on Saturday, May 30th at Timsbury Legion, the village where my parents lived and were very much part of the community."



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A carnival procession of tractors

LUCKINGTON Carnival Club once again joined forces with the Old Farts Tractor Club to stage a day-long procession around East Mendip.

Around 40 tractors took part in the event, which began and ended at the King's Head pub in Lower Coleford and took in a 30-mile route passing through villages including Gurney Slade and Binegar, Doultong and Chilcompton. The day raised funds for the carnival club.



Lighting up time on the way to Bodden



Leading the way



Caroline Taylor

Frances steps down



Motors Club chairman Roger Dollins and Frances Baker

THE locally based Historic and Classic Motor Club, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, held its AGM at Stanton Drew with a record number of 55 members attending, including many from the Mendip area.

The meeting said farewell to Frances Baker, membership secretary and a founder member who has resigned after 50 years.

She said: "It has been a difficult decision to make but I felt that after 49 years and in this special celebration year it was the right time to hand over the baton.

"Mike, my husband, bought his first historic car soon after we had started going out in 1966, a 1934 Austin 7 Ruby, and it wasn't long before we joined the Weston Motor Club where we first met Roger Deeley.

"Mike and I are, like Sam and Ann Budd, Gerald Burridge and Chris and Marlene Perry Smith, very proud to be founder members of the Classic & Historic Motor Club."

The club's next big event is on Sunday, May 17th, when it holds its 30th annual Mendip Vintage and Classic tour, which will see hundreds of classic cars trundling through the Mendips and meeting on the lawns in front of Wells Cathedral.

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Comedy as therapy – it’s no laughing matter



By Dr PHIL HAMMOND

THEY say laughter is the best medicine . . . unless you have syphilis, in which case it’s penicillin. That joke is as old as penicillin itself and, as with all medicines, it has been superseded by

alternatives that may suit you better. My favourite comes courtesy of comedian and former psychiatric nurse Jo Brand: “Laughter may be the best medicine. But it doesn’t work terribly well for erectile dysfunction.”

I doubt that gag has the same therapeutic benefit as those little blue diamonds, but used judiciously, there is evidence that comedy can improve health – but only if the comedian in question makes you laugh rather than offends you.

Laughter therapy as an idea has been kicking around for decades. As a junior doctor, I once participated in a workshop called “Ho Ho Holistic Healthcare” where we were invited to lie on the floor, hold hands and “release the joy of the inner fun child”.

A good communal chuckle apparently does wonders for your mood, sleep, cardiovascular and immune systems but I was too cynical back then to join in and my own humour was so unsettling that it tended to divide the room rather than unite it.

I used humour as an aggressive form of therapy, telling terribly dark tales of the absurdities and iniquities of a young doctor’s lot. Fortunately, and rather surprisingly, it rung enough bells with both workers and users of the NHS to earn me a better living than doctoring.

But I didn’t give up the day job, partly because I needed the material, but mainly because I enjoyed being a part-time doctor, with the escape hatch of satire. Every time something awful happened in the NHS, I turned it into ten minutes of material or a column in *Private Eye*.

In 1990, Tony Gardner, a doctor who later turned actor, and I formed an outrageous double act called *Struck Off and Die*, who’s

debut on Radio 4 earned us a record number of complaints to the Broadcasting Standards Council, who deemed it was “inappropriate material for a comedy show”.

In 1992, we broke the story of the Bristol heart scandal onstage by declaring our local heart surgery unit had such a high death rate it was referred to by the staff working in it as “the killing fields” and “the departure lounge.” Audiences generally laughed nervously, except at the public inquiry eight years later where I was ripped to pieces on the witness stand for my perceived callousness. Comedy, above all, is context.

As I’ve grown older and (hopefully) wiser and kinder, I’ve abandoned the exhibitionist’s desire to shock and converted to the idea that comedy could be prescribed as therapy, and not just one that is swallowed passively. What if we trained and encouraged patients to turn their lived experiences into laughter? Could it improve their mental health and reduce reliance on medication? Or could it trivialise and demean their suffering and trigger their audiences? Or both?

Comedy on prescription is already a growth industry. Women facing bereavement, homelessness and other hardships were recently trained by professional comedians to tell their life stories through comedy, performing at the Royal Albert Hall as part of a programme to try to reduce reliance on antidepressants.

Participants with a range of health issues find they grow in confidence and find meaning and purpose from sharing their experiences with others. They pick up skills which help them cope better with the stresses of life. And they laugh more.

We are living in difficult times and perhaps we could lighten the load by teaching those who are brave enough to turn their difficulties into funny stories to perform on stage in front of an audience.

There is nothing quite like making a roomful of strangers laugh, beautifully encapsulated by one of my favourite comedians, the American George Carlin: “No one is ever more herself or himself than when they really laugh. Their defences are

down. It’s very Zen-like, that moment. They are completely open, completely themselves when that message hits the brain and the laugh begins.

“That’s when new ideas can be implanted. If a new idea slips in at that moment, it has a chance to grow. So, for that moment, that tiny moment, I own them. That’s one of the things – maybe the most important – I seek by following this path: to have that power. To be able to say: stop in your tracks and consider this!

“At the same time, I’ve had to surrender myself to that moment, and it’s a communion. A genuine, momentary communion. Which they wouldn’t have experienced without me. And I wouldn’t have experienced without them.”

Some like to believe comedy can go further and be an agent for social change. More often, satire highlights problems rather than offers solutions. As Carlin observed: “It’s called the American Dream because to believe it, you have to be asleep!”

America laughed, woke up and then voted for Trump. However, comedy on prescription might yet buck the trend and improve the wellbeing of patients and perhaps staff too (see <https://craic.health> for more details).

As a career, comedy comes with a few side effects. There are few more painful experiences than “dying on your arse” in public as you learn to master the art. Carlin used drugs and alcohol to fuel his creativity, as the pressure to forever come up with new material got to him. He died aged 71.

And comedy itself can be cruel, discriminatory, punching down at easy targets and inciting hatred and misogyny. The best comedy unites a room rather than divides it, and the best route is to bravely let your guard down, laugh at yourself and shine a light on your own failings.

And you’re never too old to give it a go. Check out comedian Andy Huggins and you’ll realise that ageing is an endless opportunity for laughter. And Carlin got even funnier as he got older, as many comics do.

Phil Hammond talks about the links between comedy and health on Dr Simon Opher’s Podcast on Prescription. He will perform “The Ins and Outs of Pleasure” at ValleyFest on August 2nd.



Ask Dr. Hannah

How did teeth evolve?

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.

Why did teeth evolve?

That sensitive twinge that some people get when they bite into an apple makes it seem like teeth are badly designed — but it may be an echo of a survival trait that evolved hundreds of millions of years ago. Long before dentists (or even apples) existed, tooth sensitivity helped our distant ancestors sense danger, food and the world around them.

Why do teeth have a nervous system?

Teeth trace their origins to ancient hard tissue units called *odontodes*. These mineralised structures appeared in early vertebrates long before true jaws evolved.

Far from being inert armour, many odontodes were richly supplied with nerves. Research suggests they helped early fish sense touch, pressure and temperature — abilities that may have helped them detect danger in their environment.

The sensitivity we experience in our teeth today is likely a legacy of that ancient sensory role.

Were teeth an evolutionary accident?

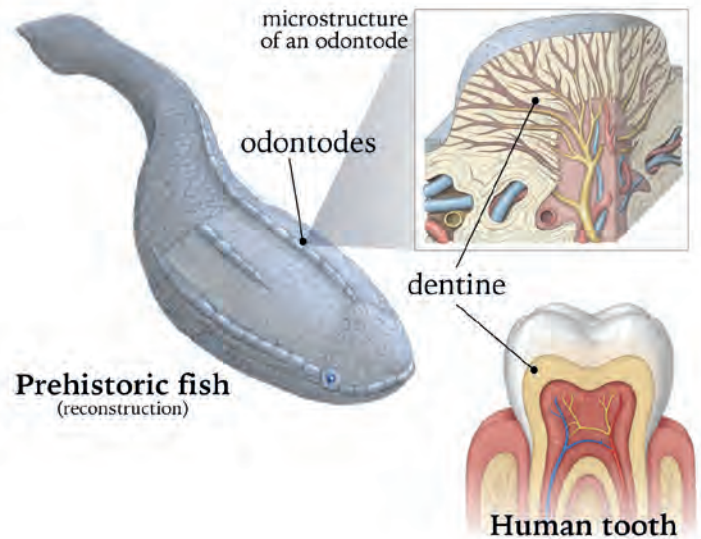
Remarkably, evolution seems to have arrived at this idea more than once. Tooth-like, sensitive structures evolved independently in several ancient lineages, including early fish, trilobites and even modern crabs. Though these creatures followed entirely separate evolutionary paths, all developed hard, innervated surface structures capable of sensing the world around them. It is a striking example of convergent evolution — different organisms repeatedly stumbling on the same elegant solution to the problem of survival.

How did teeth move into our mouth?

During the Silurian period, around 440–420 million years ago, jawless fish already carried odontodes on their skin and around the mouth, but lacked movable jaws.

As evolution later produced hinged jaws, odontodes became concentrated along the jaw margins and were transformed into true teeth. This innovation reshaped feeding, allowing animals to grasp, slice and process food in entirely new ways.

Side note: our inner ear bones evolved from jaw bones in our fish ancestors, but that's a different story!



Why are animal teeth so varied?

The age of dinosaurs showcased just how far tooth evolution could go. Predators such as *tyrannosaurus rex* bore teeth shaped like serrated steak knives, ideal for slicing flesh.

At the same time, plant-eating dinosaurs evolved batteries of grinding teeth capable of dealing with tough vegetation.

Plants did not remain passive in this contest: thicker bark, fibrous tissues and thorns likely evolved as defences, driving a long evolutionary arms race between teeth and plants.

What about our own teeth?

Human teeth reflect a more generalist solution — a versatile mix suited to an omnivorous diet, yet they still retain ancient sensitivity.

Next time an ice lolly makes you wince, remember: that sensation may once have helped your distant ancestors survive predation. Your teeth have come a very long evolutionary way.

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Dementia conference

REGISTRATION is now open for a regional dementia conference to be held in Peasedown St John on Tuesday, May 19th, organised by the Peasedown Community Trust and sponsored by homecare provider Bluebird Care.

The conference will feature an opportunity to meet charity leaders and experts working in the field of dementia research and awareness. It will be held at St John's Church, 10am-3pm.

Details: peasedowncommunitytrust@gmail.com

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Memories at the heart of new art show



Margaret Blakemore and her Charlie Bear

residency at Hauser & Wirth in Bruton.

Mendip-based organisation Museum to You, which supports older adults in care environments, has worked with the gallery on this year's community project Education Lab: Echoes which accompanies the exhibition. The project involves the gallery's youth collective called Arthaus.

RECORDED memories of older people inspired by treasured objects and photographs will play a key part in a new art exhibition going on show in Somerset in May.

The recollections of people living at Court House Retirement Home in Cheddar have been used to create a soundscape to accompany work by Puerto Rican-born Angel Otero who makes his UK debut in a

The artist's exhibition, which runs from May 2nd until October 18th, is called Agua Salada. He currently divides his time between Puerto Rico and New York and specialises in work inspired by memories and household objects.

Amongst those taking part in the recordings were Aileen



Aileen (left) chats with Sophie Greensteet from Hauser & Wirth (centre) and MTY's Suzannah Cook

Adlington, who was inspired by photos of her family, and Margaret Blakemore, who brought along one of her collection of Charlie Bear cuddly toys.

MTY works to make local history more accessible to care home residents and day centre users by using artefacts from museums and other organisations.

For details, find MTY on social media or visit: www.hauserwirth.com



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Clay the force be with you!

DOZENS of clay pigeon shooters took part in a competition near Evercreech which raised funds for Bristol Children's Hospital's Grand Appeal, the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance and a local church.

The day-long event took place at Redlands Farm with shooters taking aim in a number of challenges; there was also a laser shoot.

The day was organised by the family of Archie Tucker, who was just 11 days old when he underwent heart surgery at the children's hospital. Now 11, he has gone through 30+ operations and will require more in the future.

Archie was present at the shoot, as were volunteers from the air ambulance. The day also raised money for Milton Clevedon Church. The organisers hope to raise more than £4,000.



Taking aim



Archie (centre) with shooters Stuart Clothier and Andy Tucker



Archie with some of the winners and family and friends



Onlookers enjoy the novice shoot-out



Archie in hospital at just 11 days old

Village health fair

OAKHILL Surgery is holding a health fair in the village hall on Saturday, May 16th, 11am-2pm, with a number of health organisations sharing health information. There will also be a health quiz for children with prizes. The event is being supported by Mendip Health Connections, Somerset Carers, Age UK Somerset, Mendip Community Transport and Rethink.



Get your skis on and support Beatrice



Beatrice, a keen skier

STUDENT Beatrice Govier has come up with a novel way to raise funds for a once-in-a-lifetime school trip to Tanzania.

The 12-year-old, who attends Crispin School in Street, has decided to downhill ski the equivalent of the descent on Mount Kilimanjaro – 23 miles – before the end of July at the Mendip Activity Centre. It will mean tackling the slope 224 times.

In the meantime, Beatrice is planning a more down-to-earth event towards the £4,000 cost of the trip in July 2027 – the Great Street Jumble Sale on Sunday, May 17th.

Beatrice is one of around 20 Crispin pupils aiming to go on the biennial trip, organised by World Challenge. It is the first time year eight-, nine- and ten-year-olds have been given the opportunity to go to the south of Tanzania.

Mum Carly said: “The trip will be last two weeks and they will fully immerse themselves in the culture and communities in Southern Tanzania, focussing on student-led activities, helping rural communities with their school playgrounds and gardens, learning to cook, drum and speak Swahili, planning treks, learning about wildlife on safari and snorkling in the sea.”

For details about her attempt and the jumble sale, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/bea.s.tanzania.2027.fundraising.page?<https://>

Unbroken service – for 25 years



Pattie receiving her certificate from RBL county chairman Mike Allison

MIDSOMER Norton and Radstock Royal British Legion member, Pattie Nicol, has received a Certificate of Appreciation for 25 years of unbroken service, collecting for the Poppy Appeal.

Pattie had first started collecting for her father, a member of the Bath branch, but it was in 2000 that she was approached by Eric Cottle, the Midsomer Norton branch president, to put a Poppy Appeal display in the window of the premises where she

worked, following it up with a request to collect on several days at the local Radco store.

Pattie continued to do this until the store closed; by then, the MSN branch had a new appeal organiser, Heather Bray, who asked Pattie to collect at the local Tesco store, which she has done ever since.

During Covid in 2020, Pattie put a table and honesty box outside her house selling poppies, pins and a few legion items, so her service to the appeal was never broken.

Young rangers



THE Mendip Hills National Landscape Team is looking for 15 nature-loving young people to become young rangers.

They will work together on a variety of activities each month.

The current cohort has

taken part in nature documentary making, drystone walling, first aid training, navigation skills, building dormouse boxes, practical conservation tasks and more!

Young people can apply to join the two-year programme if they are starting Year 7 or 8 in September 2026, or the equivalent for home-schooled children.

The Mendip Hills National Landscape Partnership subsidises the scheme so places can be offered at only £150 per young ranger for the two years. The deadline for applications is June 19th.

Details: www.mendiphills-nl.org.uk

Award winners announced



Pictured (l to r) front Tom Saunders, Tom Halford, B&NES chair Councillor Liz Hardman, Joanne Saunders, Jackie Head; back Jimmi Browning, B&NES council leader, Councillor Kevin Guy, Alex Johnson and George Clutton

THE Bath and North East Somerset community awards have been announced, with Jackie Head from the Chew Valley receiving the chairman's special award. Winners are:

Beryl Dixon Community Leader of the Year Award for outstanding leadership that advances equality: Alex Johnson of Nova Sports who has transformed access to sport for disabled children and adults across the South West.

Highly commended was Claire Henwood who manages two food pantries for Oasis Hub.

Sara Banks Young Volunteer of the Year Award for an exceptional young person aged up to 25 years: Jimmi Browning, Youth Connect South West for making technology accessible to others and Tom Halford, aged 13, Time is Precious, a charity founded in memory of the brother he never met.

Peter Duppa-Miller Parish Award recognising the contribution that parishes make in their local communities: George Clutton, parish clerk at Radstock Town Council and Councillor Malcolm Austwick, Combe Hay Parish Council.

Charity of the Year Award decided by public vote: Ben Saunders Foundation which provides free holidays and respite breaks for families and was set up by Ben Saunders before he sadly passed away aged 18. Highly commended were Bath Area Play Project and Bath Mind.

Jenny Willson Volunteer of the Year Award for volunteers who also motivate others: the winner wishes to remain anonymous. Highly commended was Gill Bottomley who has volunteered for Citizens Advice since 1996.

The chair of the council, Councillor Liz Hardman, also selected a winner for the Chair's Special Recognition Award which went to Jackie Head, from East Harptree for her contributions to the Chew Valley.

Councillor Hardman said: "The nominations for our Community Awards uncovered some incredible stories of how powerful volunteering and community spirit can be. People who choose to give their time, skills and compassion to help others are the heartbeat of our communities."

Cathedral breakfast builds connections



A COMMUNITY breakfast at Wells Cathedral saw a mix of people from charities, emergency services, educators, business leaders and community organisations gather with the Very Reverend Toby Wright, Dean of Wells.

The idea is to bring together people at the cathedral who might not otherwise meet, strengthen connections across the county, and help boost Somerset's commerce, civic life and community spirit.

The Dean (pictured right) said: "Cathedrals were traditionally the centre of community life. Our aim is to rediscover that role in a modern way – bringing people together, encouraging collaboration and helping Somerset thrive."

Among those attending were Mark Shelford (pictured left), former Police and Crime Commissioner and now attending in his role as Somerset chair of the Reserve Forces and Madeline Hellier, Diocesan President of the Mothers' Union for Bath and Wells.

The Mothers' Union is celebrating its 150th anniversary.

Spring flowers



MEMBERS of Chew Stoke WI enjoyed a Living Spring Wreath workshop led by Amy Maggs and Laura James.

Egg boxes

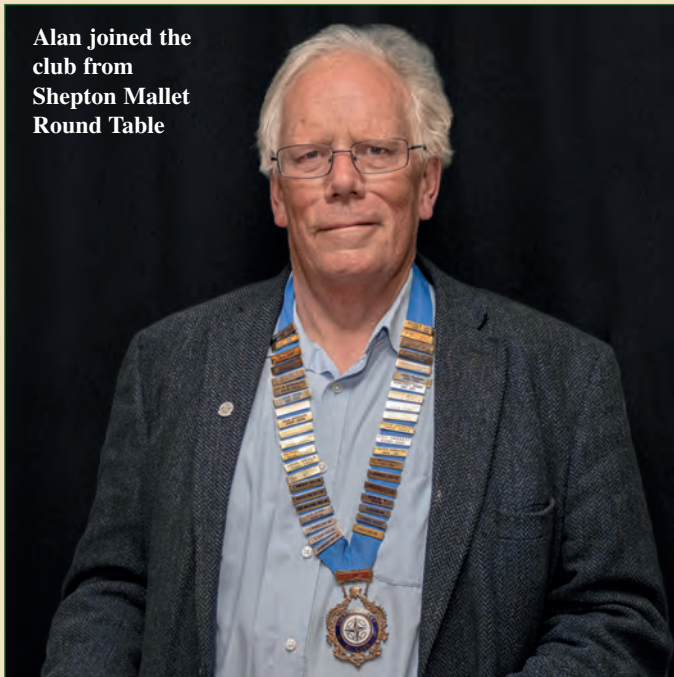


SANDFORD WI had a great turn out for their Easter themed craft evening learning how to make gift bags and gift boxes.

President Malorie Newbold and vice president Trish Rosevear were excellent instructors for the evening. Everyone received some chocolate Easter eggs to go in the gift boxes.

President's chain is a silver service award

Alan joined the club from Shepton Mallet Round Table



CIDERMAKER and historian Alan Stone has become the 2026 president of Shepton Mallet 41 Club, 25 years after joining the organisation.

Alan took over at the club's annual meeting, succeeding Frank Grech who has had a very successful year as president with the club able to donate more than £800 to local charities, including Children's Hospice South West, Help for Homeless and Salvation Army Shepton Mallet.

The club meets on the first Tuesday of each month at various venues in the area; the meeting on June 2nd will be at the Bishop's Palace in Wells to play croquet.

Village fundraiser



A packed village hall

MORE than 300 families took part in the Uphill Society's Easter egg hunt in aid of Weston Hospicecare.

Village Society chair, Stewart Castle, said: "Now in its third year, this event is becoming increasingly popular with entrants from all over the district, not just Uphill.

"It really is proving to be a great fun family way of supporting Weston Hospicecare, which Uphill is proud to house in the village."

Further fundraising events will be taking place in Uphill, including a table-top sale in support of the hospice and the village Family Fun Weekend in June in aid of Children's Hospice South West.



Mascots at the start

Details: www.uphillvillage.org.uk

Summer teas

COMPTON Dando's annual summer teas will start at St Mary's Church on Sunday, May 24th, continuing every Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays until August 31st, 2.30-5pm.

Villagers recently enjoyed their annual bluebell walk, finishing with teas at the church.

Details: Jenny on 01761 490727

Skate jam open to all



A scene from last year's skate jam

A DAY-long event to raise money towards the Frome Skatepark Project will take place on Saturday, May 9th.

The project is a community group working with the Rotary Club of Frome and Frome Town Council to create a new skatepark in the Mary Baily playing field. The skate jam will be held from 10am-4pm on the field with events including best trick competitions and music.

All wheeled sports enthusiasts, including skateboarders, roller skaters, scooter riders, and BMX bikers, are welcome to join in the activities. The skate jam is open to all ages and abilities. There are also skating classes with local tutor Dave Lea: attendees can book 30-minute skate classes for £6 at 10am and 10.30am (6-11 years) and 11am and 11.30am (12-16 years), with all proceeds to the skatepark project.

Town councillor Polly Lamb, lead councillor for the skatepark project, said: "It's fantastic to see the Frome Skatepark Project building momentum. These events are a brilliant way to bring the community together and raise the profile of skating and wheeled sports, while we work together towards creating this fantastic new facility for Frome."

For details, find Frome Town Council on Facebook

Society's annual meeting



THE Mendip Society's AGM was held on Saturday, April 11th at Draycott Memorial Hall. President Les Davies said that the voice of the society was still important and listened to today by decision makers when deciding the future of the area.

In her report for the year, chair, Tina Bath offered the society's thanks to David and Judith Tranter as they officially stepped down from their joint role as managers of the society's two nature reserves.

The sad loss of Rights of Way officer, Dave Parker last July, was noted, but thanks were offered to Steve Downs who has stepped into the role for West Mendip. An appeal for someone to cover East Mendip was also made.

Thanks were also offered to Jo Bradshaw and Liz Dagger, whose joint efforts have revitalised the walks and events schedule. Also, to the two new planning officers, Roger Wilmot and Duncan Bird, who join Mike Rolfe in monitoring planning across Mendip and act on the society's behalf when members raise concerns.

All existing officers were willing to stand again and were elected unopposed. An appeal was made for any members who felt they could do a bit more to join the committee and help spread the load of organisation a little.

Guest speaker Richard Ellam talked about the development of rail travel in Britain and how the rapid growth of a rail network had enabled "The Great Exhibition" of 1851.

Village get-together

ST MARGARET'S Church, Hinton Blewett, hosted its annual Easter Saturday village coffee morning, with an array of delicious cakes and treats and Easter story-crafting activities for children.

The Rev Katrina Dykes from the Churches of Chew Valley South spent time with children to create their own Easter garden to take home.

Organisers said this was the ideal time for the grown-ups to connect and catch up over a drink and a slice of cake, which in small villages is more important now than ever.

The morning ended on a high note with an easter egg hunt around the church grounds.



Pictured (l to r) Caroline Elliott, Carol Wheatley, Graham Sage, Ralph Elliott and the Rev Katrina Dykes

Easter bonnets



PENSFORD Evergreen Club's annual Easter bonnet competition was won by Brenda Stone, who won an Easter egg.

Club president, Janet Smith, is inviting others to join them at their weekly meetings at Pensford Memorial Hall, from 7pm.

She said: "Each Thursday we have a guest entertainer, which the club members enjoy, with some of them coming from the Chew Valley, Bristol and even as far as Radstock and Midsomer Norton."

Details: Janet 01761 490584

Sailors wanted



CHEW Lake Association of Disabled Sailors are looking for volunteers to join their very friendly group of sailors and helpers. They sail most Saturdays during the summer months roughly between May 1st to October 1st.

Helpers are not expected to attend every Saturday, there is a rota system where they can sign on for the dates they can manage. They need both on and offshore help, assisting sailors with various disabilities to access their boats.

They have four "Challengers", (15' single-handed trimarans), a "WindRider" trimaran which takes four and an "Access" single-handed dinghy. All their boats are specially adapted for disabled sailors.

It says the ability to sail is an advantage but not essential and training can be given if wanted. CLADS is part of the main Chew Valley Lake Sailing Club based at a stunning location with café, toilet and changing facilities as part of the club.

The entrance is from Wallycourt Road, Chew Stoke. There is no regular public transport to the location so volunteers would need their own transport.

Details: helpersrep@clads.co.uk

Quiz boost for church repair appeal



A NEAR full-house for a quiz at Leigh-on-Mendip Memorial Hall has raised much-needed funds towards essential repairs

Getting quizzical in Leigh-on-Mendip

to the village's rare Grade I church.

Friends of Leigh Church organised the event with Gus Unger Hamilton setting and hosting the quiz which involved 80 questions. Twelve teams battled it out with the Easter Bunnies just beating Four+Two to win, while three other teams finished only one point behind.

The money raised will help towards a grant application for essential repairs to St Giles church.

Trust transferred

A £5.3MILLION charitable fund supporting young people in Taunton has been transferred to Somerset Community Foundation.

Bishop Fox's Educational Foundation (BFEF) has a history spanning more than 500 years, when Richard Foxe, Bishop of Winchester, endowed a Tudor grammar school in Taunton.

Justin Sargent, chief executive of SCF, said: "It's a great privilege to be entrusted with the stewardship of BFEF. Funds like this play a vital role in supporting social mobility and increasing opportunity in Somerset."

Details: www.somersetcf.org.uk/trusts

Roadside library



CAROLINE Clarke has built and stocked a small, free community library in memory of her mother Doreen, who she says "loved to read".

Her sign says: "Books aren't just made of words, they're full of places to visit and people to meet."

Caroline's little library, a labour of love, is outside the gate of her home, Appletree Cottage, Stickleball Lane, Stanbow – just off the A361

between Pilton and Glastonbury.

Caroline worked as premises manager at a London school for 23 years before moving to Somerset. She said: "If you love to read, come along and take a book, share a book, keep a book. Just have fun reading."

Festival cancelled



THE Peasedown Party in the Park Festival has been cancelled because of rising costs. It was first launched in 2009 and attracted about 3,000 people.

The Peasedown Community Trust, which runs the festival, said: “With the huge increases in insurance, operational costs and the hiring of equipment, the Party in the Park festival has had to be cancelled for 2026.”

It said without the support of a financial lifeline, the festival’s future is in doubt. The trustees will meet again later this year to review the decision.

**Details: www.facebook.com/PeasedownCommunityTrust
peasedowncommunitytrust@gmail.com**

Appeal for more volunteer drivers

A COMMUNITY transport scheme run by Radstock-based charity, SWAN Transport, is transforming everyday life for residents across Bath and North East Somerset.

New figures have shown the scale of the charity’s impact in reducing isolation, connecting communities, and providing access to essential services, social activities, and healthcare.

In the first three months of 2026, SWAN’s volunteer drivers undertook 916 journeys across the county; 21% were health related journeys, 25.5% were community focused, and 53.5% were for social services clients.

Now the charity is appealing for more volunteer drivers using their own vehicles to join them. SWAN’s Transport Manager, Sofia Perkins, said: “Behind every journey is a person whose life

has been made easier. These numbers aren’t just statistics; they represent neighbours supporting neighbours and a community coming together to truly make a difference to people’s lives.”



For details, visit: www.swan-transport.co.uk email office@swan-transport.com or call 01761 439548

Fun for everyone at free fayre



Some of the fun on offer at last year’s event

RADSTOCK Fayre – a free family friendly creative arts event – returns this year offering loads of fun for everyone.

Taking place on Sunday, May 31st on the field behind St Nicholas Church, the day-long event is once again produced by The Natural Theatre Company and promises “bonkers” outdoor theatre shows and walkabout acts with the Co-Operative Community stage showcasing the very best of local musical talent alongside have-a-go arts workshops and community stalls.

Lots of bands will perform on the stage with Morris Dancers and a brass band and community stalls as well as food and ice-cream vendors.

Mark Bishop, the creative producer, said: “The fayre has just been getting better and better and this year will be a cracker! It’s always such a great atmosphere with something for everyone throughout the day. So, get down to glorious Radstock!”

Easter chicks



BISHOP Sutton and Stowey WI members decorated the cherry tree in the village’s memorial garden with knitted Easter chicks in the lead up to Easter.

Skatepark project update

A COMMUNITY-led campaign to build a new skatepark in Wells has passed a major milestone, with more than £236,000 now raised towards the project.

The Wells Skatepark Community Group is working to replace the city's ageing wooden skatepark with a modern, inclusive concrete facility designed for skateboarders, BMX riders, scooter users, roller skaters and wheelchair users.

The total includes a combination of funds raised and pledged support, reflecting growing backing from local businesses, community groups and residents as well as a grant from the Spielman Trust.

Beverley Smith, a trustee of the group, said: "We're incredibly grateful for the support we've received so far. It's been amazing to see so many parts of the community come together behind this project."

The group is now working towards its next milestone of £250,000, which will be a significant step closer to building the park and will also unlock further funding opportunities.

The new skatepark is intended to provide a free, accessible space for young people in Wells, Street, Glastonbury and surrounding towns and villages.

Anyone can support the project by



donating, fundraising or sponsoring through the "Mark on the Park" campaign.

Details: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/skatewells> or contact wellsskatepark@gmail.com



Pictured (l to r) Mandy Collinson, Lorna Cox and Carrie Riches

Backwell on the mend

BACKWELL'S free "Make, do and mend" event at the scout hut in April was a huge success, well supported by local residents old and new enjoying trying out new skills and chatting over copious cups of tea and cakes.

Bug hotel furnishing, fabric and paper crafts, sauerkraut making and bike repairs were amongst the opportunities on offer.

There was an opportunity to learn how to make kimchi, make your own eco cleaning products, know what goes in your compost bin and activities for children to do making a mini-bug hotel, paper craft and biscuit decoration.

The photo shows Lorna demonstrating how to use scraps of fabric to make pretty ties for present wrapping.

Cheering on the cyclists

A GROUP of dedicated cyclists have completed the Somerset Circle Discovery Cycle Ride which aimed to promote the concept of the Somerset Circle using a sample route.

Around 20 riders set off from Bath Abbey heading to Midsomer Norton and then Shepton Mallet, before passing along the Strawberry Line going through Wells before stopping in Cheddar overnight.

The riders then continued the following morning to Clevedon via Yatton, and then onwards towards Bristol to complete the Somerset Circle back to Bath Abbey.



The riders received a big welcome from Strawberry Line volunteers when they stopped for lunch in Shepton Mallet's Collett Park

The trip was supported by the Strawberry Line Society to show its overwhelming support for the Somerset

Circle initiative, and how the concept is developed into a viable route for all users to enjoy.

For details, visit: www.greenwaysandcycleroutes.org/ or email: somersetcircle.greenways@gmail.com

New centre opened

DAME Joanna Lumley opened the new Dame June Whitfield activities centre at the Frankie Howerd Community Hub and Café at Loxton.

It's an extension to the former blacksmith's forge where the trust first started work on its café eight years ago. It's invested £300,000 so far and is seeking another £50,000 to complete the project.

June Whitfield was the first president of the Frankie Howerd OBE Trust and Joanna Lumley took over from her. Frankie Howerd lived nearby. All three were close friends.

June Whitfield's daughter, Suzy Aitchison, said: "My mother would have been delighted to see this come to fruition."

Joanna Lumley also opened a new bridge linking the centre to the car park.

The trust supports over 300 older people each year and runs its own minibus. One said: "The café is the one place I can go where I feel connected to others and part of something bigger. It's made such a difference to my life."

The centre has been supported by the Enover Trust, WERN, Garfield Weston, Hedley Foundation, Wolfson Trust, Medlock Foundation, Hobson Charity, Platinum Fund.

The café is also popular with cyclists, walkers and visitors.



Meeting some of her fans



Joanna Lumley with Phil Davies, chairman of the trust



Joanna Lumley and Suzy Aitchison

Choir's Wells treat

CHEDDAR Valley Singers say they were delighted to return to Wells Cathedral again in April with their performance "We love2sing".

Unsuspecting visitors to the cathedral were delighted to be entertained by a wide range of songs, chosen to uplift both audience and singers.

Cheddar Valley Singers meet on Monday evenings at Cheddar Catholic Community Hall. Led by Kate Lynch, they are fast approaching their 15th anniversary and welcome new singers throughout the year.



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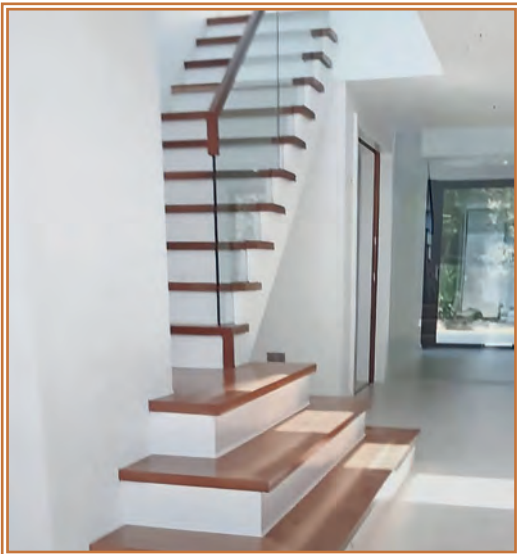


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INTENSE BIDDING AT PROPERTY AUCTION

The lure of the auction room proved an irresistible draw for salegoers in person and online at one of our spring property auctions, held at Batch Country House, Lympsham, Nr Weston-super-Mare.

The room was packed full of potential buyers as well as bidders coming in online and on the telephone, achieving some excellent prices throughout.

The stand-out price of the day was for Hornsey, Buckland St Mary, Chard, which was an excellent smallholding requiring total renovation throughout, set in a total of 14.69 acres. After frantic bidding the eventual sale price was £590,000 far exceeding the pre-sale guide of £350,000.

Small lots of land also continue to sell well. In the March auction 0.77 of an acre at Silver Moor Lane, Banwell, achieved £36,000 and 3.74 acres at Cocklake, near Wedmore, went for £60,000. A development opportunity at Chippenham sold for £73,000, again outstripping its initial guide price of £35,000.

Auctioneer Robert Baker said: "Without a doubt the highlight of the day was Hornsey at Buckland St Mary, which far exceeded everyone's expectations and had multiple buyers all keen to secure this property.

Demand is still good for smaller blocks of land and property in need of renovation and we now look forward to our next local auction at Aldwick Estate, Redhill on the 20th May."

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Three cheers for a glorious spring time

THIS is the time of year when the Chew Valley starts to look its picture-perfect best. It makes everyone feel better to see the place awash with colour, with new leaves opening, early flowers blooming and the hedgerows greening up, neatly trimmed, but not too short so the birds have somewhere to set up home.

Many human beings are keen to do the same thing and when buyers come to view properties from further afield they are always knocked out by our beautiful environment. They also see a vibrant and welcoming community which gives them the confidence to go ahead and make a purchase at a time when there are things going on elsewhere that we can't control.

We are grateful for Mother Nature's help, but she has still left us with plenty to do to make sure we get you moving. One of the ways we do that is by producing the acclaimed photographs of the homes we bring to market. Our practised eye for detail means we really bring your house to life, not just capturing all the relevant elements, but going much further than that and giving potential buyers a true feel for what living there would be like.

It's all part of the Dedication, Imagination and Delivery that has helped us to forge our reputation as the agent of

choice for so many people in the area.

A key part of that is the trust we have built up by being totally honest and transparent with sellers when it comes to providing them with a truthful and realistic valuation of their property. I know I have talked about this before, but it is such an important topic.

For one reason or another, some other agents over-value a house in order to win an instruction, but then it doesn't sell, it clogs up the market and vendors end up having to cut the price, which is never a good look. We are known for getting it right first time, which is why so many people from outside the area come to us when moving from other parts of the country, such as the south east. They see good value for money here, but they still have a keen eye on the numbers.

My team have an encyclopaedic knowledge of our district and an experienced understanding of the psychology that goes into putting buyers together with the right house for them. We get to know the property and the people so well that we regularly find ourselves match making. So, if you'd like to experience the perfect happy ending, please give us a call and we'll make your dreams come true!

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Maybe May will be better?



With **LUCY COUNSELL**

It has not been a good month! I had written one version of this column but everything changed. The eventing season had a delayed start. I was supposed to head to Tweseldown 2 but Insey had other

ideas and managed to get her leg caught over her rope and pulled back. Sadly, she was very sore and that was the end of that.

I had lousy times with a four-hour gap between dressage and showjumping and a three-hour journey to get there so I was not too sad. I think the saving I made on fuel was greater than the competition entry.

After a visit from Lindsay Opperman who got her back feeling good again in her body, we managed to start our season at Oxstalls in the BE100 open. I was supposed to be heading to Oxstalls to do the novice but dropped down a level for the first one of the season on the advice of my coach, Jo May. I also can ride like a moron at the first event so it made sense to ease our way into the season.

We had a pretty terrible dressage as Insey was tense and ended up on a 33. I am going to play with some different nosebands to see if they help some of the contact issues we get. She jumped a lovely clear in the showjumping and then was a complete professional on the cross country. We managed to finish 7th so another top 10 placing for such a wonderful friend.

We head back to Novice at Chard where we will be back jumping 1.10m and the cross-country pace is a lot quicker and I am notoriously slow. I always say that I get far better value for money cross country as have double the time to some people out there.

Badminton Grassroots has been entered and I have joined a British Eventing committee on horse grading. I think it's vital to give back where you can to things you get enjoyment from and this is a small way that

I can contribute to the sport I love.

No horse event would run without volunteers. It is getting harder and harder to get volunteers and my age group (35-45) is particularly bad at volunteering but they still want to turn up to events and participate.

You can't have it both ways...

Eris my four-year-old was kicked. I am so careful and only have horses in well matched pairs. Insey is not a kicker but Eris had a serious wound to her hock and was barely able to weight bear. It without doubt looked like a kick.

If you are a regular reader of this column then you will know it was only last year that Eris was kicked by another horse but recovered well. I think there is something about Eris which annoys other horses.

The vet was called and after x-rays and a joint tap we discovered cloudy joint fluid and a bone chip. Sophie, the attending vet from The Stables was terrific, though she did comment she only ever sees me when mine get a serious emergency.

Sophie sought a second opinion from the surgeon at Breadstone Hospital and the next day she was rushed to Breadstone, where more tests showed she had fractured her tibia and there were signs of infection in the joint. She required immediate surgery. It was a long wait into the night before I had news that she was up and OK. The most difficult bit of surgery was over.

I had discussed with the vet that if they opened her up and the joint was mashed to immediately put her to sleep as there would be no quality of life for her. I was not prepared to undergo the surgery without at least a 70% chance that she could have a normal ridden life.

She is too big and too young to be a pasture puff. My other half, Myles did ask me that night why I wasted so much money on horses, I told him I was in too deep and it was too late.

It was a great relief to have a phone call the next day to tell me she was weight



Insey at Oxstalls

bearing and cheery. She has a massive bandage on to limit movement as the wound required to remove all the fragments of bone was large and with it being an area which moves a lot will break down and have huge issues is she moves it too much.

Eris will spend the week in hospital having a huge amount of antibiotics to limit infection. The joint was flushed and a lot of hair and muck removed from the wound itself. She isn't out of the woods yet as there is a lot which can still go wrong but we are on to stage 2 out of 3 now.

Stage 3 will be bringing her home on box rest and trying to get that wound fixed without it breaking down thus limiting her movement. We will move her into our smallest stable and hope she is a good patient. Keep your fingers crossed for Eris.

Luckily, I have not managed to find a lorry so I do have the money for the surgery. C'est la vie, but the horse always comes first.

Finally, I managed to persuade my other half to come and do some rolling. He quite enjoys being on a tractor and just before he was due to finish, disaster happened and the front wheel came off. It's quite an old tractor which they do not make parts for anymore so we are not sure if it can be saved.

It's not very big but it is useful and does all our topping, rolling and harrowing. It cost a fortune last year to repair after a few issues and now this. Looks like we will be using cars for rolling and harrowing and a lawn mower for topping.

So that's three disasters alone this month and I am hoping the run of calamities is over. Meanwhile, you will find me hunting behind sofas for coins and selling everything which is not tied down to try and add to my severely depleted bank balance.

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

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Race day for young and (not-so-young)

FAMILIES with young children rubbed shoulders with race going veterans at the annual Mendip Farmers' Point-to-Point fixture at Ston Easton.

A very large crowd enjoyed a sunny start to the day which saw five races before young riders took to the course for pony racing.

The day began with the first Hands and Heels Novice Riders race to be held in the Wessex Area in which the six novice riders were able to carry whips.



Diana Tincknell (second left) with the team behind Far Out West, who took the Tincknell Restricted Race



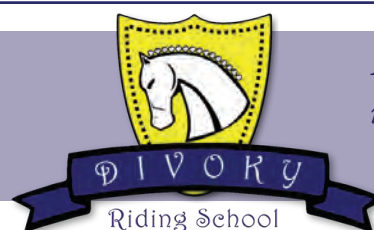
Pony race riders



Presentation time (l to r): Martin and Sue Wanless, owners of winning horse Emotional Roller with jockey Venetia Thompson, and Sally and Tom Killen, sponsors of the Killens Ladies' Open Race



Lucy Pickford clears the last jump on her way to victory in the opening race



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CYCLING
with EDMUND
LODITE

THERE is a specific kind of spring ritual that involves a bucket of warm water, a degreaser that smells faintly of citrus, and a level of focus usually reserved for watchmakers. After

months of battling the Mendip elements, my bike had become a geological record of every wet ride since December and I finally surrendered a Saturday morning to the "Great Reset."

I scrubbed the drivetrain until the cassette shone like a row of silver teeth. I wiped down the frame until the paintwork held a mirror finish. By the time I stepped back, the bike was gleaming; it looked lighter, faster – better than it had any right to. It was also, I realised with a sudden sinking feeling, perhaps too clean to actually ride.

We've all been there. You stand in the driveway, helmet in hand, eyeing a rogue, bruised-looking cloud hanging over the Mendip Hills and weighing the risk of it ruining your work. This is the cyclist's paradox: we spend good money on machines designed to conquer the elements, only to then treat a two-inch deep puddle like a river crossing.

A few days later I lingered longer than I'd care to admit before the pull of warm air won the argument. I nudged the bike out of the gate, feeling like a parent sending a child off to school in a white shirt, fully expecting them to come home covered in grass stains.

I was meeting my friend Andy. Andy is a man who treats the "n+1" rule of bike ownership (the correct number of bikes to own being n+1, where n is the current number) not as a joke, but as a lifestyle. He arrived on a beautifully kept, vintage steel-framed machine that hummed with a

certain timeless dignity.

As we pedalled out across the Chew Valley, the rhythmic tick-tick of our gears sparked a question I'd been meaning to ask.

"So, Andy," I said, dodging a particularly suspicious-looking puddle. "How many of these steel beauties do you actually have now?"

"Twelve," he replied. There was no hesitation. No hint of irony. No sheepish glance.

Twelve. I did the mental maths of the storage space required, the sheer volume of inner tubes and the maintenance schedule involved in keeping a dozen vintage frames roadworthy. When I asked him why he needed 12, he didn't give me a technical lecture on the vibration-dampening qualities of Reynolds 531 tubing or the superior lugs of a 1980s frame. He just shrugged and said, "because I like them".

It was a wonderfully simple answer. In a world that often asks us to explain and optimise everything, there's something refreshing about doing something simply because it brings quiet satisfaction. I spent the next few miles wondering if his garage

was less a place to store bikes and more of a private museum. A sanctuary of steel where each bike holds a different memory of a Mendip climb or a Somerset sunset.

We decided to loop around the edge of Chew Valley Lake, a route that changes character entirely once the clocks go back and the evenings stretch out. As we reached the flatter stretches, the atmosphere shifted. The Wednesday evening time-trialists were out for the start of the summer league.

They passed in ones and twos, low over their handlebars, faces set, legs turning with metronomic precision. There's something both impressive and slightly otherworldly about it – the focused silence, broken only by the brief "whoosh" sound of the disc wheel cutting through the air.

It's a very particular pursuit: solitary, disciplined, and repeated week after week on the same stretch of road. And yet, like Andy's collection of bikes, it exists for reasons that don't always need explaining.

Why push that hard, against nothing more tangible than the clock?

Because they like it, perhaps.

By the time I pulled back into my driveway, the bike had a light dusting of country grit and a few unidentifiable splatters from a farm track. No longer pristine, but no worse for that – just returned to its natural state.

We clean the bikes. We hesitate to use them. We ride them anyway. Some of us collect 12 of them for reasons that stand up perfectly well without explanation. Others race the clock on a Wednesday evening for motives that don't need much examination at all.

And most of the time, we return home slightly muddier, slightly tired, and none the wiser about what we were thinking about during the ride.

But we are certain – quietly, stubbornly certain – that it was worth it.



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Rufus has designs for run



THIS year's Chew Valley 10k T-shirt and medal has been designed by Rufus Keeton, aged 13, a year 8 pupil at Chew Valley School.

The race will take place on Sunday, June 7th at 9.30am, starting at Bishop Sutton Village Hall.

As a community fundraiser, all profits will be donated to Dorothy House Hospice Care (in its 50th year), local schools and Bloodbikes NICU Support, supporting premature babies across the south west.

Rufus is pictured alongside (l to r) the event's joint sponsors Nicola Deacon, Brock and Houlford Expert Eyecare and Justin Taylor, Winford Road Garages alongside Chew Valley School's Head of Product Design & Technology, Jo Ashman.

Over 300 runners have so far entered the 10km race.

Details: www.chewvalley10k.co.uk

Cricket festival

BUTLEIGH Cricket Club is set to host its first-ever community cricket festival on Sunday, June 14th, with proceedings getting underway from 12pm.

The event promises to be a lively afternoon for all ages, featuring a range of attractions including food stalls, live music and fun activities designed for the whole family.

Organisers are hopeful that the festival will bring together residents from across the village and surrounding areas in a celebration of local sport and community spirit. Entry to the festival is free.

A highlight of the day will be a special exhibition T20 match, marking the first time a representative team has been selected from clubs across the surrounding area. The match is expected to showcase some of the region's finest cricketing talent in an exciting and competitive format.



Butleigh is one of the most attractive cricket grounds in Somerset

Trio triumph off the tee

MEMBERS of Wheathill Golf Club's ladies section competed in the annual Celee Trophy with victory for Carolyn Durston, Di Longman and Dee Powel.

The event followed a three player team format, played as a full handicap

Stableford with the best two scores on each hole contributing to the team total. The winning trio delivered an impressive 79 points.

As the season gets into full swing, the club says the Celee Trophy has set a

bright tone for the competitions ahead.

Meanwhile, the club welcomed a strong turnout for its first New Members Texas Scramble, an event designed to encourage newcomers to get involved in club competitions and meet fellow players.



Di Longman, Dee Powel, Sylvia Bates (ladies captain) and Carolyn Durston



Winning team members Sean O'Neill, Lynn O'Neill, Dee Powell and Len Allen, again with Sylvia

Wells archers

Fancy having a go at archery? Here's your chance! Wells City Archers is taking part in Start Archery Week, which is a national archery initiative.

There are one-hour taster sessions – which introduce you to the basics of archery with a bit of scoring and a game or two.

Ages 18-plus are on Sunday, May 10th, 11am and 1pm; ages 8-18 Saturday, May 16th, 1.30pm and 3pm. Places are limited.

Details: www.wellscityarchers.com



Weston winners

WESTON-super-Mare RFC finished the season unbeaten in the club's 150th year, having clinched the Regional 2 Tribute Ale South West title with two games to play. They won their

last game against Crediton 21–19.

They will play in Regional 1 Tribute Ale South West next season.

Cyclists go mad on Mendip



Cyclists ahead of the start

AROUND 50 cyclists tackled 40- or 60-mile routes in Somer Valley Cycle Club's annual Mendip Madness Sportive.

Starting and finishing at Ston Easton



And they're off!

Village Hall, the event – now in its 15th year – raised money for local charities. The longer route saw cyclists tackling Cheddar Gorge and the Somerset Levels.

As well as riders from SVCC's home area of Midsomer Norton and Radstock, others travelled from Edington and Bradford-on-Avon to take part.

For details about the club, visit: www.somervalley.org.uk

Soccer tournament



Pensford's winning teams

Chew Valley primary schools taking part.

Matches were played on the all-weather pitches at Chew Valley School and were refereed by Year 9 students from the school.

Pensford Primary School ended up winning both the boys' and girls' competitions, collecting cups and medals from the Rotary club.

THE annual Chew Valley schools' football tournament, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Chelwood Bridge, saw eight boys' teams and six girls' teams from seven

Tenth anniversary



TABLE tennis players in Compton Dando celebrated ten years since the club's foundation, with a celebratory lunch at the Compton Inn.

One of the organisers, Richard Davis, said: "We

welcome additional players, who live in the Mendip area, and all abilities are welcome to join our friendly group."

They play fortnightly in Compton Dando village hall on Thursdays, at 7.15pm and some Sundays at 2.30pm. It costs £5 per two-hour session and this includes tea /coffee biscuits.

Details: richardjamesdavis@hotmail.com 07968 269841

Women's rugby history remembered

PIP Atkinson – a former England Rugby Red Rose – has attended another milestone in women's rugby, the 40th anniversary of the first women's rugby international.

Back then, no women's home union teams existed so Pip – a winger – played as part of a Great Britain team against a France XV.

Pip, who lives near Glastonbury, was studying at Loughborough University at the time and played on the wing in the game at Richmond Rugby Club.

The reunion involved players from both sides and was held at the Allianz Stadium Twickenham.



The reunion at Twickenham



Pip Atkinson



Pip in action



The match day programme

Beckington anniversary



BECKINGTON Choir celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. One of their founder members, Freda Brann, still sings with them.

She has seen many changes over the years, however they remain a friendly mixed voice adult choir that unites in the benefits of singing.

Their year starts in September and runs until spring with concerts in December and May. They also support the Remembrance Service and Carol Concert at St George's Church, Beckington.

Their musical director is Neil Moore and their pianist is Alan Burgess and they sing music from popular song to modern choral classics.

They would love to see new members - there's no need to live in the village. They meet on Tuesdays at Beckington Memorial Hall, 7.30-9.15pm.

Their next concert is on Tuesday, May 5th, 7.30pm, Beckington Hall, BA11 6SH, tickets £12 on the door, U-18s free.

Details: Jeanlillywhite@outlook.com

Memorial to musician



A CHARITY concert in memory of Jim Edwards will take place at Chilcompton Village Hall on Saturday, May 9th, 2pm, raising money for the Stroke Association.

It will feature The Singing Guitars and

Crazy for Uke – he was a member of both – plus guest singers JP7. Entry is free.

Details: **Gay 07890 051169 • 01761 252785**
Lucy Edwards 07595 604248

End of spring season

THE final concert for Yatton Music Society's spring season will be an evening of French music with Meg Davies (clarinet) and Catherine Millege (piano) who have themed their concert "Sous les étoiles".

Meg is a first class honours graduate from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Catherine teaches and accompanies at the RWCM&D and at Cardiff University.

The concert on Saturday, May 16th, 7.30pm at St Mary's Church, Yatton, tickets £15, YMS members and students £10, accompanied children U-16 free.

Details: www.yms.org.uk

Free CDs



AXBRIDGE musician Barry Walsh has released a new CD "Old Shoes" and has a new song about Jubilee Road in the town. Both are available free from the post office and Axe Vale Arts Centre.

Spring concert



BURNHAM & Highbridge Brass Band, which is celebrating 80 years, will be holding a spring concert on Sunday, May 17th at Our Lady and The English Martyrs' Church, Highbridge Road, TA8 1LL, 4-6pm.

The band started in 1945 with some ex-servicemen (and they were all men in those days!) and some railwaymen from the Somerset and Dorset Works in Highbridge.

It grew rapidly until in 1947 it was a full brass ensemble and given official status by the Urban District Council.

For many years it was a contesting band, reaching the SW Championship Section by the 1960s, and also completing three concert tours of Germany in the 1980s.

Women were eventually allowed to join and the band made an appearance on the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury Festival in 2016.

Tickets for the concert are £9 including refreshments, U-16s free from their website or Burnham Information Centre.

Details: www.burnhambrassband.org

Soprano's return



THE Cantiamo choir will be presenting their spring concert on Sunday, May 10th in All Saints Parish Church, Wrington at 6pm.

The choir will be joined by the soprano Josephine Goddard, who grew up in Churchill before going on to study at The Royal College of Music Opera School.

Her return will be an opportunity for her to reunite with the head of Wrington Primary School and Cantiamo member Sarah Joskey who taught Josephine at Churchill Primary School.

The concert is free with donations towards the church's vestry refurbishment fund.

Singing for church project



CHEDDAR Male Choir and Axbridge Singers will come together on Saturday, May 16th for an uplifting evening of four-part harmony at Cheddar Methodist Church, Cliff Street, 7pm for 7.30pm.

The concert will showcase the powerful sound of Cheddar's male voices alongside the Axbridge Singers' vibrant blend of mixed acappella.

The event supports the Cheddar Methodist Church Community Project, helping create a welcoming space for local groups and activities.

Tickets are £10, available from Deane's of Cheddar, Draycott Village Store, Eventbrite (small handling fee applies), choir members, or on the door.

American choir visit Wells



ST Cuthbert's Church in Wells will welcome the Missouri Baptist University Chorale on Monday May 11th, 7pm, for a free concert organised by WOWfest, with donations to the Wells Skate Park project.

The 30 singers will perform a one-hour concert of American spiritual, gospel and traditional music, finishing with a rousing Hallelujah chorus from Handel's Messiah.

Details:

<https://www.facebook.com/events1225548772877185>

Three Musketeers on stage

EVERY summer, the Elizabethan Evening presents a much-loved outdoor theatre event in the village of Corsley to support local charities.

The production is staged in the gardens of the historic Manor Farm, offering a truly special setting for this popular annual occasion. Now in its third decade, the event regularly welcomes an audience of nearly 500.

To date, the event has raised almost £90,000 and this year's performance will support Frome College Young Carers and the Youth Adventure Trust.

This summer, theatregoers are invited to enjoy The Three Musketeers, performed by outdoor theatre specialists Illyria.

It will be staged on Saturday July 25th, 5pm, gates open at 4pm.

Details: www.theelizabethanevening.com
theelizabethanevening@gmail.com

The
THREE MUSKETEERS

AT MANOR FARM, CORSLEY, BA12 7QE

SATURDAY 25 JULY 2026, 5PM GATES OPEN 4PM

TICKETS: ILLYRIA.CO.UK ADULTS £48; 5-12 YRS £12

Licensed bar, Tea, Coffee, Brownies, Ice cream

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.THEELIZABETHANEVENING.COM

Supporting Frome Young Carers & The Youth Adventure Trust

Airport protest



THE Save Felton Common action group held an action day on the common objecting to the airport’s plans to put landing lights on there so that it can extend the runway.

Details: savefeltoncommon@gmail.com or Facebook

Mystery tenant boost for iconic building in Glastonbury

THE renovation of the Baily’s Buildings in Glastonbury has taken another positive step forward, with an anchor tenant now secured for the redevelopment project.

The agreement will see the new tenant – as yet unnamed – take 60% of the Phase 1 renovation of the West Building, which is due to be completed in July this year.

The Grade II listed Baily’s Buildings, which fell into disrepair in the 1980s after the Baily’s tannery and glove factory ceased operations, are currently being redeveloped with support from Glastonbury Town Deal funding.

The derelict buildings were granted to the Beckery Island Regeneration Trust in 2011 and their renovation aims to create a vibrant, multi-functional space for local businesses, educational groups and community activities.

The new tenant intends to combine several existing offices to create a company headquarters with training facilities, with around

35 full-time jobs moving to the site this year and plans to expand the workforce to 50 people.



(Photograph courtesy of Beard Construction)

Bailys Buildings site visit

Heart of Paulton

PAULTON’S much-loved Books & Cooks community café, based at the village hub, has faced its share of challenges in recent years.

But Hayley Bush has stepped forward to give it a new start. Having worked at the café for several years, she’s taken on the challenge of becoming the café’s sole tenant.

Her decision sparked renewed energy across Paulton. Volunteers rallied together, working alongside Hayley and the parish council to breathe new life into the space.

Many local businesses, along with generous individuals from the community, also contributed donations, demonstrating the strength of support behind the café’s

revival.

Their shared effort transformed the café, both physically and emotionally, into something the whole community could be proud of. On April 20th, Books & Cooks Café officially reopened its doors.

Freshly painted and deep cleaned, the café welcomed an outpouring of support. It was filled to the brim with local residents - old friends and new faces alike.

More than just a café, Books & Cooks has reclaimed its role as a warm and welcoming hub at the heart of Paulton, where everyone can come together, connect, and belong.



Pictured (l to r) Carole Spencer, Hayley Bush and Cllr Liz Hardman

Valley hoard takes centre stage



A replica made at one of the workshops

THE Chew Valley Hoard, valued at £4.3 million and acquired for the nation in 2024, is the subject of a new Valley Arts community production this summer at Yeo Valley Organic Garden.

The hoard of 2,584 silver coins, buried around 1067, was found in January 2019 by seven metal detectorists just beneath the surface of a Chew Valley field.

Valley Arts will be bringing the story to life in a large-scale outdoor community production. Commissioned by South West Heritage Trust and supported by Bristol Water, the project has been built from the ground up by local people, with participants aged from eight to 80.

The show, written by Chew Stoke playwright Kesty Morrison, is a comedy whodunnit with a twist. One hoard. Six suspects. It's



Participants in one of the free craft workshops

rooted in the real drama of the Norman Conquest and promises to be unlike anything seen in the valley before. Performances take place on July 18th and 19th.

Valley Arts exists to bring high-quality arts to rural communities and the hoard project is the most ambitious community production to date. Since last autumn, workshops have drawn in local historians, artists, schools and seniors from across the valley.

In May, the community involvement continues, with free drop-in coin-making workshops for children run at Chew Valley library in Bishop Sutton on Thursday, May 28th, 2-4.30pm and East Harptree theatre on Friday, May 29th, 10am-1pm.

Meanwhile, Chew Chat is getting a hoard takeover throughout May, with Kesty Morrison running creative writing workshops on May 1st, 15th and 22nd and Geraldine Hill-Male, chair of Valley Arts, giving a talk on the discovery and heritage of the hoard on May 8th. All sessions run 10-11.30am and are open to all.

On Saturday, June 20th, Valley Arts and South West Heritage Trust are hosting a free community open day, Every Coin Tells a Story, at the Old School Rooms in Chew Magna, where some of the actual hoard coins will be on display.

Tickets for the big show, Finders Keepers, are on sale now at www.valley-arts.co.uk. And there are also plenty of ways to get involved before July, from lending a hand at children's workshops to helping create costumes and props for the show.



Inspired by the hoard



Chew Valley hoard

Details: www.valley-arts.co.uk or email cvhoard@valley-arts.co.uk

Village hall's anniversary

HUTTON will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its village hall on Saturday May 9th, with a variety of activities, 9.30am-4pm.

Originally the site had a green wooden hut, part of an army barracks canteen used in WWI. It was bought by the village squire, Thomas Bisdee, who lived at Hutton Court so the scouts could use it.

Later it was passed to the Royal British Legion on condition the Scouts and Guides could still use it. After 57 years it was time to replace the old building before it fell down! It was sold for £10!

The British Legion offered the site to the village for erection of a new hall, which was built with a significant amount of money raised by Hutton residents.



Details: villagehallhutton@gmail.com

DERVISH · MELROSE QUARTET
 DALLAHAN · KASAI MASAI
 MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK AND TIM EDEY
 THE HENRY SISTERS · MALIN LEWIS
 NANCY KERR JAMES FAGAN · RICHARD AND
 JESS ARROWSMITH · WILL POUND AND JENN
 BUTTERWORTH · THE FIRELIGHT TRIO · THE
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Priddy Folk Festival
 10TH -12TH JULY 2026

In the beautiful Mendip Hills in Somerset
 TICKETS AND INFO: WWW.PRIDDYFOLK.ORG

Priddy Folk Festival



The PTA team

THIS year's Priddy Folk Festival will take place from July 10th-12th and plans are well advanced for a fabulous weekend jam-packed with music and dance.

Headliners include Dervish, Dallahan, Melrose Quartet, Kasai Masai, Michael McGoldrick & Tim Edey, the Henry Girls and Malin Lewis. There will be more than 30 bands on the seven stages around the village.

As well as the ticketed programme, there are lots of free events over the weekend. This includes the dance festival with Border and Cotswold Morris, Cornish and clog sides as well as the ever-popular Fringe which showcases up and coming talent from Somerset and beyond.

The Children's Festival will entertain younger (accompanied) visitors with crafts, singing, story-telling and performance. Other events include poetry, archaeology and wildlife walks, ceilidhs, and workshops.

Run entirely by volunteers, this not-for-profit festival raises money for local community activities such as music tuition in the village primary school.

Organisers say: "So come along, whether for the whole weekend or just for an ice-cream, enjoy the music and the friendly vibe and you will be helping us keep Priddy special!"

Details: priddyfolk.org

Calling all artists and crafters

THIS year's Chew Valley Arts Trail will be taking place over the weekend of October 10th and 11th and entries are now invited for this annual showcase for artists and crafters people.

Organiser, Sandy Bell, said: "This is an event which gives local people a chance to collectively promote their work to a large audience at a very affordable cost, and have some fun.

"It only works so well because people have supported it over the last 22 years and I do hope they will do so again and let me know if they would like to take part. The deadline for applications is June 1st."

Details: tintinna@aol.com 01275 333128

Show entries now open as the countdown begins

THE countdown is officially underway for the return of the Royal Bath & West Show, taking place from May 28th – May 30th.

For three days, the showground will once again become a vibrant hub for farmers, competitors, rural businesses and families, celebrating the very best of British agriculture, food and countryside life.

Tickets are now on sale, with discounted rates available until May 27th, offering visitors excellent value for one of the most anticipated rural events of the year.

This year also invites visitors to embrace the full show experience by staying on site, with camping now available. From evening entertainment to live music and late night shopping, staying on the showground allows guests to enjoy every moment.

A wide array of competition classes are



now open, reflecting the depth and diversity of rural skills and livestock excellence. Livestock competitions remain at the heart of the event, with entries open for all stock classes.

In the cattle rings, exhibitors will present leading genetics, exceptional stockmanship and breed champions across beef and dairy categories. Sheep and pig classes will again shine a spotlight on breed quality, production and exhibitor expertise.

Alongside livestock, bees and honey classes return, showcasing the craft, skill and dedication within British beekeeping, while the ever competitive egg classes highlight rural produce at its finest. The farriery competitions also return, demonstrating craftsmanship and precision through traditional shoeing classes.

The equine rings once again promise exceptional displays of horsemanship, speed and skill. With £12,350 in prize money on offer, competitors can expect three days of exhilarating sport. The show's extensive schedule of Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) qualifiers – 32 in total – will again draw top level competitors from across the country.

And for exhibitors with an artistic flair, arts, floral art and horticulture entries are now open, offering opportunities for creativity and craftsmanship to shine.

For tickets, visit: <https://www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show>

FOOD, FARMING & RURAL LIFE

28 - 30 MAY 2026

DISCOVER MORE AT THE ROYAL BATH & WEST SHOW

Book your tickets now: bathandwest.com/tickets

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• LIVE MUSIC • BEES & HONEY • HORTICULTURE • ART PAVILION • LAKESIDE FARM • TRACTOR TED • PONY CLUB GAMES •

Shipham's great escape

SHIPHAM Players are working on their next production, *Escape*, written by Sharon Rutland, described as a chaotic dark comedy set in an escape room that's more than just a game.

Ticket, £12 will go on sale from May 16th. The production will run in the village hall on June 11th, 12th and 13th, 7.30pm.

Details: www.shiphamplayers.org.uk

WHAT'S ON BATH & WEST SHOWGROUND	
16 MAY	SOMERSET COMIC CON & GAMING FESTIVAL
16 MAY	YOUNG DRIVER
28 - 30 MAY	THE ROYAL BATH & WEST SHOW
7 JUNE	GIANT FLEA MARKET
12 - 14 JUNE	ANTIQUES & COLLECTORS FAIR
17 JUNE	2ND2NONE DRIVING SCHOOL
3 - 5 JULY	AUTOFEST UK

INFORMATION CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINTING.
VISIT BATHANDWESTSHOWGROUND.COM FOR FULL EVENT LISTINGS

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Craft Stalls · Face Painting · BBQ
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ARMED FORCES DAY 27 JUNE 2026 MARKET KITCHEN

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.THEVILLAGEFUND.ORG.UK OR SCAN THE QR CODE

Leisure centre reopens for a night to remember

Ekleido will visit Shepton Mallet in May



(Photo courtesy of Paul-Hampartsoumian)

THE closed-down Shepton Mallet Leisure Centre will reopen for one night when professional dance company Ekleido bring a double bill of their breathtaking show to the town on Friday, May 29th.

Incorporating voguing, bonebreaking and threading club/street dance styles, Ekleido usually perform in major dance venues but are being hosted at the leisure centre by Let's Buy The Amulet thanks to support from the national Rural Touring Dance Initiative.

For details and tickets, visit: www.takeart.org/whats-on

St Hugh's summer teas



ST Hugh's Church at Charterhouse is opening its doors to visitors on Sundays until mid-September, 2-5pm.

Dating back to 1908, St Hugh's is a Grade 2 listed building, dedicated to Hugh of Lincoln and was built by W.D.Caroe on the initiative of the Rev Menzies Lambrick on a former welfare hall for local lead miners.

Volunteers will be providing tea and biscuits. There are toilets and dogs are welcome.

Don't panic – dinosaurs “invade” heritage line



The 2026 running season is well underway at the station with rides behind a diesel loco, Shunter Class 08 08769, on loan from the Dean Forest Railway

A PLAQUE commemorating the efforts of the Home Guard in Midsomer Norton during the Second World War is to be unveiled at a ceremony at Midsomer Norton South Heritage Railway on Sunday, May 3rd.

The service will take place at the pill box above the station as part of a 1940s weekend beginning on Saturday, May 2nd with military vehicles, displays and re-enactors bringing the wartime era to life. The station will also take on a wartime look and trains will be running.



Home Guard members

Guest of honour at the ceremony will be historian Alan Readhead who last year published a book dedicated to his father, Lieutenant William Kell Readhead, known as “Bill”, but which also covers 87 other men who served with The Midsomer Norton Company of the 4th Somerset (Frome) Battalion. Alan will be giving talks at the station and signing his book on Sunday, May 3rd at 2pm and on the Monday at 11am and 2pm.

Later in May, on Sunday, May 24th, the station will be hosting a visit from some baby dinosaurs. The endearing Dino Babies, who effortlessly enchant both young and old alike will be at the station. Children will be thrilled by the show and the opportunity to meet a “real” dinosaur.

Families will have the chance to ride the Dino Express along the line and will be joined by the baby dinosaurs on the train. There are limited tickets so advance booking is essential.

MIDSOMER NORTON
SOUTH

Silver Street, Midsomer Norton BA3 2EY



Sunday 3rd & Monday 4th May Turn back the clock to the Home Front in the 1940s. Vehicles, displays and re-enactors plus a commemoration of the Midsomer Norton Home Guard – I am Sunday



Sunday 24th May – Dinosaur Day
Join the Baby Dinos on the Dinosaur Express where they will meet everyone
Later at the Dinosaur Show learn how to train a dinosaur!



Monday 25th May.
Brake Van Rides
Ride the Queen Mary Brake Van the length of the line.

For details and to book:
www.sdjr.co.uk

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

Friday May 1st

Firm Roots cancer prayer & support 2.30-4pm, Clevedon Baptist Church, Station Rd. A small friendly local group. Details: www.firmroots.org.uk Kate 07505-580297.

Shipham Save the Children lunch, 12.30pm village hall. Soup, bread cheese & pickle. £5.50, U5s free.

Saturday May 2nd

Chilcompton Gardening Club plant sale 10am-11.30 village hall BA3 4EX.

Temple Cloud in Bloom plant sale 10am-12 in the car park of the Temple Inn. Details: beccyangell@btinternet.com

Hutton: plant sale 10am-3pm. Open mic music night with the house band 7.30-10.30pm, Hutton village hall.

Sandford Station Railway Heritage Centre open 11am-4pm every weekend & bank holiday until the end of October. **Restored Victorian gems and café**, BS25 5AA. Entry free. Details: www.sandfordstation.co.uk

High Littleton Repair Café: 10am-12.30 scout hall, BS39 6JD. Our volunteers can help with sewing, electrical & general repairs. Coffee & cake. See: shareandrepair.org.uk or Facebook.

Witham Friary plant sale & cream teas 10.30am-2.30pm at the village hall, fundraising for the WI and hall.

Somerset Morris at The Redan Inn, Chilcompton, 2.30pm and 4pm

Saturday May 2nd-Monday May 4th

The Cheddar Arts Trail, 44 artists at 19 locations around the village, 10.30am-4.30pm. Details: www.cheddarartists.com

Sunday May 3rd

St Hugh's Church, Charterhouse BS40 7XR. Open 2pm-5pm every Sunday until September. Tea & biscuits, toilets. Dogs welcome.

Quiz Night every Sunday in May, 8pm the Old Inn, Hutton. Free entry & prizes.

Bank Holiday Mon May 4th

Shipham & District Garden Club plant sale on the village green from 2pm.

North Somerset Show, Wraxall. Details: www.nsas.org.uk

Axevale Greening Festival: 1-5pm eco-talks & eco-stalls, some cash-only. Family events, free entry. Ad Astra cider orchards & barn, Stone Allerton BS26 2NG. Facebook: AxevaleClimateActionAxevalehello@gmail.com

Tower Tours, St Mary's, Wedmore, from 10am, £7inc tea and cakes, aged eight or over, booking essential. Details: 07984 924432.

Tuesday May 5th

Yatton Local History Society talk by Katherine Groves on the Commonwealth War Graves 7.30pm, Yatton Methodist Church. Details: yattonlocalhistorysoc@gmail.com

Arts Society Mendip talk: "Madmen & artists: how the advertising industry exploited fine art" by Tony Rawlins 11am, Croscombe Village Hall & Zoom. Guests welcome, £10. Details: www.theartssocietymendip.org.uk

Beckington Choir concert mixed voices celebrating 30 years, popular songs to modern choral, 7.30pm Memorial Hall, BA11 6SH. £12 on door. U18s free. Details: Jeanlillywhite@outlook.com

Weston u3a meet for coffee every Tuesday 10-11.15am opp. Waterstones in the Sovereign Centre, BS23 1AH.

Wednesday May 6th

Backwell & Nailsea Support Group for Carers chat: "Favourite holiday place" 2-3.30pm WI Hall Backwell.

Wrington Vale Rotary Club "Making AI work for you" a talk by Nigel Oakley, 7.50-9am, Mendip Activity Centre BS25 5BQ. All welcome. No charge.

Thursday May 7th

Joyful Spirit Choir meet every term time Thursday, 7pm Wrington Chapel, Ropers Lane, BS40 5NH. All welcome. Details: joyfulspiritrehearsals@gmail.com

Wells Scottish Dancers Thursdays 6.30-8.30pm the Blue School Dance Studio BA5 2NR. Beginners welcome. Details: 01934 740065 email ann.wellsdancers@gmail.com

Paulton Folk Night 8.30pm Red Lion, BS39 7NW. Music, song, good company! Free. All welcome. Details: richardlm397@gmail.com

Friday May 8th

Harry Browns: Shanty singers 7.30pm Chew Magna Hall, Silver St. BS40 8RE. Bar. £12 from: www.ticketsource/harrybrown-events or rcade@gmail.com

Friday May 8th and Sat May 9th

"Dadda Dia" the latest hilarious mystery from Bishop Sutton: guess the identity of the bride's father – adult content so over-16s only. Tickets £20, incl 2-course supper, from www.suttontheatre.com

Saturday May 9th

Brent Knoll Bazaar, Farmers' Market & Café 10am-12 Parish Hall, TA9 4EH.

Chew Valley Choral Society 50th Anniversary – words & music celebrating the history of the choir, the valley & surrounding area, 7.30pm All Saints Church, Publow BS39 4HP. Details www.chewvalleychoral.org.uk

Cheddar Valley Repair Cafe, 10am-12 Methodist Church Hall, Cliff St. Bring clean items of all kinds, with leads/chargers. Our volunteers will do their best to fix them. Refreshments. See Facebook.

Uphill Village Market 9.30am-12.30 Victory Hall, BS23 4XG. Details: secretary@uphillvillage.org.uk

Somerset Gallery Quire practice 2-5pm Holy Trinity Church Nailsea. BS48 4NG. Sing & play music from the Georgian era. Details: petecr13@gmail.com

Jumble sale 2-4pm Prattens Social Club, Westfield. Fill a bag for £10 (bag provided).

Plant Fair & Fun day Weare & District Scouts fundraising for overseas trips, 2-4pm the Old Vicarage, St Andrew's Church, Cheddar.

Chilcompton: memorial concert for Jim Edwards, with the Singing Guitars & Crazy for Uke, 2pm village hall. Free. For the Stroke Assoc. Details: Gay 07890 051169 or Lucy 07595 604248.

Backwell Village Club VE day celebration, BBQ and charity presentation for MNDA, Details: www.backwellvillageclub.co.uk

Chew Magna duck race & fun day from 2pm, Streamside. Details: www.chewmagnasociety.org

RNLI Winscombe plant & garden sale 10am Community Centre, BS25 1HP. Refreshments. Entry free. Details mary.wallace@hotmail.co.uk

Mendip society visit to Batch Farm. Non-members £5. Details & tickets: www.themendipsociety.org.uk/walks-and-events

Chew Stoke Bloom plant sale 10am-12 in the Stoke Inn pub garden, raising funds for village flower displays.

Hutton village hall open day for its 50th anniversary, stalls, music, various activities, 9.30am-4pm, free. Details: villagehallhutton@gmail.com

Saturday May 9th to Sunday 17th

Wedmore Festival, tickets from Wedmore Village Store or online. Details: www.wedmorefestival.co.uk 01934 807229.

Sunday May 10th

Clevedon & District Model Boat Club sail at Clevedon Marine Lake, 10am second Sunday monthly. All welcome. Details: www.clevedonanddistrictmodelboatclub.co.uk

Monday May 11th

Nailsea & District Local History Society talk by Jonathan Harlow "Bristol & the Civil War" 7.45pm Nailsea School, BS48 2HN. Visitors welcome £3. Details: 01275 463479 or www.ndlhs.org.uk

Wookey Folk Session 8.30pm Ring O' Bells, BA5 1JZ. Music, song, good company! Free. All welcome. Details: richardlm397@gmail.com

Uphill pop-up cafe 2-4pm Victory Hall every Monday during school term. Police & Village Agent attend some dates. Details: secretary@uphillvillage.org.uk

Missouri Baptist University Chorale with spiritual, gospel & traditional music 7pm St Cuthbert's Wells. Free, with donations to Wells Skate Park project. See Facebook.

Norton Radstock u3a talk 'I bet it never happened to you' Alex Ledger BBC presenter 1.30-4pm Somer Centre Midsomer Norton BA3 2HU. Visitors welcome. Details www.norrad.u3asite.uk

RAFA Mid-Somerset branch "The SS Great Britain" by Brian Aston 11am Wells Golf Club BA5 3DS. Optional lunch. Details: rafa.midsomerset@gmail.com or 07881 822140.

Tuesday May 12th

Timsbury Gardening Club: John Nicholass 'Fuchsias & Pelargoniums' 7.30pm Conygre Hall, BA2 0JQ. Visitors welcome £2. Details: www.timsbury.org.uk/activities/environment/gardening-club/

Shipham Rowberrow & Star History Society: Members' "show & tell" – bring along a bit of your own history! 7.15 for 7.30pm Shipham Village Hall, BS25 1SG. Members £2; guests £4. Details: Jan 01934 260784.

Clutton History Group talk "Bristol & the Austrian Jewish refugees of WW2" by Garry Atterton 7.30pm village hall, BS39 5SP. Visitors welcome, £5 incl refreshments. Details: 07341 266986 or Chris.border@live.co.uk

Wells Floral Art Club demo by Lesley Hunt, "Summer delights" 2.15pm St Thomas' Church Hall, BA5 2UZ. Visitors £7. Details: www.floralartclub.co.uk

Frome Selwood Horticultural Society talk "More colour, less work: fact or fiction" by Gillian Taylor, 7.30pm Critchill School, BA11 4LD. Details: 0777 620 8531 jane.norris9@gmail.com

Clevedon Probus "The works of the Bronte sisters" by Sandy Bateman, 10 for 10.30 Town Council Meeting Rooms 44, Old St. BS21 6BU. Visitors welcome £5.

Jazz Jam: 8pm the Pelican, Chew Magna BS40 8SL. Age 14+. See valley-arts.co.uk

Mendip Society walk: Blagdon Lake, wildlife & flowers with Nigel Milborne. Non-members £5. Details & tickets:

www.themendipsociety.org.uk/walks-and-events

Wednesday May 13th

Mendip Storytelling Circle Stories for grown-ups! 7.30-9.30pm Ston Easton Village Hall BA3 4DA. Details: www.mendipstorycircle.com

Wells Folk & Barn Dance Club 7.30-9.30pm St Thomas' Church Hall, BA5 2UZ. All welcome: 2nd, 3rd & 4th Wed most months. Details: wellsfdc.co.uk

Congresbury CAMEO (come and meet everyone) talk by Maisie Bartlett about Weston hospice, 7pm Methodist Hall, £2 incl refreshments.

Blagdon Local History Society "National Trust archaeology projects" with Cat Lodge, 7.30pm Village Club BS40 7TA. Details: www.blagdonlhs.com

Kilmersdon Gardeners Club talk 'X Factor' by Neil Ross, ten ways to make your garden memorable, 7.15pm for 7.30pm village hall BA3 5TD. Visitors welcome £5. Details www.kilmersdongardeners.org

Bereavement Help Point Shepton Mallet: a safe supportive space to meet others who may be experiencing similar feelings. All welcome 10am -11.45, Shepton Brasserie, 64 High St. Details: 0345 0310 555 or dorothyhouse.co.uk

Thursday May 14th

Chew Valley Gardening Club: "The medicinal properties of plants" by Prof Dorian Haskard, rheumatologist. Competition: a tulip. 8pm Stanton Drew village hall BS39 4EL. Accessible, parking. Visitors welcome, £5.

Hutton Men's Group 2pm village hall.

Uphill Village Society AGM free wine and cheese, 7-9pm Victory Hall, BS23 4XG. Details: secretary@uphillvillage.org.uk

Table tennis, Compton Dando 7.15pm-9.15 village hall, £5. Details: 07968 269842 or richardjamesdavis@hotmail.com

Wells Gardening Club talk "So you think you know Gladiolus" by Gill Hazel 7pm Town Hall www.wellsgarden.club

Friday May 15th

Shipham Save the Children lunch, 12.30pm village hall. Soup, bread cheese & pickle. £5.50. U5s free.

Mendip Society walk: Blagdon Lake, wildlife & flowers with Nigel Milborne. Non-members £5. Details & tickets:

www.themendipsociety.org.uk/walks-and-events

Saturday May 16th to Sun June 21st

Frome Art Society Spring Exhibition, Black Swan Arts, 2 Bridge St. Frome BA11 1BB. Open every day 10am-4pm. Exhibition entry free.

www.fromeartsociety.com

Saturday May 16th

Blagdon Village Fete 1-4pm Blagdon Court, BS407RN. Entry £1. No dogs. Teas, cakes, BBQ & bar. Lots of games. Details:

Blagdonvillagefete@gmail.com

Uphill tabletop sale all around the village 10am-2pm, for Weston Hospicecare. Donations & details: www.uphillvillage.org.uk

Oakhill Health Fair 11am-2pm in the village hall. Health info & quiz with prizes for children.

Bishop Sutton Spring Fayre 1-4pm Holy Trinity Church. Cream teas, books, cakes, plants, details: 01275 331 805.

Cheddar Male Choir & Axbridge Singers, 7.30pm Methodist Church, Cliff St. Tickets £10 from Deane's, Draycott Village Store or Eventbrite.

Yatton Music Society: Clarinet & piano concert 7.30pm St Mary's. Tickets £15, Children free. Details: www.yms.org.uk

Kilmersdon Gardeners plant sale 10-11.30am village hall. £1 entry. Refreshments. www.kilmersdongardeners.org

Steve Tilston & friends: 7.30pm the Old School Rooms, Chew Magna BS40 8SH. Age 14+. Details & tickets: valley-arts.co.uk

Sunday May 17th

"Beating the Bounds" at Chew Stoke meet at the village hall from 12 for lunch. Wildflower walk from 1.30-2.30pm, about 3 miles. All welcome! Details: 07340 145441. Book lunch via: https://bit.ly/BTB_Lunch

Circus Calamitous for age 6+, 3pm Ubley Village Hall BS40 6PN. Details & tickets: valley-arts.co.uk

Burnham & Highbridge Brass Band spring concert, 4pm-6pm Our Lady and the English Martyrs' Church, Highbridge Rd, TA8 1LL. Tickets £9, U16s free, from Burnham Information Centre or on the door. Details: www.burnhambrassband.org

Table tennis, Compton Dando 2.30pm village hall. £5. Details: 07968 269842 or richardjamesdavis@hotmail.com

The Great Street Jumble Trail 11am-3pm.

Fundraising for: www.facebook.com/bea.s.tanzania.2027.fundraising.page?<htt

Plant Fair & Fun day fundraising & celebrating 110 years of cubs & 40 years of beavers. 11am-3pm Badgworth Old School, BS26 2QW.

Wincanton Choral Society with 'The armed man' by Karl Jenkins, 7.30pm Sports Hall

Wincanton Leisure Centre, BA9 9SP. Tickets £18, details: 01749 806457.

Monday May 18th

Fagus Gardening Club "How gardens have changed" by David Stevens, 7.30 for 8pm Nailsea Methodist Church Silver St. Visitors welcome, £5. Details: www.fagusgardening.co.uk

Norton Radstock u3a Coffee morning 10am-12, Somer Centre M Norton BA3 2HU. Visitors welcome. Details: www.norrad.u3asite.uk

Winscombe District u3a "From the Air Force to apples" talk by Paul Rolfe of Ad Astra cider, 2 for 2.30pm Winscombe Community Centre BS21 1JA. Visitors welcome £3.

Tuesday May 19th

Chilcompton Gardening Club morning visit to Caisson Gardens, Combe Hay, BA2 7EF. Facebook: Chilcompton Gardeners.

Arts Society Mid Somerset Lecture 'Inspired by Stonehenge' 10.15 for 11am Caryford Hall BA7 7JJ. Coffee £1.50. Visitors £8.

Hutton Dabaso Twinning Association AGM. All welcome to hear about this project, 7pm, village hall.

Dementia conference, St John's Church, Peasedown St John, 10.30am. Details: peasedowncommunitytrust@gmail.com

Wrighton Local History Society: "Tales from the rostrum" by auctioneer Andy Stowe, 7.30 for 8pm URC Chapel, Roper's Lane, BS40 5NF. Visitors welcome £2.50. Details: osmansteve@yahoo.co.uk

Wednesday May 20th

Mendip Gardening Club talk by Moira Kirk-Anderson "The swans at the Bishop's Palace" 7.30pm Ston Easton village hall, BA3 4DA. Details 01761 453654.

Thursday May 21st

Wrighton Gardening Club talk 'Garden design' by Neil Ross, 7.30pm Wrighton Memorial Hall BS40 5QL. Visitors welcome, £3.

Somerset Morris practice most Thursdays, 8pm-10pm, Marksburry village hall, BA2 9HP. Parking. Musicians needed! Details: 07968 229628 or somersetmorris@hotmail.com

Friday May 22nd

Mendip Society walk from Wedmore to Wilkins cider farm. (Over 18s only) non-members £5, Details & tickets:

www.themendipsociety.org.uk/walks-and-events

Saturday May 23rd

Whitchurch Local History Society: 'The Swinging Sixties' by Mike Britton, with film of the 1968 floods, 2-4pm Community Centre adj. to URC, 24 Bristol Rd. BS14 0PQ. Visitors welcome £4. Details: 01275 830869.

Plant sale, Frome Selwood Horticultural Society with Frome in Bloom, 9.30am-12, Selwood Academy, Berkley Rd, BA11 2EF. Details: jane.norris9@gmail.com

Ducks Racing in aid of Holcombe playing field. Three races. Holcombe Farm Shop.

Castle Cary Saturday Stitch Group Coffee Morning; meet creative folk, dip into our stash of fabric, wool etc. Refreshments, 10am-12 Market House BA7 7AH. Details 07929 097374.

Continued overleaf

THE MENDIP TIMES WHAT'S ON GUIDE FOR MAY 2026 CONT.

Saturday May 23rd to Mon May 25th

Rowberrow Church Flower Festival, 11am-4pm. Refreshments Monday only. Donations to church funds.

Sunday May 24th until August 31st

St Mary's Compton Dando: Sunday teas every Sunday & Bank Hol Mondays, 2.30pm-5pm in the church and gardens. Details: Jenny 01761 490727.

Monday May 25th

Wessex Stationary Engine Club meeting 8pm Old Down Inn, Emborough BA3 4SA. Details: www.wessexsec.org

Tuesday May 26th

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.

Chilcompton Gardening Club "Weeds and their medicinal uses" by Olivia Cliff 7.30pm village hall, BA3 4EX. Visitors welcome. Facebook: Chilcompton Gardeners.

Clevedon Probus "Time gentlemen please" by Barry Hamblin, 10 for 10.30 Town Council Meeting Rooms 44, Old St. BS21 6BU. Visitors welcome £5.

Open Mic: 7.45pm, the Pelican, Chew Magna BS40 8SL. Free, age 14+. Details: valley-arts.co.uk

Wednesday May 27th

Backwell & Nailsea Macular Support meeting 1.30pm Backwell WI Hall. Details: Sheila 01275

462107.

Wells Folk Night 8pm City Arms. Music, song, good company! Free. All welcome. Details: richardlm397@gmail.com

Bristol & West Fly Dressers Guild meet most Weds (unless we're out fishing) 8pm Redhill Village Hall BS40 5SG. All welcome. See all events at: www.bristolflydressers.org

Harptrees History Society: 2.30pm guided tour of Cameley Church, £5 in advance. Booking opens to non-members from May 13th. Details: info@harptreeshistorysociety.org subj. line "May visit 2026".

Bereavement Help Point Shepton Mallet: a safe supportive space to meet others who may be experiencing similar feelings. All welcome, 10am - 11.45, Shepton Brasserie, 64 High St. Details: 0345 0310 555 or dorothyhouse.co.uk

Thursday May 28th

Table tennis, Compton Dando 7.15pm village hall. £5, incl tea/coffee. Details: 07968 269842 or richardjamesdavis@hotmail.com

Thursday May 28th-30th

Royal Bath and West Show. Details: www.bathandwest.com

Friday May 29th

Radstock Folk Dance Club, every Friday, 8-10 St Peter's Church Hall, Westfield. Beginners welcome, partners not essential, £3 incl refreshments. Details: heather.m.leverton@gmail.com

Ekleido professional dance double-bill at Shepton Mallet Leisure Centre. Tickets £5-£12 from: www.takeart.org

Shipham Save the Children lunch, 12.30pm village hall. Soup, bread cheese & pickle. £5.50. U5s free.

Saturday May 30th

Wells Repair Café, 10am-12.30 St Thomas' Church Hall BA5 2UZ. Bring clean, broken items of all kinds and our volunteers will do their best to fix them! Bring leads/chargers. All welcome.

Details on Facebook or: repaircafe.wells@gmail.com

Where is Mrs Christie? all will be revealed! One hundred years after Agatha's mystery disappearance, 4pm Chew Stoke Village Hall BS40 8TU. Ages 14+. Details & tickets: valley-arts.co.uk

Monday June 1st

Uphill Pop-Up Cafe 2-4pm Victory Hall every Monday during school term. Police & Village Agent attend some dates. Details: secretary@uphillvillage.org.uk

Tuesday June 2nd

Arts Society Mendip: "Chopin: a portrait in words and music". Music by Stephen Baron, extracts from Chopin's letters read by Marguerite Duncan-Sutherland. Not on Zoom. 11am Croscombe Village Hall. Guests welcome, £10, on request to tasmendip.comm@gmail.com Details: www.theartsocietymendip.org.uk



OPEN:
Noon-11pm (Mon-Sat) • Noon-10pm (Sun)

Tucker's Grave Inn, Faulkland,
Radstock, BA3 5XF.
T: 01225 962669
E: info@tuckersgraveinn.co.uk
W: www.tuckersgraveinn.co.uk

IT'S GOING TO BE A VERY MERRY MONTH THIS MAY!

- 1st May**: Small Mercies – 8.30pm – (free)
- 2nd May**: Brakelight – 8.30pm – (free)
- 3rd May**: Ball and chain – 2.30pm – (free)
- 8th May**: El Toro – 8.30pm – (free)
- 9th May**: Elevation – 8.30pm – (free)
- 10th May**: KGB – 2.30pm – (free)
- 16th May**: Soul'd Out – 8.30pm – (free)
- 17th May**: Johnny Smyth – 2.30pm – (free)
- 23rd May**: D State – 8.30pm – (free)
- 24th May**: Ben Nicholls – 2.30pm – (free)
- 30th May**: Kings of Indie – 8.30pm – (free)
- 31st May**: Ollie Armitage – 2.30pm – (free)

PLUS! DON'T MISS THESE SPECIAL EVENTS!

BANK HOLIDAY 25th May – Charity Car Show 10am-5pm £5 per car entry

27th May: Dorothy House 50th Anniversary Bingo in honour of Nicky Jones – 6.30pm arrival/eyes down 7pm £10 to play + great prizes + raffle

And from 7th May: Bike Night starts every Thursday 6pm onwards – (free)

**USUAL
AMAZING
FOOD ON
OFFER**

**Sunday: Filled
roast pork rolls
with all the
trimmings, roast
potatoes and
gravy: £9.00
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1pm**



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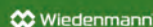
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Saturday: 8.00am – 12.30pm



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