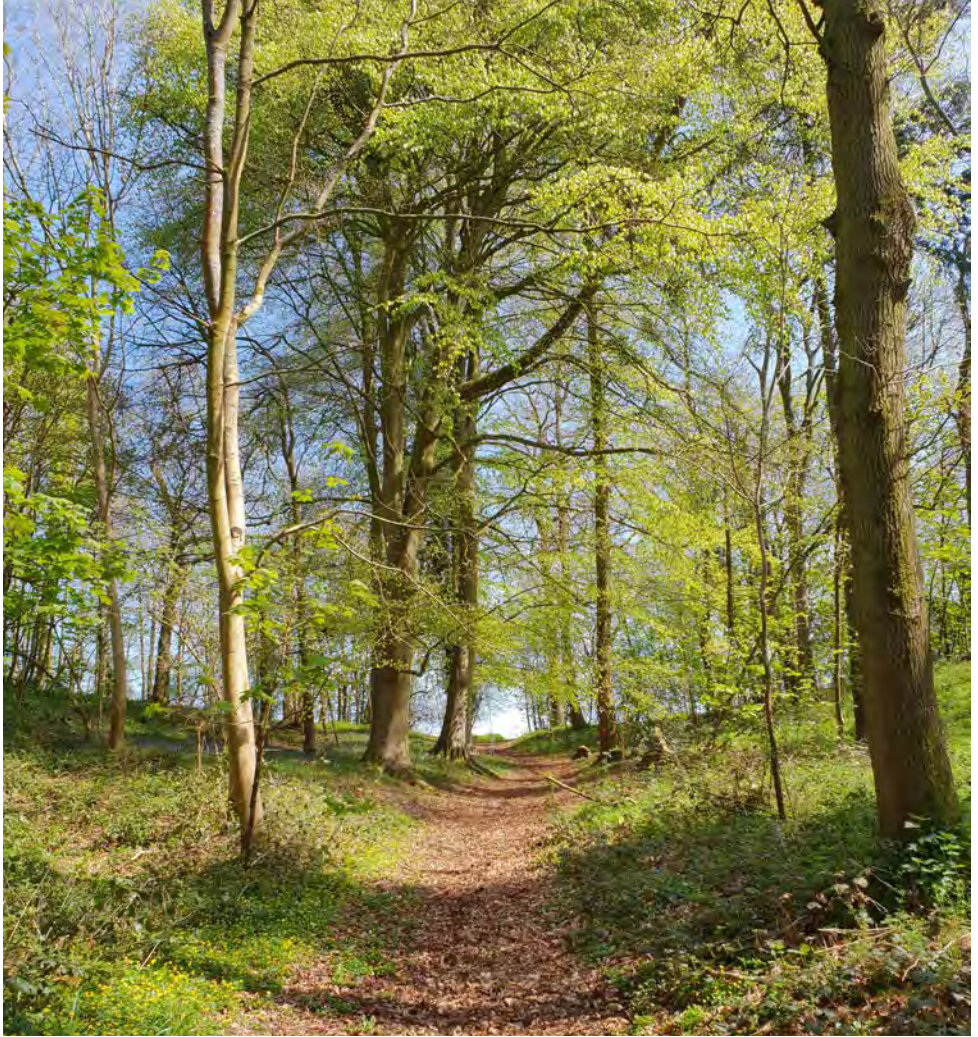


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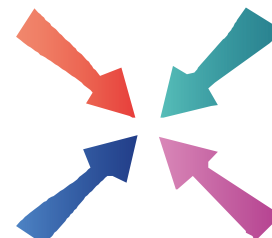
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# Meeting Point

**Volume 45, Number 7, April 2021**

The community magazine for the villages of Olveston,  
Tockington, Old Down, Lower Hazel, Awkley, Ingst, Aust, Elberton and Littleton upon Severn

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## From the Editor

I think that the beautiful cover picture this month is one of my absolute favourites. The image of a pathway through local woods, with the sun shining through trees which are just starting to show their soft, green, early foliage, captures a feeling of optimism that I hope many readers are beginning to share.

If you enjoy walks in and around the area, this edition has a couple of ideas to focus your outings. You could try to locate the Aust Arrow, described in the first article, or take up the 'Where are They?' challenge on page 11, and go on a bench hunt!

As lockdown eases, April should bring gradual changes to what we can and cannot do. Like many people, I am looking forward to meeting up with friends and family and enjoying springtime in a more sociable manner. My fingers are very firmly crossed.

This month's cover is by Lisa Helyar

Meeting Point Founded in 1976 by the Anglican and Methodist churches in Olveston, near Bristol.

**Meeting Point magazine and Meeting Point Directory are online at the  
Community Website: [www.olvostonandaust.com](http://www.olvostonandaust.com)**



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## The Aust Arrow

Nick Fear

On the top of the cliffs at Aust, to the east of the Old Severn Bridge service area, is a very large concrete arrow. It points upstream of the River Severn and following its direction takes you, at landfall, to the small hamlet of Wibdon in the Forest of Dean. This is a picturesque area with cycle and walking

routes, but why an arrow on Aust cliffs is singling it out seems a mystery.



A closer examination of the arrow site shows that it is underlined with two parallel concrete lines. Ranged around it are three small but solid rectangular bases, with some evidence that they supported a covered housing of some sort. A few metres away from the site are the ruins of a collapsed

building. A large flat concrete slab partially camouflaged by brambles, shelters the remains of a brick structure which has spilled around it into the field.

Enquiries reveal that the site was military, assisting Royal Air Force aiming skills. The arrow pointed to a target moored in the middle of the River Severn. A 1970s picture of the building on the site taken by local historian Eric Garrett just before it was demolished, (see next page) shows its purpose. An observer had a lofty view of



any incoming aircraft and could watch its flight to bomb or strafe the bobbing target in the water, reporting accordingly. A red flag was flown, as was the custom, to warn local people that the range was active. The remains of holders which supported the flagpole are still attached to the ruin today. The small rectangular bases around the arrow seem to have housed lighting apparatus to illuminate it when the need arose.

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surface, but high explosive bombs and rockets caused impressive plumes of water to burst skywards. There was always a chance that the target may disappear altogether or gently sink into the disturbed waters. All the occurrences were potentially deadly but, perhaps the most concerning were those devices which failed to explode. Their recovery was unlikely, and some may still be buried deep in the soft riverbed where they fell.

There was the chance of a war time 'ration free bounty' from the Severn - caused by the explosions - which washed ashore on the tide. Checking for unexploded ordinance was a dangerous part of the firing range duty, but fresh fish must have been a welcomed bonus.

Whether any aircraft flew out over Wibdon is unknown, but the arrow guided the possibility and it still points in that direction today. Inhabitants there may not know of the unique indicator they have.

## A Local Discovery

Dr. Roger Win

While you may be aware of the dinosaur footprints found by a four-year-old on a beach near Barry, finds on our side of the channel are less well known. In 2018 a pair of footprints were discovered at the extreme exposure of spring low tides on the Severn foreshore not far from here.

Investigation has been hampered by the fact that the prints are exposed only three or four times a year, and half of those are in the hours of darkness, however eight consecutive prints have now been identified. A cast



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(subsequently rescued by divers) has been made and the track has been recorded by drone pictures. The tracks are tentatively identified as those of Argotosaurus (a near cousin of Tyrannosaurus Rex).

Professor Will Konuss of Bristol Palaeontology Department has said that the prints are 'rare and revelatory' as they strongly indicate that the dinosaur proceeded by hopping, rather than by running. Studies in Australia have indicated that kangaroo hopping is actually an extremely energy-efficient means of locomotion. The ability of the Argotosaurus to jump an estimated three metres in the air, in addition to its nine-metre height, would have given it a major advantage in seeking prey. Regular tail marks have also been found, indicating that the tail was used to stabilise the dinosaur when landing.

The location of this find has been kept confidential, which is probably just as well, since the prints at Barry, discovered in January this year, have sadly already been vandalised.

## Friends of St. Mary's

The prize winners in the March draw, held on 4 March 2021 were:

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## Meeting Point Treasurer Retires

When the Meeting Point committee met on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March – via Zoom of course – we said a big ‘Thank You’ to Trevor Watkins, who has been our treasurer for 35 years. In more normal times we would have been holding the meeting in one of our houses and, at the end, handed Trevor a signed card and a present. On this occasion we had to be more creative and make sure we followed Covid guidelines.

Prior to the meeting we all gathered our words of thanks and appreciation about Trevor, which were then amalgamated into a ‘Word Cloud’ poster, which we had framed and delivered to his house during the meeting. It was lovely to see it being opened on screen.

So, thank you, Trevor, for all your hard work over the years, and thank you for agreeing to remain on the committee, so we can still benefit from your knowledge and experience.

*Grateful thanks, Trevor,  
for your tireless work over 35 years as  
Treasurer for Meeting Point,  
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## Where are they?

Chris Bolton

These benches are all within the Meeting Point area, but do you know where? If you go walking to find them, at least you'll have somewhere to have a rest on the way! For those who wonder, the Meeting Point area includes Olveston, Tockington, Old Down, Ingst, Aust, Elberton and Littleton. Answers in next month's edition.



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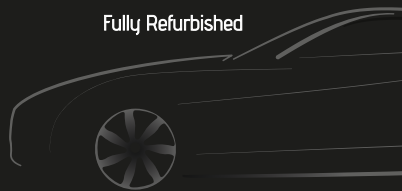
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## News from St Mary's

Debbie Harries

We are delighted to inform you that St Mary's is able to open its doors again for services!



Our Sunday services will be changing from 10am to 9.30am until further notice. For those of you who get this magazine before the end of March, please note we will open on Sunday 28th March at 9.30am for our Palm Sunday service.

On Good Friday, the church will be open from 1pm - 3pm with music and reflection from 2pm.

We look forward to welcoming you to our Easter Day Communion Service on April 4th at 9.30am. Due to restrictions and to ensure we keep our congregation safe we would be grateful if you could let the wardens know if you are attending Easter Day. Please contact Debbie on 01454 613273 or Martin on 01454 616856.

From April 17<sup>th</sup> all services will be starting again at 9.30 am, with Evensong at 6.00pm. Please see the website <https://www.stmarysolveston.org.uk> for further updates on opening times and services.

## Junior Cricket

Junior cricket is set to resume at Old Down Cricket Club with our junior indoor nets commencing on Sunday April 18th at Castle School Sports Hall between 3pm and 5pm. This is for children from school years 5 and upwards. All welcome, no experience necessary. For more information please contact: [enquiries@olddowncricketclub.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@olddowncricketclub.co.uk)

Registration is also open for our ECB AllStars and Dynamos programmes for younger children, which commence at the club on Friday evenings at 5.30pm from 7th May. Full details available online at

- <https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/all-stars> (5 - 8 years)
- <https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/dynamoscricket> (8 - 11 years)

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## Olvoston Parish Council

*Pat Savage*

By the time this issue appears on local doormats, hopefully the nation will be on its way to some easing of lockdown. We know it has been a trying and testing time for all of us. However, we should congratulate ourselves for being obedient and compliant throughout the long winter months. A high percentage of parishioners will have received their first vaccination; indeed, some may well have received their second one!

### Annual Parish Assembly

This is the annual event where parishioners meet to discuss local issues and pose questions to the Council on its work and activities throughout the preceding year, and its future. It is normally held at the Parish Hall in Tockington. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 Assembly was cancelled.

The Council would like to hold the 2021 Assembly virtually, via Zoom, which is how Council meetings have been conducted since June of last year. The time frame in which to hold the Assembly is between 1st March and 30<sup>th</sup> May. At present the Council has not fully committed to a date for the Meeting although the intention would be to hold it in the last week in April. May we ask that you check with the Council's website for an actual date. Alternatively, please email [patsavage@olvostonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:patsavage@olvostonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### SpeedWatch

Whilst the face-to-face vehicle speed monitoring has been halted at present, the two 'Smiley Face' signs have been encouraging motorists to reduce their speed, with some very encouraging results. Now, due to the generosity of a local businessman, the Council is in the process of purchasing its very own vehicle activated speed sign (VAS). Whilst the donor wishes to remain anonymous, he has stated *"if it makes the villages safer and helps to prevent an accident, then surely that is what all of us want"*. 'Smiley Faces' all round then!



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## St Mary's Church Tower Restoration Project

*Peter Floyd*

In previous articles we explained the history of the tower and about the carving of the new pinnacles. Now that our expensive and long-awaited project is about to begin, Marcus Chantrey, our architect, describes the complex process that we have followed, first to obtain funding grants and then to ensure the work is carried out successfully.

*Marcus Chantrey, AABC, RIBA,  
Inspecting Architect and  
Director of b2 architects.*

The repair of the tower at Olveston will commence this spring and whilst the works include the general repointing of the tower, the most challenging and interesting aspect of the project is the replacement of the four corner pinnacles at the top of the tower.

The crossing tower, at intersection of the nave and chancel, is typical of a Norman building. The tower originally had a spire, but this was struck by lightning in 1604. A pyramidal roof now caps the tower, and this roof structure dates from the seventeenth century rebuilding. The extent of damage caused by the lightning strike and the need to 'make good' is not well documented but it is clear that the buff-coloured ashlar stonework of the parapets and pinnacles are from the same period and are very different to the rubble stonework of the tower walls lower down, although it needs to be noted that this masonry would almost certainly have originally been rendered.

The stone from pinnacles has been analysed by the British Geological Society and confirmed to be an ooidal and bioclastic limestone laid down in the Middle Jurassic period. This stone would have come from one of the Bath quarries immediately to the south of the city, but how this stone got to Olveston remains a mystery. The Bath quarries were in operation in the early seventeenth century, but their boom time was not for another 100 years when Bath expanded, and the navigability of the River Avon allowed the stone to be more easily transported by water further afield.



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Of course, it is possible that the pinnacles have been replaced at some point during the last 400 years although the extent of decay is far more advanced than is typically found with Victorian stonework. The photographs clearly show the extent of erosion and even after 400 years the rate of decay is serious. One hypothesis is that the church's position set on high ground looking out down the Seven Estuary exposes the church to the sand and salts picked up by the wind. A high exposure to wind and rain is not unusual but the addition of sand picked up by the wind funnelling down the estuary may explain the erosion characteristics which has resulted in the 'skeletal' appearance of pinnacles that are present today. Certainly, I am not aware of any other pinnacles to Southwest churches which have such extensive and



unusual decay characteristics. The decay of the stone, the risk of masonry falls, and the loss of architectural detail all make the case for replacement of the pinnacles. In recent years, netting was installed around and over the pinnacles and this has trapped sections of stone as they fell off.

The pinnacles are particularly large at just over two metres in height and constructed with three blocks of stone. Over the course of the next few months, Centreline Architectural Sculpture, under the direction their mason and director Mark Hancock, will carve four new stone pinnacles in their workshops. Following the erection of the scaffolding the old pinnacles will be dismantled and lifted down to the ground and the new

pinnacles installed. The existing pinnacles have been measured and the new pinnacles will be carved to match the originals as they would have been originally carved. The choice of stone remains to be finalised, but it is proposed to use a harder French limestone which will stand the test of time much better than the Bath stone which has fared very poorly in this exposed location. At the time of writing, the stone selection has yet to be agreed by the Diocesan Advisory Committee, but it is intended that the stone will be Beauval limestone from the Burgundy region. This limestone has been used to replace pinnacles on Gloucester Cathedral and at Minchinhampton in recent years.

On the plain areas of stone, such as the parapets, it can be seen that the stone has eroded by approaching 15mm and this is evidenced by protruding shells which are much more resistant to weathering. The plain ashlar stonework remains structurally in good condition and therefore this uncarved stonework is not being replaced.


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All of the rubble stonework on the lower parts of the tower will be repointed with localised repairs undertaken to dressed stonework and where stones are fractured these can be pinned. To the protected areas around windows, poulticing will be undertaken to soften and loosen carbon deposits that are encrusted in protected areas and this will allow the stone to breathe and slow down the rate of decay. To the east elevation, the clock hands, dial and motion will all be removed, overhauled and repaired and the dial repainted and regilded.

Once the tower works have been completed, the work will then move on to the vice turret where

the detaching vice turret masonry will be stabilised with the introduction of new foundations and the stonework repointed.

### Appeal Update

*David Prothero, Treasurer, St Mary's Church, Olveston*

Since the last Appeal update appeared in the January issue of Meeting Point, I am pleased to say that huge progress has been made towards raising the funds necessary to undertake the restoration of the Church Tower. The total amount raised now stands at £212,000. A massive 'thank you' to all in the local community (and beyond) who have donated so generously in response to the Appeal. Although another £10,000 is required to ensure that we cover all eventualities, the amount raised to-date means that the restoration work will commence in early April. If you would still like to help, donations can be made in one of the following ways:

**By bank transfer** to the St Mary's Church bank account, the details of which are: Sort Code: 40-52-40, Account Number: 00029936, using the reference 'Tower Project'.

**By cheque** made payable to 'St Mary's PCC Olveston', and sent to David Prothero, Treasurer, St Mary's Church Olveston, Rose Cottage, Buckover, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 8DX.

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**Robin Cole-Morgan on 01454 414281**

He will arrange to pick up the tools and take them away at a time that suits everyone.

**What you could declutter and donate:**

Garden Tools and Workshop Tools (for example, spanners, screwdrivers, chisels, planes, and hammers). They can be hand tools or powered.

Thank you!

## Aust Parish Council

Aust PC continues to meet monthly via Zoom. After a year of virtual meetings, we are very much hoping that we will be able to meet in person again in a few months' time, but for now we must continue to hold meetings through the wonders of the internet.

At the last meeting, the council covered a wide range of issues such as responding to planning applications and discussion of the problems of littering around Aust. They also co-opted a new member to the vacant seat on the council – Jeremy Warren from Littleton. Many thanks to Jeremy for stepping up, and thanks also to the other residents who expressed interest in the role.

The council have decided to call the **Annual Parish Assembly on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7:00pm**. This will be held on Zoom, with joining details published on the community website and parish noticeboards nearer the time. This is your opportunity to hear about what the council has been up to over the last twelve months, to raise any local issues which you would like the parish council to consider in the coming year, and to promote what else has been going on in your community.

We understand that not everyone is comfortable with using Zoom. If you would like any advice on how to join the Assembly or any other parish council meeting, please contact the Clerk, Emma Pattullo, on [austparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:austparishcouncil@gmail.com) or 01454 837271 and she will try to help.

## Almondsbury Surgery Patient Participation Group

*Clive Wiltshire Chair, Almondsbury PPG*

The PPG at Almondsbury has been operating now for over five years and provides a direct link between the patients of the practice and doctors and other clinical staff. It provides both parties with feedback and is run by a team of members who meet up quarterly, (albeit via Zoom currently), and is always keen to have new members. The team felt that the following update may be useful.

### Vaccinations

The five local surgeries form the Severn Vale Primary Care Network, and they are currently using Thornbury Health Centre as the local vaccination centre. At the time of writing the network is well on with cohort 6, which is for people aged 16 to 65 years with underlying health conditions. At the time of writing,

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cohort 7 (60 years and over) are being contacted for their jabs with cohorts 8 (55 years and over) and 9 (50 years and over) following on in the very near future.

Registered carers will be contacted by the regional vaccination centre at Ashton Gate for their jabs - not the surgery - and similarly patients with learning difficulties and those on the shielded patient list will also be contacted by Ashton Gate.

The task of 'mopping up' any patients who have missed their appointment or who were not able to be contacted first time round will be undertaken by Ashton Gate. If you feel you are one of these, you can contact Ashton Gate directly via the NHS Online Booking System and arrange your jab.

If you have your vaccination at Thornbury, your surgery will be in contact with you to let you know when your second jab is due. If you have your first jab at Ashton Gate you will be given a date straight away for your second jab.

The Thornbury team has an on-going requirement for Volunteer Marshals at the health centre. This involves directing the patients from the car park to the various vaccine booths to ensure a steady smooth flow, which is necessary to maintain the relatively high number of patients being vaccinated. If you feel you can help here please contact me on [wilts.clive@gmail.com](mailto:wilts.clive@gmail.com) and I can pass your details to the on-site team.

## Other services at the surgery

The telephone appointment service continues during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic. Please ring the practice first if you wish to see a doctor, as the walk-in service is currently suspended.

The practice has recently acquired the services of a Physiotherapist on Mondays. Referrals are via the doctors, so if you feel you may need these services please ring the surgery in the first instance. The Asthma nurse is continuing to operate at the surgery although this is an online only service at the moment.

The Practice would like to encourage patients to make use of the online facilities by signing up with the surgery. This allows you to request repeat prescriptions and aids communication between you and the practice via text or email. All you need is to fill out a short form which can be requested by phone and provide proof of identity to register.

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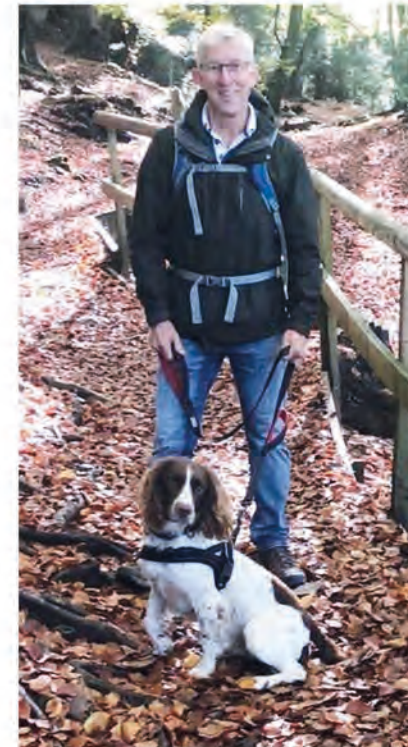

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## Martyn Suker

Pat Thirkettle

*Martyn is the second of the three new Olveston Parish Councillors to be profiled in Meeting Point.*



Martyn did a degree in Television Production and Technical Operation in London. He began his career as a studio cameraman at Pebble Mill Studios in Birmingham, which led to a very successful career in television. He climbed quickly through the ranks as a vision mixer and then director/producer, working with the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol, Children's TV and in Music and Arts departments.

He has filmed in many parts of the world, with two of the programmes he directed winning awards at BAFTA and the Royal Television Society. He and his wife Alyson met while working at the BBC and initially lived in Westbury Park with their two children but, wanting to leave the city, they moved to Olveston in 1997. They were attracted to it as a 'real' village with a variety of amenities and an excellent primary school for the children.

Martyn left the BBC, became a freelance Principal Media Consultant, and then moved to ITV as Head of Production Innovation in 2011. He has always been interested in fitness and is a qualified Personal Trainer. He retired last year and wanting to become more involved with the community, he spotted an advert in Meeting Point for new councillors, applied and was duly elected.

He intends to use his professional expertise to help improve communications about the important work of the Council. He says it is well known locally for its excellence and with more powers devolved from the District Council he wants people to better understand the scope of its work. He is particularly interested in conservation, nature, and biodiversity from working in the Natural history unit.

*Apologies to Martyn as his name was mis-spelt in last month's magazine.*



Natalie Gladstone BSc(Hons) Ost

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# A Fund-Raising Challenge

Chris Parsons

In June this year, Charlie Binning and I will be taking on the Cotswold Way Challenge / Race to raise some much-needed funds for our two chosen charities – Great Ormond Street Hospital and Cancer Research UK. The event will take place over the weekend of 26<sup>th</sup> June and will see us hiking 100km of the Cotswold Way over the course of two days, hiking roughly 10-12 hours per day and taking on an overall elevation of nearly 3000ft.

The race will begin and end in Cirencester, hiking a loop that will take us through Tetbury, Westonbirt, Wotton-Under-Edge, Nibley and Stonehouse to name a few.



Clearly this will be a mighty challenge that will test both our mental and physical resolve. I'm not convinced we'll finish first, but we'll definitely cross the finish line at some point! Training has commenced and we're increasing our mileage week by week so that we're fit and ready to go for it when June arrives.

Chris



I'll share an update in Meeting Point after the event to let you know how we got on and to share some pictures of the amazing Cotswold Way scenery we'll encounter as we drag ourselves along. I'll also be providing live progress updates and pictures through my Instagram page (@chrispyarsons).

Charlie

If you would like to show your support, it would be amazing if you could sponsor us with any donation you can. Details are given below.

**Chris Parsons – Great Ormond Street Hospital**

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/chris-parsonscharliebinning>

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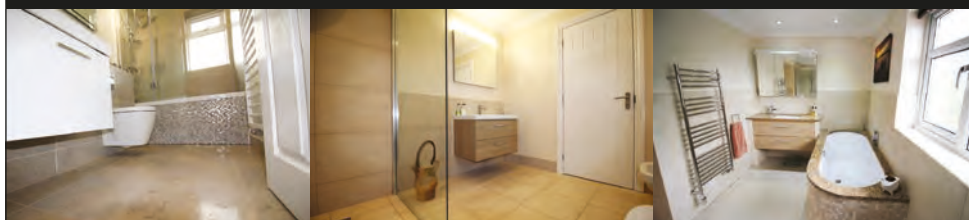
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## A Message from the Methodists

'Hi everybody... we are still here'.

The Methodist community in the parish has not been very visible during the past year, even though we managed to re-open Olveston Chapel for worship for some months in the Summer and Autumn. We have missed being in contact with those of you who used our premises, and we have kept a keen eye on the condition of all our buildings.

At the time of writing, we are unable to say when we will be resuming worship gathered together, as this decision will be taken by the Methodist Church at a more centralised level, but we very much hope that it will be by Easter or soon afterwards. When we can do so, we will be prioritising Tockington Chapel in the first instance.

Similarly, we have no firm information as yet on when we can re-open any of our premises for use by the community. We will be very glad to hear from groups and organisations on your own future planning. At the very least, we hope soon to be able to confirm access between September 2021 and Summer 2022. If you are hoping for earlier availability than the autumn, please contact Garry Phillipps (613241) or Maggie Spooner (610053) directly.

Early in 2020, our Church Council submitted to the relevant Methodist body a package of proposals about our work as a Church, and the future use of our premises, which we had been discussing for many months. We have recently received approval in principle and encouragement to proceed. However, in current circumstances, we are now rethinking the order in which we do things, this year and next. Among other things, we hope to reschedule the postponed Olveston Chapel 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for April 2022.

We look forward to a return to the fulness of our community life in the parish in the near future; best wishes to everyone.

## Old Down Cricket Club

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# GreenForce

## Did You Know.....

- that CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere accumulates in the oceans rendering them more acid? This acidity spoils corals and shellfish.
- that CO<sub>2</sub> from the wildfires that raged across the land last year cancelled out the reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> pollution from traffic which had happened during the pandemic lockdown?
- that if the oceans increase their temperature by only 1/2°C, this causes thermal expansion of the seawater which raises sea levels?

All these effects change our climate into one of extremes. So, heatwaves become more widespread and intense, as do storms that occur around the world at any time of the year. These effects in turn cause famine, floods, and homelessness. And they are happening at too fast a rate to make it possible for evolution in the animal world to keep pace.

Mankind has the science and knowledge to correct this state of affairs but actions need to replace words. Remember that every little effort we each make as individuals also counts in the long term, so keep up the recycling and reusing and doing anything that counts towards slowing down climate change.

Members of GreenForce took part in a Zoom presentation given recently by a member of the Urbaser Incinerator team. The incinerator is the big, strange building beside the M5 on the way to Gloucester. We were able to learn something about it, but we hope to actually visit sometime later this year. We shall then be able to tell you all about it.

## Anne Boulton

We were very sad to hear of the death of Anne Boulton on 19th February, just a month after her husband Paul's death.

Anne was Editor of Meeting Point from 2001 to 2003 and we always found her to be a kind, self-deprecating person with a good sense of humour while being very capable and resourceful at her job. Her previous life as a librarian shone through. In all respects she was a much-loved member of the team. Anne had a tough side to her when needed, as was evidenced by her care for Paul over



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In the 1977 Silver Jubilee Celebrations the WI performed a 'Parade of Queens', all dressed in appropriate finery, in which Anne played a very memorable Elizabeth I. (See above) It was a role that fitted her well. We will all miss her, and we send our sympathy to her family.

the last years of his life.

Originally from Clitheroe in Lancashire, Anne was an active participant and committee member in many community activities, including Parish Players and WI.

In the 1977 Silver

## Thank You

Matthew and David Boulton, sons of Anne and Paul, would like to thank the many members of the community who have supported the family over the last few years and who have sent cards and condolences at this time.



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## April Puzzle

This month's puzzle has a literary theme. See if you can spot the book titles in these cryptic clues.....

RIGHT BOB	Howards ↓	corpses ↑ BRING
1	2	3
Dazzling GIBRALTAR	MURDER SWA AMOK MURDER LO	lounge Sweeping Brush
4	5	6
My hoe	cromadwd ↓	TTTTT ← Charcoal Battleship Misty Ash
7	8	9
84 84 84 84 84 84 84 84 84 84 84 84 84 84 84 84	D	LION TIGER BEAR R S T U V W
10	11	12
↓ march	Hanger W ↗ E ↖ S	B Boer P P P P P
13	14	15
Child Asleep	SLEEP	JIM spring summer autumn winter
16	17	18





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# Olveston Schools

Eric Garrett

*Editor's note: Following Tony Cherry's article last month about Thornbury schools and the infectious diseases that affected them in C19, we asked Eric Garrett to tell us about schooling locally and the reasons for school closures and pupil absences from Victorian times up to the 1940s.*

## Schooling in Olveston Parish

Child education in Olveston was provided prior to 1604. The school master Robert Haines recorded the event of a thunderstorm and lightning that struck St Mary's Church Tower on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1604 and forwarded it to the King with a title 'Fearful News'.

Olveston School was built in Elberton Road in 1836 on land owned by Olveston Church. It replaced an existing school, possibly located at Church House at the junction of Vicarage Lane and The Street. Church House was later renamed Churchill House, after a family by the name of Churchill (described as Animal Doctors, in the Census for that period) acquired it.

The new school was funded by Olveston and Elberton Parishes, with the title Olveston and Elberton National School. A dwelling adjacent was erected to accommodate the Schoolmaster in 1854. The name of the school was amended to Senior School in 1857, when a Junior School was built on a quarry site at the top of Old Down Hill. The Senior School was built to accommodate 150 scholars between the ages of 3 to 12, at a cost of £120.



A government grant of £75 was provided. The Olveston School building was enlarged in 1871, by adding an additional classroom. The photo above dates



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from 1871 and is the first known photograph of the school, taken just after the new classroom had been added. It shows the Headmaster, the Mistress, two pupil teachers, two clergymen and 99 pupils.

Three sisters called Miss Weston ran a successful Dame School at Longleaze, Haw Lane, which they had enlarged. With increasing pupil numbers, they pressurised the Church Vestry to build a Junior School, as their dwelling was full. In 1857, £150 was raised by public subscription for a new Junior School for children aged 3 to 8 years at Old Down, pictured below in 1897.



After attending that school, the pupils were transferred to the Senior School at Elberton Road. In 1855 a weekly fee was paid: children of farmers and tradesmen 6 pence, skilled workers and mechanics 3 pence, and labourers were free. In the 1850s, Thomas Johnson Ward supported the school with £40 per annum until 1858 when he stopped doing so, due to a dispute he had with the church authorities over the refurbishment of Elberton Church.

In the first 70 years, the two schools were administered by the Church Vestry, with the expenditure of running the schools covered by applying a rate charge on landowners. The church curates were responsible for the finances. When Gloucestershire County Council was formed in 1894, they took charge of administration and expenditure.





# Dave Webb

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A school committee was formed from the gentry of the two Parishes, with others subscribing annually. The school master's annual salary in 1863 was £103, with two pupil teachers paid £30 per annum.

### School closures because of contagious or infectious diseases

The school closures we are experiencing now are not new. During the Victorian era, Olveston School closed many times for contagious diseases. These caused school closures that varied between 2 to 4 weeks, with two closures lasting 8 weeks.

Closures began in 1863 with Scarlet Fever, which closed the school again in 1893, 1897, 1929 and 1935. Measles caused closures in 1865, 1894, 1909, 1933, 1934 and 1940. Mumps closed the school in 1878 and 1940, Whooping Cough in 1883 and 1936, Scarlatina in 1883, and Diphtheria in 1894 and 1905, with the doctor taking throat swabs and Jeyes Fluid being used in the washing of hands and desks. In 1942, a Diphtheria immunization programme was introduced. Schools also closed due to Influenza outbreaks in 1907 and in 1918. Due to this pandemic, the school closed twice for 8 weeks. There were further closures in 1940 due to further cases of Influenza, along with Ringworm and Tonsillitis.

### School closures for other reasons

Several times in the late Victorian period the schools were closed due to deep snow falls. Olveston School was also used for various social meetings, concerts, flower shows, as a polling station, for the Glee Club and the Clothing Club. It would close for Harvest Home Festivals and Tockington Club Fetes.

Boys generally would go absent to attend Fox Hunts, Tockington Fairs, Aust Waterloo Horse Races, Band of Hope, Thornbury Cattle Market, Savings Club, Alveston Friendly Club, Yeomanry Exercises and Alveston Fetes. And finally, at Harvest time, many of the older boys would be absent for hay making, potato and blackberry picking.

### The History of Olveston Schools from 1836 to 1968



by Eric Garrett  
Olveston Parish Historical Society

*Editor's note: Current students at Olveston School (and others) may be interested to find out more about school life in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. You can buy a copy of Eric's book for £5 by phoning Les Harper on 01454 612304*

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# Yours Faithfully

Michael Matthews  
The Vine House of Prayer, Awkley

Can you remember a time, seemingly so long ago, when the initial topic of conversation when people met would be the weather? A strangely British habit so some would say. But not now! Another topic pre-occupies most of our thinking and talk. However, for the purposes of this article I am not going to dwell on the cause of the changes we have all experienced, nor at the time of writing can I be sure what circumstances will prevail as you read this.

My last article in June 2020 looked back to the recent and very different Easter that had passed, but this year Easter will be upon us as most of you read this magazine. Buzzing around in my mind is the question, 'if I knew the end from the beginning what would I change?' Well, of course, it is an impossible question to answer because we don't know, and even if we did, we don't always possess the power to really change anything.

So, my confidence is in the One who described Himself as 'the Beginning and the End'. The words of Jesus in the Book of Revelation in the Bible. On both occasions when this phrase is used, in chapters 21:6 and 22:13, it also mentions 'I am the Alpha and Omega', the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet. Whilst stating the obvious, it is perhaps unusual for us to give too much thought to the fact that every communication we coherently make to each other in the English language is comprised of a mixture of the 26 letters of the alphabet.

It is similar with God! The writer of Hebrews in the Bible states: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. <sup>3</sup> The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word [Hebrews 1:1-3]

Now there is One to be trusted in the uncertainty of the days we have and are experiencing. One who is willing to communicate with me in ways I can understand. Are you listening?





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Balances at 31st December 2019 and 2018			Printing	10381.00	12248.00
At Bank:			Insurance	335.29	339.00
Current Account	3292.79	3224.48	Postage	836.85	797.28
Clubs & Charities A/C	3028.40	3025.06	Stationery/Materials	84.50	61.99
Advertisements	13245.74	13672.58	Book Binding	48.00	46.00
Interest	5.60	3.34	Gratuities	24.50	106.00
			Photocopying	6.00	6.00
			Corporation Tax	72.96	-

At Bank:		
Cash in hand		
Current Account	3292.79	3292.79
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19572.53	19925.46	19572.53	19925.46
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Documents relative to this Statement have been examined and found correct.

 16/12/2021  
BRIAN ARKELL  
Dated  
T.W. Warn  
Treasurer

# Church News

## ST MARY the VIRGIN, OLVESTON

**Palm Sunday** 28 March, 9.30am Morning Prayer

**Good Friday** 2 April. 1pm to 3pm, Music and Reflection.

**Easter Sunday** 4 April 9.30am Holy Communion. **NB.** If you will be attending, please let Debbie 613273 or Martin 616856 know beforehand.

From Sunday 18 April services will be at 9.30am and 6pm every Sunday.

From Wednesday 21 April Holy Communion will be at 10am every Wednesday. Please check the Church website or Facebook page or Church Noticeboard. Visit *Revs Rural* on YouTube, every week.

**Contact:** Rev David Moss, 01454 415190; email: [mossds@gmail.com](mailto:mossds@gmail.com)

## CHAPELRY OF ST JOHN, AUST

**Palm Sunday** 28 March, 10am Holy Communion

**Easter Sunday** 4 April 10am Holy Communion

**11 April** 10am Morning Prayer

**25 April** 10am Holy Communion

**Contact:** Trevor Cook, 01454 618442

**Church Wardens:** Jenn Dickens 632312 & Clive Roberts 632238

## ST MARY DE MALMESBURY, LITTLETON-ON-SEVERN

**Contacts:** Tracey Black 417660 & Tim Pyper 416422 /07802 419451

## ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, ELBERTON

**Contacts:** Judith Heybyrne 616725 and John Gunnery 413225

## OLVESTON AND TOCKINGTON METHODIST CHURCH

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