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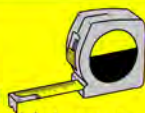
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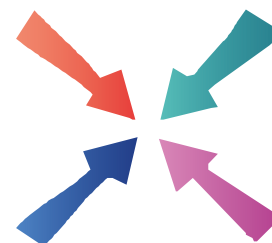
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Meeting Point

Volume 48, Number 5, February 2024

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

Our cover photograph, taken by Jenny Newley, really sums up the month of February for me. I have visited these snowdrops in Elberton every year since we moved into the area and love spotting all the different varieties within the swathes of white flowers. I've planted many clumps in my garden, but still have not achieved quite the same impact.

This month we have got a wildlife article about Sparrowhawks, with photographs taken in the author's own garden. We have also got the second part of the story about the local man who was 'ahead of his times' and inventor of a 'Death Ray'.

I am very grateful to my friend Liz, who helped with the magazine this month, as I was away for a week just at the point when articles come in and need to be edited before they are compiled into the format of the magazine. Many thanks, Liz.

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.olvestonandaust.com**

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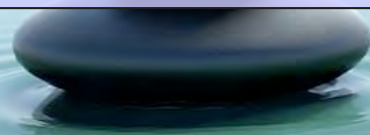
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Eric Garrett



We sadly report that Eric died on Christmas Eve at the age of 94. Eric had often written for Meeting Point, mostly on the past life, events, buildings and characters in the local villages. Local history was a driving interest for Eric; it was aided by a remarkable memory and power of recall. You could ask him about anything that had happened locally in the past 90 years and be sure to get a detailed answer. Unsurprisingly, Eric had been a leading member of Olveston Parish Historical Society from its origin in 1966 and became Archivist after a couple of years, staying in the position until almost the end of his life. Whenever Eric gave one of his talks to the Society he could be sure of a capacity audience. In fact, on at least one occasion we had to turn people away. His historical research also

provided material for him to write half a dozen books, and to contribute to others.

Eric's other long-lasting interest was his vegetables. Eric took over his allotment when his father died in 1938, to feed the family. He continued gardening there for seventy years and for much of that time he was the representative of the allotment tenants.

Eric was passionate about preserving the village and its surrounding countryside and fought to retain and improve the footpaths so that our rural environment could be enjoyed by all.

We are fortunate that during the past couple of years Steve Humphries produced a book and accompanying film "For the love of Olveston" published in early 2023, which describes the life and times of Eric Garrett and some of his contemporaries. We'll miss Eric, and we send our sympathy to his family.

A Big Thank You

Chris Smart and family would like to thank everyone for their kind donations made to St. Peters Hospice. The final total is £1020. It's an incredible amount to give, and a wonderful testament to Derry's memory.

St. Peters Hospice is 78% funded by the community, and generosity like this is vital for them to continue their wonderful work and care. Once again, our thanks to you all.

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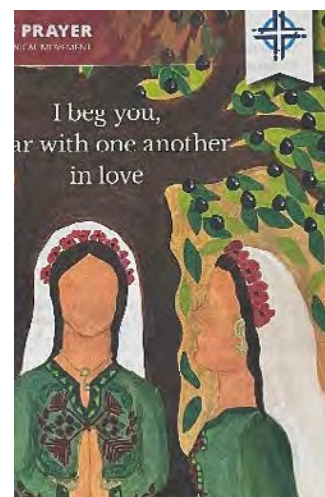
World Day of Prayer for Palestine 1st March 2024

We are called to connect with the land from where Jesus came; where he was born, ministered, and died – and from where the Christian faith began and is rooted. Despite living in an area of the world where there is ongoing conflict and the future is uncertain, the women of Palestine are sharing with love a reminder that they are there, and they want to give hope to everyone. The

theme of the service 2024 'bear with one another in love' seems very appropriate for these women who will not give up witnessing the love of Jesus Christ.

Please join one of the North Severnside services on the 1st March either in Olveston Methodist Church at 10am, or in the evening at 7pm at St Helen's Church, Alveston.

World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation, led by women which enables us to hear the thoughts of those women from all parts of the world - their hopes, concerns, and prayers.



So please join us if you can, and if you'd prefer to pray at home, please do get in touch so that we can drop in the service booklet to you.

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February's Film



Monday 5th February, St Mary's Church, Olveston

Released in 2023, this great British film features Michael Caine in probably his last ever film. It is based on a story that hit the national news headlines in 2014. A pensioner absconds from his care home in Hove to attend an event in France to mark the 70th anniversary of the D-day landings. The local police are notified of his disappearance, but later that evening the care home receives a call to say that the pensioner, Mr Jordan, has been found safe and well in France. There are superb performances from Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson. Heart warming stuff.

Doors open at 7pm and the film starts at 7.30pm prompt. This is a community event and everyone is welcome. Admission is free (do feel free to leave a donation). Tea/coffee and licensed bar.

The Monday Movie club shows a film on the first Monday of every month, apart from June to September. All profits go towards the upkeep of the church.

Parish Hall Annual Fish and Quiz



The 2024 Annual Quiz will be held on Friday 23rd February. Doors open at 7.00pm for a prompt 7.30pm start.

The ticket price is £11.50 to include a Fish and Chips supper, followed by a mini-ice cream. Payment can be made at the door; we now have a card machine! Maximum teams of four please.

We will hold a raffle with all proceeds going to a chosen charity which we will announce on the evening. There will be a cash/card bar. To reserve a place please contact: patsavage1948@icloud.com



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The prize winners in the January draw, held on 4th January 2024 were:

Amount	Number	Name
£150	399	Mrs D Grosvenor, Tockington
£75	378	Mr N Dawes, Olveston
£50	176	Mrs D Hedges, Pilning
£25	638	Mr E Garrett, Tockington
£25	238	Mrs P Vincent, Olveston
£20	440	Mr M Belsten, Olveston
£20	645	Mr D Baker, Olveston
£20	557	Mrs S Chick, Olveston
£20	437	Mr M Belsten, Olveston
£20	252	Mr & Mrs R Williams, Olveston

If you are not yet a member and wish to join the lottery, please telephone Andy Phillips on 01454 614890 or email: andisp28@hotmail.co.uk

Don't forget - if you're not in you can't win!

News from St Mary's

In 2024, St Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday coincide on 14th February. We mark this start of the forty days of Lent with the Ashing Service at St. Mary's at 10am and at 7.30pm at St. Helen's.

Many still find it helpful to 'give up' something during Lent, and this is good. We are also encouraged to 'take up' something in preparation for celebrating Easter. St Mary's invites us to share in the Pilgrim Course for the Christian Journey which examines the questions asked of those wishing to be baptised. This will be led by the Rev Ann Lloyd in St Mary's from 10.45 to 12.15 on Wednesdays starting on 21st February. More detail of the course and of other groups looking at the same content is available in church from the beginning of February.

This course will also be the sermon subject at the evening services during Lent, starting on Sunday 18th February with "Do you turn to Christ?", followed by "Do you believe and trust in God the Father?" on 25th February.

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Olveston and Tockington WI



For our WI meeting in February, we will be welcoming Dr Lucy Cramp from University of Bristol's Department of Anthropology and Archaeology. She will be talking about prehistoric porridge and medieval cabbage – Tracing Ancient Diet in Britain.

We will be voting for our chosen WI Resolution. The WI campaigns tackle issues that matter to women in their communities. From equal pay to climate change, mental health and violence against women, over the past 100 years we have embraced a diverse set of challenges. This year we are choosing between dental health matters, impacts of poor housing conditions, say 'no' to gambling advertising and improving outcomes for women in the Criminal Justice System. In addition to our regular monthly walking, stitching and reading groups, we have another visit in February to the Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility.



Olveston and Tockington WI meet at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of the month at the Parish Hall. If you would like to join us, please contact Angela Green on 01454 615222 and scan the WI QR code to find out more information about joining the UK's largest women's membership organisation.

It's back - Thornbury Rotary Swimarathon 2024



Thornbury Rotary Club's local organiser, (Rotarian Bernard Amos), is keen to hear from any person or organisation who would like to join the fun and he is encouraging as many teams as possible to take part and swim, whilst supported by the wonderful Caribbean music



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of Panache Steel Band. It all happens at Thornbury Leisure Centre on **Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd March**

Although there are, already, some teams eager to return, he still needs more to make sure the event is a successful fundraiser. Remember, every single penny raised goes to a Charity or worthy causes. The event is free to enter and is open to all ages, as long as they can swim a length of the pool, taking it in turn, relay style.

This year's two principal beneficiaries are St. Peter's Hospice (www.stpetershospice.org) that provides care and support to adults who are living with a progressive life-limiting illness, and Butterfly Space in Malawi (<https://butterflyspacemalawi.com>), a UK registered charity that supports primary & secondary school needs and many other projects for the community.

Details of the event, including entry forms, can be found on our website: www.ThornburyRotary.org/swimarathon and Bernard can be contacted via email: RotarySwimarathon@icloud.com. Thornbury Rotary has also set up a Just Giving page so that sponsors can support their teams online, www.justgiving.com/campaign/thornburyswim24. Also, by accessing this page, team leaders can create their own fundraising page to allow their sponsors to make donations to the teams directly.

President of Thornbury Rotary, Guy Rawlinson, would like to thank all those who wish to take part and, of course, the sponsors who have helped Rotary run the Swimarathon for so many years. Guy is asking for people to "Get Involved, either by swimming or sponsoring a team or individual." He adds that time is running out and urges team captains to get their entries registered as soon as possible.



Olveston Parish Council

Pat Savage

South Glos. Council - Local Development Plan

Following the publication of the Council's Local "Emerging" Development Plan a meeting was held at Olveston Parish Hall on Friday 5th January 2024. The meeting was an opportunity for two of the developers to present their plans and vision, linked to the increase in housing requirements, which falls within South Glos. Council's plans. The presentations were given by Charterhouse Strategic Land - who presented the proposed development at Grey Gables

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just off Vicarage Lane and Newland Homes – who presented the proposed development on the Aust Road.

A capacity gathering attended and engaged in very constructive and at times critical comments relating to the proposed plans. Whilst the meeting was chaired by the Parish Council, South Glos. Councillor Chris Willmore, who is the Cabinet Chair of Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure was in attendance to give the Council's rationale and future plans as the Council addresses its Housing requirements over the next five years. She was particularly impressed that the Council had invited the developers as part of the overall meeting. She also made it clear that the Council was looking for schemes of over 10 houses such that low-cost affordable houses could be part of the submission.

Her very important recommendation to all was to prepare a 'shopping list' of their concerns and recommendations. This can be emailed to the Parish Council: clerk@olvestonparishcouncil.gov.uk. The Parish Council will be compiling its list, which will incorporate both its comments together with those of the Parishioners, which will then be forwarded to South Glos. Council.

The consultation period has now been extended to 16th February 2024. She also made it clear that it is for every parishioner to submit their views from a local perspective. There will be further consultations as part of the process under L19 later in the year.

Bus Stop Guardians

I am sad to report the recent death of two of our Bus Stop Guardians. Pat Ward had taken on the responsibility of the Bus Stop in the Street from his late wife Virginia. Although he had been ill for some time, he had ensured it was in the best condition. Ann Trott had looked after the Bus Stop on the Crescent in Old Down for many years until ill-health forced her to give it up. Our condolences are extended to both families.

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St. Mary's Music have pleasure in announcing the start of a new series of Sunday afternoon concerts in St. Mary's Church, Thornbury. They will take place on the third Sunday of every month at 4.00pm (excluding August and December). Each concert will last approximately one hour and will be followed by refreshments. Entry is free, but there will be a retiring collection. All profits will go to the Music Fund of St. Mary's Church.

The performers will be local pianists, organists, singers and bands and the programme for the next two concerts is as follows:

18th February: Nigel Davies (organ)
17th March: Harlequin Singers

Up to date information can be found on our website: www.stmarysmusic.org

Brigadoon - last few tickets remaining!

Looking for something to brighten your dark winter evenings? Tickets for the Parish Players production of Brigadoon have been selling fast, but some may still be available. The show takes place at the Parish Hall, Tockington in half-term week from Wednesday 14th to Saturday 17th February at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £10 for adults, £7 for children and £12 for premium seats. To buy your tickets, please call the Box Office on 01454 202011. For up-to-date information (but not ticket sales), see www.facebook.com/OlvestonParishPlayers.

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The Sparrowhawk

Paul Godwin

The sparrowhawk is likely to be the only bird of prey (raptor) to enter our gardens. We may see other raptors overhead, such as buzzards and kestrels, but unless you have a large patch of land you are unlikely to see one in your garden. I often hear stories locally of the sparrowhawks in the area, nearly always a story of one hunting. Its population was in decline but has now recovered. Being at the top of a food chain it was hit hard by the use of pesticides, but changes to this practice have enabled its recovery. It was also persecuted by humans, especially when in the proximity of pheasants. It is mostly a resident breeder and approximately 33,000 pairs now nest in the UK. Adult birds will establish a territory and stay resident whilst juvenile birds may wander in autumn and winter, therefore possibly boosting populations locally.

There are two species of hawk in the UK; the goshawk and sparrowhawk and the latter is the much smaller of the two. It would be very unlikely for a goshawk to visit your garden for they are large, quite secretive birds of the woodland and forests. You can see them in the Forest of Dean especially in the breeding season when they display above the tree canopy.

The sparrowhawk is an extremely attractive bird with the male being significantly smaller and more colourful than the female. The male has blue-grey upperparts with strongly barred reddish brown underparts and underwings. The female has grey-brown upperparts and pale underparts with fine dark barring. The bird photographed below is a male. (*The photographs in this article were taken on a very wet day in December 2023 from our kitchen window in Olveston*). The sparrowhawk has rather short, rounded wings with a long square tail. This makes it very adept for hunting small birds in tight places amongst trees and hedges. It mostly catches its prey in flight and has



extremely long toes which it needs to catch its prey. The smaller male takes mainly tits and finches whilst the larger female will take blackbirds and pigeons. Therefore, as well as its size and colouration, the prey it is hunting could also be a distinguishing feature of its sex.

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Birds are its primary diet, and it is quite likely if you have been successful in introducing birds into your garden, then a sparrowhawk will not be too far away. For myself this can present a dilemma as I take great joy in the birds which feed in our garden and, of course, we do not like to witness any of those birds

being eaten. However, I do need to remind myself that this is part of the balance of nature. It means that the numbers of small birds regulate the numbers of sparrowhawks and vice versa. As with all predators they will not deplete their food source as it would not be in their interest to do so, and the presence of a sparrowhawk is an indication of a healthy bird population.

Another way of considering this is that blue and great tits will eat the caterpillars from our garden. But we encourage moths and butterflies into the garden through planting good food source plants and grasses. The butterflies hopefully lay eggs in our garden producing caterpillars. However, we do not discourage the blue or great tit who may eat those same insects. I believe we have to have a natural healthy balance.

It is also true that when the sparrowhawk enters our garden, I take joy in that, but we do not make it easy for it to hunt. We place feeders where it does not have a direct line of flight and ensure the feeders are very close to natural cover. It is however occasionally successful!

The sparrowhawk is typically only seen when it is attacking its prey. More often than not this is a surprise low level attack from somewhere close by; on a roof top or from another tree, where it launches itself at speed using its very powerful legs. I always feel that it has been nearby for some time just waiting for the right moment. The sparrowhawk is well established across the Meeting Point area, so keep an eye out for it especially as we move into spring where you may also see them soaring over fields and woodland looking for a mate.

You can also see buzzards soaring over fields throughout the year, red kites especially in summer when fields are being cut for silage, peregrine falcons along the Severn especially by the power station at Oldbury and kestrels hovering over our fields. Occasionally across the salt marshes at Aust and Northwick, marsh harriers and merlin. So, there is a lot to see out there. For all of these birds to be present in our area we need to ensure we protect and maintain our unique landscape here in the Severn Vale.

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A Local Man Ahead of His Times Part Two

Nick Fear

Harry Grindell Matthews local connections largely ended after his divorce in 1930 and his work took him to other parts of the country and abroad. His relationship with the British Government had deteriorated after the end of the Great War. His device for submarine detection had not been taken up by the navy and the air force seemed disinterested in aerial voice communication. To be fair, the Government was too involved with post war recovery. They kept in touch with him, but without its help Harry pursued his passion for innovation and invention. Harry always needed finances, the lack of which always seemed to haunt and hamper his work.

In 1921 Harry produced a film of Sir Ernest Shackleton talking about what would be his last expedition. He claimed this to be the first talking movie and released it in several cinemas. This was not a great success and as no copies have survived his claim cannot be confirmed. In 1923, working at New Passage Hotel, Harry had progressed and invented a device for adding sound to moving pictures. The British film industry was uninterested in his sound concept. Films with talking actors were inconceivable and as one commentator wrote, 'would never catch on'. Undeterred Harry took his invention to America. The first recognised 'talkie', in 1927, is 'The Jazz Singer' starring Al Jolson. Warner Brother's had employed Harry to assist with the sound for the film.

Despite his 1923 talking movie device, Harry chose to use a traditional silent format for a 1924 film he simply called, 'The Death Ray'. Filmed in Paris, this was accompanied by a pianist in the theatre matching images. It was heralded as, 'The most startling and breath-taking motion picture ever made'.

The film in its entirety has been lost, but small extracts still exist to give an idea of the content. Harry appeared throughout sometimes talking directly at the screen, but it would need a lip reader to give him voice. The scenes are punctuated by title boards telling the story. The viewer is told that the Grindell Matthews Death Ray, in the future, may control the destiny of the world. Harry was one of the boldest thinkers of modern times and predicted that within 15 years the machine gun would be obsolete. Many viewers would have been aware of the use of the machine gun from the war years. Artillery pieces were long range weapons, the machine gun less so. Was this an indication that Harry's invention had a short range at that time? Whatever the range, the Ray was such that it would stop all wars.

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With appetites thoroughly whetted we are taken to a laboratory where Harry is dressed in a white laboratory coat. He is working around an impressive device, with a stepped coned shaped ceramic base on top of which is a large projection device. The room has much evidence of electrical switches and wiring. Harry and three assistants examine the machine and stand back whilst it is switched on. The device has the ability to remotely illuminate a free-standing light bulb and as a spectacular finale explodes a tray of gunpowder some feet away. A title board explains that these feats are achieved by an electrical beam being created through which a controlled electrical energy is transmitted. The device can illuminate or burn dependent on the power used



and range could be increased to cover great distances. The film ends with an outdoor scene, purported to be on Flat Holm in the River Severn. Hinting that the Death Ray could be used to destroy a city, the device is fired after Harry and his assistants take cover behind a protective screen. The next scene shows a large section of warehouse like buildings in ruins and on fire over a large area. The film ends.

Audience figures for the film's London debut are unknown, but some of these were newspaper

reporters. The title of the film became shocking headline news, imaginative reporters gave over enthusiastic accounts of the deadly potential of Harry's invention. He was alarmed at many of these, his apparatus was in its infancy. The notion of a death ray spawned several fictional films whose characters used rays of destruction.

We now know that Harry had offered the Death Ray, to the British Government and the Air Ministry requested to see his apparatus in action. Other Government departments heard of this and asked to attend. His work was not without risk, one assistant was rendered unconscious and Harry lost the sight in an eye during one test. Harry gave a successful demonstration in his Harwood Laboratory. One observer described the beam as being blue in






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colour with a tinge of red. It had illuminated light bulbs and stopped working engines. Some officials were unimpressed, others looked for trickery, but admitted to finding none. It seems that a good impression was made, and Harry was offered a £1000 (£50,000 today) to aid his work if the device was kept exclusive to Britain. He declined this as he had had a better offer from a French company and he had also raised finances from a public share offer. Harry went to go to France to pursue the offer, the Ray had been lost to England. Worldwide interest in Harry's invention is evidenced by thousands of newspaper articles. Harry kept connections with France and often went to America, his ship passenger lists giving his occupation as an inventor.

The development of his Ray and achievements entered a secretive period. In 1930 he returned to England and amazed Londoners by using an invention he called a 'sky projector'. Using a beam of light, he projected images onto clouds. An angel floated across the sky trailing a 'Happy Christmas' banner. This was accompanied by another invention, the 'Luminaphone', an organ which was played by a beam of light.

In 1934 Harry was declared bankrupt and the press, which had been supportive of his work, used headlines like 'Grindell the Swindle'. He moved to an isolated bungalow on top of a mountain in South Wales. He built an extension to accommodate a laboratory. The site was surrounded by security fences and guarded by devices of Harry's invention. He became almost a recluse.

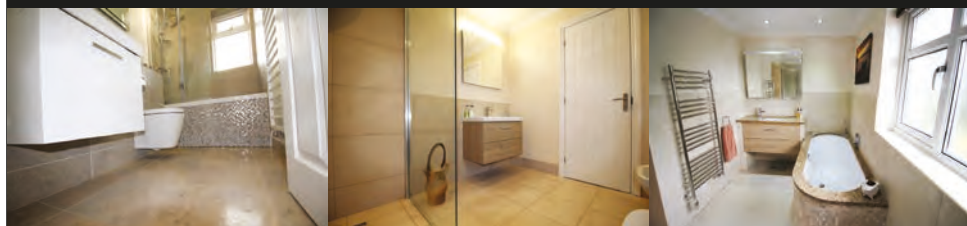
It is known that he was developing a hydrogen powered rocket plane which could reach speeds of 6 miles per second. This sort of propulsion was to take men to the moon. His home had its own air strip and light aircraft used this. Alarming to British authorities, an interest in Harry was shown by the Nazi Party in German and General Franco in Spain, but he shunned contact. At one time army soldiers were seen guarding his home. The site was often visited by Americans, some military, some civilian. Their purpose and indeed Harry's work then is still shrouded in mystery.

On the 11th of September 1941 Harry died at the age of 61 of a heart attack at his home. He left £522 in his will (£22,000 today). He had grown up in a world of technological change and wonderment. Names like Guglielmo Marconi, Nikola Tesla and John Logie Baird were pioneering radio communications and became household names. Harry had not. His inventions were many, radio communication devices, machines controlled by light, an autopilot for aircraft and the device to automatically switch on streetlamps at night. The Death Ray, his 'Ray' as Harry disliked the press description, died mainly due to lack of funds. The modern laser is an invention of the 1960s. In 1941 Harry had visited 10 Downing Street, where Winston Churchill had told him he was 100 years too advanced. Many other people accept that he, a Gloucestershire man, was indeed ahead of his times.

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Nurse Manager

Lucy Bolland



My name is Lucy Bolland, I am the Nurse Manager at Beech House, a care home based in Thornbury. I have worked across the three Bristol Care Homes for 10 years

working as a nurse as well as a deputy manager. My nursing career started in the NHS where I gained experience nursing on surgical wards as well as women's health. I then moved into care home nursing as this fitted around life with a young family.

Bristol Care Homes has given me many opportunities to develop my career while working in different environments each with their challenges and rewards. As a company, I have always felt supported in my roles, and I particularly enjoy working with a dedicated team of staff.

My role involves working with an amazing team and no two days are the same which provides variety and keeps my job interesting while also always having the opportunity to learn and develop. Meeting new people and supporting residents and their families is one of the most rewarding parts of my job.

I live in the local area with my family and enjoy spending time with them and traveling.

Severn Valley Quilters

Severn Valley Quilters are showing an Exhibition of members' work on Saturday 17th February 2024, 9.30am – 4pm at Thornbury Methodist Church Hall, Castle Court, Thornbury, Bristol.

Mark Pickles from the Sewing Studio in Bath will have a stall selling his fabrics and sewing items. We will also have a sales table of various items and books; Tombola; Refreshments will be available. Cash only, please.

Proceeds will be donated to Cancer Research UK
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Thornbury Choral Society

Thornbury Choral Society has resumed rehearsals, and we will be preparing a programme of music by English composers including Holst, Vaughan Williams and Britten for a concert on May 14th, 2024.

Also, this term, we shall be holding our annual Choral Workshop. This is on Saturday, February 24th at 10.00am at Thornbury Baptist Church. We shall be studying Edward Elgar's choral work "Songs from the Bavarian Highlands".

We are always delighted to welcome new members. We are sure that there must be lots of singers who have recently moved into the area and are looking for the opportunity to sing in a good choir and make new friends.

All details about the Society and future events can be found on our website: www.thornburychoralsociety.org.uk



COP28 - Conference of the Parties 28

This was the 28th annual United Nations climate meeting which was held in Dubai for 2 weeks 30th November to 13th December 2023

COP27 was held in Egypt

COP26 was held in Glasgow

COP21 resulted in the Paris Agreement

COP1997 was held in Kyoto and resulted in the Kyoto Agreement

So, what were all these agreements? **Kyoto** committed industrialised countries and economies to limit and reduce Green House Gases (GHGs). **Paris** aimed to strengthen global response to keep the temperature rise this century below 2 degrees Celsius. **Glasgow** agreed to accelerate to close the emissions gap from 2 to 1.5 Celsius ie: Net Zero. **Egypt** was advised to cut down on fossil fuel for energy and to replace with more renewables. This is a hard number for Egypt as it is a big producer of fuel in the continent of Africa and especially since the Ukraine war.

Dubai agreed to 'Transition'. This means that all participating nations should move from fossil fuels to produce renewable energy linking for the first time fossil fuels to global climate change. This means that effort must go into

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devising technologies rapidly in order to reduce the burning of fossil fuels. For this to go ahead funding is needed and sums have been pledged in the form of a Loss and Damage Fund. The World Bank has been asked to manage this in the form of grants. Because the USA is one of the largest producers of GHGs it has been asked to pledge the highest sum together with China, but even that is far less than will be needed.

Have you thought of watching Prince William's Earthshot Competition? It is worth viewing on iPlayer as there are so many wonderful ideas and initiatives being put forward globally. The winner of the competition each year is given one million pounds to help their idea go into proper production.

Mo's Christmas Toy Appeal

Mo Lewis would like to thank everyone who contributed in any way to her 6th annual appeal in conjunction with the Salvation Army. The result was another record-breaking year and the Salvation Army van left Salthouse Farm in Severn Beach jam packed with toys, toiletries and knitted items. The driver was also handed almost £300 in gift vouchers. It is difficult to evaluate the pile of wonderful hand knitted items, but the total donations certainly exceeded £10,000.

Mo was kept busy for several weeks, collecting gifts from the Severn Beach and Pilning area including Olveston, Alveston, Thornbury, Almondsbury and Easter Compton. The generosity of so many people, in testing times for many, ensured that hundreds of needy children, in our part of the country, had a happy Christmas.

A Note from the Severn Vale Village Agent

If you have some niggling repairs or maintenance you have been putting off, South Gloucestershire Handy Van service is available to do a wide range of small jobs around the house – the sort of jobs that will take less than three hours. For example, putting up curtain rails, unblocking sinks, gutter cleaning. The Handy Van service is intended to help people maintain their homes, whether, homeowners or private tenants and, by doing so, maintain their independence in properties that are secure and well cared for.



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The over 60s and those of any age with disabilities can have minor household repair jobs done at a reduced rate by South Gloucestershire Council's Handy Van service. The Handy Van service also offers a free home security and safety check and, where necessary, will fit free door and window locks, door chains and door viewers, and supply free low energy light bulbs.

To contact the Handy Van service call 01454863 857. If you have questions or would like to know more, please get in contact with me. More information on the project can be found here: www.wern.org.uk/village-agents

Or contact me on 07880 344460 (please leave a message) or email elizabeth@wern.org.uk. Please note I work Wednesday and Thursday.

Carers Support Centre

Do you care for someone who could not manage without your support? If so, you are a carer. Caring can be rewarding but also very challenging, both mentally and physically. Whether you're caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or is affected by mental ill-health or substance misuse, caring is very demanding. But fortunately, help is available.

Carers Support Centre is a charity offering a range of services to help improve life for carers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

Here's some of the ways we can help:

- **Carers Emergency Card:** If a carer has an accident or is taken seriously ill, carrying this card will ensure the person they care for continues to receive the support they need.
- **Carers Assessments:** Help with getting and completing an assessment. This allows carers to get help and support for themselves and the person they care for.
- **One-to-one support:** Advice and information. Help with filling in forms and applying for benefits such as Carers Allowance. Help with communicating with health and social care professionals.
- **Parent carers:** Supporting parent carers with a child under 18 who has disabilities/additional needs.
- **Carers support groups:** A safe, confidential space to meet with other carers to share information and give support to each other.
- **Hospital support:** Information and support for carers in hospital and help with discharge planning.
- **Carer involvement:** Support for carers to get their voices heard, so they can influence health and social care provision.



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The performance takes place on Saturday 24th February 2024 at 7.30pm in Thornbury Methodist Church Hall. Tickets £15 available from: AAGThornbury@gmail.com.



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The Shirehampton Remount Depot: collecting and sending horses to the front

Jenny Newley

The Shirehampton Remount Depot was a major supply base in the First World War for war-trained horses, needed in great numbers to replace those lost at the Western Front. Professor Richard Coates's main area of expertise is the origins of placenames and surnames, but he is also a Shirehampton resident and he has drawn on local work into the Shirehampton Remount Depot and also carried out his own research into newspaper archives to tell us the story he will share with us on 7th February.

He will explain how this vitally important site at Shirehampton coped with the logistics involved in assembling and transporting mind-bogglingly vast numbers of horses and mules needed for haulage and pack duties on the Western Front.

He has written a slim booklet about the Shirehampton Remount Depot and I've asked him to bring a few copies along; they'll be available for £3.50.

In September 2023, the statue of a War Horse was erected in Shirehampton, to commemorate the role of horses in the war effort and Shirehampton's role in supplying them. It's in the Daisy Field, close to Shirehampton station, at the extreme south-eastern end of the site of the Remount Depot. Here's Richard's photograph of it. I'm sure he'll tell us more about it in his talk. We look forward to seeing you there.

Everyone's welcome. Non-members: £3. Free tea/coffee/biscuits available before the start of the meeting. www.olveston.com/historical-society

**Olveston Parish Historical Society, Wednesday 7th February, 7.30pm at
Olveston Methodist Church, The Street, Olveston BS35 4DR**





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Yours Faithfully

*Kate Taylor
Thornbury Quakers*

Tucked away in Lower Hazel is a Quaker burial ground where people have been buried for 350 years. It is a very special place, with a wonderful feeling of peace and tranquillity. The first burials there were at a time when Quakerism was illegal, hence the choice of a quiet spot with a wall around it.

All Quakers are different, but for me they are, as a group, still very radical, and for me that is a positive. They are radical because they believe that there is that of God within every human being, and they believe in peace, equality, simplicity and truth. Just for a moment imagine a world based on those principles, to me that sounds like heaven on Earth.

These are the things that first attracted me to Quakerism. I remember once early on in my Quaker journey I said to one of the other women in the meeting that I wasn't sure if I should be there, and she said that if I felt drawn to be there then that was where I should be. That feeling of welcoming acceptance has been very important to me. There is a sense of unity, even when we see things differently, that is very special too. It might sound trite but there is definitely a feeling of something greater than us when we sit in silent worship together. There is a feeling of peacefulness, of calm and of unity that gives me strength throughout the week to do what I feel I need to do.

I'm sure it is not everybody's cup of tea, but now it feels like a big part of who I am as a person, and I know I would feel a big hole if I didn't feel part of the Quaker family. Just to sit once a week with other people who care about what happens in the world and who I know do whatever they can to make the world a better place feels like a real privilege. I honestly wish that everybody could be so lucky as to belong to a community of Friends.



George Fox, founder of The Society of Friends (Quakers)

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Church News

ST MARY the VIRGIN, OLVESTON

Feb 4	10am 6pm	Holy Communion Evensong	Rev David Moss Rev David Moss
Feb 11	10am 6pm	Morning Prayer Holy Communion	Rev Ann Lloyd Rev David Bone
Feb 14	10am	Ash Wednesday	Rev Ann Lloyd
Feb 18	10am 6pm	Morning Prayer Holy Communion	Janet McBride Rev Ann Lloyd
Feb 25	10am 6pm	Holy Communion Evening Prayer	Rev Ann Lloyd Janet McBride

Every Saturday in Term Time, 'REFRESH', 4.30-5.30 - Fun, relaxed church for families, all welcome. Every Wednesday, Holy Communion, 10am. NB. Clergy may change.

Contact: Rev David Moss, 01454 415190; email: mossds@gmail.com

CHAPELRY OF ST JOHN, AUST

Feb 11	10am	Morning Prayer	Trevor Cook
Feb 25	10am	Holy Communion	Trevor Cook

Contact: Trevor Cook, 01454 618442

Church Wardens: Jenn Dickens 632312 and Jon Burnett 633835

ST MARY DE MALMESBURY, LITTLETON-ON-SEVERN

Feb 11	9am	Morning Prayer	Rev Ann Lloyd
Feb 25	9am	Holy Communion	Tracey Black

Contacts: Tracey Black 417660 and Tim Pyper 416422 /07802 419451

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ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, ELBERTON

Feb 11	9am	Morning Prayer	Judith Heybyrne
Feb 25	9am	Holy Communion	Judith Heybyrne

Contacts: Judith Heybyrne 616725

Church Wardens: Catharine Gunnery 413225 and Cheryl Meredith 411065

OLVESTON AND TOCKINGTON METHODIST CHURCH

Feb 4	10am	Tock Ch	Morning Worship led by Christine Stones
Feb 11	10am	Olv Ch	Morning Worship led by Alison Smith
Feb 18	10am	Tock Ch	Covenant Service led by Rev Dr John Emmett
Feb 25	10am	Olv Ch	Morning Worship led by Chris Sledge

Contact: Rev Dr Simon Edwards 418176,
simon.edwards@methodist.org.uk

THE VINE House of Prayer, Pilning Street, Awkley BS35 4HL

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Contact: 07512 917229, email: thevine_awkley@hotmail.com

THE OASIS CHURCH, OLD DOWN

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Contact: Neil Mobbs, cnmobbs@hotmail.com

AUST EVANGELICAL and LITTLETON EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

Contact: esther@thebamfields.co.uk

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SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS), Thornbury

Contact: Chris Willmore, chriswillmore@blueyonder.co.uk

Diary Dates for February

Information believed to be correct at going to press.

1 Thurs	Thornbury Farmers' Market Coffee Shop 'Good Afternoon Choir', every week Thornbury Art Club, every Thursday 07776 271010	9am 9-12 1-3 1.30	S+M URC SMCH
2 Fri	First Friday Community Café. Haven Memory Café. Every 1 st and 3 rd Friday	10-12 10.15	TMC URC
3 Sat	Park Run, Mundy Playing Field every Saturday Litter Pick	9am 10.30	 OPH
5 Mon	Monday Movies	7.30	S+M
6 Tues	Over 60's Coffee Morning every Tuesday 10-12am Citizens Advice every Tuesday 10-12 Macular and Low Vision Group Thornbury Art Club every Tuesday Tel 414433 RBL Women's Section Severn Vale Flower Club	10am 10am 10.30 1.30 7.30 7.30	DGCL TTH TMH SMCH DGCL SMCH
7 Wed	Table Tennis every Wednesday Thornbury Art Club, every Wednesday. 414433 OPHS: The Shirehampton Remount Depot	7pm 7pm 7.30	OPH AMCH OMC
8 Thur	Coffee Shop	9-12	S+M
10 Sat	Coffee Morning at Olveston Methodist Hall, 2 nd & 4 th Saturdays	10-12	OMH
12 Mon	Severn Vale Flower Club, demo Men's Walk and Chat Group, meet Tockington Green. Every 2 nd and 4 th Monday.	2pm 9.30	SMCH
13 Tues	Thornbury Memory Café. Every 2 nd and 4 th Tuesday. WI	10.15 7.30	TMH OPH
14 Wed	'Brigadoon', The Parish Players, until Sat	7.30	OPH

15 Thur	Thornbury Farmers' Market Coffee Shop	9am 10-12	S+M
16 Fri	Haven Memory Café.	10.15	URC
17 Sat	Coffee Morning Quilting Exhibition	10.30 9.30 - 4	OMH TMH
19 Mon	Men's Walk and Chat Group, meet Tockington Green	9.30	
22 Thur	Coffee Shop	9-12	S+M
24 Sat	Coffee Morning Play: 'Where is Mrs C?'.	10-12 7.30	OMH TMH
26 Mon	Men's Walk and Chat Group, meet Tockington Green	9.30	
27 Tues	Thornbury Memory Cafe Olveston Parish Council meeting Thornbury Art, club night	10.15 7.30 7.30	TMH QAMP SMCH
28 Wed	Alveston History Soc	7.30	AMC
29 Thur	Almondsbury Panto at the Olveston Parish Hall until Saturday		OPH

KEY: AMC - Alveston Methodist Church, AMH - Alveston Methodist Hall, CS - Castle School, CTK - Christ the King, DGCL - Daldry Gardens Community Lounge, EVH - Elberton Village Hall, OC - Oasis Church, Old Down, OMC - Olveston Methodist Church, OMH - Olveston Methodist Hall, OPH - Olveston Parish Hall, QAMP - Queen Alexandra Memorial Pavilion, Old Down, S+M - St Mary's Church, S+MT - Thornbury St Mary's Ch, SMCH - St Mary's Church Hall Thornbury, TCC - Turnberries, TMC - Tockington Methodist Church, TMH - Thornbury Methodist Church Hall, TTH - Thornbury Town Hall, URC - United Reform Church

Contact details for any clubs or organisations in the Meeting Point area can be found in the Meeting Point Directory on the community website: www.olvestonandaust.com. If you would like to update your organisation's details, please email: meetingpointsecretary@olvestonandaust.com

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