

Valley^{ITCHEN} News

Issue 99 March 2022

Avington, Easton, Itchen Abbas, Martyr Worthy and Abbots Worthy



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WELCOME to the Valley News

Welcome to the March issue of the Itchen Valley News, our first as editors. Editing the IVN was a daunting task but was happily made much easier by the excellent content provided by all the energetic and variously-interested people who live in the Valley.

The broad theme that has emerged from the articles and photos we were given is that, this March, our Valley is awakening. First, most obviously, it's Spring, a time of emergence from hibernation and darkness, new growth and new life.

Read about snowdrops being the harbinger of Spring on page 18, their medicinal properties and how they came to the UK. The Redwings and Fieldfares are about to leave us on their Spring journey North. Learn how to identify them before they leave on page 32.

From the River on page 16 tells us some things to look out for on or by the river at this time of year.

Winchester City Council has also provided an interesting piece on water quality. We all live in a river valley - the Itchen is the thread that joins our four villages together. It's good to know more about our river and appreciate it. The second part of our awakening is us emerging (hopefully for good) from the COVID pandemic. It's clear from What's On and Save The Date on the following pages, Easton & Martyr Worthy Cricket Club News on page 6 and more, that there is an increasing number of events taking place in the Valley. Read on page 19 about Scottish reeling in Itchen Abbas Village Hall, Food Spy's review of Gurkha's Inn in Winchester on page 12 and, on page 11, how to keep fit in your 40s, 50s,

60s and beyond.

So, hopefully there's enough in this issue to provide you with some diversion and enjoyment. If not (or even if there is!), please do complete our survey on page 39. The more we know about what you want, the easier it will be to provide it.



Nathalie and James

Itchen Valley News

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What's On

Thursday 10 March, 10.30am

Charity Dog Walk at Pinglestone House, Old Alresford, SO24 9TB. Two guided walks of different lengths. Donation £12 per walker (includes soup and a ploughman's lunch); non-dog



walkers and lunch only welcome too. Book at: www.ticketsource.co.uk/home-start-winchester-districts; 07776 041574; email info@home-startwinchester.org.uk

Friday 25 March, 7:30pm

Itchen Abbas Parents Quiz 2022 at Itchen Abbas Village Hall. Tickets £15 include dinner and live music. They are available from rppatrick@hotmail.com.

Saturday 26 March, 10am

Itchen Valley Litter Pick. Muster at 10am at Avington War Memorial, Itchen Abbas Village Hall car park, Easton Cricketers car park, Martyr Worthy War Memorial or Top of Chilland Lane. Tea, coffee and cake served at Martyr Worthy Village Hall from 12pm for volunteers! See flyer on next page.

Friday 1 April, 7.30pm

April Fool's Quiz Night Itchen Abbas Village Hall. Tickets £15pp to include a ploughman's supper, tables of 6 or join a team on the night; in aid of Home-Start Winchester & Districts; prizes. For tickets call Sue Barham on 07776 041574 or email info@home-startwinchester.org.uk

Friday 8 April, 7.15pm

Quiz! Itchen Abbas Village Hall. Tickets £12.50pp (6 per table) to include a hot supper. Rotary Club of Alresford. To book please contact James Pinniger 01962 738788 or wjrp@hotmail.co.uk

Wednesday 11 May, 10am to 4pm

Garden & Craft Fair Upper Farm, Down Farm Lane, Headbourne Worthy, SO23 7LA. Entrance £5pp. Check website for more details: <https://winchestergold.org.uk/garden-and-craft-fair>

Save The Date

Thursday 26 May: Upper Itchen Valley Society Summer Party

Full details will follow in next month's issue, but please save the date. If you are not a member of the Society, please do consider joining us. Our remit is to preserve all that is good in the character of the Valley and to protect it from proposed actions that would be detrimental to its amenities or scenic beauty. The subscription is a one-off cost per family of £20 and all residents of the Valley can join. For further information contact me, Elaine Labram, at upperitchenvalleysoc@gmail.com.

Heads up for the Queen's Jubilee!

Our villages will each have some wonderful events organised over the Jubilee bank holiday long weekend, Thursday 2 - Sunday 5 June, so stick around to reconnect with your community or get to know it if you are new to the valley. More details to follow, and see the 'Front Gardens Competition' below, part of Easton Flower Festival.

Join the Great British Spring Clean

**Be part of the pick
in the Itchen Valley**

Sat 26 March from 10am

From the usual five starting points. Please wear gloves. Hi-viz jackets, litter-pick sticks and bin bags will be provided

**Avington War Memorial
Itchen Abbas Village Hall car park
Easton Cricketers car park
Martyr Worthy War Memorial and
Top of Chilland Lane**

**Tea, coffee and cake in
Martyr Worthy Village Hall from
12 noon onwards**

Organised by Itchen Valley Parish Council



Easton Flower Festival and Open Gardens - Fingers crossed and third time lucky!

17-19 June: In aid of the Easton Church Building Project. The church itself will be transformed and a Sparkling Preview with canapés and music will be held in the churchyard on the evening of Thursday 16 June. (tickets £25)

Over the following three days there will be a number of beautiful open gardens to visit, refreshments, an art exhibition and a flower and plant stall.

Entrance to the Flower Festival and Open Gardens £10

Children free.

As a celebration of the Platinum Jubilee, all gardens that can be seen from the road in Easton will be invited to take part in the Front Gardens Competition.

For more information go to:
itchenvalleychurches.org/fundraising.

Vineyard Tours at The Grange

Select dates from May to October 2022. Daytime or evening tours. Zam Baring or Harry Pickering will lead you in a 45-minute tour of the vineyard and then give you a taste of its award-winning wines.

See <https://www.thegrangewine.co.uk/vineyard/tours> for more information and booking.

Help is needed at St Swithun's Church, Martyr Worthy

Our beautiful church is cared for by a wonderful team of volunteers. Every month, two people help to keep the church clean on a weekly basis, either individually or together depending on their personal commitments.

Some of our happy group have moved from the area and we are desperately looking for volunteer replacements for the months of April, June, November and December. Please contact Cathy Dickinson 01962 779239 / 07551 907577

PS: We have a Spring Clean on **Wednesday 30 March at 9.30 am**. Come and join us and meet 'the team'. Coffee and biscuits!



Last chance to have your say on the News

Last month we asked readers for their thoughts on the News via a survey. We have already received some helpful and thought-provoking responses but would be delighted to hear from more of you.

Please go to [https://](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RQN988W)

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RQN988W and let us have your thoughts. Alternatively, fill out the form on page 39 and drop it in the box at any of our four churches. It's YOUR news, so now's your chance to speak up! The results of the survey will be published in the coming months.

Easton & Martyr Worthy Cricket Club News

Pre-season preparation is now underway and we welcome any interested adults and children to make contact with the club if they would like to play, coach or support the cricket club this year.



Indoor training is in full swing for both the adults and children. Adults are practising on a Monday evening at Sparsholt College and the colts on a Tuesday and Wednesday evening at Prince's Mead. Girls train on a Thursday evening at St Swithun's School. Outdoor training will commence in early April at the David Roth cricket pitch in Easton as follows:
Mondays – Colts - U9s and U11s
Tuesdays – Colts - U13s
Wednesdays – All Girls training
Thursdays – U15 Colts and all Seniors training
All Stars – TBC

Our first men's league matches are scheduled to start 7 May and Head Groundsman, Lee Padwick, has already started pitch preparations for the season ahead. The erratic weather these days ensures the groundsman's



work is as unpredictable as it is for any gardeners; mowing grass in early February would have been unheard of a few years ago!

Anyone interested in joining any of these cricket activities should visit www.emwcc.com

Club Contacts:

Seniors: seb.stannard@btinternet.com

Seniors: markdickety@hotmail.co.uk

Juniors: juniors@emwcc.com

Ladies: charliegloyn@icloud.com

A warm welcome to

Georgina, Femi and Phoebe (age 5) Ladeinde who have moved into Hornton Cottage, Church Lane, Martyr Worthy. Femi is an accountant in film and TV, Georgina is a fashion buying manager and Phoebe has just started school at St Swithuns.

Katherine, Paddy, Iris (age 7) and Finley (age 5) Earnshaw plus cats Alfie, Tilly and Charlie who have moved into Willowmead, Easton from Winchester.

Memorial Service - Geraldine Phillips

A Memorial Service, celebrating the life of Geraldine Phillips, will be held at St Mary's Church, Easton, on **Wednesday, April 27 at 2.00pm.**

Following the service, all will be welcomed for refreshments at Easton Village Hall.

Doug Phillips

Obituary - Florence Eva Bax Jordan

Florence was born and raised in Chesterfield before moving down to London just after the WWII. Whilst still in her teens she met Alan, her future husband for 60 years, when they were both having remedial maths lessons.

Florence went on to train as a speech therapist and worked until her children were born when she stopped working to concentrate on being a full-time mother and wife. She was the archetypal doctor's wife. When Alan was on call at night, she would take the calls and pass them on to him when he was out, following him around using





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the list of patients' phone numbers hoping to catch him before coming home again.

She had a very active mind and helped a lot with homework (except maths!) when required. She was particularly good at languages and when Adrian and Philip were doing their 'O' levels she went to the local college and took 'O' level in German, achieving an A. In the early 1980s Florence went back to part-time speech therapy and was approached to set up a specialist speech and language unit. This was used as a pilot study of how the existing service could be modernised. She typically underplayed how much more strategic her job had become but in the expansion of the role she insisted that she delivered face-to-face speech therapy to children.

When Alan retired as a GP in 1994, they moved from London to be close to their friends in Itchen Abbas. She was fully involved with the community, particularly supporting Alan when he was churchwarden, and they worked together raising funds for the Royal British Legion. She was a consummate host and enjoyed hosting dinner parties and drinks parties with excellent food. After 20 years in the Valley in 2014, they moved from Itchen Abbas to Alresford to be more central to the shops. With failing health their stay in Alresford lasted until 2018 when they moved into fully supported nursing care.

Throughout her life, the church played an important part. She was brought up and confirmed in the Anglican church but on moving down to London went to the congregational church in Ealing, and later in Whetstone, playing a full part in the life of both churches. Having moved to Itchen Abbas, she went back to her first love: the Church of

England. Her faith was very humble and she loved the communion service and the reminder in the prayer for humble access "We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table...."

Having struggled with poor health in her latter years, she died peacefully on 20 December 2021. She leaves behind her much loved three children: Adrian, Philip and Alison, their families and grandchildren Thomas, James, Peter, Eleanor and Hannah.

Adrian, Philip and Alison would like to thank all Florence's friends in the Itchen Valley for the continued support that they showed her over the last few years. The family will be having a thanksgiving service for Florence in the summer and all who knew her will be warmly welcomed.

Adrian, Alison and Philip Jordan

Obituary - David Marsh

We are sorry to report on the recent passing of David Marsh; a previous valley resident and a club cricketer. David was a founder member of the cricket club in 1946, a past Trustee and a serving Vice President.

David lived at Malm Gate in Easton as a child and following employment at Kings Worthy Foundry as a young apprentice, he enrolled in the merchant navy. Later he started his own construction company. Both of David's parents were part of extended families within Easton and the surrounding area. Ben Marsh, his uncle, was a good cricketer in the 1950s. Ben and Eric Thompson laid the commemorative stone for the new Easton Village Hall in 2009. David's younger brother Mick, another talented cricketer, also played for the club and held various administrative posts. Only last

December, David was enquiring about the current club activities and plans for the season ahead. Our condolences go out to the Marsh family.

Adrian Lee

Obituary - Brian Billimore

Many of you in the Valley will recall Brian Billimore, a resident of Easton for 14 years, moving on to Ickford in 2008. Sadly he passed away on Christmas Day 2021. Brian and Hilary were wonderful and fun neighbours and very community minded. They were fully involved in church life, singing in the choir and ringing the bells.

Brian was a member of the cricket club, played bridge and helped run the River Rats youth club here in Easton. Always helpful and enthusiastic in whatever he did.

Hilary would like to share the following words taken from a letter sent to her from a friend in Ickford recently.

“As a proud son of Hampshire, who had served in the Royal Navy, Brian was meticulous in displaying the many flags in his collection from the flag-pole in his garden. He had an excellent voice and enjoyed singing with the distinction of membership of the Winchester Cathedral Choir. In our local parish church of Ickford his clear and strong diction was much appreciated - such as when reading lessons or participating in dramatic productions, including the well received Mummers plays. He was also authorised by the Bishop to assist with the sacrament in services of Holy Communion, a role he undertook with great reverence.

“As a distinguished academic with a highly successful career in education, Brian was a member of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Schools (HMI), a role in which he was highly respected. He also

excelled in sport, and was a champion pole vaulter and a keen swimmer and footballer. He also enjoyed foreign travel, and spent numerous happy times in the Billimore retreat on the Island of Gozo.”

Brian will be greatly missed by those who have been fortunate to know him and our thoughts and prayers are with Hilary and the family.

Gail Mann

Learning in the desert

“There is more life than you know in the desert.”

Living by the calm waters of the River Itchen, we may find it hard to imagine what it would be like to

go into a hot, dry desert. How would I cope with the heat? Where would I find any water? How safe would it be to sleep out at night? Could I cope with it being so eerily quiet? How long would I survive? I once went on a desert trip for four nights and, boy, was I glad to get back to civilisation!

So when we hear each year, in the season of Lent, of Jesus going into the Judean wilderness for ‘forty days’ (which is a biblical way of saying ‘umpteens days’ or a ‘very long period





of time'), we may find the whole idea quite alien and odd. Yet, for Jesus, much of the fruitfulness of his later ministry was sown in the desert: in the silence he heard the voice of God, in the stillness he found a new energy, going forth into Galilee 'in the power of the Spirit' (Luke 4:14).

And so it can be for us. 'Desert times' - those times when we turn away from some or all of our normal human activities or perhaps when they are taken away from us against our will - can prove to be very fruitful. We may learn lessons there in such a 'desert' that we cannot learn elsewhere; we may gain new perspectives and fresh vision. Going on what seems like a 'retreat' may prove to be the springboard for a new 'advance' of some kind in our normal lives or working careers.

So let me encourage you to take advantage of the season of Lent (it starts on Ash Wednesday, 2 March).

You may not fully identify with the Christian use of Lent - as a season for repentance and preparation to celebrate more fully the joyful events of Jesus' resurrection at Easter - but we all need times to 'take stock', to 'do a spring clean', to go 'back to basics' - above all, to reflect on what we are doing with our lives and why. Perhaps we will be able to look back on March 2022 as a time when we made some new resolutions or good decisions which proved, in the long run, to be really valuable.

And, yes, of course, you are most welcome to join in the church's observance of Lent: we will be meeting for our Lent Course each Wednesday at 7.30pm, as well as hosting a series of coffee mornings or light lunches on Fridays (full details to be found on our website:

www.itchenvallychurches.org).

Let's be using Lent - in whatever way we choose - as a time to 'advance'.

With best wishes and prayers.

Rev'd Peter

Keeping fit in later life - Tips from a personal trainer

Laura Turner is an experienced personal trainer specialising in outdoor training and mid-life fitness. She takes classes in a beautiful field in Easton all



through the year, whatever the weather!

Laura recommends getting outdoors to exercise because:

1. Fresh air helps alleviate insomnia.
2. Natural light is invigorating for mind and body - it lifts our mood and we feel better - a natural antidepressant!
3. Sunlight enhances energy generation in the muscles and oxidation in the tissues.
4. Sunlight also provides an important dose of Vitamin D!
5. It gives you an enhanced workout - your body has to try harder to deal with inclines, uneven terrain and obstacles.

Here are her tips for mid-late life fitness:

Fitness in your 40s and 50s:

1. Workout to maintain muscle: muscle mass decreases around 3-8% every decade after the age of 30, but if we can maintain muscle mass, all the chronic health conditions - cardiovascular disease, pre-diabetes, Alzheimers - plummet. Use weight-bearing exercises for this.
- 2 Exercise regularly: ideally 2-3 times per week. Mix it up with HIIT (high intensity interval training) which gets your heart rate up and into fat burning mode, strength training and any other form of exercise you enjoy (tennis/running/gardening...).
- 3 Eat more protein: this is essential for post workout recovery and also helps you feel fuller for longer thus reducing the temptation to reach for carbs and caffeine. Protein builds more muscle, in turn increasing your metabolic rate, boosting your energy levels and helping to fuel your exercise.

Fitness at age 60 and over:

Exercise will increase your mobility and

balance, reduce chronic conditions, help you lose weight, increase lean muscle mass and improve your sleep.

1. Get the green light: seek clearance from your doctor, but don't be afraid - the benefits of starting/maintaining exercise outweigh the fear.
2. Begin with a warm up to get your muscles firing and circulation going and to avoid injury.
3. Look for a balanced exercise routine including aerobics, strength exercises and exercises that enhance balance and proprioception (the ability to sense where your body is in a space)
4. Hydration and fuel: keep your eating habits under review and drink plenty of water.

Laura runs boot camp at Ardath Meadow in Easton every Tuesday and Thursday morning at 8.30-9.30am during term time.

Email her at rlmjt@btinternet.com for details.

Laura Turner and Nathalie Paterson

Food Spy - Gurkha's Inn

One Saturday evening not so long ago, The Other Half (TOH) and I went in search of a curry supper. TOH is not the biggest fan of curry, purporting to know little about this cuisine and being wary of the fiery spices sometimes used. But I was able to reassure him regarding the provenance of the food at this restaurant, having experienced a take-away meal at a friend's house. Located on City Road, Winchester, the best place to park for Gurkha's Inn is in the Cattle Market car park, whence it is a five minute walk. This is a small but nicely decorated restaurant and that





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evening, it was full to bursting. In fact, we could only bag a spot between 7-8.30pm for our supper so presumably, there was a second sitting after we left. This certainly attests to the restaurant's popularity.

The head chef at Gurkha's Inn, Tikaram, creates both Nepalese and Indian dishes that are blended to bring out the rich aromas and authentic flavours of these culinarily diverse regions. Tikaram was born in the remote Mt. Dhaulagiri region of Northwest Nepal and crafted his skills in the kitchens of prestigious hotels and restaurants across the Indian subcontinent, where he won many awards.

So much for the build-up, I hear you say! What was the food like? Well reader, it was terrific. Armed with a pint and half a pint of Cobra beer respectively, we munched our way through a plate of wafer thin, aromatic papadums whilst waiting for our main dishes. TOH had Haas Methi Malai which is barbequed duck cooked with fenugreek leaves in a creamy gravy. I tasted it too and it was superb. Spicy but not so much so that it overpowered the duck, which was beautifully tender. I opted for King Prawn Pasanda and enjoyed the big, juicy prawns, which were perfectly cooked and spankily fresh. We shared dishes of saffron rice, Tarka Dahl (lentils), onion bhaji and a plate of Saag (spinach) as an extra vegetable. The portions were of an excellent size. Enough to satisfy our appetites but not so much that we felt guilty not guzzling every morsel. The service was satisfactory considering the place was packed and perhaps my only criticism would be that tables are very close to each other and therefore the noise level was high. A group of three men,

just arrived from the pub I suspect, kicked up a fearful din just laughing and joking, until their food arrival quelled the decibels. I imagine weekdays are more peaceful. All in all, I can highly recommend Gurkha's Inn both for in-restaurant dining and takeaways. This delicious meal and drinks cost us £60 which we thought was very reasonable and good value for excellent food.

The practical gardener

I want to write first about weeding, something you rarely hear about from the experts but nonetheless a vital part of gardening. I always think of a weed as a plant that's in the wrong place. Most weeds are easy to remove but ground elder and bindweed fall into a different category.

So, what about techniques? Well, I hope my picture will help show how I do it.

I use three tools: a prong, a knife and a trowel. I always have a sieve close by and that's where all the stones go. I have come to an incredibly stony garden. I always weed in gloves and the



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reason for that is I often rub the soil between my hands. This breaks down lumps and helps to separate weeds and stone.

I have 3 buckets, one for weeds, one for material that is better burned and one for stone. I am a firm believer in growing soil that's free and friable. After weeding I often add compost or mulch and occasionally some Growmore, though only in the growing season (which has now started).

Weeding when it is very wet is a mistake, it's difficult to separate the lumps of soil. Most weeds go into the compost heap but not ground elder or bindweed roots, which I would burn.

Winchester is a funny place for buying gardening essentials. I needed to bubble wrap my small greenhouse to keep the many plants inside free from frost.

With energy prices so high now, I deem it essential. Well, it's easy to buy

bubble wrap but what about the little

Alliplugins needed to fasten this to the greenhouse framing. I drew a blank

everywhere and had to buy online. Strange

that most garden centres sell bubble wrap (but not the plugs); do they think it's fixed by magic?

The sowing season should now be in full swing and I have several electrical propagators in use. Now that I have a proper power supply to my shed, it was easy to connect a simple lead for this purpose. I am super careful whenever electricity is used in the garden and have made sure I have the best safety devices in place (RCBOs for the technically minded). Growing from seed does need some care. Watering is the part that needs most judgement and as seeds start to appear, you must

keep an eye on things. So a daily trip to the greenhouse is needed. By the way, the alternative is the kitchen window sill. They were built to provide a growing space.

One other task that I have achieved is to lower the ground level around my sheds. Some folk are careless when erecting a wooden building in the garden. If the base and lower parts are not protected, rot will certainly follow. So I have dug away the soil around my shed (and used it to fill a new raised bed) and filled the areas with 20mm gravel. This helps with drainage and avoids splash. Even pressure treated timber will decay if allowed to be constantly wet.

Happy Gardening!

Tony Gaster.



From the River

Writing this in the pouring rain, it is easy to think that we have had a wet winter but in fact it has been remarkably dry. Rainfall between October and April (when the terrestrial plants aren't growing) is the





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primary opportunity to recharge the aquifers that feed the river via springs. Lack of rain, if sustained, will obviously have a detrimental effect on river levels as significant abstraction occurs before the water gets to the springs.

The volume of weed in the river also has a dramatic effect on levels – think of Archimedes. The preferred weed is Ranunculus (a type of buttercup) as it collects less mud than other species and provides an ecosystem for invertebrates (aka fish food). It also provides cover for the fish from predators such as Cormorants, Herons and Otters (and fishermen). It will start growing as the spring progresses so look out for long dark green tresses waving in the current.



At this time of year, the weed is not growing and Swans can cause major damage by eating it and pulling out the roots so it can't regrow. However, if there is an established pair of adult swans present, they will aggressively defend their territory from juveniles trying to trespass on their patch so, as well as looking attractive, a pair's presence is good for the ecosystem as it reduces pressure on the weed. The pair at Chilland, who can normally be seen from the bridge, put on quite a show from time to time!

Why are water levels important? Good water quality and sufficient flow are essential for the life of the river.

Phosphorus and nitrate pollution causes algal growth which smothers and kills many invertebrates and suffocates fish eggs - higher flow will move it on and dilute it. In addition, higher flow creates more oxygen in the water which is good for the fish and encourages the Ranunculus to grow which in turn increases water levels - a virtuous circle. You can measure levels by picking a spot on one of the bridges and observing the change. We are near a seasonal low point at the moment.

The main event over Christmas was the spawning of the wild Brown Trout. The female trout dig a hole in the clean gravel, creating a small mound downstream, by turning on to their side and flapping their tail. They lay their eggs in this scoop (called a Redd) and a male will fertilise them before she covers them up. It is then important that the eggs remain undisturbed and that they don't get covered in silt until they hatch at the end of February / beginning of March. At this point they are tiny, vulnerable, 'Alevins'. You can see Redds if you look carefully at Martyr Worthy bridge and also some very obvious ones at the stream by Chilland Ford.

Andrew Impey

The Valley Gardeners: A Guide to the Snowdrop

If we had to choose one plant as the harbinger of Spring, it would surely be the snowdrop. With our local gardens, paths, banks and verges swathed in these charming little flowers, it seems to be a particularly good year for the Galanthus. Certainly, in my garden, all the snowdrops I planted last year and

the ones already in situ, are looking magnificent.

February's Valley Gardeners' lecture was all about the snowdrop, and given by Naomi Slade who has researched and written about snowdrops extensively. This is not a plant native to these climes; rather they originated in Europe and the Middle East. How they reached these shores is open to question but one theory is they were brought here by the Romans, although other botanists favour the Crusaders and even soldiers on the battlefields of the Crimea, as their transporters. Whoever it was, what a joy they are to see in the darkest, coldest days of the year. It was Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish botanist, who named the snowdrop the *Galanthus nivalis*, or "milk flower of the snow," in 1753, from the Greek 'gála' for 'milk' and 'ánthos' for 'flower'.



There are many myths surrounding the snowdrop. One, from Moldova, has it that a fight between Lady Spring and the Winter Witch caused the former's finger to be pierced and where a drop of her blood melted the snow, a snowdrop grew, the pure white flower being a symbol of Spring's victory over the Winter. It has long been known that *Galanthus* have medicinal properties and today Galanthamine – an alkaloid found in snowdrops – is used in the production of drugs to help fight Alzheimer's Disease. Longer ago, the snowdrop was used as a traditional

cure for headaches.

As Naomi told us, there is such a wide range of cultivars



that you could have them flowering from early December to late May. But most flower in February and March, heralding the approaching season of Spring. If you are planning to plant some snowdrops this year, or divide and move some you may already have, do so when the flowers have faded but before the plant sinks back into the bulb: "in the green" is the time to move or plant them to ensure success. They also like plenty of water please. Last February, The Valley Gardeners visited Welford Park, which has a five acre wood smothered with snowdrops (see picture) and 150 cultivars throughout the grounds. The honeyed scent and the pure white nodding bells is a sight and perfume to delight any heart at this time of year.

Catherine Hahn

Scottish Reeling in Itchen Abbas

Hampshire Reels is a youthful group of like-minded folk who want to teach and enjoy Scottish reeling. The group started in December 2021 and we have been having lots of fun dancing Scottish reels in Itchen Abbas village hall about once a month.

Lucy Collis reports:

"The few times I have been to a *ceilidh* I have joined in enthusiastically but never really been sure what my feet and hands should be doing. Just before Christmas I heard that Elnor and

'Highland Types.'



'Full Flow!'

friends were setting up some sessions to teach their teenagers how to Scottish dance so I went along twice. It was such a relief to find there was a proper teacher who went right back to basics and walked us through each dance. He has taught Londoners to reel in Wandsworth Town Hall for many years. We then had great fun practising. It was good for all ages and a great way to get exercise on a dark evening. You don't need to take a partner either (mine refused). The good news is that they are going to keep going and everyone is welcome. I'm even hoping to get my teenagers to join me next time."

Suitable for complete beginners: teenagers and up. Just turn up on the night - no need to book (£5 on the door). Lateral Flow Test beforehand please. Squash and nibbles provided.

We put our scheduled dates on our Facebook and Instagram pages: search for "Hampshire Reels" and come along! Next date is **5 March, 7.30-10pm**. Email hampshirereels@gmail.com.
Lucy Collis and Elnor Spearing

Easton W.I.

This month, Easton W.I. members and friends enjoyed a visit to Chawton House, close to Jane Austen's home. Jane's brother, John, enjoyed the Knights' friendship and became "part of their family" changing his name to Knight and inheriting the house and estate. A fascinating house, also home to the women's library, which is open to the public and can be booked for study by researchers. The books are all by women or about women.



A big thank you to Ina Williams, our programme secretary, for arranging the outing and booking us a Zoom in March to hear about the schoolrooms that were discovered in the sealed air raid shelters of a Kent school and enjoy the humorous illustrations painted by their art teacher during that period.

Kyrene Beames

From the Parish Council

Life appears to be getting back to normal and for the Valley that means the Spring Litter Pick is on. The date set is Saturday, 26 March, starting at the usual five meeting points. Please see the advert on page 5 for details. It's a great community event so let's see if we can have a big turnout and have our



Parish once again "Clean for the Queen" and thanks to the Ladies of the WI it will end with tea, coffee and cakes in Martyr Worthy Village

Hall.

A second date to note is that work on the footpath behind Shelley Close in Itchen Abbas is scheduled to start on Monday, 21 March and is estimated to take about seven days. While work is taking place please keep away and follow the diversion signs.

Three items all involving cars. First, break-ins at Couch Green and the Country Park. Margot Power and I met with our local Police Officer and his Support Officer to see what can be done to help prevent cars being broken into at these locations. There are no easy solutions but one idea that may help is to lower the hedge on the south side of Couch Green car park. This would make the cars more visible from the road but the downside is that it would not be so good for wildlife habitats in the hedge. Please let us know what you think. The police did think cameras are useful even if they do not immediately lead to catching and prosecuting thieves. They help build up information that can lead to a satisfactory result. Installation and maintenance would require funding but the possibility of installing cameras will be investigated.

Monitoring and controlling the speed of cars is a current issue as other parishes have dropped out of sharing the use of the Automatic Speed Indicator (ASI) and we are the only parish left in the original scheme. Before deciding on any major change, the present ASI will be

kept and moved between the two positions on the B3047, one in Martyr Worthy and one in Itchen Abbas. We may look at other places to site it as well. It may be decided to keep the present indicator long term or alternatively have a new one, like those that give a smiley face to drivers who keep to the limit, but that decision will not be until we are looking at the 2022/23 budget. Please let us know what you think.

The third item involving cars is the "20 is Plenty Campaign". The idea is to have 20mph as the default position for speed limit in Hampshire's villages. The Parish Council supports this idea in principle but in the Itchen Valley it is neither practical nor sensible to have a 20mph limit on all of our roads. However there are places where it would be desirable.

Recently there have been several problems of communication. Before Christmas we were advised that our website needed upgrading. The cost was small and we were told it would take about a week, so it was agreed to go ahead. It has not quite worked out like that. Upgrading has proved more difficult and so far has taken the best part of two months. Fortunately the cost has remained the same.

If you want to use our website to put out information on your behalf, please check with our Clerk or with our Webmaster.

Still on the subject of communications it would help, if you require an answer from the Parish Council, that you talk to us in good time. You can contact any of your Parish Councillors or our Clerk and the areas they specifically cover is on our website, but please remember it can take time to find a correct and comprehensive answer. If it is regarding a planning application,

please remember **two** members of the Council have to be present and they cannot make an instant decision. You can come to our Council and Committee meetings to make a presentation.

Dates, times and locations are on all the notice boards.

Hope to see you all at the Litter Pick.

Patrick Appleby.

Winchester City Council Updates



**From Councillors
Margot Power and
Russell Gordon-
Smith**

Sewage, chemicals and pesticides - none of us want this stuff

in our local waterways! Improving local water quality is a passion of mine and Russell's, and if my mail bag is any indication, we are not the only ones concerned about the health of our rivers, streams and brooks. They are not only beautiful, they provide restorative space for us all and vital habitats for wildlife.

We are pushing for Winchester City Council to add the protection of rivers and the creatures that live there to its biodiversity plan.

Individually, however, we can all play our part, so here's some ideas on how you can make a difference and help clean up our local rivers.

Cut back on the water you use from the tap and toilet!!

Every drop of tap water used comes from local chalk aquifers - the more we use, the less there is in the aquifer to feed our rivers. Purifying water to drinking standards produces a significant carbon footprint, so using

less helps reduce your carbon footprint as well. Actions range from easy to challenging. 'Shower not bath' is well known if you want to reduce water consumption but why not set a timer for five minutes and/or use an aerator or low-flow shower: power showers increase the volume of water used.

Toilets account for over 35% of all the water used in the home so: install a Hippo, free from Southern Water, if you don't have dual flush; repair toilet leaks (dual flush toilets often leak at the valve after a period of time and need replacing); and, if you're feeling keen, adopt the mantra "if it's yellow let it mellow" overnight and flush fewer times! Run washing and dishwashing machines only when full please, don't run taps unnecessarily (common when toothbrushing), and promptly repair leaking and dripping taps.

Change your cleaning habits: use less cleaning product - they all have an adverse ecological impact. A lot of grime can be removed with a hot damp cloth! Use in moderation toilet fresheners, detergents, fabric conditioners and washing powders/liquids - these can adversely impact the natural bacteriological balance in the septic tank. Use bleach and disinfectants **VERY SPARINGLY** - bleaches kill friendly bacteria. Use non-biological and less aggressive cleaning products. There are many environmental ranges and even a biodegradable bleach. Look for labelling which shows that products are septic tank friendly. Don't use your toilet and sink as a rubbish bin!

Garden for water conservation: by engineering levels you can reduce run off - the silt impacts water quality - and retain more water for your plants, as well as providing possible boggy bits, for interest and eco-diversity. You are

all, of course, using water butts where you can, not on seedlings though, there's a risk of fungal disease.

To reduce run off and increase retention, grow plants that use less water, and increase permeability - not grass. Grass is very overrated - it's good for playing on, and livestock, but a lawn takes a lot of love, effort and chemicals – which again will end up in the aquifer.



Volunteer. And finally, get involved. There are lots of volunteering opportunities with <https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/watercress-and-winterbourne> - I did!

Here I am invertebrate sampling, invertebrates being an indicator of water quality.

Cllr Margot Power

From Fiona Isaacs

Help with Heating costs - Support is being offered by the government to some households to help with rising energy costs. A

£150 rebate on your council tax is available for those in council tax bands A-D. You can apply through the council tax section at Winchester City Council (WCC).

Rural bus routes and issues - On 27



January 2022, I attended the Hampshire Passenger Transport Forum. I was able to feed back the issues raised to me by residents across our rural ward - an important issue to many. Bus companies report that the pre-pandemic levels of passengers have not yet returned. We looked at how we could improve on this.

Why consultation is important - I was notified that plans for an altered layout, design and a reduced number of car parking spaces at the proposed Dean car park in Alresford were going to be discussed at WCC cabinet. This would prevent any public speaking or representation from the Chamber of Commerce and would not give adequate time for New Alresford Town Council to feed back in the usual manner. In November 2017, the plans and designs that were presented and accepted in relation to the land purchase of the car park had been through numerous consultations with all key stakeholders. Therefore, the proposed reduction of spaces and alteration of the land acquisition and the design, without consultation with key stakeholders, does not sit well with me. This car park is desperately needed and the new proposed plans could have a negative impact on the feel of the Dean along with the economy, if people don't want to use the carpark as a result. I have formally requested that this be delayed and that they re-consult with key stakeholders.

Cllr Fiona Isaacs

Jackie's County Corner

Notice of roadworks - Many of you ask me why a road is being dug up, or when a diversion is due to end? The County Council is encouraging all road users to connect to <https://>



one.network. It is really useful. After signing up, you can activate layers, and by diving in at a greater magnification, you can see the roadworks and details of it. You can

also request alerts. I now have alerts for my division daily - they arrive at 4am! You can define the boundary of interest. I recommend this for your journey to work.

20mph zones - The new proposal to introduce 20mph zones is a complete change of attitude from the County Council towards 20mph speed limits. To work out how and if this proposal is to go ahead, a working party has been set up to look at the options, and review results of the Pilot schemes, including those in Winchester and Micheldever. Importantly, it includes seeking the support of the Police in its remit.

Booking Household Waste Recycling Centres - The County Council has confirmed a booking scheme for their Household Waste Recycling Centres for the foreseeable future. This was the result of a survey of users: 89% liked the scheme. I think they missed one important point- it didn't include those who don't use the tips! I have asked again for on-the-day booking. I was reassured that it is an aspiration, but at the time of writing is not in place because of a software issue. We also asked for equity for cyclists who can now book as road users, and argued for better pedestrian access in Alresford.

Housing numbers - The Dever Society has published a useful statement to clarify information on housing numbers in the district. They were dismayed to

see the ridiculously huge figure bandied about: this is the developer's aspiration figure. Winchester needs to agree to the release of land or brownfield sites to provide space for around 2,700 homes in the new Local Plan to 2038. You can see more about this on my website: search 'scare stories'.

Minerals and Waste Plan - Meanwhile, the County Council continues to upgrade the Minerals and Waste Plan. I am proposing that oil and gas extraction licences are not renewed in this County. One impact of the Climate emergency is the conscious public and industrial increase in recycling, and many recycling companies are seeking cheap land with large areas of yard space for waste management activities. These sites are often poorly situated on rural roads. The increasingly heavy lorries destroy the roads and make it dangerous for other road users. With the changing emphasis on pedestrian, horseriders and cyclists, I have argued for a long time that this is unacceptable. This is a current concern for the Worthys, Stoke Charity and Sutton Scotney. I have been working with the officers to raise awareness of this problem in planning the roads for the site at Three Maids Hill. The entrance has now been moved away from a narrow road to connect directly with the main trunk network, with other protections for the environment. As I write, I am hopeful that the outcome of the Ecogen application will reflect this new hierarchy too: walkers, bikes and horses, cars, lorries.

Sale at auction of land beneath adopted roads - This can be very worrying for residents. Alerted to the sale at auction of a road in Alresford, this is a useful reminder of what road adoption actually means. The developer usually retains the land, but the County

Council takes ownership of the 'top two spits' - two spades' depth, and gives full rights of passage over it. Using the County solicitors, I could reassure the residents that auction of the land beneath would not change their rights of access. This seems to be a new trend. Please contact me if you find out that your road is 'up for auction' so we can clarify the picture.

Jackie Porter

Jackie.porter@hants.gov.uk tel/text
07973 696 085. Ansaphone 01962
791054

www.jackieporter.co.uk

Steve Brine MP



Constituents sometimes say to me, "I just wish politicians in London would get on with the job", so I bring good news. The

media may not report such but that, alas, is something we cannot control. Since my last update for the Itchen Valley News, I have spoken in Parliament about the new ten-year Cancer Plan. As a former Cancer Minister, I know huge strides have been made in cancer care in recent years – indeed in the last fifteen years, one-year survival has increased by more than 10% and for patients diagnosed in 2015, their survival rate was 72% after one year.

Now we need to go further and make a reality of the ambition to see three-quarters of cancers diagnosed at stage one or two. We know early diagnosis is cancer's magic key, so this is a must. You can see more on this at stevebrine.com/prioritynhs

Secondly, my recent work around local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) including, in particular, for families who have a child with special educational needs, led me to speak in the Commons debate during Children's Mental Health Week about the despair many of my constituents feel at ongoing issues accessing children's mental health services in Hampshire. I read out a series of personal, anonymised, stories sent to me by constituents in my efforts to get them heard.

While strong advances have been made by the Government – a new Special Educational Needs and Disability plan is imminent and huge sums of money continue to be invested – I still regularly hear from parents angry and desperate for help that is just not there. None of the personal stories I received ahead of this debate made easy reading but they all showed a sense of despair at where to turn next. Here too, early diagnosis is often what's missing and as a result children are falling further down, meaning they're helped later and, as a result, the intervention they need is significantly more acute.

Too often families are waiting for a referral from CAMHS that is not forthcoming and, worse than that, they're told not to ask how long the wait might be so they're unable to plan accordingly. Covid has been a disaster for children and young people's mental health so none of this is getting easier.

I want the new 'My Planned Care' website, launched last month to keep patients up-to-date on their wait for surgery as the NHS tackles the Covid backlog, to include information on CAMHS referrals which is the least that should happen if we want to properly realise parity of care between

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physical and mental health. I plan to meet with the new Integrated Care System covering Hampshire & the IOW in the coming weeks given its new role holding services, including CAMHS, accountable across the NHS. Finally,

I have written a lot about Green Winchester and events leading to – and since – COP26 in Glasgow, which I attended. Our focus now shifts to holding Ministers to their promises and delivering our Net Zero Plan. Further to this, I will be holding a very special AskTheMinister event in Winchester on the evening of Thursday 7 April with COP President Alok Sharma MP. More details and sign-up to receive GW updates can be found at greenwinchester.com

More at stevebrine.com but instant updates at fb.com/SteveBrineMP
Steve Brine, MP for Winchester & Itchen Valley

Easton's very own lock-up

A recent article in *World of Interiors* (February 2022 edition) about the 'village lock-up' prompted this piece on our very own gaol, or "round house" as they came to be known, in Easton. Tudor Thatch is a 16th century cottage once home to the village bobby.

In the photo, he can be seen standing on Avington Lane with Tudor Thatch's



chimney and steeply sloping thatched roof behind him. In the garden of this Grade II listed, 16th century house, home for many years to Pete, Nicky and their daughter Georgina, is a small outbuilding that can now be seen from the road thanks to some recent cutting back: this was the Easton lock-up. Thought to have been built in the 18th century, this red brick and timber construct originally contained two cells. Converted many years ago into an office/library, it sports a newer clay-tiled roof but retains what looks like original timbers and brickwork. It is an unusual example of a village lock-up due to its location in the grounds of a private house: most such cells can be found in the middle of a village or incorporated into community buildings, walls or gates.

First used in the 16th century, these gaols came in handy in rural villages to incarcerate miscreants on a temporary basis, given that the nearest police cell





was some distance away. The local bobby at that time would have been an upstanding member of the community, probably appointed by the church or the Lord of the Manor and probably unpaid. Rural villages struggled to cope with crime since, before the County Police Act of 1839, there were no organised rural police forces in Britain. The most common misdemeanor resulting in a spell in the cell would have been drunkenness, as illustrated by this line in Charles Kingsley's 1863 work *The Water Babies*: 'Put him in the round house 'til he gets sober'. But it would have addressed a plethora of crimes such as theft, burglary, shootings, the obstruction of watchmen and the stealing of livestock, and housed all manner of rogue - often for a single night - until they could be removed to - in this case probably Winchester - for trial or longer imprisonment.

Nathalie Paterson

Itchen Insight

Many of you will know Penelope Kellie, who has lived at Steeple Cottage in Easton for nearly 36 years and spearheads the wonderful flower arrangements at St Mary's.

We thought you might like to find out a bit more about this lively and interesting member of our community via a Q&A put together by some local teenagers.

Where were you brought up?

I was born in Southampton General and brought up in the Test Valley at Pittleworth Manor, between Houghton and Mottisfont.

What was the favourite thing you did growing up?

The best thing about my childhood was its freedom: my sister and I spent hours building houses in the barn out of straw, riding horses and playing down by the River Test with only the direction to be 'back for lunch'.

What was your first job?

After attending secretarial college, in the '60s, I started working in London. My parents for my 21st gave me money to buy a car, but instead I used it to buy a passage to Cape Town on Union Castle's Windsor Castle, from where I worked my way through Africa, from



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Itchen Valley Churches

Wednesday 2 March - Ash Wednesday

7.30pm - Ash Wednesday - St John's, Itchen Abbas

Sunday 6 March

8am - BCP Holy Communion - St John's, Itchen Abbas

10.00am All Age Worship - St Mary's, Easton

Sunday 13 March

10.00am Parish Communion - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

6pm Evensong - St Mary's, Avington

Sunday 20 March

8am BCP Holy Communion - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

10am Valley Worship - St John's, Itchen Abbas

Wednesday 23 March

7.30pm - 'Passion' in Readings & Music - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Sunday 27 March

10am Mothering Sunday - St Mary's, Easton

6pm Evening Communion - St John's, Itchen Abbas

We are asking that everyone continues to wear a face covering, especially when singing, to give protection to those who need it.

Travelling with Jesus to Jerusalem.

In addition to our services on Ash Wednesday and 23 March (above) we will meet in St John's, Itchen Abbas, on four other Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm (9, 16, 30 March & 6 April) for a time of teaching and reflection on

Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. We will be watching four videos from the Rector's 'In the Steps of Jesus' Film series and considering Jesus' actions in four places on his way to the Cross: Jericho, Bethany, the Mount of Olives and the streets of Jerusalem.

Rector - Revd. Peter Walker

revd.peter@itchenvalleychurches.org 01962 588313

LLM - Mr Gerry Stacey

gerry.Stacey@biblesociety.org.uk 07554 438973

Parish Administrator - Beccy Clark

admin@itchenvalleychurches.org 01962 779845

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Cape Town to Rhodesia to Nairobi to Cairo and home via the Middle East. I helped do the first tourist survey of South West Africa, worked on the referendum for the District Officer in Inyanga, Rhodesia and assisted the Attorney General of Kenya, Charles Njonjo (who, without fail, wore a red carnation in his buttonhole) and the Australian High Commissioner, also in Nairobi.

What's your profession?

I've been working in up-market yacht chartering for many years (in which I still dabble) and came to this via a number of routes. After Africa and marrying Jim (to whom I was introduced because he wanted 'a bird' for the Regimental Ball!), I worked for boat builders who built the Otter, Lark and Seal Boats. Then, when we moved to Brunei (where we lived for over a decade), I worked for Jasra Harrisons, who were BA Sales Agents, doing their marketing and organising expat holidays.

On arrival back in the UK, I became interested in yacht chartering through a friend and decided to attend the Antigua Yacht Charter Show to see what was what. There I met Eduardo Diez, who had just bought the two first, up-market boats to be chartered in the Galapagos. Over a glass of wine I offered to be his agent in the UK and ended up marketing Galapagos sailing holidays to all the UK tour operators. This led to selling high-end, crewed yacht chartering worldwide.

What's the best thing about your work?

The people. Not just my clients, many of whom have become friends, but the other yacht charter brokers. At the start of lockdown a group of yacht brokers started talking on the "House

Party" app, where we had regular get-togethers. As they live all over the world, we had people in San Diego attending with their morning coffee, those in Boston and Ecuador a lunchtime drink and those in Turkey and over here enjoying an evening tipple.

What got you through Lockdown?

As well as the House Party chats, lots of outdoor renovation work at Steeple Cottage. I painted rails, and so on, cleared sheds and this was peppered with frequent friendly chats with passers-by, making it all nicely social!

Do you have any exciting plans for 2022/the future?

I'm going to start travelling again!

What's your favourite thing about living in the Valley?

The kindness.

What advice would you give to your teenage self?

If you want to do something, go for it!
Penelope Kellie was answering questions from Antonia and Hugo Paterson

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Is your duck a dabbling or diver?

Winter into spring is a wonderful time to see wildlife, and birds especially. As the cold grip of the Arctic winter takes hold on the lakes, pools and marshes of Northern Europe and Russia, huge numbers of swans, ducks and geese retreat to the relative warmth of the UK. The UK's lakes, rivers, reservoirs and coasts offer a winter home to an estimated 2.1 million ducks!

Ducks can be split into two broad groups: dabblers and divers. As the name suggests, diving ducks feed mainly



by diving underwater, using their strong feet (and sometimes their wings) to swim and chase fish, scoop up insects or graze on tasty aquatic plants. These ducks can be seen year-round, but winter brings a boost in numbers as migrant birds arrive. Some species, like scaup and smew, are mostly winter visitors and are rarely seen during summer.

Examples of diving ducks you may spot (though some are more widespread than others) include pochard, tufted duck, scaup, goldeneye, eider, smew, goosander and red-breasted merganser. The latter three species are known as sawbills, a sub-group of ducks so named for the saw-like serrations on their slim bills that help them catch and hold fish.

Dabbling ducks, however, feed predominantly at the surface, sometimes even grazing on land. Many dabblers can often be seen upending, with their heads underwater and their hind parts in the air.

Species of dabbling ducks you may chance your binoculars upon include mallard, gadwall, wigeon, pintail, shoveler and teal. There are helpful tips to help identify each of these ducks on the Wildlife Trust website at hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife.

One useful trick for identifying ducks (especially females) is to examine the speculum. The speculum is a coloured patch on the secondary flight feathers, which are the feathers at the trailing edge of the wing, close to the body.

The speculum is often a distinctive colour and can easily be seen in flight, and often when birds are swimming or standing.

Also consider that for some ducks, the plumage of males and females of the same species can look markedly different. This applies to many, but not all, birds.

Jake Kendall-Ashton

Bird of the month



Magpies are one of our most recognised birds. They are extremely intelligent and can make and use tools and imitate human speech.

However, they are predators, feeding on invertebrates, mice, birds' eggs and young nestlings.

The old rhyme 'one for sorrow, two for joy' etc reminds us that magpies can gather - such a group is known as a parliament, mischief or congregation of magpies!

Elaine Labram

And a last chance to spot...

Now is your last chance to see Redwings and Fieldfares as they overwinter here before returning



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Redwing

further North to breed. Flocking high up over our fields and perching in clusters at the top of tall trees, they can be difficult to identify so here are some tips.

They are both a species of thrush so are shaped accordingly. The Fieldfare is the larger of the two, being a bit larger than a Blackbird while the Redwing is a little smaller than a Blackbird.

They tend to flock together unlike Song or Mistle Thrushes who prefer to go solo. Both have spotted breasts but Redwings have a distinct red patch under each wing which is clearly visible when in flight, while Fieldfares have a distinctly slate grey head and rump. Redwings also have a bold, white supercilium (stripe above the eye).

You might spot them on the ground in fields, feeding in groups on invertebrates, their gait a quick running hop, while in the air both have a 'direct' flight, which means they fly in more or less a straight line, their glide



Fieldfare

regularly punctuated by strong wing flaps. Redwings make a sound like an indrawn whistle whereas Fieldfares sound a rapid "chak chak chak".

Nathalie Paterson

Following Storm Eunice - top tips for surviving a power outage

The Itchen Valley got a battering during Storm Eunice last month, as evidenced by the photos below. Local volunteers and service providers pulled together but electricity didn't return to a number of local homes for more than 36 hours. Tips on how to prepare for similar incidents (which, many believe, shall become only more frequent) have been circulating, so here are our top 10:

1. Keep a stash of glowsticks handy - they are much safer than candles, cast wider light and can last up to 12 hours. You can get military grade ones and white or green is best.
2. Make sure everyone in the house has an LED torch with spare batteries (LEDs last way longer than normal)



Photo: Peter Sly



batteries). Headtorches are really useful.

3. Invest in an "Uninterruptible Power Supply", which contains a battery that automatically kicks in when the device it's hooked up to senses a loss of power.

4. Keep a battery-powered radio tuned into your local station.

5. Get a portable gas heater and focus on keeping one main room warm.

6. Eat first the food in the fridge that will spoil the soonest.

7. Get a portable gas cooker stove and a good supply of gas.

8. Don't open your freezer or fridge door unless you have to.

9. Don't leave candles unattended!

10. If given advance warning of an outage, boil water and keep it in a thermos flask and fill up some hot water bottles. Also charge up your phones, laptops and other devices.

James Paterson

Tiddlers Tale

From Isla Young age 6

Q: What colour is the wind?

A: Blew!



Book Review

I really enjoyed the memoir, "Free: Coming of Age at the End of History" by Lea Ypi, a Sunday Times' Memoir of the Year and Radio 4 Book of the Week. Ypi's autobiographical account of growing up in a post-communist Albania in the 1980s and early '90s is a poignant and often funny tale of how real people caught up in political turmoil have managed to cope.

At the time, Albania, the last Stalinist outpost in Europe, was almost impossible to visit or leave. It was a place of close neighbourhood and

community but also of the secret police and queuing for food. Ypi describes the word games that her parents played in order to maintain her innocence; by telling her that family members



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were at university when, in fact, they were incarcerated in camps for political prisoners. After the collapse of Hoxha's communist regime came capitalism and the book vividly describes how it felt to live through this transition, with neighbours fighting over the ownership of an empty Coca-Cola can. Unemployment, pyramid schemes and near civil war ensued and Ypi records how, like thousands of other Albanians, her mother fled with her brother to neighbouring Italy to seek a better life.

Ypi is now a professor of political theory at the LSE and offers no easy answers as to which system is preferable; liberal capitalism or Marxism, but her book is well worth reading as a personal account of their impact on civilians.

Sophie Goodall

And finally...

Are they still here?

In response to an article before Christmas in The Guardian which touched on the vexed question of how to get rid of dinner guests who outstay their welcome, my wife Alex was moved to write a letter to the editor. It appeared the following day as follows: *"Regarding encouraging guests to leave after a long evening, my husband finds that appearing in the doorway in his pyjamas usually does the trick"*.

Gratifyingly, this started a thread which in subsequent days included the following further suggestions from readers the length and breadth of the country. A correspondent from Wolverhampton suggested that *"guests might leave more quickly if her husband appears in the doorway without his*

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Dionne Yoga	Fri 0845	Dionne	07961 888676
Bump and Baby Yoga	Mon, Tue & Wed	Janet	
Enjoy Zumba	Sun 0930	Helen	
Bridge	Monthly Mon 1000	Maureen	

Martyr Worthy Village Hall Lucinda.Ffennell@martyrworthyvillagehall@gmail.com

Sherin Shefik Yoga	Mon 1730 Sun 1900	Sherin	
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Itchen Valley News Survey

As a new editorial team, we are keen to understand what the Itchen Valley News readership values about the magazine and what else you would like to see featured. Please could you complete the questionnaire, remove the page, and drop it off at any one of the churches in Avington, Easton, Itchen Abbas, or Martyr Worthy for collection.

1) How do you rate the Itchen Valley News Magazine for interesting content? (1 = poor, 10 = great) Please circle the appropriate answer.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2) Which sections of the magazine are you most interested in? (Please tick as many as you like)

Local community events including church, lectures, sport

Countryside, nature, and climate

Local politics and government decision making

Local business enterprise

Local history - people and places

Other (please state)

3) What would you like to see in the IVN that currently does not appear?

4) Would you be prepared to contribute to its content either regularly or occasionally? Please leave your name and contact details and we'll be in touch.

Yes

No

5) What is your age category? Please circle the relevant range.

Under 18 18-39 40-59 60-79 80+

All responses are anonymous (unless you leave your details as a potential contributor) and will be held in the strictest of confidence. If there is more than one responder per household, please feel free to leave additional comments in the church boxes. **Thank you!**





pyjamas” whilst a lady from Oxford remembered that her dad’s line was “Would you like a sherry before you go?”.

One writer recalled her great-uncle who used to “sit down at the piano and play God Save the King”.

*Jane’s Bristolian grandfather used to “get up, wind the clock, take his teeth out and announce “I’m off now” and go to bed”. Even more pointedly, Bill’s father-in-law from from Bath “on waking up from a nap would ask “Are those b*****s till here?”” Employing a little more finesse, Roy from Southport remembered that his “Nan used to signal time for bed by semi-discreetly taking off her corsets, then placing them in the oven of the fire range, so that they would be warm the following morning.”*

Mary’s parents from Osset had a boxer dog that on the stroke of 10pm would “go over to his favourite chair. Then he’d firmly push the knee of its occupant, until they took the hint to stand up.”

Alas, none of the contributors mentioned the ruse employed by an otherwise amiable Easton host who, at the conclusion of his lunchtime drinks parties at two o’clock sharp, would get out his wheezing old Hoover and run over guests’ feet until the house was cleared.

Steve Percy

Local monthly information

Itchen Valley area waste collections in March

Black bins and brown garden bins on Friday 11 and 25 March. Green bins on Friday 4 and 18 March. Glass boxes on Friday 4 March.

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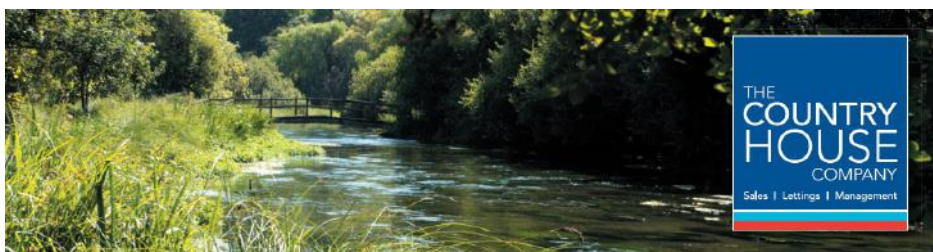
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