

ITCHEN Valley News

Issue 121 March 2024

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



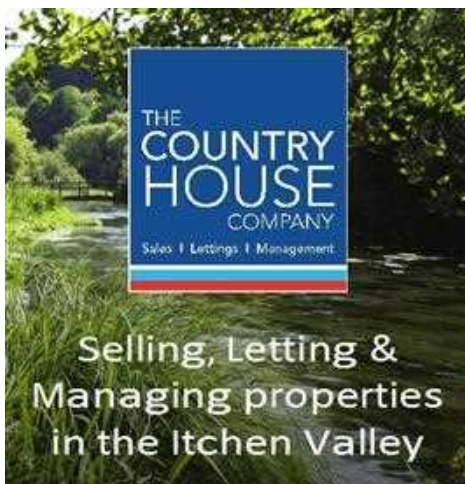
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WELCOME to the Itchen Valley News

Welcome to the March edition, which is packed, I hope you will agree, with interesting articles and news. With our eco warrior hat on, we look at the way many local businesses are trying to make a difference to their carbon footprint and there is a report on the local sustainability event. Also, Steve Percy writes about how we can all help to conserve that precious asset we do rather take for granted - water. With Easter almost upon us (how did that happen?) I offer you the delights of hot cross brownies.

All around us are signs of early Spring, whether it be the graceful nodding heads of snowdrops, of which the Valley Gardeners saw plenty in the Avon valley recently (see page 11), or the new lambs in Easton, one of which with his very proud Mum, features on our front cover this month. Although it is more than a little wet at the time of writing, there is a burgeoning of Nature waiting to burst forth in the approaching weeks. As it is still technically Winter - and I say that as a gardener, for whom Spring starts on 1 March - why not try and identify the trees which line our chalk stream using the information on the Watercress and Winterbourne page 9. Or, if you fancy a stomp through the Candover Valley, there is no better place to stop for a coffee and cake than The Yard and an article about that features on page 18. If you are wondering why there is no Pub Spy review of The Chestnut Horse in this issue (as trailed last month) we have been hearing very

varied reports and thought it better to wait until a bit later in the year to review it in a fair and measured way. Do please keep your articles and photographs coming in and, by the way, we are still looking for more people to join the editing team so please contact Mary if you are interested either at mary.c.hogg@hotmail.co.uk, or itchenvalleynews@gmail.com, or by phone: 07850 524795.

Next month's editors will be Charlotte Appleby and Brigid McManus.

Catherine Hahn

Itchen Valley News

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What's On

Lent Lunches, Fridays in March

1 March; Liz Platt, Meadows, Martyr Worthy, SO21 1DS

8 March; Lucy de Laszlo, Chilland House, Martyr Worthy SO21 1EB.

15 March: Lucy Collis, Demelza, Easton SO21 1EF.

See poster on page 25.

The Cricketers, Easton

Saturday 2 March at 7pm

Welcome evening for all to drop in to say hi and enjoy a drink and food. See page 20.

St. Mary's Church, Easton

Flower Rota Meeting

Wednesday 6 March at 10.30am

Steeple Cottage, Easton.

See page 14 for more details.

Itchen Abbas Primary School Quiz Night

Friday 8 March at 7.30pm

Itchen Abbas & Avington Village Hall.

See poster on page 10.

Charity Dog Walk in aid of Home-Start Winchester

Friday 15 March at 10.30am

Sponsored by Gay Dog Boarding Kennels.

Meet at Bighton Village Hall, Bighton, SO24 9RE at 10.30am. Two guided walks of different lengths. Both walks leave at 10.45am prompt, whatever the weather and will include some stiles. Walkers participate at their own risk. Donation £12.50 per walker (includes soup and a ploughman's lunch) Non-dog walkers and lunch only welcome too.

Book your tickets online (plus 87p booking fee) at

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/home-start-winchester-districts>

or send a cheque payable to Home-Start Winchester & Districts to The Carroll Centre, Somers Close, Winchester SO22 4EJ, call 07976 686979 or email: info@home-startwinchester.org.uk

Itchen Valley Spring Litter Pick

Saturday March 16 10am.

See poster on page 36

Brew with a View

Wednesdays 13 and 27 March 3-5pm

Easton Village Hall

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Thursday 21 March at 6pm

St Johns Church, Itchen Abbas

Alresford Art Society

Thursday 28 March at 7.30pm



A demonstration of a mountainscape in acrylics by Mark Warner.

Bishop's Sutton Village Hall, Alresford Road (B3047), Bishops Sutton SO24 0AH.

Non-members welcome – admission £3. For further information: 01962 732043 or visit

www.artsociety.alresford.org

or call 07976 686979

Save the Date

Avington Village Car Boot Sale

Sunday 28 April from 9 – 12pm,
opposite the Avington golf course.

More details next month.

Friday 3 May

Prince's Mead Alumni Open Day

Please visit the website to sign up for
this event:

www.princesmeadschool.org.uk

Winchester GOLD

**Wednesday 8 May from 10am-
4pm**

Upper Farm, Down Farm Lane,
Headbourne Worthy, SO23 7LA

Easton and Martyr Worthy Safari Supper

Saturday 11 May

Full details and application form in the
April issue of the Itchen Valley News

Anna & Terry McGowan

Valley Lent Lunches

About 40 people attended the first of
the Lent Lunches. Mike Gretton, former
Chairman of Youth Options the charity
being supported this year, addressed
the group. www.youthoptions.org.uk



Hot Cross Brownies

175g salted butter

80g golden syrup

280g golden caster sugar

1 tbsp ground cinnamon

1 tbsp freshly grated nutmeg

320g dark chocolate (70% cocoa),
chopped into small pieces

4 medium free-range eggs, beaten

70g plain flour

2-3 hot cross buns, split, toasted
and cooled

Melt the butter and syrup in a large
saucepan over a medium heat. Add
the sugar and spices, then simmer
for 3-4 minutes until dissolved.

Take off the heat, add the
chocolate and mix with a wooden
spoon. Add the beaten egg and mix
in until smooth. Finally, add the
flour and beat until incorporated.

Line a 20cm square tin with baking
paper. Tear the toasted hot cross
buns into rough 2cm square pieces
and scatter them into the tin.

Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/
gas 4. Spoon the brownie mix into
the tin and allow to stand for 15
minutes so the mix settles over and
into the buns.

Bake for 35-40 minutes until gently
set and wobbly in the middle. Don't
be tempted to leave the brownies
in the oven longer than the cooking
time as they'll become dry.

Allow to cool, then chill overnight.
The next day, turn out, remove the
baking paper and trim the edges
(for nibbling!). Turn the right way
up and cut into squares to serve. A
knife dipped in hot water will make
this much easier. Happy Easter.

Catherine Hahn

No Life Without It

For those of us minded to be critical of Southern Water, the past 12 months have provided rich pickings. From raw sewage in rivers and the sea to their performance on fixing leaks, the seeming failure to provide sufficient resilience on sewage treatment and water storage, executive bonuses and the threat of price increases, it has not been a good year for the company.

And yet, do their failings risk deflecting us from recognising the fact that our water is a precious resource that is not inexhaustible? With changing climates, many places around the world, some very close to home, are learning just how precious it is. And although we have had recent high levels of rainfall in the UK, we also have experienced near-drought conditions for weeks on end in the last couple of years. And these may become more common in future.

So, perhaps we should be critical not just of the water company but also of ourselves and our attitude to water and how we value it and use it. For example, is it ever permissible to use mains water on lawns just to keep them looking green, particularly when the sun is shining? Have we installed water butts to supplement our gardening needs? And are we as economical as we could be in using water domestically by having showers rather than baths, in minimising unnecessary laundering of clothes and, even, in failing to turn the tap off when cleaning our teeth for the prescribed two minutes, the latter potentially wasting up to 12 litres each time?

Whilst some of these measures may



appear trivial, irksome and patronising, the growing population will mean that water management will become more critical. Utility Bidder reports that the average UK resident uses 150 litres per day and that 80% of folks have scope to make significant reductions were they to change their habits in the ways referred to above. I wonder how many of us in this category might join the other 20% if we to put our minds to it. Every little helps!

‘When the well is dry, we know the worth of water’. Benjamin Franklin 1746.

Steve Percy

How topical this article is, given the plight of the residents of Catalonia at present. Severe water rationing is in place there due to reservoirs being only 16% full. Ed.

Comings and Goings

Easton welcomes Joanna Kinnear to Newbridge Cottage. Joanna has moved down from Yorkshire and has three grown up married children. Also, Sam and Toby who work at The Chestnut Horse have moved into Fernleigh.

Jude Mezger

New Leaf Alresford's first Sustainability in Business event

Approximately 30 business owners and managers gathered at The Flowerpots Inn, Cheriton towards the end of January for a buzzing Sustainability in Business event, organised by New Leaf. Supported with funding from Winchester City Council, the event featured three presentations.



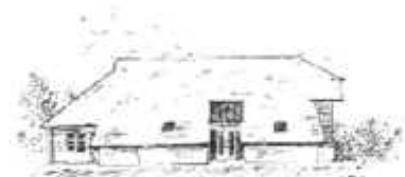
First, Jaimie and Paul from The Pollinator, who work with businesses and help them achieve B Corp certification, spoke about the power of finding the purpose in your business, and the benefits of transparency. Then Simon Burvill from furniture business Gaze Burvill described the transformative journey his business has been on, the rejuvenated connection with employees, a new approach to profit and the benefits of their relationship with a charity aligned with their business ethos. The third speaker was Stuart Mills from local charity Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis (WinACC), who outlined the support available to businesses, both locally and nationally - from community energy initiatives and accreditation schemes to free Low Carbon Assessments. If you would like to find out more please

visit newleafalresford.org/at-work/.

The talks were followed by an opportunity to network with like-minded local business representatives, with many offering feedback on changes they would consider making over the next three, six and twelve months. These included taking the time and space to step back and consider the purpose of the business, trying the free B Corp Impact assessment tool, examining the source of raw materials and sustainability in the supply chain, measuring carbon footprints, addressing energy efficiency and installation of renewable energy sources. The Flowerpots kindly offered their lovely barn space for free and provided delicious plant-based refreshments. New Leaf intends to follow this up with a series of business events. We also host a monthly "Natter" on the second Thursday of each month in the Snug at The Swan in Alresford from 7pm.

Imogen Oxley, New Leaf Alresford

Itchen Abbas & Avington village hall caretaker



We are looking for a part-time caretaker to maintain the grounds and carry out minor servicing and maintenance. The hours average six per week and are flexible to suit. Would be suitable for an active pensioner. Please contact Christopher Langford at chair@iaavillagehall.co.uk or 07801 666140.



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What's that tree?

Standing sentry along the banks of our chalk streams, trees play a crucial role in these ecosystems. Their shade keeps the water cool in summertime, and their roots help to prevent bank erosion. Now that deciduous species have shed their leaves, the complex structures beneath have been revealed. It's an ideal time to appreciate your streamside trees and improve your identification skills! Begin your quest by narrowing down the list of options. Trees growing close to streams are likely to prefer damp soil. A wood of alders, for instance, is actually stronger when wet! Other water-loving trees include goat willow, white willow, downy birch, oak, and lime. You could even find a black poplar – once a staple of floodplains, but now a rare sight, in part due to the drainage of land for agriculture.

With your shortlist ready, take in the big picture. The overall shape of a tree is a great clue – most notably the pattern of its branches. Monopodial trees like the black poplar grow in the same direction every year, typically gaining branches on either side.

Conversely, sympodial trees like the oak and lime, change their growth direction with every new branch, giving them a less uniform 'zigzag' appearance.

Nestled among the branches, you might find another clue: buds.

Dormant during the winter months, they will become leaves, shoots, and flowers once spring arrives. Goat willows have round, hairless buds, whereas white willow buds are thin and hairy. The grouping is also important – oak buds grow in

clusters, but lime buds have an alternating pattern and black poplar buds form spirals up twigs. Lastly, take a close look at the bark. Trees grow from the inside, and their outer layers respond in ways determined by their composition. The thin layer of the downy birch peels away like paper, while the thick layer of the alder cracks into fissures. Oak and lime bark is pushed up into ridges. But remember that young trees sometimes have smoother bark that will become more uneven with age.

If you need a little help with your tree ID, the Woodland Trust have a free app that works with bark, buds, and branches – perfect for wintertime. If you'd like to learn more about the wonderful world of chalk streams, you can explore the Watercress and Winterbournes scheme by visiting www.hiwwt.org.uk/winterbournes. Our work is made possible by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Sophie Evingar

Watercress and Winterbournes



Photograph taken by Mark Hamblin



ITCHEN ABBAS SCHOOL

QUIZ NIGHT

8TH MARCH

7.30pm @ Itchen Abbas Village Hall

Open to all

Tickets £15 per person
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For more details and tickets go to...

itchenabbasparents.org.uk/quiz



A Winter gardens visit by The Valley Gardeners



As a club, we are normally very lucky when it comes to good weather on our garden visit days. Not so on the 13 February when the sky was leaden grey and the rain, ranging from annoying drizzle to heavy soaking showers, began before we assembled at 9.30am for our coach journey. But The Valley Gardeners are a fearless lot and battle on through the elements to enjoy feasting their senses in beautiful gardens. We visited two very different winter gardens that day; the first, Avon Cottage, was nestled beside a chalk stream carrier of the River Avon. Working water meadows mean the cattle are constant visitors to the land adjacent and this makes a charming bucolic picture. Snowdrops abounded of course at this time of year but there were Hellebores at their peak and plenty of flowering shrubs such as Cornus Mas and Hamamelis. The owners, Sheila and Trevor Shepard, also had a wonderful glasshouse where a stunning collection of succulents was displayed. The weather did not

improve during the morning, sadly, so we repaired to The Wheatsheaf pub, handily located just across the road from Avon Cottage for lunch and much merriment.

Our second garden was Westcroft in Boscombe and its owner Lyn cheerfully describes it as a wildlife paradise. It is less pristine than Avon Cottage but this brings a charm of its own. Lyn is a true Galanthophile and she has 400 named varieties of Snowdrop in her garden as well as some unusual varieties of Hellebores and many other winter flowering plants. The rain persisted and we were all very wet and chilly, so we trooped into Lyn's small house and were made very welcome by Lyn and her daughter. Lyn is an incredibly good baker and we had the choice of four home-made cakes to go with our steaming mugs of tea or coffee. True to the Valley Gardeners' tradition, many members bought snowdrops from Lyn's collection and as it was hard to get a good picture of snowdrops on the ground in poor light and heavy rain, I took the shot of four members (complete with wet hair!) enjoying tea and convivial company on the sofa. One of these ladies dubbed the group as "hardy perennials of the Valley Gardeners' variety"! It was a fantastic day which just shows that friendly company, a good laugh and shared experiences are as important as nice weather!

Catherine Hahn





This month we investigate the world of recruitment and in particular recruitment of senior HR

professionals. Itchen Abbas resident Jen Gaster is founder and director of her company HR Heads. Catherine Hahn talked to Jen to explore her journey to date as an entrepreneur.

Q: Jen, what inspired you to take the leap and start your own business? Were there any specific influences or role models that guided you along the way?

A: My decision to start HR Heads was driven by a combination of factors but most importantly, I was made redundant in 2008 at the height of the financial crisis. With a passion for HR recruitment, a desire for autonomy, and a vision to make a positive impact in the industry, I decided to establish my own business. I drew inspiration from various successful entrepreneurs in the industry who had built their own successful businesses from the ground up. Their stories of perseverance, innovation, and resilience motivated me to pursue my entrepreneurial dreams.

Q: Starting a business can be daunting. Who were some of the key supporters that helped you navigate the early stages of HR Heads?

A: I was fortunate to have a strong support system that included friends and mentors but most notably (and it is still the case today), my husband, Rupert. He believed in my vision and provided invaluable guidance along the

way. He supported with childcare as our son was very young at the time and encouraged me to pursue my ambitions.

Q: Reflecting on your early influences, how did your past experiences shape the development of HR Heads?

A: Having completed a M.Phil in Criminology at Cambridge University, I had no idea I would end up working in the recruitment industry!

However, I joined a leading corporate recruitment business as a graduate and cut my teeth on financial recruitment initially in London. My experiences there ultimately inspired me to create a more client-centric and personalised approach to recruitment. I am very passionate about the way the industry is perceived; the value-add, expertise and customer-centric approach that we offer have all been honed over years as an antidote to the typical experience within the sector.

Q: In what ways is the business different today compared to when you first started?

A: HR Heads has undergone significant growth and transformation over the years. Initially, we started as a small team focusing on local recruitment. However, as our reputation grew, so did our client base and service offerings. Today, we have expanded our reach nationally and even internationally. One of the key differences is our approach to recruitment. While our core values remain the same – personalised service (exceeding expectations), integrity (doing the right thing), and rewarding relationships – we've become more strategic and innovative in our methods. We are now a more diverse business, having added to HR Heads two other brands:

Procurement Heads and Executive Heads. The team now stands at 23 with offices in Southampton, Winchester and London; and the business is led as a Group by Rupert, who joined in 2012 to establish the Procurement brand.

Q: What advice would you give to aspiring professionals looking to make an impact in their industry?

A: My advice would be to never stop learning and networking. Business is all about people, so building strong relationships with colleagues, mentors, and industry peers can provide invaluable support and guidance throughout your career journey. And most importantly, never lose sight of the human element – always prioritise empathy, integrity, and ethical conduct in all your interactions.

The Valley Quiz: No.22

1. What is the county town of Kent?
2. Can you name the two largest private gardens in London?
3. If the Red Duster was flying at one end, and the Blue Peter at the other, what is being described and what is going to happen?
4. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony starts with four distinct notes that resemble the Morse Code letter "V" dot dot dot dash. These notes became the theme music for which radio broadcasts during WWII?
5. This nation's capital has a link with George III, and has a river running through it that reminds you of dark brown sugar. What, and where, is it?
6. Who sang the song "Goldfinger" in the film of that name?
7. What links The African Queen, Cecil Louis Troughton Smith and

Horatio Hornblower?

8. In which wood did the House at Pooh Corner stand?

9. What annual event gives rise to the world's largest migration of people from one place to another?

10. What is the average lifespan of a male bumblebee? And is it's sting painful?

Answers on page 37

St. Mary's Easton Flower Rota

We do so hope that those on the flower rota are willing to remain on it and that you will be able to come to the meeting on Wednesday 6 March for updates. Also Pauline is wondering whether anyone would be interested in learning to arrange flowers without using oasis. If you know of anyone who would like to join the rota please let us know - the more the merrier. Easter this year is Sunday 30 March and we will be arranging the flowers on Saturday 29 March.

Penelope Kellie and Pauline Lund

Food, Glorious Food! with Easton WI

We began February's meeting by singing Lionel Bart's 'Food Glorious Food' with Jill Bentall who gave her talk on 'Food Fads and Square Meals'. We heard about rationing during the war with a weekly allowance of three pints milk, occasionally dropping to two pints, 2oz cheese, three rashers of bacon, 12oz meat, 6oz sugar, 2oz butter 4oz of margarine, 3oz of tea, 3oz of sweets and one egg a fortnight.

Vegetarians were allowed an extra 3oz cheese a week. Children and expectant mothers were allowed extra rations of milk and eggs. Fruit and vegetables were never rationed but were often in short supply and the population was encouraged to “Dig for Victory” by growing vegetables and fruit in their gardens. We are now encouraged to eat 5-a-Day, allergies are more common, and there is a growing interest in how our food is grown. In addition farmers are using crop rotation to help return nutrients to the soil and reduce erosion.

Our next meeting will be at 7.15 pm on Thursday 14 March when Pauline Lund will be talking to us about exhibiting at Chelsea. We welcome everyone of all ages and interests so do come along to a meeting, bring a friend, or come on your own, we would love to welcome you.

Sallie Peake

Bird of the Month—the Pied Wagtail



Easily identifiable by its wagging tail and habit of rushing around looking for insects to feed upon, this smart little bird is widespread. In the Winter, it can form large roosts in a

bush often in town centres, where the higher temperatures enable the birds to keep warm. As it flies overhead it has a surprisingly loud call.

Elaine and Henry Labram

The Itchen Valley News— Thank you!

It is almost two years since I took over the helm at the Itchen Valley News and in that time there have been a number of changes. But much has also stayed the same.

Over the course of the last year we have said goodbye to some of our (younger) editors who have found the pressures of working fulltime and acting as a volunteer editor for the Itchen Valley News, coupled with looking after their families, too much. Sadly they felt they had to step down from their role as editors. We are very grateful to Jen, Nathalie and James who oversaw the editing of some wonderful issues of the IVN, and hope that their companies continue to flourish. You have hopefully already read about Jen’s HR company, HR Heads on page 12.

The remaining editors have worked hard as a team to make sure that the IVN continues to arrive with you every month except January, free of charge. Charlotte and Brigid work together whilst both Verity and Catherine fly solo to create interesting and informative issues. Thank you all for your dedication and hard work.

Jenny Sloan has responsibility for all the paid for advertisements which help to keep the magazine afloat. At this time of year she is beginning to breathe a sigh of relief as the adverts are, more or less, settled for the year. Come the autumn she will once again be encouraging you to renew for the

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coming year. As the magazine is delivered free to every household in the Valley, it reaches a lot of people! So if you are not already advertising do please think about doing so. There are lots of different sizes and therefore related costs.

Without the distribution team you would not receive your copy of the IVN, so a huge thank you must go to Gilly Greenwood, Lyn Jones and their armies of distributors. They go out regardless of weather delivering the IVN to your door every month with very little thanks so it is a pleasure to be able to thank them all publicly. Behind the scenes, there are two people who contribute unstintingly to the magazine. Making sure we don't overspend, is our treasurer, Michael Smith, who took over from Henry Labram. Henry still supports the IVN by submitting wonderful walks around the Valley and superb photos of birds for the Bird of the Month. And Helen Ellis-Brown makes sure we have an attractive and eye-catching cover photo for each edition, as well as helping out with other photos within the magazine. She has some suggestions for how the magazine presentation might be changed: watch this space. Thank you Michael and Helen.

The final thank you has to go to all those who regularly, or occasionally, contribute articles, reviews and photos to the magazine. Do please continue to do so!

How can you support the IVN and ensure its continuity? We would welcome one or more people on the editing team and please consider advertising your business. And don't forget to let us know about events happening in the Valley and close by!

Mary Hogg

A literary evening at The Yard



I had long wanted to visit The Yard and finally did so on the 7 February. The Yard is a rural café and events space, set within a working farm in Candover valley, just 20 minutes' drive from the Itchen Valley.

I went there to listen to Daisy Buchanan (a prolific writer of fiction, non-fiction and high-quality journalism) being interviewed most expertly by The Yard's resident host, Rebecca Fletcher.

In recent years, Rebecca has curated a programme of live author events and hosted sell out evenings for a variety of authors and personalities including Simon Sebag Montefiore, Minnie Driver, Lorraine Candy, and Kate Mosse. The evening I was there was no different. The place was packed and although the interview was conducted in what was a chilly barn (complete with skate ramp!), the venue was made welcoming and attractive by the props and lighting and, on a cold evening, by warm



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blankets on each chair. Rebecca skilfully encouraged Daisy to communicate the essence of her new book *Limelight*, in which she writes about the conflict and chaos of being a young woman, as well as what has made her the writer she is today.

But not only literary events take place at The Yard. The woman I was sitting next to told me she had recently attended a wonderful Burns' Night celebration and there are often live music, wine tastings, chef demos, yoga retreats and supper clubs. The café was warm, mellow and inviting when I arrived: the staff were serving a squash curry and other interesting dishes as well as drinks, both alcoholic and soft. It is open Thursday to Sunday from 9am to 4pm, and the last Friday of the month from 6 to 10pm for street food, cocktails and music.

The Yard was fashioned out of a 19th century livestock building and the café was the first farm building to be converted. It became home to Moonroast Coffee, the specialist coffee roaster, and makes a great stop on a dog walk or cycle ride, or just to meet friends for a coffee and slice of cake. Using a grant from the Rural Development Programme for England, funded by the EU, the site was further developed in 2018 to what we see today. Do drop by for a coffee or book a ticket for one of the interesting events. It is a cultural hotspot in our rural setting and as close as driving into Winchester.

Their website is worth visiting:
www.theyardhampshire.co.uk.

The address is Chilton Farm,
Alresford, S024 9TX.

Catherine Hahn

Obituary of Anne Sutcliffe 1928—2023

Mother spent most of her early life at Woodbridge in Suffolk, where her father was a GP. When WWII broke out, they evacuated to the relative safety of Devon – until the Luftwaffe started bombing Plymouth and some of the bombs dropped on their little village. Mother remembered throwing fizzing incendiary bombs off the roof - the house next door was burnt to the ground. Her mother decided that they might as well be bombed at home – so back they went!

Mother married Pat Sutcliffe in 1950 when she was just 22. After a short spell in London, the opportunity arose to come to Burntwood - I don't think she had much say in the matter! She arrived in Hampshire not knowing anyone, with no car, pregnant with Rosemary and living in a large, rather empty house. Very quickly, however, a support network developed, led by Elizabeth Seymour, and many other kind people sprang to her aid, both from the village and further afield. Once she had a car (well, a Morris Minor van, actually)



she set about turning the house into a home. She went to country house sales and made some good buys, but

sometimes got carried away: on one occasion when searching for chairs, she fell in love with . . . a revolving summer house! The farm lorry had to go and collect it!



My parents worshipped at St Swithun's Church, Martyr Worthy, from the start. They both sang in the choir, were on the PCC for many years (Father as Church Warden) and Mother helped with church flowers. Mother joined the Wives Fellowship, eventually becoming County Chairman. And, of course, she became a member of the WI. She loved the WI and became Chairman and then President of our village branch, and for 25 years she was the guardian of the beautiful WI book of the Itchen Valley, created in 1950. She also did a spell on the Parish Council, and as Vice-Chairman she was keen to promote the idea of a female chairman. In due course, she encouraged Alison Matthews to take on the role, providing much helpful advice! Mother was very practical and derived great satisfaction from a well-stocked

larder of marmalade, chutney and preserved vegetables. She was also a very good seamstress - she made many of her own clothes and even ventured into making suits, with the help of 'Flora', her tailor's dummy. In her 50s, with children largely flown the nest, Mother decided that her education had been somewhat sketchy, so she started an Open University degree. She persevered for many years and was proud finally to be awarded her degree.

In the early 1980s, my parents bought a house in France – more like a ruin, in fact. This became the 'Grand Projet' for the rest of their lives, and it is not finished yet! Mother became famous locally as the wife 'Oh la,la!' who climbed scaffolding to point the masonry. They became thoroughly integrated into the village and the Jura, helped by being near our French cousins.

Naturally cheerful and adaptable, Mother settled into life at the Dower House for her last four years. She was unfailingly polite and liked to introduce visitors to all the staff.

Mother and Father were a very good team. They were married for over 60 years and supported each other in all their endeavours. Between them, they leave a very positive mark on the Itchen Valley in many different ways. They both had strong Christian faith and I am sure they are now reunited. The Sutcliffe family are very grateful for all the letters and kind words received, along with many vignettes from Mother's long and fulfilled life.

Robert Sutcliffe

The Cricketers Easton

Have you been to The Cricketers in Easton recently? If so, you will have noticed change in the air thanks to



the new direction presented by Andrew Gwilliam-Kent.

After tying the knot with Steff in late September 2023, Andrew helped keep the pub open following the unexpected exit of the previous manager. What started as a temporary stewardship has evolved into a permanent commitment to creating a pub where everyone, regulars and newcomers alike, feels welcome and valued. With a career in customer service across diverse sectors, he brings a range of experiences to his new role as landlord, including in operational management where he developed his skills in team leadership and customer engagement.

Andrew is aware that there have been a lot of changes in the pub's management over the past four years and is very much planning to stay to implement his vision. Fate may have led Andrew to Easton, but

it's the village's charm and beautiful surroundings that convinced him to stay so that within six weeks of running the pub he decided to take it on full time. Now, three months later he is full of plans about how to make the venture successful and put the pub at the heart of the community. As he himself says he is dedicated to revitalizing The Cricketers, making it the go-to haven for families, friends, and individuals seeking a warm cuppa, a friendly pint, or a hearty meal. While Andrew looks to build his team he is currently operating solo with help from his wife at weekends. He has a hands-on approach to service and for the time being is offering a selective menu which he prepares and serves himself. We had a comforting, well-presented bowl of soup – just what was needed on a wet, windy lunchtime.

A newly installed coffee machine ensures availability of fresh coffee all day, soon to be paired with fresh pastries and cakes. The B & B service continues, with plans for each room to be named after local cricketing landmarks - a nod to the pub's namesake and celebrating Hampshire's rich history of cricket. Andrew's vision extends beyond the pub, reaching out to local organizations, the parish church, and all Itchen Valley residents. He extends a warm welcome to walkers, with or without dogs, cyclists, and visitors alike, envisaging events that will bring pleasure to families and the community - from festive discos to summer fêtes. Collaboration, not competition, is Andrew's philosophy as he fosters ties with neighbouring pubs. A

welcome party set for Saturday 2 March is an open invitation for

everyone to drop in. (See What's On). The website, now live with a fresh logo, reflects The Cricketer's renewed



identity. Andrew's own words resonate with his mission to build a pub that echoes with laughter, stories, and comforts with good food and drink. 'The Cricketers has seen many changes in its long history. I'm looking forward to creating many new memories over the coming years! Our doors are open to become the backdrop to your stories, the echo of your laughter, and the sanctuary for making memories, all shared over a pint or plate.'

Andrew was talking to Mary Hogg

Tiddler Joke

Q: Why did the chicken cross the playground?

A: To get to the other slide.

Savannah and Saffron



Pancake Party

Shrove Tuesday saw over 80 children turn up for the Pancake Party at Easton Village Hall.

Well, that is 80 children of all ages, I think only about 50 were real children, but they all ate the pancakes and the hot dogs with relish. At least they ate the hotdogs with relish and the pancakes with everything from Nutella to peanut butter and lemon and sugar to honey. Cooking was nonstop, with a team of three (many thanks to Theo and Jenny) and by the time they served the last pancake (10 minutes past the official deadline) had cooked over 240 pancakes.

In fine tradition all the good things were eaten up the day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday when Christians start forty days of preparing for Easter. Traditionally they would fast and pray and give something up. Often these days Christians also like to do something extra for Lent such as giving to the basics bank or inviting neighbours for tea.

Such a great time was had by all and will be repeated next year. Look out for it.

Gerry Stacy



Our Wild Valley - Cold days outside = Beauty, creativity and Feeling Good.

On our colder days at forest school we have been well wrapped up but noticed, apart from cold hands and feet, the children seemed quite happy and oblivious to the many gales washing over us. Bashing and moulding (a mix of clay, mud and chalk), whittling and den play has kept us busy these last six weeks at Primary School. All academic institutions will require a climate action sustainability plan in 2025 and the six Rs are a good place to start: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair and Recycle. For those talking about climate and biodiversity challenges ahead, the appropriate use of language is very important and then to join forces to plan where action can be taken.

Taking action can make a big difference to an individual's positive outlook for the future. Being out in nature, and feeling part of it, even more so.

Sophie Rogers



Easton and Martyr Worthy Cricket Club (EMWCC) – Spring Update



A large amount of hard work and expenditure is necessary to enable EMWCC to be ready for the first warm-up matches of the cricket season in early April each year. Lee Padwick, Head Groundsman, has continued to mow the outfield throughout the winter due to the mild weather encouraging grass growing conditions. The outfield has also been scarified and re-seeded and the playing square aerated. Rolling the playing square commences as soon as the weather allows.

Around the ground the old timber sightscreens at the southern end have been demolished and new sightscreens purchased to replace them at a cost of around £4,000. Grounds machinery, bowling machines and indoor appliances all need an annual service / inspection. The outfield mower repairs and maintenance alone were another £4,000 cost for the Club. The Club and Village Hall Management Committees continue to collaborate throughout the year

regarding matters of mutual interest. EMWCC has obtained planning permission to restructure the patio area outside the Clubroom and provide better access to the playing area; this will benefit both Club members and Village Hall users. The Club is liaising with the Village Hall regarding their plans for the installation of solar PV panels and the switch to LED lighting around the premises. Insurances such as Public Liability and cover for equipment have to be renewed.

The Club is very fortunate to have a dynamic, committed and hardworking Treasurer in Stuart Upcraft, who also actively pursues the availability of any grants for future capital projects. Sponsorship is vital for all of our cricket at the Club. Jude's Ice cream have generously agreed to continue their association with the Juniors setup for another year; the Club is also very grateful to Station Mill Health and Fitness, which has sponsored the Senior teams for the last four years. We are always keen to talk to any new sponsors, who may be interested in supporting the Club, to enable us to deliver cricket training and games for both adult and child members.

All Juniors' age groups have been carrying out indoor winter training at Prince's Mead, St Swithun's or Twyford School. The Club has also sponsored six parent-coaches to qualify at the English Cricket Board (ECB) Foundation Level and our senior parent coach, Ben Gillings, is undertaking the ECB Core Coach course. The Men's team is entered into Division 1 of the South Hampshire Indoor Cricket League held at Fleming Park Leisure Centre.

Our Ladies have been playing in an Indoor League at Dummer Cricket Centre. Website www.emwcc.com

Diary Dates for 2024

From Saturday 20 April we plan to play a Seniors warm-up fixture each week. Friday 19 April First Club Night and BBQ including Juniors Hoppers, U9s and U11s training.

Saturday 11 May: First scheduled Senior League matches

Thursday 25 July: Annual Tug of War and BBQ

Friday 26 July: Annual Sixes Tournament.

Lynda Gray

£10,000 raised for the Parish!



We haven't quite finished the count as the IVN goes to press, but the four lectures in the Martyr Worthy Lecture Series have raised almost £10,000 for Parish funds. Here are the committee with much appreciated thank you flowers. It has been a huge team effort led by Gilly Greenwood, and we have all been entertained and enlightened by four excellent speakers. Keep an eye out for the 2025/26 Series!

Verity Coleman

Review of Martyr Worthy Lectures Numbers 3 and 4

In the third Martyr Worthy Lecture of the current series, Dr John Davies returned with a lecture on two Victorian painters who shared much in common with their choice of subjects, while enjoying very different levels of renown in their posterity. Many of us will claim some level of familiarity with Edwin Landseer's work, while reacting with puzzlement to a mention of Charles Burton Barber (1845-94). Yet their careers had much in common, and as John showed a wonderful variety of images of their paintings, it could be difficult to distinguish who painted which pictures, had his commentary not been so erudite. Queen Victoria bestowed patronage on both artists, Barber following Landseer (after his death in 1873) with hardly a gap between them. Modern taste might regard their work as frequently over sentimental, yet such a well-known painting as 'Monarch of the Glen' has lost none of its popularity in the 170 years since it was first exhibited. But Burton's painting of Victoria in her carriage surrounded by her grandchildren? Never heard of it! Over the space of an hour John held his audience's attention faultlessly, and the appreciative applause was well-deserved. Special mention should be made of the excellent graphics that accompanied the lecture, with so many paintings displayed to best effect. The final lecture in the series was delivered by Dr Edward Impey entitled "A Showplace Royal: guns, bombs and excitements at the

Tower."

Dr Impey was in charge of the Royal Armouries at the Tower of London from 2013 to 2022, and though the armouries were the main focus of his lecture, he covered a wide range of what has gone on at the Tower since it was founded by William the Conqueror. Particular mention was made of the Royal Menagerie, founded in 1210, and home to exotic animals including the first elephant to be seen in England. Lions and tigers also featured, complementing the heraldic lion royal emblem first seen in 1235. Fortunately, the collection of animals moved to their present home in Regents Park in the 19th century! The Tower of London is one of the premier tourist attractions in the UK, with over 3 million visitors a year; it is hoped to increase this by a million before long, though they haven't quite worked out how to get so many into a building originally designed to exclude visitors.

Dr Impey cautioned his audience to take anything they're told by the Yeoman Warders with a pinch of salt - they are renowned for their tall stories! The Grand Storehouse of the Armouries was destroyed by fire in 1841, since when the collection has been housed in the White Tower - the title of a book Dr Impey published in 2008.

Altogether a most entertaining way to conclude this excellent series of lectures.

Peter McManus



LENT LUNCHES 2024



The Itchen Valley Lent lunches are held in various homes throughout the Valley in the form of an informal gathering, offering soup, bread and cheese.

Voluntary Donation for Youth Options

**Fridays from noon until 2pm
Everyone is welcome**

Friday 1 March

Liz Platt at Meadows, Martyr Worthy SO21 1DZ

Friday 8 March

Lucy de Laszlo at Chilland House, MW SO21 1EB

Friday 15 March

Lucy Collis at Demelza, Easton SO21 1EF

If you would like any more information about any of the lunches or if you are able to supply a pot of homemade soup please contact Judith Mezger - judemezger@gmail.com or Verity Coleman - mumgod@aol.com

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Other networks are available

I'd had enough. Too many times had the bank or taxman sent me a text as part of the two factor identification routine. Too many times had I been unable to receive the text before it became time expired. Yes, I had WiFi calling enabled but that just gave me phone calls at home. Texts only come via the radio waves, and there weren't many of those crashing on the shores of the Itchen.

The dip in the landscape known as the Itchen Valley is wonderful countryside and provides not only great protection for numerous species of wildlife but also protection against mobile phone signals. Despite the well-resourced motorway running through one end of the valley, only a couple of miles upstream the signal strength is almost non-existent.

I asked around for suggestions. Nobody seemed to have found a solution until I quizzed a resident of Station Hill, Itchen Abbas. He told me that Vodafone had recently installed a relay transmitter on a nearby telegraph pole and he got an excellent signal, sometimes almost too strong. He kindly knocked on my door soon afterwards and showed me the multi-bar display on his phone.

On investigation, the Vodafone website indicated that they could send me a free SIM card. I asked - and they did. It arrived the next day, I inserted it into my phone (quite a fiddly task if you don't have tiny fingers) and I got a text from Vodafone the following week to say

that my old number had been transferred from my previous provider and was now up and running.

Alas, the story didn't end there.

Texts from Vodafone arrived aplenty but not from anyone else. I couldn't even phone myself from my landline. Outgoing texts and calls were fine, but not incoming. Online chat proved long winded and fruitless and eventually I just gave up. I turned off the phone; after all, what's the point of keeping it on if nobody could get hold of me? I resolved to go into town and visit the Vodafone shop for further assistance.

A few days later I still hadn't ventured beyond the Valley but needed the phone to retrieve the image of a ticket for a local event. So I turned on the phone and became anxious when it took ages for the lock screen to appear. A couple of minutes later it woke up and I was able to log on for my ticket. But whilst doing that, I was amazed to see a long stream of old incoming texts appear. Further experimentation led me to the inescapable conclusion that texts and even incoming phone calls were now enabled.

Yes folks, the phone had just needed to be turned off and back on!

Vernon Tottle



Pot Plant of the Month (Century) Haemanthos Albiflos

The Haemanthos Albiflos, Elephant's Tongue or Paintbrush plant, originates from the east coast of South Africa. Classified as an evergreen bulbous perennial geophyte, the popular names come from the broad flat leaves and from the unusual hairy flower (actually more like a shaving brush) which it produces once a year. As a house plant it has the great merit, according to the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), of thriving on "healthy neglect". It also propagates itself with baby plants appearing at regular intervals, growing to mature plants alongside their parent and fighting for space in the pot.

I can trace my Haemanthos Albiflos



back to 1903 when, in the family tradition, it was separated from my great-grandmother's plant and given as a house warming present to my grandmother on the occasion of her marriage. The tradition was continued for my mother in 1936, for me and my

sister when we set up homes, and I have passed an offshoot to my daughter. Can I claim that my plant is more than 120 years old? I think I have a strong case. But I remember Trigger's broom in 'Only Fools and Horses'. Trigger was a road sweeper and the Council gave him an award for cost saving when he told them he had kept the same broom for 20 years. During that time the brush had been replaced 13 times and the handle three times, but to Trigger it was still the original broom.

Michael Smith

Easton Supper Club

Thank you to everyone who came to The Easton Supper Club on Saturday 3 February. The main aim of the event is to have a sociable and fun evening rather than to raise funds. Those who came certainly made it a fun evening and we did make a profit of £593.47 which will be used to continue the refurbishment of the kitchen at the hall. Many thanks to Cat who took the place of her mother, Sue Kennedy (who was on holiday), on the Supper Club team. The next Supper Club is on Saturday October 5th and we will put details in the Valley News about that.

The Supper Club Team.



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OUR SCHOOL IS PART OF YOUR COMMUNITY - PLEASE SUPPORT US!

As a small village school we love being part of the community, if you would like to support us or to be more involved in the school please take a look at what is happening over the next few months.

Quiz Night

Friday 8th March at 7.30pm
Itchen Abbas Village Hall. Tickets £15 per person including food and welcome drink. For more information and tickets visit www.itchenabbasparents.org.uk/quiz

20th April AM - if anyone would like to help with 'odd jobs', gardening, repairing etc, please let us know.

Volunteer Day

Car Boot Sale

Sunday 5th May - Open to anyone, turn up to sell any unwanted items and make some money! We are collecting the 'Pitch' fee to raise money for the school - in particular towards a new climbing frame for the children!

Saturday 29th June 2024 12-5pm
save the date! If any local businesses would like to take part, please let us know and we will be in touch!

Inaugural Summer Fayre

Shed

If anyone has a shed they no longer need or would like to help towards funding a new one to house our Forest School equipment and Parents Association resources, we would be extremely grateful!

Thank you for your support
admin@itchenabbas.org.uk 01962 779310

News from Itchen Abbas School

This term we have spoken to the whole school about the Big Garden Birdwatch, the world's largest garden wildlife survey. Every year, hundreds of thousands of nature lovers take part, helping to build a picture of how garden birds are faring.

During National Storytelling Week, the children listened to stories and were introduced to Taffy Thomas, the



first storyteller laureate! Together we explored what makes a good story and hopefully parents got a chance to share in a good story with their children afterwards to participate in the fun!

The Itchen Abbas Parents held a well-attended Film Night. Thank you to all of the Parents Association who helped support and run this event - the children really enjoyed it and are looking forward to lots more events planned throughout the year! This half term our focus values are Self-Compassion and Creativity.

Sports News

We were very proud to host Micheldever Primary School for a football match against us. The children demonstrated amazing team

work and support for each other, as well as fantastic football skills winning 8-7, which keeps us top of the league! One more match to go.... can we do it? The final match is scheduled for March. The Itchen Abbas Girls Football Team took on Weeke Primary School. A team which saw 50 children try out across Year 5 and 6.... and our girls played amazingly against them. Unfortunately, we lost 4-0, but Mr



Robbins was so proud of how well the girls worked together, supporting each other and attacking the game. Well done to them all!



Hedgehogs class have enjoyed a visit to the Sea City Museum where they learnt more about the Titanic for their topic, the class had a brilliant day.

*Rob Bogan
Head Teacher
Itchen Abbas School*



Sunday 3 March

10am Parish Communion - St Mary's, Easton
4pm Café Church - Itchen Abbas Village Hall

Sunday 10 March - Mothering Sunday

8.30am Holy Communion (said) - St John's, Itchen Abbas
10am All Age Worship - St John's, Itchen Abbas
6pm Evensong - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Sunday 17 March

10am Parish Communion - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Sunday 24 March – Palm Sunday

8.30am Holy Communion (1662) St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy
10am Palm Sunday Family Service - St Mary's, Easton

Holy Week Services

Mon 25 - Weds 27 March 7.30pm Compline - Martyr Worthy
Maundy Thursday 7.30pm Passover Communion - Itchen Abbas
Good Friday 10am Way of the Cross - Martyr Worthy
Good Friday 2pm Last Hour - St John's, Itchen Abbas

Sunday 31 March - Easter Sunday

10am Family Communion - St Mary's, Easton
6pm Songs of Praise - St Mary's, Avington

Annual District Church Meetings

Each church will be holding an ADCM during March prior to our Annual Parochial Church Meeting which will take place on Thursday 21 March (details will follow on our website and on church noticeboards).

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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From our MP

As our Member of Parliament, I regularly visit local schools. It's the most rewarding, and often hilarious, part of the job. I find dedicated teaching (and support) staff who love what they do but



there's not enough of them and, in particular, they tell me that they just cannot recruit the teaching assistants they need to support an increasingly complex picture.

I am therefore really pleased to see a **new teaching apprenticeship** that will launch this autumn revolutionising the way schools recruit teachers while supporting more people to earn while they study for a degree. The teacher degree apprenticeship will offer a high-quality, alternative route for people to become qualified teachers. This includes people who may not be able to take time out to study full-time for a degree such as teaching assistants or staff already working in schools, to access this route to a rewarding profession. Trainees on the new teacher degree apprenticeship will spend around 40% of their time studying for their degree with an accredited teacher training provider, gain qualified teacher status and all tuition fees are paid for, so trainees won't be saddled with student debt. I think it will be a game-changing opportunity for schools to nurture and retain talent from the ground up. Secondly, because we Brits can

sometimes be our worst enemy, there's some really good news on the subject I wrote about last month in the Itchen Valley News - NHS dentistry. Earlier last month, the long awaited Dental Recovery Plan appeared. Its focus on prevention has to be right and the roll out of the 'Smile for Life' programme to reduce dental decay in children will see parents-to-be offered advice on baby gums and milk teeth, with babies and toddlers in nurseries having tooth brushing as part of the daily routine. Some 2.5 million additional NHS appointments will be available, as well as additional money for NHS dentists to treat adults and children who have not seen a dentist in over two years, and incentivising dentists to work in under-served areas with one-off 'golden hello' payments of up to £20,000. The idea of dental vans to help deliver care in rural and coastal areas is interesting and I will be seeing if we can get a slice of that. The British Dental Association described my select committee's report on NHS dentistry as 'an instruction manual' to save it but I am clear achieving that will require all of this and more. Contact me at [fb.com/stevebrinemp](https://www.facebook.com/stevebrinemp) and stevebrine.com

Steve Brine



Jackie's County Corner March 2024

HCC: Future Services deadline 31 March 2024: outlining around £15million cuts and savings: a tiny proportion of the projected



need to save £132 million. Services included in proposed cuts are cut are

Alresford Household Waste Recycling Centre, Worthys School Crossing Patrols, all subsidised bus services including the 240, 67 and 95, and increasing to 100% the proportion of income that can contribute to care services. This could be devastating for a family with someone in long term care. Please respond if you can.

HCC: Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS): this is a programme which extends into the Autumn. Initially the call is to identify sites you think could be the subject of nature recovery. This LNRS covers the whole of the County Council area including the National Parks. To receive more information go to hants.gov.uk and search LNRS

HHFT Hampshire Together
The Hospital Consultation is on the Hampshire Together website: there are still a lot of questions to be answered, including the funding mechanism, and how the Hospital Trust maintains high quality of care until and whilst any new hospital is built. Please consider your own needs when you respond to this by

Sunday 17 March. Only by using your own lived experience as a patient, carer or health professional can the Integrated Care Board (host of the Consultation) judge the merits of the proposal.

www.hampshiretogether.nhs.uk

Please respond to the Basingstoke and Deane Reg 18 proposal to develop 3,000 homes right on the northern border of our district www.basingstoke.gov.uk/LPU-have-your-say by 4 March.

On street parking: The County Traffic Wardens started operation on roadsides in October 2023, and are gaining confidence that they can raise a significant sum in both Winchester and Alresford on street parking. Please take care! The County employs a company to manage this and expects it to bring in revenue. They often bring several wardens into the area at one time.

January was a month of water problems right across the division, sewage spills, water shortages, and groundwater flooding. I've held a series of meetings with HCC, Southern Water, including residents at some, and there is now a plan to tackle each of the problems: rainwater and sewage leaks in Alresford and clear pipes ready for heavy rain and groundwater in Sutton Scotney. If you see leaking sewage, please contact Southern Water direct or Environ Tel/text 07973 696 085 or the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60.

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From the Parish Council

It's March and spring is on its way. That means we have the Itchen Valley Spring Litter Pick on Saturday 16 March. Please see the advert on page 36 for full details of the start time and assembly points. It's a great annual event for all ages so please come along and let's see if we can get back to pre-Covid numbers. As usual bags for litter, litter picks and high vis vests will be provided but please bring your own gloves. And finally, once again at the end the wonderful WI are providing us with cakes, tea and coffee from 11.30am in Martyr Worthy Village Hall.

Thank you to all who helped when several places lost their water supply due to burst mains. It was a great effort, whether seeing those who needed it had a supply of bottled water, making cups of tea for the contractors working on repairing the mains, and those who kept us up to date with information on what was happening. Unfortunately, Southern Water were not as good at up-dating us as might be hoped. Talking to the contractors on site was much more effective.

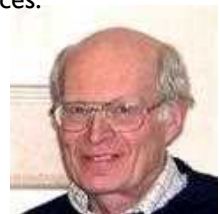
While on the subject of pipes, work on the sewage pipe in Avington continues. According to Clancy's team they aim to complete the work on the pipeline by the end of March which should allow the road to be open again. So far, no details have been forthcoming from Southern Water as to when work will start on construction of the pumping station, what it will involve regarding road closure and when all will be completed. The only bit of information we have, from Clancy, is

that it will take place in May. Rebuilding the bridge at the bottom of Church Lane Martyr Worthy is progressing well. We have been told that hardwood has been used for its construction, so hopefully it will last longer than its softwood predecessor. Surface work on improving the other route to Easton from the bottom of the same lane will be starting at the beginning of March, by which time it is hoped that the new bridge will be open. If not, see the alternative route suggested in last month's Itchen Valley News.

While still on the subject of bridges, the railings of the humpbacked bridge into Avington from Itchen Abbas were replaced relatively recently. At the time this work was done the Parish Council raised a number of issues regarding both materials and the standard of workmanship. Sadly, the result is that there are several places where these railings are showing serious signs of deterioration. A site meeting with HCC has been requested and we will have to wait to see what is proposed.

One other case of deterioration has been the official noticeboard in Itchen Abbas, which fell off its post. Thank you to the resident who reported that one. In-house work is being carried out to repair it, saving the ratepayers' money. Until that is completed, the board in Church Lane Martyr Worthy will be used for Parish Council notices.

Patrick Appleby



Letter from the Rectory— Tears to Joy

Weeping may last for a night, but joy



comes in the morning' (Ps. 30:5). These words from the Psalms helpfully acknowledge that there are many things in our own lives and in our

wider worlds which are, as they say, "enough to make you weep". Yet they also point to the biblical hope that weeping does not have the final word: there is 'light at the end of the tunnel', we can be joyful once again.

In this season of Lent and as we look forward to celebrating Easter Sunday on the last day of March, it's good to be reminded of this pattern of death and resurrection: we often, like the Psalmist, go through 'valleys' filled with the 'shadow of death', but death and darkness do not need to be the

end-game. God brought Jesus back from the dead and he can do that for us too. It's significant that, as Jesus makes his historic journey towards Jerusalem, there are two places where Jesus himself wept. When Jesus sees those mourning for the death of Lazarus, we read these

two words (in the shortest verse in the Bible): 'Jesus wept' (John 11:35).

Faced with the reality of an individual's death, Jesus was 'deeply moved and troubled': he felt the full force of our human agony at the loss of our loved ones. Yet this weeping was soon replaced by incredible joy as he raised Lazarus from the dead and summonsed him from the tomb, "Lazarus, come out!". And he did. A few days later Jesus weeps once more

- but this time not over an individual, but over a whole city. 'As he approached Jerusalem, he wept over it and said, "If only you had known on this day the things that make for peace"' (Luke 19:41-42). Jesus could sense that Jerusalem had lost its way - both religiously (its leaders were plotting his death) and politically (doing things that would leave it vulnerable to Roman siege-armies). It did not know how to find 'peace-terms'. So, faced with the reality of a city on the path to war, Jesus wept. It is hard not to hear Jesus' words about Jerusalem in March AD 30 and not wonder if they might equally well be spoken now in March AD 2024 - as we see Jerusalem and the Holy Land once more a place of turmoil and unrest. Are any 'peace-terms' in sight? What is it about Jerusalem that its residents often end up fighting over it? And is it likely that will ever be any 'light at the end of tunnel'? Might the good news of Jesus' resurrection that took place in Jerusalem ever be good news for Jerusalem?

The conflicting views between Judaism and Islam over Jerusalem lie close to the heart of the Gaza conflict. If the current crisis has caused you to ask some new questions about all this, then you might be interested in some Zoom webinars I'm leading for the Ridley Institute (Charleston, SC, USA) on 'Jesus and Jerusalem: History, Faith and Conflict' on the first three Sundays in March at 5.30-6.30pm GMT. For more details, please go to our parish website.

The bottom-line is that I deeply believe that the Resurrection of Jesus is the best news in the world - whether for us as individuals, for

society and the wider world, or for Jerusalem. That's why I'd love you to join with us in the church family as we go together through the 'valley' of Lent towards Easter. In particular, why not



join us at one of our Holy Week services, for example 'the Way of the Cross' or on Easter day itself? And let's also be 'praying for the peace of Jerusalem', and that the 'weeping' that has already lasted far too long, will soon be replaced by Easter-morning joy.

Rev. Peter

The Practical Gardener

More than two years ago, I purchased a new shed from Elfords. It is an excellent product and apart from painting which is needed, typically with a Ronseal product, it needs no maintenance. However, a year ago I was in a hurry and because of time, I ordered from sheds.co.uk. This product, madel am told by the leading UK manufacturer, has not been good. I was forced to paint it with a protective solution but it hasn't worked. It leaks all the time and now I must consider scrapping it and starting again. I was also driven a bit by price, so there is a lesson, you get what you pay for. I have also in the past two years

brought two greenhouses. One from Elite and one from Halls. Both have proven to be good but not perfect. What I have learned is the importance of everything being level and square. The other issue is ventilation and auto roof vents to me are essential. Sadly, I did not have enough space for either greenhouse and I see that to be easy to use, the width needs to be at least eight feet. My lean to is against the garage which helps to keep it warm in winter and also provides easy access for power. Keeping plants frost free over winter can be a challenge, especially with the high cost of power today. My Halls greenhouse was particularly difficult to bubble wrap. I have remote temperature sensors in each (National Geographic thermos-Hygro station) which are useful. We can no longer rely on our seasons and climate as it used to be so this makes some gardening activity really difficult. The grass is growing but it's so wet, it will be difficult to cut. Lots are plants are in bud because it's been so warm yet I foresee a late frost! March is the month for propagation so all my propagators are in use. I am trying a new variety of tomatoes claimed to be blight resistant; look out for Crimson Crush.

I've also been in construction mode, so a new pergola and path to suit. I am quite drawn to wooden structures which are so useful for clematis or climbing roses. The only issue today is that treated timber lacks the necessary chemicals for long-life (an EU directive) so for any timber used outside today, 10 years I am told is the maximum life. Such a waste! Happy Gardening!

Tony Gaster

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Organised by
Itchen Valley Parish Council

Quiz Answers

1. Maidstone
2. The largest private garden in the capital, spread over 42 acres, is at Buckingham Palace. The second largest, at 12 acres, is Winfield House, the London residence of the Ambassador of the USA.
3. It is a British registered merchant ship about to sail. The Red Duster is the nickname of the Red Ensign, the flag flown by all British merchant ships. It is red with the union jack in the upper left canton (corner). The Blue Peter is the International Code letter "P" and signifies that the vessel is about to proceed to sea. It is blue with a white square (or rectangular) centre.
4. The opening notes of Beethoven's 5th Symphony introduced Radio Londres daily broadcasts to Nazi occupied France from 14 July 1944 until 31 Aug 1944. It was known as "Les Francs parlant aux Français."
5. Guyana in South America. Its capital is Georgetown, and the river is the Demarara.
6. Shirley Bassey
7. Cecil Smith wrote both the African Queen and the name of C S Forester.
8. The Hundred Acre Wood.
9. The celebration in China of the Chinese New Year. This year it is the Year of the Dragon.
10. Two weeks. The male bumblebee doesn't have a sting!

Local monthly information

Itchen Valley area waste collections:

- Black and brown garden bins on Fridays 8 and 22 March
- Green bins on Fridays 1, 15, 29 March
- Glass boxes on 1 and 29 March

Hampshire Farmers' Market in Winchester

Second and last Sundays of every month, 9am - 2pm.

Full Parish Council Meetings:

The next meeting is 7 March (IA&A Village Hall)



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67 Bus operated by Stagecoach.

To Winchester:

Monday to Friday

Sch 8:20 NSch 8:23

9:23 12:43 15:43 17:23

Saturday 08:23 11:23 14:23 17:23

To Alresford:

Monday to Friday

10:39 13:39 15:19 17:14 18:09

Saturday: 09:19 12:19 15:19 18:09

No Sunday or bank holiday service.

Key: Sch School days only

NSch School holidays only

All times shown are at Itchen Abbas. Times are 5 minutes later (or earlier) at Easton.

The information on the bus stops is not necessarily to be relied on.

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