

ItchenValleyNews

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

Issue 138 | September 2025



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WELCOME to the Itchen Valley News



Lack of rain may mean a lot of watering cans in the garden, but on the plus side it does mean it's lovely to be outside, and the countryside is looking glorious. I hope there have been some positives for the farmers too. Whilst January and February were full of mud we have had very little rainfall since, and less than half the rainfall so far compared to 2024. Maybe we are in for a soaking wet autumn!

However, if we have to be inside, Whats On is filling up with opportunities for entertainment in the autumn. Do you find our layout easy to follow? Any suggestions for improvements to its readability will be given our full attention. You will have noticed that the IVN team are by no means experts, but I want to point out that we are helped enormously by those that are, both in writing articles and in graphics. Helen Ellis Brown always sorts out the front cover for us, but she has been called upon a lot this month and I want to express my thanks – to us amateurs it all seems miraculous, particularly as she is now harnessing the power of AI (see page 31 for example).

Whilst talking about those who help out, a mention for Wolfie, aka Philip Wolfe, who has taken over as Chair of the Upper Itchen Valley Society. Thanks to him for leading the society, whose remit is to preserve and safeguard what is good in the character of the Upper Itchen Valley, something which I think we can all agree on. I am delighted that so many locals have been inspired to write articles this

month. There are some different experiences on the river, some good some not so good, and two different views of Boomtown, one from within and one from outside. We also have reports from two different sports groups – the Cricket Club and the more informal local boules league.

Next month Catherine Hahn will be the editor.

Verity Coleman

Itchen Valley News

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Copy date for articles and one off advertisements for the **October 2025 edition is Monday 15 September 2025.**

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What's On

Easton Cricket Club
Sunday 7 September
EMWCC host the MCC.

See P34

West Meon Music Festival
Sunday 14 September at 3.30pm
at St John's Church West Meon.
Celebrating Jane Austen with Felicity Kendal and James Gilchrist
Full details of all eight festival concerts can be found at westmeonmusic.co.uk

Heritage Open Days
12-21 September
winchesterheritageopendays.org
See flyer on page 6

Easton Car Boot Sale
Sunday 14 September 12-4
See flyer opposite

CAR BOOT SALE
14th SEPTEMBER
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Hampshire Medical Fund
Art Show
23-25 September 10am - 5pm
Pinglestone Barn Alresford SO24 9TB
Tickets £20 from
hampshiremedicalfund.org
See flyer on page 6

Alresford Art Society:
Thursday 25 September
7.30pm in Bishop's Sutton Village Hall,
Bishops Sutton SO24 0AH.
Jamil Akib will demonstrate how to produce a figure with movement in oil and acrylic. Non-members welcome, admission £3 + refreshment donation.
Jen Boardman
Secretary, Alresford Art Society
artsociety.alresford.org 07798933027

Organ recital by Richard Pearce
Saturday 27 September at 6pm
St Nicholas Church, Bishop's Sutton
SO24 0AD in aid of Treloars.
A one-hour, early-evening concert at 6pm with a welcoming drink on arrival
Tickets £15.00 payable on the door in cash. Please reserve in advance. Doors open at 5.15pm. Parking is limited by the church but there is more space available at the village hall on the main road.
Tickets from stnbconcerts@gmail.com
Mandy Caldwell

Michael Lunts presents Quirkish Delight
Saturday 4 October at 6.30
St Mary's Church Easton
See flyer opposite

Martyr Worthy Lecture Series
2025/26
The new series of four lectures returns to the Itchen Abbas and Avington Village Hall on **25 November**. See flyer on page 9

EASTON CAR BOOT SALE

Sunday 14th September
12-4pm

Easton Village Hall & Recreation Ground, SO21 1EN

- Over 100 Pitches
- Car Pitches: £5
- Van / Trailer Pitches: £10
- Entry: £2 per adult
Under 10s free
- Disabled parking available
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- Tea Room
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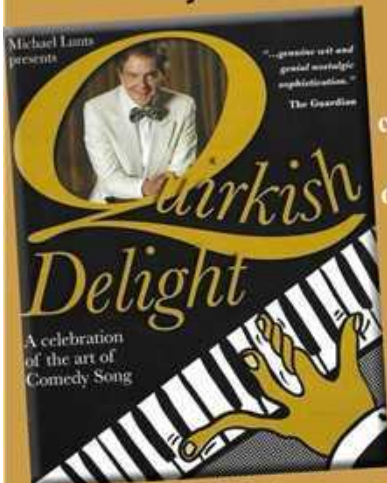
Seller set-up 11-11.45am

Pre-book your pitch via www.eastonvillagehall.co.uk

All proceeds will be shared between the Easton Village Hall & Recreation Ground (reg. charity number: 201809) and the Easton & Martyr Worthy Cricket Club.

Michael Lunts presents a celebration of the art of Comedy Song

Saturday 4th October 2025 at 6.30pm in St Mary's Church Easton



'Quirky Delight' is an intimate revue of comedy songs, a confection of deliciously witty lyrics and music, served up for your delectation by Michael Lunts, one of the UK's most experienced and widely-travelled pianist-performers.

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Watercross Line
Winchester College | The Great Hall

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Martyr Worthy Lecture Series 2025/6

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at Itchen Abbas and Avington Village Hall, SO21 1BQ

6.30pm for drinks and canapés

Lectures will last an hour starting at 7.00pm



THE FALL OF MARGARET THATCHER ~ A WHODUNNIT

Tuesday 25th November 2025

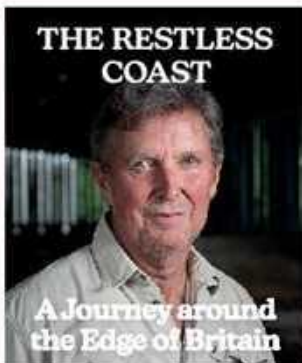
**CHARLES MOORE &
KATE EHRMAN**

Charles Moore, the authorised biographer of Margaret Thatcher, will present - jointly with Kate Ehrman - a semi dramatisation of the final days of Lady Thatcher's tenure as Prime Minister, after which he will take questions.



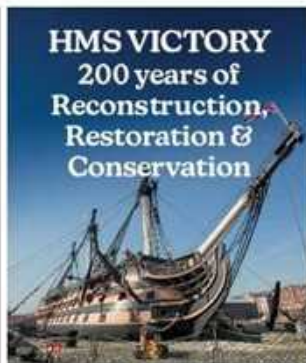
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Friday 13th February 2026

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Friday 27th February 2026

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Enquiries please email Sophie Parry at
martyrworthylecture@gmail.com



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Charles Moore comes to the Itchen Valley: 25 November

One hundred years ago, on 13 October 1925, Margaret Thatcher (née Roberts) was born above her parents' grocery shop at 1 North Parade, Grantham.

This year we are delighted to welcome Charles Moore, her authorised biographer, to perform - with Kate Ehrman - their dramatisation of the *Fall of Mrs Thatcher* as the first in the Martyr Worthy Lecture series on 25 November. This coincides with the publication of the new single-volume centenary edition of his original three volume work.

I am especially delighted Charles is coming because, as a former editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, he was my ultimate boss when I was on the editorial staff. I learnt a huge amount about the craft of journalism and about politics from him. Furthermore, my father was a Minister in the Thatcher Government. But I digress. These days Charles is a crossbench peer, Lord Moore of Etchingham, having been ennobled in 2020. He is still an influential columnist at the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Spectator*. He believes that journalists should not really be members of political parties and certainly not take a party whip. Like Lady Thatcher herself, his family were originally Liberals. Charles's mother was a Liberal councillor in Sussex. But he says he started to adopt a more conservative outlook himself as a student at Cambridge in the late 1970s. The country was in a mess and he was attracted to the

ideas proclaimed by both her and her mentor Keith Joseph. Incidentally, it was at Cambridge he met Richard Ehrman (a fellow *Telegraph* alumni), who subsequently married Kate. Kate herself worked with Charles as an assistant on the biography.

I asked him how come he is now performing a dramatisation of her last days in office in 1990 (when she was pushed out by a coup encouraged by Michael Heseltine's supporters) and not simply giving a talk like other authors? "I always felt that this could be a very gripping piece of drama," he says. "Half Greek tragedy and half whodunnit. And we could tell this story well by narrating it. We know what all these people actually said, or say they said, at the time, so it has authenticity. It is also a way of presenting a story which is fresh and alive." After the performance he will take questions.

I also asked him how come he came to be her authorised biographer in the first place? The chroniclers of historically significant figures are chosen very carefully. For example, by agreement with the Cabinet Secretary, as authorised biographer he was given confidential access to official papers before they appeared under the 30-year rule.

There was, apparently, no obvious process to his appointment. Her personal papers had been deposited at Churchill College, Cambridge and there was a view among her advisers that someone needed to get a head start with the state material held at the Treasury.

Sir Julian Seymour (her principal adviser after she left office) came to see me in 1997 and said she wants you to do it," says Charles. "The only

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condition was that nothing should appear in her lifetime. The proposition was then sold to Penguin Books.” Charles stepped down as editor of the *Telegraph* to concentrate on the work full-time in 2004, one reason being Lady Thatcher (as she then was) had deteriorating health.

The result is a fine piece of erudition and political drama. But the biography is far more than that. It is no mere hagiography. Even for those who are not Conservative supporters it is beautifully written, full of charm, wit, insight, humanity, mischief and import. It is also a piece of social history, documenting the dramatic changes we witnessed in the second half of the twentieth century. I hope that I am not alone in looking forward to welcoming Charles and Kate to the Itchen Valley in November.

George Trefgarne

Peter Bell RIP

The Bells lived at Harefield in Itchen Abbas for over 50 years before moving up to Scotland to be close to their daughter Pippa.

After his retirement as MD of Gasgoine Gush & Dent Ltd based in Alresford Peter became fully involved in village life, helping on many committees including that of the local Village Hall. He and Pat celebrated both their golden (2003) and diamond (2013) wedding anniversaries at the Hall, giving Peter a good excuse to enjoy dancing!

He was a founder member of the Itchen Abbas Bowls and Boules Club introduced after the new Itchen Abbas & Avington Village Hall was built as a millennium project and the Open Space boules (pétanque) piste had been added into the garden. Peter was one of the few members who played boules during the summer and Short Mat Bowls during

the winter.

He also helped with the Itchen Abbas & Avington Valley News (predecessor of the Itchen Valley News) for eight years, with six of those years as the Editor in Chief, introducing coloured covers in 2007. After 73 editions, he retired leaving the local news as a vibrant, interesting and ‘go to’ magazine for all things happening in the two villages.

Peter Bell died on 22 July 2025 aged 96, a couple of years after his wife Pat. There will be a memorial service in Itchen Abbas at a later date to be announced.

Jenny Sloan

Boules report

July: League Round 2

Easton v Itchen Abbas: Despite the odd threatening cloud, it was a windy but warm evening for the match between Easton and Itchen Abbas at the Oak House in Easton. It was a very happy gathering of old friends and a making of new ones, sharing excellent food and drink and some hard-fought games of boules.

The gravel in Judy Bishop’s delightful summer garden was well prepared for an exciting contest enjoyed by many spectators from both clubs. In one game the score veered wildly from 5:0 down to a victory of 5:13.

Other games moved quickly to a result but in the final game the score crept up in ones and twos.

Spectators gathered round to see a thrilling match eventually won 13:11 by Itchen Abbas. Overall the wins went to the home team and Easton took away 3 league points to Itchen Abbas’s 1, leaving the league wide open for the final evening’s matches

in August.

Simon Broadley

Martyr Worthy v Avington:

Simultaneously Martyr Worthy were playing at home against Avington, held in Lower Chilland Lane. Refreshments were generous and it was a little while before play started. When it did, the scores in the first two games crept gently up, with Avington eventually winning one and Martyr Worthy the other. After a break Avington managed to move ahead and secure wins in both games. So score for the match was Avington 3, Martyr Worthy 1. With round 2 of the League completed the combined scores were Easton 5 points, Itchen Abbas 4 points, equal with Avington 4 points and Martyr Worthy 3 points.

Ralph Matthews

August: League Round 3

For the third and final round of the 2025 boules league there were two

matches at different locations. Avington were at home against Easton and had noticed optimistically that, if they could win 3-1, they should be in a strong position. But this was a tall

order. In both the first two games the scores crept up gradually and in a balanced way to about 7 points, but then Easton accelerated and quickly reached the target of 13 points, clinching both those games. .

At the other venue, Itchen Abbas were playing Martyr Worthy. Itchen

Abbas were on home ground and were in strong form. They pulled ahead winning both the first games by a margin of 13-7. So now, with Itchen Abbas also having won 2 games to nil, they were still only one match point behind Easton, with two games to play.

Refreshments at both locations provided the opportunity to decide on tactics for the remaining games. After the break, Itchen Abbas continued their powerful progress against Martyr Worthy and, with their new-found accuracy and effectiveness, they won the remaining two games with an even wider margin. Result for the day - win for Itchen Abbas 4-0.

In the Easton v Avington match, again the early play kept the scores roughly level for a while but in both games Easton then forged ahead to reach the 13 point target and claimed victory and two more match points. Result

for the day Easton 4-0. With two teams winning by 4-0 on this last round the result had remained in the balance for some time. The final score after all three rounds was Easton 9 points, Itchen



Abbas 8, Avington 4 and Martyr Worthy 3. Congratulations to Easton and well played Itchen Abbas.

Commiserations to Martyr Worthy and Avington. Easton were duly presented with the Dick Hewitt trophy.

Ralph Matthews

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From The Parish Council

The Parish Council does not meet in August. However that does not mean all activities come to a halt. Work on the M3 Junction 9



Improvement scheme continues apace. The Contractors are making good use of the dry weather and if that reduces the time until completion of the project all to the good. The downside for Valley residents is the problem caused by heavy traffic coming through the narrow lanes to the south of, and into Easton. This is both a problem of noise and, as has happened several times, complete blockage of the lanes by HGVs. The Parish Council, with active support of our County Councillor Jackie Porter, has been trying to get this problem addressed for several months. An onsite meeting with National Highways and their Contractors was held in May and regular meetings by Teams have been held since. Our proposals to



improve the situation on these roads are: comprehensive and clear signage, temporary speed restrictions and a one way system for the most crucial narrow roads. We were informed at the meeting in May that it would be Hampshire County Council Highways responsibility to have these measures put in place. Consequently a letter was sent to the County Councillor with responsibility for Highways and Transport. The reply was “I am liaising with the head of Highways and one of us will come back to you as soon as we have the details for you”. Since then the only information we have received has been thanks to the help and support from Jackie Porter. We have had no formal reply or direct communication from Hampshire County Council. Another letter has therefore been sent and a response is awaited. Meanwhile traffic congestion and face offs between HGVs that should not be using these narrow lanes continues. Rest assured, the Parish Council is making every effort it can and will continue to do so to get appropriate sensible measures in place. In the meantime we will be posting traffic information with relevant links on our website and elsewhere.

While on the subject of information, whether supplying it to or seeking it from Parish Councillors, please use our official email addresses which can be found on our website along with other useful information. This includes which Councillor is best to contact on any given subject. It is also worth copying in our Clerk on all correspondence, who will see that it goes to the right Councillor and will check on progress. Sending emails on Parish Council matters to private addresses can result in delays or

being missed altogether.

It is unfortunate that the Old School Field in Easton has had to be closed during part of school summer holidays, but necessary while a tree in a dangerous condition was made safe. This work has been organised by the Trust that manages the field supported by the Parish Council who are responsible for the play equipment. Tree surveys have been carried out at both this field and Couch Green. Depending on what is recommended further work may well be needed.

Not forgotten is the Avington Sewage Project. We have at last received some information from Southern Water. There has been another delay, this time the need is for redesign of the pumping station due to a tree being in the way and not allowed to be felled. They will be holding a meeting with interested parties at a date still to be decided. A request for plans to be supplied in advance of the meeting has been agreed. The Parish Council next meets at Easton Village Hall on 4 September. September is also a time when hedge cutting can start. Will all those who have Rights of Way adjacent to or across their land see that overgrowth from the sides onto the footpath or bridle way is cut back. This is especially important in the case of rights of way along the roadside where if overgrowth is not cut back to above head height pedestrians can be forced into the road and it becomes a safety issue.

Patrick Appleby, IVPC Chairman

Dragonfly Days

The new single by local singer/songwriter and actress Juliet Howland. It's from her upcoming album 'Under The Apple Tree' and the video, which can be found on Youtube, features our beautiful River Itchen. The song is



available on all major streaming platforms and can be purchased

from Juliethowland.bandcamp.com '

From our MP



Summer 2025 has been one of the hottest and driest on record. Climate

change is supercharging dry and wet spells, Conservative and Labour governments have failed to invest in reservoirs and water conservation, and our private water companies have chosen to put profits into CEO pay instead of investing in infrastructure.

Southern Water has been responsible for 15 serious pollution incidents this past year alone, the second highest of all water companies. I've heard from so many people who have had trouble - I helped a farmer win compensation after the company spilled sewage over their crops, and park homes residents were being continuously overcharged until I demanded Southern Water listen to their case and treat them fairly. These kinds of issues should never happen in the first place, and customers certainly shouldn't be ignored unless an MP gets involved.

At the same time as they're increasing bills by hundreds of pounds, they have decided to reward their boss with a £1.4million pay deal.

Why is the board of Southern Water rewarding this failure? After our calls for a ban on bonuses for water bosses, the Government promised to act. Clearly the



in the catchment area that allows winter rains to filter properly through the soil and into the chalk rather than running straight off. Whilst some of the springs that burst into

companies are finding ways around the rules. That's why I joined Liz Jarvis MP for Eastleigh and other Lib Dem colleagues to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, calling on them to put an end to this unjustified profiteering.

It's time to scrap Ofwat for a regulator with teeth that can actually hold these companies to account, and replace all of them with public benefit companies who work for us, not their overpaid CEOs.

My team and I are ready to help, so if there are any issues or concerns you have, get in touch at danny.chambers.mp@parliament.uk

The River this summer

In all the years that I have lived, worked and marvelled at the beauty of the Upper Itchen I cannot recall a year when the river has looked quite so wonderful, perhaps surprising given the relentlessly dry and at times hot weather that we have endured this summer. Aquifer recharge from last winter's rain must have been exceptional for the river to be flowing so healthily still, which may in part be due to the gently undulating landscape

life back at the beginning of the year have now dried up at the top of the catchment area, others further down the Valley may still be active. It is perhaps worth noting that the volume of water that flows under the Easton road bridge is twice the volume of water that can be found in the river where the three tributaries of the Itchen come together near Itchen Stoke, only a couple of miles upstream. This might suggest that a great deal of water may be feeding into the river from unseen springs that lie under the river bed.

Simon Ffennell

Itchen Insight: Philip Wolfe



The IVN shines the spotlight on 'Wolfie' as he takes over as Chair of the Upper Itchen Valley Society, of which it is to be hoped you are all members! The UIVS is a

charity whose object is to protect countryside, community and heritage in the Itchen Valley, Itchen Stoke and Ovington parishes.

Name: Philip Wolfe (aka "Wolfie")

Career: Background in investment banking and finance, mostly in the energy industry. Now CFO, entrepreneur and NED.

How long have you lived in the Valley?: 21 years.

Your life in 140 characters: Wife Lucy, son Ned (20), daughter Charlie (15) and dog Edna. Talks a lot – likes industrial hemp, eco-homes, Cricketers Inn, watching cricket, outdoors, tennis and skiing.

Valley moment to remember: Hosting members of the North Korean Paralympic Team in 2012.

Champagne moment: Completing and surviving the Inferno Ski Race.

Surprising snippet: Deported from Tripoli.

Passion: Skiing in the mountains with my family.

Favourite place: Wengen, Jungfrau Region, Switzerland.

Best thing about the Valley: Countryside, community and our pubs!

Worst thing about the Valley: Lack of speed limit in Easton.

Favourite book: *Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy

Best one liner/favourite quote: “Growing old is mandatory, growing up is optional!”

TASA: The Arts Society Alresford

TASA is an active and friendly society which organises a strong programme of monthly art lectures in Itchen Abbas & Avington Village Hall, as well as a programme of private visits, plus study days which offer in-depth learning with an expert in the field of an arts-related subject.

We welcome new members to join the society. New membership starts from

January 2026, but discounted membership is available for anyone joining this year. New members will be invited to meet the committee and each other, at a coffee morning early next year.

For more information see the flyer opposite or visit

theartsocietyalresford.org.uk

Helen Ellis Brown

From the Itchen Valley Parish

During the summer months we take the opportunity to enjoy some relaxed time together. Our normal services still happen but we are also lucky enough to spend some time at social events organised by some of our team.

At the beginning of the month we enjoyed our now annual “Church with a Splash” when over 70 people came together to hear a very relaxed short talk, some worship and then plenty of time for fun in the pool and an opportunity to catch up with friends.

People who have not historically been churchgoers may not feel comfortable coming into a traditional service where they don't know what to do or even what to wear. It is more natural for them to come to the sort of events which they would normally enjoy going to such as "Cafe Church" (in the village hall with pretty tablecloths and home





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made cakes and fun creative or sporty things to do) or in this case "Church with a Splash" beside a swimming

pool. After the very simple service everyone can jump into the pool and have some fun then chat over a hot dog cooked on the BBQ, plentiful cakes, strawberries and ice-cream. We keep the time of worship in song, the talk and the prayers very simple and relaxed but Christ-centred and everyone seems to enjoy chatting about them afterwards as there is lots of time to do so, unlike in a more traditional service with a formal ending. We love the fact that young children are growing up thinking church is really good fun and wanting to come again. We are always delighted that this type of event appeals to so many different people and we are always surprised (and pleased) to see the cross section of people, young and old, joining us. The following Sunday afternoon we enjoyed a rather more relaxed afternoon tea in the garden of the Farmyard, Easton hosted by Judith and Theo Mezger when over 40 people came together to enjoy relaxing in the garden with friends old and new over tea and cake.

Thank you to everyone who hosted,

helped, made cakes, barbecued sausages and most of all those who attended. We really are so lucky to be able to enjoy the summer in this way with each other.

Becky Clark

VJ Day Commemoration in the Itchen Valley



Admirals John Lang and Michael Gretton with Lt Helena McFeely RN

On 15 August the Itchen Valley Branch of the Royal British Legion held a special lunch at The Plough, Itchen Abbas to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VJ Day and the end of the Second World War.





September Services

Sunday 7 September

10am Parish Communion - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy
4pm Café Church - Itchen Abbas Village Hall

Sunday 14 September

8.30am BCP Holy Communion - St Mary's, Easton
10am Valley Worship & Ark - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Sunday 21 September

10am Parish Communion - St John's, Itchen Abbas

Sunday 28 September

10am Harvest Parish Communion - St Mary's, Easton
6pm Evensong - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

**Please check our website in case of
any unexpected changes:**

www.itchenvalleychurches.org

September Activities

Cameo

A short lunch time service followed by a light two-course lunch:
12 noon on 3rd Tuesday of each month at St John's, Itchen Abbas

Little Rainbows

For parents and carers with their babies and toddlers:
9.30-11.00am on Mondays (during term-times) at St John's, Itchen Abbas



Some 23 members, partners, friends and supporters gathered for the occasion. Following a very enjoyable meal and a few short speeches, Branch President Admiral John Lang proposed a toast to peace and freedom - a poignant reminder of the courage and sacrifice of those who served in the Far East, and of the enduring legacy of the victory that finally brought the war to its close. The event was both a warm social occasion and a fitting act of remembrance.

David Wolfe

The Itchen Valley Quiz: No.39

1. What is a female otter called?
2. What is the name of the capital of the Republic of China?
3. The coastline is known as the Skeleton Coast. Of what country and why?
4. What is the first line of the Kohima Epitaph?
5. The 7.845 mile long Öresund Bridge is a combined railway and motorway bridge across the Øresund (The Sound) strait that connects Denmark (just south of Copenhagen) with Sweden,. Part of it features an

undersea tunnel. Why?

6. What is the name of our MP?
7. Who were the parents of the first Princess Charlotte of Wales?
8. What towns mark the east and west extremities of the A303. Stonehenge is not the correct answer!
9. What are the names of the four gentleman who feature conspicuously on Mount Rushmore in South Dakota?
10. What is the UKs largest breeding bird.?

John Lang (answers on Page 40)

Boomtown 2025: 'The Power of Now' Experience



I had the privilege of playing at the Boomtown music festival for my second year with the Boomtown Ukes ukulele band. We are an ensemble of local amateur musicians aged from 19 to 70, playing songs from modern to traditional delivered in a fun and light-hearted way. We were asked to perform every day - on stage, busking at street corners or cafes and even up a tower!

The festival was laid out with themed districts areas including Old Town, with a pirate and down and out feel, and Copperwood with a 1920's glamour focus. It was a

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wonderful feeling to perform at the opening of the gates to the Old Town, dressed in pirate outfits and playing to hundreds of revellers dancing and singing along to our songs. An experience that will live long in my memory.

I was possibly the most senior person of the 75,000 festival goers, but felt at home in the colourful, vibrant and energetic environment and its many faces of entertainment. The scale of the operation was astounding with 12 main stages and 50 hidden stages found behind doors in the back streets of the towns. I managed to see some of the more than 500 acts over the five days of the festival, including The Wurzels and Sex Pistols. There were many musical flavours to sample, including Drum and Bass, Electronica, Soul, Funk, Ska, Rap, Hip Hop – think of a genre : it was there.

The festival even had its own newspaper *The Daily Rag*, which gave a view of events and news, even including a wedding proposal. Boomtown Post Office was busy with postcard senders taking a break from smartphones. There was a strong thread throughout the festival related to sustainability, environmental consciousness and societal

responsibility, with stalls promoting crafts, repair and recycling, environmentally positive initiatives and mental health awareness and improvement.

Credit must be given to Lak Mitchell and Chris Rutherford, who had the vision in 2009 to start a themed music festival, and the Matterley Estate has been its base since 2011. The logistics for the construction, including stages, themed buildings, sound and lighting, camping sites, sanitation and transportation is immense and complex.

Acknowledgement and enormous gratitude need to be given to all the staff and volunteers that make the whole event possible.

To some the annual arrival of Boomtown may be a source of inconvenience with increased traffic, lights piercing the night sky and the sound of music rumbling across the fields until the early hours of the morning. However, Boomtown has become a popular well-established tradition giving the opportunity to many people from all over the UK and the wider world to come together to enjoy a rich mix of musical genres, and other entertainments such as circus acts, magicians, fire dancers and eaters, jugglers, trapeze artists, clowns, poets, comedians and many more. It's a wonderful combination for the stimulation of the mind and senses. I left the Boomtown site for the final time this year on the Sunday feeling tired but exhilarated, with many happy memories after an energetic few days meeting many people and seeing very talented musicians and performers. Thanks to my fellow Ukes of Boomtown band members for their fun company. We look

forward to returning in 2026 for Chapter 5: Radical Redesign.
Pete Riches (also see the front cover)

Plant of the Month: Common Toadflax

Such a pretty plant with such an ugly name. A sprinkling of yellow and orange toadflax along the borders of fields or country roads is one of the everyday sights of an English summer. Its name derives from the leaves,



narrow and spirally arranged like those of flax, but the plant was regarded as so worthless as to be fit only for toads. Only a heavy insect like a bee can depress the lower lip of the

flower to gain access to the nectar at the tip of the flower's spur and in so doing pollen is exchanged between the stamens, the bee's body and the stigma.

Dorothy and Simon Broadley

Butterfly Count

It's a glorious Sunday morning. The sun is already uncomfortably hot and I think of the Boomtowners, tired, thirsty and hungover and am glad I'm not there. However, I am old and they are young and enjoying the freedom, the experiences, the dangers and the excitement of the festival. It's the last day of the national butterfly count and I feel I should be contributing.

I sit in the shade in an Itchen Abbas garden. My Siamese cat emerges from a clump of hydrangeas with all the

grace of a tiger appearing in the jungle. Each foot is placed directly in front of the preceding one as if he is walking a tightrope. He comes and joins me as we watch for butterflies. Almost immediately we see three small whites. In previous years we would expect brimstones and red admirals, but perhaps it is late in the season and there are none around. Two more small whites appear so we have five. They disappear and for a while there are none. Soon there are once again five small whites in the garden. A group of six more can be seen next door, climbing in an excited spiral.

The fifteen minutes is up. I saw five small whites and then another five. But were they the same ones? How many should I report? Can I count the ones next door? Supposing my neighbour is counting them too. I could report 5 or 10 or 16 differing by a factor of three. I am stressed by the responsibility. My numbers could be spurious. I could ruin the national survey. You know what they say about statistics. Rubbish in rubbish out. I am distressed. The cat is indifferent.

So I start to think about butterflies. I am ignorant but curious. They are extraordinary. Not just their incredible lifecycle, but their design. If you set out to design a flying machine I don't think a butterfly would ever be the solution. I can't imagine how it works. Their flightpath looks completely accidental. A combination of chaotic and apparently random zig zags which appears completely out of control. And yet they fly from A to B and the last zag lands them exactly on a flower. And when they meet another butterfly they spiral upwards fluttering rapidly around each other but never colliding. And all controlled by a brain the size of a speck of dust. Could a



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computer programme be written to predict a butterfly's flightpath? Probably: I'm sure AI could do it.**



But I have no comprehension, so I start to think about the thing that worries me about all flying insects and that is rain. A small white weighs about 0.05g. An average raindrop weighs about 0.5g and falls at a terminal velocity of 25mph. What happens when a small white is hit on the head (I assume they have heads) by a raindrop 10 times its mass, travelling at 25mph? It's too upsetting to contemplate.

So my relaxed Sunday butterfly count has achieved nothing. I feel unable to submit my conclusions, and worry about carnage in the next rainfall. The cat has lost interest and is to be found on this beautiful summer day, upstairs asleep under the duvet in the spare room. And the Boomtowners will be gearing up for their final night, the green searchlights will be raking the sky, and we will fall asleep to the regular thump of the percussion.

Michael Smith

***The Jersey Tiger Moth butterfly, photographed in Abbots Worthly by Steve Stewart and enhanced using AI*

The Valley Gardeners brave the heat in Oxfordshire!

Thirty-three intrepid Valley Gardeners (and a few guests) braved a temperature of 31C to journey up

to Oxfordshire on a garden tour. We have been styled the Hardy Perennials by one of our members and indeed, we needed to be on this day, one of the hottest during this latest heatwave.

Our first stop was Rousham House, the gardens of which are a firm



favourite of Monty Don's. I can do no better than quote the AI overview which says "Monty Don considers Rousham Gardens in Oxfordshire to be one of the greatest gardens in the world, specifically highlighting William Kent's design as a masterpiece. He emphasises that Rousham represents the first phase of English landscape design and has remained largely unchanged since Kent's time in the 18th century. Rousham is known for its harmonious blend of house, garden, and surrounding countryside, with a focus on naturalistic features like serpentine watercourses and framed views."

If you are interested in following Monty's tour of the Rousham garden, please take a look at [youtube.com/watch?v=O4pS-NdLL7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4pS-NdLL7A) It is well worth watching and you will see many of the delights we Valley Gardeners enjoyed.

August is the time for dahlias and Rousham has a long and deep border

filled with these glorious, showy plants. There are three 17th century walled gardens housing deep herbaceous borders which spill over the paths, peaches, apricots, plums and pear trees trained against the ancient brick walls, a pool with a fountain surrounded by roses and a path, framed with espalied apples, takes you to an archway leading you into the well-stocked kitchen garden.

But I think it is the landscaped part of the



gardens which are so magnificent and magical. You feel you could be back in the 18th century here, glimpsing fine ladies and gentlemen promenading along the gravel paths in their brocades and lace or perhaps stopping for a stolen kiss amongst the shrubbery! The statuary is wonderful too, many surprising and delighting the visitor as you turn a corner or bend. We had a picnic lunch in the garden as, refreshingly, Rousham has no café or shop; just loos! The peace and tranquility sitting in the seven arched Praenestewe gazing down the green slope to the gently flowing River Cherwell was simply captivating. We had to be wrenched away to continue our journey on to Broughton Grange garden.

Broughton Grange's history involves its construction around 1300 as a manor house by Sir John de Broughton, complete with a moat. The gardens, established in the early 20th century, are known for their contemporary design and integration with the surrounding landscape.

Garden designer Tom Stuart Smith created this garden, constructing three south-facing terraces along the three metre fall in the ground along the length of the garden. Each has its own character.

In the warmest part of the garden at the top a greenhouse nestles in a corner of the walls, surrounded by a

tapestry of Mediterranean flowers and grasses. From here a stone rill carries water down to a large stone tank in the centre of the garden, where the planting has a

damp meadow character. As Tom writes "Although the garden has a strong formal structure it was conceived entirely in relation to the surrounding landscape and the views to distant tree clumps, hills, valleys and vistas. At one end of the scale trees and shrubs familiar from the surrounding hedges and woods make up the components of the garden's structural planting. At the other end of the scale, the microscopic cellular structure of beech, ash and oak leaves from the hedgerow trees surrounding the garden is magnified several thousand times to make the pattern of the parterre on the lowest terrace."

As you can see, the two gardens we visited that day were very different one from the other but both captivatingly beautiful and I hope they will stick in our memories for years to come. We all survived the intense heat and a coach full of rather tired and overheated but happy Valley Gardeners made their way back to the Itchen Valley.

Catherine Hahn

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My name is Dr Eve and if you, like me, are frustrated with the current landscape of healthcare, please read on.



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Dr Eve*

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Easton and Martyr Worthy Cricket Club

The 12th annual Easton and Martyr Worthy CC Sixes tournament, sponsored by Knight Frank, was held on Friday 25 July at the David Roth Cricket Pitch in Easton. Colourful playing shirts ensured the different teams



could be easily identified throughout the day of rapid format cricket. The eight teams were each sponsored by a local business and competed in a five over knock-out competition of two leagues, culminating in semi-finals – and the grand final match.

The first semi-final was played between Dr Vegan in bright green shirts and Fenwick Elliot in lavender. Fenwick needed 19 runs off the last over, however Dr Vegan controlled the play and won by seven runs. The second was between Anglesea Capital in pink and Client Server Titans in mint green, who won comfortably by five wickets.

In the final Dr Vegan won the toss and elected to bat first; some outstanding bowling and fielding, including three run outs, restricted them to 53 runs. Will Kendall and Olly Boulton opened the batting for Client Server Titans. Will retired on 22 runs, bringing in Nick Boulton, who was quickly out for three attempting a reverse sweep. Sam Boulton then came to the crease and, batting with his brother, steadied the ship to the extent they only needed

eight runs off the last over, having scrambled three due to overthrows they eventually won by five wickets. The Sixes Cup was presented by Club Chairman, Adrian Lee to Client

Server Titans' captain Nick Boulton. Nick stated the team had thoroughly enjoyed the day and were very pleased to have won the competition on their third attempt. The umpires particularly

mentioned the sportsmanlike conduct of both teams in the final.

Four teams consisted entirely of players aged under 19 and Wessex Energy Storage's players were all EMWCC cricketers aged under 17. The boys attend different schools and have become friends through the EMWCC Juniors' set up.

This year the club's U15 A team won their League; and junior players comprise at least half the players in the club's evening T20 Slam squad which, as runners up in their group, is through to the knock-out stages of the competition. These junior boys have been fortunate to benefit from their coach Ben Gillings' hard work and inspirational coaching. Ben has been coaching them since the U11's and he is committed to welcoming boys new to cricket, as well as more experienced players.

Diary date: On Sunday 7 September EMWCC will again be hosting the MCC in a fixture starting at 11am. All spectators are welcome to come along and support the EMWCC team; the bar and BBQ will be open all day.

Lynda Gray www.emwcc.com

Jackie's County Corner

You may have heard of Healthy Streets. Active Travel England and Public Health are encouraging us to



adopt this approach. Hampshire County Council held a seminar for all those of us involved in residents'

health and wellbeing, as Healthy Street principles result in cleaner air and make it more pleasant to walk, cycle and use them. To be a healthy street, there are criteria to satisfy: active frontages, so you feel safe as you walk along, good quality footways, public transport can use these, trees or other ways to shield you from bright sunlight and bad weather and clear points at which you can cross.

Hampshire County Council is seeking views on the effectiveness of the new TOUCAN crossing at Abbotts Barton. Have you been through this as a driver, on a bike or with a wheel/pushchair or on foot? Please let me know your thoughts.

How easy do you find it to cross a road safely? Does it stop you getting out? Thank you for your replies to an earlier County Corner about Zebra crossings. I received several suggestions from residents, which I am following up now. The decision to install any crossing involves a balance between safe pedestrian movement and managing traffic flow effectively - but who makes the decision? If you'd like to know more about them, please go www.hants.gov.uk, search pedestrian crossings.

The Stagecoach bus timetable has changed, with some improvements, including continuing Sunday services on the 6, 75 and 64, but the outcome for some isn't so good, with reduced numbers of buses at peak times. If you go to college, I'd be pleased to hear from you. When do you need the buses to run to get to Basingstoke, Andover, Eastleigh or Winchester for your lectures? Is there anything missing in the new timetable that Stagecoach should know about? School transport provided by HCC is changing too. There is evidence that quite a few children have a pass (for which the tax payer covers the cost) but they don't use it at all or on certain days.

To reduce the bill, HCC is introducing Digital Bus passes, with a printable QR code if your child doesn't carry a smart phone. The cards will be used to predict better the number of children on the buses, reducing and increasing as necessary. From 2026, the bus routes may change to take more children on each bus, possibly with some children standing on some days. More options will be available for parents of children with an EHCP or who have other special needs. If you would like to talk about the implication for your child/ren, please contact me.

Is your Neighbourhood in a No Cold Calling Zone? You can check easily on www.hants.gov.uk Search 'no cold calling zones' where they are listed by district, or email or call me if you don't have access to this or want your road added to the list. A resident kindly alerted me to the fact that the complaint site wasn't operating. This has now been corrected.

I have written before about Scams.

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The Pilgrims' Chorus concert in Itchen Abbas

A kind friend in the village alerted me to an unusual concert taking place in St. John's Church, Itchen Abbas. Given by the Exeter Philharmonic choir (or a selection of them), it was a programme of sacred and secular music to celebrate their journey along the St. James' Way. In case you are not familiar with the St. James's Way (as I was not) it is a 66 mile

pilgrimage route created by the Confraternity of St. James which starts at the majestic ruins of Reading Abbey - the centre of the St James cult in England in the Middle Ages - to Southampton, a port from which pilgrims would have embarked on their onward journey to Santiago (Santiago = Saint James).

The members of the Exeter Phil. were not intending to walk the whole route but concentrated on a section from Upper Wield to the Hospital at St.

Cross over a long weekend. Along the way, they had planned five evening concerts at which to sing The Pilgrims' Chorus and I was lucky enough to be present at the one in Itchen Abbas on Friday 1 August. We were treated to four collections of short musical pieces, with readings of poems in the intervals between the music. After a couple of sections, a clear theme emerged: a celebration of both the natural world and of love. Being a fan of Christopher Marlowe I was drawn to his well known *The Passionate Shepherd...* with the seductive first line 'Come live with me and be my love'. We were taken to *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* by W.B. Yeats which reflects on a universal human desire for a connection with nature and a retreat from the pressures of modern life.

Musical highlights for me were *Ave Maria Stella* by Grieg and the haunting *Crossing the Bar* from the poem by Lord Tennyson, set to music by

Hubert Parry, which the choir sang as an encore. Another, more lighthearted love song, was *The Honeysuckle and the Bee*, complete with buzzing and other extraneous sounds from the choir members.

Exeter Philharmonic Choir is one of the oldest amateur choral societies in the U.K. It began in October 1846 in "Mr. Risdon's room" in Exeter. Today there are 100 members of the choir and I would guess we had close to half that number performing at the concert. The voices were superbly blended and their attention to detail was impressive. It was a thoroughly enjoyable hour's entertainment.

Catherine Hahn



Tiddler Joke

“Knock knock”, “who’s there?” “Interrupting cow”
“interrupting cow...”
“mo”
...who?”



Valley Quiz answers

1. A bitch or a sow.
2. Taipei City. Capital of Taiwan, which is, officially, the Republic of China. Mainland China is The People’s Republic of China,
3. It forms much of the Atlantic coast of Namibia and is so called because of the number of bleached whale and seal bones, and shipwrecks scattered along the shore.
4. “When you go home, tell them of us and say,” (For your tomorrow we gave our today.)
5. The bridge is situated close to the east end of Copenhagen’s Kastrup Airport and becomes an underwater tunnel in that vicinity to ensure aircraft landing and taking off do not face any risk provided by a bridge on their flight path.
6. Danny Chambers MP.
7. She was the only child of George, Prince of Wales, and Caroline of Brunswick. She was expected to ascend the British throne after the deaths of her grandfather, George III, and her father, George IV, but died in childbirth at the age of 21 in 1817,
8. Basingstoke and Honiton.
9. Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln.
10. The White-Tailed Eagle. They have been sighted in the Isle of Wight and land bordering the Solent.

Local monthly information

Collections: Usually Tuesdays for Easton and, Avington, and Wednesdays for Abbots Worthy, Itchen Abbas and Martyr Worthy.

Please check your calendar for actual dates.

Hampshire Market in Winchester Second and last Sundays of every month, 9am - 2pm.

Full Parish Council Meeting: Next full council meeting is on Thursday 4 September at 7pm at Easton Village Hall’

Bus information



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

From Winchester bus station

Mon- Fri 10.20 13.20 15.00 16.55 17.50

Saturday 9.00 12.00 15.00 17.50

To Alresford:

Monday to Friday

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

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

From Alresford Perrins school

Mon- Fri 8.11/14 9.14 12.34 15.34 17.14

Saturday 8.14 11.14 14.14 17.14

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



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Itchen Abbas and Avington Village Hall
www.iaavillagehall.co.uk
Hall Manager: Izabela Young 07947
191229 or
manager@iaavillagehall.co.uk
Village hall callbox 01962 791021

Hello lovely!



Earlier this year, The Secret Garden Clinic was extremely proud to receive the Client Care Maven at the 2025 Maven Winchester Awards!

The award recognised the care and dedication we give to every client, which remains the foundation of everything we do. Since then, we've been excited to expand our treatments, utilising the latest in skin-tightening technology - NeoGen, and our truly transformational medical weight management programmes achieving safe, personalised solutions.

As always, we remain whole heartedly committed to combining medical expertise with a calm and luxurious experience, empowering confidence, embracing innovation, and remaining a trusted destination for skin and wellness.

To start your journey to a happier, more confident you - get in touch today, we'd love to meet you.

With love,

Sharron & Mica

thesecretgardenwinchester.co.uk

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