



February 2024



H A P P Y
Valentine's Day


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EDITOR'S NOTE



Hello and welcome to this February edition of the CVN. One minute we're preparing for Christmas; and the next we're into the second month of the New Year! How and why does time race along so fast at times?

My wife and I have just had a very enjoyable couple of days in the Big Smoke (actually, London is pretty much smoke-free these days). It turned out to be a slightly bittersweet experience, as it happens – more on that later; let's focus on the sweet bit! As a Christmas present, Trupti arranged a mystery theatre evening in London for us both, which turned out to be the very last night at the Prince Edward Theatre in the West End of a highly acclaimed National Theatre play by James Graham called 'Dear England'. You may well have heard about it. It's all about the first few years of Gareth Southgate's tenure as the England men's football manager. Joseph Fiennes plays Gareth – brilliantly.

The play starts by looking back on Gareth's own personal trauma, as an England player, of missing a crucial penalty in the Euro '96 semi-final against Germany; and takes us through to when England, now managed by Gareth, finally put that bogey to bed by winning a penalty shoot-out against Colombia at the 2018 World Cup. But this is just the backdrop to the story of how Gareth struggled to introduce a new methodology to managing the England team, moving away from the macho, disciplined, often blame culture favoured by some of his predecessors to a kinder, person-focused, team bonding approach in which the players were encouraged to express their feelings openly. Wow! Indeed, he even brought a female psychologist into the backroom team! The team's results started to justify this highly contentious approach.

For me, this play spoke to the troubled, violent world we live in today. Maybe, just maybe, kindness, tolerance and self-awareness could offer an antidote to the extreme, populist brand of politics and aggression that infects parts of our world today. I know, I'm opening myself up to the accusation of being 'woke'. So be it; I'm in good company. Gary Lineker says in the Guardian Saturday magazine today (20th January) that he'd like to see politicians reintroducing respectability, decency, kindness, generosity. 'Having a conscience, having a heart, having empathy. How is that a bad thing?'

Finally, the bitter part. While in London both my wife and I picked up this fast-spreading 'flu/coughing bug that's doing the rounds and have been confined to barracks for a few days since we got back. We hope to be back in business very soon.

Enjoy the magazine; and have a great Valentine's Day. Best wishes. Peter Skelton

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Contributions, photos and letters to the editor for the March 2024 issue of the Clyst Valley News should be sent by email, to the editor, Peter Skelton, at clystvalleynews@gmail.com by the earlier date of Wednesday 7th February 2024 at the very latest, please. Please note that contributions may be edited.

If you experience any difficulty in receiving your copy of the CVN, please contact your local distributor, as follows:

CSG & Ebford	Isobel Stubbs	07826 806919
CSM	Ivor Spriggs	01392 874382
WS	Debbie Jung	01395 232328
Sowton village	Mike Galloway	07764 582023

VOLUNTEER CVN DELIVERER STILL NEEDED

We continue to be short of someone to deliver the Clyst Valley News in the north-west area of the Cat and Fiddle. This has been done recently by Dan and Bev Maher and we would like to thank them for the help they have given us but unfortunately they are unable to carry on. If anyone would like to volunteer to do this job, please let me know and it would be greatly appreciated. Ivor Spriggs (01392 874382)

WHY NOT ADVERTISE IN THE CLYST VALLEY NEWS?

If you'd like to advertise your business or organisation in the Clyst Valley News, please get in touch - with no obligation. Our rates are very competitive! The CVN is delivered free to around 1300 homes and businesses in Clyst St Mary, Clyst St George and Ebford, and Woodbury Salterton; with other copies going to Exton, Aylesbeare, Farringdon and Woodbury. We also cover news from Topsham. In addition we post the magazine online (in full colour!) via various Facebook village and town group pages (including Woodbury and Topsham), parish council websites, etc; and we have an emailing service whereby subscribers receive a free pdf colour copy of the magazine each month directly in their inboxes. Please contact the Editor, Peter Skelton, for more information at clystvalleynews@gmail.com.

YOUR PHOTOS ALWAYS NEEDED FOR THE COVER OF THE CVN!



Photographers: Why not share your photos with our readers? Most months we aim to put one nice pic on the magazine cover and we need yours! So please do send in your efforts to the editor, Peter Skelton, who'll choose one. Try to use relatively high-definition settings but that's not a must. Just email them to clystvalleynews@gmail.com and we'll do the rest. Simples!

CLYST ST MARY



St Mary's Church, Clyst St Mary

Reflecting on Christmas. Happy New Year to everyone and hope 2024 keeps you all well, safe and happy. We have had a very happy Christmas in the church with many people coming along to the services, singing carols and enjoying a tea afternoon.



The Christingle was enjoyed by many families and friends and was led by Archdeacon Andrew. He told the story of the Christingle and everyone then put their orange together knowing what each piece represented in the story. Andrew blessed our Crib with the knitted Nativity scene made by one of our congregation. Christmas Tea Afternoon was enjoyed and it started to feel like Christmas.

The Carol Service choir was led by Liz Whittaker with the Churchwarden, Pat Cusa, presenting the service. Mulled wine and mince pies sent everyone home in a good mood! Lots of happenings in the church and looking on the proceedings was our beautiful Christmas tree presented as a gift to the church by St Bridget Nurseries. They have been very generous to the church for many years. THANK YOU. Thank you to our volunteers who helped make our events run smoothly and tastefully!! x

Easter. Next is Easter. We are putting on another Easter Fest in the church because it was successful last year. This will be held on Saturday 23rd April from 12 noon to 4 pm. We will start with hotdogs and refreshments at 12 noon and at 1 pm we will enjoy the activities and arts and crafts that will be on offer. The church are moving towards changing the churchyard environment with wilding and areas for birds, ie bird houses, food, etc and we hope that the weather is kind and we can go out and start to decide what to do to encourage wildlife to visit us. So do come along and if anyone would like to donate a bird house or some food for them to enjoy we look forward to seeing you on 23rd April. All ages are very welcome and for more information please contact Pat Cusa at pat@cusa.org.uk or on 01392 877907. We look forward to seeing you soon. Look out for more Easter information being planned now.

Services. The Family Service will be held on 4th February, starting at 9.30 am (and on 3rd March and 7th April). This is a very informal gathering for parents and children. There will be a Family Communion Service on 18th February, at 9.30 am as usual. Tea and coffee are served after both services, and we encourage people to stay and enjoy some fellowship. We welcome new families who would like to bring their children to join us in these services. Thank you. Pat Cusa and the PCC.

Supporting the Church. We would like to give our very grateful thanks to all those who have so generously given grants and donations. The new oil tank is in place and the church is lovely and warm again. Unfortunately, we still need to increase our income to cover rising costs, and while individual donations are extremely welcome, a regular monthly commitment enables us to plan in advance. If you feel able to make even a small regular payment, please contact our Treasurer Gill Fenwick at gill_fenwick@hotmail.com or on 01395 239802.

Village Hall



AGM. The Annual General Meeting of Clyst St Mary Village Hall CIO will be held in the Hall on 18th March at 7.30 pm. Have you got ideas about events, clubs or activities you would like to see at the Hall? Do you want to know what groups you can already join?

Come along and talk to committee members and regular hirers about your ideas, or just to find out more. There will be an open session for any points people would like to raise. With the emphasis today on issues of loneliness and social isolation, we are keen for the Hall to help to meet community needs. Although most of the running of the Hall is now done by paid staff, we need new Trustees to keep our focus on improving our service to the community.

Hiring the Hall. Our website <https://www.clyststmaryvillagehall.co.uk/> gives details of hiring availability and prices but if there's anything else you'd like to know, please drop Ali West an email on: bookings@clyststmaryvillagehall.co.uk. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Bishops Clyst Parish Council



Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places. In accordance with Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 East Devon District Council is to carry out a review of its polling districts and polling places. Further information and details of the consultation, which closes on Friday 9th February 2024, can be found at

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/elections-and-registering-to-vote/election-information/polling-place-review-2023/>.

Bishops Clyst Parish Council Vacancies. There are still vacancies for Parish Councillors which we need to fill urgently. If you would like to be involved, you can be co-opted on to the Council. Just email your details to the Clerk (bishopsclyst@gmail.com) or drop a letter in to the Village Hall.

Community Grants. Community grants are available to groups, clubs and voluntary organisations based in the parish for non-commercial activities which benefit residents of the parish. Please see further details on our website (www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/community-grants/).

Parish Council Meetings. Council meetings take place on the second Monday of the month and dates, agendas and minutes are posted on our website (www.bishopsclyst.org.uk) and on noticeboards in Clyst St Mary, Cat and Fiddle Park and Sowton Village.

Contact the Parish Council. Karan Bennett, PC Clerk, working from the PC office in Clyst St Mary Village Hall on Monday to Wednesday, 9 am to 12.30 pm. Call 01392 874405 or email bishopsclyst@gmail.com. *You are very welcome to drop in, but we recommend making an appointment to ensure someone is available to see you.*

Clyst St Mary Primary School




Everyone has settled well into the new spring term and new year, after the excitement of the Christmas holidays. So far this term, our Reception Class has been learning all about dinosaurs! They have enjoyed learning facts from non-fiction books, as well as

creating and baking wonderful playdough fossils. They will also learn about the fossil hunter Mary Anning, whose discoveries in the Jurassic marine fossil beds in the cliffs along the Dorset coast contributed to changes in scientific knowledge about prehistoric life. The ever-popular Forest School has started up again this term with Class 6 having their final session at the beginning of the term, and Class



5 starting from mid-January. As ever, the cold weather doesn't detract from the enjoyment and outdoor learning experience! This term we are highlighting the importance and joy of 'Reading'. As such, we are holding small events throughout the school to encourage reading, and parental involvement as much as possible. Parents have been invited to our Reading Breakfasts first thing in the morning on a selection of dates to read with their children and enjoy a light breakfast. We look forward to seeing you there.

Continuing with this theme, we have encouraged parents to donate pre-loved books that their child/ren may have grown out of to the school to benefit our younger learners. The response



at the CAT & FIDDLE

Depending on interest, we are looking at organising a pub quiz in the New Year once a month on a Thursday evening at 7pm.

If you are interested, please contact,
Dave Moore on 07971 843621
Email. dave.marg.moore@gmail.com

We would like to think we could get at least 5 teams of 4 to make it worth while

from all our families has been tremendous - thank you! Here are some Class 5 helpers and book monitors sorting through some of the donations. Our library, book corners and reading areas are filling up nicely.



Our seasonal pantomime this year was an M&M Theatre production of the much-loved story of 'Aladdin'. As always, it was a delightful, fun and colourful performance, which the children enjoyed immensely.

This term we participated in the NSPCC's 'Speak out. Stay safe' programme, for children aged 5-11 years. It is designed to help children understand abuse in all its forms and to recognise the signs of abuse. Following a sensitively-constructed assembly, two NSPCC volunteers delivered workshops to the older children in school.

Also at the beginning of the month, our Years 2 and 3 children participated in a creative workshop run by Theatre Alibi. The musician Lizzy Westcott led the sessions, instructing children on the creative process of music and inventions, based on the popular book *Izzy Gizmo* by Pip Jones – who also took part in the workshops!

We are very pleased to be able to offer two Bikeability courses again in early February. The first, for our Reception children, is designed to help them start developing the important skill of balance, as well as handling and awareness, using bikes with no pedals. The Level 1 course, for slightly more experienced riders, was enjoyed by our Class 3 pupils.

Coming up, at the beginning of March, we are looking forward to the Paddleboat Theatre Company's performance of 'Framed!' for our KS2 classes. It's an Agatha Christie-style whodunnit, which I have no doubt will be thoroughly enjoyable. Half term is scheduled from Monday 12th to Friday 16th February. We hope you enjoy a lovely break.

Wombling Time!



Just recently, the high winds made it appear as if the recycling team were delivering rather than collecting! An 'emergency team' of us got out on the Saturday after the storm and after some diligent clearing up, eventually found the village beneath all the rubbish 😊! It's a tough job that the crews

do but in recent conditions, it must be a nightmare. It always baffles me as to how some residents put their bins out without any thought about rubbish 'security'. Perhaps they consider that as long as it's gone in the morning, it's not their worry as to where?!

Anyway, if you're one of those who does care and would rather live in a tidy village, can spare an hour or two (no more), then please let me know on rogernorman@clyststmary.net and I'll add your name to our list of magnificent volunteers. We normally 'Womble' at the weekend and only on an occasional basis. All the necessary gear is provided. Many thanks. Roger Norman

Anyone for Tennis?



Some of us play tennis in Clyst St Mary on Friday mornings. Why not join us for some fresh air, exercise and good fun? Call Janice on 01392 876858

Walking Group



The February walk will be on Tuesday 20th. We meet at the Village Hall to carshare. We plan to walk in the Byes to Sidmouth for lunch. Why not join us; we all walk at our own risk. For more information, please call Janice on 01392 876858.

[This section continued on page 9.]

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[Clyst St Mary section continued from page 7.]

Clyst Valley Preschool



During spring term, our focus will be on traditional fairy tales alongside some more modern versions of these; the children will be enjoying exploring these stories through role play, arts and crafts, small world play, music, songs and of course books.




From April, many two year-olds with working parents will be able to access funded Early Years education and care for 15 hours a week. Codes **must** be applied for before the end of March by visiting www.childcarechoices.gov.

We have some spaces available for an immediate start, and our waiting list for September starters is filling fast. So, if you are looking for a nurturing and fun Early Years setting for your child with dedicated, enthusiastic, very experienced and highly qualified staff please check out our Instagram account and our website www.clystvalleypreschool.org. To arrange a visit, please call 01392 876615 or email admin@clystvalleypreschool.org.

Table Tennis Club




Please come and join us! New members always welcome. We play at the Village Hall every Thursday, 4 - 6 pm. The minimal fee of £20 for a 10-week session includes use of all equipment and refreshments. Alternatively, fees may be paid on a weekly basis if preferred. For further details please contact Pam Gardner on 07714 097220 or by email to pamelamgardner9@gmail.com.



Badminton Club

Clyst St Mary Village Hall



The club, which plays on Tuesday evenings in the Village Hall at 8 pm.

ALL are welcome (young and not so young!!) so come and join us. It is good exercise and a sociable evening.

For more information please contact either:
Hilary 01392874722 or Anne (annecurryer@gmail.com)

Thank you.

CLYST ST GEORGE AND EBFORD



Clyst St George Parish Chairman's Notes: February 2024

At our January meeting we set our precept, or budget, for 2024/25 tax year. This will be our share of the Council tax. We are requesting £9,558; last year we had £9,135 so a 4.6 % increase. Various items we pay for have gone up, such as insurance. I still think our precept is low when compared to other parish councils.

We have been offered a tree from the Woodland Trust, and have opted for a small-leaved lime, to be planted by the bus stop in Ebford. It will replace the oak that was planted in 2023 (which never came into leaf). We can use it to commemorate King Charles's Coronation.

Most dog owners do clear up after their dogs, and dispose of it correctly, so please do so 100 % of the time otherwise it gives all of us dog owners a bad name. Thanks.

The coffee morning will be on Thursday 1st February, 10.30 am – 12 noon in the Parish Hall.

John Manser

JEManser@outlook.com

01392 874861

Clyst St George Parish Hall

New Caretaker. At the end of December 2023 Mike resigned as caretaker of the Parish Hall. What started as a temporary role became ten years of service (thank you Mike!) and we all wish him a relaxing and enjoyable retirement. In January we organised a full spring clean of the Hall; the windows are sparkling in the spring sunshine and the surfaces are gleaming. Alan is our new caretaker and will, no doubt, approach the role with his usual high level of enthusiasm and limitless energy.



Please Switch Off! We would like to remind all users of the Hall to please have a final check that everything is switched off before you leave. It was only by chance that we avoided a flooding incident on Christmas Eve.

Events. More events are being planned for later this year: Big Breakfasts, another Quiz and hopefully a Summer Fayre.

Get Involved. If you would like to get involved in any of our community events, please contact Isobel Stubbs (chair) on 07826 806919.

Cards for Sale in the Church



Recycled cards are available in the church. They can be used for any occasion, eg notelets, birthday, get well, sympathy, anniversary, new home, new baby, etc. You are welcome to visit the church at any time and spend time looking through the boxes of cards. The church is open every day between 9 am and dusk. I'd also welcome any cards you may wish to recycle, except for Christmas cards. These can be left in the church for collection. Many thanks. Linda Wilkerson (01392 873699)



Lady Seaward's C of E Primary School



Lady Seaward's has started 2024 with a bang and had enjoyed a busy start to the term. We are excited to announce that the Department for Education (DfE) has given us the green light to take on the nursery at our school. We would like to thank the staff, parents and children of Little Dragons for their hard work and partnership over many happy years and we look forward to continuing their commitment and drive to develop the nursery further. We warmly welcome the children and families who have transferred from Little Dragons to Lady Seaward's EYFS and sharing in the start of their educational careers. The Nursery is open Monday – Friday and enquiries may be made at the school office.

We also look forward to welcoming Premier Education after half term, who will be running our new Wraparound Care provision. This will run from Monday to Thursday and will be bookable through Premier Education. Booking details, for Lady Seaward's children aged 3 years and up, will be available from the school office as they are confirmed.

The rest of the school is gearing up for more adventures to add colour and variety to their studies with upcoming trips to watch the BSO perform in the Grand Hall, Exeter and visiting the beach while studying our fascinating coastline. Year 4 will soon depart for their Residential and Year 5 will be taking part in the Bikeability training, supported by Devon Council as well.

It is a busy term indeed at Lady Seaward's and if you have any questions, please contact the school office on admin@clyst-st-george.devon.sch.uk or call 01392 873629.

Clyst St George Cricket Club



The cricket club plays a big role in the community and is looking for players and helpers. We run two teams in the Devon Cricket League, as well as midweek, Sundays, women's hardball and softball teams, Junior Cricket and All Stars & Dynamos programmes.

If you are interested in coming along to a training night or nets session and would like to find out more information, please contact Caroline Creer at secretarycsgcc@gmail.com. We would also be interested in hearing from anyone who could help with catering at the club, both for Friday evenings, when we have junior training and also at weekends when we have fixtures. Please contact Caroline as above.

After many years of excellent and dedicated work on our ground, our groundsman Paul Laverick has expressed a desire to step back from the lead role. The club is therefore in need of somebody else to help out. Could it be you? Or do you know somebody who would be prepared to get involved? Paul is happy to remain involved but is keen for somebody else to take on the weekly responsibility of pitch preparations. If you feel you can help in this vital role, please do get in touch with Paul on 07944 688973 or pwrp@btinternet.com. Full training will of course be provided.

You can find out more about your local cricket club by visiting our website <https://clyststgeorge.play-cricket.com> or following us on Facebook and Instagram. It's a great club; come along and get involved!

Nature Garden

Clyst St George has a delightful nature garden by the side of the parish church. The aim of the garden is to grow local Devon indigenous plants and trees and to encourage a Devon meadow with local wild flowers. Should you wish to help develop this 'green' facility, you can come along on the first Saturday of every month from 9.30 to 11 am.

Norman's Weather Report



December began seamlessly from November in terms of very heavy rain during the first week. This was followed by a relatively dry period up to and including the 25th and 26th; after which rain certainly fell again to provide a monthly total, here at Ebford, of 142 mm (5.6 inches), similar to that for December 2020. Averages between 2018 and 2022 were 114 mm; but significantly between 2003 and 2017 only 76 mm.

So Decembers seem to be getting wetter and annual amounts also increasing; 2023 – 1101 mm (43.3 inches) being rather exceptional! The annual average amount of rain between 2018 and 2022 ran out at 888 mm (34.9 inches). Are we awaiting another warmer, wetter year in 2024? Norman Cann

Little Dragons Pre-School



Little Dragons has now been taken on by the First Federation (see above). This has enabled Lady Seaward's to look at their class structures for the future resulting in Little Dragons and Reception children being together to make a foundation stage unit. Little Dragons' provision will work alongside the Reception class; the children follow the same Early Years curriculum.

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## WOODBURY SALTERTON



### Woodbury Salterton Church: Looking Back at Christmas

*Tree and Lights.* Once again we are grateful to Devon Clinton Estates for their kind gift of the tree we had in church and to the Parish Council



who gave money to purchase the lights outside on the fir tree.

*Carol Service.* The Carol Service was very attended and was led by Debbie Jung. Thanks to all those who read – Shirley Moore, John Hitchcock, Mark Lovett, Simon Andrews, Jo Parsons and Paul Mattin and to Nigel and Jill Dupain who made the mulled wine which was enjoyed after the service. And to those who gave mince pies. Debbie thanked the choir and organist Katharine Wheeler, those who decorated the church and members of the PCC for their work and support during the past year and in turn Fiona Vessey expressed appreciation of all that Debbie does as our hard-working Churchwarden and fundraiser.

*Carol Singing.* The carol singing round the village, led by Debbie, raised money for The Children's Society, and this, added to the collection at the School Christingle Service (which was led by Mark Lovett) amounted to £144.



*Fundraising.* A big THANK YOU to Estelle Hitchcock who very kindly sold some of Katharine's knitted items in her Nail and Beauty Salon in the village. Estelle raised £135 for which the church is very grateful.

## Other Church News

*Church Quiz.* Entries are due in as this magazine goes to press so the result in the next edition. The furthest entry this year came from Phil Dent's niece at Stavanger in Norway!!! As over thirty entries have been submitted it is likely that there may be a draw for the prize – at the next Family Service.

*Church Microphones.* For some time the microphones in church have proved unsatisfactory despite the kind efforts of several people to make them work well. The PCC have therefore decided to look at a new system and Mark Lovett will consult a couple of local firms for advice. This will be an extra and unexpected expense on top of all that we have to pay as a church so if anyone would like to make a donation so that they and others can hear better it would be much appreciated. Donations please to Nigel Dupain, Treasurer.

## Woodbury Salterton C of E Primary School



In Class 1, our main History topic this term is called 'Magnificent Monarchs'. This project will teach the children about the English and British monarchy from AD 871 to the present day. Using timelines, information about royal palaces, portraits and other historical sources, they will build up an understanding of the monarchs and then research six of the most significant sovereigns.

The Reception and Nursery children will also access this topic through activities and challenges set up through continuous provision, which will be linked to kings, queens, castles and knights! This term, our topic in English is penguins! We will be learning all about them and will produce a non-fiction report. In Maths, Class 2 will continue to work on addition and subtraction. The children will be learning formal methods such as column addition and subtraction. The Year 3 children will have texts in guided reading linked to their afternoon topic 'The Tudors'. The Year

2 children will continue to develop their phonics knowledge and link this to their spelling, reading and writing.

The children in Class 3 enjoyed sharing the stories they had written and beautifully illustrated with their families at the story telling event. The children used the drawing techniques that they had learnt in their Art lessons to carefully illustrate the wonderful story and poems that they had written before painting them and sending them to the publisher!

### A Fun Day!



A group of Woodbury Salterton residents got together in the Village Hall in December and made these splendid wreaths with help and encouragement by Sam Greetham. Our sincere thanks to Sam for supplying the metal frames all mossed up and for the vast array of green foliage not to mention her expertise in constructing them. The afternoon was helped by Prosecco – mulled wine – mince pies and the

coffee and walnut cake baked by Louise. Thanks to everyone who supplied the raffle prizes, the proceeds divided between our monthly craft afternoons and the Village Hall.

It was agreed that the Village Hall should be booked for something similar next year. The surplus greenery did not go to waste as it was used to decorate the church in readiness for the Carol Service.

### SOWTON VILLAGE



#### Christmas in Sowton

Sowton Village started celebrating their Christmas with the annual party in the Village Hall on 7<sup>th</sup> December which was very well attended. The Carol Service on 17<sup>th</sup> December was well supported and everyone enjoyed a glass (or two) of mulled wine. Now the dust has settled the

Hall has re-opened again for the Tai Chi and Yoga Classes to help us lose some of those Christmas pounds (see below).

#### Church Services on First and Third Sunday of the Month at 5.30 pm

We are back to normal church services, with Holy Communion on the first Sunday and Evening Prayer services on the third Sunday of the month at 5.30 pm. All are very welcome.

#### New Year Tai Chi and Yoga

The New Year has kicked off with Tai Chi on Wednesday evenings and Yoga on Thursday evenings in Sowton Village Hall. Anyone interested in taking part should contact Yvette Williams on [yfp.williams@gmail.com](mailto:yfp.williams@gmail.com).

### MONTHLY GIGGLE



Man: Honey, on this Valentine's Day, I want to tell you something...I'm not rich like Jack. I don't have a mansion like Russell. I don't have a Porsche like Martin. But I do love you and I want to marry you.

Woman: Oh, dear, I love you too! What was that you said about Martin?

Who has large antlers, has a high voice and always wears white gloves? Mickey Moose.



Diner: Waiter, I can't eat this soup.

Waiter: I'll get the manager, sir.

Diner: Manager, I can't eat this soup.

Manager: Sorry, sir. I'll get the chef.

Diner: Chef, I can't eat this soup.

Chef: What's wrong with it?

Diner: Nothing - I haven't got a spoon.

Tourist: Hello father, this is a really nice church. What period is it from?

Vicar: It's Norman.

Tourist: Sorry, Norman, this is a really nice church. What period is it from?

Patient: Doctor, I keep thinking I'm a horse.

Doctor: Don't worry, I'll give you something to make your condition more stable.

A man changed the alarm on his phone to play the 'Hokey Cokey'. It took him an extra 20 minutes to get out of bed this morning.

I lost an Elvis CD when I was baking. It was in the gateau.

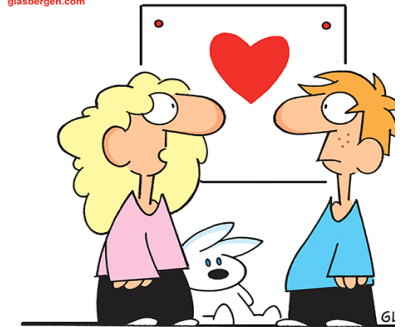
Did you hear about the millionaire clock and watchmaker who died recently?

They reckon it will take years to wind up his estate.

How do fleas go on holiday? They itch hike.



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glasbergen.com



"Valentine's Day is the holiday where men presents to the woman they love to make for the way they screwed up at Christmas."

I lived in a houseboat and dated the girl next door. Eventually, we drifted apart.

I like to shower the same way as Frank Sinatra ... So now I face the vinyl curtain!

Doctor: Have you had this illness before?

Patient: Yes.

Doctor: Well, whatever it is, I'm sorry to say you've got it again.

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# Kids' Corner

What's happening this month?

## 14<sup>th</sup> February – Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is celebrated around the world every year on 14<sup>th</sup> February and has an interesting history.

Some people believe that Valentine lived in Emperor Claudius II's Rome (between 268 and 270 AD). Emperor Claudius II thought that men made better soldiers if they were not distracted so he banned soldiers from getting married. Valentine thought that this was unfair and performed marriages anyway in secret. Our St Valentine's Day is said to be the day that he died.



Other people believe that the day is actually older than the Roman times and, in fact, is based on a Pagan festival. It was held in Rome each February and during the celebrations, men would pick women's names out of a container and then spend the festival with them. It is said that some of the couples would actually get married when the festival had finished.

## Get involved...

Have a go at solving the riddle below. Send your answers in via email to [clystvalleynews@gmail.com](mailto:clystvalleynews@gmail.com) and you could be featured in the next issue.

**Riddle: I can be cracked, made, told and played. What am I?**

We would love to have some children writing for the Clyst Valley News. If you would like to get involved, please email [clystvalleynews@gmail.com](mailto:clystvalleynews@gmail.com)

**Last month's answer: What kind of lion never roars? A dandelion!**



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**POETRY CORNER**

We have two poems for you this month: the first, by local resident, John Flitney; and the second selected by local poet, John Smith. Enjoy!

*All Things Bright and Beautiful (and some a tad moist)*  
 By John Flitney of Clyst St George

I am the Sky; I'm way up on high,  
 Blue or black are my colours I do wonder why.  
 We are the Stars or Planets like Mars,  
 Who twinkle on nights that are clear,  
 Then up comes the Sun to spoil all our fun,  
 So once again we just disappear.  
 Sol or Sun is my name; I'm covered in flame,  
 Lighting your way is my call to fame.  
 Me I am Luna or otherwise called Moon,  
 I shine out at night but rarely at noon.  
 We're some pretty Snowflakes a drifting in the night,  
 Everything that we might touch we gladly turn it white.  
 Here's a happy Hailstone all fat and round that's me,  
 I hit a tree I hit the ground and bounce around with glee.  
 Me? I'm Rain, so very plain. As plain as plain can be  
 What! Make you wet? You can bet!!!  
 Then it's off to Spain for me!  
 I'm a Cloud all black and loud, sometimes quite flashy and gay,  
 Why you may wonder? Because I am THUNDER!  
 Who can rumble and grumble all day.  
 My name is Jog and I am Fog and full of mystery,  
 I hide things in a swirling mist just so you cannot see.  
 Me I'm the Wind and I can be rough,  
 Sometimes I bluster sometimes I puff,  
 I might just whisper as I play with the trees.  
 Or pass softly by as a warm gentle breeze.  
 Now I am Ice, which is rather nice in a freezing sort of way,  
 I can make patterns on glass, put crystals on grass,  
 And glitter and sparkle all day,  
 But likely as not when the Sun gets too hot,  
 I'll simply melt and just fade away.



©John Flitney



*Gerard Manley Hopkins is a Victorian poet who lived in the second half of the nineteenth century but whose poetry was many years ahead of its time. His originality and greatness were unrecognised by most of the academic establishment until the 1920s. Like his contemporary, Van Gogh, he was able to express his feelings in a totally new and fresh way, uninhibited by convention. Also like Van Gogh, he died in his mid-forties. I first read Pied Beauty when I was sixteen years old and it has never left me. I hope that whatever your beliefs, or none, that you will enjoy it. John Smith*

## Pied Beauty

by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Glory be to God for dappled things –  
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow,  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim,  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pierced – fold, fallow, and plough,  
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.  
All things counter, original, spare, strange,  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow, sweet, sour; adazzle; dim  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him.

~~~~~  
AND FINALLY...

What Are Palm Trees Doing in England?



How many of us must have pondered on this question as we see this seemingly alien plant in the English landscape? According to Alan Mitchell, whose famous book *Trees of Britain and Northern Europe*, which took him 14 years of intense research to compile, the true home is none other than New Zealand and the first of them arrived in 1823. It is the hardiest of the Cordyline species, is drought resistant and mainly found in the south of England. Reaching a height of approximately ten metres' its very tough long leaves, which are related to Sisal, have even been used as belts and braces. (*Cordyline australis* or Torbay palm pictured.)

Now that global warming is becoming a reality, perhaps in the far future England's 'green and pleasant land' may not be quite the right description! Tony Rule

The Sky Tonight: February



February offers us the last chance for a while to catch a look at some of the planets. *Saturn starts the month low in the west. Venus is very low in the south-east before dawn with the Moon close by on the 7th.* (An opportunity for one of those horizon photos I mentioned last month?) *Jupiter is bright in the western evening sky with the Moon nearby on the 14th and 15th.* One other event to watch out for: *the Moon passes*

below the Pleiades cluster (follow Orion's belt upwards past bright Aldebaran) at 8.30 pm on the 16th and occults (covers) some of the stars.

Apart from their differing brightness, the stars, at first glance, may all appear the same. But a closer look will show that they show subtle variations in colour. This is linked to their age – which may come as a surprise, but stars have a life cycle – they are born, they age and they die. So put on a warm coat, grab your binoculars and move outside on a clear night and let me guide you through the life of a star. *Find Orion's belt then track down slowly from the middle star with binoculars, and you will find a glowing 'blob'. This is the Sword-handle Nebula, a star nursery.* All stars are formed from hydrogen atoms, present in the dust clouds of such nebulae. The effect of gravitational attraction between these atoms squashes them together. This heats

them up and, at a critical point, a fusion reaction begins, the atomic particles of the hydrogen rearranging into helium atoms. But less mass is needed to make a helium atom and the extra mass changes into energy. (This is the m and e in Einstein's famous equation.) This radiates out and the new star begins to shine – like those you can see amongst the glowing dust within the Nebula. What happens next depends on how much material has joined to form the star. The smallest stars are called Red Dwarfs. (Really! It's not just a fictional spacecraft.) Although numerous they are faint and difficult to observe – but let's try. *Find the Plough. The two stars on the bowl-shape nearest the handle point away from the Pole Star, across the sky towards Regulus, the bright star in the head of the Lion. Half way across, look with binoculars for a faint red star.* This is Lalande 21185, the brightest (and nearest) Red Dwarf.

Stars of moderate mass develop along a path called the Main Sequence. They begin very hot as nuclear fusion runs very fast, but as the hydrogen supply reduces they cool down and their colour changes from white through yellow to red. *Find the last star in the handle of the Plough.* This is a medium mass star at the beginning of its life. It is white, showing it is very hot. An example of an equivalent middle-aged star is our yellow Sun. When the core of the star starts to run out of hydrogen (and begins to produce other, heavier elements) the star cools further, swells to an enormous diameter and becomes a Red Giant. (Our Sun will expand to include the orbit of the Earth!) *Follow Orion's belt upwards and you will come to the reddish star Aldebaran which has entered this stage.* When a star's fuel has all but run out it collapses – but in a strange way. *Follow the line of Orion's belt downwards and you will come to Sirius, the Dog Star.* With close observation astronomers found this star wobbled, which indicated it was a double star. When its companion (named the Pup!) was located it was found to be very small, but also very dense – a matchboxful would weigh more than 12 truckloads of rocks! The collapse has crushed together the atomic particles removing the usual space between them. The star has become a very hot White Dwarf. During this catastrophic collapse the outer layers of the Red Giant are blown away forming a shell of material which appears as a luminous ring. *Follow a line from the right star of Orion's belt through his top left star, Betelgeuse, across the sky and you will come to a pair of stars, Castor and Pollux. Sweep the sky with binoculars half way between the lower of the pair and Betelgeuse to find such a ring, the Eskimo Nebula.* These stars eventually just fade away – unlike the really big ones we are about to meet! They also initially follow the Main Sequence. *Find the bottom right star of Orion.* This is Rigel, a young white super-giant star. *Follow the line from the star to the left of Rigel through the left star of the Belt across the sky and you will come to an orange star, Capella, a super-giant in middle-age. An example of an old super-giant nearing the end of its life is Betelgeuse, which you have already found.* But giant stars don't go quietly – they explode into a Supernova! *Find Aldebaran again. It forms the left top of a V of stars. Follow the line of the V away to the left and you will come to a lone star. Look just above it with binoculars and you will see a hazy patch.* This is the Crab Nebula, a supernova seen in 1054. What remains in the centre is a Neutron star, spinning violently (a pulsar) or, if the star was very large, a Black Hole.

But what happens to the great variety of new atoms thrown out in the explosion? These join the cosmic dust and form new stars, planets, and on Earth, the building blocks of life. We can truly call ourselves Children of the Stars. Clyde Bish

Love Topsham



What Do YOU Want Us to Do in 2024?

The Love Topsham team is putting the final touches to a programme of events this year – but it's not too late for you to suggest some great ideas for us to consider!

Each year we put on feel-good events fulfilling our mission – to work alongside residents, businesses and local groups to promote and enhance Topsham as a destination, a home town and a workplace.

This means a range of summer music and entertainment events, promoting our terrific range of independent shops and businesses, encouraging our fabulous voluntary community groups, organising town-wide initiatives like the hanging baskets, benches at the Rec and the Quay, and of course Christmas lights and entertainment.

What would you like us to do in 2024 or beyond? Just let us know on lovetopsham@gmail.com and we'll let you know if it's do-able! In the meantime, please remember that we can only do these things with financial support in the shape of contributions towards the Love Topsham card. This is your chance to have a stake in Topsham and help us do all these things each year. More details on lovetopsham.co.uk – and if you want to sign up to our regular newsletter, please email us on lovetopsham@gmail.com.

We're back next month with details of our programme for 2024. Until then, have a fabulous February, keep warm and keep loving Topsham. From your Love Topsham team.

The Exeter Forum Talks Programme: February 2024



The Wednesday weekly talks take place at the Mint Methodist Church in Fore Street, Exeter, EX4 3AT. Coffee and socialising from 10.15 am; the talk starts usually at around 10.45 am. All welcome to attend these meetings. There is a small admission charge for non-members. More information at www.exeterforum.org/talks.

Date	Speaker	Title
7 February	Clare Law	<i>The Life and Work of a Professional Artist</i> Clare is a full-time landscape artist working from her studio in the heart of the beautiful Tamar Valley in Cornwall. Her talk will look at how she developed her style as a professional artist and the range of her work from larger canvasses to greeting cards with scenes of rich vegetation and bodies of water exploring how nature is a lifeline, to be shared and celebrated.
14 February	Robert Guyver	<i>General Sir Redvers Buller VC: His Life and Controversies Surrounding His Legacy</i> Robert will make a welcome return visit to the Forum to tell the story of General Sir Redvers Buller's life and career, including the various controversies that are associated with him.
21 February	John Davidson	<i>Earthquakes: Where and Why They Happen, and How We Can Manage Them</i> John will look at the causes of earthquakes and the places they affect, including parts of the UK. He will look at how the risks from earthquakes can be managed.
28 February	Jonathan Turner	<i>The Way to the Sea</i> Historian and author and member of the South West Maritime History Society (SWMHS), Jonathan Turner will look at the links between Exeter and the sea and particularly the role of the Exeter Ship Canal.

SUNDAY
18TH FEB 24

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WCMC SERVICES FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday 4th February

09:30 WST Holy Communion
 09:30 CSM Family Service
 11:15 AYL Holy Communion
 11:15 WBY Holy Communion
 18:00 EXT Evening Worship

Sunday 11th February

09:30 EXT Holy Communion
 09:30 CSG Breakfast Family Service
 11:15 FAR Holy Communion
 11:15 WBY Holy Communion
 18:30 BUD Joint Evensong with Budleigh

Wednesday 14th February: Ash Wednesday

10:00-15:30 EXT Exploring spirituality and imposition of the ashes with Holy Communion at 15:00 hrs - please see pewsheets for details

Sunday 18th February

09:30 CSM Holy Communion
 09:30 WST Breakfast Family Service
 09:30 EXT Morning Worship
 09:30-11:00 AYL Family Warm Space
 18:30 WBY Compline

Sunday 25th February

9:30 FAR Morning Worship
 10:30 WBY Family Service
 11:15 CSG Holy Communion

Week 1

Rev'd Margaret
 Rev'd Sid
 Rev'd Chris Cant
 Rev'd Tony
 Rev'd Roz Harrison

Week 2

Rev'd Margaret
 Rev'd Sid
 Rev'd Tony
 Rev'd Peter
 Lay led

Rev'd Sid

Week 3

Rev'd Peter
 Debbie Jung
 Lay led
 Lay led
 Lay led

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Christine Grist
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