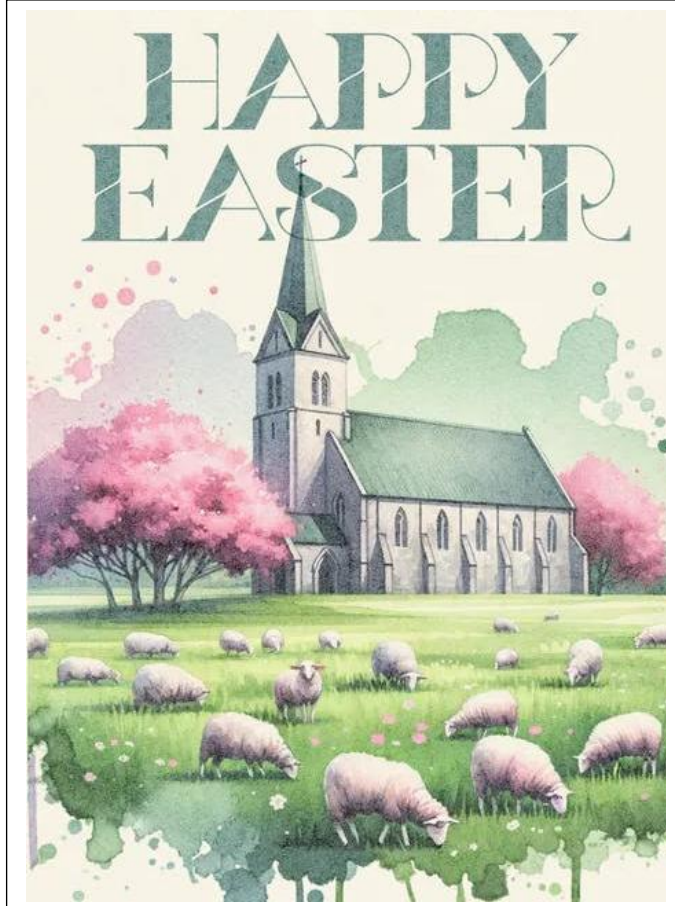


CLYST VALLEY NEWS



April 2026



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EDITOR'S NOTE



Hello and welcome to this April (Easter) edition of the Clyst Valley News. It's difficult to take in that Easter is already just around the corner. We have an interesting piece on page 21 by Rob Somerwill of Estuary Vets offering advice to us dog owners on what to do if our pooches start to munch on the Easter eggs!

You'll see that we have a bumper issue of the magazine this month – running to a full 32 pages! There's always a lot going on in our villages and towns over the Easter period, as you'll see. I think I may have mentioned at this time last year that, like Christmas, Easter means a lot of different things to different people – ranging from recognising this as the most important moment in the Christian calendar to an excuse to gorge on very expensively packaged chocolate. My guess is that, where we would find some measure of agreement, is that Easter is often the time when we celebrate the early stages of spring; and marvel at the daffodils, croci and tulips adorning our gardens and hedgerows; and, the spectacular blossoms the trees produce to welcome in the warmer weather. New beginnings...


Finding that balance between the religious and the secular significance of Easter is a task that I, as editor of the CVN, do not take lightly. I've tried my best to be reasonably even-handed.

Have a very Happy Easter, however you celebrate it. Best wishes. Peter Skelton

YOUR PHOTOS ALWAYS NEEDED FOR THE COVER OF THE CVN!



Calling all 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 most months. Just email them to clystvalleynews@gmail.com and we'll do the rest. Simples!



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Contributions, photos and letters to the editor for the May 2026 issue of the Clyst Valley News should be sent by email, to the editor, Peter Skelton, at clystvalleynews@gmail.com by Wednesday 15th April 2026 at the 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

CLYST ST MARY



Church News

The Family Service will be replaced by an Easter Day Holy Communion on 5th April, starting at 9.30 am. The normal Family Communion will be held on 19th April at 9.30 am. Families and children are very welcome at both services and refreshments will be served afterwards. We invite attendees to stay on and enjoy some fellowship. For other Easter services around the Mission Community see page 31.

Supporting the Church. Very many thanks to everyone who continues to support us as we endeavour to maintain and keep our beautiful old church open. If you would like to become a regular giver or make a one-off donation please contact our Treasurer, Nicky Blacker, on 07501 223654 or nicky.blacker@gmail.com.

Thank You

I would like to thank everyone who sent cards and messages following the sudden death of my wife on 1st February. The knowledge that Jackie was held in such high esteem by so many of you has been a great source of comfort in this difficult time.

Rob Hatton

Clyst St Mary Primary School



We had two big events at school in March: World Book Day and our Spring Residential for Years 3 and 4 children.

As a school, we spend a lot of time focussing on the importance of reading to our children, so World Book Day is a highlight in the calendar. Once again, families made a huge effort to dress the children in their favourite book characters – and the costumes were most impressive. The day started with an assembly, followed by a parade so everyone could show off their designs! A fun day, with an important message.



The three-day residential trip to Heatree in the middle of the month was a fun and educational experience for all. Nestled in the heart of Dartmoor, everyone enjoyed trying archery, bushcraft, a climbing tower and high ropes, as well as more sedate activities like beach-combing and an Earth Walk.

As part of their RE syllabus, Class 5 visited the Exeter Mosque and Cathedral on 24th March. During the autumn term the class studied 'What it means to be a Muslim in Britain', so the tour, led by the Imam, was a most welcome opportunity to consolidate their learning. After lunch at the library, the class took a self-led tour of the Cathedral to consider 'How Cathedrals Reflect Christian Ideas About God'. It was an interesting visit, which included drawing some of the beautiful stained glass windows.

The best of CSM's swimmers represented their school at the Schools Swimming Gala at Honiton on 25th March. We managed to field (pool?) 16 children for the event, which was a great experience for them to compete against other children in their year groups.

Classes 4 and 6 enjoyed the 'Time Odyssey' exhibition at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) again at the end of the month. An interactive learning experience where students met characters throughout history and explored objects and collections from across the world – amazing!

Parents' Evenings were held on Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th March: a useful chance for parents to sit down with their child/ren's teachers to discuss progress or any areas of concern.

Our very popular 'Caring & Sharing' event was put on by Class 6 children at the Village Hall on the last afternoon of the month. This is a unique opportunity for each to invite two special adults in their life, to treat them to lunch (made by them at school), conversation and a short presentation as a thank you for all their support.

On the last day of term, before we break up for the Easter holidays, we will hold our annual Easter Walk. This is usually a sponsored event to help raise money for the school, but, after raising close to £2,000 off the back of the visit by a Paralympic swimmer last month, we thought we would allow the children to just enjoy being outside in the fresh air this year! Families are welcome to join us at the Clyst Valley football field for the afternoon.

We break up for the Easter Holidays on Thursday 2nd and return to school on Monday 20th April. We wish all our families a lovely, restful break, enjoying family – and chocolate Easter eggs – hopefully in the sunshine!

Bishops Clyst Parish Council



Allotment Plot Waiting List.

Allotments are known for their physical and mental health benefits, from exercise to stress reduction and access to fresh food. They also provide a way to connect with others who share similar interests. We currently have a very short waiting list for allotment plots in Clyst St Mary. Priority is given to residents within Bishops Clyst. If this is of interest, or you would just like to find out more, please contact the Clerk (details below).

Parking on Pavements and Verges. The Parish Council would like to remind residents and visitors that the verges in the villages are not for parking and please repair any damage that is created.

Bishops Clyst Parish Council Vacancy. We still have one vacancy for a councillor we would like to fill as soon as possible. If this is of interest, do come along to a Parish Council meeting to see what we do and, if you would like to be involved, you can be co-opted on to the Council. Email a brief résumé to the Clerk (clerk@bishopsclyst.org.uk) or drop a letter in to Clyst St Mary Village Hall.

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/parish-council-agendas) and <http://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/parish-council-minutes>) and on noticeboards in Clyst St Mary, Cat and Fiddle Park and Sowton Village.

March BCPC Summary

The Parish Council discussed a planning application for employment development north of Sowton Village, deciding to formally object. Financial updates were approved, with councillors noting the need to rebuild reserves. Updates were given on the Greenspire Footpath project and a landslide near Rydon Garage. The Council agreed to remove tyres from allotments for health and safety reasons, and raise concerns about damaged verges and pavements.



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Contact the Parish Council. Katie Webb, 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 clerk@bishopsclyst.org.uk. Bishops Clyst Parish Council also has a Facebook page – please follow our page.

You are very welcome to drop in, but we recommend making an appointment to ensure someone is available to see you.

Walking Group



The walking group in Clyst St Mary meets once a month. Generally, this takes the form of a morning walk of varying difficulty followed by a pub or café lunch. Occasionally a picnic will be taken with some walking in the afternoon. In February we enjoyed a four-mile walk in the vicinity of Coleton Raleigh followed by lunch at the Otter Inn. We are a friendly group and all are welcome; indeed, we would benefit from some fresh faces. We meet on the third Tuesday of each month (21st April this month) at 10 am in the Village Hall car park. So please come along and enjoy some exercise, fresh air and good company. We are an informal group and walk at our own risk. Any questions, please contact Peter Cusa on 01392 877907.

Village Hall



The Village Hall AGM was held on 16th March and the Annual Report and Accounts are available on our website at clyststmaryvillagehall.co.uk.

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.

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

Help Wanted

Clyst St Mary
VILLAGE HALL CIO

Trustees needed for our village hall. We are finding it increasingly hard to run without more help. Contact our chair on admin@clyststmaryvillagehall.co.uk

Badminton Club

Clyst St Mary Village Hall

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

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 01392 874722 or Anne (annecurryer@gmail.com)

Thank you.

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.

CLYST ST GEORGE AND EBFORD



Church News

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)



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.

Clyst St George Parish Hall



Theatre Comes to Clyst St George & Ebford Hall! On 28th February, our Hall was alive with laughter and excitement as over 40 people gathered for a one-man theatre show, *Into the Breach*, written and performed by the talented Mark Carey. The audience enjoyed side-splitting comedy, soft drinks, and delicious ice cream throughout the performance. The raffle was a huge hit, with lucky winners taking home fantastic prizes, including personal trainer vouchers, wine, and chocolates. It was an evening full of fun, community spirit, and memorable moments. Keep an eye out for more events like this — there's plenty more entertainment to come!



Isobel and Claire are pictured with Mark and his roadie, Giles, capturing the excitement of the night.

A Sizzling Send-Off for the Big Breakfast! The Parish Hall was buzzing with activity at our recent Big Breakfast (Sunday 29th March), and what a fantastic morning it was! Residents from across the villages came together to enjoy a delicious breakfast and great



company. A huge thank you goes to our wonderful volunteers who gave up their time to cook, serve and organise the event – it simply wouldn't happen without them. It was lovely to see so many familiar faces, as well as some new ones, all enjoying a relaxed start to the day while supporting the Parish Hall. This was our final Big Breakfast of the season. While it will certainly be missed during the summer months, we're pleased to say it will return in the autumn. Please watch this space for more information!

Summer Fête – Save the Date! It's back – and it's going to be bigger, brighter, and better than ever! Our much-loved Summer Fête returns on Sunday 19th July 2026, from 2 to 5 pm, promising an afternoon packed with fun for the whole family. Expect a fantastic mix of stalls, games, and activities – plus the hugely popular Dog Show, which always steals the spotlight! Whether you're young or young-at-heart, there'll be something to enjoy, plenty to smile about, and lots of chances to make summer memories together. Pop the date in your diary now and get ready for one of the highlights of the village calendar. More exciting details coming soon, so keep an eye out over the next few months!



Coffee Morning – Cake, Chat and Community! Come and join us at the Parish Hall on Thursday 2nd April from 10 am – 12 noon for a relaxed and friendly coffee morning. Enjoy a cosy cuppa, a slice (or two!) of delicious homemade cake, and plenty of cheerful conversation. It's a lovely chance to catch up with friends, meet new people, and spend a relaxed morning together in the heart of our community. Everyone is very welcome – we'd love to see you there!



Get Involved – Help Shape the Future of Our Parish Hall! Do you love village life and want to play a bigger part in keeping our community vibrant and thriving? We're on the lookout for enthusiastic, friendly people to join our team of trustees and help shape what happens at the Parish Hall. Being a trustee is a brilliant way to get involved, meet new people, and bring fresh ideas to the heart of the community. From supporting much-loved events to helping plan new activities, you'll be part of the team that keeps the Parish Hall a lively and welcoming place for everyone. No special experience is needed – just a positive attitude, a few spare hours, and a passion for community spirit. If you'd like to help make great things happen and be part of something really special in the village, we would absolutely love to hear from you! Email: Clyststgeorgeandebfordvhall@outlook.com.



Your Perfect Venue Awaits! Looking for the ideal spot to host a birthday party, wedding, meeting, fitness class, or community event? Our bright and welcoming Parish Hall is perfect for bringing people together and creating unforgettable memories. With flexible hire options – hourly or daily – and great rates, it suits any occasion. Our friendly Booking Officer, Kate, is happy to answer any questions and help you secure your booking – just drop her an email at Clyststgeorgeandebfordvhall@outlook.com.



WOODBURY SALTERTON



Follow the Donkey

This year the churches in the Mission Community will be holding a service of some sort every day in Holy Week. Woodbury Salterton has the first of these – on Palm Sunday, 29th March. You may get your magazine before the end of the month so it is worth mentioning this. Dawn Cowler will be bringing her two donkeys to lead the procession from the well down to the church at 10.30 am for the Palm Sunday service. Dawn, and everyone else, is hoping that the donkeys decide to co-operate! Please join us – even if you do not wish to attend the service afterwards.



April Coffee Mornings



9.30 till 10.30 am, Woodbury Salterton Church
4th April: bacon butties; 18th April: coffee and cake.

Scarecrow Quiz



The spring church quiz, the seventh in this Scarecrow series, is now on sale from Katharine Wheeler, Lin Ashby in Woodbury and Liz Whittaker in Clyst St Mary. The subject this time is things you could find in a country garden. The price remains at £2 and the prize to the winner is £10. You have until the beginning of May to solve the clues.

Woodbury Salterton C of E Primary School



Little Buds. We're delighted to announce that our Baby and Toddler Forest School sessions are back! These free sessions run every Thursday from 10.30 to 11.45 am. Come along and let your little one explore the outdoors in our beautiful Forest School setting. Each week features different hands-on activities designed to encourage play, build new skills, and nurture a being outside. To find out more, please give us a love to tell you how you can join in the fun!



love of
call – we'd

The Big Easter Sing-Up. Our Year 5 and 6 children attended the Big Easter Sing-Up alongside around 200 other children from across Exmouth at Holy Trinity Church. Throughout the day, the children took part in a hands-on experience retelling the Easter story, led by members of the Diocese. The day culminated in a special Easter service. It was a lovely occasion and a wonderful opportunity to meet the Bishop of Exeter, along with other members of the church. The children explored the Easter story



in a new way and learned about the different feelings and emotions that the story can bring.

Animal Visit. Our youngest pupils in the school, enjoyed a visit from Animals 2 U as part of their science and literacy work. They enjoyed finding out about ferrets, frogs, giant millipedes and snakes and were even able to touch and hold some of the animals during the visit. The visit has inspired their writing and they are all busy writing some fantastic that incorporate some of the facts that they learnt on the day!



story stories

Foundation Governor. We are still looking to our parish to find a Foundation Governor to support our church school. This is an opportunity to be part of the work of the School Ethos Group, which follows a cycle of monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, collective worship, justice and responsibility, RE, and wellbeing — all underpinned by the school's vision and values. The group meets twice a term, and the Foundation Governor shares the minutes of these meetings through feedback given at the half-termly Local Advisory Committee. This ensures that all stakeholders in the Link Academy Trust, to which the school belongs, are aware of the Christian distinctiveness of our lovely church school and how this is enabling all to flourish. Please contact us by either calling 01395 232649 or emailing adminwoodburysalterton@thelink.academy if you are interested in learning more about this exciting role. Gillian Pyle, Academy Head

Woodbury Salterton Village Hall



Bangers and Mash Evening. The Bangers and Mash evening in Woodbury Salterton Village Hall on Saturday 28th February was enjoyed by nearly 60 people. It was a busy and noisy



night and a fantastic £824.60 was raised for Hall funds. Many thanks to everyone that helped on the night and special thanks to Florence who helped serve the sausages with her mummy. The selection of puddings was first class and the raffle table was overflowing with donated prizes. There will be another event soon so watch out for posters.

Village Hall Community Events. Coffee/tea and biscuits, every Monday 11 am – 12 noon, £2; Craft with cake, the last Wednesday in every month 12 noon – 3 pm, £3, or just pop in for a chat with cake. All proceeds from these events donated to Woodbury Salterton Village Hall.

Art & Craft Exhibition, 2nd – 4th May 2026 [See poster]

Woodbury Salterton Church is very excited to announce that it is holding its third Art & Craft Exhibition. This event will again be featuring local art and craft exhibitors displaying every type of genre.

We have now hosted two successful exhibitions in our beautiful church; seeing art displayed with the light coming through the stained glass is a truly lovely experience. Many of the artists sold art throughout the year in local galleries and remarked on the very different atmosphere of displaying in a church. Each time we had a truly fantastic response with over 300 people coming and admiring the art in our surroundings, enjoying coffee and a chat – great cake from our volunteers – and from the artists' point of view, a worthwhile event.

Many people remarked how much they enjoyed revisiting the church where they once went to school, were married, baptised or were visiting for the first time. They spent time just admiring all the talents of our local artists and crafters, commenting on the wide range of talent and prices making it affordable for many but always fun just to admire. As we are looking for every genre, there may be a space available for any local artist/crafter who would be interested in displaying/selling their art.

So, save the dates (2nd to 4th May, 10 am – 4 pm) and come along and admire the art and crafts created by your local art and crafters. Entry to all is free. A thank you to the Parish Council for contributing to the cost of running this event for our residents. For further information, please contact Debbie Jung on 07903 345683.



SOWTON VILLAGE



Potholes!

Now the flood waters have subsided we can get in and out of the village without having to go through a ford, but the sandbank does act as a speed hump! A word of warning though: Watch out for the potholes! Yes, we have a few new ones to avoid.

Bingo Night



Following the success of the Beetle Drive we look forward to the Bingo Night on Saturday 28th March starting at 6 pm. It is always well attended and a lot of fun.

Easter Service



There will be an Easter Church Service in St Michael's and All Angels on Easter Sunday, 5th April at 6.30 pm. All are welcome.

POETRY CORNER

Hill Climb

By John Smith of Clyst St Mary

I climb the hill for fitness,
But it is fitness of the mind
As much as for the body,
For nature gives soothing balm.
And to hear the skittish breeze
Stir the naked leaf-bare branches
Lets me enter a timeless world
Above the whirlpool of war.
Where the screen is not a shield
But a window on the horrors
Created by foolish men
Who serve no one but themselves.



I do not try to escape
The image of the distraught mother
Holding the dead baby in her arms-
For this is the reality of war.

But I must not accept the view
That there will always be wars,
We must hold on to the hope
That morality will prevail.

And so I walk the hills
To bear witness to that which is pure,
And to see the distant horizon
Of a peace that man can achieve.

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Kids' Corner

What's happening this month?

April – Signs of Spring

After the long, cold winter, something exciting begins to happen outside. Spring is arriving! One of the best places to spot the signs of spring is right in your garden.

First, look for flowers popping up from the soil. Some of the earliest spring flowers are bright and cheerful. You might see yellow Daffodil flowers waving in the breeze or little purple and white Crocus flowers opening when the sun shines. These flowers grow from bulbs that sleep underground during winter and wake up when the weather gets warmer. Spring is also a busy time for birds. As the days grow longer, birds start singing loudly to mark their territory and find a mate. You might hear the cheerful song of the robin or see a blackbird hopping across the lawn looking for worms.



If you watch carefully, you might see birds carrying twigs, grass and feathers to build their homes. Soon, tiny chicks will hatch and the garden will be filled with hungry chirps.

So next time you step outside, take a moment to look and listen. Can you spot colourful flowers or hear birds singing?

Get involved...

Have a go at solving the riddle below. Answers to clystvalleynews@gmail.com

Riddle: **Where the river meets the sea, sandy beaches wait for thee.**

Boats and birds and waves in view— Which seaside town am I to you?

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

Last month's answer: Born when clouds cry, I rest where pavements meet the sky. Step in me—splash and muddle! Sun comes out... I shrink to nothing.

What am I? A puddle.



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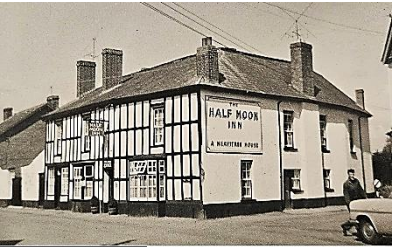
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FEATURES IN FOCUS

Gracie's Column: Beating Hay Fever



With the arrival of spring comes more sun, time spent in beer gardens, the Easter bank holiday weekend and the relentless itchy skin and sneezing associated with spring's biggest villain: hay fever. Around 10 to 16 million people in the UK suffer with it, suggesting it impacts up to 25 – 49% of the population, some more severely than others.

Hay fever is also known as seasonal allergic rhinitis and it is an immune system response to airborne allergens, primarily plant pollens from trees, grass and weeds. It is worse when pollen is high in the spring and can be further worsened fresh after a rain shower when the pollen is lower to the ground. The pollen, when ingested, releases chemicals like histamine, causing inflammation in the nose, eyes and throat which can be debilitating when there feels like there is no escape. While with some, an antihistamine a day can keep the itching at bay, it is often hard to enjoy typical British springtime activities when hay fever is the biggest obstacle to overcome.

Aside from the obvious antihistamine tablets and nasal sprays to prevent symptoms, it is recommended to start using eye drops up to two weeks before symptom even begin. Rather than attacking hay fever as it has already taken hold, the eye drops are a great preventative measure.

If like me, itchy eyes are the most pesky symptom of your hay fever, wraparound sunglasses are also a go-to as they physically prevent the pollen from entering your eyes. Despite not being the most stylish by appearance, they are great if itchy eyes tend to bother you. Itchy eyes can quickly become swollen and infected when scratched so it's important to keep them protected.

In a similar vein, if sneezing and an itchy nose are your most irritating symptoms, adding Vaseline or other petroleum jelly to the outside of your nostrils creates this same physical barrier. The pollen, before entering your airways, gets stuck to the jelly and can't bother your nose.

Referring back to histamines that trigger allergy-like symptoms in the body, these can be found in lots of food groups. It is recommended to avoid eating high doses of these foods in order to lower the immune system reaction to the pollen in the air. The foods include dairy products such as cheese and yoghurt and some vegetables like spinach and tomatoes.

Finally, pollen sticks incredibly well to clothes even when you can't see its noticeable yellow stains. After coming back from picnics or contact with grass and plants, washing your clothes will remove the continued risk of more sneezing, long after you've come inside for the day.

Truly the only reason to avoid pollen during this season is to monitor the pollen counts as per the weather forecast and stay firmly indoors. But this is no fun! With antihistamines and careful planning, there is no reason spring and summer can't still be enjoyed to the fullest. Gracie Moore

Chocolate Safety Advice for Dogs Around Easter



A timely public service announcement feels appropriate now that Easter is around the corner. As a clinician in a companion animal practice, the annual surge of advice calls around dogs enjoying an accidental chocolate buffet has become all too familiar. So here is a little advice to help in the event of a mishap this year.

What happens when dogs eat too much chocolate? The main active ingredient of concern in chocolate is theobromine, which at low levels will cause either no issues or at worst mild gastrointestinal side effects (V and D). Moderate to higher levels of exposure cause neurological and cardiovascular disorders (seizuring and pacemaker upset) which can be genuinely life-threatening if not rapidly addressed. The onset of these signs is usually from two to 12 hours of ingestion.

What should be done in the event of chocolate ingestion? The golden window of opportunity to reduce the severity of these side effects is within three hours of ingestion, so prompt response times are always helpful. Make sure to arm yourself with information about what has been eaten, and how much. The difference between white chocolate and dark is massive when it comes to risk to animals, with higher cocoa concentrations being more likely to cause harm. This information is best passed on to your veterinarian for a quick over-phone triage, but multiple useful online toxicity calculators can be found while you are waiting.

What advice may my veterinarian give? This may range widely depending on the dose received, the time from ingestion and signs being shown at the time of reporting:

- Doing nothing /observing.
- Making a dog sick (emesis) and providing binding agents to prevent further absorption.
- Hospitalising a dog in preparedness for worsening or to control active side effects.

The good news is that, with prompt and appropriate action, the vast majority of chocolate-eating dogs make full recoveries. Of course, prevention is far better than cure, so enjoy your Easter breaks while keeping the temptation to indulge away from your canine friends!

Rob Somerwill MRCVS, Estuary Vets, Ebford/Topsham

Ash's Albums. This Month: *Ooh Rap I Ya* by George Clanton



George Clanton's 2023 album *Ooh Rap I Ya* blends glossy, hazy production with nostalgic euphoria, pulling you into its warmth and lively motion.

With the sun starting to appear after months of endless grey, I keep returning to Clanton's *Ooh Rap I Ya* for its carefree and radiant atmosphere. The album exists in its own world, and is an ambitious shift from Clanton's previous work, with a

deeper thematic focus on more explicit ideas, such as youth, ageing, and regret. Despite this, it's paired with more uplifting, grandiose and slightly conventional pop choruses, and a generally looser, more impulsive structure. I find this reinvention particularly exciting, as it's the first time Clanton has leant into sincerity and emotional directness, maintaining his unique scene-driven and aesthetic focus, whilst adopting fresh pop ambition.

What's particularly masterful is how thematically Clanton often returns to the *feeling of being young* rather than youth itself; the comedown after emotional and social excitement, and the afterimage of such. Nostalgia-oriented music in the present day tends to romanticise reminiscence, and although sonically the album is certainly euphoric and comforting, the lyrics allude to a sense of detachment and disillusionment.

The opening track, *Everything I Want*, establishes this theme immediately. Shimmering synths, carefully integrated vocal mixes, and a steady, hypnotic groove throughout leads to a bright, ritzy, but slightly obscured sound: the music equivalent of a vivid memory that is just beyond reach. It functionally pulls the listener in with its accessibility and catchiness, yet manages to tactfully unsettle you with its haziness and emotional dubiety.

Following this, at the canorous peak of the album, *I Been Young* feels the most focused, direct and perfectly balanced between haziness and clarity of all tracks on the album. It's clean, satisfying and structurally gratifying – when the chorus kicks in, the moment feels almost anthemic, as opposed to concealed within the song. Clanton's ideas of looking back on his youth, trying to preserve its intensity and realising it's already slipping away are fully realised. The specific and poignant reflection paired with Clanton's stellar production, songwriting and emotional intent spotlights *I Been Young* as a benchmark of the album.

Finally, one of my personal favourites, *F.U.M.L.*, features addictively punchy drums, aggressive and bright synth textures and a more potent vocal presence. Whilst most other tracks on the album lean into vague longing, *F.U.M.L.* is a surge of urgency and tension, pushing towards emotional overload and release. Less quiet nostalgia, more so an unbridled extant reaction.

Ooh Rap I Ya is Clanton's most human release so far, and even in moments of tonal divergence or impulsivity, its atmosphere remains, sustaining its musical brightness and addictiveness throughout.

Favourite songs: *Everything I Want*, *Justify Your Life*, *Punching Down*, *I Been Young*, *F.U.M.L.*, *Ooh Rap I Ya*. Least favourite song: *For You, I Will*. Overall rating: 9/10. Ashik Skelton

WHITE CROSS MISSION COMMUNITY



From the Vicar's Desk...

Happy Easter! Christ is Risen! Alleluia! This simple statement appears at first glance to be an ordinary one. One where we recall someone getting up as if they have been lying down for some time. Almost as if they had been asleep. Yet, this statement is more than that. It is shorthand for the most miraculous things to ever occur – a man rising to life from death. It is an impossibility because life is finite. Surely?



Jesus came to prove this to be inaccuracy. That death wouldn't stop his mission of bringing love, life, joy, hope and peace into the world. He came to reassure us that no matter what happens in life, there is hope that tomorrow (whenever it comes) will be better.

As I write this, the sun is shining, plants and trees are blooming or beginning to bud. There is much hope in the air after all the rain we experienced in January, February and March. All seemed to be at a loss because of how miserable it was. Yet, there is much hope in the air because the sun is present. The feeling of the early warm spring sunshine radiating on the face and the hope of new life in Jesus is important to hold on to. Important because there is so much uncertainty in the world currently; there is war in Europe and the Middle East and the threat of war elsewhere, affecting the cost of living here and dividing communities nationally.

As these things arise within our nations, we are to look at what unites, not what divides. As we go forth this year with the knowledge of hope and the memories of blooming lovely gardens why don't we take the opportunity the spring and summer months offer us to greet and invite our neighbours around for a coffee or a drink? By doing so, community ties are strengthened and everyone can benefit from the love offered to another. After all, Jesus' return to life offers us the true pathway to never ending, overflowing love.

Your friend and Vicar, Lewis

MONTHLY GIGGLE



A man died and went to Heaven. St Peter says to him, 'Before you meet with God, I should tell you, we've looked over your life, and to be honest you really didn't do anything particularly good or bad. We're not really sure what to do with you. Can you tell us anything you did that can help us make a decision?'

The newly arrived soul thought for a moment and replied, 'Yeah, once I was driving along and came upon a little old lady who was being harassed by a group of thugs. So I pulled over and went up to the leader of the thugs. He was a big, muscular guy with a ring pierced through his lip. Well, I tore the ring out of his lip, and told him he and his gang had better stop bothering this lady or they would have to deal with me!'

'Wow that's impressive; when did this happen?'

'About three minutes ago,' came the reply.

Why are people so tired in April? Because they just finished a 31-day March.



How do you get the Easter Bunny to put in more hours? Increase his celery.

I met a man carrying two heavy suitcases full of prosthetic ears. I said, 'That's a lot of luggage.'

A couple turned up at a fancy dress party, the man giving the girl a piggyback. The man's face was painted green and he had a red mask over his eyes. 'So what have you come as?' asked the host. 'I'm one of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,' said the man. 'And what about her?' asked the host, indicating the girl. 'That's Michelle!'

What did the Easter Bunny say to the carrot? It's been nice gnawing you!



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AND FINALLY...

The Sky Tonight: April



Although we don't have the extensive parade we had earlier in the year there are still a number of planets visible in the evening sky this month – not to mention the Lyrid meteor shower peaking on the nights of the 22nd/23rd. These shooting stars which often leave dusty trails will be best seen after the Moon has set at 2 am.

Jupiter blazes in Gemini as before with the Moon to the right on the 22nd. This month Venus, the glorious Evening Star, rises higher and can be seen against a truly dark sky. The crescent Moon lies close on the 18th and 19th and from the 22nd to 24th the planet passes to the left of the Pleiades. Between those two dates

Venus lies up and to the right of Uranus and so provides a convenient signpost to the seventh planet.

Until the first space probe made a visit, Venus, the planet of love, was considered to be Earth's twin. But Venus could hardly be more different. That probe told a story of an all-enveloping pall of sulphuric acid droplets (from the emissions of some 1600 surface volcanoes) hanging in an unbreathable atmosphere of carbon dioxide so dense that the surface pressure is 90 times that of Earth, which also created a runaway greenhouse effect resulting in a temperature of 460° C, making Venus the hottest planet in the solar system!

As you search for Uranus you will have noticed that the winter constellations of Taurus and Orion are now well to the west with the spring constellations now dominating the southern sky. Most prominent of these is Leo, a constellation whose star pattern actually resembles what it represents; in this case a crouching lion. It is one of the oldest constellations. In Greek mythology Leo commemorated the fearsome beast that Hercules slaughtered as his first labour, but these stars had already been associated with a lion two millennia earlier by the Elam civilisation on the Persian Gulf.

The most obvious feature of this constellation is the reverse question mark of stars forming its head, with the King Star, Regulus, at the base. *From 8.10 pm on 29th March watch, with binoculars, the top right edge of the Moon (near the dark spot - the Mare Crisium) and you will see Regulus reappear from behind it.* Being on the ecliptic this star is regularly occulted.

On the same day, but at 1 am, Summer Time begins and clocks 'spring forward' one hour. As you go round altering your clocks the next morning you may wonder why you have to. British Summer Time was the brainchild of a builder from Kent called William Willett. In the early 1900s, he noticed many of the curtains in the neighbouring houses were still drawn, even though it was light. This led him to consider the idea of adapting the time to better fit daylight hours. His leaflet, *The Waste of Daylight*, had the support of MP Robert Pearce who championed the idea in Parliament, albeit unsuccessfully. The idea resurfaced during World War I when the need to conserve coal made the suggestion of daylight-saving time more pertinent. (Germany had already introduced a similar scheme.) The Summer Time Act was finally passed in the UK on 17th May 1916, the clocks going forward one hour on the following Sunday. Sadly Willett had died in 1915 but is rather fittingly honoured in Petts Wood by a memorial sundial, set permanently to Daylight Saving Time (and by a nearby pub, The Daylight Inn!).

But as you change your clocks you can breathe a sigh of relief that not all of Willett's original scheme was adopted. He planned to alter clocks by twenty minutes each week for four weeks! Clyde Bish

 **INSPIRING ACTIVITY** **Premier Education Holiday Clubs Support Families Across the South West**

Children across the South West are staying active, creative and engaged during the school holidays thanks to the expanding Holiday Club programme delivered by Premier Education. The clubs run across Plymouth, Torbay, Exeter, Cullompton, Tiverton and parts of Somerset, offering both parent-funded places and spaces through the government's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) and Happy Healthy Holidays (HHH) programme.

Premier Education's Holiday Clubs are designed to provide a safe, welcoming and energetic environment for children while schools are closed during the school holidays. With a strong focus on fun, wellbeing and personal development, the programme gives children the opportunity to try new activities, build friendships and stay active throughout the holidays.

Sports are a major part of the experience, with children participating in a wide range of activities throughout the day. Popular sessions include football, dodgeball, gymnastics, multisport games, archery, and other high-energy activities that encourage teamwork, confidence, and physical fitness. All sessions trained Premier Education coaches who activities are inclusive, engaging and suitable abilities.



are led by ensure for all

Alongside the sports programme, the clubs also place a strong emphasis on creativity and imagination. Children can take part in craft sessions that include painting, drawing, and themed projects linked to the time of year or special events such as Easter. These activities provide a great opportunity for children to express themselves and develop new creative skills.

Free play is also an important part of the day, allowing children to relax, socialise and enjoy unstructured time with friends. This balance of structured activities and free choice helps create a positive and enjoyable environment for every child attending.



Through the HAF/HHH programme, eligible families can access funded places that include enriching activities and nutritious food, ensuring children remain active and supported during the school holidays. Parent-funded places are also available, allowing even more families to benefit from the clubs across the region. By delivering Holiday Clubs across multiple communities, Premier Education continues to support local families while giving children memorable holiday experiences filled with sport, creativity and fun. Contact dcrysell@premier-education.com for more information. [*Paid content*]



Love Topsham: Between 23rd March and 7th April – The Topsham Tenner Returns

Look out for special offers and a warm welcome to launch your spring in these shops: The Beauty Lounge; Estuary Vets; Nest Living; Salt; Peter Tosh Opticians; Wild Bird Boutique; The Old Fire Station; Country Cheeses; Pawsome; Wine World.

Going but not to be forgotten. Coraline Skincare shop is closing. After having a shop in Topsham for four and a half years (first at 94 Fore Street and then at 36 Fore Street), Coraline Skincare (award-winning organic skincare formulated and handmade by Kevin) will be closing its shop to go online only. The shop has been a joy for Kevin,



Liz and the Coraline Skincare team, past and present, to run. They are so grateful for all that it has brought them: getting to know so many people, feeling a real part of the community and lots of fascinating chats. They would like to convey their thanks for such warm support to their landlords, Love Topsham, the other traders, the community and their lovely customers.

Coraline Skincare's last day will be Saturday 11th April from 10 am – 8 pm (with drinks from 5 – 8 pm). Do pop in if you can make it as Kevin, Liz and the team would love to see you for a celebration of the shop on that day.

From 12th April you can place orders online, over the phone or in person at Matthew's Hall

Saturday market where Coraline Skincare will be delighted to have a stall on the



last Saturday of every month. Kevin, Liz and the team are excited about this next phase, and you will continue to see Kevin running about town.

Love Topsham's 2026 Twinkle Target. In 2026, we will have to spend around £6000 – £8000 to replace some of the Christmas lights that are nearing the end of their twinkling days. In short, they are less twinkly than they should be. If everyone tipped in an extra £5 to Love Topsham, we would make our twinkle target. [Support us here](#). If you pay by BACS, please label the payment TWINKLE so we can allocate the funds to their rightful place. We will be making collections throughout 2026.

The Exeter Forum Talks Programme: April 2026



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
1 st & 8 th April	Easter break	<i>No meetings</i>
15 th April	Professor Martin Sorrell	<i>The Phantom Train</i> Professor Sorrell will describe antifascist Francesco Fausto Nitti's two-month journey on a deportation train from the South West of France to Dachau. Initially planned to last three days, this was the longest and probably the most eventful of all deportation journeys out of France during the Second World War.
22 nd April	Lottie Dale	<i>Falling with Style</i> Lottie returns: Her dad was a pilot in WW2 – and she acquired his love of flying. Unable to afford flying lessons she learned how to fall out of perfectly serviceable aircraft. After her first at 31 years old, in the next 17 years she completed more than 1200 skydives having been in air display teams, taken part in British record jumps and competed at national level.
29 th April	Sally Smith	<i>The Women Who Went Round the World</i> Sally will make a welcome return visit to follow up her talk on magnificent women in the air. This talk will look at the amazing journeys of women who circled the globe, by land, sea and air, including the adventures they had and some of the trials they had to overcome. (This talk was postponed from 2025.)

Clyst Valley Choral Society's Spring Concerts



'Simple Gifts' is the theme for Clyst Valley Choral Society's spring concerts. Join us for two evenings of choral delights and enchanting melodies featuring Bruckner, Mozart, Holst, Gjeilo, Lauridsen and many more, at 7.30 pm on Saturday 16th May 2026 at Clyst St Mary Church, Church Lane, EX5 1DY; and at 7.30 pm on Sunday 17th May 2026 at Holy Trinity Church, Exmouth EX8 2AB. Tickets at £12 on the door (£10 in advance). See www.clystvalleychoral.info for details.

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WCMC SERVICES APRIL 2026

Aylesbeare

5 th	06:30	Dawn Service - Estuary View	Rev'd Eden
5 th Easter Day	11:15	Holy Communion	Rev'd Hunt
19 th	09:30	Family Service	Rev'd Stirling Troy

Clyst St George

3 rd Good Friday	14:00	The Last Hour	Rev'd Eden
5 th	06:30	Dawn Service - Estuary View	Rev'd Eden
5 th Easter Day	09:30	Holy Communion	Rev'd Eden
12 th	09:30	Family Service	C Grist
26 th	09:30	Holy Communion	Rev'd Eden

Clyst St Mary

7 th	19:30	Compline and Reflection	Rev'd Eden
5 th	06:30	Dawn Service - Estuary View	Rev'd Eden
5 th Easter Day	09:30	Holy Communion	Rev'd Scrivener
19 th	09:30	Holy Communion	Rev'd Eden

Exton

7 th	10:30	Midweek Holy Communion	Rev'd Stirling Troy
5 th	06:30	Dawn Service - Estuary View	Rev'd Eden
5 th Easter Day	09:30	Holy Communion	Rev'd Raven
8 th	10:30	Midweek Holy Communion	Rev'd Scrivener
15 th	10:30	Midweek Holy Communion	Rev'd Eden
22 nd	10:30	Midweek Holy Communion	Rev'd Stirling Troy
29 th	10:30	Midweek Holy Communion	Rev'd Eden

Farringdon

4 th	19:30	Hymns and Readings	Rev'd Eden
5 th	06:30	Dawn Service - Estuary View	Rev'd Eden
5 th Easter Day	11:15	Holy Communion	Rev'd Stirling Troy
12 th	11:15	Holy Communion	Rev'd Raven

Woodbury

2 nd Thursday	19:30	Maundy Thursday	Rev'd Lewis
5 th	06:30	Dawn Service - Estuary View	Rev'd Eden
5 th Easter Day	11:15	Holy Communion	Rev'd Eden
12 th	11:15	Holy Communion	Rev'd Scrivener
19 th	18:00	Evensong	Rev'd Eden
26 th	11:15	Holy Communion	Rev'd Raven

Woodbury Salterton

5 th	06:30	Dawn Service - Estuary View	Rev'd Eden
5 th Easter Day	09:30	Holy Communion	Rev'd Spray
19 th	09:30	Family Service	Lay led

For all queries, please contact Admin Officer, Jill at dupain@hotmail.co.uk.

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