

# CLYST VALLEY NEWS



February 2026



Have a feathery and flirtatious Feb!

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### EDITOR'S NOTE



Hello and welcome to this February edition of the Clyst Valley News. I hope you like our cover photo of Charlie the cockatoo, taken by his foster 'mum', Ros Bolton from Woodbury Salterton. You can read more about him on page 10. He's a handsome fellow, isn't he?

Well, February may be a short month but we've got at least two important events we may wish to mark before the month is out. First, of course, it's St Valentine's Day on the 14<sup>th</sup>. This traditional celebration of love and romance has been around a long time and is now as much an excuse for restaurants, pubs and card and gift shops to make a killing as it is an opportunity for expressions of true love and more. But I don't want my cynicism to mar what for many couples can be a beautiful, memorable experience. So my loving thoughts go out to you all. Goodness knows, we could do with spreading a lot more love around this troubled, hate-filled world of ours at the moment.

The second – and some would say, more important – event in February, following close on the heels of St Valentine's Day, is Ash Wednesday on the 18<sup>th</sup>. That's the day when those of us observing Lent start our privations and/or devotions. Christians will take the occasion of the 40 days of Lent not only to give up personal pleasures but also to find space and time for contemplation and prayer. Other people, to be frank, see Lent as an opportunity to row back on the extravagances of the recent festive season – and, hopefully, lose a few pounds! Whichever route you take, or even if you don't observe Lent at all, I trust you will feel some sort of sense of achievement come Easter.

Enjoy the magazine. 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](mailto:clystvalleynews@gmail.com) and we'll do the rest. Simple!

### WHY NOT ADVERTISE IN THE CLYST VALLEY NEWS IN THIS NEW YEAR?



Advertising your business or organisation in the Clyst Valley News makes a lot of sense. Have you thought about giving your business a boost this year by joining our loyal band of advertisers? We print and deliver the magazine free to around 1300 households and businesses in our villages and towns; and, in parallel, we upload an online, full colour version on various Facebook village and town pages and parish council websites each month. We have also built up a sizable mailing list for direct emailing of the CVN to subscribers - all also for free, of course!

To find out more, please get in touch – with no obligation. Our rates are very competitive. Please contact the Editor, Peter Skelton, for more information at [clystvalleynews@gmail.com](mailto:clystvalleynews@gmail.com).



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**Contributions, photos and letters to the editor for the March 2026 issue of the Clyst Valley News should be sent by email, to the editor, Peter Skelton, at [clystvalleynews@gmail.com](mailto:clystvalleynews@gmail.com) by Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February 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:**

<b>CSG &amp; Ebford</b>	<b>Isobel Stubbs</b>	<b>07826 806919</b>
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<b>Sowton village</b>	<b>Mike Galloway</b>	<b>07764 582023</b>

**CLYST ST MARY**



**Church News**

*Services.* There will be no Family Service in February as there is a combined Candlemas service at Woodbury Salterton on 1<sup>st</sup> February. There will be a Family



Communion Service on 15<sup>th</sup> February, at 9.30 am. as usual. Tea and coffee are served after the service, 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 all services.

*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](mailto:nicky.blacker@gmail.com). Any other questions about St.Mary's Church, then please contact the Churchwarden Pat Cusa on 01392 877907. Thank you.

**Clyst St Mary Primary School**



We've enjoyed welcoming all the children back to school for the spring term and hearing all about their exciting Christmas breaks! Our weekly music lessons, run by RockSteady Music and West Country School Music, have resumed, as well as our very popular

lunchtime Spanish Club which is run by the wonderful Carmen Sanchez.

January saw the start-up of weekly Forest School sessions, run on site by the Outdoors Group. The aim of Forest School is to connect students to the outdoors, where they can learn through exploration and play. Each class will enjoy six sessions over the course of the spring and summer terms.

The monthly Football League for local primaries, which is held after school at St Peter's, has started up already this year with the third of seven fixtures taking place on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January.

As part of their RE curriculum, Class 5 visited Exeter Mosque and Cathedral towards the end of January. An enjoyable and educational day out!

We were proud to participate in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch again at the end of January, with the children learning about our feathered friends in assemblies and the classroom. We now have a variety of filled bird feeders and baths around the school to help keep them fed over these cold winter months.



Towards the end of January, most of CSM, as well as our sister school, Stoke Canon, enjoyed a performance of *Beauty and the Beast Jr* at the Barnfield Theatre. The production was put on by Clyst Vale Community College for all its feeder primary schools; a





chance for our Year 6 children in particular to see first-hand the type of production they could be involved in in the very near future!

To finish, here's a little taste of the festive fun we had at Clyst St Mary at the end of last term: Our KS2 classes put on an enchanting Christingle Service at the Village Hall for an impressive turnout of parents and other family members.

The children enjoyed their Christmas lunch, pulling crackers, telling jokes and singing along to festive music! To round it all off, Christmas Jumper Day helped to create a wonderfully festive atmosphere for Mrs Herbert's annual Christmas Quiz – always great fun!

### Bishops Clyst Parish Council



*Bishops Clyst Parish Council Has a Facebook Page.*

Bishops Clyst Parish Council has a NEW Facebook page so that we can communicate with you, our community, to update you with the works of the Parish Council which includes meetings, events important notices and issues raised. Please follow our page.

*Dog Fouling on the Playing Field.* The Parish Council are continuing to receive reports on dog fouling on the playing field behind the Village Hall, where children play. Please could we remind residents and visitors that dogs are not permitted on the Village Hall site which includes the playing field and play park unless it is an assistance dog.

*January BCPC Meeting*  
Updates were received from the County Councillor via a January newsletter, with an invitation extended for attendance at the February meeting. Progress on recent planning matters was noted including satisfactory responses from EDDC on Winslade Park. The Council highlighted some overspend and the need for financial prudence with further discussion delegated to the Finance Committee. Members agreed to proceed with updates to the Council website.

*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](mailto: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](http://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.

*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



**Bishops Clyst Parish Council**  
November 25 - January 26 [clerk@bishopsclyst.org.uk](mailto:clerk@bishopsclyst.org.uk)

**A warm hello from your Parish Council!**

For more in-depth information, please read the full minutes on our website.  
For any comments or queries, please e-mail our clerk or make an appointment to pop in to the office at the village hall (9-12.30 Monday - Wednesday) <https://bishopsclyst.org.uk/clerk/>  
**Our meetings are the second Monday of each month.**

<p><b>Looking back...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Neighbourhood Plan was formally made/adopted (November).</li> <li>• Planning Committee meeting held to consider the revised Frog Lane housing application.</li> <li>• Greenspire Footpath fencing works completed. Revised Phase 2 plans prepared and submitted to DCC.</li> <li>• Grounds and General Maintenance contracts for 2026-27 awarded.</li> <li>• Regular payment schedules, bank reconciliations, and budget monitoring completed.</li> <li>• Allotment newsletter issued and tenant inspections initiated.</li> <li>• Sanbags ordered and received</li> <li>• Bishops Clyst 'Whats On' community directory completed.</li> <li>• Flooding issues escalated to highways Environment Agency and MP involvement requested.</li> <li>• Website upgrade approved and work initiated.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Looking forward...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning application monitoring against the new Local Plan</li> <li>2. Identification and protection of heritage assets</li> <li>3. Input into the Heritage Strategy consultation.</li> <li>4. Greenspire Footpath - Awaiting formal response from Devon County Council to revised Phase 2 plans.</li> <li>5. Flood Group meeting scheduled with new highways Officer.</li> <li>6. Ongoing engagement regarding A376 flooding, Cats Copse and Sowton run-off. Further action expected with landowners and DCC.</li> <li>7. Website redevelopment.</li> <li>8. Finance Committee to review reserve levels and budget pressures.</li> </ol>
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email [clerk@bishopsclyst.org.uk](mailto:clerk@bishopsclyst.org.uk). You are very welcome to drop in, but we recommend making an appointment to ensure someone is available to see you.

### Clyst Valley Preschool



Our new starters and their families are settling in well and enjoying our theme of traditional stories, fairy tales and nursery rhymes. We are learning new songs and lots of action rhymes and immersing ourselves in popular stories, book characters and

traditional fairy tales, with dressing up, role play, puppets, small world play, art and crafts and much more! The children have also very much enjoyed exploring the properties of ice outside in our garden during this cold spell!

Hopefully with spring and better weather around the corner, after half-term we will be able to turn our thoughts to our preschool garden and begin to nurture and grow some seeds to plant.

Clyst Valley Preschool offers a warm, secure, fun preschool experience for children from 2 years 8 months, in an Ofsted rated 'Good' Early Years setting led by dedicated, enthusiastic, experienced and highly qualified staff. We have limited spaces available, so if you are considering preschool for your child, starting any time in the next academic year, even a September 2026 or January 2027 start, please get in touch. Email us at [admin@clystvalleypreschool.org](mailto:admin@clystvalleypreschool.org) or call 01392 876615 for more information. Check out our Instagram account, and visit our website [www.clystvalleypreschool.org](http://www.clystvalleypreschool.org); you can always enquire through there.



### Walking Group



The walking group enjoyed their traditional festive gathering of food and wine which is usually preceded by a morning walk. This year however the weather was so poor that even the hardy spirits of the group decided a day wholly dedicated to the festive fare was a better bet. So even more work to build up those fitness levels in the New Year. In January we will have already enjoyed a walk around Coleton Raleigh with lunch at the Otter Inn with more walks planned each month through the year.

We meet on the third Tuesday each month at 10 am in the Village Hall car park (17<sup>th</sup> February this month) so do come along if you feel the need for some exercise, convivial company and a good pub lunch. We are an informal group and walk at our own risk. Any questions, please contact Peter Cusa on 01392 877907.

### Village Hall



*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](mailto: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


### 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 [pamelamgardner@gmail.com](mailto:pamelamgardner@gmail.com).



**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](mailto:annecurryer@gmail.com))  
Thank you.

## 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 Council Chairman's Notes: February 2026

As we enter a new year, planning remains a major topic for residents in the Parish. Those attending recent meetings have raised concerns about several developments in Ebford, as well as the potential for a larger development on the outskirts of Clyst St George. While the Parish Council reviews and comments on planning applications, we also encourage you to submit your own views via the EDDC planning portal.

We continue to review options for refreshing the Parish's Neighbourhood Plan and welcome any residents who may wish to contribute. Parish Council meetings are typically held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Village Hall, and a working group for the Parish Plan is being created.

Away from planning, the Council agreed a moderate increase to the precept for the coming year to cover additional grass cutting at the newly acquired Bragg Community Field and village green. Cllr Knowles has also helped launch a Community Speed Watch to operate on the A376 near Ebford, and volunteers are encouraged to contact the Clerk if they can assist. Finally, we were delighted to see Lady Seaward's School celebrate the opening of their new play equipment, a timely addition as we slowly edge towards spring and better weather! Geoff Bowen

### Clyst St George Parish Hall



*The March Big Breakfast is Here!* Join us on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 9.30–11 am, for a relaxed morning of good food and great company.



Enjoy a hearty Full English breakfast with unlimited tea, coffee, toast, and juice for £10, or choose a bacon or sausage bap with unlimited drinks for £5. It's the perfect chance to catch up with friends, meet neighbours, and soak up a warm community atmosphere – and it's the final Big Breakfast of the season, so don't miss it! Cash preferred, card payments welcome.

*Coffee Morning.* Join us on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February, 10 am – 12 noon for a cosy cuppa, a slice of cake, and plenty of friendly chatter. Whether you're catching up with neighbours or meeting new faces, everyone is welcome – we'd love to see you there!



*The Theatre Comes to Clyst St George.* 'Into the Breach' is coming to Clyst St George and Ebford



Village Hall on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February – and it's an evening of laughter you won't want to miss. Written and performed by the brilliant Mark Carey and produced by Stratford Theatre Company, this original comedy has been described as 'Dad's Army meets The

Vicar of Dibley'. Set during the Second World War, it follows George Crocker, who joins his village drama club dreaming of playing the panto dame... only to be cast as Henry V instead! With one actor

playing all 17 characters, this warm, witty and uplifting show is suitable for everyone and guaranteed to be a hoot.

Tickets: £12. Express interest by contacting Claire Marks on 07732 676367. A joyful, laugh-out-loud night of theatre – book early!

*Parish Hall AGM.* We held our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025. There were a couple of changes to the committee. We'd like to thank Paul Bragg, who has stepped down from his role as Vice Chair, and welcome Jacquie Spencer, who has kindly stepped up into the position. We also thank Claire Marks for her work as Bookings Officer, with Kate Wileman now taking on this role.

We're always on the lookout for new trustees to join our friendly team. Being a trustee is a brilliant way to support your community, have your say in how the Hall is run, and get involved in organising the fun events that bring everyone together. No special experience is needed – just enthusiasm and a willingness to help. If you'd like to make a difference and be part of something positive, please get in touch with us at [Clyststgeorgeandebfordvhall@outlook.com](mailto:Clyststgeorgeandebfordvhall@outlook.com).

*Looking for the Perfect Venue?* Our Parish Hall is a bright, welcoming venue, perfect for everything from parties, weddings, and bar mitzvahs to meetings, fitness classes, and community gatherings. With flexible hire options available by the hour or day, and competitive rates, it's an ideal space for bringing people together and making memories to last. For bookings or further information, email on [Clyststgeorgeandebfordvhall@outlook.com](mailto:Clyststgeorgeandebfordvhall@outlook.com) or call 07732 676367.

### Ladies Craft Group



Long-established (20 years) friendly group of like-minded ladies meets twice a month on Fridays at Clyst St George Parish Hall, 10 am to 2 pm. It costs £6 per session. You will be made very welcome. Come and join us and make new friends. Contact Marion Jones (Secretary) on 01392 874368.

### Lady Seaward's C of E Primary School



What a great start to the term we have had with the official opening of our wonderful new playground! The children have enjoyed exploring the equipment and celebrating this exciting new chapter for our school. We are incredibly grateful to our PTA for championing this project – organising fundraising events, gathering donations, researching designs, and driving it forward with such dedication. It is a remarkable achievement in such a short space of time and one that will benefit the children of Lady Seaward's for many years to come. A huge thank you also goes to Oliver's dad, Harvey's dad, and Austin and Aubrie's dad and grandad for generously giving their time during the Christmas holidays to help remove the old playground equipment.



Finally, thank you to all of you for your donations, support and participation in the fundraising events. We are absolutely delighted with the new play area and can't wait to see the children enjoying it for years to come!



If you have any queries or would like to consider our nursery and/or school for your child(ren), please contact us as follows: school office on

01392 873629 or at [office@clyst-st-george.devon.sch.uk](mailto:office@clyst-st-george.devon.sch.uk); nursery email: [nursery@clyst-st-george.devon.sch.uk](mailto:nursery@clyst-st-george.devon.sch.uk).

### Norman's Weather Report for December



December was the wettest month of 2025, although the last 13 days were mainly dry, with some associated frosty nights. Rainfall at Ebford was 166 mm or 6.5 inches. In

fact January, November and December totalled 412 mm or 16.2 inches; and the remaining, rather dry months only 444 mm or 17.5 inches, rather drier than recent years. The previous three-year average was 37.8 inches. This supports national press reports that 2025 was a 'double record breaker', being the UK's hottest and sunniest year to date. Norman Cann

**WOODBURY SALTERTON**



**Church News**

*Christmas.* This seems a long time ago but a chance to say thank you to all who helped to make this such a joyful celebration. Thanks to Devon Clinton Estates for the lovely



Christmas tree and to Debbie Jung and her helpers who decorated our church so beautifully. The Carol Service was particularly well attended and we were pleased to see so many children. Thanks to those who gave mince pies and those who served these with mulled wine after the service. Thanks to all who read and to the choir for their two items.

Carol singing round the village, led by Debbie, raised money for The Children's Society. This, with the collection at the school Christingle Service, raised a total of £149.50.

Thanks also to Catherine Eden for playing the organ at the Midnight Communion.

*Coffee Mornings.* We have now returned to the winter pattern of our Saturday coffee mornings from 9.30 to 10.30 am. Bacon butties on the first Saturday each month; and coffee and cakes on the third Saturday.



*Help with Selling.* Once again Estelle Hitchcock sold knitted items in her salon for church funds. These raised £137. Thank you to her and her clients.

*Quiz.* Thirty entries were submitted for the quiz which was on the subject of Sports. Games and Pastimes. The winner was Ann Steventon with only one answer which was deemed incorrect. Ann kindly returned the prize money to the church so at the Family Service Rev'd Lewis presented her with a small gift. Thanks to this, copies sold and several very generous donations, the quiz raised an amazing £731 for church funds. This will help as a heater has gone wrong in church and will have to be replaced.

Again thanks to all who put themselves about to sell copies of the quiz – Lin Ashby in Woodbury, Liz Whittaker in Clyst St Mary, Eileen Wilkinson and Carol Rowe in Exmouth, and our own church members Fiona Vessey, Phil Dent and Mark Lovett.

**Woodbury Salterton Village Hall**



*Bangers and Mash.* The next food event will be Bangers and Mash on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026 (see poster). Booking recommended. Pat Bricknell 07929 134325; [woodsaltvillagehall@outlook.com](mailto:woodsaltvillagehall@outlook.com).



*Wreath Making Workshop.* We had a very festive wreath making workshop in Woodbury Salterton Village Hall in December. A great group of ladies enjoying mulled wine/mince pies with the occasional glass of Prosecco with lots of friendly chat. Thank you, Sam, for collecting the foliage and helping us put our wreaths together. £150 was raised towards maintaining our Village Hall.



*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.

**Woodbury Salterton C of E Primary School**



Our annual Nativity and Christingle Services certainly got everyone in the spirit of Christmas. This year, the children performed *Prickly Hay*, which begins with

Sam, a hardworking young stable boy, trying to keep the stable clean and the hay fresh for all the animals – a very smelly job! Gradually, as the miraculous events of the night unfold, Sam starts to realise his worth, with a little help from his friend Shrew.



The highlight of our Christingle Service was when the lights in the church were turned off and it was filled with the glow of the children's lit Christingles as *Away in a Manger* was sung. Our Preschool enjoyed a Christmas crafts morning; parents and carers were invited in to enjoy Christmas activities with their children, listen to them sing a song and enjoy a mince pie or biscuit.



Our small and incredibly hardworking group of parents who run our PTFA paid for all the school-aged children to attend the pantomime. The children had a fabulous time on the last day of term, bringing a magical touch to the end of the year by watching *The Wizard of Oz* at Exeter Corn Exchange.



The team also ran a Christmas craft event after school, where the children had the opportunity to decorate biscuits, make reindeer food, design Christmas decorations, and get stuck into the lucky dip! This followed their participation in the Santa's Sporting Sponsorship Challenge throughout the afternoon. A huge thank you to the PTFA for volunteering their time.



*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@thelinkacademy](mailto:adminwoodburysalterton@thelinkacademy) if you are interested in learning more about this exciting role. Gillian Pyle, Academy Head

**Charlie the Cockatoo**



Charlie the cockatoo lives in Woodbury Salterton and is 22 years old. He is well known in the area and gives people a lot of pleasure. Children and adults love to hold him and have their photos taken with him. I foster him from BirdlineUK which is a rescue charity. Ros Bolton [See also our cover photo. Ed.]

**SOWTON VILLAGE**

**Cathedral Visit and Evensong 22<sup>nd</sup> February**

In a change to our usual service schedule, there will be no Evening Prayer service at St Michael and All Angels, Sowton Village on Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February. Instead, we have been invited to visit the cathedral for a talk and a tour, followed by tea and Evensong. Anyone who is interested in coming

along from 2.15 – 4.45 pm should contact our churchwarden Pippa Watts on 01392 362230. Our Holy Communion service will take place as usual on the second Sunday of the month (8<sup>th</sup> February) at 5.30 pm. As usual, all are very welcome.



**What's On in Clyst St Mary and Sowton Village**

If you are interested in finding out about events, clubs and other activities in Clyst St Mary and Sowton Village, there is a new Facebook page set up by Bishops Clyst Parish Council. Either search for 'Directory of Clubs Clyst' or follow this link:

[https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=122119862673016918&id=61580507545548&mbextid=wwXIfr&rdid=k7lKl3Twqp7DGzpl#](https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=122119862673016918&id=61580507545548&mbextid=wwXIfr&rdid=k7lKl3Twqp7DGzpl#)

**POETRY CORNER**



One of Britain's greatest poets, Percy Bysshe Shelley, died a little over 200 years ago at the tender age of 29. Our very own John Smith has written a beautiful tribute to him; and we are also including Shelley's, famous 1817 sonnet, *Ozymandias*, about the ruined statue of the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramesses II, symbolising that all power, no matter how tyrannical or mighty, is temporary, while the desert's vastness and art's endurance ultimately triumph over human ambition. Enjoy!

*Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Tribute*  
By John Smith of Clyst St Mary

*Ozymandias*  
by Percy Bysshe Shelley

What quirk of genes drove you  
To the life of a free thinking radical,  
Ignoring the strictures of family  
And leaving the ease of privilege

I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said — "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. . .Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

To follow the principles of freedom  
For all men to choose their path  
And seeing the shallowness of glory  
Which leaders so often aspire to.

But the legacy that you left us,  
In poetry and essays of belief  
Live longer than fame of kings  
And teach us to be true to ourselves.  
©John Smith

**WHITE CROSS MISSION COMMUNITY**



**From the Vicar's Desk**

February is a weird month within the church, as we do two things nearly every year. At the start of February at Candlemas (2<sup>nd</sup>) we remember when Jesus' mum and dad, Mary and Joseph, went to the temple and gave thanks to God for the birth of Jesus, marking the end of the Christmas Story – a time of great joy. After which, many take down their Christmas decorations, packing them away until they go up again in December. As they are removed, the brightness they gave is



removed. Yet, darkness does not prevail. It does not because during the second half of February, we begin the season of Lent. Lent comes from the Old English and means lengthen. It was the name given to the period before Easter, because as the mediaeval church was preparing for Easter so too were the days getting longer; they were lengthening.

During Lent many of us seek to forego something that we are depended upon, whilst others take something on as part of preparing for Easter. We do this to remember Jesus, and the 40 days he spent in the wilderness without food and water. Lent is when we seek to go through a little hardship to remind us of the hardship Jesus went through. In doing so we seek to become less reliant on the self and instead more humble and dependent on others.

As I write this, I am still revelling in the joy of Christmas, whilst also thinking about Lent and Easter, particularly about my Lenten discipline. Moreover, I am also preparing for the gear shift in February between supreme joy at the start and the fast that begins in the second half of February. In doing this, I am left wondering if there is another time in the year when we experience such extremes in emotion in such a small timeframe – I cannot think of any. Therefore, February is unique in that we experience both the highs and lows of human experience within 28 days. This is good, because it helps us to be ready for when the unexpected occurs. As we will have the resilience for them. I will leave you to ponder that this month. Your friend and Vicar, Lewis

**MONTHLY GIGGLE** ❤️



My high-school English teacher was well known for being a fair, but hard, grader. One day I received a B minus on a theme paper. In hopes of bettering my grade and in the spirit of the Valentine season, I sent

with the pre-printed inscription: 'BE MINE.' The following day, I received in return a Valentine from the teacher. It read: 'Thank you, but it's still BE MINE-US.' [Brad Wilcox]

*A prince was put under a spell so that he could speak only one word each year. If he didn't speak for two years, the following year he could speak two words and so on. One day, he fell in love with a beautiful lady. He refrained from speaking for two whole years so he could call her 'my darling'. But then he wanted to tell her he loved her, so he waited three more years. At the end of these five years, he wanted to ask her to marry him, so he waited another four years. Finally, as the ninth year of silence ended, he led the lady to the most romantic place in the kingdom and said, 'My darling, I love you! Will you marry me?' And the lady said, 'Pardon?'*

Did you hear about the two bed bugs who fell in love?  
They're getting married in the spring!

*My boyfriend and I met online and we'd been dating for over a year. I introduced Hans to my uncle, who was fascinated by the fact that we met over the Internet. He asked Hans what kind of line he had used to pick me up. Ever the geek, Hans naively replied, 'I just used a regular 56K modem.'* [Anne McConnell]

Two aerials met on a roof, fell in love and got married. Their wedding ceremony wasn't fancy. The reception, however, was excellent.



'If you step on a purple mushroom, you'll be forced to marry the ugliest person in the world,' warned the old gnome, so the man continued carefully through the woods. He didn't step on any purple mushrooms. Suddenly a beautiful woman walked up and said: 'We have to marry.' 'Why?' asked the man, smiling. 'I just stepped on one of those flippin' purple mushrooms!' she replied.

I just got a text from my girlfriend that said, 'I bought you an awesome Valentine's Day gift! Xox' I really hope she spelled 'Xbox' wrong.



# Kids' Corner

## What's happening this month?

### Winter Olympics: 6<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

The Winter Olympics is a huge sports event where athletes from all over the world compete in snow and ice sports. The event takes place every four years like the Summer Olympics. The next Winter Olympics will be held in Italy in places called Milan and Cortina.

For the first time, the number of female and male athletes is almost the same. In earlier Olympics, far more men competed than women. Now, women make up nearly half of all athletes taking part.

## MILANO CORTINA 2026



The first Winter Olympics took place in 1924 in France. At first, only a few cold-weather sports were included such as ice skating and skiing. Over time, the Games have grown and now there are many exciting events like snowboarding, freestyle skiing, ice hockey, curling and bobsleigh. Over 90 countries take part every year.

Team GB may not win as many medals as snowy countries like Norway or Canada but British athletes are very competitive in sports such as curling, skeleton and bobsleigh. Britain has previously won Olympic medals in skeleton sliding where athletes race head-first down an icy track.

## Get involved...

Have a go at solving the riddle below. Answers to [clystvalleynews@gmail.com](mailto:clystvalleynews@gmail.com)

**Riddle: I fall from the sky but I'm not rain. I'm cold and white and feel no pain. You can catch me on your tongue for fun, but I disappear when I see the sun! 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: I have a long, strong tail and huge, powerful feet. I travel by hopping, but my pouch is my seat. What am I? A kangaroo.**

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## FEATURES IN FOCUS

### The Sky Tonight: February



Anyone going to be on an Antarctic coastal cruise on 17<sup>th</sup> February? No? Shame. We'll all miss the annular solar eclipse that's only visible there. You would see just a thin ring of the Sun's disc shining at mid-eclipse. Such eclipses are quite rare as they not only need the Sun-Moon-Earth to be in a straight line but also the Moon to be furthest away from the Earth on its

elliptical orbit so its disc is not large enough to completely cover that of the Sun.

But there are still many other unusual sights to see in the night sky this month. Elusive Mercury is putting on its best show of the year and there is a Large Planetary Alignment to look forward to (plus I *am* going to be brave enough to have at least a brush with Relativity!).

At the end of the month six planets will gather for a rare Planetary Alignment. *Look just to the south of west at about 6.45 pm on the 28<sup>th</sup> and you will see Venus shining brightly just above the horizon. Look slightly up and a bit to the right to find a much dimmer Mercury (at the moment showing a crescent through binoculars). Higher above Venus, slightly to the left, is the golden glow of Saturn. Now sweep slowly with binoculars to the right of Saturn to find the tiny bluish disc of Neptune. High in the sky, above Orion is bright Jupiter, with Uranus, just at naked eye visibility (but better with binoculars) completing the line-up, half way between Jupiter and Saturn.*

In past articles, regular readers may remember the term 'precession' – the wobbling of the Earth's polar axis or the changing angle of the Moon's orbit. Mercury also shows orbital precession, a slow shift in its elliptical orbit's closest point to the Sun. Using Kepler's Planetary Laws and Newton's Gravity Equation this is calculated at 531 arcseconds (about 0.15°) per century. But careful measurements show it to be 43 arcseconds more. Although this is a miniscule amount it is measurable – and consistently so. There is no fault in either the calculation or the measurements, but both can't be right – unless ...

Einstein's Theory of General Relativity combines three-dimensional space and time into the concept of four-dimensional 'spacetime'. Imagine spacetime as a stretched rubber sheet. If a heavy object (like the Sun) is placed on it, a dip (curvature) will be created. If a smaller moving object (like Mercury) is placed on to the dip it will follow the curvature, appearing to be 'pulled' by the Sun. This orbit is created, not because of a force, but because the planet is following the shortest path in curved spacetime. So Relativity has redefined gravity as the curvature of the fabric of Space caused by mass and energy – and if data is fed into Relativity Equations then the missing 43 arcseconds are predicted! (Incidentally this precise prediction confirmed Einstein's Theory.)

Keeping with Mercury, *on the 19<sup>th</sup> look low in the west and in the twilight glow you will see the narrowest crescent Moon with bright Venus below it. Now look about halfway between the Moon and Venus and you will find Mercury. Through steady binoculars you will see it now appearing like a tiny half-moon.* (It was these phases shown by the inner planets which convinced Galileo that the solar system was Sun-centred.) Today it appears furthest away from the Sun in the sky, its greatest elongation. This angle between the Sun and Mercury is 18° but it can be up to 28° if the planet is at the end of its quite elliptical orbit.

Tradition has it that Nicolaus Copernicus was never able to observe Mercury because of the mists rising from the local river. I wish you more success. Clyde Bish

### Gracie's Column: Valentine's Day on a Budget



We don't need a special day of the year to show our loved ones that we care but February 14<sup>th</sup> does offer the perfect excuse. Celebrated internationally as Valentine's Day, the day is rooted in Christian feast days honouring Saint Valentine and is also linked to ancient Roman fertility festivals like Lupercalia where expressions of romance, friendship and familial love are popular.

This day is extremely popular in the UK but with the commercialisation of it comes great cost and it's not unusual to see friends splashing out to spoil their significant other. While this is wholesome



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and kind, there are also plenty of other ways to show love and affection at this time of the year while not blowing your budget.

While many choose to indulge in lavish holidays abroad with expensive gifts and activities, the toned down version of this would be to take a trip away but closer to home. In this respect, you get the best of both worlds – keeping the cost down while still spending some quality, private time together. Being in Devon, you already have some of the country’s prettiest beaches and quaint villages. Spend some time exploring and reconnecting with each other!

Walks like Wistman’s Wood on Dartmoor, dramatic waterfalls like Lydford Gorge and picturesque villages like Branscombe offer variety from the mundane 9 to 5 and are great for exercising, mental health, and spending time talking and taking in the countryside with your loved one.

In addition to this, if you are married or engaged and proposed in an idyllic setting like this, perhaps Valentine’s Day offers the perfect time to revisit this spot and remind yourselves of one of the many highs of your relationship.

If a trip away is beyond your budget, fear not. The most meaningful Valentine’s Days are spent when you are simply doing what you love. If you pay attention to your partner, you should know their favourite food, their favourite film, their favourite flowers and every other niche fact about them. When you tap into this and show you’ve listened, that means so much more than an all-inclusive holiday in the Caribbean. Date nights where you cook together (or splurge on a takeaway), watch some trash TV and enjoy each other’s presence are better.

More than anything, Valentine’s Day is just another day. It’s important to not compare to wealthy friends and family who can maybe afford to splash the cash a little more – each relationship is different. To be loved is to be known, so show your partner that you know them like the back of your hand and the rest of what you do on this day is unimportant. Gracie Moore

**Ash’s Albums: This Month: Rocky Top Ballads by Fine**



Danish singer-songwriter Fine Glindvad Jensen’s album *Rocky Top Ballads* (2024) captures the quiet intimacy of rural Denmark, embracing slow and solicitous reflective observation. There has recently been a major rise in solo artists from Denmark producing surreal electronic singer-songwriter music, not easily



fitting into any categorised genre. From this, Fine emerged with her debut album *Rocky Top Ballads*. Her sound is extremely stripped-back and acoustic, favouring gentle simplicity over refinement. This feels intentionally unadorned; each song gets its own space to breathe, without any major climaxes or huge, punchy hooks. The album’s atmosphere remains in a calm and melancholic space, the type of record that is best listened to the whole way through, uninterrupted and unhurried.

Rather than making grandiose remarks, Fine embraces delicate deliberations and acute imagery. *Rocky Top Ballads* opens with *Coasting*, which sets up the album’s feel sublimely. The song gently unfolds with minimal instrumentation and understated but esoteric lyrics. It appears to be a message to a (former) lover: ‘*You kiss me like a stranger*’, and Fine tries to convey some sort of arcane prophecy: ‘*You’ll meet me in a bathtub, upon a mountain*’. I think Fine wants to communicate some sense of dislocation – the desire to have her vulnerabilities understood (bathtub), but wanting to escape (mountain).

The juxtaposition of feelings continues in the track *Big Muzzy*, with more of an anchored, deliberate feel to it. The song feels emotionally denser than *Coasting*, with heartache and homesickness taking precedence (*‘I’m ready to fly, I’m friends with time [...] I’m running on home, but I’m never home’*). It’s more of an acknowledgement than an expression of exasperation; to Fine, ‘home’ is more of an unresolved idea than a destination, and she is willing to accept the tension between longing and arrival.

Each song feels as though Fine is singing directly to the listener, rather than a big performance. The entire album is tailored to listeners who appreciate subtlety, and it rewards patience and close-listening, eliciting a sense of calm and reflection after it ends. If this appeals to you, *Smerz’s* album *Big City Life* (2025) and *ML Buch’s* album *Suntut* (2023) both exist in a very similar space, and I recommend them just as much as *Rocky Top Ballads*.

Favourite Songs: *Coasting, Remember the Heart, Big Muzzy, Days Incomplete*

Least Favourite Song: *Whys*; Overall Rating: 8/10. Ashik Skelton

~~~~~  
**AND FINALLY...**

**The Exeter Forum Talks Programme: February 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](http://www.exeterforum.org/talks).

| Date                      | Speaker           | Title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 <sup>th</sup> February  | David Westcott    | <i>Richard III and the Princes in the Tower</i><br>David’s talk will investigate the reign of one of England’s most controversial Kings, Richard III, who visited Exeter two years before he was killed in battle. He will look at the various stories surrounding the fate of the Princes in the Tower during Richard III’s reign.                    |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> February | John Dean         | <i>Scars that Shine: The Madonnas of Pervyse, Mairi Chisholm and Elsie Knocker – WWI Women Heroes</i><br>Exeter-born Elsie Knocker and her Scottish colleague Mairi Chisholm were called the Madonnas of Pervyse in recognition of their front-line care of casualties and innovations in the Belgian trenches of WW1. They received national honours. |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> February | Caroline Stephens | <i>General Health: Feel Energised and Fabulous Every Day!</i><br>Caroline’s talk will describe what being healthy means and how we can both maintain our general health and improve our energy levels and feelings of wellbeing.                                                                                                                       |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> February | Dame Julia Slingo | <i>My Role at the Met Office</i><br>Dame Julia Slingo served as Chief Scientist at the Met Office for nearly eight years. She was made a Dame in the 2014 New Year Honours for her services to weather and climate science. Before joining the Met Office, she was the Director of Climate Research at the University of Reading.                      |

**Clyst Valley Choral Society Is Looking for New Members: Delay to Rehearsals**



Please note that Clyst Valley Choral Society has had to delay the start of spring rehearsals to Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 7.30 – 9.15 pm at Clyst St Mary Church, Church Lane, EX5 1AB. We will be learning pieces for our concerts in May. No auditions and no experience necessary. Just come along on the 12<sup>th</sup>! See <https://www.clystvalleychoral.info/> for details.

**Woodbury Camera Club**

Woodbury Camera Club held its annual general meeting in the Church Rooms last night. The meeting itself lasted less than an hour – giving plenty of time for food, chat and an



excellent presentation by a member of the Club. We have used this format for a number of years and find that it is very successful.

The club decided to continue for another year and members were elected. We have limited the number of meetings to 5/6 a year to encourage regular attendance and allow for holidays. The subscriptions were reduced to £15 per year in respect of this. It was decided to have presentations on travel, technical presentations such as portraiture/software, etc, interclub showing of best photos, etc, plus presentations from well-known speakers. We also decided on a summer social again this year. We also intend to publish a calendar this year and further details of that to follow. A huge thank you to all those who have supported us in the past – we will be back!!

The aim of our club is to improve our skill, to share good practice but always in a kind, supportive way. We have a lovely social evening with lots of chat. We are a small club who have a lot of fun. We are non-judgemental about our hobby, encouraging anyone who likes to take photos either with a camera or with a mobile. We are happy to invite new members to join at any time. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month and a calendar of our meetings will be published on Facebook and in the village magazines. If anyone should wish to join us on a free trial basis, please contact [debbiejung16@gmail.com](mailto:debbiejung16@gmail.com) for more information. We also have an online Special Interest Group for those that are interested but unable to come in person; again, Debbie can provide details of this part of the club.

The presentation this month was from Tony Bennett, founder of Wild Woodbury. During the presentation he showed us the camera kit that is used by Wild Woodbury to monitor the health of the animals it rescues. We also saw the type of camera traps it uses, the go pros and cameras that Tony uses in order to spot wildlife in his local area. There were images of the animals that had been rescued and released and a talk on some of the ways they care for the animals and the challenges of diseases such as bird flu. It was an excellent presentation full of interesting facts and stories of the various animals. A huge thank you to him and to all the members of the club who make the evenings so enjoyable.

#### Love Topsham: Christmas 2025 All Packed Away



Last month we thanked all our volunteers, and to round off Christmas 2025 we would also like to thank our sponsors: Taylor Wimpey (£500 towards our twinkling trees), Locality Budget Funding through Andrew Leadbetter (£3000 towards the Christmas decoration of the town) and East of Exe (for hosting our snowflake projector, shining on to St Nicks).

In 2026, we will have to spend around £6000 – £8000 to replace some of the Christmas lights that are nearing the end of their life. 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](https://www.lovetopsham.co.uk). If you pay by BACS please label the



payment TWINKLE so we can allocate the funds. We will be making collections throughout 2026. Of course, we are very happy to accept larger or one-off donations. Please email us at [donations@lovetopsham.co.uk](mailto:donations@lovetopsham.co.uk) to discuss.

No director or volunteer is paid for their work; all donations are used for these activities.



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To celebrate St Valentine's Day, this is 'The Kiss' by Gustav Klimt (1907-1908)

# WCMC SERVICES FEBRUARY 2026

## Aylesbeare

|                                |       |                |            |
|--------------------------------|-------|----------------|------------|
| 15 <sup>th</sup>               | 09:30 | Family Service | Rev'd Eden |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday | 19:30 | Holy Communion | Rev'd Eden |

## Clyst St George

|                  |       |                             |                 |
|------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 09:30 | Breakfast Service & Baptism | Rev'd Eden      |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 09:30 | Holy Communion              | Rev'd Scrivener |

## Clyst St Mary

|                  |       |                |             |
|------------------|-------|----------------|-------------|
| 15 <sup>th</sup> | 09:30 | Holy Communion | Rev'd Raven |
|------------------|-------|----------------|-------------|

## Exton

|                                |       |                                  |                    |
|--------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 4 <sup>th</sup>                | 10:30 | Midweek for Mission Community HC | Rev'd Eden         |
| 11 <sup>th</sup>               | 10:30 | Midweek for Mission Community HC | Rev'd Scrivener    |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday | 10:30 | Midweek for Mission Community HC | Rev'd Eden         |
| 25 <sup>th</sup>               | 10:30 | Midweek for Mission Community HC | Rev'd StirlingTroy |

## Farringdon

|                  |       |                 |                 |
|------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 11:15 | Holy Communion  | Rev'd Scrivener |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 09:30 | Morning Worship | Rev'd Eden      |

## Woodbury

|                  |       |                |                                    |
|------------------|-------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 11:15 | Holy Communion | Rev'd StirlingTroy                 |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> | 18:00 | Evensong       | Rev'd Eden                         |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 11:15 | Holy Communion | Rev'd Eden &<br>Rev'd StirlingTroy |

## Woodbury Salterton

|                                |       |                                       |                                |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup>                | 10:30 | Candlemas for Whole Mission Community | Bishop Mike &<br>Ministry Team |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday | 09:30 | Breakfast Family Service              | Jill Dupain                    |

For all queries, please contact Admin Officer, Jill at [dupain@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dupain@hotmail.co.uk).

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