

CLYST VALLEY NEWS



March 2026



Have a momentous
March

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Hello and welcome to this March edition of the Clyst Valley News. Our atmospheric cover photo this month comes courtesy of Dave Cornick who took it one wintry January morning as he was cycling from Clyst St George to Clyst St Mary. Fabulous! Many thanks, Dave!

In early February we received the very sad news that Jackie Hatton, a key person in the life of Clyst St Mary for many years – and a lovely, kind, talented lady – had passed away. Among the many contributions she made to our village was her 17-year stint as my illustrious predecessor as editor of the CVN. I will always be grateful to Jackie for her patience and good humour as she handed over the reins of the CVN to this bewildered novice. You can read Clyde Bish's lovely, fitting tribute to Jackie on page 6. She will be greatly missed.

My wife and I have just returned from a couple of breathtaking (literally!) weeks in Sikkim and West Bengal, high in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas. It was our latest trip exploring the different regions of India – and one of the most interesting so far. Against a permanent backdrop of towering snow-capped peaks (often shrouded in mist, unfortunately) the gentle, friendly people were getting on with their lives, almost oblivious of the wonders surrounding them. In Sikkim particularly, most of the population is Buddhist and this shone through in their lives and in their kindness to strangers like us in particular. I've come back feeling chastened and a little humbled. Sometimes simple decency trumps the excesses of our western 'civilisation'. Excuse the pun. I hope you 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 and we'll do the rest. Simple!

WHY NOT ADVERTISE IN THE CLYST VALLEY NEWS THIS 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.

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

Services. There will be a Family Service on 1st March at 9.30 am; and a Holy Communion Service on the 15th, also at 9.30 am, as usual. Tea and coffee are served after the services, and we encourage people to stay and enjoy some fellowship. We welcome new families who would like to bring their children to join us in 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. 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 hope all our families enjoyed a restful February half term and managed to get outdoors for some fresh air! Upon their return to school, our weekly Forest School sessions continued, run onsite by the



Outdoors Group. So far this spring term, each class has had a turn – which has unfortunately meant clambering about in the mud and sheltering under a tarpaulin, such is the state of the weather this winter! The sessions will continue through the summer term, when, hopefully, the children can experience some different outdoor activities in the sunshine! At the end of February, we had a visit from the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, delivering an age-appropriate assembly to the whole school about fire prevention, identifying risks and encouraging safe behaviour. In partnership with the RNLI, they also gave water safety advice. The members of our newly-formed Bird Club had a soggy, but enjoyable, visit to the Exe Estuary in February for a bit of bird spotting! CSM families also took part in our own 'Big Garden Birdwatch', recording any birds they were able to identify, to be collated at school. The School Council's environment-themed cake sale expanded on this theme by selling cakes in bags decorated with eco-friendly messages!



The whole school thoroughly enjoyed the unusual opportunity to try their hand at archery during Premier Education's enrichment day; helping develop focus, patience and hand-eye coordination. Before half term we were very excited to have a visit from Paralympian swimmer David Hill, in his role as a Great Athletes advocate. He led a sponsored fitness circuit with the whole school, followed by a motivational assembly.

The aim was to inspire pupils to be more physically active and also helped to raise money for some much-needed new sports equipment.

During February's Safer Internet Day, we focused on the safe use of AI, which has, of course, crept into all aspects of our lives and poses an ever-increasing area of safeguarding. Children watched a video introducing the basics of how AI works and were provided with tools to use it responsibly.


The PTFA-run Valentine's Disco was held just before we broke up for half term, which was great fun as always!

There is much anticipation for our Years 3 and 4 children as they prepare to embark on their Residential trip to Heatre for three days in the middle of March. It will be a great experience for all. Class 4 will experience the Time Odyssey exhibition at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) again on 26th March. It is an interactive learning experience during which students meet characters throughout history and tackle challenges to explore objects and collections from across the world – amazing!

We will hold Parents' Evenings 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.

Finally, Class 6's 'Caring and Sharing' event will be held at the Village Hall on the last afternoon of the month. This is a unique opportunity for the children to each invite two special adults in their life, to treat them to lunch, conversation and a short presentation as a 'thank you' for all their support.

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.

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.

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

February BCPC Meeting

Bishops Clyst Parish Council considered planning applications (objecting to Oil Mill Lane and supporting Winslade Park Avenue) and agreed to meet Winslade Park developers regarding community use arrangements. The recent landslide at Rydon Motors was discussed and some councillors agreed to meet with the owner to discuss next steps. Flood response, drainage, traffic issues, and parish maintenance were discussed, with agreement to apply to the Devon Resilience Forum for funding to replace sandbags.

Jackie Hatton: A Tribute



It is with great sadness that I write this tribute to Jackie Hatton who passed away on 1st February. To try to sum up her contribution to Clyst St Mary and the other communities around in just a few words is far from easy.

Jackie and Rob moved into the village in 1974 and over the next 50 years not only witnessed community life but together have been the powerhouse behind it. Settling into the village, Jackie immediately became active, helping setting up the Playgroup in the Village Hall. When the boys were at Primary School, Jackie played a major part in the PTA, and when they transferred to Exmouth Community College she became Treasurer of the Bingo Club which supported the College. All who are reading this have reason to be grateful to Jackie as for 17 years she was the editor of this magazine. She invited, persuaded and cajoled folk into contributing to or helping deliver it to every household. It was, and indeed still is, the way of informing everyone of what goes on, and how they can join in this thriving community.

For her Memorial Service, the church was filled to capacity which bore witness to the love felt towards her and, as Matthew so movingly said, he and his brothers were so fortunate to grow up in Clyst St Mary and he defied anyone to think of somewhere better for children to be nurtured – an atmosphere his mother contributed towards immeasurably.

Jackie was a kind and generous person who gave of her time so willingly. She was extremely creative and famous for the countless teddy bears she made for charity, and amongst our Christmas decorations are those she made for the Christmas Fairs. Indeed, any event you might name in the village, Jackie was there, actively involved – encouraging others to also participate - from the Twinning Association to pub quizzes and drama productions and, of course, to singing in Clyst St Mary Church choir, to name just some. There are many 'strong' women living here and as one male resident once observed, 'The village does not need Women's Lib – rather Men's Lib!' Jackie will indeed be hugely missed.

Alongside her incredibly busy life devoted to others she still found time to fulfil a personal goal by studying for a degree, followed by a Masters in Paleo-Environmental Archaeology. Knowing that she could always rely on the support of Rob and her family.

Gandalf advises Frodo in R R Tolkien's *Fellowship of the Rings*: 'All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.' Jackie, together with Rob, has always made the best possible choices. Thank you, Jackie, from us all. Clyde

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. 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 (17th March 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



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

Table Tennis Club

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

**Badminton Club**
Clyst St Mary Village Hall

The club 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.

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.




Norman's Weather Report for January

 January, with its three named storms, produced 207 mm or 8.2 inches of rain here at Ebford, even more than that of January 2025. It was well distributed over the four weeks but of course extremely heavy around Monday 26th, leading to spectacular flooding in the Clyst valley. This appeared locally as an estuary filled with brown water for a couple of days! [*Thanks to Nick Brady for the image. Ed*]

January rainfall averages were: over the past five years: 88 mm (3.46 inches); over the past ten years: 83 mm (3.28 inches). The total amounts of rain over the previous five years were: 36.2; 30.2; 43.3; 40.1; and 33.7 inches. So no predictions are available for this year 2026! Norman Cann




Clyst St George Parish Hall

 **The March Big Breakfast is Here!** Join us on Sunday 29th March for our much-loved Big Breakfast at the Parish Hall! Enjoy a hearty, feel-good start to your Sunday with: £10 for a full Big Breakfast; £5 for a delicious breakfast butty. It's the perfect chance to catch up with neighbours, enjoy great food, and soak up that wonderful village buzz.


Can't make this one? Don't worry — The Big Breakfast returns in the autumn for its full season. Keep an eye here, on Facebook, and on the village WhatsApp for dates and details. A huge thank you to everyone who has already joined us for breakfast in 2025 and 2026 — we can't wait to welcome you again!



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, Community...and a Cause! Join us on Thursday 5th March 10 am – 12 noon at the Parish Hall, for a relaxed and friendly get-together. Enjoy a cosy cuppa, a slice of, 10 am – 12 noon at the Parish Hall, for a relaxed and friendly get-together. Enjoy a cosy cuppa, a slice of tempting cake, and plenty of lively conversation.

 Our coffee mornings aren't just about catching up — attendees also choose which local cause the annual profits support. In January, Hospice Care was selected, and the £50 raised from our monthly morning was donated to this wonderful cause. Whether you're popping in for a quick chat or staying to while away the morning, it's the perfect way to connect with neighbours, meet new faces, and make a difference. Everyone is welcome — we'd love to see you there!

Get Involved – Join Our Team of Trustees. Do you enjoy being part of village life and want to play an active role behind the scenes? We're looking for enthusiastic, friendly people to join our team of trustees and help shape what happens at the Parish Hall. Becoming a trustee is a rewarding way to support your community, share your ideas, and help plan the events and activities that bring everyone together. You don't need any special experience — just energy, commitment, and a willingness to get involved. If you'd like to help shape the future of the Parish Hall and be part of a team that really makes things happen, we'd love to hear from you. Email: Clyststgeorgeandebfordvhall@outlook.com.

 **Looking for the Perfect Venue?** Whether it's a party, wedding, meeting, fitness class, or community event, our bright and welcoming Parish Hall is the perfect place to bring people together. With flexible hire options — hourly or daily — and competitive rates, it's ideal for creating memorable occasions that everyone will enjoy. We're also thrilled to introduce our new Booking Officer, Kate Wileman! Kate has received full training from our experienced Claire Marks and is excited to meet you, answer your questions, and help plan your perfect event. For bookings or more info, email: Clyststgeorgeandebfordvhall@outlook.com.

WOODBURY SALTERTON



Visit of the Bishop of Exeter

On Sunday 1st February, the Feast of Candlemas, the service for the whole of the Mission Community was held in Holy Trinity Church, Woodbury Salterton, and was conducted by the Bishop of Exeter, the Right Reverend Dr Mike Harrison.

The service was also a Confirmation Service and the Bishop confirmed Judy Ann Lander from Clyst St George Church and Nicola (Nicky) Jane Blacker from Clyst St Mary Church. The Bishop preached on the presentation of the child Christ in the Temple. The service was very well attended and there was a large choir from across the Mission Community.



Our Vicar, Rev'd Lewis Eden, took part as did Rev'd Maggie Stirling Troy and Rev'd Margaret Scrivener supported by Rev'd Susie Watson and LLM Chris Grist. After the service tea, coffee and juice with cake was served by Debbie Jung and a team of helpers.

Debbie had worked hard to organise this and was grateful for the help from other churches in providing cakes and loaning beakers; and for all who helped serve and washed up afterwards.

Our Mission Community has a reputation for the way all the churches work well together and this was very obvious on Sunday. It was the first time most of us had met Bishop Mike and we were all very impressed by his friendliness in trying to ensure that he spoke to everyone afterwards. Everyone agreed that it was a wonderful and memorable service, not only for Judy and Nicky but for everyone who was there.

Other Church News

APCM, Monday 30th March at 2 pm in the Church.

This is the AGM of the church and the meeting is open to everyone. Your opportunity to hear how the church has fared financially and in other ways during the past year and to ask any questions. It is only a short meeting so please come and support your church and the PCC.

Coffee Mornings. During the winter these are held on the first and third Saturday of each month at 9.30 am in church; so, 7th March with bacon butties and 21st March with cake.



Woodbury Salterton 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.

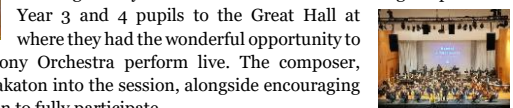
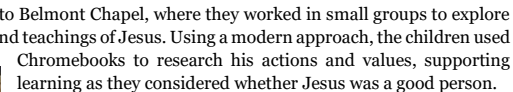
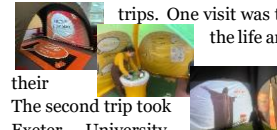
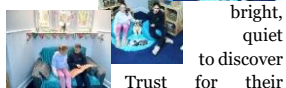
Woodbury Salterton C of E Primary School

New Library. We are thrilled to share that our library has been completely transformed into a vibrant space we can all be proud of. Thanks to the generous support of The Farmington Trust Grant, we have added new shelving, comfortable soft

furnishings, and a fresh new look throughout. The result is a welcoming library that is enjoyed daily by the children for learning, with shelves brimming with exciting books for them and take home to read. A huge thank you to The Farmington Trust for their incredibly generous £4,000 donation, which has enabled us to achieve our dream library!

Oak Class Discovery Trips. During half term, the older children took part in two exciting discovery trips. One visit was to Belmont Chapel, where they worked in small groups to explore the life and teachings of Jesus. Using a modern approach, the children used Chromebooks to research his actions and values, supporting learning as they considered whether Jesus was a good person.

The second trip took Year 3 and 4 pupils to the Great Hall at Exeter University, where they had the wonderful opportunity to watch the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra perform live. The composer, James Redwood, incorporated Makaton into the session, alongside encouraging the children to use body percussion to fully participate.



Acorns and Saplings. Both classes have been using food to support their learning. Acorns class has

been exploring space and created some delicious fruity rocket kebabs which have kept them full when exploring the different learning activities about space. Meanwhile, Saplings class has been learning about different

sources of food in preparation for making their own sandwiches. As part of this, the children have been tasting, chopping, grating, slicing, and mashing ingredients to discover which techniques work best for the items they will include in their sandwiches.

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

SOWTON VILLAGE



Proposed Development of old Venns Farm Land, Sowton Village

You may have seen news of a planned major new development proposed for a site just north of Sowton Village. The planning application seeks permission for the construction of up to 28,300 square metres of commercial floorspace across a 19.3-hectare greenfield site. Details of the planning application can be viewed on the East Devon Planning Portal <https://planning.eastdevon.gov.uk/online-applications/> under search term 25/2620/MOUT. Comments can be submitted until 14th March. There is also a chance to discuss the application at the next Parish Council meeting on Monday, 9th March at 7.30 pm in Sowton Village Hall.

Cathedral Visit and Evensong 22nd February

A group of us from Sowton church joined 42 other members of the East Clyst Mission Community for a tour, talk, tea and Evensong for the first Sunday of Lent in Exeter Cathedral on Sunday, 22nd February. It was a fascinating 'behind the scenes' glimpse of life in the cathedral which concluded with Evensong beautifully accompanied by the Ad Hoc Voices and Truro Chamber Choir as the choristers were on half term.

We revert to our usual service pattern in May, with Holy Communion on the second Sunday of the month (8th March) and Evening Prayer on the fourth Sunday (22nd), both starting at 5.30 pm.



Beetle Mania in Sowton Village Hall

The typically fiercely contested annual Beetle Drive was held in Sowton Village Hall on Saturday, 21st February. With dice skittering everywhere and players racing to complete their 14-part beetle, the resulting images were more often than not rather rudimentary, though the more artistic among us still managed to produce beautiful drawings despite the frenetic pace of the game. After six rounds and a delicious lasagne and almond orange cake supper, the winner – by one point – was Pippa Watts (much to her embarrassment), carrying off the Len Stanbury Buddha trophy. A raffle of donated prizes raised further funds towards the cost of replacing the thatched village hall roof – a challenging fundraising target.



POETRY CORNER

Open Minded

By John Smith of Clyst St Mary

The mind like an open hall –
Doors wide agape.
Ideas look in, but some fleeting,
Too shy, quickly turning away.
Some find just open space
And wander out unexamined.
But others stay waiting patiently
Thought through, but stored away,
Only perhaps for later form,
Because those never die.
They stay in the womb of memory
Awaiting possible re-birth,
Re-try, re-forming, maturity,
And a new life to give to others.

And the ideas that struggle
Into the life of words, they
May be expressed for the judgement
Of other minds with joy of words.
Perhaps to be understood
Perhaps to even give pleasure.
And some to crystallise
The latent thoughts of others.
©John Smith



WHITE CROSS MISSION COMMUNITY



From the Vicar's Desk...

As I write this piece, I can finally see blue sky after what seems like an eternity of rain. During which we have been flooded and cut off from civilisation. The floods are finally beginning to recede, and flowers are starting to bloom. During the last few weeks, it has been easy to think that it is going to rain forever, yet finally the rain has stopped. This is especially poignant as we approach the Spring Solstice, where the days will be longer than the nights. Hurrah!

As we approach that point in the year, we can see the signs of new life all around us. Whether it be in the bleating of lambs, the sound of farm equipment preparing the land or planting seeds, and so much more. We are entering the season of HOPE: Hope that today will be a better day than the one before. Hope that whatever our troubles are, they can be removed from us. Hope that life is worth living and can be very joyful.

It is perhaps apt that we in the church begin Holy Week at the end of March. For it was during the first Holy Week where the people of Israel were full of hope. They were hopeful because of Jesus and the story he had shared with them. Jesus had told them the Kingdom of God is near at hand and will be brought into full existence very soon! The people knew this to be true, and were expecting someone to overrule the Romans, and they would be set free from oppression. The people rejoiced and were glad when they saw Jesus on the back of a donkey entering Jerusalem.

Yet all they were hopeful in didn't come to pass as they expected; rather Jesus died a few days later, before coming back to life after a couple of days. Bringing in God's Kingdom, but in a different way. This March, we begin with hope, hope for the future, but what does that hope look like? Will you be okay if what you are expecting to happen doesn't take place but something else entirely does? For it is easy to get bogged down in what we expect to happen without seeing the beauty of reality. Therefore, I encourage you to take a break this month to take in the beauty of East Devon.
Your friend and Vicar, Lewis





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Kids' Corner

What's happening this month?

Mothers Sunday (Mother's Day) – Sunday 15th March

Mothers Sunday is a special day in the UK when we say "thank you" to our mums and other people who care for us.

Mothers Sunday began hundreds of years ago in Britain. It was first celebrated in the 16th century. In those days, people would return to their "mother church" on the fourth Sunday of Lent. A mother church was the main church or cathedral in the area where someone grew up or was baptised. At that time, many children worked as servants or apprentices and lived away from home. Mothers Sunday was one of the few days they were allowed to visit their families. It became a happy day when families could come together again. On their way home, children sometimes picked wildflowers for their mothers. Families also ate a special fruit cake called a Simnel cake. It is often decorated with 11 marzipan balls to represent the 11 faithful disciples of Jesus.



Today, it is a time to celebrate mums, grandmas, step-parents and anyone who cares for us. People might: make handmade cards; give a small gift; or spend quality time together. Mothers Sunday reminds us to be thankful. It's not about expensive presents — it's about showing love and appreciation.

Get involved...

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

Riddle: **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?**

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: **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? A snowflake**

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FEATURES IN FOCUS

Gracie's Column: International Women's Day



8th March marks International Women's Day every year. While many of us don't need a specific date to celebrate the women in our lives, it is nice to draw attention to the power of women in a big way. Whether this be through personal celebration or attending planned events, there are ways to get involved this year. International Women's Day started with its first celebration in 1911, with events in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. Its roots can be traced back to early socialist and suffragist movements of the 20th century. It was officially

recognised by the UN in 1975, establishing it as a global event.

Nowadays, although women notably have more legal standing and power than they did when International Women's Day was first coined, it's still just as important. Around the world, women still face discrimination and action needs to be accelerated for ending gender parity. Experts indicate that it could take 135 years to bridge the global gender gap, so the activism needs to continue!

Every year on 8th March, protests take place around the world to defend women's rights through many means. These include taxes on menstrual products, the gender pay gap and gender violence laws. With placards and megaphones, women, men and children take to the streets to amplify the voices of those who are silenced.

It's important for all of us to celebrate the achievements of women and demand more from governments and people in power to make tangible changes. Protesting in the streets isn't for everyone but there are still ways you can make a difference.

One event taking place in Devon this year for the cause is a major free community celebration hosted by the Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council on 9th March at Sherwell Church in Plymouth. Taking place between 10.30 am and 3.30 pm, this event will feature speakers, workshops and networking opportunities.

If you are unable to attend an event, you can create one for yourself or engage in micro doses of feminism in other ways! This can include anything from supporting women-owned businesses (such as enjoying a coffee in a women-owned café) to donating to women's causes such as Women's Aid. Also, a movie based around female empowerment never goes amiss either! My favourites include Legally Blonde and Wonder Woman because both of these tap into women in positions of power and how they command respect in a patriarchal society.

However you choose to mark the date, it's important to remember that women have played a huge role in creating and nurturing the world we live in today, and that is something to admire.

Gracie Moore

Ash's Albums. This Month: *What's Going On* by Marvin Gaye



Marvin Gaye's monumental and highly decorated album *What's Going On* deserves its flowers, and is, without fear or favour, one of best works of art of all time.

What's Going On was released in 1971, at a time of political and moral turmoil in the US. Gaye's tone throughout is tender, despite (by implication) acknowledging despotic late-1960s political topics, such as the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, and Robert Kennedy, and consequential general distrust in government institutions, as well as civil rights struggles following the Vietnam War. The discernment of asking 'How do we care for each other?' feels particularly resonant today, as human



dignity appears to be more of a debate than a truth (cf the actions of ICE in the US). Questions raised about power, justice and empathy are not relics of the past, rather ongoing themes for every generation, which just attests to the timeless and legendary essence of *What's Going On*.

Sonically and thematically, the album is completely captivating. Atypical to most Motown label releases of the era, which were usually collections of singles, the album is intended to be listened to in album-form. Songs seamlessly blend into each other, and maintain thematic continuity. There is no dramatic narrative or patriotic rhetoric, instead successive reflections and processing of a divided society.

The album begins with the title track, *What's Going On*, which opens with a summery saxophone line, ambient party chatter in the background, and a relaxed flow with heavenly, layered vocals. The song isn't confrontational, yet carries heavily-weighted content in addressing suffering and conflict. In a way, this makes it all the more persuasive; using empathy as a model instead of outrage doesn't alienate the listener, but invites them to listen closely.

Following this, *What's Happening Brother* is more definitive in its message, widely understood as being from the perspective of a Vietnam veteran returning home. Where the title track is questioning what's wrong with the world, *What's Happening Brother* asks what happens when someone returns to it. There's no sense of victory in Gaye's tonalities, more so disorientation, whilst the musical brightness of the song again induces the listener to hear him carefully. The buoyant groove is perhaps a disguise for the deep-rooted anxiety behind it.

The album concludes with *Inner City Blues (Make Me Wanna Holler)*, not with resolution, but with a feeling of fatigue – not with a cry of mutiny, but a sigh of survival. It circles back to the opening subject: desperate asking and searching for humanity, and personal despair is rendered into collective deliberation. Like Gaye's refrain, today's conflicts are leaving so many people feeling silenced, with institutions that are meant to serve, instead pushing people further away and begging questions about safety, justice, and human dignity. RIP Renée Good and Alex Pretti.

Favourite songs: *What's Going On*, *What's Happening Brother*, *Flyin' High (In The Friendly Sky)*, *Save The Children*, *God Is Love*, *Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)*, *Right On*, *Wholy Holy*, *Inner City Blues (Make Me Wanna Holler)*. Least favourite songs: N/A. Overall Rating: 10/10. Ashik Skelton

MONTHLY GIGGLE



The tour guide in the Natural History Museum said, 'This dinosaur is 65 million and three and a half years old.'

I said, 'That's brilliant. How can you be so specific about its age?'

He replied, 'Well, I've worked here for three and a half years and it was 65 million years old when I started.'

I used to be in a band called 'White Lines'. We played mostly middle of the road.

My wife and I took a long, leisurely drive into the country and pulled in to get petrol and put air in the tyres. She was surprised to see that you had to pay to pump up the tyres and asked me, 'Why on earth do they charge for air?'

I responded, 'Inflation.'



So there is this pub down in Cornwall called 'The Dog's Tail', a curious name even for an English pub! The place is a tourist trap though due to the name! They claim it's one of the most haunted places in Britain.

The story goes that the original owner had a huge St Bernard. She used to go with him everywhere. But on one occasion the dog was being stubborn and refused to leave the pub, so the owner went to get his wares himself. The dog planted herself in front of the door waiting his return.

There was some famous storm and it took out the bridge, and the owner tried to get his cart back that night to not be stranded and was caught and drowned. According to the legend the dog refused to move from the door or eat or drink until her owner came back and died too.

They keep a thing above the bar they claim is the dog's tail, because the owner's family didn't want to have the whole dog stuffed and displayed. Over the years it got such a story they renamed the pub.

So the ghost bit? Once a year at the stroke of 2 am on the anniversary of the storm when the owner died (NOT the dog's death that might have been more convincing) a ghostly scratching is heard as the spirit of the dog tries to be reunited with its tail and be complete before she can move on. But it's Britain. They can't re-tail spirits out of hours!



I went round for seconds at the church seafood buffet. Well, I'm a prawn-again Christian.

Max went to see Carl. Carl had a big swollen nose. 'Whoa, what happened, Carl?' Max asked.

'I sniffed a brose,' Carl replied.

'What?', Max said. 'There's no "b" in rose!'

Carl replied, 'There was in this one!'

I got invited to a BBQ at the weekend. I declined the invite as I hate waiting for a haircut.

AND FINALLY...

Ever Wondered What It's Like in Exeter's Sister City in France?



Way back in 1955 Exeter signed an official accord with the city of Rennes, capital of Brittany in France. The cities became twinned, and have maintained close links ever since. Ten years later the city of Bad Homburg in Germany formed a similar agreement with Exeter, and more recently Terracina in Italy has been added to our family of 'sister' cities.



Exeter Twinning Circle was established to maintain the social and cultural links with our twins, and 2026 will be the 70th anniversary of our links with Rennes. The twinning circles in both cities are busy planning a year of celebration, with events to mark the special nature of our relationship. Already plans have been laid for a visit from Exeter to Rennes next May, and a return visit from our friends in Rennes to our city next September.

If you would like to find out more about Rennes, to meet some of the French people who live there, or just to take part in the events when the Rennais come to Devon, then please get in touch with the Exeter Twinning Circle.

The party from Exeter plan to travel to Rennes via the overnight ferry from Plymouth to Roscoff departing Tuesday 26th May 2026. We will return on Sunday 31st May. The twinning circle would welcome new members, and invite any who are interested to join us for this visit. Accommodation in Rennes is usually provided by French families, where we try to match the ages and interests of

Commented [PS1]:

participants. It is expected that participants reciprocate with accommodation if possible when the Rennais twinnings come to Exeter. The principal expense for participants is basically the cost of travel, which is expected to be around £350 per couple (with a cabin on the overnight crossing) or around £250 for a solo traveller.

One of the questions often asked is, 'Do you have to speak the language of your twin?' Although it is helpful, it is not necessary!

Rennes is a fascinating city, with a great deal of medieval history and a delightful historic quarter. It has also developed good modern facilities and architecture, and has many interesting sights and places to visit. If you are interested in joining us, please get in touch. If you wish to express an interest in joining the visit to Rennes in May please let us know as soon as possible.

In the first instance, please contact our secretary by emailing secretary@exetertwinningcircle.org.uk or visit our website <https://exetertwinningcircle.org.uk>. We can also be found on Facebook.

We also have a talk coming up by Todd Gray, an historian, about the Royal Clarence Hotel in Exeter. Drinks, nibbles and the talk will be on Friday 13th March at Newcourt Community Hall, Blakeslee Drive, Exeter EX2 7FN. Tickets are £10.00. Further details from secretary@exetertwinningcircle.org.uk.

The Exeter Forum Talks Programme: March 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
4 th March	John Davidson	<i>Jack Rattenbury: Fisherman, Privateer, Pilot, Free Trader; Rob Roy of the West</i> Jack Rattenbury lived in Beer, Devon. During his lifetime he had an honest trade as a pilot and fishermen, was recruited into the Royal Navy on various occasions, and was actively involved in smuggling. This talk will look at his exciting career, both legitimate and on the wrong side of the law.
11 th March	Tom Acres	<i>A Legacy of Care: Why Step One Still Matters Today</i> This talk explores Step One's long-standing legacy of support and shines a light on each of our services, what they do, and the difference they make. It will highlight the growing needs within our communities and explain why Step One continues to play a vital role in supporting people at every stage of their journey.
18 th March	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.
25 th March	Emma Laws	<i>Treasures of Exeter Cathedral</i> Exeter Cathedral Librarian Emma is returning to tell us about some of the wonderful treasures in the Cathedral's historic collection.
1 st and 8 th April	Easter break	<i>No meetings</i>

Love Topsham: 2026 Events



We are already making plans for 2026. As we get firm dates for these, we will let you know, and they will also be in the Town Calendar and your Love Topsham newsletter (Love Topsham events in italics):

18th March: Volunteers' Thank You Meet-up at The Nelson; April: Easter Trail; 23rd May (tbc): Music and Dancing with Otter Morris; June: Music from Exeter Railway Brass Band; 28th June: Nello XXVII (charity bike ride); July: Music (tbc); July: Topsham Art Festival (Topsham Art Group); 26th July: Nello's Longest Table (with Italian-themed market on Saturday 25th); 23rd – 30th August: Town Fayre Week; 30th August: Charter Day; 27th November: Big Switch-on and Christmas Market; December: Children's Christmas Trail.

We couldn't do all this without you. As a volunteer organisation, we rely on your donations, large or small, to: fund and install Topsham's Christmas lights and Christmas trees; run the Christmas Market, Big Switch-on and Children's Christmas Trail; organise other events such as Join The Club and New Residents' Meet-Ups; provide summer music and bunting; fund and look after the flower barrels (more planned for this year!); supply and maintain the picnic benches at the Quay and the Rec; support our independent traders with national campaigns; run lovetopsham.co.uk and the Town Calendar; fund the social media promotion of the town and its traders; promote Topsham as a destination. You can support us doing what we do either by monthly or one-off donations at lovetopsham.co.uk.

Love Topsham Achieve Good Business Charter Accreditation. We are delighted to announce that the Good Business Charter group has accredited Love Topsham. To achieve accreditation, we have signed up to a Charter of Good Business Practice. Set up by Julian Richer of Richer Sounds, the mission for GBC is to equip every business leader, consumer and employee to recognise, encourage and champion responsible business behaviour by giving them a benchmark for 'Good Business' that is accessible to all.



Find World Book Day Costumes for Free in Devon Libraries



Libraries Unlimited is partnering with Recycle Devon to bring World Book Day costume swap rails to 15 libraries in Devon. World Book Day 2026 is Thursday, 5th March and library swap rails have been running from 16th February to 8th March. Customers are invited to donate outgrown, unwanted children's costumes in good, wearable condition. Costumes will be available to take home for free!



The World Book Day costume swap rails follow on the back of the hugely successful Halloween costume swap which ran last year. The costume rails are easy to use: simply visit the library to pick up a costume. There's no obligation to donate an outfit to use the rails. Not only do costume swaps help families save money, but they are also a greener choice. According to Hubhub and The Fairyland Trust, seven million costumes are thrown away every year; that's 2,000 tonnes of plastic waste! Costume swaps give outfits a new lease of life.

Fifteen libraries across Devon and Torbay are participating in World Book Day costume swaps. Find a costume swap rail at the following libraries: Barnstaple, Newton Abbot, Chudleigh, South Molton, Dawlish, Torquay, Pinhoe, Sidmouth, Torrington, Kingsbridge, Holsworthy, Tavistock, Exmouth, Paignton, and Ivybridge.

This project is supported by the National Lottery Community Action Fund.

Robert Williams
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WCMC SERVICES MARCH 2026

Aylesbeare

7 th	11-15	Holy Communion	Rev'd Eden
15 th	09-30	Family Service	Rev'd Stirling Troy
30 th	19-30	Compline and Reflection	Rev'd Eden

Clyst St George

8 th	09-30	Breakfast Service	Rev'd Eden
22 nd	09-30	Holy Communion	Rev'd Stirling Troy

Clyst St Mary

7 th	09-30	Family Service	Rev'd Stirling Troy
15 th	09-30	Holy Communion	Rev'd Eden

Exton

4 th	10-30	Midweek for Mission Community HC	Rev'd Eden
17 th	10-30	Midweek for Mission Community HC	Rev'd Stirling Troy
18 th	10-30	Midweek for Mission Community HC	Rev'd Eden

25 th	10-30	Midweek for Mission Community HC	Rev'd Eden
31 st	19-30	Compline and Reflection	Rev'd Eden

Farringdon

8 th	11-15	Holy Communion	Rev'd Eden
22 nd	09-30	Morning Worship	C Grist

Woodbury

7 th	10-30	Family Service	Lay led
8 th	11-15	Holy Communion	Rev'd Scrivener
15 th	18-00	Evensong	C Grist
22 nd	11-15	Holy Communion and Baptism	Rev'd Eden

Woodbury Salterton

7 th	09-30	Holy Communion	Rev'd Scrivener
15 th	09-30	Breakfast Family Service	Lay led
29 th	10-30	Palm Service with Donkey Parade	Rev'd Eden
Palm Sunday		Whole Mission Community	

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