

PARISH NEWS

OF THE UPPER WYLYE VALLEY

MAY 2026

MOONSHINE AT SUTTON VENY

The moon's a balloon. Well, not quite, but the one that was suspended in St John's Sutton Veny for several days in March as part of Starquest Astronomy Club's Astrofest 2026 was large and inflated but definitely not made of cheese.

Sutton Veny is within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape - an International Dark Skies Reserve - and, when the weather is suitable, the astronomy club move out to view the stars from the playing field adjacent to the village hall where they meet on a regular basis. The club organisers, led by Peter Lee from Tytherington, recognised the potential of St John's not only to suspend a large Moon but also to make use of the space recently created by the removal of two rows of pews at the back of the church to host an inflatable planetarium.

The Moon is owned by Warminster Council, who opted to purchase rather than rent an edition of the artwork for display in the Minster Church in 2025 and thus it represents an asset that needs to be used. Measuring 7 meters in diameter, the surface features detailed NASA imagery with each centimetre representing 5km of the lunar surface. It is inflated and illuminated via an internal fan and light.

The request to host the event was enthusiastically agreed by the Parochial Church Council, who are keen to increase the footfall into this beautiful Grade 1 listed building and to demonstrate its utility not only as a place of worship but also as a community space.

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Photo Andrew Crisp

The obvious place to suspend the Moon was from the hatch above the chancel, which is there to facilitate the movement of bells. No such movement has taken place for many years and it was fascinating to find copies of newspapers dating back to 1930 together with some old sacks that had been put under the ringing chamber floor and above the hatch as soundproofing.

The event proved to be a huge success. The Moon looked stunning (especially after dark) and many people visited St John's to stand in awe beneath it during the time that it was in place. Sessions in the planetarium, which needed to be booked, were very well attended, enabling the Astronomy Club to more than cover their costs. Astronomy displays in the village hall stimulated much interest in the activities of the club and many people who might never have stepped inside St John's appreciated its splendour, with or without a suspended Moon; the event was a real win/win.

Richard Jackman

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ARTEMIS CREW!



Photo RC

**CODFORD
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Tuesday 12th May
in the Small Hall of
the Codford Village Hall 7.30pm
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If interested, contact Tina Sitwell
01985840556.

SAVE THE DATE

On Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th
June, 2 - 5pm

The Friends of Heytesbury, Tytherington
and Knook Churches are organising
Art and Jewellery in Knook Church
and **Cream Teas in the Garden next to
the Church.**

This is supporting the Repair Fund for
Knook Church roof.

Enjoy a walk and explore Knook.

PHOTO CHALLENGE RESPONSE Thanks go to Sarah Buttenshaw

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ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL HEYTESBURY DUCK RACE

Although the morning weather was grey
and dull, the sun came out just as 671
ducks started their journey down the
Wylle. A new team of fishermen kept
them moving but having misjudged the
depth of the river, became part of the
race to the amusement of spectators. Two
ducks were well ahead as they neared the
finish line but at the end, one floundered
leaving duck 204 and Will Preston this
year's winner! In 2nd place India Eastman,
3rd place Katie Wreford and the booby
prize to Tom Asquith! Thank you to every-
one who supported the race and to those
who helped on dry land and in the river.
A total of £1,326 was raised for the new
heating system in Heytesbury church.

Tina Sitwell

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MINISTRY LETTER

LOOK AT THE VIEW

Tim and I have lived in some very special places over the years, few more beautiful than the Upper Wyllye Valley. We have so enjoyed exploring the countryside with our dog, Banjo, climbing the hills, soaking in the sweeping panoramas, and we know there is so much more to discover!

Our appreciation of such things takes time to develop. As children, holidays would mean long, hot car journeys punctuated by cries of 'Are we nearly there yet?' My siblings and I, squished in the back, would roll our eyes and wonder what all the fuss was about when our parents pulled over and encouraged us to 'look at the view'. Being young and impatient, we had no comprehension that as well as admiring the breathtaking view, there was something more going on. A chance, in their case, to take a deep breath after a demanding school term.

Regular stays with our grandparents would always include roaming the Malvern Hills, racing up and down as fast as we could, tobogganing out of control when it

snowed. It was always fun, but it took years to realise why Granny would always point out how many counties we could see from the top and how far we could see into Wales. Now, of course, it is one of my best loved places. Our children went on a similar journey, usually on Cornish cliff walks and coastal paths, restlessly wondering why their parents were lingering, staring out to sea. And now the cycle continues as they, with tinies of their own, yearn for those moments to stop and stare....

What is it that causes us to be drawn to a view? Undoubtedly the natural physical beauty, unspoilt by human hands. The unique shape of every aspect, the variety of colours, landscape, geology, vegetation. The distance, the sense of space. But there is something more.

We stop, we breathe. The unrelenting, complex juggle of life is momentarily paused. We turn from looking down and in, to upwards and outwards. Tantalising hints of the beyond. We marvel. Perspectives change. We receive, we are refreshed, refuelled. We long to capture it. We take

endless photos. Reluctant to tear ourselves away.

Is it because creation itself is trying to tell us there is something more? That there is something bigger?

One visitor to the pop-up planetarium in Sutton Veny church remarked that the experience had brought to mind the book 'Your God is too small'.

The author C S Lewis describes earthly beauty and pleasures not as the ultimate goal, but as hints, echoes, or scents of a higher, heavenly reality. He argues that the sense of longing we experience in the beauty of nature is an 'inconsolable longing' for a distant homeland. He describes this longing as 'the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.'

The four astronauts on Artemis II have travelled further from Earth than any humans before. I wonder whether they, witnessing what must be the most extraordinary views available to mankind, will conclude that, yes, there is something bigger, something more.

'The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.'

Psalm 19

Ros Ling

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom.
Whoever derides their neighbour has no sense,

but the one who has understanding holds their tongue.

A gossip betrays a confidence,
but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.

For lack of guidance a nation falls,
but victory is won through many advisers.

The Lord detests those whose hearts are perverse,

but he delights in those whose ways are blameless.

A generous person will prosper;
whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

Those who trust in their riches will fall,
but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and the one who is wise saves lives.

Verses from Proverbs 11

RH

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BOOK REVIEW

AN ELEPHANT IN THE GARDEN by Michael Morpurgo

Curling up with a good book is one of life's pleasures. I was enjoying 'An Elephant in the Garden' so much on my train journey back from London that I would have missed Warminster station if Mark had not alerted me. It's a long time since I lost myself so completely in a fast-moving story, complete with drawings. (Michael Morpurgo has the gift of catching the imagination for all ages.)

How different from 'War Horse', but also how closely related. The world is seen from the perspective of a German family whose father, despite his pacifism, has been sent to fight in Russia, leaving his wife and two children to survive as best they can in war-ravaged Dresden. The story is told by the teenage daughter, and one can recognise signs of adolescent tension between her and her mother.

Marlene, the elephant, is pivotal in their escape as the Allied bombs begin to fall. "It was like a walk through hell." They endure the combined misery of

snow, hunger, thirst and exhaustion. An elephant is not easy to hide, so they travel by night to avoid detection by the Russian and Allied armies advancing from both east and west. Their first night is spent at a farm where, to their horror, they discover an RAF airman, fast asleep, hiding in a barn after his plane had crashed. "I hated him, and I hoped he was dead. Then he opened his eyes and looked at me, and I knew right away that he was no more of a killer than Papi was." The story is not short on drama; one is the rescue of 9-year-old Karli who nearly drowns after falling through ice on the lake. The description closely matches my memory of watching my small brother being resuscitated.

En route, the family find temporary refuge in the castle of a Countess who is sheltering several refugee families. Karli urgently needs a doctor, and then puts the family in danger of discovery by playing with the compass given to him by the RAF pilot. Hans, the Countess's servant, snatches it. "A German compass would have O for Ost,

and this has an E. Ost in English is East. Where did you get it?"

It's a great story, with plenty of action, and Marlene the Elephant is a delightful character at the heart of it.

Katherine Venning

FISHING...

The three weeks from mid-May to early June are the most exciting time of the year for fly fishermen. This is often called 'Duffers Fortnight' and the undisputed pinnacle of the angling calendar. This period sees the emergence of Ephemera Danica, the Mayfly, the largest and most spectacular of our upwinged flies. On the hallowed, crystal-clear chalkstreams of Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Dorset, it triggers a surface-feeding frenzy that can make even the most cautious trout lose its inhibitions.

The cycle begins with the 'hatch'. As water temperatures rise, mayfly nymphs swim from the silt on the riverbed where they have lived for the past two or three years, up to the surface, where they shed their skins to become duns. These large, spectacularly beautiful pale-yellow insects are clumsy and vulnerable, and you can often spot them drifting downstream like miniature sailing boats. For the angler, this is the first window of opportunity. Matching the hatch with a large, high-floating dry fly such as a French Partridge or Grey Wulff often results in explosive, confident takes from fish that have spent the winter tucked away.

The real magical time often happens in the short, golden hours of the early evening. As the light fades, and having transitioned again into their final

translucent adult stage, the mayflies return to the river to mate and die. Female mayflies fall onto the water with wings outstretched, creating an easy, protein-rich feast. The rise during this period can be spectacular, with the rhythmic gloop of large brown trout echoing under the overhanging willows.

The name 'Duffers Fortnight' suggests the fishing is easy, but far from it, it can be deceptively technical and demand considerable skill. Because the flies are so large, trout often become highly selective and even a tiny hint of line drag will cause a seasoned wild trout to spook.

Furthermore, the sheer abundance of natural flies means your imitation is

just one among thousands; presentation must be flawless to succeed.

The season is a sensory overload. The rivers are lush with flag iris and water crowfoot, and the air is thick with the dance of insects. It is a brief, frantic explosion of life that defines the heritage of English fly fishing. Whether stalking a rising fish on our beloved Wylfe or any other stream, the mayfly season remains a fleeting, essential pilgrimage for every chalkstream devotee.

Mike Tebbs

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TURBO'S DOG BLOG FOR SPRING PROPER

At last things are warming up and the prospects of balmy summer days lazing about in the garden while the Guvnor mows the lawn loom. He hums 'Sunny Afternoon', the Kinks' great hit from 1966 which, of course, he remembers from the days when he was young, fit, fearless and fancy-free and with no responsibility for family, dogs or to the taxman and thoughts that wandered no further than where the next beer was coming from. Carefree and undoubtedly careless, it was the life of Riley.

I asked him from where the phrase

'Life of Riley' originated and he didn't know so he Googled it; out came another, but better known, comment but this time from Michael Caine whose 'bon mots' are legion - 'not a lot of people know that!' True, regarding Riley, who was Irish but little more elucidation than that. I suppose there are some things we are not supposed to know more about but in this case, we can assume that it is the hilarious and life-fulfilling joy that some of the Irish can wring out of the hum drum. Now, about hum drum...well, perhaps not.

People have been asking (well, one person) how I am faring after my mammoth session at the Vets to remove four of my teeth. Regular readers will remember that this four was to follow three that had already fallen out or been swallowed. I'm glad to say that the extortionate number of £s spent by the Guvnor on my facial welfare was worth every penny. I had no side effects, had a hearty meal, albeit mushed up into pulp as per instructions, that evening and have never looked back. I am full of beans, to coin another well-known phrase and as bouncy as a budgie. 'Oh, do stop it', I hear the Guvnor complain, as I interrupt him leafing through the Dictionary of Phrase and Fable but to no avail.

The old fella (I am 13 and that is 91 in 'dog years' but that is quite another thing) is not in great nick himself. Dieticians from across the NHS have been advising him on how he can take in more calories and proteins and kind friends have offered their family tips; he has tried many of them. He is a bit lethargic too, so he was given an energy drink to try. He couldn't get the top off the bottle.

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PUBLIC CONSULTATION CONTINUES INTO PROPOSED FIRE STATION

The ongoing public consultation into the potential closure of eight fire stations by Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service will run until Friday 15 May.

The eight locations under consultation are all on-call fire stations: Bradford on Avon, Charmouth, Cranborne, Hamworthy, Maiden Newton, Mere, Ramsbury and Wilton.

Chief Fire Officer Andy Cole said: "Nobody wants to close fire stations but, despite saving over £15 million in the last ten years, our financial position remains very challenging due to a 19.5% cut in funding provided directly from Government. We still need to make sure our operational staff have the equipment and training they need to stay safe, and we've pared back our Corporate staff numbers as much as possible. This isn't Plan A; we've worked through many difficult option before this point."

He added: "The elected Members of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority are responsible for keeping the Service sustainable, and they recognise that tough decisions need to be considered.

"This consultation is therefore essential. We understand that people care about what this means for their

community. That is why we want them to tell us what they think, and if there's anything important that we might have missed. No decisions have been made. The final decision will be made by the Fire & Rescue Authority at their meeting on 30 June. We would urge our residents to have their say via our survey or the upcoming online meetings."

In-person meetings have been held already in six of the eight locations, with further dates booked for Charmouth and Maiden Newton in April. There will also be an online meeting for each location during April.

Full details of these, FAQs, station-specific data, the consultation leaflet and the survey can be found at www.dwfire.org.uk/proposed-station-closures

A paper copy of the survey can be requested by calling 01722 691000 during office hours, or by emailing consultation@dwfire.org.uk



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DID YOU KNOW? YEW TREES

If we walk through many traditional churchyards in Britain, the most striking feature we will often see is the number of established yew trees that surround the church. But what is special about yew trees and why have they been planted in churchyards?

The yew tree (*Taxus baccata*) is a small to medium-sized evergreen, which grows to a height of 10 to 20 metres and can reach at least 600 years of age. Indeed, it is said that some yew trees in Britain predate the 10th century.

There are various explanations for the association with churchyards. One theory is that yews were planted at religious sites because their longevity suggests eternity. Another theory is that due to the tree being poisonous; it symbolises death and is therefore in keeping with a burial ground. It might also be that because the tree is toxic, it was deliberately planted in churchyards to discourage farmers or drovers from allowing animals to graze on the burial grounds. There is also evidence that the yew tree was important to the ancient Celtic peoples of Western Europe, with the tree symbolising immortality, through being evergreen.

The yew tree is 'dioecious', meaning that it is either male or female. The male produces pollen and the female

produces the red berries, which are the fruit containing the seeds. Most trees are 'monoecious,' meaning they have both male and female reproductive parts on the same tree. The red flesh of the yew tree berry is the only part of the tree that is not poisonous. The berries are frequently eaten by birds such as great tits, green finches and hawfinches and they disperse the hard seeds without ingesting them, in their droppings.

The wood from the yew tree is among the hardest of the softwoods, similar to cedar and pine. In the Middle Ages it was used to make items such as musical instruments, furniture and very importantly, longbows. Yew is also widely used in landscaping and ornamental horticulture. It is used especially for

formal hedges and topiary. Due to its relatively slow growth rate, it needs to be pruned only once a year.

Yew trees have often featured in art and literature, largely due to the symbolism of the tree's association with churchyards and death. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the three witches include 'slips of yew' in their poisonous cauldron and the artists of the 18th and 19th century often depicted the ancient yew to represent the power of nature over man-made structures.

The next time you walk either past or through a churchyard, do spare a thought for the yew trees and the history and symbolism that they represent.

Jonathan Wansey

THOUGHTS FROM MY GARDEN

Spring is such a wonderful time of year. I'm so glad that with the chaos and destruction going on in the world I can retreat to my own little world in my garden. I think May is meant to be the beginning of summer but that cold wind is still with us as I write in early April and hopefully gone by the time you read this. It's what my mother called 'the black-thorn winter' and the blackthorn is very evident in the hedges and on the hills at the moment. It feels like winter again today but we have had at least two days of wonderful warmth and sunshine. With clear skies at night I have looked up to the full moon gradually waning and thought of those astronauts on their way back to earth.

Those two hot days made gardening difficult, as it was too hot to work and much easier to sit somewhere shady with a cold drink and look at the garden. I have never seen so many bees! The different tones of their buzzing denoting whether a large or small bee, the bumble bee being the lowest tone and the bee fly being one of the highest as they hover over primulas

and liverwort. There seem to be more bee flies than ever this year and I find them fascinating to watch. However, I have learnt that they are parasitoids, preying on the eggs and larvae of other insects, mainly beetles and wasps. I'm sorry for the beetles, not so much the wasps but everything needs to be in harmony with the rest of the garden. Butterflies have been very early: I've seen lots of Peacocks and recently Orange Tips and a small blue of some kind; unfortunately they never sit still enough for me to identify! Some of my favourite flowers at the moment are lilacs, we have white as well as the usual pinky purple, and *Alchemilla Mollis* or *Ladies Mantle*. It looks so pretty when it rains and the water sits like pearls on the leaves and it's also great for low growing cover.

There is now so much to do, the potatoes are planted but need constant earthing up and Mike has grown so many seedlings that I will be trying to find spaces for weeks, filling pots as fast as I can go. And who knows what I shall buy at the Heytesbury plant sale! *Ali Tebbs*

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DOWN ON THE FARM

I am sat watching from the office window the cows grazing as I spend another day working my way through official paperwork. With spot checks we could be inspected any day, any hour. Every reason to be on top of the standards and regulations set for us, and this week we spent two days on an M&S conference being up dated on the most recent changes. All mind-spinning and just a further increase in paperwork and hoops to leap through. We are set targets to meet and graded on a bronze, silver and gold achievement. I am pleased to say we are majority gold and much like receiving an outstanding from OFSTED (I have previous experience) the task is to keep that achievement.

Areas cover, animal welfare, human welfare, employment, health and safety and cleanliness of the farm, to name a few. Each area then has an extensive list of requirements and it can seem like a never-ending task and dare I say it, not always necessary but for us to keep our contract and a premium one at that we

have no choice. It does make our days much longer with extremely early mornings and late nights keeping on top of it so that the routine work can be completed.

We had the privilege of visiting other M&S producers, a crucial exercise and an opportunity to meet those from all over the country to exchange ideas, opinions, empathise, argue and have a pint at the end of the day.

Two quite different farms, all meeting exceptionally high standards and milking small herds, an average of 120. One a recognised pedigree herd of world class standard, a family run farm. I have often mentioned how Jamie our son loves to show cows, this family are one of the most recognised in the world and take their genetics very seriously. It is nothing for a pedigree cow to be worth thousands, but in this case just two special cows with the perfect genetics between them are worth over £150k, yes, you have read that right. These are the equivalent to the top racehorses but in the cow world, I must stress this is far from the normal value of a cow.

The second farm, again run by a family and milk a similar number have made the change to robot milking machines for a number of reasons, one being work life balance, something that is a huge issue in agriculture and few fully achieve but this family are making it work and the transition from parlour milking twice a day to robots where the cows just take themselves in and out as and when they want to be milked has gone remarkably smoothly. They have two robots; to put it into perspective we would need eight to meet the ratios and at an average of £120k each it is a massive investment. It was fascinating to see the process and realistically it is the future, and I imagine it will only be a matter of time (no time soon) robots will be in place down on the farm. *Kit Pottow*

THE RIVER WYLYE

The river Wylye is at the heart of our beautiful valley. One of the UK's rare chalk streams, it runs from Kingston Deverill till it joins the Avon near Salisbury, and is home to a great variety of wildlife. It is certainly a valuable asset, but a vulnerable one too. For many years the river has been under sustained pressure from the results of human intervention and climate change - as demonstrated by factors such as water extraction, flood prevention, sedimentation, pollution and so on.

For the past few years the Wylye Valley Farmers Group has been carrying out work to enhance the river and the surrounding environment. This is often in association with other interested parties such as the fishing clubs and the Wessex Rivers Trust, all of whom share the same aim of a clean and healthy river support-

ing wide biodiversity.

On the 20th May the WVFG will be holding a River Day at Boyton. This is open to everyone, including children, and is free of charge. It will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about the river and the nature that calls it home, as well as the restoration works that are planned. The day will include guided walks along the river with experts in subjects such as plants and invertebrates. There will be a selection of speakers throughout the day, and lunch and refreshments will also be provided.

It should certainly be an interesting and entertaining day. Those who want to attend, even if only for part of the day, should RSVP to Robin Leech (email robin@jmstratton.co.uk or phone 07881305836)

Jonathan Jardine Paterson

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VILLAGE NEWS

CODFORD COMMUNITY KEY EVENTS MAY 2026

- 1st Fishy Friday at Codford tea rooms
5pm onwards
- 2nd Free drama workshop at the
Woolstore theatre 10.30am-12.30
- 3rd Codford community park run at
Codford village hall grounds 10am
- 3rd Live music at Codford tea rooms
1.30pm - 2.30pm
- 5th Parish Council meeting at
Codford village hall 7pm
- 6th Film night 'H is for Hawk'
at Woolstore theatre 7.30pm
- 11th Codford annual village meeting
at Codford village hall 6pm
- 12th Codford local history society talk
'Houses of Fonthill - lost, recovered and
rebuilt' at Codford village hall 7.30pm
- 14th Hearing aid clinic at Codford
village hall 10am - 12.00
- 15th Golden oldies set menu at
Codford tea rooms 7pm
- 16th Free drama workshop at the
Woolstore theatre
10.30am - 12.30
- 16th Codford and District gardening
club plant sale at Punchbowl
Farm, Codford - 10am - 12.00
- 17th Monthly drinks at the Woolstore
theatre 12.00 noon - 2pm
- 17th Monthly arts and crafts market
at Ginger piggery, Boyton 10am
- 20th The Occasional singers meeting
at Codford village hall - 2.30pm
- 20th Wylde Valley farmers river open
day at Boyton, BA12 0SS
11.30am - 3.30pm
- 20th Codford & district gardening club
talk 'Heros and heroines of horticulture'
at Codford village hall 7.30pm

CODFORD VILLAGE HALL ACTIVITIES

Tue: Pilates & short mat bowls.
Wed: Pilates, Choir, Fit club.
Thurs: Community café, Happy hearts,
Clubercise and Badminton.

To find the Codford community website,
type "Codfordcommunity.co.uk" into your
search bar to access the website. There,
you will find various useful and informa-
tive content. A new quiz has also been
added, which can be found on the home
page.

Codford Parish Council minutes can be
found on the Codford Parish Council
website (codfordpc.org.uk) or you can
find a link to them from our Codford com-
munity website.

REVELATION OF A NEW WHEELCHAIR USER!

Being a new wheelchair user here in
Heytesbury, I've discovered that every
simple dog walk is actually a rural
obstacle course disguised as a village.

The adventure begins the moment I
leave my back gate and enter Jungle
Alley. Nettles, ivy, and brambles loom on
either side like they're auditioning for I'm
a Celebrity. Who knows what fearsome
beast lurks in the hedgerow – probably
just a blackbird, but they've got attitude.
I narrowly avoid being dive bombed and
breathe a sigh of relief as I escape onto
the path.

Time to cross the road. There is a drop
kerb, but the potholes around it mean my
wheels perform an interpretive dance I
didn't sign up for. On the other side,
I must trek around The Mountain – other-
wise known as a car parked squarely over
the drop kerb – and then climb the
narrow trail without becoming intimately
acquainted with the hedge.

Up the hill I go, chair clanking and
groaning in protest. I reach the summit,
metaphorically plant my flag, and prepare
for the next peril.

The pavement ends. Of course it does.
So begins The Road of Doom, where I must
navigate parked cars, blind bends, and a
pothole so deep I'm convinced it's a
quarry for miniature miners. I sail down
the hill, wind in my hair, praying no
tractor appears around the corner.

At the bottom lies the main road.
There's a tempting drop kerb to the right,
but it hides The Bear Traps – two drain
grates perfectly sized to swallow my
narrow front wheels. I know this because
they already have. Once was enough.

So, I cross the road instead, bumping
over more potholes until I reach a bless-
edly flat drop kerb. Dog on lap, deep
breath, and dash. Thankfully, it is not
school run time, or I would be dodging
cars using the space as a turning circle.
Safely across, I head toward the pub. It's
closed, which is just as well – the steps

out front mean I could not get in anyway.
Next is the post office. I do not need it
today, but last time Charlie and I had
quite the laugh when I tried. Front wheels
over the door frame, back wheels outside
spinning like I was stuck in mud. They've
got a lovely ramp, but that door frame is
just a fraction too high. A masterpiece of
almost-accessibility.

Past the parked cars I squeeze, one of
them leaving only millimetres to spare.
I'd go behind, but one particularly long
car would force me into the road. No
thanks.

I reach the church – a rare oasis of
smooth passage – and head down Mill
Lane, the easiest part of the journey. At
the far end, however, awaits The Double
Kerb of St John's, with no drop kerb for
ages in either direction. So, it's back onto
the rutted road, dog perched on my lap
like a furry figurehead.

At the bus stop, the dog hops down and
we continue along the narrow path. I
rattle over the bone shaker manhole
covers, and oncoming pedestrians kindly
step aside like guardian angels. Back at
the church, I take my life in my hands and
cross the road – impossible to see around
the house, so it's lean forward, hope for
the best, and go.

Then comes The Corner Kerb, a drop
kerb that bends around a wall in a way
that can only be described as malicious.
Get the angle wrong by a fraction and
you're either back in the road or nose to
brick. "Why not cross to the other side?"
you ask. Ah, but the downpipe on that
corner sticks out just far enough to block
the pavement entirely. A perfect trap.

So back I go, retracing my route until I
reach The Grand Cannon – a drain gully
across the path that's too narrow to dip
into and too wide to glide over. It's a
skeleton shaker every time.

And then... bin day. The wheelie bins
stand guard, like bouncers. One knocked
me off the edge last week, but today I
manage to squeeze past with only minor
swearing.

Past the school I creep, too short in the
chair to see over the parked cars. I lean
forward as far as I dare without falling
out, checking for traffic. Looks clear.
Quick dash. The wheels trundle at
tortoise speed, but I make it to the other
side.

Finally, I head back toward Jungle Alley
and home, having survived yet another
heroic expedition through the wilds of
Heytesbury.

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VILLAGE NEWS

HEYTESBURY HAPPENINGS

You may have noticed the new roses planted by Heytesbury War Memorial. The old roses were removed, with the healthy ones donated to villagers. Amelia Jackson, Andrew Kennedy and Ralph Oxborrow then put new topsoil and a large amount of well-rotted manure (courtesy of the Mundy's horses at Westover) before planting twelve 'Miss Edith Cavell' roses. We look forward to seeing their red blooms.

Trustees of the Raymond Trust have been hard at work in attempting to buy a three acres plot in the Parkland. This was considered to be the area of most use to the community. After lengthy negotiations, the seller accepted their offer of £140,000 and a deposit was paid. But whilst their solicitor was proceeding, they learnt that the seller had accepted another deposit on half of the same plot, from another bidder. She completed before there was a chance to fight this unfriendly action.

After further discussion, and another offer that was refused, the trustees very reluctantly decided to withdraw from further efforts to purchase any of the land. This was due to the remaining land being very over priced and bound by some unacceptable conditions. Despite excellent help and advice from the land agent and solicitor, the attempts to safeguard the future of the land for the community have failed.

On a positive note, because the land is designated as an Asset of Community Value by Wiltshire Council, any development is prohibited for 5 years on land sold after 1st September 2025.

Thank you to all the volunteers who

helped on the village clean-up, organised by Councillor Karen Riggs, with free refreshments in the church. The bus shelters were washed, street signs cleaned and litter collected. We have entered the Best Kept Village competition again this year so please help keep our village tidy.

A successful Easter Duck Race has been held, with the River Wylde proving to be a tricky course in a strong west wind. Thank you to Tina Sitwell and all her many helpers for organising the annual event once again. Thanks, are also due to the ladies who arranged such beautiful flower displays in Heytesbury Church.

The next meetings of the Parish Council will be at 7.00pm in the St John's Residents' Hall on Tuesday 28th April; Tuesday 12th May for the Annual Parish Meeting and Tuesday 26th May for the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council. **SB**

A small library in the Hungerford Chapel in Heytesbury Church includes theology books and commentaries. These are available for anyone to borrow.

Our churches looked lovely at Easter. Grateful thanks to all who arranged flowers and mowed churchyards!

NEWS FROM

HEYTESBURY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

A fantastic Heytesbury's Got Talent event and cake sale was organised by our School Council to raise money for Red Nose Day. Nearly three-quarters of our children performed to a packed hall full of the whole school, Heytesbury Hedgehogs Nursery and family members. And what an array of different talents they displayed! From skipping and football skills, through lego building and magic tricks, to dancing, singing and rapping, and with a finale of stand-up comedy, our children put on a fantastic show. Our Year 6 children were our judges, but the standard was so high we had to give out six prizes not just one! We followed this with a cake sale which raised an amazing £120 for Red Nose Day. Quite an achievement for a small school like ours.

Children from across the school decorated Easter eggs that were displayed around the village, each giving a clue of one letter. Families on the trail had to find the eggs and unscramble the letters to spell a word to enter our prize draw. Cherry Class, our YR, Y1 and Y2 children, baked Easter biscuits that alongside other Easter treats and activities were available for people who finished the trail. What a lovely way for us to end a busy term.

Lindsey Hermon, Headteacher



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VILLAGE NEWS

SHERRINGTON

British Summertime and we reached for woolly jumpers! Then came the hottest day of the year and supper in the garden. Now we are back to woolly hats again. How one longs for normal weather. Incredible after the winter we had that we now need rain! Ground is rock hard again so birds that feed their young soft food will struggle and returning migrants that need mud for nest building will have a difficult time. We do not want the downpours that flood and need the launch of an ark, just normal rain! However, normality seems to be a thing of the past.

If the swans decide to nest on an island in the cress bed it is very unlikely that the cob (male) will tolerate the geese. It is a very territorial bird, will attack its own species and drownings are not unknown. Someone should tell the geese about Langford Lakes just down the road.

The Owl and Raptor Group, under the auspices of Justine Hadfield has got off to an encouraging start. Justine tells me that on their first outing they found 24 Barn Owl eggs (one bird was sitting on 8), a Tawny owl with 2 young and 2 eggs that could still hatch and a Little owl with 2 eggs.

Dr Hugh Bond was always very interested in Nigel's conservation work. Now retired, when time permits, he is joining Justine and her colleague Mark Fisher in the Lewis Raptor Group. It is so brilliant that the years of detailed work that Nigel left behind will not be wasted and that Justine is now carrying it forward. It is a lot to take on and I well remember the hours Nigel spent on the computer

recording results and planning ahead, not just a stroll around with binoculars and a notebook!

Two recent walks in the Great Ridge have been a delight. In certain areas the seasonal mist of bluebells drifts left and right beneath trees just coming into leaf.

The wide main valley has spreading clumps of primrose and just off the path a patch of cowslips is established. The incline out of the valley still has a border of brambles and among the tangles the delicate wood anemones peer towards the sun, wide open faces on such slender stems.

There are a number of hares seen in the area and having read the amazing Raising Hare one feels such concerns for leverets, born and raised as they are on open ground. The challenges that they face are so numerous, badgers, foxes and many avian predators and of course dogs. Then there are grazing cattle and farm machinery, no wonder that they breed pretty well throughout the year, fabulous inhabitants of our countryside.

So good that the little church is visited. Always interesting to look at the visitors book and see the people who appreciate its beauty and see it for the special place it is.

BL

SUTTON VENY

The Woolpack Community Pub Project Group met recently to assess the results of the community survey responses to date. Of 179 responses, 115 were from Sutton Veny residents showing strong support for the project. There were 112 pledges of financial investment amounting to just over £141,000, a fantastic response given that the campaign has only been running for 10 weeks.

As a result it was decided to continue with the Woolpack Community Pub campaign to garner further support using a variety of publicity and marketing initiatives. In addition, having now determined that the project looks as if it could gain enough support to effect a buyout, the next steps will be to put in place appropriate governance, to include setting up a legal entity, opening a bank account and obtaining a domain name.

If you have yet to complete the survey, it's not too late, the deadline has been extended and your opinion would be greatly valued. Please scan the QR code or click on the link www.suttonveny.co.uk and scroll down to the Woolpack Community Pub green poster on the home page.

MAY RAMBLINGS FROM UPTON LOVELL

We ran a fabulous Village Soup lunch during Lent in aid of the Warminster foodbank, five different soups, bread and cheese and stupendous puds including the Upton Lovell weatherman's famous trifle. We had a full house and raised over £250 pounds which was terrific. We also welcomed the newest arrivals to the village, Stephanie and Mike Marsh and said farewell to the Kearney family who have moved to Corton. We also have said farewell to Peter Akers, who died aged 92; many of you will remember Brenda, his wife, who died three years ago. Their house and lovely garden will be welcoming new arrivals in due course.

As Easter was early, we managed to decorate our wonderful Church with spring blossom and flowers, and it shone with yellow and white on Easter day. The Church is so lovely at all times, but when it is dressed for celebrations it looks particularly beautiful. We are so lucky to have a few really talented flower arrangers as well as organisers par excellence who rally the troops to muck in when needed to clean, polish, titivate, cook, bake or plan including the return of the Upton Lovell Fete which will take place on Saturday 4th July from 2 - 5 pm in South Farm House garden. You will start to see flyers around the valley promoting it so get your dogs prepared in good time to take part!

By the time the magazine comes through your door we will be in May, the later blossom will be out and hopefully the House Martins, swallows and swifts will have returned to nest and fill the sky with their calls. They, along with many other small migrating birds not only have to navigate their way from Africa but also run the gamut of weather systems, predators and being netted in Malta and Cyprus for human consumption and yet year after year they return to their existing nest sites to raise their young. We have relatives in South Africa and when we go there in the winter I often wonder if the birds on their farm are the same ones who were here. How brilliant that would be!

Amanda Cheesley

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WORSHIP in the UPPER WYLYE VALLEY MAY 2026

MAY 3 Easter 5	Norton Bavant Codford St Peter Heytesbury Upton Lovell	9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 6.00pm	Holy Communion (BCP) + hymns Parish Communion Sunday Worship Evensong (BCP)	choir
May 10 Easter 6	Tytherington Sutton Veny Heytesbury Codford St Mary	8.30am 9.30am 11.00am 6.00pm	Holy Communion (BCP) Sunday Worship Parish communion Evensong (BCP)	choir
May 14 Ascension Day	Sherrington	6.00pm	Ascension Day Evensong	choir
May 17 Rogation Day Easter 7	Boyton Upton Lovell Manor Farm Codford Sutton Veny	9.30am 11.00am 3.00pm 6.00pm	Sunday Worship Patronal Parish Communion Rogation Day service Evensong (BCP)	choir
May 24 PENTECOST	Sutton Veny Codford St Peter Knook Heytesbury	8.30am 9.30am 11.00am 6.00pm	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion Parish Communion Evensong (BCP)	choir
May 31 TRINITY SUNDAY	Upton Lovell Knook Heytesbury Boyton 6.00pm	10.00am 10.30am 11.00am	TEAM SERVICE 3-church pilgrimage celebrating the Trinity Launch of 'Generosity' season Evening communion	choir

UWVT WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesdays Sutton Veny 8.30 am Morning Prayer (BCP)

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FROM THE REGISTERS

FUNERAL AND BURIAL OF ASHES

*Our sympathy and love go to all those
who mourn the passing of*

Simon Firth

On 18 March at Codford St Peter

Noah Kautoga

on 21 March at Codford St Peter

Robin Mulholland

on 1 April at Boyton

Peter Akers

on 10 April at Upton Lovell

Gillian Thorne

on 15 April at Heytesbury

Pauline McKechnie

on 16 April at Heytesbury

*May they rest in the peace
and light of Christ*

*Please contact the Ministry Team to make
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Confirmation preparation or Service of Prayer
and Dedication after a Civil Marriage.
The clergy will officiate at any
crematorium service.*



PRAYER GROUP

We pray daily.

If you have any prayer requests,
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LOVING OUR NEIGHBOUR AS CHRIST LOVES US

Do you need some support? If you would like a chat,
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upperwyldevalleyteam@gmail.com

MINISTRY TEAM

Team Rector The Revd Michael Duff 640098

(day off Friday)

teamrector.uwvt@gmail.com

NB email is the surer means of communication

Team Vicar The Revd Timothy Ling 512480

(on duty Sunday to Tuesday)

teamvicar.uwvt@gmail.com

Associate Priest

The Revd Jonathan Hiscox 840966

jonathan.hiscox@btinternet.com

Licensed Lay Ministers

Katherine Venning LLM 840283

katherine.venning@gmail.com

Barbara Luscombe LLM

barbara_luscombe@hotmail.com **840830**

CONTACTS FOR OUR CHURCHES

Boyton & Corton Robin Grist 850596
Codford St Mary David Shaw 850372

07899 906371

Codford St Peter Alasdair McGregor 07803246480

Heytesbury Tina Sitwell 840556

Knook Robert Pottow 850285

Norton Bavant John Acworth 840134

Edward Moore 840420

Sherrington Richard Morris 07555425110

Sutton Veny Richard Jackman 07968 164256

Tytherington Caroline Lester-Card 07787556505

Upton Lovell Gilly Cumming 850834

LAY PASTORAL ASSISTANTS

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Sutton Veny Richard Jackman 840899

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Kim Sutton

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 jilldeborah@me.com

Codford

Chair: Tom Thornton 850560

Clerk: Karungi Grant 850523

clerk@codfordpc.org.uk

Heytesbury/Knook

Chair: David Bond 07766 397107

Clerk: Sarah Vesey-Thompson 07879 529437

clerk@heytesburyparish.co.uk

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Bookings: Niki Gerring 07816 874503

Sutton Veny Chair: Alan Russell 840 883

Newsletter: Richard Jackman

svvhnewsletter@gmail.com

Bookings: Gay Woods 840057

svvhbookings808@gmail.com

Upton Lovell Bookings: Ros Coombs 851277

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WOOLSTORE THEATRE

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Theatre bookings - Gavin Park -

gavin@pfp-ltd.com

For Information - Jenny Johnson -

furriejen.3607@gmail.com

PARISH WEBSITES

Team www.upperwyllyealleyteam.com

Webmaster admin@newvalleywebdesign.com

Codford www.codfordcommunity.co.uk

Heytesbury www.heytesburyparish.co.uk

Norton Bavant www.nortonbavant.co.uk

Sutton Veny www.suttonveny.co.uk

SPORTS CLUBS

Badminton (Codford)

Dominique Beagley 850952

Cricket (Heytesbury & Sutton Veny)

Chair: Justin Wagstaff 840782

Secretary: Robert Robson

Football Club (Heytesbury and Codford)

Martyn Spratt 07790 728197

Tennis (Codford)

Chair: Vince Abbott 850239

Secretary: Jeremy Coltman 07976 398194

STARQUEST

Astronomy Club: Pete Lee 840093

SUTTON VENY FLOWER SHOW

www.suttonvenyflowershow.co.uk

SUTTON VENY NURSING HOME 840224

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