4-ward

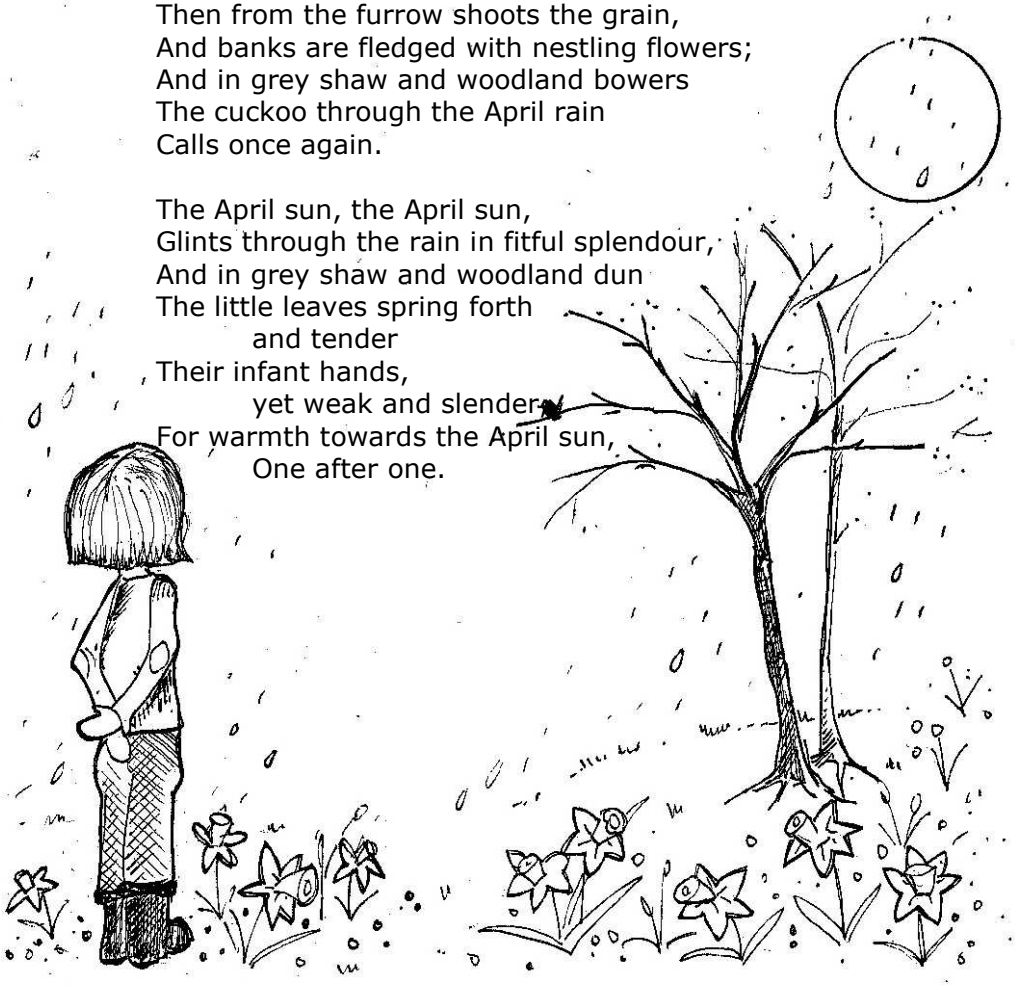
April 2025

The April Rain

by Mathilde Blind

The April rain, the April rain,
Comes slanting down in fitful showers,
Then from the furrow shoots the grain,
And banks are fledged with nestling flowers;
And in grey shaw and woodland bowers
The cuckoo through the April rain
Calls once again.

The April sun, the April sun,
Glints through the rain in fitful splendour,
And in grey shaw and woodland dun
The little leaves spring forth
and tender
Their infant hands,
yet weak and slender,
For warmth towards the April sun,
One after one.



4ward
Community magazine for
Oldbury, Shepperdine, Kington, Rockhampton & Hill

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Editorial

Spring has always been my favourite season, and this year, just turning over the calendar to April, after spending quite a few of the past weeks laid up recovering from a knee replacement, fills me with joy. I had imagined my convalescence would be spent getting through the pile of books by my bedside, and catching up with missed TV series on iPlayer, but not a bit of it. For some reason the anaesthetic left me nauseous and woozy-headed and I could neither eat nor hold a coherent thought in my brain. Still, everything passes, and I'm gradually recovering. My new knee feels good and I can't wait to build up my strength enough to make it down to the river bank of the muddy old Severn. How I've missed it!

Our April edition is packed full of all the upcoming activities and events taking place in and around the Parish over Easter. I think I might have to pass on the Bollywood Dancing, which sounds enormous fun, but I'm really hoping to be fit enough to make it to the Easter Sunday dawn service up at St Arilda's, which is always so very special. The church is almost always open during daylight hours, and it will be beautifully decorated for Easter by two of our incredibly talented and creative flower ladies. It should be well worth the walk up the hill.

Happy Easter to all our readers, advertisers, and distributors

from Chris and the team at 4ward.

Memorial Hall Matters March 2025

March has seen plenty of activity in the Hall; we started the month with the Whodunit Theatre Group, with their own murder mystery set in No 10 Downing Street, where the quest for power was taken to the ultimate conclusion. It was very well written, with plenty of one-liners to amuse the audience, and for me, a sandwich will never be the same again!!! We will be inviting them back next year, around the same time, so make a note in your diary.

We continued the screening of the rugby, showing some excellent matches, although the fine weather did reduce the numbers for the third round. People returned for Super Saturday, when we were treated to some great games, including Wales vs England. Linda did an excellent job providing some very welcome food during the afternoon.

Line Dancing is now up and running once a month. Apart from the enjoyment of the dancing, it is a great workout and we always open the bar during the evening so non-participants can come along and have a social drink. Please contact Jan Wilcox or me for more details.

Keith Miller's Silent Disco took place on the 22nd, as ever a wonderful playlist was provided, and the participants had a great time; I really enjoy the freedom of expression when people have had a few drinks! Great night, thanks Keith.

Our last event in the month is with Helen Clarke, who is leading an evening's tuition on how to make the famous Oldbury Tart, this is a repeat from last year as it was a great success. It has limited numbers and, as I write, has already sold out, but if there is sufficient interest I am sure we can arrange another one later in the year.

As you enter the lobby you will see the latest addition to the Hall; we are displaying work from local artists, some for show and others for sale, prints and/or originals. Please feel free to contact me if you are interested in showing or selling your art work. If you wish to purchase any item there, please contact the artist directly.

Phase one of the Hall refurbishment is almost complete; we just need to install Roman Blinds, which will soften the interior and improve the ambiance of the Hall. These should be installed in early April.

Phase two will be replacing the floor in the main hall with new boarding, with the addition of underfloor insulation. In addition, the aim is to board

out the loft to create additional storage space, and to increase the insulation above the lobby, kitchen and small committee room. Timing of this undertaking will be very much dependent on funding.

April sees the first Grumpy Man's Breakfast of the year on Friday the 11th, always an excellent morning of food and chat, tickets are still available for purchase either in the shop or online.

The Hall is holding a spring craft fayre on Saturday the 12th April; we already have a full number of contributors, so there will be a host of wonderfully crafted goods on display and to buy. This will include a plant stall and coffee/tea and, of course, cakes.

Marg's Open Mic Night follows on the evening of the same day, and plans are in place for a musical night of enjoyment and entertainment. Marg always puts on a good show, so don't miss out.

Saturday the 26th April sees another new event we are bringing to The Memorial Hall, "Bollywood Night"; this will include Indian dancing led by Natasha, and we are hoping to have authentic curries made by the Indian community in Bristol which will give a real flavour of India. Dress code is what you feel comfortable in. Tickets available in the shop or online.

Two events in May worth noting are – on Saturday the 10th we are celebrating VE day with the Thornbury Small Swing Band taking us back to the 1940s/50s and maybe some newer tunes. This will be augmented by suitable music between their sets. I am sure it will be a very entertaining night!! Tickets will be in the shop and online, and will be out soon.

The event on Saturday 17th May is one The Hall is particularly pleased to support; it is an evening dedicated to Ukraine. The Ukrainian Community of Thornbury and the wider area are using the Hall to demonstrate their history, culture, and food, whilst raising funds for a very commendable cause. I think this will be a fascinating night, certainly something different to look forward to.

Chris Jennings

Shop Spot

Just to say that, as in previous years, the Shop will be closed for one day on Easter Sunday, the 20th April.

Chris Awde

Closed on Easter Sunday 20th April.

OLDBURY-ON-SEVERN COMMUNITY SHOP

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Tel: 01454 501090

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Thursday
9 am to 1:30 pm

Friday
9 am to 3 pm

Saturday
9 am to 2 pm

Sunday
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For updates check:-
www.facebook.com/OldburyCommunityShop

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As well as a great range of basics at competitive prices, we stock many local products. These include: fresh veg, meats, ice cream, honey, jams, eggs and cakes.

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Come and see. You may be surprised!

ROBIN PITMAN OBE CPhys FInstP

9 February 1945 – 12 February 2025

Robin, together with his wife Iris, pitched up at Oldbury on Severn in October 2008 on his retirement from more than 40 years of service in government science. They had just returned from a six-year posting to the USA where Robin was with the British Defence Staff at the British Embassy in Washington DC. They arrived home with an American rescue cat, so the plan was to move from their London flat to a place in the country, and happily for them Oldbury hove into view.

Robin was a man of many interests – Charles Dickens, Sherlock Holmes, Winston Churchill, William Shakespeare, Bach, Jazz, History of London, and the London Underground. It was not long before he added to these by becoming an active member of the Oldbury Village History Group. But without doubt the greatest passion of his life was science, fuelled by another lifelong hero, Richard Feynman. He used to say he had the best job in the world – working and living his life doing what was essentially a hobby.

Everything he attempted in his life – flying Tiger Moths, Pitts Specials or Cessnas, skiing, horse-riding, learning languages – had to be done to perfection. He spoke Welsh better than his Welsh-born wife and Gaelic sufficiently well to make close connections with those he worked with in the Outer Hebrides, his philosophy being that if something was worth doing it was worth doing well.

Robin was one of the first 500 students at the new University of Kent at Canterbury when it was founded in 1965. He maintained close links with the University all his life and they will be honouring his lifelong commitment to the University, his passion for education, and the lasting impact on all who knew him, at their next degree ceremony later this year. He will be greatly missed.

Iris Pitman

Oldbury "Open Mic"(ish)!

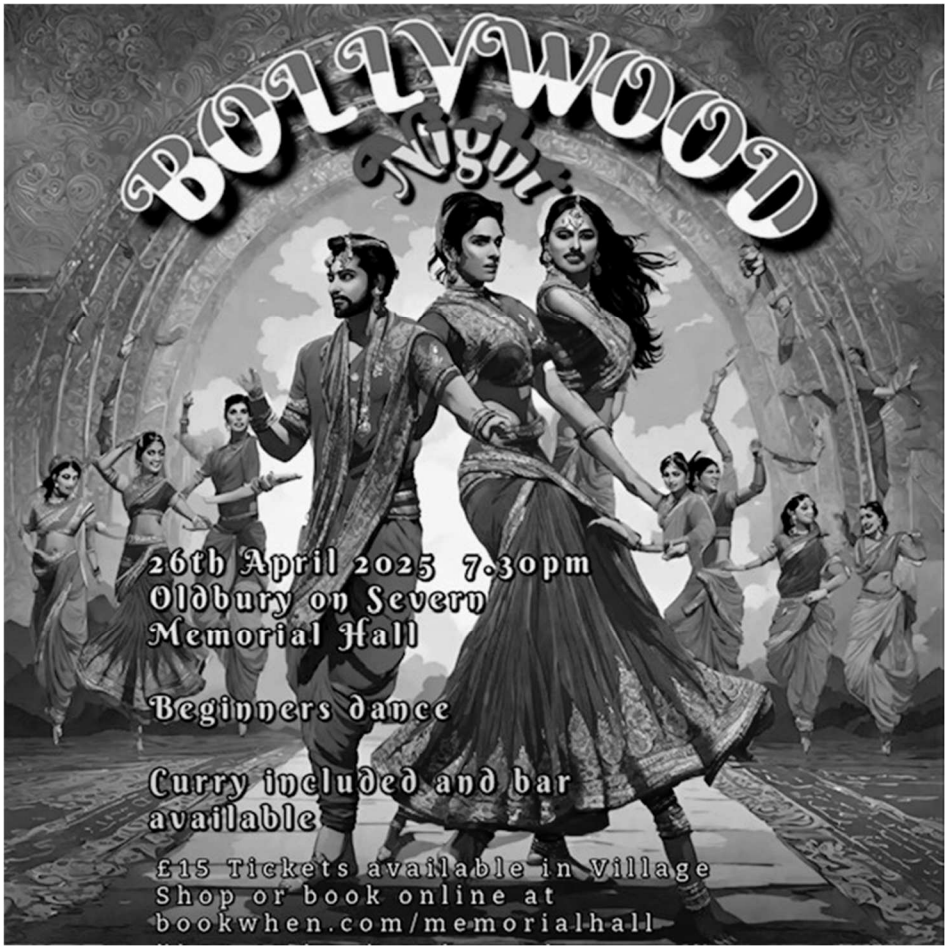
Welcome to our informal music night!
Come join in or listen to local musical talent across various genres

With performers being singers or instrumentalists playing solo, duo, or in small ensembles

NB. This is a "curated open mic". If performing, add your name to the list on arrival, or message Marg ahead – first come, first served. (Some acts pre-planned.) If you need accompanying, please bring chord sheets – we'll try to help!

VENUE: OLDBURY ON SEVERN MEMORIAL HALL.
Saturday 12th April
STARTING: 8pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

BAR AVAILABLE BEFORE THE START AND DURING THE INTERVAL.
TICKETS £5: Buy online or in the Oldbury village shop using QR code, or link https://bookwhen.com/memorialhall
(Enquiries: Marg 07971 290603)



Friday, 16th May 2025
7.30pm
Oldbury On Severn Village Hall
Teams OF 4 to 6 People (60 people max)
£3 Per Head (Cash only please)
Tickets For Sale In The Village Shop
Bar Available

Oldbury Power Station Biodiversity and the Community

Oldbury Power Station curtilage covers approximately 470 acres and the vast majority of this is open vegetation or water which offers a safe haven for many species, whether it is mammals, birds, or invertebrates. As with many Power Stations the proximity to water is a natural attraction for migratory birds, and provides a good source of food and shelter.

The lake just south of the Power Station is a natural attraction for many species and the diversity of the inhabitants - include Sticklebacks and Rudd, invertebrates such as the Dragon fly and Damselflies to name a couple, frogs and other vertebrates - can be seen if you are prepared to sit and watch. Otters have been frequenting the lake for a few months of the year, which is a positive statement for the quality of the water and the availability of food!

There have been 374 different plants and fungi, 407 insects, and 142 animals and fish recorded in the curtilage of the Power Station, so it is a very important site for the biodiversity and ecosystems of our area. This is encouraged by many areas being inaccessible to humans!!

It is a natural breeding ground, and a couple of Canada Geese have been nesting there for the last few years; these are quite remarkable parents, as within a few days they leave the lake with their offspring and walk along Ham Lane, through the village to the Pill. Quite a trek for small chicks! Why leave - maybe the threat of the otters? I'm not sure why they don't just walk the short distance to the Severn and swim to the Pill?

Bird life is prolific both on the water / mud-flats and in the scrub land, with over 257 species being identified in total, with 125 being regularly recorded. A few of the more interesting visitors include an Alpine swift (which resulted in 'twitchers' coming from far and wide), a Great Bustard, normally found on Salisbury Plain, an escaped Turkey Vulture from a zoo, and the only sighting in South Glos. of a Little Bunting and Whiskered Tern.

A pair of Oystercatchers used the slab of the demolished 132 kV substation to build a nest and rear their young, which provided much interest to the employees.

The plan is to turn Lagoon 3 into a wetland area, as soon as funds become available, which will undoubtedly add to the diversity of the site and provide an additional stopover place for the many migratory birds that pass overhead. This will be achieved by sealing up the outflow, removing vegetation and undertaking monitoring.

The policy of adopting "No Mow May" has provided a haven for native flowers to grow, such as the Bee Orchid, and this provides a rich resource for the many insects that live and breed in the meadows.

The Power Station has taken steps to reduce its impact on the environment. As part of the decommissioning process the admin block was vacated, and better-insulated portacabins were installed, with solar panels to reduce electricity consumption. The solar panels are estimated to generate approximately 138,000 kWh/year.

Last year a significant saving in time and money was achieved when, over a weekend, many services were disconnected from the main Turbine House. This required a total 'power outage' so 'green cabins' were hired in, which are self-sufficient with solar panels, thus allowing the electric tools to be recharged without the use of a generator. The internal fleet of 10 vehicles has been converted from diesel fuel to the biofuel Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) which has reduced carbon emissions, and usefully this fuel can be used without modifications to existing diesel engines.

As with all Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) sites, Oldbury Power Station is aware of the local community and supports it in many ways, including providing a clothes bank for the Salvation Army, where over 160 bags have been collected to date. In addition, a food bank was set up to support North Bristol and South Glos Food Banks and more food bank collections are planned for 2025.

NRS provide donations to good causes and charitable organisations in the community around the Oldbury. In the past year, recipients of the Good Neighbour level funding (up to £2,000) including the Petanchors Boule Club, North Bristol RFC, and Charfield Junior Football Club. Two 'medium' (£10,000-£200,000) donations were made to the Oldbury on Severn Memorial Hall and the Envision Project.

If you'd like to find out more, or know of a project in need of support, please contact Sharon Fry (*sharon.fry@magnoxsites.com*) for projects less than £2,000 or Jess Dawson (*jessica.dawson@nrservices.co.uk*) for projects over £2,000.

When disposing of redundant equipment, the Power Station is keen to help local causes – for example, when a large number of redundant pipes from Lagoon 2 became available, they were dug up, cleaned, and sent to the Slimbridge site of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust to use as culverts in their drainage system.

NRS encourage every employee to engage with their community, and to meet this aim, each employee is allowed to give five days a year to work on projects within their local area; such projects have included drystone walling with Cleve Archers, and decorating at the Dr. Jenner House. If you think you have a project that could benefit from some help, please contact Lizzie Willis at *lizzie.willis@nrservices.uk* for more information.

Chris Jennings SSG vice chair,
with help from Sharon Fry (NRS), and Peter Hazelwood

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A SERVICE FROM PLANNING TO COMPLETION

Sailing Club News

The cruiser Frostbite Series has been completed successfully, with a record number of craft and crews competing. One of the objectives of the series is for dinghy sailors to be given a taste of big-boat sailing, if they have not had this experience previously. Although light winds often caused frustration and numb fingers for those on the water, it was good to see well-wrapped-up members of the community braving the cold to spectate from the benches.

Plenty of work has been achieved since Christmas, in spite of the wet conditions and soggy grounds. The balcony has been completed and fitted out to welcome the sun, and a major audit to identify and dispose of abandoned boats has met with much progress, and is still ongoing. Reading the Yachting Press, I note that the problem of abandoned boats is not unique to our Club, but has become an issue both in the UK and abroad, so the sooner we address this the better.

Regular visitors from the Village will see that the seating area in front of the jetty, which had become rather muddy during the work to install the flood gates, has now been tidied up.

The annual RYA Sail Training Course will be starting very soon. There are still places available, so if it appeals to you, just submit an enquiry on the website.

With the main sailing season soon to begin, there will be a full programme of racing and opportunities for cruising. The new season will begin on 5th April with an Awards Evening for last year's winners, followed by an Anchors Aweigh Supper. Club Week is scheduled to begin on Monday 28th July through to Friday 1st August, and the Annual Regatta is over the weekend of 30th/31st August.

Saturday 1st November, in the afternoon, is a must for your diaries. While on holiday last Autumn, I was fortunate to attend several talks given by Captain Andy Wyatt, a retired airline pilot. Andy has piloted many types of aircraft, including as a member of the Red Arrows Team. His illustrated talks are inspirational, motivational and humorous. He is an extremely popular speaker, especially on cruise ships, and the Club is lucky to have negotiated a mutually convenient date for him to visit us. Andy has requested that the event be held as a charity event for the RNLI, and this has been agreed. Invitations will be sent to sailing clubs in the Upper Bristol Channel, and to members of the local Community, who will be most welcome. Reservations will be made via the Club website and I will keep you updated on the details. I'm sure I will be asked if the ladies would enjoy the talk, and my answer will be in the affirmative, as was evident by the number of ladies who enjoyed immensely the talks I attended.

Sue Leat

A WARM WELCOME

Central Pook is a hidden gem nestled in the beautiful hamlet of Northwick.
Surrounded by countryside we are situated in the heart of the Severn Estuary with access to a variety of cycle routes and walks.
We are a bespoke café serving breakfast brunch and lunch along with our homemade cakes, savoury bakes and amazing coffee.

FISH AND CHIP FRIDAYS

Every Friday we serve hand battered Fish and Chips, lunchtimes and evenings with takeaway available

SUNDAY ROAST

Join us for a traditional home cooked Sunday lunch, available in two sittings 12.30 or 2.30 takeaway available

Dogs welcome

OPENING TIMES

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8.30am to 4pm
Friday
8.30am to 4pm and 5.30pm to 8pm
Saturday
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Sunday
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Hill & Rockhampton WI

Report of Meeting 11th March 2025

Our speaker for the evening, Professor Emeritus Gareth Williams, talked about Edward Jenner, the man who changed the face of the world. Born at Berkeley, Edward's parents died when he was very young. At eight years old he was enrolled in a boarding school in Wotton-under-Edge where he underwent variolation for smallpox. Variolation was the giving of a small dose of smallpox via a scratch to the skin, intended to give the recipient a light dose of the disease which would make them immune in the future.

At 16 Jenner went to Chipping Sodbury to start medical training. It was here that the apocryphal story of the Milkmaid was born. He then went to London where he studied under, and became great friends with, John Hunter FRS, surgeon extraordinary, scientist and polymath, and it was he who steered Jenner towards science.

Jenner returned to Berkeley to practice as a country doctor. He seems to have been a very jolly chap, being a member of the Convivio Medical Society which met at The Ship, Alveston, for drinks and the discussion of medical issues. Which of these took precedence is unknown. It was thirty years after his alleged meeting with the milkmaid that Jenner attempted to use the cowpox virus as a protection against smallpox. On the 14th May 1796 he took a sample of cowpox virus from Sarah Nelmes, a milkmaid, and using the variolation technique, gave it to James Phipps, his gardener's son. Due to the skullduggery of John Hunter's brother-in-law, Jenner's paper to the Royal Society on the experiment was rejected. Not to be refused, he wrote and published his own pamphlet, which was a DIY guide to vaccination, and it was a roaring success.

In 1967 the World Health Organisation introduced a ten-year programme to eradicate smallpox across the world. This was finally achieved on 8th May 1980.

Gill Bennett gave the vote of thanks on our behalf for a thoroughly entertaining and informative talk.

Our next meeting will be on 8th April, dress code is an Easter Bonnet, and we will try our hand at Easter crafts.

Winners of the March Rockhampton 100 Club Draw were:
Penny Dommett; Charles Bryant; Mike and Gwen Finding; Rob Watkins.

Ann Jones, Secretary, Hill & Rockhampton WI

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Thornbury Choral Society's Spring Concert
Saturday 10 May at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Thornbury BS35 1HQ

The choir will perform Duruflé's *Requiem* and several unaccompanied Motets.

We are also giving the first performance of a piece composed especially for the Society by our conductor Steven Kings, entitled "*Thine Enchantment*".

The soloists are: Martha MacLorinan (*Mezzo*), Dan Robson (*Baritone*), James Drinkwater (*Organ*), and Rosie Wennick (*Cello*).

Tickets are £18 (pre-booked) or £20 (on the door) and students are £5. Tickets available from members or *tickets@thornburychoralsociety.org.uk* or (from April 28) from Horders Stationers. We look forward to seeing you!

"Crafts, Coffee & Cake"

A fun craft event for all the family, raising funds for **Cancer Research UK** from **10am - 2pm** on **Saturday 5th April** in **Falfield Village Hall**

Phone Louise Wright on *07800776998* for further details.

Refresh!

A service for ALL ages at St Arilda's Church starting with refreshments at 3pm.

Sunday 6th April
Finished?

Sunday 4th May
Showers of Blessings!

Sunday 1st June
Flaming June!

Church Services for April 2025

St. Mary's Thornbury

6th 10.30am
Holy Communion

13th 10.30am
All Age

17th 7.00pm
Maundy Thursday
Agape Supper

20th 10.30am
All Age Holy Communion

27th 8.00am
Holy Communion

St. Arilda's Oldbury

6th 3.00pm
Refresh!

13th 3.00pm
Simple pet service

18th 6.00pm
Good Friday
Walk of Witness
Starts, the Pound

20th 6.00am
Dawn Service
for Easter
Holy Communion

27th 10.00am
Benefice Service, St Mary's Hall

St. Mary's Shepperdine

No Regular Sunday Service During Winter Months

15th 7.00pm
Tuesday
Prayers for creation

Open as a place of pilgrimage and prayer.

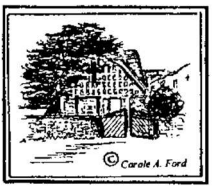
For details phone
01454 260316

St. Oswald's Rockhampton

Please check locally

Liz Cullimore churchwarden 01454 412208 or 07876352680 email cullimorel@aol.com

27th 10.30am
Holy Communion service



Catholic

Christ the King, Thornbury.
Sunday Mass
9.00am
10.30am

www.ctk-thornbury.org.uk

Holy Cross, Wotton Under Edge
Saturday
(vigil Mass) 5.00pm

Morton Baptist

Morning Service
Every Sunday
at
10.30am

See https://mortonbaptist.org for details

Thornbury Quakers

Chantry Community Centre on Castle Street

Sunday
10.30am

Further details contact Sheila Waters on *07738495776*

Christian Comment

In April this year, we in Oldbury will be celebrating Easter for much of the month, starting with our 'April Fool' early-Easter with our school (Tuesday 1st April), all the way through to Easter Sunday (20th April), when we gather at our sunrise service rejoicing in God's amazing gift of redemption.

The term 'redeemer', in the Old Testament, means literally the one who rescues, who buys back. It was applied to those Israelites who paid a sum of money to buy back family members who were going to be sold into slavery because of their debts.

At Easter we celebrate the God who frees us to start our lives afresh. But we also celebrate the God who St Paul describes as the one who redeems all creation. Not just us, and our friends and families, but the whole world and all creation is bought to freedom by the God who loves it.

So, on Palm Sunday (13th April at 3pm), as we remember the Jesus who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, we will be thanking God for creation and, during a simple and welcoming service, we will be blessing the creatures we share it with...

Please do bring along your own pets for this celebration!

We welcome **all** pets, large and small, **provided** that their owners recognise and respect that there will be other pets there too, and are thoughtful regarding the safety of them all… we are not quite living in the new creation yet, and we definitely don't want any beloved small creatures being eaten as we celebrate this part of the Easter story together…!

Before then, we will be setting the scene by telling the whole Easter story (or most of it) at our relaxed all-age Refresh! service (Sunday 6th April at 3pm), praying for creation at Shepperdine (Tuesday 15th April at 7pm) and walking through the village up to the church on Good Friday (18th April, starting at The Pound at 6pm) so there are lots of ways to join in with the season even if you are not a pet owner…

There really is something for everyone this April, and ALL are welcome!!

These wonderfully varied services all lead us towards hearing the dawn chorus at 6am on Easter Sunday (20th April), at the start of the unique sunrise service that vividly reminds us of the glorious story our bibles tell us, of how God's redemption was revealed on that very first Easter morning!

Revd Joy

Baby Backpack Appeal – a very thankful update!

Oldbury and surrounding areas you are amazing! Thank you to all those who donated cash or gave babygrows, nappies and other essential items for the Ukrainian Appeal.

We have today transferred 120 Backpacks filled with items for new Mums and Babies, and stuffed also with a Ukrainian Greeting and Prayer card, and dried soups and chocolate. The Midwife from The Suverens Charity Hub in Kharkiv video-called us in tears at the thought that this aid would arrive soon. Since the bombing of the Maternity Suite the Mums have taken to underground carparks where midwives try to make them comfortable. Wendy said that on one day last week nineteen babies were born in one Hub and she had very little to give the Mums to help.

So, thank you for:

4500 nappies
500 knitted jackets and bootees
100 blankets
200 breast pads
3000 sanitary pads
500 babygrows
200 sudacreme
100 baby toys
Heaps of dried soups + chocolate bars,
and the little toiletry bags filled with Mums' treats.

We had nearly £4000 donations to cover the insurance and travel costs and towards buying the packs. Thanks to Rotary, Armstrong Arts Group, Christ the King's children who did a Walkathon, and countless others who gave cash.

This was the second van of aid from Thornbury Hub this year. The first van was filled with all sorts of humanitarian aid, medical supplies, lost-limb knitted socks, and candles.

We exceeded our goal and our doorstep is now looking forlorn with no plastic bags piled high!

Special thanks to local neighbours Camilla, Heather, Sophie and Marcus, who helped with transport, lugging stuff around, and counting sanitary pads.

Jacquie Rinaldi

A Ukrainian Food, Music & Culture Evening
Saturday 17 May - Doors Open 6pm at Oldbury Memorial Hall

The local Ukrainian Community wish to thank Oldbury and the surrounding areas for all that they have done in so many ways to support the refugees here in such difficult circumstances.

With thanks to The Oldbury Community Shop, who have generously donated £400 to The Ukrainian Hub, and the Memorial Hall which has been given free of charge for the event, they are organising a Supper of Ukrainian Delights, interspersed with Ukrainian Musical performers, dancers, and singers.

Vera Stadon from the Charity *Bristol Aid 4 Ukraine* will also talk about the tradition of Costume, Vishvanka, Headdresses, and their fascinating Culture.

Brush up your knowledge as there might even be a short Quiz!

Tickets are limited, and available to buy at £15 from the Oldbury Community Shop, and online at *https://bookwhen.com/memorialhall*

All proceeds to The Ukrainian Charity. Please come and bring a friend to learn more about the fascinating heritage of our Ukrainian guests, now living in Thornbury and the surrounding areas.

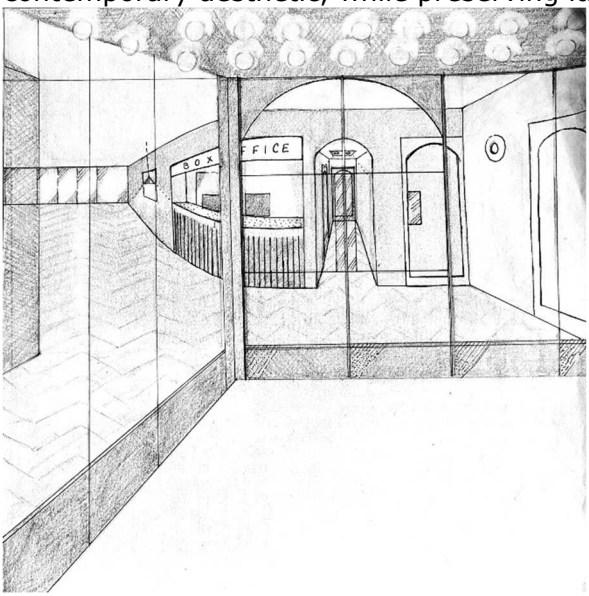
Remember, tickets are limited, so buy yours now!

Jacquie Rinaldi

ARMSTRONG ARTS GROUP

Thornbury's Landmark Venue Gets a Fresh Start: Introducing "The Armstrong"

Thornbury's beloved cultural and community hub is making a grand return with a brand-new look and renewed purpose. Formerly known as "The Armstrong Hall Complex", the newly named "The Armstrong" is set to become a revitalised and dynamic venue for the community. Thanks to the expertise of local volunteers and businesses, the venue will feature a fresh, contemporary aesthetic, while preserving its historic charm.



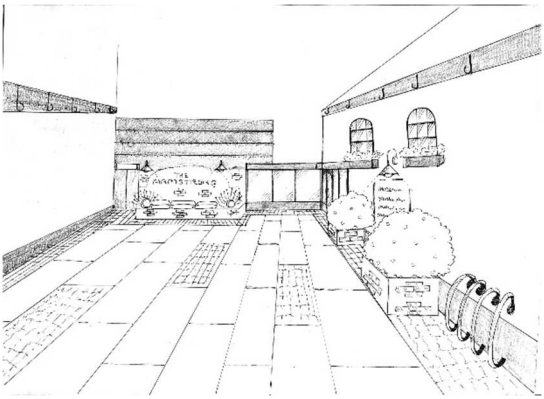
The transformation of The Armstrong has been made possible through the collaboration of the existing Armstrong Hall Trust and Thornbury Community and Arts. With the renovations starting in spring 2025, The Armstrong is on track to open its Cossham Hall and Foyer in Winter 2025/26, followed by the main 300 seat theatre opening from mid-2026. This ambitious major refurbishment project will bring the venue up to modern standards while providing a welcoming space for events, performances, and community gatherings. The newly revitalised venue will feature a fully upgraded foyer, with improved accessibility, modernised facilities, and a welcoming bar and function space.

Users can expect an exciting lineup of events for all ages and backgrounds. From laugh-out-loud comedy nights, and inspiring TED-style talks, to enchanting family theatre performances, hands-on creative workshops, and welcoming social gatherings, there will be something for everyone. Whether you're looking to be entertained, to learn something new, or to connect with others in the local community, The Armstrong will be the place to be!

The cost of renovations is estimated to be just over £2m. TCA have secured funding to enable the Cossham Hall and the Foyer to open, which is a tremendous achievement. A significant milestone in the project was securing major funding from generous donors, including Maggie Lansdown,

whose contributions have laid the foundation for this ambitious endeavour. A fundraising campaign will now launch to secure the funds for the main 300 seat theatre.

"The Armstrong is more than just a venue. Our mission is to become again the heart of Thornbury's cultural and social life." said Jill Dimond, representative of Thornbury Community and Arts. "With a fresh new look and a professional events team in place, we're committed to creating an exciting, inclusive, and financially sustainable space that will serve the community for generations to come."



Community members and local businesses are encouraged to get involved. Whether this is through fundraising, volunteering, or contributing expertise, there are many ways to help bring this landmark venue back to life. Those interested can reach out to *hello@thearmstrong.co.uk*

Stay up to date with the latest developments and fundraising opportunities by visiting *www.thearmstrong.co.uk* or by signing up to the monthly newsletter and following The Armstrong on social media.

For media enquiries, interviews, or further information, please contact:

Olivia Riddiford
07742769165
olivia@thearmstrong.co.uk

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Police Drone Trial to span Severn Estuary for six months

A six-month trial for a Wankel-engined 200kg police drone is proposed for an area spanning the Severn Estuary close to Bristol. The trial will operate 'Beyond Visual Line of Sight' meaning the operator will be completely remote.

A Temporary Reserved Area (TRA) will be established for the period of the trial, expected to start in May 2025. Dates, time, and segments of TRA activation and deactivation will be NOTAMed, "Notice to Airmen," a notice containing information essential to flight operations that is not known far enough in advance to be publicized by other means, indicating real-time and abnormal status of the National Airspace, at least 24 hours in advance.

The National Police Air Service is sponsoring the trial, working with an unnamed commercial supplier. The idea is to replicate current-day operations, using a drone instead of crewed helicopters.

The drone has not been identified yet, but will be a similar drone to ones already in service with the Royal Navy.

Avonmouth Helipad will be used as the launch and landing site, located on the edge of the Severn Estuary, providing easy access to both overwater and overland flying.

All operations will occur between 900ft and 1,200ft and the drone will typically transit at 1,000ft. Routes to be flown will be pre-planned and Bristol ATC will be notified ahead of launch.

The majority of activities will occur during the night, 22:00 to 04:00 local time, with daytime operations in the fifth and final stage.

The proposal says daytime flying activities will be "*limited to no more than two weeks Monday to Friday (ten flying days) between 10:00 – 15:00. Access to the TRA may be granted to cooperative aircraft not participating in the trial, if agreed with NPAS. These aircraft will then need to contact Bristol ATC.*"

https://flyer.co.uk/police-drone-trial-to-span-severn-estuary-for-six-months/

Sheila Bedford – Chairman, Oldbury Parish Council

Yet More Foolishness from DFPAF!

Today, 1st April 2025, I have received news, from a very reliable source, that the Environment Agency, in partnership with DFPAF* are going to apply for planning permission to create a huge 350-acre salt-marsh that will stretch from Cowhill to Shepperdine, and will include Oldbury. The application comes after the villagers of Littleton-on-Severn mounted a wrongly-conceived rejection of their previous proposed scheme last month.

This new scheme will involve moving the sailing club to the power station reservoir, enabling sailing at all times regardless of tidal status. The number one reactor (nearest to the reservoir) will be repurposed as a clubhouse and social club. The upstairs will be for the birdwatchers to photograph, count and record species numbers, noting that of particular interest are the sightings of the Lesser Spotted Green Wallybird, a species last witnessed on the riverbank over a hundred years ago, after a Wassailing session in a cider-shed in Cowhill.

The number two reactor is also to be repurposed, in this case into an Olympic-sized Velodrome to take cyclists off the local roads and the narrow, deeply-cratered, perilous lanes. "*Cyclists will now be able to cycle four abreast around a permanent corner with no fear of collision*", a cyclist said from their hospital bed.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency explained that this plan will make our carbon footprint so small as to make the whole project well worthwhile, for us, for our children, and of course for the endangered Lesser Spotted Green Wallybird.

"*I am confident that the intelligent people in our region will see sense and vote in favour of this scheme, not like the inhabitants of Littleton*."

The author wishes to remain anonymous...

[***** *Department For the Promotion of April Fools*]

Oldbury on Severn - Memorial Hall 100 Club Draw Winners

March Draw		
1st prize.	£20	Isaac Wadhams
2nd prize.	£15	Karen Awde
3rd prize.	£10	Nick McCulloch
4th prize.	£10	Marie Baker

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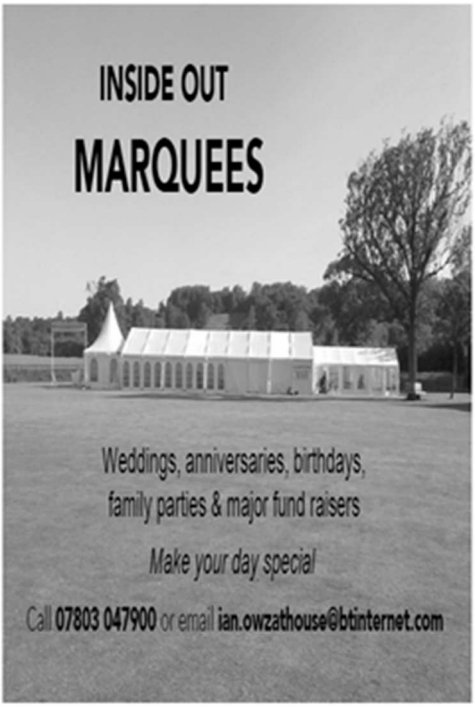

Olveston Young Farmers

'South West Area' took place at the start of March in Weston-super-Mare. This is a weekend jam-packed full of competitions and partying, when Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall all gather together each year! Competitions include sandcastle-building, public speaking, and pantomime! Our club secretary Jessica competed in the public speaking competition "Brains Trust" with members from other clubs, and very impressively placed 4th out of all the counties. Well done, Jessica!

Most of our meetings lately have been in preparation for our rally competitions, but we have also had some interesting events such as a tour of Godsells Cheese in Frocester, and a highland cow painting class! Young farmers is not just about farming, but about trying new things and having a go! This month we will also be having a meeting to learn basic first aid, and how to use a defibrillator, which is such an important thing to know.

This year, both Pre-Rally and Rally are being held in South Gloucestershire. Family, friends, and everyone in the community are welcome to attend these days to see what we young farmers get up to, and enjoy the entertainment.
* Pre-Rally is on 12th April at Ostbridge Manor Farm, Pilning, BS35 4HN.
* Rally is on 17th May at Two Pools Farm, Iron Acton, BS37 9XD.

olvestonyfc@gloucestershireyfc.co.uk - Alice Bathard, Chairman

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Severn Vale Art Trail from 1 - 5 May

More than 60 artists and makers will be displaying their work over the Bank Holiday weekend from Thursday 1st to Monday 5th May.

There will be a diverse range of arts and crafts, by the talented local artists displaying their work in shared venues or their own studios and workshops.

This is your chance to support local artists and purchase unique paintings, photography, ceramics, textiles, jewellery, glass art, mosaics, upholstery, woodturning and much more. Or simply have an inspiring day out, as you will also have the chance to watch many of the artists and makers at work.

Many venues have refreshments available or are close to local coffee shops, and include interesting churches, working studios and community buildings.

For details of all artists and venues (including accessibility, directions, and opening hours) and the Trail Map, please visit *www.severnvalearttrail.org* or alternatively pick up a printed Trail Guide from local shops and cafes.

Severn Vale Art Trail updates: on Instagram and Facebook *@severnvalearttrail*

Exciting changes
We've just launched our new volunteering platform. Volunteers, voluntary organisations and charities are now better connected, with improved services.

Looking to volunteer?
You can now keep track of roles you are interested in, get matched to opportunities specifically tailored to you, and contact organisations directly.

Looking for volunteers?
You can post your own opportunity roles, monitor their progress, and message volunteers directly to invite them to apply.

Visit *www.volunteer-thornbury.co.uk* to sign up for your volunteering journey.

Our team of advisors will be available, as always, to answer your questions, give advice, and help with volunteering in general. Our office is open from 10.30am-12pm on weekdays in Thornbury Town Hall, telephone *01454 413392*. Find us on Facebook: *thornburyvolunteers* and X: *@thornburyvc*

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oneyou.southglos.gov.uk for more information

Tide Table: Inward Rocks, River Severn

April 2025

Day	High	Low	High	Low	High	Moon	Sunrise	Sunset
Tue 1		5:23 AM BST / -0.37 m	10:28 AM BST / 13.17 m	5:45 PM BST / -0.33 m	10:49 PM BST / 12.91 m		6:45 AM BST	7:44 PM BST
Fri 4	12:19 AM BST / 11.38 m	7:33 AM BST / 0.89 m	12:46 PM BST / 10.73 m	7:57 PM BST / 1.50 m			6:38 AM BST	7:49 PM BST
Sat 5	1:12 AM BST / 10.21 m	8:25 AM BST / 1.69 m	1:43 PM BST / 9.47 m	8:52 PM BST / 2.33 m		First Quarter	6:36 AM BST	7:51 PM BST
Sun 6	2:14 AM BST / 9.06 m	9:28 AM BST / 2.42 m	2:52 PM BST / 8.39 m	10:04 PM BST / 2.96 m			6:33 AM BST	7:52 PM BST
Mon 7	3:29 AM BST / 8.21 m	10:50 AM BST / 2.82 m	4:14 PM BST / 7.80 m	11:34 PM BST / 3.09 m			6:31 AM BST	7:54 PM BST
Fri 11		2:44 AM BST / 1.77 m	7:49 AM BST / 9.70 m	3:06 PM BST / 1.45 m	8:10 PM BST / 9.86 m		6:22 AM BST	8:01 PM BST
Sat 12		3:22 AM BST / 1.46 m	8:28 AM BST / 10.39 m	3:41 PM BST / 1.26 m	8:46 PM BST / 10.51 m		6:20 AM BST	8:02 PM BST
Sun 13		3:55 AM BST / 1.26 m	9:03 AM BST / 10.93 m	4:12 PM BST / 1.17 m	9:19 PM BST / 10.98 m	Full Moon	6:18 AM BST	8:04 PM BST
Mon 14		4:25 AM BST / 1.16 m	9:36 AM BST / 11.24 m	4:42 PM BST / 1.17 m	9:51 PM BST / 11.22 m		6:16 AM BST	8:06 PM BST
Fri 18		6:33 AM BST / 1.67 m	11:42 AM BST / 10.16 m	6:51 PM BST / 2.01 m	11:58 PM BST / 9.91 m		6:07 AM BST	8:12 PM BST
Sat 19		7:10 AM BST / 2.04 m	12:18 PM BST / 9.47 m	7:30 PM BST / 2.41 m			6:05 AM BST	8:14 PM BST
Sun 20	12:36 AM BST / 9.22 m	7:53 AM BST / 2.44 m	1:01 PM BST / 8.74 m	8:16 PM BST / 2.81 m			6:03 AM BST	8:16 PM BST
Mon 21	1:25 AM BST / 8.52 m	8:45 AM BST / 2.80 m	1:57 PM BST / 8.07 m	9:14 PM BST / 3.11 m		Last Quarter	6:01 AM BST	8:17 PM BST
Fri 25		12:44 AM BST / 2.22 m	6:16 AM BST / 9.19 m	1:17 PM BST / 1.71 m	6:45 PM BST / 9.57 m		5:53 AM BST	8:24 PM BST
Sat 26		1:43 AM BST / 1.53 m	7:10 AM BST / 10.33 m	2:13 PM BST / 1.04 m	7:35 PM BST / 10.73 m		5:51 AM BST	8:26 PM BST
Sun 27		2:38 AM BST / 0.87 m	7:57 AM BST / 11.45 m	3:05 PM BST / 0.48 m	8:19 PM BST / 11.77 m	New Moon	5:49 AM BST	8:27 PM BST
Mon 28		3:29 AM BST / 0.32 m	8:41 AM BST / 12.34 m	3:54 PM BST / 0.08 m	9:02 PM BST / 12.52 m		5:47 AM BST	8:29 PM BST
Wed 30		5:03 AM BST / -0.15 m	10:07 AM BST / 12.88 m	5:26 PM BST / 0.02 m	10:28 PM BST / 12.73 m		5:43 AM BST	8:32 PM BST

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April in Thornbury Library

Marvellous Mini Beasts, Easter-Holiday Craft Activity
Wednesday 9th April 10.30am – 12pm Drop-in Session

Enjoy a free hot drink in the library!
Available **Monday**, **Wednesday**, **Thursday and Friday 10.30am - 4pm.** Use the computers or your own iPad, phone etc. (Wi-Fi available). Read a book or newspaper, browse the shelves, enjoy a communal puzzle or just relax!

LEGO Club. **FREE Every Saturday 9.30–10.00am**
Listen to a story or some poems, then create your own LEGO masterpieces and display them in the library for your family and friends to see.

Rhymetime. **FREE Every Monday and Friday 9.30am-10am**
(open at 9.30 for Rhymetime only)

"Have You Read…?" Friday 4th April 2pm-3pm A book group for everyone. Come and enjoy an open book group with a difference. No set novel to read. Just drop in for an hour for refreshments and a chat.

Computer Support 1-1 Every **Thursday**: **10am**, **11am**, & **12pm** slots. **Book** a session with our computer volunteer for IT and digital support.

Staffed Times		**Open Access (Unstaffed)**
Monday:	10am - 5pm	Every day: 8.00am – 7.30pm
Wednesday:	10am - 5pm	Induction essential
Thursday:	10am - 5pm	*Please note: A 15-minute lapse will occur between staff closing time and Open Access starting.*
Friday:	10am - 5pm	
Saturday:	9.30am - 12.30pm	
Rhymetime 9.30-10am (Monday & Friday) - special opening time for this event only.		

For more information on any of the above, please contact us by dropping in to Thornbury Library, or email *thornbury.library@southglos.gov.uk* or phone: *01454 868006* or visit our website: *www.southglos.gov.uk/libraries*

Collectors' Book Fair
Saturday 5 April 10am – 12pm Easter Compton Village Hall

This annual Book Fair, held at Easter Compton Village Hall since 2006, takes place again on 5th April. This regional event, run by the Observer's Books Collectors' Society, features thousands of vintage collectable books for sale. As well as Observer's books, others include: Ladybirds, Beatrix Potter, Wayside & Woodland, and many different book series on subjects like natural history, transport, and militaria. All book enthusiasts are welcome to attend and admission is free. Advice and valuation on books can be gained from expert stallholders who come countrywide to attend. Refreshments available. Telephone *01454 632170* for further details.

Calendar Dates for Oldbury

12th	April	Sat	Spring Arts & Craft Fair, Memorial Hall 10am to 1pm
12th	April	Sat	Open Mic Night, Memorial Hall, 7.30pm
20th	April	Sun	Dawn Easter Service, St Arilda's, 6am
26th	April	Sat	Bollywood Night, Memorial Hall
10th	May	Sat	VE celebration, Thornbury Small Swing Band
16th	May	Fri	Quiz Night, Memorial Hall 7.30pm
17th	May	Sat	Ukrainian Food, Music & Culture evening, Memorial Hall
14th	Sep	Sun	Produce and Craft Show

OVCC Film Show, second Friday of month, Memorial Hall, doors open at 7.30pm

If you have any more local events that you would like to include in this diary, please email the magazine at **4wardmag@gmail.com**

Oldbury Elders Luncheon Club
Meet at 11.45am in the dining room, lunch served at 12noon,
on the last Tuesday of the month.
Thanks to Mark Sorrell and the team at the Anchor.
Any enquiries to Janet Astle *07747 198878*

Oldbury Whist Drives, first and third Saturdays

of the month, at 7.30pm in the Westmarsh Lane Pavilion.

New players always welcome!
If anyone would like to learn the game or brush up on their skills, please feel free to contact me - Matthew Riddle - 07877 413 298
matthewriddle1967@googlemail.com

The Jazz Club, first Wednesday of each month.
Memorial Hall, 7.30pm to 9.30pm
(*Not June to August inclusive.*)

Rainfall

February		
2025	**2024**	**2023**
73.5mm	178.0mm	9.5mm
2.89"	7.01"	0.37"

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