4ward

April 2026

The Women at the Tomb

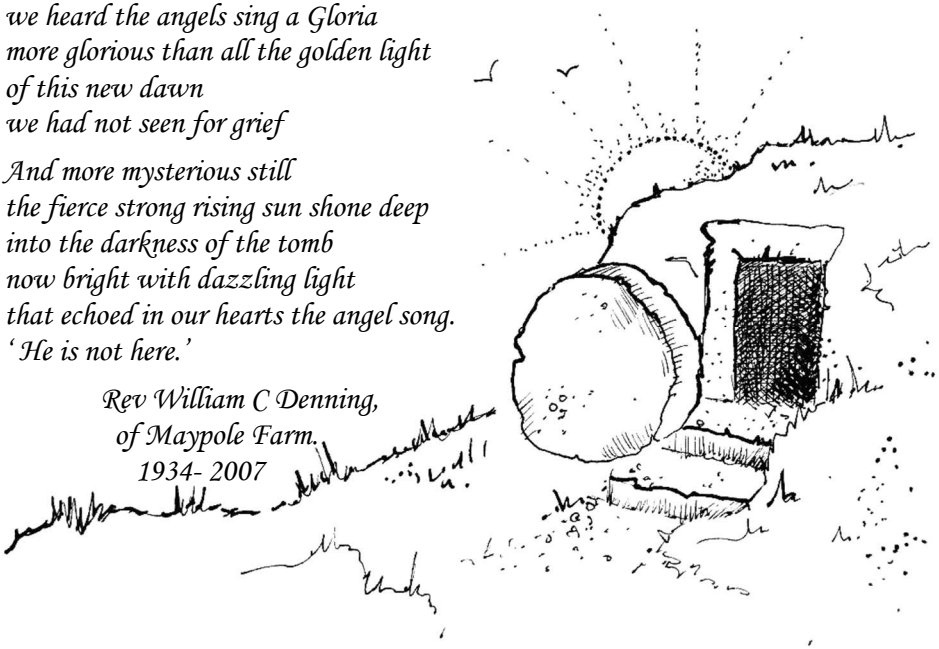
Early we came through moist deep shadows
of the waiting dawn
our steps slow and senses numb
and then we heard
from far beyond the edge of space and time
a gentle sound of angels' wings

We stopped and in a timeless moment
senses stirred
and hearts now burned like fire
our souls awake

And from that distant edge
we heard the angels sing a Gloria
more glorious than all the golden light
of this new dawn
we had not seen for grief

And more mysterious still
the fierce strong rising sun shone deep
into the darkness of the tomb
now bright with dazzling light
that echoed in our hearts the angel song.
'He is not here.'

Rev William C Denning,
of Maypole Farm.
1934- 2007



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

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Editorial

I'm writing this editorial as I'm packing to go on a coach holiday. Back in the depths of winter on one of those long dark evenings, I was idly passing the time online looking at various holiday destinations. It was all passing over my head as it tends to, every tour seemed too expensive, or too far away, and none seemed worth the effort, or much fun travelling on your own, but then I saw coach tours visiting the war graves.

I remembered that this was something I had always wanted to do, following the years of research myself, Sandra Grey and Ruth Riddle did between 2014 and 2019, when the WW1 centennial commemorations were taking place. COVID and life generally got in the way and I haven't travelled abroad for many years, but I suppose it was always on my bucket list, not that I even realised until that moment that I had one; something you really want to do before you kick the bucket, pop your clogs, or any other euphemism used to describe the unmentionable. Such things have been on my mind because I was shocked and saddened to hear earlier this week that Jenni Murray had died, a brilliant broadcaster and columnist who presented Woman's Hour for most of my adult life, and who was in fact two years younger than me. I had recently read her latest column, which has turned out to be her last, published only a couple of weeks ago.

To get back to my story, I carried on looking, and one particular tour of the Western Front sounded perfect. It visited various places of interest, but also included visits to the four famous Memorials to the Missing, Arras, Loos, Tyne Cot, and Thiepval, on which the names of the six Oldbury men who have no known grave, but whose stories I know so well, are inscribed. I booked up to travel there and then, and that was before I even realised the coach pick up point is at the Severn Bridge services, so it could hardly be more convenient. Another bonus is that instead of Eurotunnel there is a cross-channel ferry, which is something I always enjoy, as it takes me back to my adventurous youth setting off on the ferries before hitchhiking across Europe. I'm leaving very early tomorrow, 23rd March, and will be back before the magazine is printed, but that's all I've got time for now.

Chris

Happy Easter to all our readers, advertisers, and distributors!

The Hall Matters, April

Donations and grants are a key source of funding for the Hall. These contributions have not only given us the opportunity to improve the facilities, but also to keep our hire charges at an attractive rate. Our philosophy is to ensure that the Hall is a great place to meet, and enjoy whatever activity or experience that you have come to participate in.

We have been very fortunate to receive three donations in March. The first one was from NRS, (Oldbury Power Station) where the money was put towards an additional picnic table. The second donation came from our wonderful Community Shop. This money has also been used towards the aforementioned table, along with the installation of an outside power point and the purchase of a Gazebo, thus enabling greater use of our outside space. The third donation came from Natasha Johnson's *Zumba Gold* and *Strong and Stable* classes, who signed over part of their January 'subs' to the Hall. Many thanks to all concerned.

At the end of February, we had the *'Whodunit' Theatre Group* performing, who entertained us with their own scripted play *'Anchorman Down'*. The play, as always, was based around a murder, and the audience had to identify the perpetrator of this heinous crime. The script was littered with jokes and innuendos which provided excellent entertainment. At the interval, hotdogs provided an extra bite to the evening. The sausages, which incidentally were very tasty, were very kindly provided by Jim Hopkins at Cowhill (just in case you're interested in purchasing any in the future!!)

We continued screening the 6 Nations, and, as one pundit stated after the Scotland game, '*the pies and beer were good, shame about the rugby*'! Having said that, when England '*got off the bus and decided to play*' in their final match in France, the atmosphere was electric. Super Saturday provided a fitting finale to an excellent series of entertaining rugby. This year's meal was '*An Oldbury Flat Cap*' (a giant Yorkshire pudding with sausages, for the uninitiated) with peas, mash and onion gravy; scrummy!! Again, the sausages were provided by Jim Hopkins, by popular demand!

Looking forward to Hall events in April and May, firstly we have The Games Night on the 11th April. This is a very casual affair where you can come along, bring your favourite game, or just turn up and enjoy playing the games on offer. Either way it should be a relaxing and enjoyable night.

Our Spring Fayre is on Saturday the 18th April, where there are always lots of interesting stalls selling a range of local crafts. With coffee, tea and cake on offer, the morning will provide a good opportunity to chat and catch up with all the news.

Marg's Open Mic Night is on the 25th April, always a well put together gig with a variety of music and very enthusiastic participants. This is a very

important occasion, as it introduces different talent from the surrounding area, and it is well worth supporting.

Intermixed with these events we are planning to show the Women's 6 Nations Rugby throughout April and May.

In May, we continue our theme of 'specialist evenings'. After the success of Oktoberfest and Bollywood, we are going to be holding a Spanish-inspired evening. The date for your diary is the 16th May, more info to follow.

Chris Jennings 07740934182

COMING SOON ……..
SPANISH NIGHT

Please put this date in your diaries: **SATURDAY 16th MAY 2026**

Hola!! Join us for a Spanish Evening at Oldbury on Severn Memorial Hall
Sangria, Paella, Flamenco Dancing, and much more.

More information to follow in due course.

Gracias!!

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Village Wine Club 20th Anniversary

On the 18th March, a village wine club held their 20th Anniversary Dinner at the Thornbury Castle Hotel. The members attending were Carole & Gerry Dyke, Jenny & Len Hales, Rachel & Paul Pitfield and Jane Perkins & Ian Bell.

Their next meeting will be their 150th, and the total number of wines tasted over the 20 years is 600 bottles. That does not include the 'social' wine consumed at the end of each meeting with cheese and biscuits.

The average number of meetings per year was only 7.5 events, that low number being due to the stringent conditions imposed during covid.

Oldbury on Severn - Memorial Hall 100 Club Draw Winners

March Draw		
1st prize.	£20	Bob Abbott
2nd prize.	£15	Jim Nichols
3rd prize.	£10	Helen Poole
4th prize.	£10	Linda Jennings

New members of the 100 Club are always welcome!
Forms are available in the Shop, or contact Doug Mills or Angela Conibere at Christmas Cottage or *aeconibere@hotmail.com* or *01454 413828*

Oldbury Cricket Club

If you are a spectator, cricket teaches you patience……...Prince Philip.

Spectator or player, you could be at the start of the Oldbury cricket season, which is due to commence on Sunday 19th April with the *Oldbury Ashes* game. At the AGM the elected officers for the 2026 season were: President Derek Garrett, Chairman Toby Summerfield, Secretary Piers Norton, Club/Sunday Captain Jimmy Garrett, Wednesday Captain George Smith, Fixtures secretary Jon Dyke, and Groundsman Charlie Keedwell. A full Home Fixtures List for the 2026 season is provided in this edition of 4ward.

The Cricket Club are to hold a
Quiz Night on Friday 10 April at 7pm at the Playing Fields Pavilion
Entry costs will be £30 for a table of 6, so get a team together,
and come along and release those hidden brain cells.
There will be prizes, a bar, and light refreshments available.

Gerald Porter

Spring's Here — and so is Cricket at Rockhampton

The covers are coming off, and the new season is almost here at Rockhampton Cricket Club. With preparations underway at The Common and Boundary Field, the 2026 campaign gets rolling on Saturday 18 April, as Rockhampton 2nds host King Stanley 1st.

Junior Cricket Returns
Friday nights are back with the hugely popular All Stars (5–8) and Dynamos (8–11) programmes, running from 8 May to 3 July, 5–7pm. Expect skills, smiles, and plenty of energy — with the bar and BBQ on for parents too.
Info: *martin.paton@gmail.com*

Live Music at The Common
On Friday 15 May, The Common swaps whites for riffs as *The Bob Villains* bring an unplugged tribute to Bob Dylan's legendary 1966 performance. Open to all, music starts from 8.30pm, with bar and refreshments available.

Rockhampton Sixes Is Back
One of the club's biggest days returns on Sunday 24 May. The Rockhampton Sixes promises fast cricket, local rivalries, food, music, and inside/outside bars — and it's free entry.

Cricket, music, community — Spring at Rockhampton has it all.

Oldbury "Open Mic"(ish)!

At the Memorial Hall, 25th April

Tickets from Shop, or QR links below

Come join in!

Or listen to local musical talent!

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.

VENUE: OLDBURY ON SEVERN MEMORIAL HALL.
Saturday 25th 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)

Oldbury Cricket Home Fixture List for this Season

Day	Date	Team	H / A	Type
April				
Sun	19/04/2026	Ashes	Home	Sun Friendly
May				
Sat	02/05/2026	Frampton on Severn 2nd XI	Home	GCL Division 8D
Fri	08/05/2026	Old Oldbury	Home	Midweek Friendly
Sat	09/05/2026	BS&A using ground	Home	B&D
Sun	10/05/2026	Commoners	Home	Sun Friendly
Tues	12/05/2026	GD Trophy final 2025	Home	GD Trophy
Sat	16/05/2026	Painswick 3rd XI	Home	GCL Division 8D
Sun	17/05/2026	Travellers CC	Home	Sun Friendly
Sat	23/05/2026	Thornbury 3rd's using	Home	TCC
Sat	30/05/2026	Hawkesbury Upton 3rd XI	Home	GCL Division 8D
Sun	31/05/2026	Tintern	Home	Sun Friendly
June				
Tues	02/06/2026	Rockhampton	Home	GD Trophy
Sat	06/06/2026	BS&A using ground	Home	B&D
Sat	13/06/2026	Randwick 1st XI	Home	GCL Division 8D
Tues	16/06/2026	Oldlands	Home	GD Trophy
Sat	20/06/2026	Stone 1st XI	Home	GCL Division 8D
Sun	21/06/2026	Quedgeley	Home	Sun Friendly
Sat	27/06/2026	BS&A using ground	Home	B&D
Sun	28/06/2026	Down Hatherley CC	Home	Sun Friendly
July				
Fri	03/07/2026	Berkeley Hunt	Home	Midweek Friendly
Sat	04/07/2026	BS&A using ground	Home	B&D
Sun	05/07/2026	Frenchay	Home	Sun Friendly
Tues	07/07/2026	Charfield CC	Home	GD Trophy
Sat	11/07/2026	Charfield 1st XI	Home	GCL Division 8D
Sat	18/07/2026	BS&A using ground	Home	B&D
Sun	19/07/2026	George Hunt sixes	Home	Sun Friendly
Tues	21/07/2026	Old Down CC	Home	GD Trophy
Sat	25/07/2026	Eastington 1st	Home	GCL Division 8D
August				
Sat	01/08/2026	BS&A using ground	Home	B&D
Wed	05/08/2026	Slimbridge	Home	Midweek Friendly
Sat	08/08/2026	Rockhampton 4th XI	Home	GCL Division 8D
Sun	09/08/2026	Cam	Home	Sun Friendly
Fri	14/08/2026	TRFC	Home	Midweek Friendly
Sat	15/08/2026	BS&A using ground	Home	B&D
Sat	22/08/2026	BS&A using ground	Home	B&D
Sun	23/08/2026	Old Down Estate XI	Home	Sun Friendly
Sat	29/08/2026	Stroud 3rd XI	Home	GCL Division 8D
Sun	30/08/2026	Giles Smith Uni Team	Home	Sun Friendly
September				
Sun	06/09/2026	President's XI	Home	Sun Friendly
Sun	13/09/2026	Hold over possibly if rain on 6th	Home	Sun Friendly

Closed
Easter Sunday,
5th April

OLDBURY-ON-SEVERN
COMMUNITY SHOP

Church Road, Oldbury on Severn, S. Glos BS35 1QA
Tel: 01454 501090

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Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
9 am to 1 pm

Thursday
9 am to 1:30 pm

Friday
9 am to 3 pm

Saturday
9 am to 2 pm

Sunday
9 am to 1 pm

Teas and Coffees served including Takeaways

For updates check:-
www.facebook.com/
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Run by volunteers for the benefit of the community

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.

We also sell newspapers, Hobbs House breads, plus award winning wines & beers.

Come and see. You may be surprised!

Shop Spot

The Shop donations have all gone out to the beneficiaries, and we have had some wonderful letters thanking us, and everyone that works in the Shop.

We will as usual be closed on Easter Sunday the 5th April.

Hoping everyone has a nice Easter and that the sun stays out!

Chris Awde

Severn Vale Crib League 2025/2026

Cards are like life: you never know what you're gonna get, but you have to play anyway……...Forrest Gump (paraphrased)

There was no way that the Sporting Oldbury and The Shipwrecked team players were going to give any quarter when they played in the local derby game on March 2nd. It was a tightly contested game in which Sporting managed to just win the match 8-7. Since that game Sporting have won all their matches, whilst The Shipwrecked have not been so fortunate, having lost a couple. After Easter there are only 3 programmed fixtures left to play, with Sporting entertaining The Shipwrecked, a clash occurring once again in the very last game of the season.

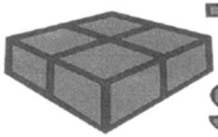
Gerald Porter

Parish Litter Pick

Many thanks to the nineteen or so local folk who came along to take part in the Oldbury Parish Council Litter Pick on Saturday 14th March. It was a dry and sunny day and that greatly helped us to pick up many bags of litter, some old signs, a gas canister and the odd tyre. A lot of the rubbish was recyclable materials. All parts of Oldbury-on-Severn Parish have now been covered: Cowhill, Oldbury and Shepperdine on 14th March, whilst Kington had already carried out their own litter pick just a few weeks before – well done to them!

Many thanks also to the team at The Anchor Inn who afterwards very kindly laid on refreshments for the litter pickers, and to South Gloucestershire Council for the loan of the litter-picking equipment, and for coming out to our area to remove the bags of rubbish and the other discarded items after the volunteers had finished collecting it. Thank you again to one and all.

Matthew Riddle



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Sailing Club News

By the time you read this issue, the Cruiser Frostbite Series will have ended, and the dinghy sailing programme is set to begin, including the RYA Training Course and the in-house Better Sailing Course. The latter is very popular with those who have already obtained their RYA certificates, so should you wish to build up your confidence on the water please contact us via the website.

My plea in the March issue, for walkers and members to observe safety notices/equipment while in the vicinity of the Club, went unheeded on a recent Wednesday morning, when lifting operations had to be halted to allow two people to vacate the coned-off area. I'm sure that they were busy chatting and totally oblivious of the danger they were in, and the concern they were causing the lifter operatives. We love to see our visitors, but please, please, observe any safety restrictions in place.

As many members as possible are requested to attend a work party on Saturday 11th April, when various maintenance tasks will be allocated to groups. Last year this was extremely well supported, so we hope for similar numbers this time. We rely on the practical support of all our able-bodied members to volunteer their help, and thus keep our fees down.

The Club will be hosting the first of two running events for Thornbury Running Club on Thursday 18th April so the Oldbury Shop cakes will be much in demand.

This year the Sailing Club celebrates its 77th Anniversary. Our founder, the late Edmund Grace of the Anchor Inn, would be delighted that his dream to foster the sport of sailing in the district is thriving. We were pleased to hear that one of Edmund's founder colleagues and one of our Honorary Life Members, Derek Hand, is in his nineties and still sailing on the Hamble River, albeit in a fishing boat these days. It is to be hoped that the Club's other Honorary Life Member, Michael Dowdeswell, will be able to join us at our forthcoming Regatta.

Suitable tides allow the Club to hold its annual Regatta and YW Dayboat Open over the weekend of 6th and 7th June. Visiting boats will be arriving on the evening of 5th June. Breakfast will be served on both the following mornings, and refreshments will be available throughout both days. On the evening of Saturday 6th June there will be a Hog Roast served from the Boat Shed followed by a performance by the popular '*Port of Bristol Shanty Singers*' and the evening will progress with the '*Narwhal Monument'* group. The Shanty Singers are raising money for the '*Teenage Cancer Trust*' which the Club is more than happy to support. Tickets for the Saturday evening will be on sale to members and visitors via the Club website and Oldbury Shop. Those of you who would also like to watch the sailing during the daytime will be most welcome to do so. Further details will be in May's 4ward.

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

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

Report – March Meeting

Members were welcomed to the meeting by Jill, and informed that there was information on the board about the new open-learning platform, and also *MyWI*. The bulb catalogue is now available. Last month's Seated Zumba with Philomena had proved very enjoyable, and Jill hoped no-one was too stiff the next day.

Jill then introduced our speaker for the evening, Natasha Purdy. Natasha had been a chef with South Gloucestershire Council, moving on to M&S, and later Amazon, where she often catered for 5,000 people per day. She promoted healthy, seasonal eating, growing many vegetables and herbs herself. She regularly judged entries at local Agricultural and Flower Shows. Her favoured diet was based around the Mediterranean one, using olive oil instead of vegetable oils which she felt were too processed. She also favoured supporting British Farmers, and using Farm Shops wherever possible. All her jams and chutneys were made year on year, so that what she made this year would last until the same time next year.

We were all able to taste some of the food she had produced, including olive bread, chutneys, tomato soup and sourdough. She always used Spelt Flour in her baking, and insisted that a Judge should always taste every item in the competition; simply looking at or cutting a cake in half was not adequate.

Jennie thanked Natasha for an entertaining and informative evening and Mum for handing around the delicious food.

For this year's Group Meeting we are partnered with Compton, who are leading. They propose a Ceilidh with a Ploughman's upper. We are to provide the food and a fruit hamper for the raffle. This will take place on Friday, 8th May at 7pm in Easter Compton Hall. Tickets will be £10.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 14th April when our speaker will be Rachel Pilling talking about "Planting Pollinators"

Ann Jones, Hill & Rockhampton WI Secretary

Rockhampton 100 Club Winners –

February	March
15 Mike and Gwen Finding	60 Nicola Dunn
42 Mrs Irish	49 Ian Williams
03 Alex and Patsy Hurley	12 Brian Woodward
52 Sophie and Charlotte Williams	51 Ian and Thomas Williams

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UKRAINIAN-BRITISH AFTERNOON

AMATEUR COMEDY SKITS & SHORT PLAYS!

UKRAINIAN CAKES, TREATS & TEA!

9th MAY

Doors Open at **2:00pm**
Show Starts at **2:30pm**

Oldbury Village Community Hall

Donation: £8

All proceeds to support
Elderly People (75+)
in Ukraine, Kharkiv

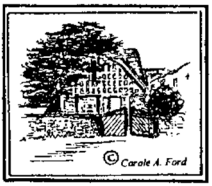
Church Services for April 2026

St. Mary's Thornbury	**St. Arilda's Oldbury**	**St. Mary's Shepperdine**	**St. Oswald's Rockhampton**
2nd 7.00pm Maundy Thursday Agape Supper	**3rd 3.00pm** Good Friday Walk of Witness	**1st 7.00pm** Holy Week Wednesday Taize Service	Please check locally
5th 10.30am All Age Easter Holy Communion	**5th 6.00am** Dawn Service With Holy Communion	*Open as a place of pilgrimage and prayer.*	*Liz Cullimore churchwarden 01454 412208 or 07876352680 email cullimorel@aol.com*
12th 8.00am Holy Communion	**12th** *No Service*	*For details phone 01454 260316*	
12th 10.00am Benefice Service St Mary's Hall			
19th 10.30am Holy Communion	**19th 6.00pm** Evening Prayer		**26th 10.30am** *Holy Communion Service* *Rev Rob Axford*
26th 10.30am Holy Communion	**26th** *No Service* *See Shepperdine*	**26th 6.00pm** Evensong BCP	

St Mary's Music, Third-Sunday Afternoon Concert
Sunday 19 April at 4pm in St Mary's Church, Thornbury

Our next Sunday Afternoon concert features the *Dodington Parish Band* who are based in Yate. The band was formed in 1996, the idea being to create a band for the local community and the surrounding area. The band aims to enhance and widen the musical opportunities of all its members, but particularly for the younger players. They perform at many local events and play a wide variety of music.

I am sure this will be a most entertaining concert. As usual, there will be refreshments after the performance. Entry is free, and there will be a retiring collection, the proceeds of which go to St Mary's Music.

		
Catholic	**Morton Baptist**	**Thornbury Quakers**
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	Morning Service Every Sunday at 10.30am *See* *https://mortonbaptist.org* for details	Chantry Community Centre on Castle Street Sunday 10.30am Further details contact Sheila Waters on *07738495776*

Refresh!

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

Sunday 5th April

No Refresh! – Easter Sunday

Sunday 3rd May

Everyone's Invited!

Christian Comment

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road…?" (Luke 24:32)

As spring quietly stretches its arms and the days grow lighter, Easter arrives. Often wrapped in the familiar — chocolate eggs on the shelves, hot cross buns in the toaster, plans coming together for time with family and friends. On the surface, it can all feel rather ordinary.

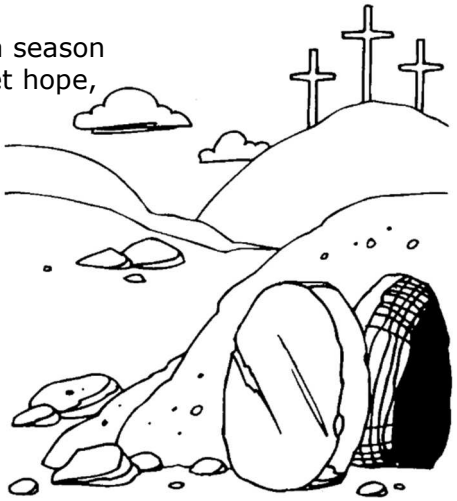
And yet, at the heart of Easter is a story that turns everything upside down — and invites us into an adventure.

We tend to picture resurrection in the brightness of Easter morning — the stone rolled away, the garden waking, the first light of dawn. And we will celebrate that here, gathering early as the village stirs. But the mystery of Easter begins earlier, in the quiet darkness of Holy Saturday, with the tomb still closed and the world holding its breath. Before anything is seen, before joy is felt, something is already happening.

Perhaps that's where the adventure truly begins — not in certainty, but in stepping into the unknown. Like setting out on a journey without a map, Easter invites us to trust that even in the dark, even when we cannot yet see the ending, new life is quietly unfolding.

Because so often, change doesn't begin in the bright, certain moments, but in the hidden ones — in the waiting, the not knowing, the long nights. Easter tells us that God is present there too: not only in the joy of a new dawn, but in the stillness that comes before it.

And so, whether you find yourself in a season of light or shadow, celebration or quiet hope, this story gently draws us in — an adventure of hope, where new life may already be stirring, even now.



Wishing you a peaceful and Joyful Easter season from all of us at St Arilda's.

Revd Joy

The Opening of The Armstrong

This is an historic moment for The Armstrong, when the doors are opened again after six years of lockdown. The scaffolding is down and the new foyer and renovated Cossham Hall are ready for business! The Cossham has a new faceted curved grid ceiling, which will enhance the acoustics and ambience at all future events. Visit the website to see videos and photos, and better still, book up for the free "*tea and tour*" events, which are planned for April 7th, 8th and 9th. Tickets for these are available at *www.the armstrong.co.uk/whats-on*

As visitors and bookers will find, the venue has been professionally restored, and the events team has already been inundated with enquiries and bookings for the upcoming year. If you have an event / party / occasion / workshop that is coming up, then please go to the website to view the specifications, our FAQs, and how to book: *bookings.thearmstrong.co.uk*

The venue re-opens on Sunday 10th April with a two-weekend feast of events organised by Thornbury Arts Festival, now returning to its original home. Alfie Moore, ex-policeman, stand-up comedian and radio presenter will open the festival with his hilarious brand of humour, however, tickets for his show have already **SOLD OUT** in a mind-boggling first morning of sales!

The programme also includes a screening of *The Audience* with Helen Mirren, a brilliant production from The National Theatre. The streaming of iconic plays from The National Theatre will be a regular feature of the programme offered by The Armstrong, as well as other cinema events.

Please note that Thornbury Arts Festival events are booked directly with TAF on their website *www.thornburyartsfestival.org.uk* but if you have any difficulties, please call *07591 030785*.

The Armstrong is also joining with Thornbury Town Council and others in a bid to be the first Town of Culture, a new government initiative to celebrate community and culture in towns across the country. The re-opening of The Armstrong will help significantly in this inspiring endeavour.

The efforts to raise sufficient funds to complete the project by bringing the 280-seater hall back into use will continue. The hall is now called The Lansdown in honour of Maggie Lansdown's generous donation. But for now, The Armstrong wish to thank everyone who has supported the project, and who helped in any way to make Phase One of the regeneration of this much-loved venue possible. It has been very heartwarming to receive so much encouragement from the community.

Keep in touch with what's on by visiting the website and social media posts.
www.thearmstrong.co.uk

"Life influenced by our River Severn"
An ongoing saga

Next morning, having slept soundly on board, I was tidying up the cabin while waiting for crew members from our, and two other barges, to arrive, when I heard their approaching voices. Suddenly, there was a yell, and a loud splash, and a bit of a kerfuffle. Dashing up the companion way, I was in time to witness a drenched figure being dragged aboard spluttering and swearing. Apparently, one of the other third hands, no doubt still half asleep, on boarding, had, in the dim morning light, stepped onto the reflection of the barge, not the deck. Poor old "Stormy", now wide awake, stood bedraggled in an old Army greatcoat and balaclava, with a kit bag, shivering, and dripping. What a way to achieve lasting fame in the Fleet. His misfortune was our gain though, as we let go and got under way first, gaining pole position of our little convoy. This was important, for Gloucester lock could only take two smaller barges at one time. After our customary mug of tea, liberally laced with condensed milk, we set off, each taking a spell at steering, whilst the other two breakfasted. My first job was to clean the wheelhouse windows using that well-tried formula of fresh water, vinegar, and sheets of newspaper. Next job was taking advantage of the fresh canal water, scrubbing down the barge from bow to stern, decks and topsides, to get rid of the residual Severn mud and salt from yesterday's trip.

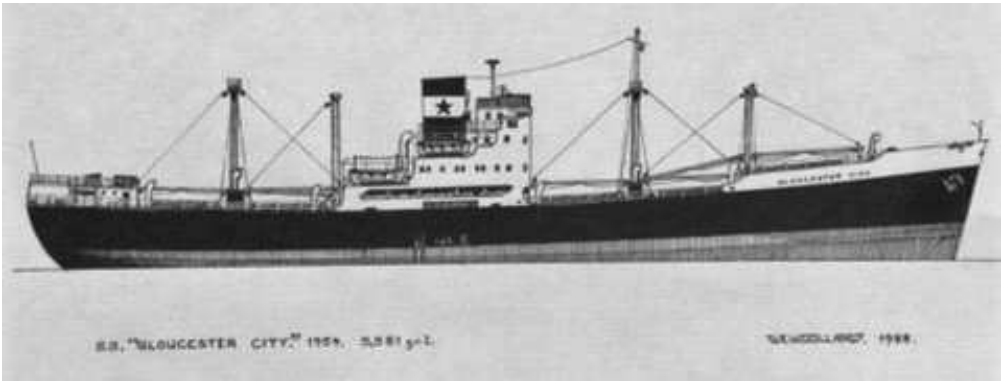
For the first mile or so, the canal ran alongside the tidal River, separated by a narrow strip of land, and a stone wall, giving grand vistas of hills, fields, and the greenery of the Forest of Dean, while to starboard trees and thick shrubbery ran down to the canal. Onward, under the swinging span of the mighty Severn railway bridge, past the old, disused, timber ponds, now inhabited by swans, duck, moorhens, and coots, and, it was reputed, large Pike, and so to Purton - a long blast on the siren to warn the bridge keeper to open up the two sets of bridges under his control. Here, a 'Passman' was attached to the convoy to cycle along the towpath opening one half of each bridge, all the way to Gloucester. We always said, "sixteen miles, and sixteen bridges en-route". The canal passage seemed quite leisurely, owing to the speed restriction in force, the main engine burbling away as we passed open countryside, woods, and villages. Places passed by included the mouth of the river Cam, and Frampton with its church and chocolate factory, from where a family called Ballinger still ran a long-boat with chocolate crumb up to Bournville for processing. Then the 'junction', where the old Stroudwater canal crossed the Sharpness to Gloucester canal, and where a ship repair yard, and dry dock still functioned. On past Hardwick, Moreton Valence, four-mile bend, Quedgley with Sellars bridge where the Pilot Inn looked down on passing traffic, through a cutting, up to the two-mile turn where the sewage works, though hidden from sight, gave off a discouraging aura. Nearing Gloucester now, we ran alongside

the A38, past Hempstead, Monkmeadow Dock to the port side, (our main base, local office, and stores), and to starboard timber yards all busy unloading timber from big lighters, stacking the deals (planks) in neat piles and into sheds.

Just before the last bridge, and Gloucester Docks, the third hand was given his regular task; nip ashore with his bike as the barge went slowly along the quay wall, cycle up Llanthony Road onto Bristol Road, then along to Commercial Street, and back down to the lockside, shopping along the way. A packet of digestives, another can of condensed milk, and a bag of fresh doughnuts from the Spa Cafe, and perhaps other (sometimes spurious) requisites, such as non-flammable matches, or a dozen of those new lightweight, perforated, condoms, etc. This all had to be completed before the barge locked down into the River, thus making re-boarding difficult, and causing delay.

Leaving Gloucester lock..... More to follow.

George Woollard



A larger 'local' vessel, trading Bristol Channel ports to North America

Octopus Drama Group - Box Office Opening on 2 May for "*Murder at the Margate Majestica*" in mid-June

The box office for Octopus Drama Group's forthcoming original new murder mystery comedy *'Murder at the Margate Majestica*', written by Paul Harrod, will open at Rosie & Rex gift shop at the top of Thornbury High Street on Saturday 2nd May. Full details will appear in the May edition of 4ward. Performances from Wednesday 10 to Saturday 13 June will take place at Christ the King Church Hall in Castle Street. The cast of thirteen are already in rehearsals and having a lot of fun in doing so! Join us for an evening of fast-paced, playful intrigue - packed with physical comedy, visual gags and sparkling dialogue.

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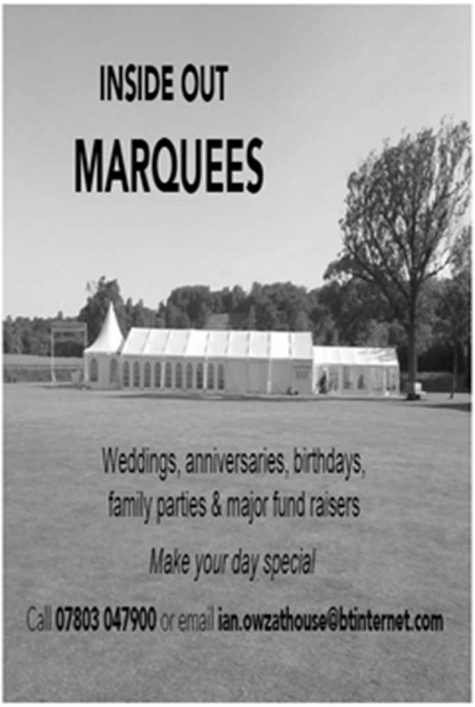

2026 is the 20th Anniversary of the Severn Vale

Art Trail

Celebrating local artists and their work taking place from Thursday 30th April to Monday 4th May

The Severn Vale Art Trail is based in Thornbury, and reaches out from Slimbridge in the north to Frampton Cotterell in the south, covering Berkeley, Dursley, North Nibley, Wotton Under Edge, Charfield, Wickwar, Tytherington and Alveston, with many other villages in between. It's a great way to get 'off the beaten track' and discover some truly unique locations, and see talented artists and makers.

The Severn Vale Art Trail prides itself on being a collaborative and community-minded event which strives to create an environment that is welcoming to all. There are 60 artists in over 30 venues exhibiting over five days! Artists and makers show their work in their homes, studios, community venues and churches, bringing creativity to every corner of the community. All the artwork exhibited is original, and made in the Severn Vale, with contemporary and traditional art showcased side by side in a diverse range of mediums.

There are several artists new to the trail this year, and a huge variety of art with prices to suit all pockets. The Trail includes sculptures, paintings, photographs, ceramics, upholstery, jewellery, woodturning, plus a whole lot more - there's something for everyone.

Many venues are serving refreshments, making for the perfect refreshment pit stop when needed! Spend just an hour, an afternoon, a day or even several days exploring the Severn Vale Art Trail, and enjoy the opportunity to view and purchase original artwork.

Local group venues this year include Rockhampton Village Hall, and, in Thornbury, St Mary's Church, St Paul's Church, Christ the King Church, the United Reformed Church, the Hatch, and Thornbury Museum.

Thursday 30th April:	10am - 5pm
Friday 1st May:	10am - 5pm
Saturday 2nd May:	10am - 5pm
Sunday 3rd May:	10am - 5pm
Monday 4th May:	10am - 5pm

For details of all the artists and venues (including accessibility, directions, and opening hours) please visit *www.severnvalearttrail.org* or pick up one of the printed trail guides with a map from local shops and cafes.

Follow the Severn Vale Art Trail on Instagram and Facebook (@severnvalearttrail) for all the latest updates

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Collectors' Book Fair
Saturday 25th April, 10am-12pm, at Easter Compton Village Hall

This annual Book Fair, at Easter Compton Village Hall, will be celebrating its 20th anniversary when it takes place again on Saturday 25th April. Now one of only three national events run by the Observer's Books Collectors' Society, it 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 and admission is free. Advice and valuation on books can be obtained from the expert stallholders who come from all over the country to attend. Refreshments available. Telephone *07989 494159* for further details.

Shanties at *The Ship* with *The Port of Bristol Shanty Singers*
Saturday 25 April at 7.30pm at *The Ship*, Bristol Road, Alveston

The Port of Bristol Shanty Singers are rolling up at *The Ship* in Alveston on Saturday April 25th. A gathering of shipmates has been convened by the Action Arts Group to keep the music going and the smiles on our faces!

ACTION ARTS GROUP

The Port of Bristol Shanty group currently performs predominantly to raise funds for *The Teenage Cancer Trust*, whilst keeping the tales of old Bristol's seafaring alive, creating new songs and revitalising the old. Visit their website *www.pobshantycrew.co.uk to* get to know the members of the crew. Tickets cost £15 and can be booked by emailing *AAGThornbury@gmail.com* or ringing *01454 850933.*

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A SERVICE FROM PLANNING TO COMPLETION

Olveston Young Farmers

As this year's Secretary of Olveston Young Farmers' Club, I would like to begin by introducing myself. My name is Lily Gibbons, and I have been a member of the club for just over a year. I now have the pleasure of writing the monthly updates, taking over from Alice, who did a fantastic job last year keeping everyone informed, and sharing the club's achievements. I hope to continue that by giving readers a clearer insight into what Young Farmers is about.

Young Farmers can sometimes be associated with outdated stereotypes, but in reality, it is a supportive and forward-thinking organisation that plays an important role within rural communities. Even in the short time I have been involved, I have seen first-hand the confidence, friendships and opportunities it provides.

Olveston Young Farmers' Club is a thriving part of the local community and the 2025–2026 year marks our 91st year running. With around 50 members currently involved, the club continues to grow and evolve. Open to members aged 13 to 28, we offer a mix of competitions, skills' development, social events and practical experiences. For those involved in farming and rural life, Young Farmers offers not only opportunities to learn and compete, but also a strong support network that helps to combat isolation and bring people together.

We are proud to be part of the Gloucestershire Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (GFYFC), one of 48 county federations within the National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC). GFYFC currently consists of 10 active clubs across the county, and offers young people opportunities to compete, develop skills and socialise. Nationally, NFYFC represents over 23,000 members across more than 500 clubs.

Olveston Young Farmers have had another busy period with a variety of competitions, educational meetings and social events.

Six Olveston members took part in the County Quiz Night at the end of January, finishing in third place. Shortly afterwards, on 17th February, a team of five members represented the club at the County Bowling Competition, where we were delighted to come second.

February was a particularly full month for meetings. On 2nd February we held a farm safety talk, following recent incidents involving young farmers in Gloucestershire. The evening focused on both physical safety and mental health within farming, highlighting how important it is that people in the industry feel supported. This was followed by pig stock judging on 9th February, a pancake-making social on 16th February — where more flour ended up on members than in bowls — and dairy stock judging on 23rd February, where we collaborated with Sodbury Vale YFC.

During February the club also took part in a mini documentary project led by one of our members as part of her college film work. The project focuses on agriculture, Young Farmers, and mental health within farming. Members took part in short interviews during one of our meetings, sharing their experiences of being involved in the organisation, and highlighting the role Young Farmers plays in supporting the farming community.

March continued to be a busy month. Six members attended South West Area Weekend in Weymouth from 6th–8th March, where Young Farmers from across the region competed in a variety of activities including arts and public speaking. Although members of Olveston YFC didn't compete, we still showed our support.

On 22nd March we are hosting our annual charity Tractor Run, which will hopefully bring the local community together and be a fantastic day. Events like this are always a highlight in the club calendar, and help strengthen connections between Young Farmers and the wider community.

Members will compete at the Carcase, Dairy and Milking Day on 29th March, where we will be putting forward a strong team to represent the club. March meetings included a skittles social, carcase stock judging, a scavenger hunt, which remains a firm club favourite, and horse stock judging. The past few months have been particularly stock-judging heavy, but this has been important preparation ahead of upcoming competitions. Looking ahead to April, the focus will turn to preparations for Rally - the biggest competition day in the GFYFC calendar. Rally brings together clubs from across the county to compete in a wide range of activities, from stock judging and sports, to arts and crafts. April meetings will therefore focus largely on rally preparation, alongside key events including Pre-Rally on 12th April, and the county Tug of War competition on 25th April.

We have also recently shared a 'save the date' for a new event we are trialling this year - our Summer Ball on 6th June. Planned as a relaxed social evening, the event will give members and friends of the club the chance to come together and celebrate the end of a busy year.

Alongside our events and meetings, we have also been developing our social media presence to raise awareness of the club. Our TikTok content has now reached over 250,000 views with nearly 15,000 likes! While Olveston is one of the largest clubs in the county, we have often been one of the quieter ones in terms of visibility, so this has been a great way to showcase our members and highlight what the club offers.

If you, or someone you know, would be interested in joining Olveston YFC or you would like to find out more, we would love to hear from you. New members are always welcome, and there is something for everyone to get involved in.

Lily Gibbons. Club Secretary. olvestonyfc@gloucestershireyfc.co.uk

Lydney Spring Gardens Open Days 2026

Lydney Park Estate, Lydney Park, Lydney, Gloucestershire, GL15 5JW
Gardens open at 10am, and close at 5pm with last admissions at 4pm.
Cost of entry is £7.50 per adult. Dogs on leads. Picnics welcome.

Friday 3rd April
Saturday 4th April
Sunday 5th April
Monday 6th April

Friday 10th April
Saturday 11th April
Sunday 12th April

Friday 17th April
Saturday 18th April
Sunday 19th April

Friday 24th April
Saturday 25th April
Sunday 26th April

Friday 1st May
Saturday 2nd May
Sunday 3rd May

Monday 4th May
Friday 8th May
Saturday 9th May
Sunday 10th May

Friday 15th May
Saturday 16th May
Sunday 17th May

Friday 22nd May
Saturday 23rd May
Sunday 24th May
Monday 25th May

Friday 29th May
Saturday 30th May
Sunday 31st May

Friday 5th June
Saturday 6th June
Sunday 7th June

Thornbury and District League of Friends (TADLOF)

TADLOF invites you to a **FREE coffee / tea and cakes morning** on **Wednesday 6 May 10am – 12pm** at **The Armstrong in Thornbury**.

The League of Friends support local health and well-being groups in the area with financial grants. Twenty-three donations were made in 2025. Among new recipients were *Thornbury Wayfinders*, *Moon and Lotus*, *Severn Area Rescue Association*, and *Rockhampton Ravens*.

Krunch and *Jigsaw* have received an award since we became a grant-giving charity in 2021.

Please be our guests and join us on 6th May, in the surroundings of the refurbished Armstrong Foyer.

There will be a raffle on the day and all profits will go directly to supplementing this year's funding programme, so please bring along a little cash!!

Colouring (for young or old!) kindly created for us by Lorna Page

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Tide Table: Inward Rocks, River Severn

Warning: actual high or low water can occur 30 minutes or more before or after predicted times. Discrepancies are caused by local geography and weather conditions; not to be used for navigation purposes!

April 2026

Day	High	Low	High	Low	High	Phase	Sun rise	Sun set	Moon rise	Moon set
Wed 01		3:04 AM BST 1.09 m	8:07 AM BST 10.58 m	3:28 PM BST 0.72 m	8:28 PM BST 10.73 m		6:45 AM BST	7:43 PM BST	7:25 PM BST	6:21 AM BST
Thu 02		3:46 AM BST 0.75 m	8:47 AM BST 11.27 m	4:07 PM BST 0.55 m	9:07 PM BST 11.33 m	Full Moon	6:43 AM BST	7:45 PM BST	8:40 PM BST	6:31 AM BST
Fri 03		4:23 AM BST 0.62 m	9:25 AM BST 11.71 m	4:42 PM BST 0.58 m	9:43 PM BST 11.67 m		6:41 AM BST	7:47 PM BST	9:56 PM BST	6:43 AM BST
Sat 04		4:57 AM BST 0.67 m	10:01 AM BST 11.84 m	5:14 PM BST 0.76 m	10:18 PM BST 11.69 m		6:39 AM BST	7:48 PM BST	11:11 PM BST	6:58 AM BST
Sun 05		5:27 AM BST 0.84 m	10:36 AM BST 11.65 m	5:43 PM BST 1.04 m	10:53 PM BST 11.41 m		6:36 AM BST	7:50 PM BST		7:16 AM BST
Mon 06		5:57 AM BST 1.12 m	11:11 AM BST 11.17 m	6:13 PM BST 1.40 m	11:27 PM BST 10.86 m		6:34 AM BST	7:52 PM BST	12:25 AM BST	7:42 AM BST
Fri 10	1:21 AM BST 8.41 m	8:23 AM BST 2.82 m	1:50 PM BST 7.89 m	8:49 PM BST 3.20 m		Last Quarter	6:25 AM BST	7:59 PM BST	3:55 AM BST	11:12 AM BST
Sat 11	2:18 AM BST 7.67 m	9:22 AM BST 3.21 m	2:59 PM BST 7.26 m	9:55 PM BST 3.47 m			6:23 AM BST	8:00 PM BST	4:20 AM BST	12:27 PM BST
Sun 12	3:39 AM BST 7.25 m	10:35 AM BST 3.32 m	4:28 PM BST 7.13 m	11:11 PM BST 3.39 m			6:21 AM BST	8:02 PM BST	4:39 AM BST	1:46 PM BST
Fri 17		3:05 AM BST 1.06 m	8:23 AM BST 11.30 m	3:30 PM BST 0.73 m	8:43 PM BST 11.60 m	New Moon	6:10 AM BST	8:10 PM BST	5:45 AM BST	8:46 PM BST
Sat 18		3:51 AM BST 0.55 m	9:02 AM BST 12.14 m	4:14 PM BST 0.35 m	9:22 PM BST 12.31 m		6:08 AM BST	8:12 PM BST	6:03 AM BST	10:20 PM BST
Sun 19		4:35 AM BST 0.22 m	9:42 AM BST 12.63 m	4:58 PM BST 0.18 m	10:01 PM BST 12.65 m		6:06 AM BST	8:14 PM BST	6:28 AM BST	11:52 PM BST
Fri 24	1:11 AM BST 10.09 m	8:32 AM BST 1.65 m	1:45 PM BST 9.38 m	9:01 PM BST 2.20 m		First Quarter	5:55 AM BST	8:22 PM BST	11:56 AM BST	3:31 AM BST
Sat 25	2:17 AM BST 9.13 m	9:38 AM BST 2.13 m	2:57 PM BST 8.54 m	10:13 PM BST 2.54 m			5:53 AM BST	8:24 PM BST	1:20 PM BST	3:51 AM BST
Sun 26	3:34 AM BST 8.53 m	10:56 AM BST 2.29 m	4:17 PM BST 8.20 m	11:33 PM BST 2.49 m			5:51 AM BST	8:25 PM BST	2:40 PM BST	4:06 AM BST
Thu 30		2:35 AM BST 1.38 m	7:43 AM BST 10.13 m	2:59 PM BST 1.19 m	8:04 PM BST 10.28 m		5:43 AM BST	8:32 PM BST	7:41 PM BST	4:51 AM BST

FREE EVENTS AT THORNBURY LIBRARY IN APRIL

LIBRARY OPENING TIMES

Monday*	10am-5pm
Tuesday	OPEN ACCESS
Wednesday	10am-5pm
Thursday	10am-5pm
Friday	10am-5pm
Saturday	9.30-12.30
Sunday	OPEN ACCESS

*Except Bank Holidays

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Wednesday 8th April

10.30-12pm

"Have You Read?"
Friday 10th April
2pm
Talk about books and have a cuppa!

Need help with IT?
Book a session with our IT volunteer on Thursday mornings

Children's Events

Rhymes & Stories — **Mondays 9.30-10**
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Lego Club — **Saturdays 9.30-10.30**
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Calendar Dates for Oldbury

10th	April	Fri	Cricket Club Quiz Night, Playing Fields Pavilion, 7pm
11th	April	Sat	Games Night. Memorial Hall, 7.30pm
17th	April	Fri	Line Dancing. Memorial Hall
18th	April	Sat	Spring Fayre. Memorial Hall, 10.00am – 1.00pm
25th	April	Sat	Open Mic Night. Memorial Hall, 7.30pm
	April / May		Women's 6 Nations Rugby. Memorial Hall
9th	May	Sat	Ukrainian – British Afternoon, Memorial Hall 2pm
16th	May	Sat	Spanish Inspired Evening. Memorial Hall
5th	Sept	Sat	Oldbury Produce and Craft Show. Memorial Hall

OVCC Film Show, second Friday of month, Memorial Hall, doors open at 7.15pm

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

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2026	**2025**	**2024**
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