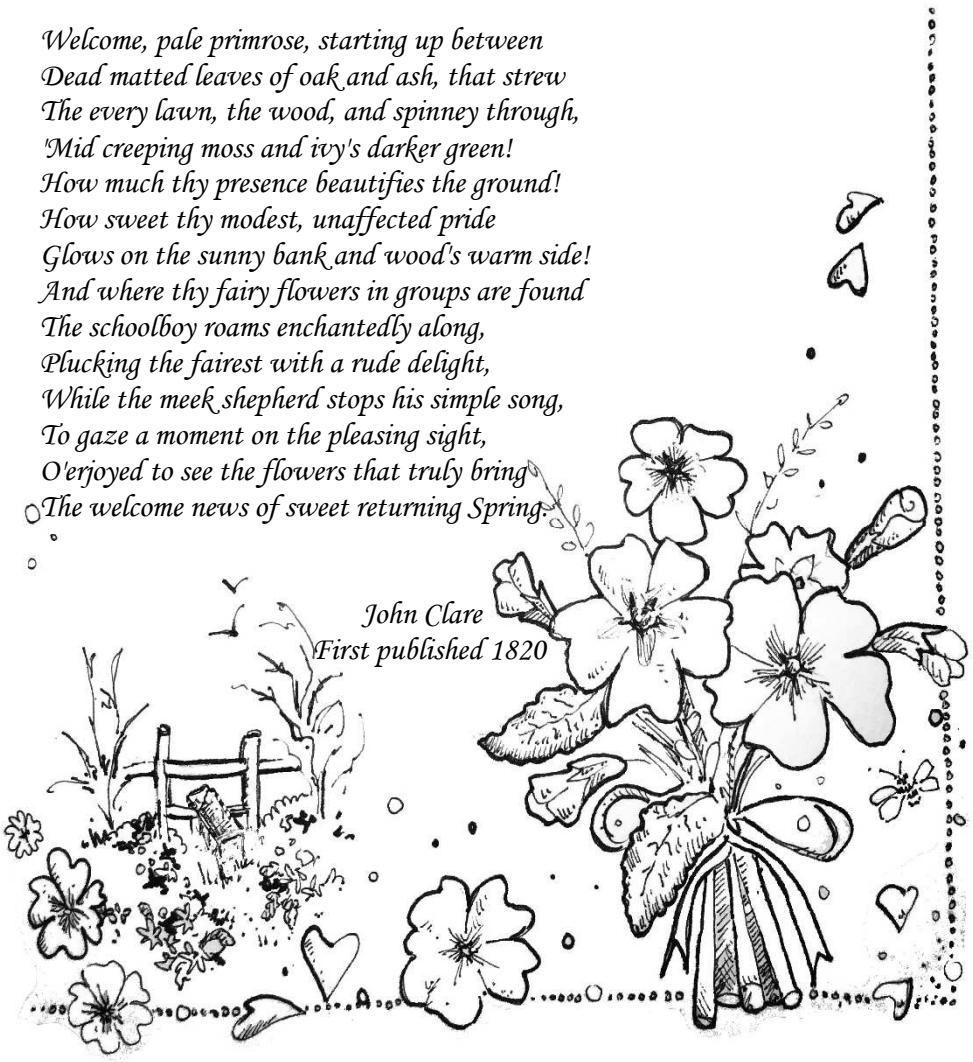
4-ward

March 2026

Ode to a Primrose

Welcome, pale primrose, starting up between
Dead matted leaves of oak and ash, that strew
The every lawn, the wood, and spinney through,
'Mid creeping moss and ivy's darker green!
How much thy presence beautifies the ground!
How sweet thy modest, unaffected pride
Glows on the sunny bank and wood's warm side!
And where thy fairy flowers in groups are found
The schoolboy roams enchantedly along,
Plucking the fairest with a rude delight,
While the meek shepherd stops his simple song,
To gaze a moment on the pleasing sight,
O'erjoyed to see the flowers that truly bring
The welcome news of sweet returning Spring.

John Clare
First published 1820



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

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Editorial

Our March edition is crammed full of reading, reports, posters, and sadly, also tributes and funeral arrangements for another two long-term Oldbury residents who passed away recently. Both Peter Everton and Gerald Yates played a big part in our community life over the years, and both had also contributed to 4ward. I was very touched when Gerald's family asked us to reprint "*My Life with Sheep*", when they found a copy that he had proudly kept among his papers, and it was Peter Everton who wrote one of the most dramatic stories that we have ever had in 4ward - a true account of abandoning ship in the North Sea, which we also hope to reprint in the near future.

Both the Memorial Hall and the Community Shop held AGMs recently and both reported on very successful years; the Hall is now in almost constant use as an entertainment space, and the success of the Shop is allowing them to donate another £15,000 to good causes. A really special Thank You to the Shop committee from us here at 4ward, for without their very generous donation of £1000, and their monthly full-page paid advert, we simply could not cover our printing costs and the magazine would be very thin indeed.

So, with more volunteering opportunities this Spring below, all there is left to say is 'three cheers for volunteers everywhere', including ourselves!

Chris

St Arilda's Church Spring Clean! Saturday 21 March at 10am

No need to book! If you can help, just turn up armed with dusters, dustpans, brushes, Brasso or anything else you may need (wax polish for pews provided).

Oldbury-on-Severn Parish Litter Pick

The Parish Council is organising a parish litter pick for Oldbury, Shepperdine, Cowhill, and Kington, on **Saturday 14 March**, starting at **10am** at the Playing Field carpark, Westmarsh Lane. All participants are invited back to The Anchor Inn for "coffee and cake" afterwards – I would like to express our grateful thanks for this kind invitation and their hospitality. Please let me know if you want to help, so I can get equipment ordered from South Glos Council. Please do bring gloves and wear Hi-Vis clothing if you have any. Thank you.

Matthew Riddle, 07877413298, matthewriddle1967@googlemail.com

Memorial Hall Matters February 2026

The Hall's AGM was held last month and, although it is not the most interesting of proceedings, I was able to provide feedback on our achievements for 2025. I am pleased to report another successful year in terms of grant applications, continued improvement to the Hall's infrastructure, and many entertaining events.

Over the last twelve months we have improved the main hall by installing insulated plasterboard that will help retain the heat, and also reduce the mould that appeared from time to time on the back walls. At the same time, we replaced the radiators and many people helped with the redecoration of the Hall. We also improved the insulation of the loft spaces and boarded them out to improve storage.

Activity wise, we organised a number of events in 2025, some trusted favourites, and additional ones like the Bollywood Evening, which was a great success. Additionally, Matthew and his team did a great job in re-introducing the Craft and Produce show. This proved to be exceptionally popular, so this will become an annual event. I must also mention the Themed Dinner organised by Angela. Apart from being a great night, it is a very good fundraiser for the hall.

I also thanked the community of Oldbury for their work and support over the last twelve months - as they say, many hands make light work.

Linda, in her capacity as Treasurer, presented the accounts, which have been checked by Robert Gazard. The Hall has managed to increase its reserve in The Dudley Building Society, which provides a good 'insurance policy' should anything go wrong or need urgently replacing. The Committee recognised the need to increase this reserve over the midterm, as building repairs or replacement items can be expensive. For the year there was a surplus of circa £11,000, which reflects the hard work the committee has undertaken over the last twelve months.

The floor was completed on time and what a splendid job was done!! Our first event was a charity night where *The Narwhal Monument* played with *The Keith Miller Experience* covering the interludes. A total of £450 was shared between the British Heart Foundation and The Anthony Nolan Trust. Great job, thank you to all who attended and supported this event.

Activity this month, as always, has been based around the rugby Six Nations, and again it was disappointing to see England outplayed by the Scots.

Our last event in February will be *The Whodunnit Theatre Group*'s presentation of '*Anchorman Down!*' Thank you to Jan for organising this event. This will be their third year at the Hall, and if the other plays are anything to go by, it will go down really well.

March continues with the Rugby, with Super Saturday being the climax on the 14th of March. On that day we will be screening all the games, with a meal (needs to be pre-booked) between the second and third games.

Oldbury on Severn Memorial Hall and the Friends of Oldbury School are running a joint fundraising event on Saturday the 21st of March at the Hall. This is in the form of a Race Night which has proved to be a very successful evening in the past where a fun time meets a good cause to the benefit of both!!

Just thinking about April, there are three events which will hopefully be of interest.

On Saturday April the 11th we are holding a Games evening where there will be a number of table games to play. Whether you're competitive or just in it for fun, there's something for everyone. Entrance is free, and we would also be encouraging people to bring along their favourite games, (card and board, not electronic) on the night. The bar will be available, so you could just come for the company. Bring your friends, meet new people, and enjoy a great night of games and laughter.

On the morning of Saturday April the 18th we have our Spring Fayre. There is always lots on offer (all local crafts and wares), as well as an enjoyable social morning with coffee and cake.

On Saturday April the 25th we have our first Open Mic Night of 2026, and I know Marg is busy preparing for another varied ensemble of performances.

Please feel free to contact me on any matters regarding the Hall.

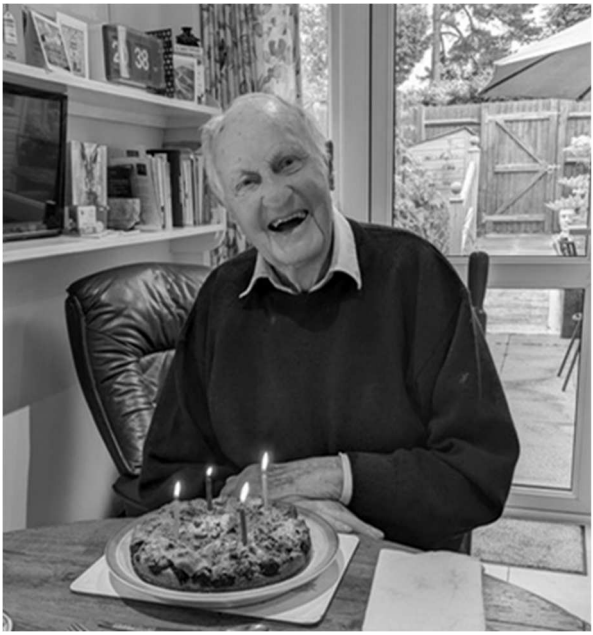
Chris Jennings 07740 934182

Oldbury on Severn - Memorial Hall 100 Club
Draw Winners

February Draw		
1st prize.	£20	Marie Stephens
2nd prize.	£15	Gerry Dyke
3rd prize.	£10	Mary Nichols
4th prize.	£10	Sarah Baker

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*

Peter Everton



Peter Everton sadly passed away, peacefully aged 94, on 3rd February this year at his home in Thornbury.

Peter and Kay Everton moved into Yew Tree Farm in Oldbury-on-Severn in 1985, having moved from West Sussex. Over the next 36 years they made it their own. Kay was working as a physiotherapist in Stroud, while Peter, an electrical engineer by training, developed his own business working from one of the farm's old outbuildings, making and selling electronic timing and scoreboard systems. Peter provided the Oldbury Cricket Club scoreboard, and was always happy to provide the digital racing clock for the Oldbury Fun Run. As links in the community were forged, the company developed from a one-man band into a thriving business employing six people, eventually needing to move out to larger premises. In 2003 they converted a redundant chicken shed along the road to the Power Station into their headquarters. The team worked hard, and had a lot of fun together, travelling all over the country and overseas installing their electronic systems. In 2005 Peter sold the business to an American company. Peter stayed on as MD for a couple of years and eventually hung up his boots in 2006 aged 75! We're sure this kept him so 'young' in mind. The company is still going, with some of the original employees now running the successful business.

Meanwhile Peter and family made good use of Yew Tree Farm. Peter loved to grow his own produce. He would spend hours tending his veg patch or - like many guys - sitting on his mower. Kay was in charge of the flower beds and turning a glut of produce into something delicious. Kay really wished to share their special home with others, so they had many parties, with Kay being a wonderful cook and hostess. Both Peter and Kay were active members of Thornbury Golf Club and made many friends there. Peter was honoured in his later years to be President of the club. He was also an active member of the village, wishing to make it a welcoming community. He and Kay organised the commemorative mugs for the Millenium, and the 2002 Golden Jubilee special edition plate. He was treasurer and chairman of the Parish Plan steering committee, looking into various projects such as broadband for the village, the football field and the pavilion. He became a volunteer in the village shop for a few years.

Later on, Kay was keen to downsize. She didn't want her daughters left with the task of getting rid of all the clutter that a life well-lived had accumulated. Much to Peter's reluctance he accepted. Many of his precious tools and items of equipment were sold or went to the tip! They sold their beloved home and in 2021 moved to Thornbury to a smaller house. Kay worked hard to make this house welcoming, but sadly only enjoyed it for a few months before she passed away. Peter managed to live on for 4 more years, and grew to learn that Kay was right all along. The new house was perfect for him. He adjusted well to widowed life, and with the help of his daughters and kind friends, still managed to lead a full life, playing golf and bridge, attending jazz club and investment club, throwing the odd party and squeezing some veg into his small garden. Latterly he was physically slowing down, but his brain was amazingly sharp, right up to the end. Whether this was thanks to keeping up with current affairs by reading the Guardian and FT from front to back, his ability to connect and socialise with others, his unique sense of humour, or his penchant for gin with Angostura bitters, we will never know! A mix of them all I guess.

He will be greatly missed by his daughters Jo, Fiona, and Sorrel, and his many friends.

The funeral will be held on

Wednesday 4th March at St Arilda's Church at 14.30
Interment 15.15

There will be a wake at Thornbury Golf Club from 16.00
All welcome

Stanley Gerald Yates (Gerald)

Gerald passed away peacefully in Southmead Hospital on 3rd February, aged 82.

Much loved husband to Diane, Dad to Sarah and Sally,
Father-in-Law to Julian and Scott,
and Grandad to Abigail, Samuel, Christopher and Rebecca.

The funeral service will take place at St Arilda's Church at 11.30am on Thursday 12th March followed by Refreshments in the Memorial Hall, Oldbury.

All Welcome

Family flowers only, Donations if desired to Southmead Hospital.

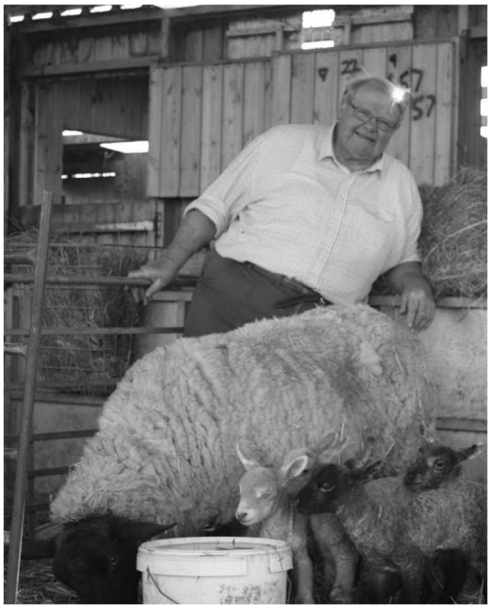
'My life with sheep' by Gerald Yates

I started keeping my own sheep mainly for lamb for my butchery business, then I gradually got more and more until I had to get help from my neighbour, John, to look after them. I keep Poll Dorsets for early lambs, and West Country Mules for later ones. It's North Country Mule for late lambing. I cross my ewes with Charollais or Suffolk Rams.

When I was growing up I used to help my uncle with the Clun Forest and Kerry Hill sheep at Knight's Farm in Shepperdine where he worked. I was ten year old then and I reckon I've been working with sheep ever since.

When I left school I worked with both sheep and cattle on Sheepcombe Farm for Cyril Limbrick at Tockington. Back in those days a favourite breed was the Hampshire Down but they are too good for the trade these days. I mean they carry too much fat on them and often the lambs are too big for the ewes. Charollais lambs have a finer head and finer confirmation altogether and so the ewes lamb more easily. Texel is another popular breed these days with good confirmation.

Sheep live up to ten years or more. I had one myself once that was an old pet lamb that we keep until she was ten. Most farmers keep a ewe until she has had four lots of lambs. The first year a ewe generally has only one lamb but as she get older the chances of her having twins or more goes up. Twins are good because it's twice the money! Some years I had ewes that had four lambs each. Then it was a job for our Di or our Sally to hand rear 'em on the bottle with the help of our very good neighbours, Simon, Sam and Victoria. It takes ten to twelve weeks to hand rear a lamb. To start with the lambs need the bottle four times a day then we gradually introduce pellets and cut down the bottle feeds.



They reckon you need an acre of land to keep four sheep but with sheep you have to keep moving em. I'm in, that I know a lot of people who like my sheep to winter graze their pastures down on the Meads, then you get the finer grasses growing which makes better hay for the horses. In the old days of mixed farms a lot of farmers would have kept sheep to follow the cows and clean up the pasture. In them days of course they would feed 'em on roots, turnips and the like, in the winter and the sheep would lamb out on the pasture. Nowadays we keep 'em in if they're due to lamb, just for a couple of days in the spring but longer if the weather be bad. The most trouble we have is not from bad weather but from foxes. That's why we keep 'em in for lambing.

I've never kept sheep dogs to round up my sheep, it's not as though they were out on a mountain side. I find the only dog I need to round 'em up is the cake bucket.

By Gerald Yates, as told to Chris Tymko in 2016

Silent Auction Success at The Anchor Inn!

What an incredible show of community spirit!

Local artist Lorna Page kindly donated her beautiful festive painting, "Hamish the Cow", to be auctioned in a silent auction – and what a result it was! Featuring the much-loved Highland cow in a Santa hat, the artwork captured hearts and raised smiles throughout the event.

Thanks to the generosity of everyone who placed bids – and, with the wonderful support of The Anchor Inn Oldbury, who matched the final silent auction price – an amazing £712.17 has been raised for Leukaemia UK.

We're also delighted to congratulate Debbie Barrett, who placed the winning bid and is now the proud owner of "Hamish the Cow"!

A huge thank you to Lorna for her talent and generosity, to all our customers at The Anchor Inn for their incredible support, and to everyone who took part and donated. Together, we've made a real difference for a fantastic cause.

Community. Kindness. Making it count.
James Sorrel

Friends of Oldbury School

Oldbury on Severn Memorial Hall

Present

A Night at the

RACES!

Saturday 21st March 2026

Ticket £8 available from Oldbury Community Shop or by scanning the QR Code

Doors open 7.30pm, first race at 8.00pm

Venue: Oldbury on Severn Memorial Hall

Bar Available

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Memorial Hall Event tickets

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

Opening hours

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
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Teas and Coffees served including Takeaways

For updates check:-
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Run by volunteers for the benefit of the community

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

Come and see. You may be surprised!

Shop Spot

We are pleased to confirm that we have had another successful year and are able to make yet further donations (£15,000 in total) to local good causes and local charities.

This includes £1,500 to the *Oldbury Memorial Hall* to fund a new patio table and a contribution towards an outside patio canopy. On the same theme, the same figure is going to *Oldbury School* towards an outside canopy in their Forest Area.

£900 donated to the *Busy Bees* for new play equipment, supporting our local nursery for local children, and £500 to the *Oldbury Cricket Club* as a contribution towards a practice mat.

£1000 to help support the costs of producing the local community *4Ward Magazine*, distributed to 650 local households in the Parish. [*If anyone would like to place an advert for their businesses in 4ward, please contact Kevin Evans (Treasurer for the Mag) at* kevincevans1964@gmail.com - *your support would be very welcome*].

£1200 to the *Oldbury Playing Fields Committee* (Parish Council) as a contribution to buy a second Defibrillator for Oldbury Village and £500 towards *Thornbury U10 Falcons* to buy new football shirts; local lads play in the team, and it is even managed by a local Dad.

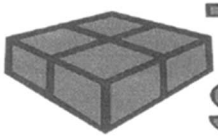
£1250 towards local charities *SARA* based at Sharpness, *Thornbury Baptist Church Care Fund* (which includes Thornbury Foodbank) and the *Great Western Air Ambulance Charity* based at Almondsbury.

Again £1000 each to local Thornbury Charities: *Jigsaw*, *Brain Tumour Support* and *St Peter's Hospice*.

Donations also made to Thornbury's *Volunteer Compost Group*, the *Thornbury Memory Cafe* and a donation to contribute towards the procurement of furniture for the recently renovated *Cossham Hall* in Thornbury.

We are so proud to make these donations, and it's a credit to all our Volunteers and our Shop customers. This brings our total donations to over £95,000 since our Shop opened… who would have thought this possible when we first opened our doors in 2014!

Chris Awde



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Maureen Hedges, Celebration of Life

Dave Hedges and family wish to thank all those who attended Maureen's Celebration of Life at St Oswald's Church on 7th January, and the Revd Freeman for conducting the service.

We would also like to thank all those who sent sympathy cards with meaningful messages (so many cards). Also, many thanks to the village ladies for the flower arrangements in the church, and to the ladies of the WI for teas and coffee in the hall. It's at times like this that you really feel the value and warmth of village life.

Many Thanks to All,
Dave Hedges and family

Thank You

On behalf of my family and myself, I want to express our heartfelt thanks for the many kind messages of sympathy we received following the passing of my wife, Patricia, on 2 January 2026.

The service at St Arilda's on 18 February was a truly special celebration of her life. Despite the stormy weather, more than 100 people attended. Seeing so many of you there, people who cared for her and for us, brought great comfort. Patricia would have been deeply touched by that warmth and support. After a long period of decline, she is now at peace.

It was also wonderful to see many of you at the Anchor afterwards. A total of £164 was collected, which will be donated to Dementia UK in Patricia's memory.

This has been a long and sometimes difficult chapter for those closest to it. Throughout it all, the kindness, patience, and understanding shown to me personally have meant more than I can fully express. Every message, every gesture of support, has helped carry me through.

Thank you again, and best wishes to you all,

Barry Turner

Severn Vale Crib League 2025/2026

Card players have a saying 'It's all right if you keep your eyes on the deck' which is another way of saying 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty'… Frank Sinatra

Eyes on the deck was not a part of Sporting Oldbury's mindset for the fixtures played in the first half of February as they lost both their games, to the Otters and the Pier View Wanderers. The Shipwrecked lost their first game in February and because of a bye and a cancellation they have not played since. At the time of writing there is one game still to play in February for both Sporting and The Shipwrecked, and then the local derby clash on 2nd March. It will be like the Earps versus the Clantons at the O.K. Corral, but hopefully not with the same finale.

Gerald Porter

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Hill & Rockhampton WI

Meeting Report – February 2026

Jill welcomed members to the meeting, on what was a very damp and dismal evening. Last month's lunchtime meeting had been very successful, and we hope to repeat it in the future. Our Resolution vote had been for Ensuring Accessible Public Toilets and Ann had informed Avon Federation. After upcoming events and other information had been circulated, the postponed Rockhampton 100 Club Draws were held; results given below.

We were then introduced to our guest speaker, or rather, event leader for the evening. Philomena Connelly was going to put us through our paces with Seated Zumba. Making sure we had plenty of room, we marched on the spot, bounced the ball around, touched our toes (or at least waved to them!) and stretched our arms and legs. Philomena's encouraging 'Whoo's' were infectious and the music had us singing along, which sometimes distracted us from what we were supposed to be doing with our arms and legs, causing as much laughter as confusion. At the end, after a cool down stretch, we all felt energised and happy. Sarah thanked Philomena for a fun evening.

Our next Institute meeting will be on Tuesday 10 March at 7pm, when Natasha Purdy will be sharing hints and tips on preparing items for local produce shows.

Ann Jones, Hill & Rockhampton WI Secretary

This month there were three **Rockhampton 100 Club Draws** as follows:

December 2025 Draw:	1. Nigel Jackson	2. Mike & Gwen Finding
	3. Beth England	4. John Snowden
Christmas Bonus Draw:	1. Charlie & Chris Till	2. Harry & Lily Hook
	3. Sophie Williams	4. James Cumber
January 2026 Draw:	1. Amy & Charlie Bryant	2. Brian Woodward
	3. Richard Child	4. Mike & Sandy Good

The draw for February will be made next month.

Volunteer Deliverer Needed for Sundayshill, Rockhampton!

Many thanks to dedicated volunteer Angela Walker from Sundayshill who has delivered 4ward for well over 20 years, but who is now having to retire.

Angela, your commitment over so many years has been much appreciated by all of us here at 4ward. We hope you carry on enjoying reading it.

If anyone else from the area is able to take over Angela's round, please contact the Rockhampton Coordinator, Pauline Low, via either email to *paulinem.low@hotmail.com* or mobile: *07880 694747*.

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National No Smoking Day

Wednesday 11th March

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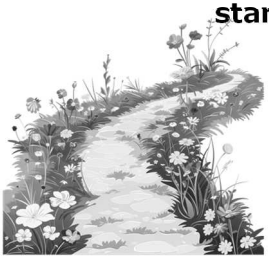
Refresh!

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



Sunday 1st March
On the March!

Sunday 5th April

No Refresh! – Easter Sunday

Sunday 3rd May
Everyone's Invited!

Thank you from St Arilda's Church

Many thanks to the lovely person who kindly left a superb collection of lots of children's Bible storybooks in the children's corner at St Arilda's. They are wonderful, and we are so very grateful to have received them.

St Mary's Music – "Third Sunday" Concert
Sunday 15 March at 4pm at St Mary's Church (BS35 1HQ)

Our guests on this occasion are "*The Celli Peppers*".
This group of cellists comes from across the region, and have been playing together for about ten years. Their aim is to explore the wide-ranging cello repertoire and have fun and enjoyment whilst they perform!

We are sure that this will be a most enjoyable afternoon.
As usual, the concert will be followed by refreshments.
Admission is free and donations go to St Mary's Music.

Advance Notice – Special Easter Services in Oldbury

Friday 3 April 3pm
Good Friday
Walk of Witness
Starts at the Pound;
walk up to St Arilda's.

Sunday 5 April 6am
Easter Sunday
Dawn Service
With Holy Communion.
At St Arildas.

Church Services for March 2026

St. Mary's Thornbury

1st 10.30am
Holy Communion

8th 10.30am
All Age Service

15th 10.30am
Holy Communion

22nd 10.30am
Holy Communion

29th 8:00am
Holy Communion

St. Arilda's Oldbury

1st 3.00pm
Refresh!

8th 6.00pm
Holy Communion

15th 6.00pm
Evening Prayer (posies for Mothering Sunday)

22nd 6.00pm
Evensong BCP

29th No Service

St. Mary's Shepperdine

Open as a place of pilgrimage and prayer.

For details phone *01454 260316*

No Regular Sunday Service During Winter Months

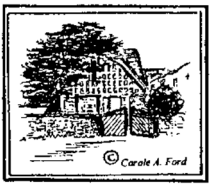
St. Oswald's Rockhampton

Please check locally

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

22nd 10.30am
Holy Communion Service
Rev. David Powe

29th 10:00am Benefice Palm Sunday Service
St Mary's, Thornbury

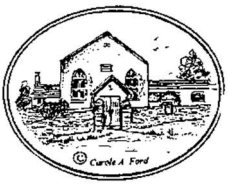


Catholic

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

Hello, my name is Helen. I am a relative newcomer to the St Arilda's team of clergy, having only joined the "Thornbury and Oldbury with Shepperdine" group of parishes in May 2025. However, I am not a newcomer to the area, as our family lived in Thornbury for 22 years up until 2006 and we often came to Oldbury and Shepperdine to walk along the Severn, or to Hill and Rockhampton, enjoying walks in the fields and woods at all times of year. It has been a pleasure to re-connect through coming to the church and becoming involved with Oldbury School. I have also loved doing some slow walking around Oldbury village on a few occasions, getting to know the lanes and praying for God's blessing on the homes and meeting places I pass. It looks as if Oldbury and the surrounding area is, as ever, a good place to live.

Thinking of walking reminds me that Christians often talk of 'journeying through Lent' – the season we are in now. It sounds an odd phrase perhaps, but it's resonating with me this year because a couple of weeks ago, as I travelled to a retreat house near Llangors in the rain, it felt something like going on a pilgrimage, which is a name for an intentional journey after all. It made me question where I was heading for in life, and the answer that came was to live where God is fully at home. I believe this is where we enjoy freedom, peace, acceptance, good relationships, and generosity - life in all its fulness!

Perhaps the 'journey through Lent' is a miniature form of this journey of life, a time for turning to come closer to God, and to align ourselves with the benefits of his wisdom on how to live well, discarding some of the rubbish. So often I've thought, 'What shall I give up for Lent?' but I'm sure now the real focus is about creating opportunities to live well, as God wants, for ourselves, others and the earth; clearing spaces in which good habits can grow that will be taken into the rest of life. And what's at the end of the journey? All the joys of Easter!

Peace and blessings, Helen
Revd Helen Hill

An extra "comment" from a reader…

"I'd like to withhold my name, to avoid embarrassing those who've been so kind, but our family has been really blessed by ongoing generosity from local friends. The way they've shared their time, skills and resources, has been a Godsend to us. We've thanked them personally of course, but it made me think it would be good to put something in 4ward to thank EVERYONE who quietly looks out for the needs of other people, and then helps them with no thought of reward. Please know that the difference you make IS noticed, and that you are hugely appreciated for making the world a better place."

Oldbury Pigeon Flies Again! - Term 3 Highlights at Oldbury School

Our children have started 2026 with great enthusiasm, as they've enjoyed discovering many new things, whilst continuing to explore the school values of **Growth, Care, Respect, Friendship, Community** and **Joy** as they "**Love, Learn and Flourish**". We were thrilled to receive a large pile of letters from the children explaining why they would like to be the next school Worship Ambassadors. It was very tricky to choose, but we eventually selected eight pupils who will be helping to lead school and community worships over the next three terms – we can't wait to hear all their ideas!

This year, we are going 'all in' with the National Year of Reading, a nationwide celebration that highlights the importance of reading, for pleasure, confidence, and lifelong learning. Reading opens doors, sparks imagination and helps children make sense of the world around them, and we're proud to be placing it at the heart of our school community. As part of our Year of Reading, each class will have 12 special books to open across the year, with one book revealed each month. These carefully chosen texts will help build excitement around reading and introduce children to a wide range of stories, authors and themes, and our pupils have loved unwrapping the first few of their class books and are eagerly awaiting their March surprises.

The school has also been filled with music, as our Badgers class (Y3 and Y4) have been learning to play the ukulele, whilst our Foxes class (Y5 and Y6) have taken on the cornet. Continuing artistically, at the end of term 3, our Hedgehogs class (Y1 and Y2) hosted their families at a special Japanese tea ceremony, complete with beautiful fan dancing, to celebrate their time learning about Japan's traditions, food and daily life. Our Mini Hedgehogs (YR) led the way with pancake racing before half term, but rain meant the whole-school pancake race had to be postponed until the first day back after the holiday. As this coincided with "French Day", when all the Oldbury children were invited to dress in the colours of the French flag and enjoy a day of immersion into French food, music and culture, to celebrate the launch of our new French Curriculum, we turned it into a 'Crêpe Race' instead!

For Spirituality Day, we recorded reflections from some of our children on what makes them feel like they 'belong', specifically at our school. They mentioned sharing time with their reading buddy in the cosy reading nook, or enjoying their class book corner, feeling like they belong because we are a church school, or when spending time with staff having fun and refocussing. Others mentioned belonging because they feel supported and can be themselves, or by being at school with their brothers, or when they can let their imaginations run wild or can climb up into a tree, during forest school.

As we begin term 4, we are looking forward to celebrating World Book Day in school, and to a variety of day trips for the different classes, including to London, to multi-skills sports, to *The Matthew*, and to the *Bristol Beacon*.

Fair Cop Alfie to help re-open Thornbury's Cossham Hall

Top comedian Alfie Moore will launch this year's Thornbury Arts Festival and help celebrate the re-opening of The Armstrong performance and community venue.

The policeman turned stand-up comic will appear in the renovated Cossham Hall, within The Armstrong, on Friday, April 10, making a welcome return to the festival after his sell-out show in 2023.

Alfie has a big following due to his hit BBC Radio 4 series *It's a Fair Cop* and tickets for his show are expected to be in high demand.

The 2026 arts festival has been brought forward by five months so it can be among the first events in the previously named Armstrong Hall complex, which closed in 2020, but is now being revived thanks to a major campaign.

Volunteers behind the festival only wrapped up their 2025 event last October, but, keen to return to their traditional "home", swiftly devised a programme of four evening shows, a guided town walk and a science spectacular for families.

The schedule includes *Cardiff Cotswold Opera*, which aims to open the world of opera to new and less traditional audiences. It will bring the concert *Murder at the Opera* - an audience favourite of popular opera, musical theatre, and fun, - to town on Saturday, April 11.

Mark Thompson's *Spectacular Science Show* on the afternoon of Friday, April 17, is designed for both children and adults. It won the "Best Kids' Show" accolade at the Edinburgh Fringe, and aims to show that science is not boring.

Later that day, audiences can experience *National Theatre Live*, where a play performed on stage in front of a theatre audience is filmed and subsequently screened at venues globally. In the first of what is hoped to be a regular The Armstrong event, *The Audience*, starring Helen Mirren, will be shown.

Bringing evening performances to a close on Saturday, April 18, will be *The Churchfitters* folk band and their high energy show. As well as "normal" instruments, they also play others created from such items as saucepans, saws and scrap metal.

The final event will be a guided walk led by local historian Meg Wise on the morning of Sunday, April 19, to feature places associated with the life of benefactor Handel Cossham.

Visit *www.thornburyartsfestival.org.uk* for full details of events and ticket information, from March 2.

Sailing Club News

By the time you are reading this, it is to be hoped that spring-like weather has arrived, and that the wet, windy and dismal days at the start of 2026 are now behind us.

The sailing club Frostbite Series of 8 races began in January, and finishes at the end of March. Weekends when tides are unsuitable are being used for various sailing courses, instruction, and maintenance of club premises.

Important Information
In the December issue I mentioned that the Club's floating jetty was to be renovated with a complete replacement of the old floating pontoon. This project is an enormous task and involves much heavy lifting equipment operation in addition to the usual cruiser lifting operations. Please forgive me if I repeat the following Health and Safety requirements which must be respected for the safety of both our working members and that of the visiting public:

> *The work involves pontoon handling and boat lifting using heavy machinery including a tractor and specialist lifting equipment. While these activities are taking place we have to temporarily restrict access to certain areas of our premises.*
>
> *While we normally welcome walkers and visitors to the Club, we have to ensure that members of the public (and our own Club members who are not directly involved in the operation being undertaken) keep clear of the working area. Working areas will be clearly marked with cones, chains and signage, and restrictions will only apply on occasional days and for short periods. Please keep young children with you. Dogs could present a hazard if they run into a restricted area, so please keep them on leads.*

We are very grateful for the patience and understanding of local residents while this work is carried out, and will always aim to keep any disruption to a minimum. Please be assured that if you are asked to vacate an area, it is your safety we have in mind.

Looking ahead, we would like to extend a warm welcome to you all to join us at our regatta on 6th and 7th of June. Enjoy the views of the River Severn from the clubhouse balcony, while you watch what has always been a spectacular programme of sailing and racing. The Saturday evening social event, that will include a Hog Roast and Shanty Band, will also be open to visitors, and will be advertised nearer the time, on our website and locally.

Our regular visitors will have noticed hedge planting in progress. The tree species have been chosen as being native to our conditions, so it is to be hoped that they will survive. The project has been coordinated by our Estates Manager with the help of an organisation founded four years ago called *'Carma*', which since its foundation has planted 1.6 million trees. *Carma* was founded with the aim of helping veterans and service leavers find positive employment through nature-based tasks in partnership with a charity called '*Highground*'. The latter provides resettlement courses for service-leavers to enable them to get green-sector jobs. Other partners are the '*Standing Tall Foundation*', which provides mental health support for veterans, and '*Climate Action*' which supports UK veterans. The Club's point of contact for the project is an ex Royal Navy Veteran, Jim Holland, and we are most appreciative of his valuable support and advice. The Club's objective is to replace some of the hedging lost over the years, thus creating a habitat for wildlife, whilst at the same time creating screening for our boats to give better protection from the elements. We realise such screening won't happen quickly, however, as always, we are planning for the future.

Sue Leat

Severn Bore 2026

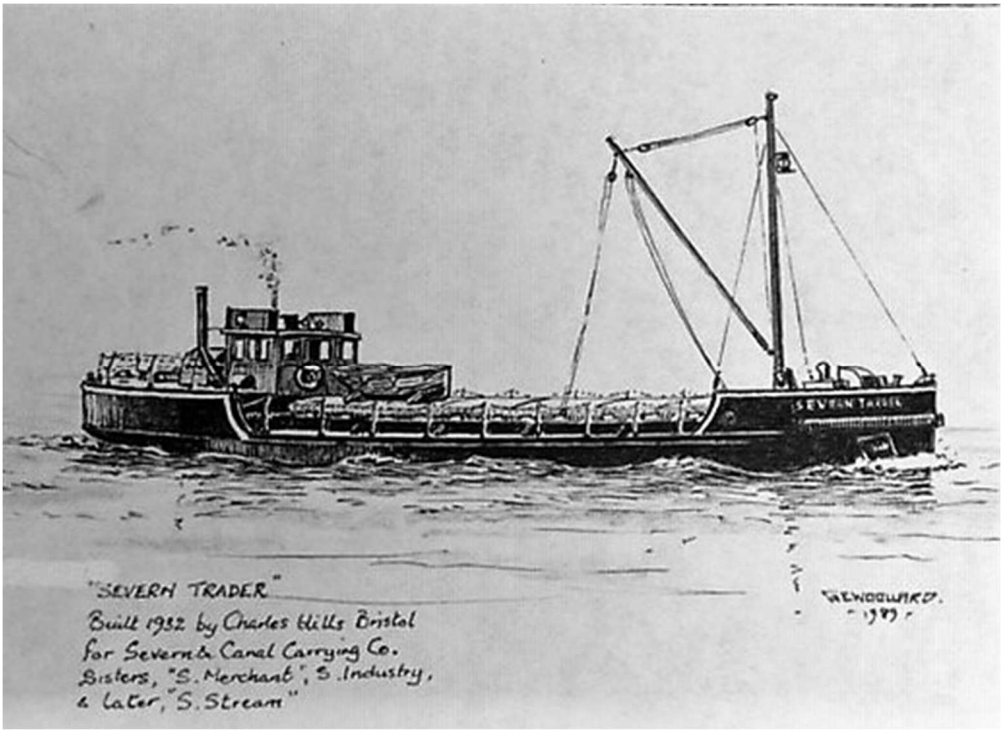
A bore is a natural phenomenon where waves flow up a river.

Unfortunately, 2026 does not see a Severn bore prospect of greater than 3 stars, meaning that the chances of a significant surfable tidal bore are low.

Each with two 3 star bores, August and September have the best chances this year.

"Life influenced by our River Severn"
An ongoing saga.

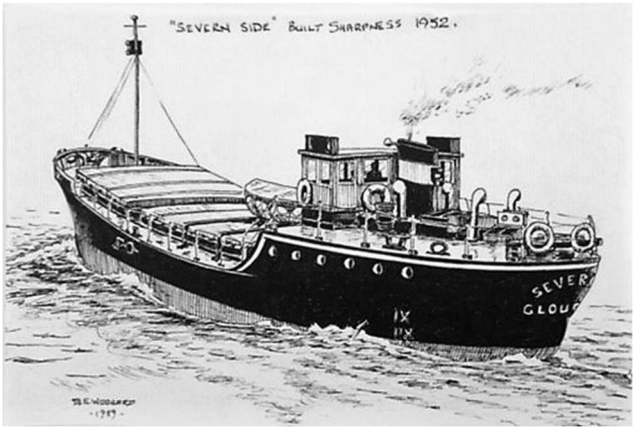
Another early start, but we had enjoyed an evening and night at home. With a considerable flotilla due to sail from Sharpness, crews started boarding their various craft at two and a half hours before high water. Time for the third hand to start up that (sometimes recalcitrant) 'rattler', bringing the barge to life. Boiling up the kettle for mugs of hot, sweet tea in huge china "Port of Bristol" canteen mugs, purloined in earlier days. Time for men to yarn, and compare notes and news before the lock opened up. There was always a motley of craft to sail, tankers large and small, cargo barges, tug and tow, sometimes a coaster. The larger Harker's motor barges were designed to trade between Swansea and Worcester, and some could carry up to four hundred tons up River. The smaller barges' size was dictated by the dimensions of the locks above Worcester, which they fitted into like a finger into a glove. With the lock rapidly filling with vessels, there was just time to nip to the lock-side shops to top up supplies like bread, bacon, sausages, a paper, and maybe, a bag of toffees. No fridges in those days, so canned goods, and basics, were order of the day.



Once levelled down, and the outer gates open, the exodus began. First the large tankers, as they had furthest to go, then the rest following on. There was no point in 'racing', as Avonmouth would wait for the last arrival before opening for the level up. From Sharpness, downstream punching the flood tide, past Panthurst and Berkeley Pill, joined by a convoy from Lydney with more barges, loaded and light, some old cut-down trows fitted with a basic single-cylinder Bolinder engine chugging away noisily. On then outward, Hayward, Hills Flats, Shepperdine, Counts Channel, and on to Beachley looking for the ebb tide. Past Charston rock, through the "Shoots", into the ever-widening estuary, open to the Westerly weather. Then the five-mile run down to King Road.

Having locked up at Avonmouth, vessels made for their different berths; the tankers into the oil dock which was separated from the rest of the system by a floating, self-propelled boom, to protect against any oil spillage, there to load a full cargo, be it motor spirit, aviation fuel, gas-oil, or whatever. The Port was filled with large, ocean-going cargo liners, cargo ships and tankers, of enormous interest to myself. After loading, there was time to kill, waiting for the next tide. Some crews would rest, others would gather in one of the cabins, to talk, tell tall tales, and play cards for high stakes (matchsticks), and smoke. Smoking was allowed below decks, and, when under way, in the wheelhouse and aft. This was when I learned to play 'pontoon', and awakened an interest which ended up with the local cribbage league today. I also discovered smoking myself, as occasionally cartons of two hundred cigarettes could be bought from ships for a pound, mostly Lucky Strike and Camel.

Before tide time, main engines were started up, and craft began to move slowly down the oil dock to the boom, ready for the dash to the lock. As soon as the boom began to open, clouds of exhaust smoke arose as each craft jostled and manoeuvred for position. Prime position in the lock was close up to the outer gates, ready to go as soon as the gates opened. All manner of craft filled the first lock; coasters, barges, tugs and tows, large tugs bound outward to meet incoming ships, a Pilot cutter. Some vessels were bound down Channel, some up to Bristol, most bound up Channel to Sharpness.



No holds barred this time, for inward-bound the race was for first lock into the dock, the lock being too

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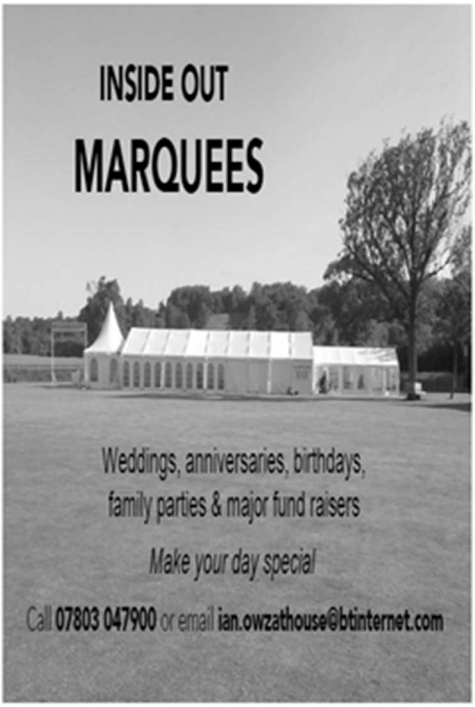

small to take all of the arrivals at once. First lock meant a gain of an hour or more to get moored up, get home, or get turned in. "Regent Lady" had a good turn of speed, and rarely missed first lock. Just once we were foxed, when a Harker's tanker took a short cut over the sands. We tried it once, and could feel the keel bumping on the bottom.

Docked at Sharpness we had to pass through the dock, as loaded petroleum craft were forbidden to moor there. This meant proceeding to the Old Dock, or to Purton for the night. Depending on the hour, some crew would go home for a few hours, whilst others would opt to spend the time on board after a long and busy day.

So, all was ready for the 'morrow, and the prospect of a twelve-hour passage by canal, and river, to our destination.....

George Woollard

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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)

Site Stakeholders report for Oldbury Power Station February 2026

John Alderton, Site Director for Oldbury on Severn Power Station, gave an update on recent and planned activity at the site at the joint SSG (Site Stakeholder Group) meeting held in conjunction with Berkeley Power Station.

There were a number of work areas planned for 2026. However, these works are very dependent on government funding, and Oldbury projects are subject to the same prioritisation process as all NRS (Nuclear Restoration Services) projects.

Asset care

This includes structures and buildings that need removing because they are no longer required, or are in a state of disrepair. With that in mind, the most efficient policy is to dismantle them, as and when funds are available. These include offices, labs, stores, and surplus equipment such as carbon dioxide tanks and other vessels. These are all assets that are outside of the nuclear reactor area. Other buildings still need to be maintained.

Turbine hall decommissioning

The turbine hall is a massive structure, including the associated offices and support centre - it covers an area the size of two football pitches. It also extends down 9m below the surface. Companies have been invited to quote for the decommissioning process, and tenders have to be submitted by the 22nd June. These will be reviewed and a preferred contractor appointed. Due to the complexity and cost, there will be a final review in December 2026, with contract mobilisation in early 2027.

The turbine hall is completely free of any nuclear hazard, but it does have other significant hazards, such as asbestos, which needs to be managed in accordance with the relevant Health and Safety Regulations. Currently the turbine hall fits in the 'nuclear licensed area' of the site, although this is being reviewed, as there are more relevant regulations, like CDM (Construction – Design and Management), that cover the asbestos removal, de-planting and demolition of the complex.

Pond plant decommissioning

The cooling pond area was used when the site was operational and was where spent fuel was stored for a period of time prior to dispatch to Sellafield for reprocessing. The pond area has now been completely drained down and de-planted.

There were a number of systems that supported the operation of the cooling pond, including tanks, pumps and filters, and these are gradually being de-planted. This work takes place in difficult conditions, and is expected to continue for a number of years.

Early FED Retrieval

During the site's operational phase, a large quantity of FED (Fuel Element Debris) was created. This is predominantly the material that housed the fuel elements when they were in the reactors, and which had to be stripped off before the spent fuel was sent to Sellafield for reprocessing. This material is now stored in five above-ground vaults. The Early FED Retrievals work is designed to retrieve samples of this material so that it can be analysed, and the data used to design the main retrieval systems that will be used in future years. Due to the nature of the material, personnel have to carry out this retrieval work remotely outside the vault. Samples will be placed into containers ready for assessment. This process has already been undertaken for vaults 3 and 4, with vaults 1 and 2 under review.

Auto Sort and Segregate

This project is being funded by the NDA (Nuclear Decommissioning Authority) outside the normal budget, with AI (Artificial Intelligence) being developed to help identify different radioactive waste materials. This is linked to the sampling of the FED vaults. The separated contents will be placed in an isolated safe area, so a test facility and associated systems can be programmed about different wastes, and so segregate them. While the project is in its infancy, once up and running, the systems should be able to identify individual waste streams, and will make waste segregation significantly quicker, safer, and more cost effective.

Lagoon 3

Work continues in Lagoon 3. It is planned to have the sluice gates completed in March 2026, with the water levels being monitored over the next 12 months to identify what kind of 'wetland' will be established. This will be part of the 'row of pearls', from Slimbridge to the Somerset Levels, to aid wading and shoreline birds.

The Environment Agency (EA) also presented a report. The EA regularly inspects Oldbury to make sure that permits and regulations are complied with. The EA recently visited Oldbury site to inspect the arrangements for managing liquid radioactive effluent discharges. No unconformities were identified. Because of a planned transfer of intermediate level waste (ILW) from Oldbury to Berkeley, the EA also carried out a remote (Microsoft Teams based) inspection of Oldbury site's arrangements for ILW transfer. Transfer of ILW requires a significant amount of planning and paperwork. During these two inspections no non-compliances were identified. Two ILW loads have now been transferred. The EA officer was pleased to report that the transfer was compliant with the permit, with no issues or concerns to report.

Chris Jennings, vice chair of Oldbury SSG

"*The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*"
Saturday 21 March at 7.30pm at Methodist Church Hall, Thornbury

Neil Gore presents a one-person magic lantern show, a version of the classic novel by Robert Tressell featuring projection, political conjuring tricks, live music and song. Meet the famous characters and enjoy the scenes, speeches, and songs, including the *Great Money Trick* as its centrepiece.

ACTION ARTS GROUP

Following a year in the life of a group of Edwardian painters, it traces their hardships, and struggles for survival, in a complacent and stagnating Edwardian England. These workers are the philanthropists who throw themselves into back-breaking work for poverty wages to generate profit for their masters.

Tickets £15 from *AAGThornbury@gmail.com* or *01454 850933*.
Interval tea and coffee.

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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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!

March 2026

Day	High	Low	High	Low	High	Phase	Sun rise	Sun set	Moon rise	Moon set
Sun 01		12:29 AM GMT 2.40 m	5:36 AM GMT 9.08 m	1:05 PM GMT 1.78 m	6:09 PM GMT 9.33 m		6:55 AM GMT	5:50 PM GMT	3:25 PM GMT	6:21 AM GMT
Tue 03		2:26 AM GMT 1.05 m	7:24 AM GMT 10.89 m	2:50 PM GMT 0.54 m	7:48 PM GMT 11.04 m	Full Moon	6:51 AM GMT	5:53 PM GMT	6:10 PM GMT	6:51 AM GMT
Fri 06		4:23 AM GMT 0.35 m	9:26 AM GMT 12.17 m	4:41 PM GMT 0.35 m	9:45 PM GMT 11.88 m		6:44 AM GMT	5:59 PM GMT	10:00 PM GMT	7:24 AM GMT
Sat 07		4:56 AM GMT 0.54 m	10:03 AM GMT 11.91 m	5:12 PM GMT 0.68 m	10:22 PM GMT 11.50 m		6:42 AM GMT	6:01 PM GMT	11:15 PM GMT	7:36 AM GMT
Sun 08		5:26 AM GMT 0.88 m	10:41 AM GMT 11.33 m	5:42 PM GMT 1.13 m	10:59 PM GMT 10.86 m		6:40 AM GMT	6:02 PM GMT		7:52 AM GMT
Fri 13	2:06 AM GMT 7.45 m	8:47 AM GMT 3.43 m	2:52 PM GMT 7.11 m	9:23 PM GMT 3.73 m			6:29 AM GMT	6:11 PM GMT	4:25 AM GMT	11:17 AM GMT
Sat 14	3:33 AM GMT 7.11 m	10:09 AM GMT 3.61 m	4:22 PM GMT 7.10 m	10:51 PM GMT 3.68 m			6:27 AM GMT	6:13 PM GMT	4:56 AM GMT	12:31 PM GMT
Sun 15	4:56 AM GMT 7.42 m	11:35 AM GMT 3.32 m	5:31 PM GMT 7.66 m				6:24 AM GMT	6:15 PM GMT	5:18 AM GMT	1:50 PM GMT
Thu 19		2:41 AM GMT 1.13 m	7:53 AM GMT 11.26 m	3:03 PM GMT 0.73 m	8:11 PM GMT 11.49 m	New Moon	6:15 AM GMT	6:22 PM GMT	6:13 AM GMT	7:19 PM GMT
Fri 20		3:21 AM GMT 0.59 m	8:29 AM GMT 12.06 m	3:42 PM GMT 0.31 m	8:47 PM GMT 12.16 m		6:13 AM GMT	6:23 PM GMT	6:26 AM GMT	8:46 PM GMT
Sat 21		4:01 AM GMT 0.24 m	9:05 AM GMT 12.55 m	4:21 PM GMT 0.11 m	9:24 PM GMT 12.48 m		6:11 AM GMT	6:25 PM GMT	6:41 AM GMT	10:16 PM GMT
Sun 22		4:40 AM GMT 0.12 m	9:44 AM GMT 12.63 m	5:00 PM GMT 0.17 m	10:03 PM GMT 12.40 m		6:08 AM GMT	6:26 PM GMT	7:00 AM GMT	11:48 PM GMT
Fri 27	1:29 AM GMT 9.06 m	8:47 AM GMT 2.43 m	2:09 PM GMT 8.51 m	9:27 PM GMT 2.85 m			5:57 AM GMT	6:35 PM GMT	11:42 AM GMT	4:01 AM GMT
Sat 28	2:46 AM GMT 8.39 m	10:14 AM GMT 2.61 m	3:32 PM GMT 8.10 m	10:56 PM GMT 2.77 m			5:54 AM GMT	6:37 PM GMT	1:08 PM GMT	4:26 AM GMT
Sun 29	5:10 AM BST 8.35 m	12:39 PM BST 2.27 m	5:52 PM BST 8.37 m				6:52 AM BST	7:38 PM BST	3:32 PM BST	5:45 AM BST
Tue 31		2:15 AM BST 1.62 m	7:20 AM BST 9.73 m	2:42 PM BST 1.10 m	7:46 PM BST 9.94 m		6:48 AM BST	7:42 PM BST	6:09 PM BST	6:10 AM BST

FREE EVENTS AT THORNBURY LIBRARY IN MARCH

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

Want to access the library 7 days a week?
Find out more here: southglos.gov.uk/openaccess

AUTHOR EVENT SIR GEORGE WHITE

Saturday 21st March 2pm

Learn all about local naturalist John Knapp

TICKETS £5

"Have You Read?"
Friday 6th March- 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**
Suitable for all children 0-5

Rhymetime — **Fridays 9.30-10**
Suitable for all children 0-5

Lego Club — **Saturdays 9.30-10.30**
Suitable for all children 4-11

Meet SUPERTATO — **Friday 6th March 3.45-4.15**

CONTACT US:

Email: thornbury.library@southglos.gov.uk
Phone: 01454 868006

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Active Libraries

Calendar Dates for Oldbury

7th	March	Sat	Rugby 6 Nations. Italy vs England
14th	March	Sat	Parish Litter Pick, 10am, Playing Field carpark
14th	March	Sat	Rugby 6 Nations. Super Saturday. Memorial Hall
20th	March	Fri	Line Dancing. Memorial Hall
21st	March	Sat	Church Spring Clean. St Arilda's Church, 10am
21st	March	Sat	Race Night with the School. Memorial Hall, 7.30pm
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
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

	January	
2025	**2024**	**2023**
142.0mm	129.0mm	86.0mm
5.60"	5.08"	3.39"

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