

downendvoice



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Going off with a bang!

Members of the Association of Crown Forces 1776 demonstrated musket and cannon fire from 250 years ago to crowds in Page Park as part of this year's South Gloucestershire Armed Forces Day.
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Post Office faces closure

Downend faces losing its post office after Morrisons said it could close the high street shop that hosts it.

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Bridge opens

A new bridge over the M4 is now open, ending three years of disruption for traffic between Downend and Yate.

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Heathfest success

About 1,500 people enjoyed a "fantastic day filled with entertainment, music and community spirit" in Bromley Heath Park.

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Schools' cup glory

Football teams from Downend and Mangotsfield schools are celebrating trophy wins.

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No jail for crash driver

A LORRY driver who admitted causing the death of a passenger in a crash on the Avon Ring Road will not go to jail.

A judge told Michael Ronner the right sentence for causing Tyler Carley's death by

careless driving was six months' imprisonment.

But he said a change in the law, brought in a few days before Ronner pleaded guilty to the offence, meant he had to suspend the sentence.

The decision has been met with dismay by Tyler's parents, who say they feel shocked and let down by the system.

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Post office is facing closure

DOWNEND faces losing its post office after Morrisons said it could close the high street shop that hosts it.

The supermarket announced at the end of May that it was proposing to take the "tough but necessary decision" to close 100 Morrisons Daily convenience stores.



Downend's post office is inside Morrisons Daily

The shop in Downend Road is one of the "loss making" former McColls branches that could go.

Morrisons has declined to comment further on the shop's future while it carries out a consultation with workers.

Frenchay & Downend ward South Gloucestershire councillor Liz Brennan says she has been told by staff that the consultation will end on July 16, with closure possible any time from the 17th onwards.

Morrisons said a review had identified a number of former McColl's stores "whose performance has been challenged for a number of years and which are loss making, despite remedial action".

It said: "This situation has been exacerbated in more recent years by significant cost increases resulting from Government policy choices, which have made returning these stores to profitability even more difficult."

The company said affected staff would be offered "all necessary support", including offering some alternative jobs elsewhere in the business.

Post Office Ltd said it had been informed by Morrisons about the proposal to close the store.

A spokesperson said: "We fully recognise the inconvenience this will cause our customers who rely on our banking and parcel services in particular.

"We will therefore be advertising the vacancy for the branch on our runapostoffice.co.uk website shortly and welcome applications from nearby retailers looking to host a post office inside their store."

Cllr Brennan said: "Downend residents deserve a good, working Post Office service, and with no bank remaining in the area, the potential loss would have a real impact on our community, particularly for older residents and those who depend on local access day to day.

"I have written to Morrisons to raise the concerns residents have shared with me."

Fellow ward councillor Raj Sood said the loss of the post office would be "disastrous".

Cllr Sood previously applied for Downend to have a 'banking hub' to provide face-to-face access for multiple banks, but was told the application had been turned down because the post office could be used for banking.

He plans to campaign again for a banking hub if the decision to close Morrisons is confirmed.

Cllr Sood said: "Cost cutting is not always the best course and cash machines will never be able to replace the human touch."

Morrisons bought McColl's convenience store business out of administration in 2022.

The Downend shop was refurbished in 2024, but with only one relocated Post Office counter, which was dogged by technical and staffing problems.

After complaints, Morrisons assured customers later that year that it was committed to providing Post Office services.

ADVERTISING

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EDITORIAL

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Letters to the publication can be sent to the above e-mail address.

The editor reserves the right to edit your letter.

DEADLINE

Our August edition deadline is July 15.

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A NEW bridge over the M4 for traffic travelling between Downend and Yate is now open.

The £20 million bridge carrying the A432 Badminton Road opened to pedestrians and cyclists on June 19 and to vehicles the following day - almost three years after the old one closed to motor traffic on safety grounds.

The new bridge, next to the Wick Wick roundabout junction with the Avon Ring Road, is 4m wider than its predecessor - the extra width accommodates widened pavements for pedestrians and cyclists on either side of the road.

Road lanes on the bridge have been reorganised: now traffic heading towards the A4174 from Coalpit Heath and Yate has two lanes approaching the roundabout, while traffic heading from the roundabout on to the bridge is restricted to a single lane.

The old bridge had the opposite arrangement, and there were often long queues approaching it from the north.

A new pedestrian crossing has been installed north of the Cuckoo Lane junction on the way

New bridge reopens road to Yate



Cars, pedestrians and bikes on the new bridge

to Winterbourne.

The old bridge, built in 1966, carried 16,000 vehicles a day but was closed suddenly in July 2023 when a routine inspection discovered "accelerated deterioration and cracking" in the concrete.

The closure meant South Gloucestershire Council had to set up diversions for traffic between Bristol and Yate using country lanes, which are now in the process of being removed.

National Highways, which

manages the bridge as part of the motorway network, started work on a replacement, which involved not just designing a new bridge from scratch but coordinating the re-routing of utilities - water and gas mains, electricity and fibre optic cables - that had gone through the old bridge.

Three weekend closures of the M4 were organised - one in October 2024 to dig trenches for the new utility connections, one in March last year to demolish the bridge and one in October to

put in place the new steel beams for the replacement bridge, which is designed to last 120 years, with no moving parts such as bearings and joints that need to be replaced.

National Highways route manager Sean Walsh said: "From a difficult starting point - having to immediately close and then take the decision to demolish the old bridge for safety reasons - the project has been a positive example of inter-agency working, delivering the bridge in around half the time it would normally take.

"We would like to thank everyone in South Gloucestershire, especially those communities most affected, for their patience and support throughout the build."

During the opening weekend pedestrians and cyclists tried out the new paths, while some drivers could be seen approaching from the north, driving around the roundabout and heading back again.

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Steve Palmer
Operating Department Practitioner

Most oppose 20mph limit on main road

A PUBLIC consultation into a "highly contentious" 20mph speed limit proposed for a main road through Downend found most people oppose it.

More than 1,600 people responded to a joint Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council consultation on plans to reduce the limit on the A432 from 30mph to 20mph between the Avon Ring Road and the existing 20mph zone in Fishponds, and on the last remaining 30mph stretch of Fishponds Road.

The strongest opposition was to plans to reduce the limit to 20mph on Badminton Road between the ring road and Cleeve Hill, and enforce it with average speed cameras - a suggestion opposed by 61.8% of respondents.

Proposals for new pedestrian crossings were backed by most of those who expressed a preference, with a crossing at Leap Valley the most popular of the six suggested locations.

The others are north and south of Westons Brake, between The Paddocks and Church Lane, at the Blackhorse Lane junction and the Cleeve Park Road junction.

The consultation ran between December to February, to seek opinions on plans by the two councils to spend £2.275 million from the previous government's Safer Roads Fund to bring about "significant reductions in fatal and serious injuries".

A joint report on the consultation said: "Proposed 20mph restrictions are highly contentious. "Drivers were much less supportive than people who mainly use active travel.

"Bristol residents were more supportive than South Gloucestershire residents.

"Many recognised speeding issues along the route, but concerns focused on a minority driving well above limits; some did not see lower limits as the best way to address this."

There was overall support

for 20mph limits proposed on residential roads leading off Badminton Road, including Blackhorse Lane, Westbourne Road, Aintree Drive and Sutherland Avenue.

These were backed by 49.6% of respondents and opposed by 39.2%, with the others not expressing a preference.

But the 20mph limits proposed for three stretches of the A432 were all opposed by a majority.

The Badminton Road proposals were opposed by 61.8% of respondents, with 30.9% in favour. The proportion opposed rose to 76.6% when only south Gloucestershire residents were counted.

A planned 20mph limit between the Cleeve Hill traffic lights and Cassell Road was opposed by 53.7%, with 37.3% in favour.

Plans to reduce the limit on Fishponds Road between Lodge Causeway and Muller Road were opposed by 51.6% and supported

by 38.8% - but were supported by 60.8% of Bristol residents.

The report found 51% of survey respondents said they lived in South Gloucestershire, 35.9% in Bristol and 13.1% either lived elsewhere or didn't say. Half of the South Gloucestershire residents lived in the Frenchay & Downend ward and another 36% lived in either Emersons Green or Staple Hill & Mangotsfield.

More were aged between 35 and 64, and 61.3% were men.

The report found 95% of South Gloucestershire residents who responded to the survey were drivers, compared with 80% of Bristol residents.

Announcing the report's publication in June, South Gloucestershire Council said: "We'll refine the plans for South Glos's part of the route and hold Traffic Regulation Order consultations, which are needed to make certain changes to the highway, ahead of any work taking place."



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Law change means crash driver avoids jail

From Page 1

Tyler, who was 20 and lived in Thornbury, died after the DAF scaffolding lorry he was a passenger in overturned on the A4174 near Mangotsfield on December 5, 2023.

He was thrown from the cab, suffering a fatal head injury.

Tyler's friend and colleague Cameron Williams, from Downend, was also thrown from the cab and survived with minor injuries - but Bristol Crown Court heard that he took his own life the following year, aged 19, as a "direct result" of the psychological trauma he suffered.

The court was packed with around 45 of Tyler's relatives and friends for June's sentencing hearing.

They heard Ronner, 39, of Summer House Way, Warmley, had been drinking, should not have been driving the lorry and should not have been carrying two passengers.

Oliver Glyn-Jones, prosecuting, said Ronner's licence to drive a lorry had expired.

The cab had only one passenger seat, and Tyler was sitting on the cab's central console at the time of the crash.

Mr Glyn-Jones said after finishing a job in Radstock for employer MJD Scaffolding, Ronner had bought them each a bottle of Thatcher's Katy cider, which they drank before setting off towards Pucklechurch.

Before he died, Cameron gave an account of the incident,

describing how they were laughing and joking when Ronner looked over at Cameron and Tyler, taking his eyes off the road, and the lorry started moving into the inside lane.

Mr Glyn-Jones said: "He over-adjusted and the driver's side struck the central barrier.

"The lorry flipped onto its side and ended up on the opposite side of the dual carriageway."

As Cameron braced himself against the passenger door it came open. He and Tyler, who were not wearing seatbelts, were thrown through it.

Mr Glyn-Jones said Tyler died at the scene. Ronner was trapped in the cab and freed by Cameron.

A roadside breath test detected 36 micrograms of alcohol in 100ml of Ronner's breath - above the legal limit of 35mcg. A blood test three hours later found 14mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood - below the legal limit of 80mg.

The lorry was travelling at 56mph, under the speed limit, and had no mechanical defects.

Tyler's father Mark told the court about the impact of his son's death.

He read messages from Tyler's sisters Ronni and Skye, who said their lives had been changed forever.

Mark said: "We love Tyler and miss him every single day. No matter what punishment is given or how much time passes, that pain will never go away."

In a statement, Tyler's mum Gemma Showering said: "What

what happened that night, we would like people to remember Cameron for the incredible courage and selflessness he showed.

"In the aftermath of the collision and despite the trauma and shock of what happened, Cameron did everything he could to help Tyler and those involved in the accident.

"Cameron was only 18 years old at the time, but his actions that night showed extraordinary bravery, compassion and strength of character.

"We want people to know just how proud we are of him.

"In the face of an unimaginable situation, Cameron's instinct was to help others. That is the person he was,



Tyler Carley. Picture courtesy of Gemma Showering

is every parent's nightmare is now my reality - my whole world collapsed around me and Tyler's brother that night."

Representing Ronner, Sam Jones said he had changed his plea to guilty in March, after expert reports agreed that the crash was caused by his "momentary lapse of concentration".

He said Ronner, who had no previous convictions, had expressed "genuine remorse" and the case had caused huge stress and pressure, causing him to "turn to alcohol".

Judge Edward Burgess told Ronner that the appropriate sentence after his late guilty plea would be six months in prison.

But he said change in Sentencing Council guidelines, introduced when the Sentencing Act 2026 came into effect in March, means any prison sentence of up to a year "must be suspended" unless there were exceptional circumstances that did not apply to the case.

The judge also told Ronner to carry out 150 hours of unpaid



Michael Ronner. Picture: Avon & Somerset police

work and undergo treatment for alcohol dependency. He was disqualified from driving for 18 months and ordered him to pay £630 costs.

The Sentencing Act was brought in to tackle overcrowding in Britain's prisons - had Ronner pleaded guilty before the law changed, he would have faced jail.

Afterwards Tyler's dad Mark said: "I just feel let down by the system.

"A suspended sentence is hardly a punishment.

"The judge has got his hands tied and has to do what's in front of him.

"The country just hasn't got any space in its prisons so people are going to get let off - in what world is that right?"

Tyler's mum Gemma said: "It's shocking. I'm just so disgusted that people get such light sentences.

"I do believe the guidelines need to really be looked at - it might stop the prisons becoming full if people actually feared punishments more."

'We are proud of Cameron'

THE family of Cameron Williams have paid tribute to his "extraordinary bravery" in the aftermath of the collision.

His grandmother Karen Parker said the Downend teenager had tried to help Tyler and had broken the lorry's windscreen to get Ronner out.

Speaking on behalf of Cameron's mother Melissa Care and the rest of the family, Karen said: "Whilst nothing can change

and that is how we will always remember him.

"Whilst we live with the heartbreak of losing Cameron every day, we take comfort in believing that Cameron and Tyler are together, looking after one another.

"Our thoughts, love and support are always with Tyler's family and friends, who have shown incredible strength, dignity and courage throughout such a devastating time.

"We are also deeply grateful for the kindness, love and support they have shown our family in return. The bond created through such a tragic loss is something we will always cherish.

"We are immensely proud



Cameron Williams

of Cameron, and we hope he is remembered not only for the life he lived, but for the remarkable bravery, selflessness and kindness he showed when it mattered most."

Heathfest celebrates community spirit

AROUND 1,500 people enjoyed a "fantastic day filled with entertainment, music and community spirit" in Bromley Heath Park.

Heathfest 2026 on June 20 also raised around £1,500 to help fund improvements to the park, and the replacement of a bench which was damaged by vandals.

The main stage featured musical performances from the Bromley Heath Choir, Maria and the Wilds, the Frampton Shantymen, Kris Nock's Big Band and Freeze, while elsewhere there were inflatables and fairground rides, sports activities and a huge range of stalls, selling everything from food and drink to locally-grown plants, and showcasing local organisations.

A brief sprinkling of rain didn't put off visitors, who had picnics on the field and met up with friends and neighbours through the day.

The event was run by an organising committee of seven residents, backed by a small

team of volunteers helping out on the gate and around the site.

The committee said: "We would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who attended this year's Heathfest, helping to make it a truly memorable and successful community event.

"Around 1,500 local residents, families and friends came together to enjoy a fantastic day filled with entertainment, music and community spirit.

"The wonderful atmosphere throughout the day demonstrated exactly what makes Bromley Heath such a special place to live.

"Importantly, proceeds raised from the festival will be donated to local charities and good causes, ensuring that the positive impact of Heathfest continues long after the event itself."

The Heathfest Committee thanked the volunteers, performers, stallholders, sponsors including CJ Hole and supporters who contributed to the festival's success.



Young entrepreneurs on the Happy Pot Garden Shop stall
Picture: Tony Bundy

The committee is now looking for new volunteers to help organise next year's Heathfest.

They said: "Without additional support, the future of the festival could be at risk. Whether you can spare a few hours throughout the year or

take on a more active role, every contribution makes a difference."

Anyone interested in helping should get in touch by emailing heathfestbs16@gmail.com and updates can also be found on the event's Facebook page.

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NEWS



Heathfest's organising committee.
Picture: Tony Bundy



A young visitor has her face painted.
Picture: Tony Bundy



Families from Bromley Heath enjoyed the day



Frampton Shantymen members on stage



Volunteers welcome visitors at the entrance



In the stocks with history group Downend CHAP. Picture: Tony Bundy

ADVERTISING FEATURE

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POLICE are being investigated to see whether officers could have better protected a woman who died with her ex-partner in an explosion in Frenchay.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct says it is looking into the contact Avon & Somerset Police had with Joanne Shaw, who was 35, and Ryan Kelly, 41, before their deaths on May 3.

Joanne was killed after her ex-partner Kelly forced his way into a house in Sterncourt Road, carrying an explosive device.

She had previously reported incidents of "stalking, harassment and assault" by Kelly.

Police say they are treating the explosion as deliberate and Joanne's death is being investigated as a homicide.

They have not confirmed reports that the explosion was caused by a hand grenade, but say they are not looking for anyone else in connection with the incident.

The force referred itself to the IOPC, a mandatory process in cases where people have died after recent contact with the police.

Police face conduct probe over explosion deaths

The IOPC said police last had contact with Joanne four days before the explosion.

A spokesperson said: "Our enquiries will look at whether appropriate steps were taken by police to safeguard Ms Shaw before she died, spanning a timeframe of five years, between May 2021 and May 2026, including whether all incidents during this period were adequately resourced, progressed and risk-assessed.

"We will also consider whether there were any missed opportunities which may have contributed to the deaths of Ms Shaw and Mr Kelly and whether police officers and staff acted in accordance with local and national policies and procedures."

IOPC Director Derrick Campbell said: "My thoughts and sympathies are with everyone

affected at this very difficult time.

"We are independent of the police and it is important that we carry out a thorough investigation, to fully establish the circumstances of what happened prior to the tragic events of 3 May.

"There is a significant history of police involvement in relation to Mr Kelly's behaviour, including allegations of stalking, harassment and assault, which we need to examine as part of our investigation.

"We are reviewing extensive documentation detailing that history as part of our enquiries

"We will be keeping all interested parties updated as our investigation, which is at an early stage, progresses."

After her death Joanne's family praised her "heroic" actions in the moments leading up to the explosion, which her child and two other family



Joanne Shaw was killed along with her ex-partner

members survived.

They said: "She showed extraordinary strength, selflessness, and love in the face of unimaginable fear, placing herself between danger and those she loved.

"She leaves behind a legacy of love, compassion, and strength that will never be forgotten."

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Report calls for urgent improvements at school

INSPECTORS say an independent school for children with special educational needs and disabilities needs to make urgent improvements.

Regulator Ofsted visited Elmtree Grove School in Overndale Road in January.

Its report, published at the end of May, outlined "multiple weaknesses in the quality of the school's provision".

Ofsted said the school needs to urgently improve pupils' achievement, its curriculum and teaching, inclusion work, and leadership and governance.

The inspectors also said the school's safeguarding culture is not open and positive, and systems and processes to keep vulnerable pupils safe are not good enough, putting pupils "at significant risk of harm".

They said work on pupils' attendance, behaviour, personal development and well-being needs attention.

Executive head teacher Tyrone Perry-Harry is "highly disappointed" with the report, and does not believe it reflects the school's current position.

Elmtree Grove opened last year on the site of the former Gracefield Preparatory School, which closed in 2024.

It has around 25 pupils aged from four to 12 with autism, ADHD and social, emotional and mental health needs, and charges fees of £36,000 to £48,500 per year to local authorities that place children at the school.

Inspectors Gavin Summerfield and Hilary Goddard said "poor teaching" meant pupils have weaknesses in their essential knowledge and do not achieve well.

They said: "A weak culture of safeguarding exists, putting pupils at risk of harm."

"Pupils do not receive an acceptable standard of education."

"The school does not take into account pupils' starting points or meet their special educational needs and/or disabilities well."

"Furthermore, teaching often does not address the significant gaps in pupils' knowledge."

"The proprietor's oversight of these issues is weak."

"Despite this, some pupils enjoy their learning."

"Many pupils have missed considerable periods of their education before joining Elmtree Grove."

"The school's work to overcome barriers to learning helps pupils to re-engage with education and improve their attendance."

"Caring and respectful relationships guide their daily interactions. Some pupils feel safe, however, not all."

The inspectors said proprietor Elementa Education Group "has not ensured that the school's site is safe for pupils".

They said there are weaknesses in how the school monitors attendance and bullying, but said staff respond swiftly to any complaints, and have "high expectations and build caring relationships with pupils".

The inspectors said the curriculum lacks coherence and staff have not had sufficient training to adjust it to pupils' needs, with "significant weaknesses" in how individual needs are assessed.

Their report said that since opening, the school has "experienced significant staffing turbulence, including at a leadership level".

This relates to the school's dismissal of its previous head teacher last year, following a number of complaints and an internal investigation.

The inspectors said: "Until very recently, the school has lacked both the strategic direction and the external support needed to bring about rapid and meaningful improvement."

"New leaders have brought additional capacity and a renewed sense of stability and direction. "These leaders have begun to introduce more training to promote greater consistency in curriculum delivery. However, this work is still at an early stage."

The inspectors laid out seven steps for improvement, including to safeguarding systems, oversight, assessment and adaptation of teaching to meet pupils' needs.

Mr Perry-Harry said: "We are highly disappointed with the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection, as we believe that it does not reflect the current position Elmtree Grove School is in."

"As a very small independent specialist school supporting young people who have struggled

in their education journey, we feel the inspection does not reflect the journey our children and school have been on in the short time it has been open."

"We are a small specialist SEND school, supporting pupils with highly complex and evolving needs, many of whom were previously unable to access suitable placements."

"We have continually adapted our curriculum to reflect a growing understanding of each child, creating a responsive and inclusive environment despite the challenges of fitting the standard Ofsted inspection framework."

He said the four-month delay in publishing the report was as a result of the school completing Ofsted's complaints procedure, saying the school's "context and our young people sit outside of standardised processes".

Mr Perry-Harry said all of the areas identified by Ofsted for improvement were already existing priorities, and



Elmtree Grove School in Overndale Road

the school has moved from being overseen by a panel of advisors to a governing body, as recommended by Ofsted.

The school pointed to a report commissioned from consultants Education Safeguarding Solutions last November, which concluded safeguarding was "effective", and a council quality assurance report that recognised improving leadership and stability.

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World-class live music in Emersons Green

A FESTIVAL which brings top class professional musicians and the community together in Emersons Green is back for a sixth year.

Ham Farm Festival, from July 24 to 26, features three evenings of 'cross-genre double-bills', from classical to cabaret, free daytime drop-in picnic concerts and children's events.

It is run by the Ham Farm Festival charity, founded by locally-based professional classical musicians Emily Andrews and Francisco Correa, in partnership with Emersons Green Town Council.

Hosts Emily and Francisco have selected every evening act for the event in Emersons Green Lane, which aims to bring world-class live music to the community at affordable prices.

All events happen outside under a large marquee, to keep the rain at bay – but when the sun shines people can have picnics in the farm's orchard or by the pond, with a long interval for eating, socialising and enjoying drinks from the bar.

The professional performers

are a mixture of UK artists - Bristol's own Lady Nade, Eleanor Grant, Louise Innes and Charlie Bicknell - and international acts Ellinoa, from France, Ala Par from Argentina, and Italian/Greek duo Palena Soukaras.

The festival will close with 'Cabaret with Balls', described as a "riotous romp of a musical event, mixing comedy, music and acrobatics". Parents are advised that this performance contains adult language - bring children at your own discretion.

Daytime interactive, family-friendly musical events include a community ceilidh, a children's concert and a special educational needs and disabilities concert.

The two free drop-in picnic concerts (bring your own picnic) feature Brazilian music from Clube do Choro Bristol and swing jazz from the Dave Salt Big Band.

Due to the intimate capacity of the venue, booking in advance is necessary - for tickets and more information visit www.hamfarmfestival.com.

Emily said: "In addition to our main summer festival, we have been working behind the scenes



■ The audience enjoys a concert at last year's Ham Farm Festival

all year to bring professional music performances to our primary school children: 210 children from Blackhorse, Emersons Green and Barley Close schools attended a flamenco concert in Resound church, and 120 children benefited from hands-on flute discovery workshops up-close in their classrooms this term.

"We also hosted a Young Performers spotlight concert, giving a professional concert opportunity to 12 young musicians.

"We are also hosting a special

free Youth Music day in advance of our festival, in partnership with Emersons Green Town Council. Up to 60 teenagers (13-18) can attend and enjoy beatboxing, songwriting, group jamming and guitar workshops.

"At a time when the music industry faces heavy challenges, Emersons Green stands out as a vibrant cultural hub where creativity is actively growing.

"This incredible work is only possible thanks to the fantastic support of our local council and your generous donations."



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Council warning over flags

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council says it will continue to remove flags put up on lampposts, railings and other public property during the World Cup.

The council says it wants residents to show their support for their nation "safely and lawfully" by displaying flags on their own property.

The authority brought in a policy to remove flags following a national campaign spread via social media last summer, which saw Union and England flags fixed to lampposts put with zip ties in areas including Mangotsfield, Staple Hill, Downend and Soundwell.

In a newsletter to residents, the council said: "We know many residents will want to show their support for teams and countries competing in the World Cup.

"To make sure this is done safely and lawfully, any items, including flags, should only be displayed on your own private property and must not cause obstruction, damage, or concern to others.

"These rules are not about limiting expression. They exist to protect public safety, prevent damage to public assets, ensure the highway remains safe and usable for everyone, and maintain a welcoming and cohesive community feel.

"Any flags or other items displayed without permission on public land or council property will be removed by the council.



England flags were put up on lampposts in Northcote Road in June

"You can usually fly flags on your own property without needing permission, provided you follow national guidance."

The council said flags at residents' homes should be secure and safely installed, not obstructing roads, pavements or sightlines, and avoid causing damage to property or distress to others.

It said: "Attaching flags, banners, or any other items to highway infrastructure such as lampposts, traffic signs or street furniture is not permitted without authorisation and may constitute a criminal offence."

Flags on lampposts would be "removed within a reasonable timeframe", and the authority said it would take enforcement action, including possible prosecution and recovery of removal costs, "where it is in the public interest".

The council urged people not to attempt to remove flags themselves but to report concerns online at tinyurl.com/3sk4b4t6.

By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service

Extra patrols

POLICE say they are carrying out extra drink and drug-driving patrols during and after England World Cup matches.

The force says several types of offences, "often linked to alcohol", increase when England play. Officers are urging people planning to go out to watch a match to "make a plan and stick to it", including having a designated driver, using public transport or a taxi, and reminding drivers that they could still be over the limit the morning after if they have been drinking during a late match.

Increased patrols will be around city and town centres and pubs on match nights.

And the force says it is expecting an increase in domestic violence, as abusers are known to become more aggressive during tournaments, regardless of the match results.

Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody said: "No result, no referee decision, no amount of alcohol creates domestic abuse. It is a choice, and it is a crime."

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TURNER'S VISION

Why are my eyes so itchy? Understanding dry eye and allergies

By Specialist Optometrist Marta, who has a special interest in Dry Eye and Eye Allergy Care

If there is one thing I hear almost every week in clinic, it is this: "Why are my eyes so itchy, all I want to do is rub them". Now whilst allergies are certainly a common culprit, the answer is not always quite so simple.

As an Optometrist with a special interest in caring for and helping those with dry, sore or itchy eyes get relief, I often meet patients who have spent months, sometimes years, trying different eye drops, antihistamines, or simply "putting up with it," never quite understanding why their eyes still feel irritated red and sore.

The truth is that itchy eyes are often caused by a combination of factors, and dry eye can frequently be hiding in the background. The cause can vary depending on whether your eyes are itchy in the corner or along the lid, itchy some of the time, itchy all of the time...

When most people think of dry

eyes, they imagine eyes that feel dry, sore, or gritty. But surprisingly, dry eye can also make your eyes water excessively and feel itchy. This happens because the delicate tear film covering the eye becomes unstable, causing irritation to the surface of the eye. Our natural body defense often responds by sending out poor-quality "emergency tears," which unfortunately do little to sort the problem.

Allergies, meanwhile, tend to trigger inflammation. Pollen, dust, pets, and even cosmetics can all play a role. If your eyes feel intensely itchy, puffy, watery, or appear red, particularly during summer, allergies may well be contributing.

However, what many people do not realise is that dry eye and allergies often occur together. This combination can create a self-perpetuating cycle. Allergies irritate the surface of the eye, inflammation worsens tear quality, and rubbing the eyes (which we all instinctively do, but know we shouldn't...!) can make symptoms even worse. In some people, frequent rubbing can

even contribute to changes in the shape of the cornea over time.

I always say that our aim is not simply to make eyes "less sore," it is to help them look and feel comfortable again. This starts with understanding the root cause - which is where our specialist clinics come in,

Sometimes treatment is as straightforward as choosing the right allergy drops or preservative-free tear drops. Other times, we may recommend warm compresses, specialist eyelid hygiene, dietary advice, or more advanced dry eye treatments if the oil glands in the eyelids are not functioning well too.

Simple changes can also make a surprising difference: avoiding rubbing your eyes, washing your face in cold water when you get home, keeping windows closed on high pollen days, and taking screen breaks if your eyes feel tired or strained can all help.

Most importantly, please do not assume itchy eyes are "just something to live with." Your eye comfort matters to us too! And in many cases, with the



Marta Bochenek-Cutter
of Turners Opticians
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right advice and treatment plan, there is much more we can do than people realise.

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Marta

Marta Bochenek-Cutter is a Specialist Optometrist, at Turners Opticians in Bristol, who has an interest in dry eye and blepharitis care. She was formerly a physiotherapist.

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Images are for illustration purposes only, and are with and without makeup.

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Guide dogs inspire scouts



Members of 78th Kingswood scouts with a banner supporting fundraising

SCOUTS from a Downend-based troop have raised more than £275 for charity after being inspired by a visiting speaker.

The young members of 78th Kingswood Scout Division, based at Downend Methodist church, were inspired by a visit from a Guide Dogs UK speaker who told them about the commitment involved in training a guide dog and the difference the dogs make to people living with sight loss.

The scouts held a cake sale, 'guess the sweets in the jar' competition and sponsored bike ride.

Leader Jenny Wheeler said: "Through their enthusiasm, creativity and personal commitment, the Scouts successfully raised a fantastic £275.02 for the charity, which will help fund their guide dog service and a range of services for adults, children, young people and families. "As scout leaders we could not be more proud of them."

Surgeries drop eConsult

A GP practice has switched its online booking system to a new provider after patients said the old one was hard to use.

Downend Health Group, which runs the Willow Surgery in Hill House Road and Christchurch Medical Centre in North Street, sent a message to patients telling them that as of June 22 it was "moving away from eConsult" to begin using a new system called Klinik.

The practice said: "Over recent months, many patients have shared feedback that the current online system can sometimes be confusing and time-consuming to use.

"Klinik will be our new online system that allows you to contact the surgery and let us know what support or assistance you need. "The system is designed to feel more like a short conversation and asks fewer, more relevant questions. This makes it quicker and easier for patients to explain their needs in a more natural way."

The practice introduced eConsult in 2023. Concerns were raised initially after patients were told it would be the only way they could contact their surgery. Although it later clarified that people could still use the phone or ask for help in person, two years later the practice's patient participation group was still reporting problems with the eConsult system.

Both eConsult and Klinik are private contractors that provide tech services to general practices.

The Voice understands that across the area covered by the NHS Bristol, North Somerset and south Gloucestershire Integrated care Board, 17 practices are still using eConsult.

Practices are required to offer online consultations as a condition of their NHS contracts but are able to choose which provider they use.

TURNERS HEARING CARE BLOG

The sounds we don't realise we've been missing



One of the loveliest parts of my job as an audiologist isn't removing ear wax or looking inside ears with specialist equipment.

It's seeing someone's face when they realise what they've been missing.

Often, people don't notice a change in their hearing straight away. It tends to happen gradually. The television volume creeps up a little. Conversations in busy places become harder to follow. Family members seem to mumble more than they used to.

Sometimes people tell me, "I thought everyone was like that."

Then, after an ear examination and perhaps the removal of a build-up of wax, they suddenly hear sounds they hadn't realised had faded away.

The indicator clicking in the car.

Birdsong first thing in the morning.

Even the sound of their own footsteps on a gravel path.

It's often the little things that make the biggest difference.

Our hearing connects us to the world around us. It helps us enjoy conversations, stay aware of our surroundings, and feel involved in the moments that matter. When hearing becomes reduced, even slightly, many people simply adapt without realising they are working harder to listen.

Sometimes the cause is something straightforward, such as ear wax. Sometimes it isn't. Either way, understanding what's happening is the first step.

As we move through another busy season, take a moment to listen.

Can you hear the birds outside?

The kettle beginning to boil?

The laughter of family and friends?

If not, perhaps it's time for a gentle hearing health check.

You might be surprised by what you've been missing.

Get in touch with us here at Turners Opticians and book in to see me, I'd love to help you hear clearly again!

Deb Campbell

Debbie Campbell is a qualified and experienced Audiologist, who has joined the clinical team at Turners Opticians in Fishponds having worked for many years in NHS Audiology clinics.

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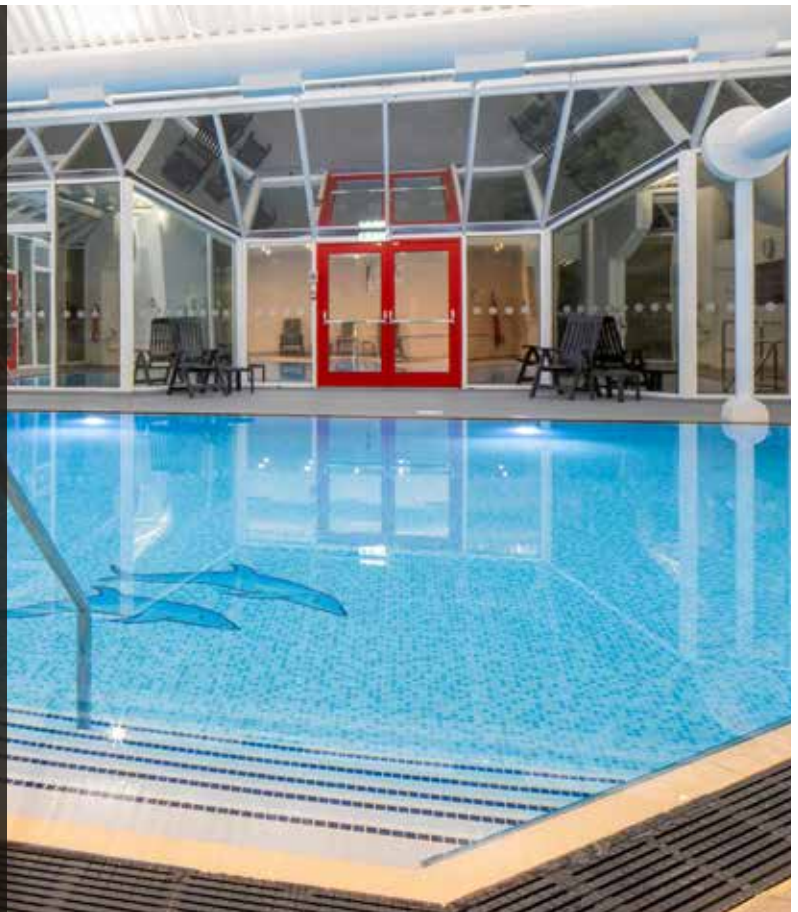
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School helps children 'open doors to the future'

A PRIMARY school has been praised for its high expectations, learning culture and the opportunities it offers to pupils.

Inspectors from Ofsted visited Frome Vale Academy in Frenchay Road in March.

The regulator said the school had reached its 'strong standard' grade in five areas: achievement, attendance and behaviour, curriculum and teaching, leadership and governance, and personal development and well-being.

The school achieved Ofsted's 'expected standard' in the early years and inclusion categories.

Lead inspector Sophie Hillson said: "Frome Vale Academy is a calm, purposeful school where learning drives the culture.

"Leaders believe every child can achieve and never let barriers hold pupils back.

"They make sure children understand that education can open doors for their future.

"Staff and pupils share high expectations.

"Pupils thrive in a safe, predictable environment built on



Frome Vale Academy principal Janet Saunders with pupils

strong relationships and effective teaching."

The report said pupils "achieve well and make strong progress", including those with special educational needs or disabilities.

The inspectors said: "Pupils take pride in their learning. They develop detailed knowledge across a broad range of subjects."

They said the curriculum is well-designed, with a clear and consistent approach to each subject and skilful teaching.

Teaching methods are informed by research and regularly reviewed to keep them effective, the report said.

The inspectors also praised the school's 'Frome Vale Citizen' system, which teaches children to be "responsible, confident individuals".

The inspectors said: "Pupils quickly learn that their voice matters. Leaders listen to pupils and give them real opportunities to shape school life."

Ofsted recently changed its

method of assessing and grading schools from the previous system of overall one and two-word ratings, and the new system is seen as more demanding, exacting and wide-ranging than its predecessor.

Frome Vale, which has 202 pupils aged from four to 11, was rated 'outstanding' under the old rating system in 2022.

Principal Janet Saunders said: "We are incredibly proud that Ofsted has recognised the high expectations and supportive culture that sit at the heart of Frome Vale Academy.

"This report reflects the dedication of our staff, who know our pupils so well and work tirelessly to ensure every child can succeed.

"It is particularly pleasing that inspectors noted the strong progress made by all learners, alongside our inclusive ethos and commitment to providing the right support at the right time.

"We will continue to build on this success, ensuring every child feels safe, inspired and prepared for their future."

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Will Trust – Care Home Fee Protection for couples

When you have worked hard and saved hard, you will probably hope to leave behind a financial legacy to support your children or nieces and nephews.

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the normal cost of your Wills.

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Each case is different and Trust Protection should only be put in place after taking legal advice. Simpson Solicitors offer our readers a FREE review meeting to discuss if this protection is right for your situation.

To book your **FREE** meeting call their friendly team or pop into your local branch, or email message@simpsonslawuk.com



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Road resurfaced



Resurfacing work in Northcote Road

ONE of the area's most potholed roads has been resurfaced.

Highways workers moved on to Peache Road and Northcote Road, between Downend and Mangotsfield, over two weeks in June to replace a stretch of the route where large, deep patches of the surface had completely worn away, forcing drivers to swerve around long and deep potholes.

While the route was completely resurfaced from the bus stop opposite Peache Court, at the Westerleigh Road end, to a spot between the Stanbridge Close and Royal Road junctions, further up the road to Mangotsfield only damaged parts of the surface were replaced, including a strip by the Long Road junction and a stretch near the Windsor Place junction.

Heat hits waste collections

RESIDENTS are being warned that heatwaves are affecting bin and recycling collections.

About 3,000 households in South Gloucestershire had their bin collections missed during the heatwave at the end of May.

A combination of staff shifts ending at 1pm because of the record-breaking temperatures, bin lorries breaking down, and employee sickness created a massive backlog.

With black bin collections prioritised, many residents missed out on a week of recycling collections, and contractor Suez had to organise extra weekend collections to catch up.

Ahead of the latest heatwave from June 22, with amber extreme heat warnings in place, residents were advised to have bins and recycling ready from 5.30am, as crews started and ended rounds early to avoid the worst of the heat.

In a social media post, the council advised residents to have all bins, boxes and bags out the night before collection days during heatwave conditions, including sharps and clinical waste, and large household item collections.

Sort It recycling centres will also open earlier, with bookings available from 7am, and close earlier, with last booking slots available at 1.45pm.

The council said: "Extreme temperatures mean crews may need to work slower, and there is an increased risk of vehicle issues. This could lead to some delays, and it's possible your waste will not be collected on your usual collection day. We are working with our contractor to gain additional resources and alternative collection methods may be used to minimise disruption."

The council has also apologised to residents who have experienced delays receiving blue soft plastics recycling bags. A spokesperson said: "We are seeing exceptionally high demand for bags, which has led to delays in deliveries. Our team is actively working through the backlog and putting measures in place to improve response times."

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Visit bristoldownend.com for more details

Park hosts a celebration of service



RAF Air Cadets lead the parade along Broad Street



Veterans on motorbikes followed the marching groups

PAGE Park echoed to the sound of musket and cannon fire during a celebration of past, present and future military service.

Veterans, serving personnel and their families were joined by civic leaders, cadets and residents for South Gloucestershire Armed Forces Day on June 20.

The free event started with a parade to the park along the

High Street and Broad Street.

Participants ranged from young cadets, from units in Mangotsfield, Kingswood, Speedwell and Keynsham, to 100-year-old Second World War veteran Harry Francis, of Soundwell, who told the story of his extraordinary service in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines in the Voice last year.

Harry served on a ship

hunting U-boats in the Atlantic before joining the Special Boat Service, fighting in Italy and the Middle East and going on a secret mission to meet Yugoslavian partisan leader Tito, before being badly injured fighting in the jungles of Burma.

At Page Park a drumhead service - a traditional military service using a stack of regimental drums as an altar

- was held before a signing ceremony for 17 public organisations backing the Armed Forces Covenant to support service personnel and veterans.

Special events for service personnel and their children were held in a VIP tent, while at the bandstand and in the arena performers included the Bristol Military Wives Choir, which rehearses in Mangotsfield.

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Second World War veteran Harry Francis in front of veterans at the drumhead service

The noisiest part of the day was a musket and cannon demonstration by the Association of Crown Forces 1776, a re-enactment group which draws its members from across the South West.

Dressed as soldiers of the Coldstream Guards, Queen's Rangers and camp followers from the time of the American War of Independence, the group showed the unpredictable nature of weapons fired using powder, flint and tapers - warning visitors to cover their ears before their cannon roared.

Organising committee chair Ian Campbell said around 4-5,000 people attended this year's event, which was supported by a team of around 30 volunteers.

He said: "I'm incredibly proud of what we achieved.



A cannon fires in the re-enactors' demonstration

"It was our biggest event to date and a real celebration of the people who serve, have served, and the families who support them every day.

"More than 150 veterans, serving personnel and their families joined us at our reception, and we were also delighted to welcome over 50 children and their families to our children's tea party for serving Armed Forces families.

"Seeing so many people come together, catching up with old friends and making new connections, really brought home the strength and spirit of our armed forces community.

"One of the highlights of the day was seeing the largest number of councils and organisations anywhere in the country sign



A fairground ride decked out in Union flags

the Armed Forces Covenant in a single event. I think that sends a powerful message.

"A huge thank you to everyone who attended, sponsored, supported and helped organise the day. Events like this don't happen without a real team effort, and yesterday showed the local area at its very best; proud, welcoming and united in supporting our Armed Forces community."

Planning is already under way for next year - people can make suggestions at southglosafd.com.

Page Park





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Representatives of Downend's post box topper groups receive award



Fiona Konteh accepts the Friends of KGV award on behalf of the group

Parish champions honoured

VOLUNTEERS who help make Downend a brighter place to live have been honoured by the parish council.

Parish Champion awards were presented to the Friends of King George V Playing Fields and two groups - Yarn Busters and Knit & Natter - that make colourful toppers for the post box outside Downend Post Office during the annual meeting of Downend & Bromley Heath Parish council in May.

The awards are made to people in the area

who "truly embody community spirit".

Parish council chairman Janet Biggin, who presented them, said: "The Friends of King George V Playing Fields have worked closely in partnership with the parish council.

"Their dedication and energy have made a real difference, not least in organising an Easter egg hunt this year, with over a hundred people taking part, which brought so much joy to so many local families, being a free event."

"Over the years our brilliant post box toppers have designed and made some fabulous creations for our post box here in Downend.

"The creativity never fails to bring a smile to my face and, I'm sure, to everyone who

passes by."

The parish council's annual meeting also heard that around £14,000 had been awarded in grants to local organisations including Downend in Bloom, disability charity Paul's Place and park friends groups to support their work in the community.

Two new defibrillators, one outside Avonmere Care Home and another at Bromley Heath playing fields, have been funded.

The parish council is inviting people to a free event at King George V Pavilion on August 16 from 11-5pm to celebrate a year since it opened, with stalls, music, food and family activities.

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YOUR Community NEWS

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**DOWNEND & BROMLEY
HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**

Christmas Volunteers!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP ILLUMINATE DOWNEND HIGH STREET!

We need volunteers to bring festive cheer by:

- ✓ Erecting large display trees across Downend & Bromley Heath
- ✓ Assisting with the High Street live trees

Volunteers must be 18+ years old.

Interested? We'd love to hear from you!

Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council.
Email: fm@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk

Christmas Volunteers

Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council are looking for volunteers to help bring festive sparkle to our High Street later this year. From supporting the installation of our large display trees to lending a hand with the live trees along the High Street, your help will make a real difference to the magic our community enjoys each Christmas. And yes, we know it's only summer, but good things take planning!

THANK YOU

A Huge Thank You to all our May litter-picking volunteers across the Parish!

For helping to keep Downend tidy!
Your time and efforts are greatly appreciated!

D & B H
DOWNEND & BROMLEY HEATH

Thank you

A huge thank you to everyone who joined our May litter picks across the Parish, your efforts have helped keep Downend and Bromley Heath looking bright and beautiful!

How's Your Sunflower Growing?

LET US KNOW HOW IT'S GOING!

SEND YOUR PICTURES TO
Chrisy@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk

SHOW US HOW TALL THEY ARE! HOW BIG THEY'VE GROWN! SHARE YOUR SUNNY SNAPS!

Email your photos and let us know how your sunflowers are doing!

Sunflowers

Remember potting your sunflower seeds with us at King George V Pavilion over May half term. We'd love to see how they're getting on. Send us a photo and share the progress of your growing sunflower so we can celebrate everyone's blooms together.

DOWNEND & BROMLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCILLORS

Downend Ward

Councillor Phillip Abbott
phillip.abbott@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 0117 957 0075

Councillor Janet Biggin
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Councillor Jacky Dockerty
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Staple Hill Ward

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Councillor Stephen Pick
stephen.pick@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 07584 425 242

Clerk to the Council
Mr Kevin Spratt - Email: clerk@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk

www.dbhparishcouncil.uk

Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council

Youth custody unit improves

A YOUTH custody unit in Emersons Green has had its Ofsted rating upgraded to 'good' following years of failures.

Vinney Green secure children's home in Emersons Green Lane was rated 'inadequate' in 2021 after inspectors found scaffolding poles and pieces of wood lying around that "could be used as weapons".

A year later, the government watchdog said staff used unlawful and painful physical restraint of residents, along with unjustified solitary confinement for up to three days.

More recent visits concluded that the unit, which accommodates up to 24 young

offenders aged between 10 to 18, still required improvement.

Now Ofsted says the unit is 'good' across all five areas inspected in April, including overall experiences and progress of young people, education, health, and the effectiveness of leaders.

Its report, published in June, said: "Leaders and managers are driving sustainable improvements across all areas of the service, with a focus on children's care, experiences and progress."

"There has been a positive change in the culture of the home, and children now benefit from a more settled and safer environment.

"The education provision has expanded, offering internal work experience and placements that support children to develop skills for their future training and employment.

"There are positive improvements in the health provision across the home."

The report said children were "at the centre of all decisions" and felt valued, with complaints taken seriously and investigated.

The inspectors said: "Parents

and professionals consistently said that they 'cannot fault' the care provided.

"Children are involved in decisions about their home and have helped to decorate some rooms.

"Children make positive childhood memories with the fun and varied social and leisure activities available to them.

"This helps children to build on their social and interpersonal skills, build appropriate relationships with their peers and grow in self-esteem and confidence.

"Staff work tirelessly to prepare children for when they leave."

The report said youngsters enjoyed and valued their education and that their behaviour in lessons was 'exemplary'.

It said: "Most children achieve qualifications across a range of academic and vocational subjects, such as barbering, food technology, construction skills, English and mathematics.

"Children are consistently seen by a healthcare professional following a physical restraint or after an incident of self-harm.

"Healthcare staff also review CCTV of the restraint to support a thorough review of physical issues for the child.

"Children said that they feel safe.

"All staff understand children's individual triggers and what strategies are most effective in supporting them during times of crisis.

"As a result, incidents are mostly de-escalated at an early stage."

A spokesperson for South Gloucestershire Council, which runs the home, said: "We are very pleased to have received Ofsted's latest full inspection report.

"This is testament to the hard work of our staff and the strong and trusting relationships they are able to build with residents.

"We do not take this rating for granted, of course. There is always more we can do, and we continue to work hard every day to maintain and improve standards."

By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service



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Deadline for show entries

GARDENERS, dog lovers and artists are being reminded to get their entries ready for the Frenchay Flower Show.

The show takes place on Frenchay Common on July 11 from 10.30am, with events up to the produce auction at 4.30pm.

This year it will include its first fun dog show, as well as more than 200 exhibition classes from flowers, plants, and vegetables to art, photography, cookery and handicrafts, with 28 children's categories.

Entries for the marquee exhibitions are free but forms must be submitted by 6pm on July 8. To enter, buy tickets and find out more about the event visit www.frenchayflowershow.com.

This year the show returns to Frenchay Common, next to the parish church, with Blue Badge parking next to the showground and free parking for other visitors at Frenchay Parklands.

Tickets cost £6 before July 1 and £8 on the day - accompanied children go free.

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DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS PREVIEW



SUMMER CEILIDH WITH THE MOLECATCHERS + FISH & CHIP SUPPER FRIDAY 17 JULY 2026

AFTER the success of their ceilidh during the 10th Anniversary Celebration in 2024, Downend Folk & Roots are delighting to announce that they will sign off for the Summer break with another dance and supper, in partnership with Christ Church Downend.

As before, the music will come from Bristol's finest ceilidh band, The Molecatchers, while a fish & chip supper will also be provided by Downend's own Good Frydays. The meal is

included in the ticket price. Anyone requiring an alternative meal should contact us before booking.

Tickets for the ceilidh, which takes place at Christ Church Downend on Friday 17 July 2026, are available online from downendfolkandroots.com, as well as from the Parish Office and Downend Cards and Gifts. They are priced at £15 each (£10 under-18s if accompanied by a paying adult), in advance only, and are strictly limited to 100. Doors open at 7.00pm supper will be served at 7.30pm and the dancing will begin at around 8.00pm. Please note that this event is not included in the Summer Season Ticket and

is a stand-alone event in partnership with the church.

There will be a bar, stocking cider, soft drinks, wine, hot drinks and real ale from Bristol's Hop Union Brewery. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own glass/mug/tankard, as well as reusable bottles for water, as part of the drive to be more environmentally aware; there is a 50p discount for those that do. There will also be sweet treats available at the bar courtesy of Radstock-based The Great Cake Company.

For further information, please email info@downendfolkandroots.com or find them on social media.



DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS REVIEW

THE CHARLOTTE CARRIVICK BAND + ERIKA OLSON FRIDAY 15 MAY 2026

CHARLOTTE Carrivick, flatpicking guitarist extraordinaire, has her head down, tuning. Her face is obscured by a single, old-timey microphone. There's laughter from the three musicians around her. "What's all of that giggling? You're not supposed to be having fun." She is deadpan, dry as an Appalachian path. She looks up, there's a sparkle in her eye and electricity crackles from her fingertips. She chuckles and her acoustic guitar leaps onto life.

There are a lot of incredible players in the folk world but, oh my, these Bluegrass musicians! Phew! There's nothing like them. Carrivick is joined by Evan Davies on mandolin and Niles Krieger - incredibly this is only his second show with the band - on fiddle, both from The Often Herd, and fellow Midnight Skyracer member, bassist Eleanor Cross. All four are incredible.

Over the course of their two sets the four-piece play 20-odd songs and tunes. They flit and fly by, they are fireflies, they are hummingbirds. Vivid and quicksilver, the music shoots into your field of vision, a blur of beauty, shooting sparks before leaving you with your jaw on the floor and a tingle in your ears.

There are tunes that take a little

snap-shot of a moment; I'm Glad That's Not My Dog is inspired by a Springer Spaniel and lots of mud but it absolutely sings. Mandolin runs tumble over guitar lines, until the fiddle bursts through and the bass yomps by its side. Each instrument steps up to that microphone, takes up the tune, throws in the air and passes it on. It's fast and flash but never clinical. Instead, feet move and those fireflies dance.

Ron's Duck Blanket has a cute-cute swing that could soundtrack some of Morph's more whimsical adventures. There are mandolin plinks until everyone else joins for some serious multi-coloured, hand drawn silliness.

When Carrivick sings she shows impeccable taste. Jason Isbell's If We Were Vampires is gorgeous, all shadow-y swoon and velvet-y night. Her harmonies with Davies are beautiful. Dylan's Farewell Angelina has a slow moan helped by Cross' bowed double bass while Pony Boy, by Mark Simos, starts with sweetness and light until it blossoms into something altogether more rousing.

Throughout the evening it becomes obvious just how much Carrivick adores her family. So many tunes have been written for her children, or various nieces, and you'd be damn proud if any of them had been written for you. Evie, Brighton Breesey, Robyn's Tune and Waiting for Annie all have an affection and warmth that is utterly captivating. All four



musicians gloriously compliment one another, allowing each to breathe and express themselves but singing with one voice too. No, Hatit has a Chaplin-silent-movie lopsided swagger and is just fabulous.

By the time The Charlotte Carrivick Band make their way to the end of their set things are at fever pitch. Papa's on The House Top is a knee-slapping hoedown complete with fully rockin' slapped double bass and then Krieger takes centre stage for a fiddle driven Train on the Island. His playing is breakneck but completely effortless, it glides across the tracks at dizzying speed. Davies and Carrivick race to keep pace and Cross is as languid as she's been all night. Phew!

Before the music began it was pointed out that the Queen of Country, Emmylou Harris, is in town tonight. Not that this has put off the Downend faithful. They are richly rewarded, too, by a fantastic support set from ERIKA OLSON, an

American singer-songwriter by way of East Sussex. She's a bit indie-folk, a bit country, even a little bit of soulful testifying.

This is How I Pray is nature-green, Olson's earthy voice adding sass and sway, while Benefit of the Doubt strains with anger and frustration. It is here that her inner street preacher peeks out; social commentary as barely contained fury.

If there are comparisons to be made then, maybe, Bonnie Raitt is a good one. Olson's voice is strong, especially on the anthemic I Don't Feel Like Fighting, and tells stories with Raitt's authenticity and assuredness. We might not get Emmylou but no-one's complaining.

Charlotte Carrivick knew, of course, that if there's one thing that this music is, it's fun. This is music that crackles and leaps and does all of the good things. There's nothing like it.

**Words: Gavin McNamara
Photo: Barry Savell**

The rest we really need

BY this point in the summer term, Many of us are beginning to count down the days. Children are tired. Teachers are tired. Parents are tired. Even those without school-age children can feel the familiar summer longing for space to breathe. Perhaps there's a holiday coming, a few slower evenings, or simply the hope of not having quite so much to do.

Rest is a wonderful gift. We are not machines. We were never made to keep going endlessly without stopping. And yet, one of the strange things about rest is that it can be harder to find than we expect.

Sometimes we finally stop, only to discover that our minds keep racing. We go on holiday but bring our worries with us. We clear the diary but still feel burdened. We sleep longer but wake with the same anxieties. We have a break from

work, but not from grief, guilt, loneliness, fear, family pressures, or the nagging sense that life is not quite as it should be.

Of course, holidays and days off still matter. But perhaps our struggle to rest points to something deeper. Perhaps we are not only tired because life is busy. Perhaps we are tired because we are burdened.

Jesus once spoke these inviting words to weary people: "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Notice what Jesus doesn't say: "Try harder." "Sort yourself out." "Come to church and pretend you're fine." He says, "Come to me."

Christianity is often misunderstood as giving tired people more things to do. More rules. More guilt. More religious effort. But at the heart of the Christian message is not an instruction to climb our way up to God. It is the good news that God has come down to us in Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that our deepest restlessness comes from being away from God. We were made to know him and love him, but we have wandered from him. That is why the burdens we carry are not only outward but inward too. We need more than a break. We need forgiveness. We need peace with God. We need to be



brought home.

That is what Jesus came to do. He lived the life we have not lived. He died on the cross to bear our sin. He rose again to bring new life to all who come to him.

So do enjoy the summer. Receive the gift of slower days and longer evenings. But don't stop there. The rest we most deeply need is found in Jesus himself.

And his invitation still stands: "Come to me."

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Farewell and thank you, Lisa

SUNDAY June 14 was a very special day in the life of St Stephen's Church, Soundwell. This was the day when Lisa the vicar was going to preach her last sermon.

Although it was a very sad time because Lisa was leaving us, it was also a joyful time as it enabled us to look back and celebrate all the wonderful things she had done, and the fun things we had all shared together - picnics and games in the church garden, the setting up of the Easter story around the path, stalls and tea on the grass, and gardening sessions.

It was ten years ago when Lisa officially became vicar of St Stephen's. Lisa was known to church members as she was born and brought up in the Soundwell area, attended the church and took on the office duties.

It was her past experience working as a 'holiday rep' that helped when it came to fun and laughter, as on a dark miserable Sunday she would bring the congregation to life by doing all the movements to a lively song.

Children also enjoyed these songs, and it was from there that



Lisa worked toward getting a now growing Youth Church officially up and running. Lisa also spent time going into local schools.

Lisa always had time for everyone, whatever their age, she would visit the sick and the housebound, and bring a light into their lives. The ten years that Lisa was with us were amazing. She has been an inspiration to everyone, so we hope and pray that St Stephen's Church can continue to grow in her absence.

Gill Mayo, Church Warden

Creativity and community

WHEN Christ Church Downend was re-ordered in 2017/18, the vision was for the building to reflect our priorities: Christian Spirituality, Community and Creativity.

We are used to churches holding all sorts of services and prayer events, and welcoming in the community with events such as cream teas, but creativity?

If you think about it, a church is often the largest space in a community, so it's a great venue for exhibitions.

We've had work by the local Ukrainian artist Maryna Volkodavova, artwork from Downend School art students and photographic work from Downend Camera Club.

If you are interested in having work displayed at the church, please get in touch via the parish office.

With its beautiful setting, lovely acoustics, lighting, PA, moveable seating and a stage, Christ Church is also a great venue for concerts by orchestras, bands and choirs such as Longwell Green Orchestra, West Winds Concert Band, Bromley Heath Community Choir and others. Not forgetting, of course, that Christ Church is home to Downend Folk and Roots every third Friday of the month.

This month you all get to join in!

We are joining with Downend Folk & Roots to host a ceilidh (a barn dance in old money) and fish and chip supper from our local, Good Frydays, on Friday July 17 from 7pm.

Live music is provided by the Molecatchers, a Bristol band: they explain what to do, so no previous experience is necessary! Booking is essential.

Tickets are available from www.downendfolkandroots.com and from the parish office, by emailing parishadmin@christchurchdownend.com or calling 0117 908 9867.

Tickets include the supper and the chance to dance in great company.

We are blessed to have such a beautiful space in which to celebrate the creativity of our community: it's there for all of us to enjoy.

Anita Dobson

Looking for hope and encouragement?
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Frankie Johns and Lucciano Mortimore

Frankie and Lucciano will sing in Page Park

A SINGING grandad and grandson who wowed the judges and audience of Britain's Got Talent will bring their double act to Page Park this summer.

Frankie Johns and Lucciano Mortimore provided one of the most memorable moments of the ITV talent show series this year, when nine-year-old Luciano called his grandad out of the audience at the start of his audition, to sing with him on stage.

They performed a duet of the One Direction song 'History', to a huge reaction from the audience and four 'yes' votes from the judges.

Although they didn't make the show's semi-finals, Frankie and Lucciano's performance brought them media attention, and the audition has been viewed more than three million times on YouTube. Luciano has also been praised by singers Robbie Williams and Michael Bublé.

Frankie, from Kingswood, is already well known locally for his decades of singing at local venues, particularly care homes. Lucciano sometimes joins him during school holidays.

Lucciano lives in Wales and previously appeared on BGT three years ago. His mum Marisa Billitteri, who is Frankie's daughter, appeared on the X Factor in 2008 as part of the group Girlband.

Frankie says he's looking forward to singing at Page Park's bandstand on August 23.

The free show is part of the Lazy Sunday Afternoon concert series running from 2-4pm on Sundays from mid-July until the end of August.

He said: "We'll sing a bit of old stuff and a bit of new, and mix it up a bit."

The concerts have been organised by Melody Beard of the Bean Tree Cafe in the park, who is one of Frankie's neighbours.

Melody said: "I didn't realise I had a celebrity on my road.

"I'd already booked him to play an event in

Kingswood.

"Frankie has got such great energy, the way he engages with the crowd, and obviously his grandson is adorable!"

The acts performing are:

July 12: Bristol Concert Wind Band

July 19: The Bears & Michael Wilson

August 2: Siobhan Olivia & Rock Choir

August 9: Ukulele Ben & Artuba

August 16: Mad Sax (at noon on the cafe patio), Salvation Army band

August 23: Frankie Johns & Lucciano, Kelly Loveridge

August 30: Bristol Concert Wind Band

Friends of King George V Playing Fields



SOME of you will have seen the brand new water station for the dogs and, hopefully, wildlife that visit King George V playing fields.

The 'Watery Hole' is situated next to the pavilion.

Why the Watery Hole? It's in memory of Madeline Caple, a neighbour whose garden

backed onto the park and who always looked after our furry friends.

Every morning, no matter what the weather, Madeline would hang bottles of water out for dog owners to fill up the water bowl she left in the park for visiting dogs.

She also liked to chat to dog owners and watch the dogs enjoying their time in the park. She made sure the wildlife was suitably looked after, too!

Sadly, Madeline passed away in December, and the Friends of King George V Playing Fields wanted to do something in her memory, hence the water station with a plaque in her memory.

The words engraved on the plaque - "Reach out and touch somebody's hand" - are a quote from the 1970 Diana Ross song, a message of compassion, unity and helping others,

The Friends are very grateful to Frenchay & Downend ward councillor Raj Sood for his generous donation to make this happen.

Bridget Suitters

Friends of Lincombe Barn Park & Woods

MANY thanks to the team of volunteers who helped cut back the stinging nettles along the path that leads down to the tall waterfall in the woods.

The 16 children and adults also cleared litter from the park and woods during our community Sunday in June.

Our community Sundays are held on the first Sunday of every month between 10am and 11am, weather permitting. Everyone is welcome.

The Friends have created a multi-sensory scavenger hunt, which can be found on the notice board just inside the entrance to Lincombe Barn Park, as well as on the Friends' website and Facebook page.

Simply take a photo of the scavenger hunt or scan the QR code and enjoy exploring the park and woods over the summer in search of nature's treasures.

If you would like to send us photos of your discoveries, we would love to display them. A big thank you to Tina for putting the scavenger hunt together.

For more summer fun, if you are interested in bats (the furry flying variety!), you are very welcome to attend our bat talk and walk at 7pm on Friday August 28 at Lincombe Barn. Bat detectors will be provided. Bat enthusiast Daisy Finniear has kindly agreed to lead the event. No charge, but any donations to Severn Wildlife Rescue would be greatly appreciated.

Before that you can join Mud Pie Explorers on Saturday July 18 from 10-11.30am as they celebrate their 15th anniversary with a free community event for families, with activities and play.

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Diane Paddon

Help measure health of river

PEOPLE are being invited to join a community effort to measure the health of rivers and streams in the Downend area.

Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) runs the annual Bristol Avon RiverBlitz, which this year is taking place from July 25 to August 2.

The charity invites people to send off for a kit they can use to sample the quality of water in local rivers, streams and wetlands for common nitrate and phosphate pollutants that indicate poor water quality.

Last year volunteers took samples of water from the River Frome in 13 places between Hambrook, and Frenchay, measuring levels of nutrients washed into the river to see if they were harmful.

High levels of pollutant

phosphates were found in nine of the sites, and medium levels of nitrates found 12 out of the 13 sites.

BART River Engagement and Education Lead Amy Wade said: "The Bristol Avon RiverBlitz is our biggest volunteer event of the year, with hundreds of families, friends and individuals heading to their local river to make their contribution to improving river health.

"We are always delighted by the level of participation, which helps us build a detailed snapshot of river health across the catchment."

People can apply online for a free water testing kit and instructions at tinyurl.com/2s4jxuus.

Kits are posted to volunteers and, after taking their samples, they submit their results online.

BART says RiverBlitz accessible and suitable for individuals and families to take part in.

Amy said: "Participants gain a deeper understanding of their local waterways, discover new places, and contribute valuable data that helps inform action to improve river health."



Volunteers taking part in a previous RiverBlitz

The event takes place across the Bristol Avon catchment, which includes the Avon, Frome and other tributaries including the River Chew and minor brooks and streams that feed into the rivers.

Testing takes a few minutes: volunteers use colour-changing test strips to measure phosphate and nitrate levels, comparing results to a chart.

They can submit findings on the spot using a mobile phone or upload them later from home.

Participants are also encouraged to take a photo, note

key features of the waterway, and record any wildlife or litter seen.

Amy said: "Monitoring nitrates and phosphates is vital. While these nutrients occur naturally and support healthy ecosystems in small amounts, elevated levels can result from sewage, domestic and industrial waste, and agricultural run-off.

"This can lead to excessive plant and algal growth, reducing oxygen in the water and harming aquatic life."

Details of previous surveys can be found at bristolavonriverstrust.org/riverblitz

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July 1

■ **MOTHERS UNION** at Christ Church Downend, 2.15pm. Talk, worship, refreshments, fundraising, friendship.

July 3

■ **BRISTOL PALAEOBIOLOGY FESTIVAL** at Bristol University Willis Memorial Building, Queens Road, Bristol, 7-9.30pm with TV's Prof Alice Roberts and palaeontologist Prof Mike Benton exploring the history of life on Earth, with films and discussion. Book free tickets at tinyurl.com/mtc38ez8.

July 4

■ **CHARITY CONCERT** in aid of BRACE-Alzheimers charity by the Filtones Choir, Community Rooms, St Teresa's RC Church, Gloucester Road North, Filton, 4pm. Tickets £10 (school age children free) at the door. More information from Dot on 07870 984760 or www.thefiltone.co.uk.

July 4

■ **CLEEVE SINGERS SUMMER CONCERT** at Lincombe Barn, Overndale Road, Downend, 7.30pm. Tickets £6 from Downend Card & Gifts (cash only), Downend Folk House and on the door. Tea, coffee and soft drinks during interval.

July 4

■ **BRISTOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA** concert, Frenchay Parish Church, 7.30pm. Tickets £12 in advance from 0117 956 2106 or £15 on the door, includes refreshments, glass of wine or juice. Students £5, Children free. Programme includes Boyce, Vivaldi, Saint-Saens, and Elgar.

July 11

■ **COFFEE MORNING** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 10am-noon. Coffee, cakes and bacon rolls. Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.

July 11

■ **FRENCHAY FLOWER SHOW** on Frenchay Common, 10.30am-5.30pm. Includes fun dog show, classic car display, marquee with competition entries, entertainment, auction and many stalls. Tickets £6 before July 1 from www.frenchayflowershow.com or £8 on the day. Accompanied children free.

July 12

■ **CAR BOOT SALE**, Mangotsfield School, Rodway Hill, 10am-1pm. Last date of the season - raising money for new school minibus. £1 entry per adult. Sellers from 9am: £5 per car, £10 per van. More details on Friends of Mangotsfield School Facebook page.

July 12

■ **PROMENADE THROUGH TIME** with Downend Community History and Arts Project (CHAP) in the high street, 11am-3pm. Re-enactors from various eras of history including WG Grace, a suffragette, Romans, medieval peasants and a highwayman. Come in costume. Volunteer to help visitors or show a vintage vehicle - contact big.gin@yahoo.com if you can help.

July 12

■ **DOWNEND FOOD MARKET** in the high street, 11am-3pm. Stalls, music and children's activities.

July 12 & 19

■ **LAZY SUNDAY AFTERNOON**

CONCERTS at the bandstand, Page Park, from 2-4pm. July 12: Bristol Concert wind Band. July 19: The Bears & Michael Wilson.

July 12

■ **HAPPY'S CIRCUS** at Christ Church Junior School from 12.30pm. Family-friendly event raising money for school resources. Tickets £10.50 from school office or on the gate. Raffle prizes, stalls and sponsors wanted - email christchurchjuniors@sgmail.org.uk for more details.

July 12

■ **BUBBLE CHURCH** at the Church Centre, Quakers Road, Bromley Heath, 4pm. Interactive short service for families with young children, followed by children's tea.

July 14

■ **BEREAVEMENT GROUP** at Christ Church Downend, 2pm. Friendship refreshments and a chance to reflect together with others who have lost a loved one.

July 16

■ **DEMENTIA CAFE, WARM SPACE** at Christ Church Downend, 11am-1.30pm. Full hot meal. Also hot meal on July 2. Live music from Music Train, with soup & roll lunch, on July 9 & 23. Free.

July 17

■ **MANGOTSFIELD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION SKITTLES COMPETITION** at Mangotsfield United FC, July 17 from 7pm. Raising money for St Peter's Hospice and Pancreatic Cancer charity. Teams of six - £18 per team. More details and entry forms at Mangotsfield Community

Association Facebook page.

July 18

■ **MUD PIE EXPLORERS** 15th anniversary celebration, Lincombe Barn Woods, 10-11.30am. Free community event for families, with activities and play. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

July 19

■ **MESSY CHURCH** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 4-6pm. Craft based afternoon for all the family, includes shared meal. No need to book, Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.

July 23

■ **THURSDAY CHURCH** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 11.15am-noon. Relaxed, traditional Christian worship. Refreshments from 10am.

July 24-26

■ **HAM FARM FESTIVAL**, Emersons Green Lane, Emersons Green. Evenings musical double bills, afternoon events for families, drop-in picnic concerts with local, UK and international artists. Advance booking required - more details at www.hamfarmfestival.com.

July 26

■ **PAGE PARK PRAISE** with Staple Hill Salvation Army Band, 3pm. Afternoon of music and worship. Bring a chair if you can.

July 27

■ **CAMEO CRAFT EVENING** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 8pm. Different crafts each month and a chance to make new friends. Free event - open to all. Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.

July 28

■ **HOLIDAY AT HOME**, Church Centre, Quakers Road, 10am-3pm. Activities, refreshments, friendship and Christian message for seniors. All welcome.

REGULAR EVENTS

■ **BRISTOL U3A**: Have you reached a point in your life where you have fewer responsibilities and more time for yourself? Would you like to take part in activities where you can share skills, abilities or hobbies whilst having fun and making new friends? Go to www.bristolu3a.org.uk for details.

Monday

■ **SINGALONG 4 ALL** - Mondays 10.30/11.30, Grace court, Dial Lane, Downend BS16 5UP. £4 ...£1 tea n' bikkies Tel: Barbara 07816839141.

■ **PUCKLECHURCH SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB** are looking for new players. We meet every Monday evening (7.15-9.30) and Sunday & Wednesday afternoons 3.15pm-

Join the Summer Reading Challenge 2026: Read to the Beat FREE at your local library and earn stickers and rewards!

Every child aged 4 and above is invited to take part! Children read any books they enjoy and take part in fun activities over the summer holiday to collect stickers and rewards including a medal and certificate.

Join the Summer Reading Challenge 2026: Read to the Beat at a South Gloucestershire library during staffed hours from Saturday 4 July finishing by Saturday 12 September, and **pick up your FREE activity bag**.

See the difference the Summer Reading Challenge makes to your child's reading:

"I am a foster carer to the 2 boys, so it was lovely to widen the range of books available to them. Also, it was great to see their motivation and sense of achievement at completing the challenge." (Downend Library)

"I love that the reading challenge happens each year. My child struggles with English and reading so this is brilliant for him and keeps him off his tech. It's a great skill to have." (Patchway Library)

"My 10 year old - dyslexic - not a keen reader, has loved the dyslexia section and has really enjoyed the books she's chosen and has been really keen to come back to the dedicated section to choose another book." (Staple Hill Library)

Children love taking part and there are lots of **fabulous FREE holiday activities**: West African Drumming Workshops with Batch Gueye, Crafts, Junk Modelling Workshops and Lego™ Challenges.

The Summer Reading Challenge is delivered by The Reading Agency in partnership with public libraries and powered by Universal Music Group UK.

Find out more at www.southglos.gov.uk/summerreadingchallenge or follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/sgloslibraries for the latest updates.

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

6pm at Pucklechurch Community Centre. Refreshments available. For more information contact John 07926541933.

■ **SILK PAINTING** at Downend Baptist Church. Come along to an enjoyable afternoon, every alternate Monday 2pm-4pm. Make cards, tuition given, tea and biscuits provided, cost includes all materials. One large card £2 or 3 for £5, small cards £1 each. Please contact 0117 9608935 for more details.

■ **LUNCH CLUB AT STAPLE HILL COMMUNITY HUB**, Berkeley House, Berkeley Road, every Monday, 12.15pm. More details from the hub on 01454 868374.

■ **KINGSWOOD LACE MAKERS** - meet at Lincombe Barn, Overndale Road on Monday afternoons from 2-4pm, evenings 7.15-9.15pm every third Monday. New members welcome, first meeting free. For more information contact Beverly on walkingwithlace@yahoo.co.uk.

■ **JOB SEARCHERS SUPPORT** Staple Hill Community Hub, 2-4pm. Benefits advisor available second Monday of each month.

■ **FRENCHAY CHAPEL** 'Wild, Wise Curious' Discussion Group with coffee and cake 12.30 weekly For more info or to go on weekly email contact peter.a.bruce@gmail.com 07527-118586

■ **FRENCHAY CHAPEL** Mindful Pilates weekly - Contact Debbie 07771 544549

■ **ADULT TAP DANCING CLASSES**, Frenchay Village Hall, Monday mornings, 10.30-11.30am Fun class with lots of laughs. £9 a session. Call Suzanne 07787 396718

Tuesday

■ **DOWNEND GARDENING IN RETIREMENT CLUB** meets at the Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, on the third Tuesday of every month at 9.45am. Speaker at 10.30am. Non Members welcome, £3 including tea/coffee.

■ **BOARD GAMES NIGHT** every Tuesday from 7pm. All Welcome The Wooden Walls Micropub, 30 Broad Street, Staple Hill, BS16 5NU

■ **LINCOMBE BARN CAMERA CLUB** meets every second, fourth and fifth Tuesday of the month at Lincombe Barn, Overndale Road. New members always welcome. For information see website at www.lincombebarncameraclub.co.uk or email lincombe.barn@gmail.com.

■ **BROMLEY HEATH GARDENING CLUB** Meets at Christ Church Centre, Quakers Road, every third Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm. Talks, day trips and short holidays - everyone welcome. Call May on 0117 957 3695 for details.

■ **PUCKLECHURCH FOLK DANCING CLUB** Pucklechurch Community Hall, Abson Road

every other Tuesday from 7.30 to 10.15pm All welcome either with a partner or solo. Enjoy an evening with us. Call Sue on 07742114566 or Linda on 07843240414.

■ **MESSY SPACE**, Badminton Road Methodist Church Downend. Term-time group for toddlers and their carers, 10-11.45am. Toys, books, play dough, paint & craft, singing and refreshments. First visit free, then £3 per child or £5 per family. More information at www.badmintonroadmethodist.org.uk or 0117 956 1106.

■ **DOWNEND BAPTIST CHURCH**: Coffee time 10.30-12.30 the first Tuesday of the month.

■ **FRIENDSHIP & EXERCISE GROUP**, Salvation Army, Broad Street, Staple Hill, every Tuesday 10-11.30am.

■ **MOVE-IT CLUB** for children aged 7-11, Staple Hill Community Hub, Berkeley House, Berkeley Road, every Tuesday 3.30pm. More details from hub on 01454 868374.

■ **TEA AND TOAST** after school drop-in for primary aged children and families, Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, Downend, term-time Tuesdays, 3.15-4.30pm. All welcome for tea, squash, toast, board games, colouring and play in a friendly atmosphere.

■ **DOWNEND WI** meets at Christ Church Hall, North Street, Downend on the last Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. For details email downendwi@yahoo.co.uk.

■ **RIDGEWAY BADMINTON CLUB** meets every Tuesday evening from 8-10pm at Downend Sports Centre for informal badminton doubles/singles matches between adults of all ages. First visit free. For more information contact Graham on 07968 050 320

■ **SINGING FOR THE BRAIN**, free music club for people living with dementia and Alzheimer's, Staple Hill Hub, every Tuesday 2-3pm. Call 01454 868374 for more information.

■ **COFFEE AFTERNOON** with free coffee & cake, friendly conversation and a 'thought for the day'. First Tuesday of the month, 2pm at the Pendennis Good News Centre, Pendennis Road, Staple Hill. All welcome.

■ **KARATE FOR MUMS AND DADS**, 7pm, Page Community Association Staple Hill. More info from www.zenkarate.club.

■ **MEDITATION** at Frenchay Chapel, 7pm. Kundalini Osho movement meditation on 1st Tuesday, person-centred meditation on 3rd Tuesday.

■ **DOWNEND BAPTIST CHURCH COFFEE TIME**, first Tuesday of the month, 10.30am-12.30pm. Join us for tea, coffee, cakes. Relax together. Quiet area. All ages welcome. Starts

July 1. www.downendbaptist.co.uk

■ **BRISTOL MILITARY WIVES CHOIR** meets at Mangotsfield and Castle Green United Reformed Church, Cossham Street, every Tuesday 7-9pm. Open to women with a military connection. No audition or experience needed. Cake and tea/coffee provided. More details from bristol@militarywiveschoirs.org.

■ **GREENBANK BOWLS CLUB** Gordon Road, Whitehall, BS5 7DP (What three words: same. zone.frozen) Every Tuesday 5pm until dusk. All equipment provided Please wear flat soled shoes, eg. trainers. No need to book Car Parking Licensed Bar greenbankbowls@gmail.com

Wednesday

■ **DOWNEND BRIDGE CLUB - NEW MEMBERS ARE WANTED** Come and join us and play duplicate Bridge at Lincombe Barn Downend on Wednesday afternoons 2pm. All levels welcome. Please contact eveforbes77@gmail.com or 0117 9836886 or Yvonne Scoulding rscoulding@googlemail.com or 0117 9568944

■ **CLEEVE SINGERS OF DOWNEND** This four part choir meet at Lincombe Barn, 7.30 p.m. from September until July. For more information contact the Secretary on 0117 9561881.

■ **DOWNEND SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB** Musical entertainment from 2-4pm every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at North Street Church Hall. All are welcome.

■ **ROYAL BRITISH LEGION WOMEN'S SECTION** meets on the first Wednesday of the month, 1-3pm at the YOU Foundation, Page Road, Staple Hill (by the long-stay car park). New members welcome. More details from Diane Roberts on 0117 956 3407.

■ **DOWNEND TANG SOO DO** meets at Christchurch Parish Hall, North Street on Wednesday evenings from 7.30-9pm. Suitable for beginners and ages 10+. First class free. More details from Ian on 07817 744689 or at the Downend Tang Soo Do Facebook page.

■ **FRENCHAY PROBUS CLUB** We meet at Frenchay Village Hall on the first Wednesday of each month between 10.00 and 12.00 hrs. For further details contact: davidhjryan@gmail.com.

■ **WARMLEY JAZZ CLUB**, Every Wednesday except first one of the month, 7.30pm, Cadbury Heath Social Club, £7 on the door. More details at warmleyjazz.co.uk.

■ **BRISTOL SCRABBLE CLUB** meets every Wednesday evening at 7pm until 10pm at Filton Community Centre, Elm Park, Filton BS34 7PS. New members welcome-

first visit free so come along and give us a try. Information: Jo Hunter by email atpurplewellies@live.co.uk

■ **CROSS STITCH** Like to learn this absorbing relaxing hobby and have fun at the same time? Why not join the Club at Lincombe Barn. Beginners and those with all abilities welcome. New term commences beginning of September on Wednesday mornings 10.00 am until noon. Contact Lincombe Barn 9562367.

■ **THE FRENCHAY FOLK DANCE CLUB** meet fortnightly at Frenchay Village Hall from 7:45 until 10:15pm. All standards of dancer are welcome to enjoy live Bands and experienced Callers. Visit frenchayfdc.co.uk or call 0117 3021543 for more information.

■ **FRIENDLY VOICES** dementia-friendly singing group, Mangotsfield & Castle Green URC, Cossham Street, second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, 10.30am to noon. No charge, carers welcome. Sessions led by music therapist. More details from June Watts on 0117 956 6625.

■ **WEDNESDAY CAFE FOR SENIORS**, at Badminton Road Methodist Church (BS16 6NU) every Wednesday 10am to 12 noon. All Welcome - just come along - make new friends over a cuppa and cake. Information: 0117 239 5984

■ **DOWNEND FLOWER ARRANGING CLUB** We are a friendly group, we meet at 7.30pm on 1st & 3rd Wednesday each month from September to June at Emersons Green Village Hall, Emersons Way, Emersons Green, BS16 7AP Ring Genise on 0777 2451217 for more information.

■ **LADIES ENTERPRISE CLUB** We are a friendly group who meet in Downend Baptist Church Salisbury Road Downend on the 3rd Wednesday afternoon of the month from 2.30pm - 4.00pm. Everyone is welcome. For details Contact Ruth on 07733413823

■ **MOTHERS UNION** - worship, friendship, supporting charities, refreshments: First Wednesday of the month, 2.15pm at Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street. Non-members welcome. More details from 0117 908 9867.

■ **FRENCHAY & HAMBROOK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** meets at Friends Meeting House, Frenchay, 7.30pm first Wednesday of the month from September to March. Talks on garden-related topics, meet other gardeners, trips in April & May. Phone 0117 967 2390 for more information.

■ **COFFEE MORNING**, Staple Hill Community Hub, Berkeley House, Berkeley Road, every Wednesday 9.30-10.30am. More details from

Continued on next page

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

the hub on 01454 868374.

■ **KEEP FIT**, God's House International Centre, The Sanctuary, 55 High Street, Staple Hill, every Wednesday 10-11am, followed by cup of tea and a chat. For adults 50+. More information from Lin on 0770 707 6281 or email Lincolnish@hotmail.co.uk.

■ **SPROUTS**, free gardening and nature club for children aged 7-11, Staple Hill Hub every Wednesday, 4-6pm. Call 01454 868374 for further information. Thursday

■ **HOLY COMMUNION** at St James

Church, Mangotsfield, from noon.

■ **QUIZ NIGHT** at St James Church, Mangotsfield, 8pm.

■ **BEECHWOOD READING**

GROUP Meets at the Beechwood Club, Fishponds. Third Wed of the month 1.45pm to 3.15pm. New members welcome. Contact Caroly at 07527 841443

■ **LADIES-ONLY KARATE GROUP**, 7pm Page Community Association Staple Hill. More information from www.zenkarate.club.

■ **HANHAM BRIDGE CLUB** Every Weds 7-10pm at Hanham

Community Centre, new members welcome. See www.hanhambridgeclub.co.uk or call Graham 07790 491564

■ **ST JOHN'S BADMINTON CLUB** plays at Kingswood Leisure Centre, Church Road, Soundwell every Wednesday, 8-10pm. New members welcome - more details from Sue on 07715 738131.

Thursday

■ **BARN BELLS** handbell ringers meet at Lincombe Barn, Downend, from 2-4pm weekly. Anyone who

can read music is welcome to join.

■ **DEWDROP INN CAFE**, Resound church, Blackhorse Road, Mangotsfield. Every fourth Thursday of the month, 2-4pm. A place for the community to relax and unwind with old & new friends. Tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits £2.

■ **ROOTED YOUTH GROUP** at Christ Church Downend - age 11-18 7pm-8.30pm Every Thursday in term time. Games, crafts, reflections Contact Paul on 07939 125375.

■ **MANGOTSFIELD AND CASTLE GREEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH** regular coffee mornings, held on the first Thursday of the month, 10.30am-noon

■ **SCRABBLE** Downend Folk House Thursdays 10-12noon Info: 07789772538 Jonathan Seegrove.

■ **WARM SPACE CAFE** at Christ Church, Downend, free every Thursday 11-2pm. Soup and roll lunch from noon. Live music, including Music Train on 2nd and 4th Thursdays. Dementia-friendly cafe on 3rd Thursday of the month, 11am-1.30pm.

■ **HAMBROOK MEN'S PROBUS CLUB** meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month, 10am-noon at Whiteshill Chapel, Hambrook, with a speaker at each meeting. Friendly group, new members welcome. For details call the secretary on 07788 882386.

■ **BROMLEY HEATH PROBUS CLUB**, holds fortnightly meetings with Speakers for ladies and gentlemen on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 10:00 am till 12:00. We also enjoy lunches/outings together. Please join us at the Assembly Hall, Downend. More details on 0117 9574583 or see our website.

■ **FRIENDSHIP AND EXERCISE GROUP**, Staple Hill Methodist Church, High Street, Staple Hill, every Thursday - first session 9.30am, second session 11am.

■ **BROMLEY HEATH WI** meets at Bromley Heath Junior School Hall on the second Thursday of each month (except August) at 7.30pm. Email bromleyheathwi@gmail.com for more information.

■ **FAMILY DROP-IN** with free after-school refreshments and activities for families. Every Thursday, 3.15-4.45pm during term time, at Pendennis Good News Centre, Pendennis Road, Staple Hill.

■ **DOWNEND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** meets every second Thursday of the month at Downend Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, at 7.30pm. New members welcome. More details from downendhortsoc@gmail.com.

■ **COFFEE, CAKE, AND COMMUNITY MORNING** at Emersons Green Village Hall. Free

Downend Community History & Arts Project

Downend High Street

Sunday 12th July 2026

1100-1500

Try the stocks!

Calling all residents!

The Mad Hatter!

Spot the Romans!

Meet W.G. Grace

Lord Nelson!

FREE EVENT

Downend Community History & Arts Project

PROMENADE THROUGH TIME

Join us on a stroll through time, remembering key events and figures from the history of our local area

Funded by

WEST OF ENGLAND

MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

Tea, Coffee, and Cake served 10am to 12pm, with extra time to relax and finish your drinks until 1pm. Everyone is welcome! Donations to Emersons Green Village Hall welcome. Supported by Emersons Green Town Council.

Friday

■ **TAI CHI FOR PARKINSON'S.** Weekly beginners Tai Chi & Qi Gong class for people with Parkinson's disease, their families and carers. Lincombe Barn. (term times) 10.15 – 12.15 including tea / coffee break. Contact: Claire - Claire@Taichibodyandmind.co.uk (07769 857672) or Sarah - buqiworks@gmail.com (07815 662844)

■ **PAGE PARK UKULELE CLUB,** Bean Tree café, Fridays at 1pm. All abilities welcomed. Places £4 each. For further details call or text 'Ukulele' to Ben on 07910 668258.

■ **JIGSAW TODDLER GROUP,** Fridays in term time at Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, from 9.45-11.15am.

■ **LATER LIVE MUSIC,** Resound church, Blackhorse Road, Mangotsfield. Every second Friday monthly, except August & December, 8-10pm, £2.50. [facebook.com/lateratresound](https://www.facebook.com/lateratresound).

■ **ARTWINGS,** Resound church, Blackhorse Road, Mangotsfield. Every fourth Friday, except August & December, 7.30pm. Explore new ways of creating and making, natter over refreshments. £5, includes materials.

■ **RAINBOW TOTS PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP** meets at Emersons Green Village Hall every Friday morning in term time, from 10-11.30am. For more info email church.egbc@outlook.com

■ **IN-THE-PINK** Exercise to music 9-10am followed by chat & coffee time. Pay session-by-session basis. Get yourself fit & make new friends at Hillfields Park Baptist Church, Thicket Avenue. For details call Julie 07903123793.

■ **TUTTIFLUTTI,** an inclusive

ensemble welcoming flautists of all ages from Grade 3 up, rehearses at Lincombe Barn in term time, from 6.30-7.30pm. New members welcome. Details from Fiona on 07817 629 691.

■ **LUNCH CLUB,** Staple Hill Community Hub, Berkeley House, Berkeley Road, every Friday from 12.15pm. For details 01454 868374.

■ **AFTER SCHOOL DROP-OFF KARATE GROUP** for mums and dads, 9am, Page Community Association Staple Hill. www.zenkarate.club.

Saturday

■ **BRISTOL SUGARCRAFT GUILD** We are a small friendly group who meet every third Saturday of the month 2pm to 4pm at St Andrews Hall, Elm Park, Filton. If you would like to make sugar flowers and models we hold workshops with instruction. Beginners very welcome. For more information contact Julia Mackay on 07563 628513

■ **STAPLE HILL METHODIST CHURCH** Coffee mornings in our beautiful building every Saturday 10.00-12.00 in aid of church funds or charities. Enjoy Fairtrade coffee, tea and cake, and stalls.

■ **REPAIR CAFE AT STAPLE HILL METHODIST CHURCH,** 3rd Saturday of the month, 10am until 12pm. Free repairs – owner pays for spare parts. Donation to church appreciated. Drop in for a chat.

■ **BALLET CLASSES** at Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, Downend. Baby ballet (aged 2 1/2 to 4) at 3pm; Royal Academy of Dance pre-primary ballet (4-6 year-olds) 3.45-4.25pm followed by introduction to tap, 4.25-4.45pm. Contact Rosie on 07534 119467. Starting April 26.

Sunday

■ **EMERSONS GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH** services are held every Sunday morning from 10.30am-11.30am at Emersons Green Village Hall, Emersons Way. Contact Simon

on 07765 201435, e-mail church.egbc@outlook.com or visit www.emersonsgreenchurch.org

■ **MANGOTSFIELD AND CASTLE GREEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH** hold regular weekly Sunday morning worship at Coss-ham Street. Services start at 10.30 a.m. with different speakers each week. New members welcome. For details contact Peter Redding (Ch. Sec.) on 0117 9657075.

■ **COMMUNITY GARDEN WORKING PARTY,** Percy Walker Court, Lincombe Road, Downend, every Sunday 10am-noon.

■ **KARATE FOR MUMS AND DADS,** 7pm, Page Community Association, Staple Hill. More information www.zenkarate.club.

■ **FRENCHAY CHAPEL** Beckspool Road. Sunday services, weekly at 10.30am. All welcome. More details from peter.a.bruce@gmail.com.

■ **BADMINTON ROAD METHODIST CHURCH BS16 6NU.** Sunday worship 10.30am. Service of Holy Communion usually fourth Sunday of the month. More information from www.badmintonroadmethodist.org.uk

■ **STAPLE HILL METHODIST CHURCH,** High Street BS16 5HQ Sunday services 10.30am + Sunday Club for ages 5-17. Holy Communion 2nd Sunday of the month – all invited. Taizé worship 6.00pm 3rd Sunday of the month. Contact Rev Dr Aboseh Ngwana 07482 550888, Philippa Church Liaison at staplehillmethodist@hotmail.co.uk or www.staplehillmethodist.com

■ **FRIENDS OF LINCOMBE BARN AND WOODS** litter picking and woodland management, first Sunday of month, 10-

11am (weather permitting).

■ **SERVICES AT ST JAMES CHURCH,** Mangotsfield. Holy Communion at 8am every Sunday. 10:30am services: 1st Sunday Holy Communion, 2nd all-age service, 3rd Holy Communion, 4th morning worship, 5th morning worship with healing.

■ **FRENCHAY CHAPEL** Beckspool Road. Community Arts for all, Frenchay Chapel, Beckspool Road. 1st Sunday of the month, 12.30pm.

■ **GREENBANK BOWLS CLUB** Gordon Road, Whitehall, BS5 7DP (What three words: same.zone. frozen) Every Sunday 10am to Noon All equipment provided Please wear flat soled shoes, eg. trainers No need to book Car Parking Licensed Bar greenbankbowls@gmail.com

■ **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS,** Frenchay Chapel, Beckspool Road, 6pm weekly.

■ **CHRIST CHURCH DOWNEND:** 9.15 am Traditional morning worship (Holy Communion on 2nd & 4th Sundays) at Church Centre, Quakers Road BS16 6NH. 10.30 Morning worship with youth and children's groups at Christ Church Downend, Downend Rd BS16 5UF

■ **FRENCHAY QUAKER MEETING,** at the meeting house, Beckspool Road (opposite Frenchay Village Hall), every Sunday 10.30-11.30am. All welcome to come and experience stillness, reflection and connection, with refreshments afterwards. Regular children's meetings. More details from frenchay.clerks@bristolquakers.org.uk or 0117 956 7337.

■ **ALL AGE WORSHIP** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 10am. With band, choir and children's band and singing group. Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.

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The weaver's waltz - a workers' champion in Bristol

IT began with a collection of trade union materials from the 1898 Trades Union Congress that I bought.

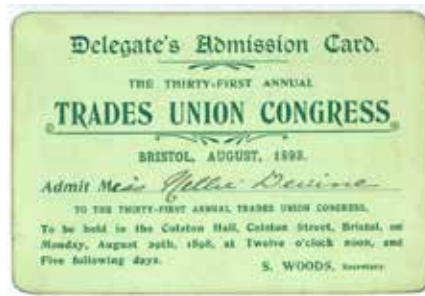
These documents, including a silk rosette and a dance card filled with names, had once belonged to a woman named Miss Nellie Devine, an 'Oldham Weaver'.

The story I discovered gave an insight into the Victorian labour movement and the hidden role of women in the fight for workers' rights.

The 1898 TUC conference in Bristol was destined for drama before it even began.

Scheduled to be held at the Colston Hall (now the Bristol Beacon), the proceedings were interrupted by a catastrophic fire at the neighbouring Clark's clothing factory.

The theatre was largely destroyed, forcing



Nellie's 1898 Trades Union Congress delegate's card

delegates to make emergency arrangements.

Despite the chaos, Nellie's collection paints a picture of a vibrant, high-society welcome for these labour pioneers.

It includes a lunch invitation from Lady Dilke, a famed suffragist and trade unionist, at the Royal Hotel, College Green, and programmes for tea dances at Hannah Moore Hall, receptions at the Academy of Fine Arts, and performances by The Bristol Glee Men.

There was also a visit to Goldney House, hosted by radical Quaker and Bristol Liberal politician Lewis Fry.

Born Mary Ellen Devine in 1864 to Irish immigrants, Nellie lived her early years in a single room above a Salford pub. By the 1881 census, following her father's death, she was one of six family members (plus two lodgers)

cramped into a home in the industrial area of Ellor Street.

She became a weaver, in an industry notorious for dreadful working conditions and an area that inspired Friedrich Engels to write his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, and influenced the creation of the Communist Manifesto with Karl Marx.

Nellie refused to be a silent statistic, rising through the ranks of the Oldham & District Weavers and Winders Association.

In an era when women didn't even have the vote, she appears in parliamentary records as a campaigner in an inquiry into the brutal conditions of weaving sheds.

Oldham in the 1890s was a crucible for change, a key site in the founding of the Independent Labour Party.

For Nellie, the union was a conduit for class-breaking social mobility and political agency.

By the 1921 census, she had moved to the leafy suburbs of Manchester and was a civil servant in the Ministry of Labour.

When she died in 1956, aged 92, Nellie had lived to see the birth of the Welfare State. She had fought in the battles that led to workers' rights...and in 1898, she had danced the night away in Bristol.

What a woman, what a life.

For more information about Downend Community History and Arts Project (CHAP) visit www.downendchap.org.

Nick Smith

Care failures

A WOMAN with complex health needs was left with mouldy food and given vegetables rarely by her Staple Hill-based care provider, the Local Government Ombudsman has found.

She was also placed at risk by being left alone on a pavement next to traffic, despite her care plan saying she had no awareness of danger.

The woman, who has not been named, experienced 'emotional neglect', the report said.

South Glos Council, which commissioned Cherish Able Care in December 2024, was ordered to apologise and pay £1,000 compensation for causing 'significant injustice' in the poor standards of care provided.

The woman's sister complained several times to the council, which terminated the contract and found another provider by April 2025.

A council spokesperson said: "We accept the ombudsman's findings and sincerely apologise for the distress caused by the care provider commissioned by the council."

Cherish Able Care has not responded to a request for comment.

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high-quality imaging technology and expert clinical support in a modern, patient-focused environment. Flexible payment options are also available.

Early diagnosis can make a significant difference, and many patients value the opportunity to avoid lengthy waits and gain clarity about their health sooner.

Nathalie B, who had a private

diagnostic scan with Practice Plus Group said: "I would certainly recommend anyone currently experiencing a long wait for an NHS scan to claim on their health cover or pay for a private diagnostics appointment with Practice Plus Group for a speedier scan and added peace of mind."

To book, call 0117 453 0877 or visit www.practiceplusgroup.com

Katie's charity boost

STAPLE Hill & Mangotsfield councillor Katie Cooper has donated more than £3,700 to a charity doing "life-changing" work in the community.

The money was raised by events, donations and sponsorship raised during Cllr Cooper's year as chair of South Gloucestershire Council, including a charity party at Cleve Rugby Club in April.

As her term of office in the ceremonial role ended at the council's annual meeting in May, Cllr Cooper handed over £3,714 to a representative of Ignite Life, which runs a foodbank in Staple Hill.

The charity also provides a range of services locally, including family and individual therapy in schools, one-to-one mentoring and professional counselling.

Cllr Cooper said: "The last year has been one of the most extraordinary of my life. The experience has been truly magical.

"My chosen charity for the year was Ignite Life, a truly remarkable organisation undertaking life-changing work with young people who need someone to believe in them.

"Every penny we raised will make a meaningful difference to the young people they support."

The new chair of the council is Chipping Sodbury councillor Adrian Rush.



Katie Cooper hands over the money raised to Emilia Thomas, of Ignite Life

Circus comes to school

A DOWNEND junior school is hosting a circus show to help raise funds and bring the community together.

Christ Church Junior School will host Happy's Circus for a day on Sunday July 12, with the full-size touring circus setting up its big top on the school playing field.

Children from the school will be running stalls, selling tuck and enjoying the circus atmosphere from 12.30pm before the show begins at 1.30pm.

The circus big top can hold 600 people and the show has two packed halves, including a wide variety of acts, tricks and acrobatics.

Head teacher Pippa Osborne said: "The circus is an incredible opportunity for our local community to come together for a fantastic family-friendly event.

"We believe that education is so much wider than just maths and English, and that we have a role in ensuring that children experience life in all its fullness.

"The circus brings people together and is also a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the end of the school year.

"The children are incredibly excited."

Tickets are on sale now at the school office for £10.50, and can also be bought on the gate on the day.

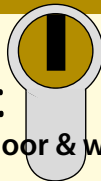
There will also be a raffle, stalls and a programme - anyone who is interested in having a stall, donating a raffle prize or sponsoring an advert in the programme should email christchurchjuniors@sgmail.org.uk



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Our young people need more support

THE recently-published Milburn Review, commissioned by the Government, found that over one million young people – one in eight – are currently not in education, employment or training.

The review warns that without urgent action, that number could rise to 1.25 million within five years, and that the systems meant to support young people – across education, health and the labour market – are failing to work together.

I'm pushing for its upcoming recommendations to address not only those already not in education, employment or training (NEET), but those most at risk of falling through the cracks.

Speaking in the House of Commons, I called on the work and pensions minister to confirm that the next phase of Alan Milburn's work considers early intervention – using the risk factors identified in the interim report to support young people before they become NEET, not only after.

He responded positively, agreeing that the review must look beyond immediate interventions to long-term structural solutions, and expressing his hope that it brings forward recommendations that address the root causes of the problem.

The Government has committed £2.5 billion to a youth employment support

package, including the creation of 300,000 new work experience and training placements in sectors including construction, health and social care, and hospitality. The package accelerates the Youth Guarantee – giving every young person the chance to earn or learn – and includes a £3,000 Youth Jobs Grant and 50,000 additional youth apprenticeships.

Alan Milburn's interim report is nothing short of totemic. It sets out with real clarity the scale of the challenge we face and the risk factors that push and keep young people out of education, employment and training.

I'm glad the minister confirmed that short-term fixes won't be enough – this is a structural problem that needs a structural solution.

I want to make sure that young people across the Filton and Bradley Stoke constituency have the support and opportunities they need to thrive and will keep pushing for this.

Opportunities should be open to all ages, and I was delighted to see SGS and UWE among the first institutions approved to offer flexible, bite-sized courses through our Government's new 'Lifelong Learning Entitlement'.

Continuing my push for improved SEND support, I met with the Schools Minister again to share local feedback and to ask local

parents' questions.

I also sat down with the Technology Secretary and Online Safety Minister to share local views on social media access for under-16s, ahead of the policy announcement.

Last month, my team and I worked on 549 new cases for residents, including working with the council, a housing association and the police to secure priority housing for a local family who urgently needed it.

I held my advice surgery in Emersons Green, hosted 'Coffee with Claire' in Bradley Stoke and 'Pub Politics' at Frenchay's fantastic White Lion pub. These events are invaluable for hearing directly from fellow residents.

South Gloucestershire Armed Forces Day was a powerful celebration of service. Coming from an RAF family, I'm proud our Armed Forces Bill will give those who serve a legal entitlement to the housing, healthcare and education they deserve. Thank you to all involved.

Please get in touch with me anytime at claire.hazelgrove.mp@parliament.uk.



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Working wonders together

AT Staple Hill Community Hub, we've always believed that the best community support isn't delivered by one organisation working alone, it's built through relationships.

This year, we want to shine a light on some of the partnerships that make our work possible.

Take our collaboration with Bean Tree Café. Since 2021, we've teamed up two or three times a year during school holidays to run Fresh Air and Free Food — outdoor breakfast events that get local children and families into the park at no cost.

Bean Tree provide half the food; our volunteers provide the people power. It's a simple idea that works because both organisations care about the same community.

As Melody Beard from Bean Tree puts it, the partnership has been "a joy" — and the families

who turn up year after year seem to agree.

Then there's our work with North Bristol Advice Centre (NBAC), whose benefits advisor visits the Hub monthly to offer free, expert one-to-one support.

For people navigating Universal Credit, PIP appeals or DWP sanctions, having access to a specialist in a familiar, trusted space makes an enormous difference. One recent client received over £5,500 in backdated payments he was entitled to but would never have claimed alone.

Our children's clubs — Terrapins and Sprouts — are delivered in partnership with Turtle CYP, a local children and young people's organisation whose expertise in child well-being perfectly complements our community base.

Terrapins runs every Tuesday and Sprouts every Thursday, both from 3.45–5pm during term time, for children aged six to 11.

Together, we've created a free, welcoming after-school offer that families in Staple Hill can genuinely rely on.

What connects all of these partnerships is something simple:



Members of Staple Hill Sprouts children's gardening club

local organisations, rooted in the same community, working towards the same goal.

We're grateful to all our partners - and always open to conversations about what we

might achieve together next.

To find out more about Staple Hill Community Hub, visit us at Berkeley House in Berkeley Road or call 01454 868374.

Katie Cooper



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Young hands help Downend to bloom

WHAT a lovely time we had when we took some little helpers to plant two new raised beds in King George V park.

A little while ago we were asked by the parish council if we would be able to help plant up the beds, which Dave from the King George team had built.

We took a selection plants and a group of very enthusiastic pre-school children, from Downend & Mangotsfield Childminders, and had a great time digging and watering. It certainly was a new experience for us! The young gardeners are looking forward to helping care for the flower bed over the coming months.

Earlier we had our second week with Downend School pupils. Our volunteer Clive finished off making their bird boxes with them, while Sandra organised making wild flower seed bombs, and they also made bug houses.

Apparently they loved getting their hands dirty and foraging around the garden, looking for suitable materials to fill them.



Children from Downend & Mangotsfield Childminders help plant the raised bed

They then had to look for suitable places to site them, so foxes wouldn't damage them.

Mark also spent time with them by the pond, which now has its first water lily. It was a busy but satisfying time.

When we were at King George V we also met up with our bee man, who has a new swarm that has just made a home in one of his hives. Hopefully he may be able to rehouse them into our garden. We have also been around the

High Street over the last couple of weeks. Dave and I have been checking out the plants and had to replace a few that hadn't taken very well. We also did a bit of deadheading and the plants are now looking really good.

We have also been revamping the fence which houses our In Bloom sign.

We have a new volunteer, also called Dave, who kindly volunteered to give the fence two coats of paint, and what a great job he has done! Spurred on by this, we've painted the flowers on the blue tree planters and made some new flowers for the sign.

I hope you'll agree that the area is now looking much more cheerful!

Finally, would you believe, we had to cancel our In Bloom meeting due to a football match being screened at the tennis club! I can't remember which team was playing - must have been an important match, though...

You can contact us by email at dbhinbloom@gmail.com or on Facebook. **Jackie Baker**

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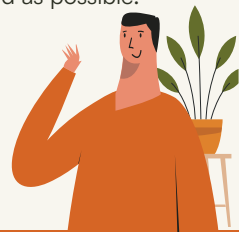
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Denied the chance to make case for hospital

WE have recently been denied the opportunity to present our case to the Local Plan Inspectors on the lack of rehabilitation and medical facilities in South Gloucestershire. Since 2014, when Frenchay Hospital was demolished, a total of 750 beds have been lost.

Maria Kane, the chief executive of the new Bristol NHS Group, is wrestling with the problem of bed-blocking, where at peak times the hospital has one third of the beds occupied by patients who should be moved along their recovery path but due to the lack of bed provision, cannot do so.

For the last 22 years the plans for rehabilitation beds at Frenchay have started and then been stopped by the NHS five times.

We discovered, quite by accident, last December that the latest plan had been stopped (Voice, January).

According to the Office of National Statistics, South Gloucestershire has seen a significant rise in the elderly demographic, with the proportion of over-65s increasing from 16.9% to 18.6% over the last decade. The over-75 population is projected to rise to 11.4% of the total by 2041.

The Local Plan says it is "important that our health services and facilities are accessible to the whole community regardless of age and ability".

When South Gloucestershire Council was inspected by the Care Quality Commission last year, the inspector reported there were gaps in provision.



Members of Bristol Military Wives Choir

One example of this was integration between hospital discharge and adult social care services. The inspector said South Gloucestershire Council were "aware of the areas that need addressing and have begun putting improvement plans in place".

Oh no, they have not!

Both the council and the ICB have now abandoned any further interest in healthcare provision on the Frenchay site and suggested the land should be sold for housing. Was that the plan all along?

We now ask Maria Kane - are you also going to abandon us?

Barbara Harris
Save Frenchay Community Hospital Group

Calling women with military connections

BRISTOL Military Wives Choir is inviting women from across the

Bristol area who have a connection to military life to come and give us a try.

Our members include serving personnel, veterans, wives, partners, mothers, daughters, sisters and women working in military support services.

What brings us together is a shared understanding of the unique challenges military life can bring, alongside the friendships, opportunities and sense of community it creates.

We rehearse every Tuesday evening from 7-9pm at Mangotsfield and Castle Green United Reformed Church, in Cossham Street, and welcome new members throughout the year.

You don't need any previous singing experience, be able to read music or pass an audition - many of our members hadn't sung in a choir before joining. If you enjoy singing in the shower, Bristol Military Wives Choir could be for you!

Your first free session gives you the chance to meet the choir, experience a rehearsal and ask any questions before deciding whether to join.

Many of our members arrived knowing nobody else in the room. Today they enjoy being part of a supportive network of women who understand military life and genuinely look out for one another.

We break for the summer after July 28 and return in September, making now the perfect time to find out more and arrange a taster session - contact us at bristol@militarywiveschoirs.org.

Bristol Military Wives Choir

Where is the evidence?

FINALLY, some good news regarding the re-opening of the Hambrook lights (Voice, May).

However, when you dig a little deeper you find that the restrictions were never required in the first instance.

There is no data which shows that the NO2 levels in 2019 were above the legal limit, and therefore the traffic restrictions were unnecessary in the first instance.

Any references made by the council/councillors to returning to "legal limits" are therefore invalid.

Where is the data/study on increased journey times and fuel use for going around the M32 roundabout instead of going straight across the junction when travelling from Frenchay to Hambrook?

The council asserts that the improvements in NO2 levels are down to an increase in electric car uptake.

Where is the analysis for this? How have they counted the different fuel types of cars, and who paid for it?

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■ Bierkeller generative picture

AI causes a stir

ARTIFICIAL intelligence is certainly causing a stir in photographic circles.

Camera club veterans might recall the heated debates when digital photography first challenged film. People argued that digital lacked soul or was cheating: working in the darkroom is a craft, while Photoshop is just pressing buttons.

Camera clubs adapted, requiring new judging criteria.

Despite the initial resistance, digital is now the dominant

force but sits happily alongside analogue. Post-processing has opened up a whole new world of creativity.

It's said that history doesn't repeat itself but it often rhymes, and the debates are now about AI, but it is here to stay.

The digital imaging group of the Royal Photographic Society seems to be holding out a tentative hand, and recently ran a fun competition where images had to be completely AI generated.

I was lucky to have one of my generative images in the top five, but obviously there was some dissent.

Camera clubs such as ours will need to understand and think about the ethical use of AI and its capabilities, perhaps with new



■ Venice scene

categories for AI-assisted images, and update definitions of what constitutes a photograph for competition rules.

Change is constant in photography. AI is a crucial part of all manipulation programs: 40 to 50% of Photoshop's core selection and correction tools rely on AI. In the 2026 version, Generative Firefly AI is now a primary interface element.

According to Adobe's latest annual report, 86% of users now use generative AI.

Here are three images that have had the AI treatment.

The first was taken in Venice a few years ago with a camera; a pole was taken out and the waiter was made to turn to the camera and smile.

The second is an AI generative image, showing two drinkers in a German bierkeller. This was my successful entry in the RPS competition.

The last image is of an art club member, taken with my phone and then given a studio setting with



■ Portrait. Pictures: Ian Boulton.

Nano Banana AI.

I'm going with the flow, using AI, my camera and my phone and just enjoying my hobby.

To find out more about our club, visit www.downendcameraclub.org.uk or come along to the Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, where we hold meetings on Tuesdays at 7.45pm.

Ian Boulton

BRISTOL u3a

200 things to do, and 2000 new friends

DID you know that July is the best time to join Bristol u3a?

While our membership year runs from September to August, new members joining after our June AGM will not have to renew until August of next year.

Once you've paid your membership fee, you're unlikely to be asked for any more money, no matter how many interest groups you join.

You can find out all the details, including

discounts for people sharing an address or anyone who is a member of a neighbouring u3a, online at tinyurl.com/mr7tpn4r.

A full list of interest groups can be found by entering "Bristol u3a Groups" into your favourite search engine. There are 215 to choose from across the Bristol area, including 40 that meet locally in East and North East Bristol.

Why not come along to one of our café socials to find out more about Bristol u3a and our range of groups?

You don't have to be a member to attend, and can find us at Ivy's Café, Hanham Hall (flat access) at 10am on July 3, and then between 2pm and 4pm at Orchard Coffee & Bakery in St George (flat access) on the 10th, the Market

Café and Lounge in Kingswood (stairs) on the 14th, the Crafty Egg in Fishponds (ramp) on the 22nd, Mokka Downend (flat access) on the 27th and Hillfields Park Community Centre (flat access) on the 30th.

We'll also be at the Frenchay Flower Show on July 11, and we'd be delighted to see you to chat about your interests.

Curious but can't make it to any of the events mentioned above?

Email me at learnlaughlive@bristolu3a.org.uk and I'll do my best to answer your questions.

Also, don't forget that you can type "Bristol u3a" into your favourite search engine to find out more about our organisation.

Lindsay Gough

Wanted: young volunteers



ARE there any young people out there needing to do some one-off community work for D of E or any other award scheme?

If so, we've a task and finish mapping project that should suit, and provide the hours needed.

Drop us a line to Contactus@bhnw.org.uk to find out more.

We remain hopeful that new volunteers will come forward to lead and support Bromley Heath Neighbourhood Watch from the autumn annual meeting onwards.

Use the same contact email address, please, to let us know your interest or if you know of someone we can approach.

You can also email us to join the list to receive our newsletter directly.

Antisocial Behaviour Awareness Week takes place from June 29 to July 5. It highlights the impact of antisocial behaviour and there are two webinars to provide some practical advice on what to do if you, or your neighbours, are having issues.

You can find out all about the week online at tinyurl.com/566na5m8.

You may be aware of recent changes in the law relating to ASB and the process for requesting a review of your case. The charity ASB Help (asbhelp.co.uk) can give you more information.

It can really help to know where and how to report ASB.

Neighbourhood Watch chief executive, John Hayward-Cripps, is holding a webinar to learn more about reporting it on June 30 from 2-3pm. You can register at tinyurl.com/yp9s6m2f or visit www.ourwatch.org.uk/asb for more information and resources.

Did you know that reports of domestic abuse increase by 38% when England lose a match? Even in the event of a win, there is still a 26% increase.

Events like the World Cup should bring people together, but this data shows we need to look out for vulnerable families.

Crimestoppers is encouraging everyone to call time on abuse, recognise the signs, and report anonymously. Find out more at crimestoppers-uk.org

Bill Crocker

School's out forever



■ Downend Lower School, 1985



■ Homes in Hazelwood Close, off North View, 2025

Photographer Chris Bigg shares some of his collection of 2,000 pictures of Downend, taken decades apart

THIS month we revisit Downend Lower School in North View, on the Downend/Staple Hill border. The school was built in 1933 and was formerly known as Page School for Girls.

After several name changes over the years, it became Downend Lower School in 1982.

The school was closed in 2005 and pupils were transferred to the main Downend School site in Westerleigh Road.

The building was demolished in 2007/8 and redeveloped as modern housing, along with the new Willow Surgery, which relocated from Coronation Road.

The original low boundary wall remains, and the metal stumps on the top are the telltale remains of the metal railings that were removed during the Second World War for the war effort.

The removal of metal railings and gates was carried out throughout the country, with a staggering million tons being collected.

Sadly, a lot of the iron was not used, or was found to be of poor quality, but the scars are still to be seen nationwide today.

Page Park had its 1,000 meters of railings replaced in 2019, 80 years after the start of the war, with the help of the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Chris Bigg

Mud Pies is 15!

Come celebrate with us

Free community event
Nature activities, play and fun for families. All children must be accompanied by an adult. No need to book, just come along!

We'd love to see you

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Why we need visible policing

THE public tell me, in so many conversations, how important visible policing is to them.

Visible policing plays an important role in making people feel safe, improving communication with the public, and building trust and confidence in the police.

People want to know their communities are being listened to, and that their concerns are taken seriously.

Neighbourhood officers provide this significant link between the police and the public. They embed themselves into a community and become a consistent, dedicated contact, bringing people together and supporting community cohesion and safety.

Strengthening neighbourhood policing is one of the five priorities in my Police and Crime Plan, and I continue to consistently advocate for local, visible policing.

It remains a national priority for the government, too, which has committed to an additional 13,000 officers, Police Community Support Officers, and special constables for neighbourhood teams across England and Wales, through its

Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee – something I am working with Avon and Somerset Police to deliver locally.

But neighbourhood policing isn't just about being visible – it's also about meaningful engagement, long-term problem-solving, and strong partnership working. This is key to tackling local criminality and antisocial behaviour.

Antisocial behaviour and local criminality have complex causes that require sustained investment, resource, and dedication.

While response officers play a critical role in responding to immediate threats or crises, neighbourhood policing focuses on solving problems at their root and delivering preventative, proactive action.

This requires coordinated action across all local services and community organisations; while neighbourhood officers play a vital role, they cannot deliver this alone, especially when we know that policing resources are already stretched.

That is why I continue to commission services and initiatives that support preventative work and early intervention,



Clare Moody A&SPCC

writes for the Voice

including detached youth work, mentoring, school programmes, trauma-informed support, multi-agency research, and youth outreach.

I know there is always more to do, and that antisocial behaviour and local criminality remain pervasive issues for our communities. I hear your concerns, and I share them. As your police and crime commissioner, I will continue to advocate for neighbourhood policing, focus resources where they are most needed, and work with partners to build safer communities.

Memory Lane

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Chris, Bristol

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Go your own way



A big advance in the fight against potholes

OBVIOUSLY this is nothing to do with us, but it's great to finally see road resurfacing work being carried out across parts of Mangotsfield.

The improvements are long overdue, but the work now under way should make a noticeable difference to daily travel around the village.

Can we remind you that potholes should be reported directly to South Gloucestershire Council via their website, rather than solely on Facebook as that doesn't work? Here's the link: tinyurl.com/jvds39z

Likewise, any crime or suspicious activity should be reported to Avon & Somerset Police via calling 101 or the avonandsomerset.police.uk website to ensure it is officially logged.

Again posting on Facebook doesn't work for reporting crime, although it can be useful in raising awareness, as long as it does not inflame a situation or create a false message.

The new café in Mangotsfield continues to be a valued local spot, and we hope it's getting the support it needs. The Red Lion is also preparing to open its lounge as a traditional weekday café, opening times to be advised. This new offering will not affect our regular monthly community coffee morning: the next one is on Wednesday July 1, at 10am.

A new water butt has been installed at the Dame School, making it much easier to keep the surrounding plants healthy, especially during

warmer spells.

It's slightly irritating that we have had to put a lock on the tap to prevent people emptying it for no reason, but that's life!

Mangotsfield Beavers will shortly be visiting the Dame School as part of a local history walk for their Outdoor Challenge Badge, helping young people learn more about the heritage on their doorstep.

There is no reason other local groups could not do the same, so if you are involved in one and would be interested in doing this, please let us know.

The village planters have recently been repainted and are looking much smarter. Any residents who have spare plants are warmly invited to add them to the displays. I know we keep reminding you, but when hot weather returns, a little help with watering any planters near your home would make a big difference in keeping them looking good.

Due to recent poor weather, there hasn't been a HAM (Hour a Month) event for a little while.

As the Voice went to print the next one on the diary was June 27 at 10.30am, for some weeding and tidying, meeting at the village car park - bring something to dig out weeds and sweep up.

If you want to get in touch, please email



Northcote Road has been resurfaced

MangotsfieldRA@gmail.com, message the Mangotsfield Matters Facebook page, call our chair, Clive Heath, on 07507 168700 or me on 07918 701881.

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■ In the Lead



■ In the Winners' Enclosure

Every picture tells a story

ROD Stewart sang that Every Picture Tells a Story, a phrase he borrowed from Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre.

You can't go wrong with a heritage like that - but if it's true, how much better is a story told by a series of photographs?

The age of the digital photograph, whether by camera or mobile, has made this much easier. Outings, parties, weddings - the least of such occasions has a continuity and, by photographing them, you can tell their story.

A good example comes from Bruce Gibbs, who went to the Mendip Farmers' Point-to-Point at

Ston Easton in the spring. He sent me a dozen photographs, and they easily fitted into a clear narrative - a horse race, like a good story, has a start, a middle, and an end.

Choosing only three photographs was difficult. I finally decided to focus on the horses, using no photos containing only humans watching or placing their bets.

The first, 'Over the First Jump', has been cropped to emphasise the line of horses: one horse leading, while three others take off as they hurdle the first fence. As you would expect from an early part of the race, the field is quite close together.

The second photo, 'In the Lead', has a leading group of just two, with the forward horse caught dramatically mid-jump but being followed closely. Both horses are in very clear focus, to emphasise the drama.

Finally, the race is over and we find ourselves in the winners' enclosure. Surprise: the winner was



■ Over the First Jump - Pictures by Bruce Gibbs

a different horse. And there we are - the whole story of the race in just three photos.

Whether you want to tell a story, preserve your memories or just enjoy taking pictures, we'd love to see you at Lincombe Barn Camera Club.

We're a friendly group who chat about all things photographic and get together every other Tuesday from September to June, with regular outings during the summer.

We also host regular

competitions, practical evenings, guest speakers, and in-house critiques. It's a great way to learn from others and improve your skills.

Your first visit is free.

Lincombe Barn is conveniently located on Overndale Road, Downend, with plenty of parking on-site.

For more details, visit www.lincombearncameraclub.co.uk or email lincombe.barn@gmail.com.

Sid Stace

CHRISTINE'S COLUMN

Visiting a botanical garden

A BRILLIANT warm day dawned for the Gardening in Retirement Club's trip to Birmingham Botanical Garden.

We gathered in the Co-op car park, and did not have long to wait for the coach.

When we arrived at our destination I decided to go into the gift shop and also make a phone call to Lance, as the others went ahead into the tropical house.

In the gift shop I browsed around and

bought two or three things, including a nice coaster with a chaffinch on it for Lance.

I then went into the nursery and bought a small-leafed cotoneaster, which I had been looking for for some time. There was only one, so I whipped it off the shelf and paid for all my purchases

It was nearing lunchtime so I found a bench in the sun, had my picnic and bought a cappuccino and a raspberry and almond muffin. I looked on the plan of the rock garden and alpine garden which, of course, I was most interested in.

I walked around the beautiful rose garden and herbaceous borders until I came upon the incredible Hugh Nettlefold rock garden. If only

my garden was big enough to accommodate one like that!

My next encounter was the Alan King alpine garden.

This was the piece de resistance - such a magnificent layout, with exquisite rock and alpine flowers. The gems in the two alpine houses were, to me, some of the prettiest flowers I had ever seen.

In fact it gave me an idea of how to turn my cold frame into an alpine house.

On the way home in the coach I was thinking of how to do this.

I have always wanted to grow exquisite tender alpines and now, with a bit of thought, I know I can!

New buses connect more communities

SUMMER in the West of England is such an exciting time.

From Bristol's Harbour Festival to Valley Fest in Chew Magna, Countryfest at Weston's Grand Pier and open-air Shakespeare at Dyrham Park, there is something for all ages and hopefully we'll all be able to get out in the sunshine soon.

Connecting our communities through better transport is so important, which is why we are continuing to invest in bus services together.

Among the service changes from July 26 are:

65: Thornbury town service connecting more communities to the town centre.

K2: Keynsham town service connecting the Chocolate Quarter and town centre to neighbourhoods in South Keynsham.

100: hourly service between Bath and Bristol to serve Timsbury, Farmborough, Bishop Sutton, and Chew Valley.

101: service between Bishop Sutton and Radstock including Chew Magna, Paulton, and Midsomer Norton.

Y2C: service between Cribbs Causeway and Yate will also serve Ladden Garden Village and provide a bus from Westerleigh Road and Rodford Way into Yate town centre, and service for Severn Beach, Castle School and Iron Acton.

X91: Service between Ubley and Bristol, via West Harptree, East Harptree, Bishop Sutton is being

extended to Dundry.

25 is being extended to connect Southville to Bristol city centre, now terminating at Eastgate Shopping Centre.

768: service between Writhlington, Radstock, Timsbury, and Bath will have earlier and later journeys added.

Y8: Yate to Wotton-under-Edge service will be extended to serve Leyhill.

9, 21, 31, and 41: Park & Ride services in and around Bath and Bristol will be improved, including evening journeys.

525: service between Yate, Pucklechurch and Emersons Green will now run every 60 minutes Monday to Saturday, and every 120 minutes on Sunday.

534: route connecting SGS campuses in Filton and Stoke Gifford to Downend, Cadbury Heath, Kingswood and Fishponds will run three services on college days

Getting our region moving is one of our biggest priorities. Investing in these routes and services means better buses for passengers across the West Country and gives people certainty until at least spring 2029.

You can find the full list of service changes online at TravelWest.info.

More widely, work continues to fully assess options for how to take greater control of the region's buses – including through different types



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

of franchising.

Alongside these changes, we want everyone to be able to make the most of our incredible region this summer, so we are bringing back Kids Go Free.

Running from July 18 until September 6, children and young people under 16 will be able to explore our whole region by bus free of charge again.

Kids Go Free is opening up our region, particularly for children from lower-income areas, and making a real difference to families – like our £1 regional fare freeze for children, saving people millions. As a result, this August Kids Go Free will be rolled out across England with £100 million of investment - benefiting 7.5 million children.



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We've come a long way

DOWNEND Men in Sheds will soon be celebrating our tenth anniversary.

What has happened in that time? Well, we are about to make our third move: from King George V playing fields to Bromley Heath Park, and now to Cuckoo Lane in Winterbourne, each move has been to a bigger, better and a more suitable premises to suit our needs.

From the first big event that we hosted, the centenary celebration of the end of the First World War, to making our first of many mud kitchens, to the hosts of bird boxes, bird tables and loads of Christmas gifts and ornaments, we have come a very long way.

Several notice boards for local churches, even a go-kart for a soap box derby, to a community bench, planters and more.

We have many long-term customers who come back often for different products.

We work on behalf of local councils, and community and charity groups of all types. Whilst we do not aim to make a large profit, we do need to make some money to cover insurance, rent and replacing tools.

We now are doing work for such diverse people as a wedding venue in Wiltshire and an animal sanctuary in Somerset, alongside



A 'mud kitchen' built by Downend Men in Sheds for Little Mead Primary Academy in Southmead

referrals from the NHS.

So what about our members? We have members who had little or no knowledge of woodworking, but with a little training have become quite proficient at what they do.

Men with depression, loneliness and other challenges have come to enjoy the comradeship and connection that Men in Sheds offers.

We continue to progress and hopefully fulfil our main objectives in relation to promoting good physical and mental health.

We have to thank all of you who have helped

us achieve this, especially the local companies that donate their offcuts (Crest Timber, Bristol Sheds and Gates, Cleeve Carpentry, plus several grants from local councils).

Let's not forget you, the local residents who continue to support us at the fairs and events we attend.

Anyone out there who would like to give us a try can contact us by email at downendmensshed@gmail.com or dave.mensheds@gmail.com.

John Lockwood

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BROMLEY HEATH WI

OUR June meeting was a really interesting look at some of the influential women who made Bristol, with author Jane Duffus.

Jane has written three books, covering some 750 different women's stories.

We then had the opportunity to buy her books and get them signed by the author herself.

Some of our members also enjoyed an exceptional trip to Acton Court, learning all about the history of the Tudor house and a wander through the varied gardens, with tea and a wide variety of cakes for refreshments.

In July we have a trip into the city centre, for Mr Brunel's harbourside walk.

The July WI meeting is earlier than usual, on the 2nd.

We look forward to the return of Matt the quizmaster for our annual summer social evening.

If you are interested in joining our friendly ladies' group, please contact bromleyheathwi@gmail.com.

We usually meet on the second Thursday of the month at Bromley Heath Junior School, at 7.30pm

DOWNEND WI

I HOPE you are looking forward to the summer!

In May we welcomed the kind volunteers who work for Bristol Blood Bikes.

They do incredible work across the South West, providing a free, out-of-hours emergency transport service for blood, medical supplies, and vital equipment.

At our next meeting, on Tuesday June 30, we'll be welcoming Alan Toyne, Author of 'Gorillas in our Midst'. Alan used to work for Bristol Zoo, and hand-reared baby gorillas.

We have an exciting year ahead, packed with inspiring speakers, creative activities, and plenty of opportunities to connect and socialise.

The events we have coming up include a trip to Bristol University Botanic Garden on July 28 and a visit on August 25 from Alison Bacon, who will be sharing how old photographs inspired her book.

If you'd like to come along and

see what we're all about, you'd be very welcome.

We meet at Christ Church Hall in North Street, Downend, on the last Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. Guests are always welcome for a small fee of £3, which includes refreshments.

As a member, you're free to take part in as much or as little as you like.

Our varied programme offers something for everyone, and it's a great way to meet new people and try new experiences.

If you'd like to find out more about joining, please get in touch at downendwi@yahoo.co.uk. We look forward to welcoming you!

**Linda Russ
President**

FRENCHAY WI

I'M pleased to say our speaker in June was Angela Ryan, who told us all about folk and canal art.

In July Peter Gill is giving a talk and musical presentation on Noel Coward. Noel was an English playwright, composer, director, actor, and singer, known for his wit. It should be an interesting evening.

We have lots of interesting speakers lined up, so do come along and join our friendly group this year!

We meet on the third Monday of every month at Frenchay Village Hall at 7.30pm. There is always a friendly reception awaiting new members.

If you are interested in joining our WI or would like more information please email the secretary at FrenchayWI@gmail.com

Linda O'Carroll

STAPLE HILL WI

OUR speaker at our last meeting gave us an insight into the world of metal detecting, or 'detectoring'.

We had the opportunity to view and hold some of his interesting finds, including an Elizabeth I coin - amazing to think it was around 450 years old!

With the weather much improved we have a number of outings arranged before our next meeting, including a visit to Fonthill Garden Centre to inspire us and to hopefully enjoy a coffee and cake with friends. Visiting garden

centres could become another regular fixture.

Our walking group strolled around the area surrounding the Cheese Company and enjoyed a lovely lunch.

Our regular coffee mornings are also very popular and an excellent way to make new friends.

A number of our group will be attending the Hippodrome to see the Jersey Boys show. They are looking forward to a great evening.

At our next meeting our speaker will be Jenny Benson from Somerset & Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support. It should be a very interesting and informative talk.

Our regular friendly monthly meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month, starting at 7.30pm, in Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, Downend. There is plenty of parking.

Please come along and see what we are about or visit our website at staplehillwi.weebly.com.

Linda Stephens

RODWAY RUBIES WI

THANK you to everyone who made cakes and popped into Mangotsfield URC in June to support their fundraising for the Jessie May Trust and Gympanzees.

It was very successful, and was followed by the Rodway Rubies WI coffee morning at the same venue later, in aid of BUST.

Our trip to Buckfast Abbey and

Dartmouth was not blessed with good weather, but members made the most of the day.

We were much luckier at the Badminton House Gardens open day, with ideal temperatures and a lovely show of flowers in a beautiful setting.

Our recent speakers have included a couple who spent time on Mercy Ships serving West Africa, and a talk called 'Goats of the Gorge' by a father and son whose family business sells skin products they make from goats' milk. They brought some along, and our members duly indulged!

In July, Andrew Stocker from the Bristol Old Vic will give a talk called 'Then and Now', which should be fascinating.

We don't have a meeting in August, but a group is getting together to visit 20th Century Flicks at the bottom of Christmas Steps, for a new cinema experience.

In September we are hosting a country and western evening at Lincombe Barn for our members and those from other local WIs. Tickets are £12, to include supper, and are available now.

We are hoping for a full turnout, in appropriate gear for those who have it - otherwise just come and enjoy the music and company.

We meet on the third Monday of the month at St James Church, Mangotsfield.

Jane Eldon

MANGOTSFIELD DOLLY MIXTURES

AT the beginning of June 23 of us, including partners and family, were given a fascinating insight into Bristol in the Blitz.

We met at the Commercial Rooms for coffee before joining our guide Duncan for a tour of St Nicholas Market and the nearby air raid shelters.

We saw photos of the devastation of Castle Green due to one night's bombing, and how Bristolians managed in the air raid shelters.

Duncan was amazing, managing to add in humour to what is clearly a serious subject, and mentioned that some of us might see 'Margaret', the resident ghost, who appears now and then if she feels like it!

The visit takes two hours but, being absorbed by the story, it flashed by.

A week later we had our meeting in the hall.

The speaker we had booked unfortunately had to cancel due to family problems, so we improvised with an evening styled on 'bingo lingo'.

A Dolly brought along a machine and cards, three Dollies took turns at calling and we made up our own sing-along rhymes to go with the numbers.

One of our Dollies celebrated her 60th birthday with us, so with plenty of homemade cakes, tea and coffee, what could have been a disappointing evening turned out to be an absolute hoot.

Our monthly pub lunch at the Lamb in Mangotsfield is, as always, very well supported: our thanks to Kate and her team.

For more information, email carol@applause.co.uk.

Carol Coombes

**Let us know your Community News
email news@downendvoice.co.uk**

Graduates on the green



The latest course graduates

PAGE Park Bowls Club has unveiled the latest graduates from its annual beginners' course.

An expanded coaching team meant the Staple Hill club was able to offer 36 places on its course to introduce new players to the game this year.

Club Captain Don Willcox said: "Our coaching team will remember this year's students as the Sunshine Group, as the weather was fantastic every Saturday morning, for the whole six weeks.

"Almost all are applying for membership to us and we would love to accept them all but cannot due to numbers.

"Choosing whom to accept is going to be difficult!"

Don said the club hopes any players who missed out on membership will join other local clubs in need of recruits.

Mango Rocks merger

ONE of Mangotsfield's football teams is merging with another side ahead of the new season.

AFC Mangotsfield has announced a partnership with Tytherington Rocks, which has left its home in a village near Thornbury, to form AFC Mangotsfield Rocks.

Rocks will be based at Mangotsfield United's Cossham Street ground, and will compete in the Bristol Premier Combination, Bristol & District League and Gloucestershire County League.

A statement on the AFC Mangotsfield twitter page in June said: "This partnership sees our family at Cossham Street grow again, offering even more opportunities for local people and young players within our partners clubs youth setups by further extending the player pathway."

Rocks said: "After 88 years of representing the village of Tytherington, we have been left with no option but to vacate our home ground."

The side blamed the village's parish council for a "lack of support" and said: "While we are saddened by these circumstances, we are also excited to announce a new chapter for the club.

"This partnership creates a strong and sustainable structure, with first, second and third teams, alongside valuable links with Mangotsfield United and the Mangotsfield United Under-18 pathway.

Pre-season fixtures

Mangotsfield United play eight pre-season friendlies in July.

July 4: Yate Town (Home) 3pm

July 7: Portishead town (H) 7.30pm

July 11: Chippenham Town (H) 3pm

July 14: Bristol Manor Farm (H) 7.30pm

July 18: Bideford (Away) 3pm

July 21: Shepton Mallet (A) 7.30pm

July 22: AFC Mangotsfield Rocks (A) 7.30pm

July 25: AEK Boco (H) 3pm

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Downend School boys are national champions

DOWNEND School's Year 7 footballers are celebrating becoming national champions.

The team won the English Schools FA Boys Under-12 Schools' Cup with a 2-1 victory over Tipton School of Sheffield in the final, played at Stoke City's Bet365 Stadium in May.

A total of 588 schools from across the country entered this year's 9-a-side tournament, one of the most prestigious in school football.

To reach the final, Downend beat Bristol's Orchard Academy 8-0 at home, before putting another eight goals past St Lawrence School of Wiltshire, winning 8-3.

They then travelled to Gloucester, where they beat St Peter's Catholic College and 6th Form 5-1, before travelling to Cirencester, where they beat Cotswold Academy 6-3.

An awayday in Newbury, Berkshire, saw Downend beat Kennet School 7-2, before they returned home for the next three rounds.



Downend School's national champions at Stoke City's bet365 Stadium

A 3-1 win over Braunton Academy of North Devon was followed by a 2-0 win over Durrington High School, of West Sussex.

Downend booked their place in the final with a 2-1 win over the Aldenham Foundation, of Watford & District.

Head teacher Rachael

Corns said: "The final proved to be a fitting occasion for two outstanding teams.

"Played in front of proud parents, staff and supporters at Stoke City's impressive stadium, Downend demonstrated tremendous character, determination and quality to overcome a talented Tipton School side.

"The boys produced a performance that reflected everything they have shown throughout their remarkable cup run.

"Their teamwork, resilience and commitment were evident from the first whistle, and despite the pressure of the occasion, they played with confidence and maturity beyond

their years.

"Two well-taken goals secured a memorable 2-1 victory and sparked scenes of celebration at the final whistle.

"Winning a national competition of this scale is an exceptional achievement. To emerge victorious from a field of 588 schools and win consecutive knockout matches requires not only talent, but also dedication, discipline and a strong team spirit.

"Throughout the season, the squad has represented Downend School with distinction, both on and off the pitch.

"This success is a testament to the hard work of the players, the support of their families, and the commitment of the staff who have helped guide the team throughout their journey. The boys have created memories that will last a lifetime and have written their names into the sporting history of the school.

"Everyone at Downend School is immensely proud of this outstanding group of young footballers. Their achievement serves as an inspiration to other students and demonstrates what can be accomplished through hard work, teamwork and belief."

Two members of Downend's squad, Leo Clarke and Zach Williams, play for Bristol City's academy; most of the others play for either Mangotsfield United or Downend Saints.

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We compete in the Bristol Suburban League, train at The Centre Longwell Green & play at Somerdale in Keynsham.

Pre-season training starting early July.
Training sessions held on Wednesday evenings at The Centre Longwell Green.

@oldgeorgiansafc
@OldGeorgiansAFC

Double cup triumph for Mangotsfield School



Mangotsfield School's Year 10 team and head of PE Tristan Hawkins with the Woodcock Shield. Picture: Ray Young Photography.

MANGOTSFIELD School's Year 10 football team sealed a remarkable double in the space of 24 hours, by winning two prestigious trophies.

First the team travelled to Ashton Gate, where they beat Redland Green 3-1 to lift the Woodcock Shield, the region's oldest and most prestigious schoolboy football tournament trophy.

Just a day later they travelled to Hartpury University near Gloucester for the final of the Gloucestershire County Cup, where they beat Cheltenham's Cleeve School 4-2 in a penalty shoot-out, after the match ended 1-1.

Mangotsfield's path to glory in the Woodcock Shield saw them beat Marlwood School 2-0 away before beating Ashton Park by the same scoreline at home.

They then beat Oasis

Brislington 2-1 at Mangotsfield United's Cossham Street ground, with Fred Cousins scoring a stunning free kick in stoppage time to send them into the final. The match doubled up as the Bristol v South Gloucestershire final of the County Cup.

In the final at the end of May, Josh Thompson, Ryan Tattersal-Froom and Ben Massey-Jones scored the goals that beat Redland Green at Bristol City's ground and won the shield, which was first awarded in 1907.

The County Cup saw Mangotsfield beat Hanham 3-0 away and Abbeywood 1-0 at home, courtesy of a goal in the last minute of extra-time from Harrison Peglar.

The win over Oasis Brislington that took them to the Woodcock Shield final also took them into the County Cup final.

School head of PE Tristan



The team with the Gloucestershire County Cup

Hawkins said: "The County Cup final was played 18 hours after the Woodcock Shield; the boys were very fatigued and exhausted after the excitement of the day before.

"They weren't at their best but hung in there.

"We were 1-0 down until we won a penalty in the last couple of minutes. Fred Cousins dispatched the penalty, then we won in the shoot-out.

"The man of the match was goalkeeper Sulley Parsons - not only did he save two penalties in the shoot-out, but he kept us in the game by saving about four one-on-ones during the match.

"The boys have had an unbelievable season, and have won four titles this year.

"This team previously never got further than the South Glos quarter finals in Years 7-9 but this year we have managed

to win everything, and are undefeated for the season.

"It has been remarkable how they pulled together as a team and showed real resilience throughout the season.

"We don't have any academy players, but we have strength all over the pitch and quite a few of our boys play representative football for South Gloucestershire."

Sulley Parsons and captain Sam Bell, a defender, were in the South Glos regional talent centre side that won the junior premier league national cup final at Chesterfield this season, with Sulley saving two penalties during the 2-0 victory.

Head teacher Hetty Blackmore said: "It's a fantastic achievement, and one the whole school community can be very proud of."

DOWNEND Flyers' Condors team are filling the club's trophy cabinet during the summer tournament season.

The under-11s have won all three tournaments entered since early May, following an impressive and highly competitive league campaign.

Their first stop was the St Nicholas FC tournament in Chipping Sodbury. Across eight matches, the girls remained unbeaten, winning the tournament without conceding a single goal.

The following weekend, the team travelled down the M5 to Portishead and once again were unbeaten across eight games, conceding just two goals throughout the entire competition.

Most recently, the Condors went to Bridgwater, and turned in their most complete

Condors score tournament treble

performance yet, winning all five matches without conceding a goal on their way to lifting another trophy.

While the trophies are a fantastic reward for their hard work, this season has been about much more than results.

The Condors squad have grown tremendously as both individuals and as a team. The development of every player has been wonderful to see, and their togetherness has become one of the team's greatest strengths.

The Downend Flyers' own tournament is due to take place on June 27-28, with more than 140 teams and around 1,000 girls taking part in a huge celebration of football.

Preparations are already under way for the women's teams



Downend Flyers Condors win in Bridgwater

to return for pre-season training, with all three sides already having several friendly fixtures booked into the calendar.

The club is also looking for a sponsor for the Condors team, with businesses having the

chance to put their name on the girls' custom-designed kit.

Anyone interested in supporting the club can find out more by contacting info@downendflyers.com.

Steve Poole

Foot pain – the chiropractor becomes the patient!

If you've been following our social media recently, you may have spotted something unusual. Just for a change, the patient on the treatment couch wasn't one of our lovely patients ... it was me!

As chiropractors, physiotherapists and sports therapists, we're usually the ones doing the treating. But every now and then, we're reminded what it's like to be on the other side of the couch.

The reason for this unexpected turnaround? A rather unwelcome bout of plantar fasciitis.

For those who haven't experienced it, plantar fasciitis is one of the most common causes of heel and foot pain. It often triggers that classic sharp pain when you first get out of bed in the morning, or after sitting around for a while. Unfortunately, it decided to pay me a visit just as I was preparing for a challenge that is outside my comfort zone.

About the time that you are reading this, I'll be joining around 50 other chiropractors, including our very own Catherine, as we climb Snowdon in memory of a much-loved chiropractic colleague and former lecturer who sadly passed away from prostate cancer. He played a huge role in helping me survive my neurology exams as a student and I know many others in the profession have similar stories about the support and encouragement he gave them throughout their careers.

It's a cause very close to all our hearts so I wasn't going to let anything stop me taking part.

Now, I should confess something. I've never actually walked up and down a mountain before – but I have spent months training so I don't

embarrass myself in front of my friends. There has been plenty of weight training in the gym and lots of running up the seemingly endless hills around Somerset. I was starting to feel reasonably confident until my foot decided to have other ideas.

Thankfully, working in a clinic like ours has its advantages. I have appeared on social media using our shockwave therapy machine on my own foot. Contrary to what some people think, it didn't hurt at all. In fact, I felt immediate relief afterwards.

Following the shockwave treatment, I also used our laser therapy system on the same area. These are treatments we regularly use to help patients recover from a variety of musculoskeletal injuries. We've also used them during our work in elite sport, including professional rugby, athletics and football during my years working with Bristol Rovers.

Of course, before throwing treatments at the problem, I wanted to know exactly what I was dealing with.

So I asked Keith, our most experienced physiotherapist, to perform an ultrasound scan of the foot. Thankfully, there were no tears or serious damage, just a small amount of inflammation. That was great news because it meant I could continue training while calming everything down before the big day.

Then came Emily. Now, Emily is one of our brilliant sports therapists and, some might say, perhaps a little too enthusiastic when a treatment opportunity presents itself!

Before I knew it, she had me lying face down while she worked on my calf muscles. There were moments when I had to take a very deep breath and question my life choices, but I have to admit

the results were fantastic. The calf felt looser, the foot seemed happier and I walked out feeling considerably more mobile than when I walked in.

Not to be left out, Beth, another of our fantastic physiotherapists, provided me with a selection of strengthening and rehabilitation exercises.

What struck me during the whole process was that I was discovering exactly what so many of our patients experience every day.

An accurate diagnosis. A clear explanation. A combination of treatments. A rehabilitation plan. And a team of healthcare professionals all working together towards the same goal.

It reminded me just how fortunate I am to work in such an incredible clinic with such talented people around me. Every day we combine chiropractic, physiotherapy, sports therapy, rehabilitation, diagnostic ultrasound, shockwave therapy and laser therapy to help people get back to doing the things they love.

For me, that's hopefully getting up and down Snowdon safely while raising money and awareness for prostate cancer.

Am I nervous? Absolutely.

Most of all, though, this experience has reminded me how lucky I am to have my health and to be surrounded by people who genuinely care about helping others. While I'm worrying about a sore foot and a mountain climb, many people are facing far greater health challenges.

My thoughts are with them and I remain grateful every day for the opportunity to help people improve their health, mobility and quality of life.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a mountain to climb.

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“ Seeing Catherine to work on my back and hip mobility regularly allows me to continue training
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Brayley calms the panic

AS the cricket season beds in, Carsons & Mangotsfield carry the calm confidence of a side that's decided winning is perfectly reasonable behaviour.

The 1st and 2nd XIs are among the front-runners of their divisions.

The 1sts did their best to provide drama at Failand & Portbury. At 19-4 it looked like the cricketing equivalent of stepping on a rake, until panick's least-favourite man, skipper Sam Brayley (60), arrived to steady things.

His calm let Ollie Clatworthy (85) unleash batting of unapologetic violence and their 227 was plenty, once Will Thatcher (3-18) tore through the top order.

Hampset were dispatched with similar efficiency: Kieran Gallagher's fluent 78 and George Sutton's 47 — another week, another jug dodged — set 193, and Hampset folded for 125. The table is taking shape, with the firsts part of the furniture around the top.

The 2nd XI were in the mood to bully a few

scorecards. Their standout win came against Taverners, built on captain Harry Ravenscroft's assured 63. A brief wobble only cleared the runway for James King, whose crowd-pleasing, 59no - a maiden 50 - pushed the total to 194.

Taverners mustered 101 in reply, George Clatworthy's 3-12 the pick of the bowling.

Stapleton were brushed aside too, James Ward's 3-23 and Darren Shellard's calm 40no sealing a five-wicket win.

The 3rd XI remain winless, but not without promise. Dan Cook's unbeaten 43 and Steve Edwards' steady 45 in defeat to Bishop Sutton suggest things just need to click.

The 4th XI, designed for social and developmental cricket, enjoyed a handsome victory over Pucklechurch. Liam Nicholls (3-26) and Lewis Tyacke (3-16) did the damage before Phil Clatworthy (45) and Mike Norris (49no) eased to a seven-wicket win.

On Sundays, Jack O'Hara's maiden ton (105) wasn't quite enough against league leaders Leema 1sts, but wins over Keynsham (Ben Child 49no, George Sutton 46), and Leema 2nds kept momentum strong. George Farmer (67), Ben Johnson (62) and Matt Clatworthy (67) all filled their boots, while Ben Child's 4-48 ensured Leema's chase fell short.

The club also offers women's cricket and walking cricket for the over-50s.

For more details email [info](mailto:info@carsonsandmangotsfield@gmail.com).
carsonsandmangotsfield@gmail.com.

Downend win again

DOWNEND Cricket Club's First XI chalked up their fifth win of the season by 25 runs over Clevedon.

Opener Callum Loud top-scored with 90, followed by Ben Ford on 59 and Mohamed Jezuli on 52 not out as the side ran up 367 for 5 at the WG Grace Memorial Ground on June 20.

In reply, Clevedon lost their last wicket in the final over for a total of 342, with Downend bowlers Matthew Jackson, Ross Robbins, Henry Cheal and Abdul Sami each getting a brace of wickets.

The win sees Downend continue their push for promotion from the Premier 2 Bristol and Somerset division - they have won four of their last five matches.

The 2nd XI are looking to end a losing streak, while the 3rds have won the last three of their matches to be played.

After losing their first fixture against Hanham, the Women's 1st XI have now won three on the bounce against Bristol, Frocester and Tetbury.

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