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These colours run!

Pupils at Christ Church infant and junior schools in Downend ran through clouds of powdered paint to raise money for Children in Need.
Full story: Page 9

Death crash driver broke ban

A DRIVER who caused the death of a young passenger in a crash on the Avon Ring Road has been jailed after being caught behind the wheel within weeks of being banned.

Michael Ronner narrowly avoided prison after he admitted causing the death of Tyler Carley, aged 20, when the lorry he was driving overturned near Mangotsfield.

He was given a suspended sentence and disqualified from driving for 18 months in June.

Yet when 40-year-old Ronner was pulled over by police on Pomphrey Hill the following month, he told an officer he was still driving because he thought his ban was "harsh".

The judge who imposed the ban disagreed - and locked him up for a "deliberate and flagrant breach" of his suspended sentence.

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Head moves on

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£75,000 raised

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Further details of the complaints process can be found on the Voice website here, or can be obtained by contacting the Publisher.

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People who worked on the community garden gathered for an opening party

Ready to grow

A NEW community garden where people can grow their own food or flowers has been created from an overgrown 'jungle' in Staple Hill.

Around 40 volunteers, including members of five community groups, worked with Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council and Page Community Association to create the growing space at Page Community Hall, in Page Road.

Local businesses donated staff time and equipment while the parish council secured a £20,000 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund to cover most of the £25,000 cost for phase 1 of the project.

Another £3,000 came from South Gloucestershire Council, with the rest met by the parish council and Page Community Association, which runs the community centre.

Before, the site was covered in head-high brambles, and was home to an asbestos garage with concrete foundations that had to be drilled out by volunteers.

Adam Hayward, who chairs the parish council's environment and open spaces committee, worked with Geoff Cummins of Page Community Association to design the space.

Adam, who runs the allotments in nearby Morley Road, then coordinated a team of volunteers, who worked through the spring and summer to clear the site and create the garden.

Wooden planters were made by members of Downend Men in Sheds and over the summer, volunteers worked to install them on the site, fill them with soil, and put down large quantities of wood chips around them.

Adam said: "It was a lot of work but it was a labour of love."

The 14 raised beds can be hired by individuals and community groups for £50 a year to grow food and flowers.

Among those who have signed up already are Staple Hill & District Royal British Legion, charity Milestones, the nearby YOUF centre and residents' groups.

Volunteers built a frame which will be covered to create a polytunnel in time for the next growing season.

The site also has 1,000-litre water storage tanks and a lockable container for equipment donated by businesses.

Among those who helped are Tom's Rubbish Clearance, Reecer Group, EDF, BT, Ashford LLP and Milestones, along with individual residents and groups.

Bristol North East MP Damien Egan, who attended Labour Party meetings at Page Hall as a teenager, returned for an opening event in November.

He said: "It shows, when you get people together, what a difference you can make."

Rob Jones of Page Community Association thanked everyone who had "helped bring a jungle into its current state."

Phase 2 will see another derelict area at the hall turned into a patio and outdoor kitchen.

The raised beds are now available for hire. For more details email *pagecommunity@outlook.com* or call 0117 956 6786.

From Page 1

Driver showed 'no remorse' for Tyler's death

Tyler's family say Ronner clearly felt no remorse for causing his death, and feel let down by the justice system.

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

He was thrown from the cab, suffering a fatal head injury, and died at the scene.

Friend and colleague Cameron Williams, from Downend, was also thrown from the cab.

He survived with minor injuries and pulled Ronner from the cab - 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.

In June a judge told Ronner the right sentence for causing Tyler's death by careless driving was six months' imprisonment - but a change in the law, brought in a few days before his guilty plea, meant the sentence had to be suspended.

He was also disqualified from driving for 18 months.

In November Ronner, of Courtney Road, Kingswood, was back in court in front of the same judge.

Christine Hart, prosecuting, said PC Dan Hamblin saw Ronner driving a Mercedes X350 four-wheel drive pickup on July 22 - just 47 days into his driving ban.

PC Hamblin, had attended the fatal crash on the nearby A4174 and recognised Ronner as he got into the truck.

He followed the car and pulled Ronner over on Pomphrey Hill.

Miss Hart said: "Ronner told the officer he thought the disqualification was harsh and that he didn't do anything wrong."

Ronner pleaded guilty to driving while disqualified at a hearing in August.

The court heard he is due to stand trial for another charge of driving while disqualified, which he has denied, at Bath Magistrates Court next year.

Defending, Francesca Chaplin said: "The explanation that Mr Ronner has given for driving on that day was that his dog had been injured and he had gone out to get treatment for the dog."



Michael Ronner



Tyler Carley
Picture courtesy of Gemma Showering

She said Ronner had "reflected" on the comment he made to PC Hamblin and "has expressed remorse about it".

The court also heard Ronner had not attended all of the unpaid work sessions imposed as part of his suspended sentence.

Judge Edward Burgess activated Ronner's six-month suspended sentence in full, adding another two months for the breach, making a total of eight months in jail.

The judge added another 18 months to Ronner's remaining ban, so he is now disqualified for 31 months.

Judge Burgess said he imposed the earlier suspended sentence on the basis that the fatal crash had been the result of a "momentary lapse of concentration".

But he told Ronner: "Just 47 days after I passed sentence upon you, you were behind the wheel of a vehicle again.

"In my judgement it's a telling fact that you believed your disqualification was harsh.

"There's no justification for your driving on that occasion.

"Frankly, it's hard to think of a more deliberate and flagrant breach than that."

Afterwards, Tyler's mother Gemma Showering said: "After his suspended sentence I said we would be back in court, but I'm shocked it was this soon, and how again he has shown no remorse."

Tyler's dad Mark believes Ronner should have been sentenced for Tyler's death using the rules that were in place when it happened, which would have seen him jailed earlier.

Mark said: "This could all have been avoided if he'd gone to prison back in June.

"We wouldn't have had to waste everyone's time, heartache and taxpayers' money, if the justice system was doing what it's there for - keeping the general public safe by having people like that off the streets.

"He was jailed two years and 11 months to the day that Tyler passed away.

"Over that time I feel terribly let down by the British justice system."

Cameron's grandmother Karen Parker said: "At last there's some justice for Tyler, but Ronner now serving time in prison won't change what he has put everyone through.

"His total lack of compassion over the past 35 months and his total lack of respect for the sentence he was given in June shows who he really is."

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Council tax rise won't stop cutbacks

TAX bills for South Gloucestershire Council services are likely to rise by 4.99% next year - the maximum increase allowed by the government without a referendum.

But the rise, partly to cover the rising cost of social care, won't cover all existing services and the council is reviewing opening hours at household recycling centres, street cleaning and other areas to see where it can save money.

Potential proposals also include a reduction in spending on grit, which could impact elderly and disabled people in icy weather.

The authority's basic charge to residents with homes in the average Band D tax bracket was £1,999.57 this year.

Increasing that by 4.99% would make the new bill for South Gloucestershire Council services £2,099.34 in Band D - before precept charges from the police, fire service and parish councils, which added around £600 this year.

A report to the council's ruling cabinet in November said a major change in how business rates are distributed to local authorities has left it £15 million worse off than originally expected.

Overall it faces a budget gap of £18.7m in the financial year from April 2027, rising to £20.4m the following year and £22.9m in 2029/30.

A pot of money called the financial risk reserve will run out, with not enough to cover the forecast deficit next year.

The council is facing rising costs and demand for services like social care for elderly and disabled people and temporary housing for people at risk of being homeless.

The report said "urgent action" is needed to secure a sustainable financial position, adding: "Difficult decisions will continue to be required across all service areas."

A public consultation on the 2027/28 budget is open online at councilbudget2728.commonplace.is until December 20.

Anyone who is not online should call 01454 868009.

Council leader and Liberal Democrat councillor Maggie Tyrrell said: "Our priority remains protecting people with the greatest needs. Around two thirds of our current spending supports vulnerable adults and children, so we need to make sure that every pound we have available is working as effectively as possible.

"We want residents to be part of this conversation. They know the services they use and their communities, and we want to hear what works well, what could work better and what we need to consider as we develop our plans."

At a cabinet meeting in November, opposition Conservative group leader Liz Brennan (Frenchay & Downend) said the budget papers painted a worrying picture.

She said: "Families across our communities are tightening their belts. Yet they have been hit with higher council tax, parking charges, green bin charges and changes to waste collections.

"They are being asked to pay more whilst the council still faces an £18.7m budget gap and the complete exhaustion of its financial risk reserve."

She said when the previous Tory administration left office in 2023, the deficit stood at £3.1m and that the financial risk reserve was £38.9m.

Council co-leader Ian Boulton (Lab, Staple Hill & Mangotsfield) said the current problems were inherited from the previous administration, "which had been borrowing against future income to keep things on the road".

By Alex Seabrook and Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Manor Cottage Care Home in Bristol celebrates Platinum award for outstanding end-of-life care

A BRISTOL care home has been recognised for its exceptional commitment to end-of-life care after achieving prestigious Platinum accreditation from the Gold Standards Framework (GSF).

Manor Cottage Residential Home, located in Frenchay and part of Kew Care Group, achieved an impressive 81 out of a possible 82 points in its latest assessment, securing Platinum status just three years after first receiving Gold Standards Framework accreditation.

The achievement recognises the team's continued dedication to providing compassionate, high-quality care to residents approaching the end of their lives, ensuring their individual wishes, comfort and dignity remain at the heart of everything they do.

The Gold Standards Framework is a nationally recognised training and accreditation programme designed to improve the quality of care provided to people in their final years of life. Its Platinum award recognises care providers



that have demonstrated sustained excellence through reaccreditation, showing that high standards are firmly embedded in everyday practice.

For residents and their families, this means having the reassurance that important conversations about their wishes and preferences take place early, that care is thoughtfully planned and that loved ones receive compassionate support throughout.

Led by Home Manager Rayna Powell, the Manor Cottage team has worked hard to make the principles of the Gold Standards Framework part of everyday life at the home, with a focus on helping residents live as comfortably and fully as possible while receiving the care and support they need.

Rayna Powell, Home Manager at Manor Cottage, said: "We're absolutely delighted to have achieved Platinum accreditation, particularly with such a fantastic score of 81 out of 82.

"Supporting someone towards the end of their life is one of the most important and personal aspects of the care we provide. It's about so much more than meeting someone's physical needs. It's about taking the time to really get to know them, understanding what matters most to them, respecting their wishes and making sure they and their families feel supported every step of the way.

"I'm incredibly proud of our whole team. This recognition reflects the kindness, compassion and dedication they bring to their work every single day."

The Platinum achievement adds to Manor Cottage's existing Outstanding rating from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which recognised the home's exceptional caring approach and leadership.

Situated in a historic 15th-century building on Beckspool Road, Manor Cottage provides residential, respite and mild dementia care for older people in a warm and welcoming setting.

For more information about Manor Cottage, visit www.kewcaregroup.co.uk.

Fireworks raise £75,000 for good causes

DOWNEND Round Table's fireworks display has set a new record, raising £75,000 for good causes - £14,000 more than last year.

More than 13,000 visitors attended the show on the King George V Playing Fields on November 6.

The Bristol area's biggest fireworks celebration featured two displays, a bonfire, light show and music, including live drumming by Batala Bristol.

Despite chilly and misty weather, the rain held off while the huge crowd enjoyed what the organisers described as an "incredible night for the Downend community".

Round Table spokesperson Dan Upton-Arkless said: "It was brilliant to see so many families, friends and local people coming together for one of the biggest nights in the Downend calendar.

"But the best part of the evening is what it helps us achieve. Thanks to the incredible support of everyone involved, we now have over £75,000 available to support local charities, community groups and good causes over the year ahead.

"That's over £75,000 that will go back into our local community, helping organisations, individuals and projects make a real difference to people's lives.

"For a relatively small group of local volunteers, that's something we're incredibly proud of."

As well as the Downend Round Table team, the Downend 41 Club and more than 100 volunteers from other local groups helped make the evening a success.



Downend Round Table volunteers at this year's display.
Picture: Hannah Daniels



Batala Bristol drummers perform at the display.
Picture: Hannah Daniels

Round Table also thanked sponsors CJ Hole, We Do Your Group, Massey Cladding and Happy Days Nursery, entertainers Party Peeps and firework operators Skyburst.

Downend Round Table chairman Daniel Deffley said: "Most importantly, thank you to everyone who bought a ticket and came along.

"Whether you were watching the fireworks, enjoying the bonfire or dancing along with Party Peeps, you helped make the evening what it was.

"Beyond being a great night out for families, every ticket sold helps us put money back into the local community, supporting the charities, groups, and individuals who make this area such a great place to live.

"That's what makes this event so worthwhile."

Round Table is inviting charities, community groups, not-for-profit organisations and individuals fundraising for local good causes to find out more about funding at *request.downendrt.co.uk*.

The money can be used for new equipment, improving facilities and supporting people and families.

The group also welcomes new members. The social and voluntary organisation is open to men aged 18 to 45.

Dan said: "We're a small group of local people who enjoy putting on events, supporting good causes and having a laugh along the way. If that sounds like your sort of thing, get in touch."

For more information email *hello@downendrt.co.uk*.

Santa sleigh on the way

DOWNEND Round Table members aren't putting their feet up after this year's record-breaking firework display.

The group is making final preparations to its sleigh so members can help Father Christmas make some early visits to the Downend area.

The sleigh is due to visit Mangotsfield on November 29, from 5.30–8.30pm, Bromley Heath on December 4 from 6-8pm and the David Wilson estate on the 5th from 5.30-8pm.

Next is the turn of Lyde Green and Emersons Green to receive visits, with the sleigh visiting Lyde Green from 5.30-8pm on December 6, Emersons Green South from 6-8.30pm on the 11th and Emersons Green North from 5.30-8.30pm on the 12th.

The other visits are: Bromley Health, December 13, 5.30–8.30pm; North Street and surrounding area, December 18, 5.30–8.30pm; Lower Emersons Green, December 19, 5.30–8.30pm; Blackhorse Lane, December 20, 5.30–8.30pm; Longwell Green, December 23, 6-8.30pm.

Route maps and a live tracker will be published at *santa.downendrt.co.uk/tracker* ahead of each visit and donations can be made online at *santa.downendrt.co.uk/donate*.

Updates will also be published on the Downend Round Table Santa Sleigh Facebook group.

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Ecotech village plans are unveiled

DEVELOPERS who want to build 1,800 homes near Emersons Green have revealed details of their plans.

Social housing provider Places for People (PfP) is leading a joint venture that aims to build the homes, provide a new school and employment space to complement the Bristol & Bath Science Park on the opposite side of the M4.

The new development, currently known as North Lyde Ecotech Village, will take around 21 years to build.

But PfP says it wants to have a permanent presence as a social landlord on the site.

PfP is part of a joint venture with project development firm BraceyCo Limited and the landowners, collectively known as Land North of Lyde Green.

The land lies between Westerleigh Road, the M4 and the railway line serving the Westerleigh fuel depot.

Much of it is currently farmland but it also includes the Windmill Leisure Golf and Activity Centre, and Windmill Fishery. The neighbouring Pilgrims Europe abattoir is not part of the development plans.

PfP has been working with South Gloucestershire Council for four years, and the site was earmarked for more than 2,000 homes in the council's draft Local Plan, which is currently awaiting government approval.

It says 30% of the homes planned - around 540 - will be classed as affordable, available as a mixture of shared ownership and social housing, which PfP intends to keep ownership of.

Paul Smith, one of PfP's managing directors, said: "We're in this for the long term - it's not a case of come in, build it and leave - it's come in, build it and stay, as part of the community."

The plans also include a large area of employment land, and the developers hope to entice science, technology and industrial businesses similar to those in the nearby Bristol and Bath Science Park.

PfP hopes to attract a large anchor employer, on a similar scale to the National Composites Centre, along with providing spaces for start-ups and businesses looking to expand locally.



Places for People senior planning manager Matthew Besant, senior development manager Finlay McPherson and managing director Paul Smith at the site near Emersons Green

The site will rely on Westerleigh Road for access by cars and other private vehicles: the stretch of Henfield Road between the M4 and Westerleigh Road is due to become a bus, pedestrian and cycle-only route.

The developers will ask the West of England Combined Authority to add the estate to future bus and mass transit networks.

PfP expects the entire project to take until 2047 to complete, with the first buildings expected to go up between 2030 and 2035.

The first step is a round of consultations, including drop-in sessions on January 15-16 next year at Emersons Green Shopping Centre.

A website at *landnorthoflydegreen.co.uk* is now open with more details.

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Ofsted finds 'significant improvements' at nursery

OFSTED says "significant improvements" have been made at a Downend nursery.

An inspector visited Kiddi Caru Day Nursery and Preschool in Coronation Road in September.

Her report said the nursery, which has 64 places for children aged four and under, now meets the regulator's expected standard in all areas: achievement; behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines; children's welfare and well-being; curriculum and teaching; inclusion; leadership and governance.

The turnaround comes just five months after a previous inspection found the nursery, run by national operator GrandirUK, needed 'urgent improvement' in four areas and attention in the other two.

Inspector Charlotte Jenkin said: "Since the last inspection, leaders have provided training and coaching to staff that has made significant improvements to their practice.

"Staff are more confident about how they observe and assess children's progress, and they quickly identify relevant next steps for children's learning, particularly for those who may have special educational needs or disabilities.

"The curriculum is broad and balanced, and staff use children's interests well to help them engage in and develop positive attitudes towards their learning.

"Key persons take time to get to know their children well, including their backgrounds and interests and how to help them settle in the nursery."

The inspector said children feel safe and secure at the nursery, learn rules and boundaries and benefit from established routines.

As well as having "lots of training and coaching", staff say they now feel well supported and listened to, which has had a positive impact on morale and well-being.

The inspector said: "Overall, parents report that they are happy with the improvements made at the nursery and the progress their children are making."



Children and staff at Downend's Kiddi Caru Coronation Road nursery

To further improve the inspector said staff should consistently extend children's learning, help them to learn and use their good manners and make healthy choices about food.

Nursery manager Emily Davies said: "This is a hugely positive moment for Kiddi Caru Coronation Road and a wonderful reflection of our team's hard work and commitment.

"Following our previous inspection, we listened carefully, worked together and made meaningful improvements across the nursery.

"I am incredibly proud of how the team has responded and of the progress we have made, which ultimately is about creating the very best experiences for the children and families in our care.

"We look forward to building on this positive foundation as we continue to grow and improve."

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Head hands over a changed school

MANGOTSFIELD School's head teacher Hetty Blackmore is leaving at the end of this term, after seven years in charge.

Ask her what has changed at the 1,200-pupil school in that time, and the short answer is 'everything', from curriculum and culture, attitudes and achievement to community connections.

Mrs Blackmore arrived in September 2018 as deputy head, becoming interim head in 2019 before permanently taking charge in January 2020, shortly before the pandemic - a period she describes as a "baptism of fire".

The school had been told it required improvement in all areas by watchdog Ofsted in March 2018, its third successive report demanding changes.

Inspectors wrote that "nearly one in three" parents would not recommend the school to other families.

In her first years in charge Mrs Blackmore and her staff had to do a lot of work rapidly across all areas to turn around the school.

She said: "The staff here are remarkable – they have stood next to me, in front of and behind me, supporting this huge journey the school has been on.

"There's not a single bit of the school that's the same as when I arrived."

Change was recognised when the school received its first 'good' rating from Ofsted in 2022.

While its latest report this year, under a more complex grading system, said attention was still needed in exam achievement and attendance, long-term measures are in place to ensure both areas improve.

The curriculum was completely rewritten five years ago: current Year 11 students are the first to go all the way through the school learning it.

Mrs Blackmore said: "I'm really proud of the progress that cohort are making and their projected results are looking really good. We'll see the results in terms of GCSEs next summer."

Describing the current curriculum as "broad and ambitious," Mrs Blackmore said: "We've got cohorts doing further maths in year 10, and more kids than before doing triple science."

Nevertheless the curriculum was designed with the most vulnerable students in mind, to ensure all are supported.

The way pupils have engaged with lessons has changed.

Mrs Blackmore said: "We've gone from really passive students to really high levels of student participation. I'm hugely proud of the children."

The school makes a point of challenging students to leave their comfort zone, by trying new non-curriculum activities. Staff are challenged, too.

Mrs Blackmore said: "One challenge this term is learning Tamil – ten children who speak it have taught the teachers phrases, which they have taught students so they can answer the register in Tamil."

Another area that has changed is the level of respect. Dedicated behaviour and special needs teams have tackled the "pockets of very challenging behaviour" that previously existed.

Mrs Blackmore said: "We now have very few incidents of bad behaviour. A good example that happened recently was when a big crowd gathered outside during a break and I went to see what was happening, only to find it was two Year 7s and two Year 11s doing a dance battle!



Hetty Blackmore with Mangotsfield School's therapy dog Sid, a Hungarian vizsla

"One student said to me 'Miss, that would have been a fight five years ago' - I think that's when you realise a culture has completely changed."

Extensive work to tackle persistent absence is underway, including a base to help pupils with almost zero attendance back into education.

The school has also regrown community ties. Changes include charity work organised by pupils, a community hub with a food bank and breakfast meetings with people from the wider community.

Mrs Blackmore said: "I know some parents still won't look twice at us, but we've gone from being under-subscribed every year to being oversubscribed.

"It's important that parents have a choice locally, and what we've done is to put Mangotsfield back on the table."

For personal reasons Mrs Blackmore is moving to take over a school closer to home, Bristol Free School in Southmead.

The new head is Kirsty Aaron, director of inclusion at the Pathway Trust, which runs Mangotsfield and Downend School.

Mrs Blackmore said the new culture and progress created now "runs through the school like a stick of rock," adding: "It's a sensible time to hand over and not see it crumble. This is a great school in a great place, with great staff and a great community."



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Pupils raise thousands for Pudsey appeal

CHILDREN at three Downend primary schools have raised more than £8,000 for the BBC's Children in Need appeal.

More than 350 children from Christ Church Infant School and Christ Church Junior School came together for a their first joint Children in Need fundraising event, called Run for Pudsey after the nationwide appeal's bear mascot.

Pupils from both schools ran laps of the infant school field while staff showered them with colourful powder paint.

The junior school's pupil council also organised its own event, a sponsored run by 20 children during their lunch break that raised £1,101.

Added to the colour run fundraising and a non-uniform day, the schools raised a total of £2,744 for the appeal, which raises money for a variety of charities supporting children across the country.

Head teachers Edward Huxley and Anna Martin said: "The enthusiasm shown by the children was wonderful to see. We are very grateful to all the families who donated so generously and helped make the event such a success."

The schools are planning future joint fundraising events.

Meanwhile pupils at Stanbridge Primary School raised more than £6,000 with a series of events, capped off with a fun run attended by BBC Radio Bristol and Pudsey.



Children from Stanbridge Primary School meet Pudsey on the school field

A school spokesperson said: "Children were sponsored for running laps of the field.

"It finished with a big run - bubbles, music, guitar playing, percussion and of course Pudsey Bear! We have raised an amazing £6,025.40, which even included a donation from one of our neighbours who saw the events happening all week and wanted to donate."



Christ Church pupils covered in paint

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Hosepipe ban lifted

BRISTOL Water has lifted a hosepipe ban imposed on customers at the end of the summer.

The company, which supplies all homes in South Gloucestershire and Bristol, introduced temporary restrictions on hosepipe use for all customers in August to protect water resources in the River Severn, following a drought order by the Environment Agency.

However on November 18 the company said it was lifting restrictions, saying: "Recent rainfall has helped improve flows in the River Severn and started the refill of the region's reservoirs."

The announcement was made as torrential rain flooded roads in many parts of South Gloucestershire in November.

Bristol Water said the Environment Agency had withdrawn its drought order application for the River Severn, and the region's reservoirs are now at 43% overall capacity heading into the winter, when they are expected to recover.

Bristol Water water services director Richard Stanbrook said: "Thank you to our customers for playing their part and using less water while the restrictions have been in place.

"We know the ban has been an inconvenience, and the water people have saved has helped us protect supplies and the environment during the drought.

"Our teams have worked hard to find and fix leaks and make the best use of the water available to us.

"The recent rainfall has helped river flows and reservoir levels start to recover enough for us to lift the ban, and we'll continue to monitor both closely over the winter.

"Water is a precious resource all year round. We're asking everyone to keep up the small habits that make a difference, like taking shorter showers, turning off the tap while brushing their teeth and waiting for a full load before running the washing machine or dishwasher."

For more information on saving water visit *www.bristolwater.co.uk/hosepipe-ban*

Schools given choice on book ban

INDIVIDUAL schools must decide whether or not to remove David Walliams' children's books from their libraries and classrooms, after South Gloucestershire Council said it could not issue a blanket ban.

The comedian and author was named in a series of allegations, including sexual misconduct, after trying unsuccessfully to secure a legal injunction to prevent their publication.

Asked whether the star's books would be removed from South Gloucestershire Council libraries and schools, a spokesperson for the authority said: "It would be something for the individual schools rather than for us to issue a directive, and our libraries are guided by the LibrariesWest Collection Development Policy in relation to the books they stock."

The policy covers library services in the West, including Bath & North East Somerset; Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole; Bristol; Dorset; North Somerset; and Somerset; as well as South Glos with the aim of saving costs and offering a better service.

A section in the document covering 'censorship and controversial stock' includes guidance from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals that librarians have a "core and ongoing commitment to freedom of expression and freedom of access to information".

The policy says: "Using this guidance, LibrariesWest will make available the broadest range of material within its policy of freedom of access to all legally available information.It is acknowledged that on occasion individuals may find items in LibrariesWest libraries offensive. However, we do not label items to warn customers of potentially sensitive content and would only restrict access to material to protect it from damage or theft, not as a form of censorship."

The 55-year-old author brought legal action against Independent Television News and Guardian News and Media, publisher of The Guardian, ahead of the two organisations reporting the allegations.

By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service



Husband denies murdering wife

A DOWNEND man has denied murdering his wife at their home.

Geoffrey Billett, aged 68, of Overnhill Road, appeared at Bristol Crown Court on November 18, when he pleaded not guilty to the murder of his wife Jill, who was 69.

Billett also denied a charge of causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal by stabbing a dog.

Both charges followed an incident which led to emergency services being called to the address in Overnhill Road in the early hours of September 27.

They found Mrs Billett seriously injured. She was taken to hospital but died a few hours later.

Billett is next due to appear at Bristol Crown Court in February next year, ahead of a murder trial in March that is expected to last around seven days.

He remains remanded in custody and no bail application was made at the hearing in November.

Police have appealed to anyone who has information they think could help the investigation into Mrs Billett's death to call 101, quoting crime reference number 5226 276 512, or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Cloned car seized

A MAN has been arrested after a suspected 'cloned' car was spotted on the Avon Ring Road near Downend.

Police spotted the car on the afternoon of November 1 after receiving information that it was cloned – a stolen car given false plates belonging to another vehicle of the same make and model. After an unmarked car followed it onto the A432 Badminton Road, three police vehicles boxed it in and brought it to a halt in Coalpit Heath.

The driver, a man in his 50s, was arrested on suspicion of drug driving, driving without insurance, and the fraudulent use of number plates.

He was later released under investigation, while police enquiries continue.

The arrest came weeks after police warned there had been an increase in cases of cloned stolen vehicles.

Nightlife operation

POLICE have been carrying out high-visibility patrols to tackle antisocial behaviour in popular nightspots.

The Staple Hill Neighbourhood Policing Team and Special Constabulary volunteers carried out the weekend operations in November in Staple Hill High Street and Downend to support pubs and other businesses.

During the action, named Operation Nightsafe, two vehicles were searched and one seized, two e-scooters being used unlawfully were seized and a man who was wanted on warrant in connection with a shop theft in Downend was arrested.

Patrols were carried out on the Bristol & Bath Railway Path.

Police also visited addresses where concerns around "cuckooing", where drug dealers take over the homes of vulnerable people, had been raised.

A police spokesperson said: "Operations like Nightsafe help us support local businesses, safeguard vulnerable people and address concerns raised by our communities.

"If you have concerns about anti-social behaviour or crime in your area, please continue to report them to us so we can take action where it is needed most."

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TURNER'S VISION

A little Christmas cheer… and a lot of goodwill



Peter Turner
of **Turners Opticians**
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WELL, here we are again. December. I'm not entirely sure where the year has gone, although judging by the speed at which Christmas seems to arrive these days, I suspect someone has been quietly removing a few weeks from the calendar!

Christmas is, of course, a wonderful time for family, friends, seasonal festivities, Church carol services, and, hopefully, finding time to put our feet up.

It's also a time when I find myself reflecting on just how fortunate many of us are.

This December, we're once again supporting the wonderful Baby Bank Network in Fishponds, a local charity helping families who are finding life particularly challenging.

As a family practice, we've always believed that looking after people extends a little beyond checking their eye health and helping them choose amazing new glasses.

So, at the start of December, we're collecting donations from our patients, suppliers and ourselves to help the Baby Bank Network support local families who need a helping hand - particularly at Christmas.

And the lovely thing is, you don't need to spend a fortune to make a difference.

They're particularly grateful for new toiletries for babies and mums, good-quality children's clothing, toys in good condition and even bags for life to help distribute everything.

Yes, bags for life! Those things we all seem to accumulate in cupboards, car boots and kitchen drawers. At last, a genuinely good reason to have collected so many!

If you'd like to contribute financially instead, you can donate directly through the Baby Bank Network website to their Santa's Sack Appeal, where donations before the 8th December are being doubled! Every contribution, however small, is appreciated.

Of course, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a few eye-related mishaps, so perhaps a little festive advice wouldn't go amiss.

Firstly, if you're enjoying a sherry or two, do remember where you've put your glasses before sitting down. Spectacle frames and one's derrière are rarely a happy combination particularly after the third sherry!

Secondly, keep yourself hydrated. Between central heating, cold winds and the occasional festive tipple, dry eyes can become particularly troublesome. A little water alongside the celebrations and remembering to blink regularly is a good idea.

And finally, please don't look down at the business end of a party popper. It sounds obvious, but eyes and high-speed Christmas surprises really aren't the best of friends!

On a more serious note, if your eyes or vision aren't quite right, please don't simply put up with it until the New Year. We're always happy to help and are open most days apart from Festive Bank Holidays.

So, from all of us at Turners Opticians in Henleaze and Downend, thank you for your support throughout the year, and especially for any help you're able to offer the Baby Bank Network.

To find out more or to book an appointment, visit our website or contact our friendly team by calling our Henleaze practice on 0117 9622 474 or our Downend practice on 0117 965 4434.

A little kindness can make an enormous difference.

Wishing you and your families a very happy, healthy and hopefully spectacle-breakage-free Christmas!

See you soon!

Peter

Peter Turner is an Independent Prescribing Senior Optometrist at Turners Opticians in Bristol. He also works as a Senior Medical Optometrist at Bristol Eye Hospital and has a specialist interest in visual development and performance.



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Luke takes on huge double challenge

A DESIGNER and TV presenter from Bromley Heath is taking on two huge challenges for causes close to his heart.

Luke Millard will take on the National Three Peaks Challenge of climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon on New Year's Day, while carrying 300 hard hats weighing around 100kg.

Later in January he will head to Tanzania aiming to climb Africa's highest peak, Kilimanjaro, and get down in 24 hours – far shorter than the week most people take to scale it.

Dad-of-two Luke, who runs architectural design firm Millard's Studio and has appeared in TV programmes including *George Clarke's Kitchen vs Garden* and *DIY SOS*, is taking on the challenges to raise money for two good causes: Lighthouse Charity and the Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project.

Lighthouse Charity provides free 24/7 emotional, physical and financial well-being support for people who work in construction and their families.

Luke said: "I've worked in construction for years.

"I've lost two good friends in the trade to suicide, and years ago I attempted to take my own life.

"I know how easy it is to turn up for work, tell everyone you're fine and crack on.

"I want more people in construction to know there's somewhere they can turn when things get hard.

"Getting outdoors helped me talk about my own mental health, and I'd love this challenge to get more people in the industry talking about theirs."

During the Three Peaks Challenge Luke will carry 300 hard hats with him. He is inviting workers, tradespeople and families to share the names and memories of people within the industry they have lost, and will write names and memories onto each hard hat.

He said: "The idea is that these aren't simply 300 hard hats being carried up three mountains. They're a visual representation of the people we've lost, the families affected and the importance of looking after one another."

Luke climbed Kilimanjaro in October.

He said: "The trip took seven days, and I came down by helicopter.

"What stayed with me was how hard the Tanzanian porters worked to get people like me up the mountain.

"I watched the porters carry our kit through the cold and rain and still get to camp ahead of us to make sure we had somewhere to eat and get warm.



Luke Millard, centre, on his previous Kilimanjaro trek

"I came home wanting to give something back to the people who made that experience possible."

Luke has a live fundraising page at *gofund.me/37e31cc5c*, from where donations will be passed to Lighthouse and KPAP.

He aims to raise more than £50,000 for the causes, and will post updates on Instagram channel @lukejmillard.

Businesses who can offer sponsorship or logistical support can email *creative@millardsstudio.com*.

TURNERS HEARING CARE BLOG

Christmas present for your ears? A little loving care!



Why not? After all, your ears do a fabulous job all year round!

Whether it's conversations with friends, family dinners, your favourite television programme or phone calls with loved ones, your ears are constantly helping you stay connected.

And then there are those less welcome sounds. Corks popping, fireworks exploding, or perhaps your partner snoring loudly! Not always appreciated, but all part of how our hearing helps us make sense of the world.

So this Christmas, let's give our ears a little well-deserved appreciation and think about keeping them healthy throughout 2027.

Here are my two favourite tips:

1. Protect your hearing. Keep television and headphone volumes comfortable, and wear hearing protection around noisy machinery or particularly loud events. It's never too late to start looking after your hearing.

2. Be kind to your ear wax! Wax actually protects your ears, and usually clears naturally. Avoid cotton buds, which can push it further inside.

If you're prone to troublesome wax build-up, olive oil spray can help soften it. A few days' preparation before removal often makes microsuction easier and more comfortable. Always check that olive oil is suitable for your ears first.

Here at Turners Opticians in Downend, I offer gentle, professional microsuction, and we also stock olive oil ear spray.

So amongst all the Christmas busyness, spare a little thought for your ears.

Here's to enjoying every festive sound and conversation!

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.



A new chapter for the Green Dragon: traditional pub hospitality meets Indian street food

THE Green Dragon in Downend, Bristol, is entering an exciting new chapter, with Fin, Mike and Jay bringing fresh energy, new ideas and a renewed sense of community to the much-loved local pub.

With a shared passion for hospitality, the trio are determined to make The Green Dragon a welcoming destination for everyone, combining everything people love about a traditional British pub with an exciting Indian kitchen and a vibrant street-food-inspired lunch offering.

At the heart of their vision is a simple philosophy: a great pub should be somewhere people feel comfortable, whether they're popping in for a quick pint after work, enjoying a leisurely lunch, catching up with friends or gathering the family for a special occasion.

While the food offering brings something new to the area, the team are keen to emphasise that The Green Dragon remains, first and foremost, a proper local pub.



An important part of this commitment is the introduction of real ales, giving customers even more choice at the bar and reinforcing the pub's traditional character. Alongside a carefully selected range of draught beers, ciders, wines, spirits and cocktails, the addition of real ales reflects the team's ambition to offer something for every taste, from traditional ale enthusiasts to those looking for something a little different.

Live sport, social occasions and a lively weekend atmosphere will all play their part in establishing the pub as a hub for the Downend community.

One of the biggest changes comes from the kitchen, where Indian flavours take centre stage. Rather than following the traditional curry-house format alone, the team are introducing a street-food-inspired lunchtime menu designed around bold flavours, fresh ingredients and approachable dishes.

Think tandoori chicken wings, freshly prepared naan wraps and Indian-inspired bar snacks — perfect for a relaxed lunch, a bite alongside a pint or something a little different from the usual pub fare.

The wider Indian kitchen offering will also provide an inviting option for evening dining, bringing together the relaxed atmosphere of a neighbourhood pub with the flavours and excitement of Indian cuisine.



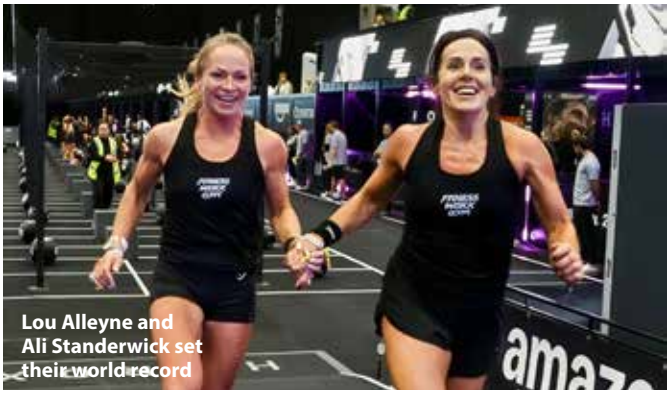
Ali and Lou set a world record

TWO super-fit women who train at a Downend gym are celebrating setting a new world record in a tough sport.

Lou Alleyne and Ali Standerwick took part in the Hyrox fitness racing championship's opening round in Birmingham, and set the record for the fastest women's doubles time in the 55-59 age group.

Hyrox is an indoor fitness race that combines running with fitness stations. Contestants do eight 1km runs combined with eight workout stations between each run, including sled pushes and pulls, a 1km machine row, a 200m 'farmer carry' - walking with heavy weights in each hand - and sandbag lunges, which involve lifting a heavy weight from the ground to the shoulders while moving forwards.

Lou, a nutritionist and personal trainer from Coalpit Heath, and Ali, of Winterbourne, who works full-time for Wessex Water, both have backgrounds in endurance events, and have run several marathons, but only started competing in Hyrox just over a year ago.



Lou Alleyne and Ali Standerwick set their world record

They have been training together at Fitness Worx independent gym in Downend.

Ali had already made the podium in Hyrox solo events. When she invited Lou to partner her in a women's doubles event, they broke the world record in only their second competition together.

They achieved a time of 1 hour 7 minutes, breaking the previous age category record by three minutes.

Afterwards Lou said: "I'm incredibly proud and grateful for this achievement. But it's about more than a title. It's a reminder of what consistency, hard work and believing in yourself can achieve.

"I don't believe age or gender should define our limits. Whether you're 25 or 75, just starting out or already active, there's always room to get stronger, fitter and healthier."

Ali and Lou were interviewed about their achievement by ITV.

Ali said she and Lou had done marathons together in the past and she knew that if she worked with Lou they would push and motivate each other.

She said: "We never took it for granted that we would get the world record – we just thought, let's go out there and see what we can do, let's forget about how old we are and think about what we've done and how hard we've trained."

Lou told ITV that she has been giving her husband, former Gloucestershire and England cricketer Mark, and son Max, an England under-21 international footballer, stick because they don't hold a world record.

Around 19,000 people took part in the event in Birmingham, from October 27 to November 1.

Jack Scott, from Fitness Worx, said: "This is an incredible achievement and one that deserves recognition, particularly given the dedication, training and determination required to compete at this level."



School still has 'work to do'

AN independent school for children with special educational needs and disabilities has made improvements but has "further work to do" to ensure it meets standards, says Ofsted.

Earlier this year the education regulator said Elmtree Grove School, in Overndale Road, needed to make urgent improvements in pupils' achievement, curriculum and teaching, inclusion work, and leadership and governance.

Its report, published at the end of May, outlined "multiple weaknesses in the quality of the school's provision" and said its safeguarding standards were not met.

Ofsted returned to the school, which has 21 pupils aged from four to 12 with autism, ADHD and social, emotional and mental health needs, in October.

Inspector Esther Best carried out a 'progress monitoring inspection' focusing particularly on safeguarding, health and safety.

She found the school, which charges fees of £36,000 to £48,500 per year to local authorities that place children there, now meets standards for the welfare, health and safety of pupils, and standards of accommodation.

But her report said that standards in the quality of education, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the quality of leadership and management, were still not met consistently, although some improvements had been made.

Addressing leadership and management, the inspector said: "There is still further work to do to ensure that all the standards are met consistently.

"Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has strengthened leadership capacity through the appointment of key staff, including a senior leader with responsibility for curriculum development and a special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.

"A new governing body has been established to provide increased oversight and challenge. However, this work is in its infancy and so it is too soon to see the full impact, particularly on pupils' learning. Changes in leadership continue to slow the pace of change."

The school's safeguarding and anti-bullying policies are now implemented effectively.

The inspector said leaders need to ensure staff adapt teaching to ensure all pupils achieve well.

She called on proprietor Elementa Education Group to strengthen systems to check and evaluate the quality of education pupils receive and make changes promptly.

The inspector also called for improvements to assessment, monitoring and addressing pupil behaviour.


Elmtree Grove School

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

A spokesperson for Elementa said Ofsted's latest visit had been a "collaborative and positive experience", with the inspector speaking to staff and children during a thorough process.

The spokesperson said the school was pleased the rigour of its safeguarding processes and positive culture of safeguarding had been recognised by the inspector.

They added: "The day included a small snapshot of other areas and the inspector noted the progress and that this would be explored further and reported on, on the next visit.

"Whilst we would have loved to be able to have all areas assessed and reported on it is simply not viable in a one day visit.

"We are looking forward to the next visit and anticipate being able to share further positive news once this has happened."

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YOUR Community NEWS

Brought to you by

DOWNEND & BROMLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

A Christmas Message to Our Community

Well, Christmas is nearly upon us! The trees are lit, which is always an exciting sight, bringing a sense of hope and festive cheer to our village and beyond.

For many of us, Christmas will be a time spent with family and friends. However, there may be someone living nearby who will be on their own over the festive period. If you can, why not take a moment to pop in, have a chat or simply say hello? A small gesture of kindness can make a real difference and help someone feel remembered and included at this special time of year.

Looking back over the past twelve months, we have been incredibly busy. King George V Pavilion has continued to develop into the thriving community hub we have always hoped it would become. Bringing people together has been one of our aims, and it is wonderful to see this happening so successfully.

Working in partnership with our Friends of King George V & Badminton Road Playing Fields, the Parish Council team has hosted a range of activities and events for residents to enjoy throughout the year. These have included our Grow the Tallest Sunflower competition, Easter egg hunt, second anniversary celebration, free tree and seed giveaway, and pumpkin carving. It has been fantastic to see many people of all ages getting involved, enjoying the events and making the most of our shared community spaces. A big thank you goes to everyone who has supported, attended or helped organise these activities.

The investment into the tennis courts at Bromley Heath has been a real success. The improvements have helped enhance our local sporting facilities, and the addition of pickleball means there are now even more opportunities for people to get active, try something new and enjoy sport together. It is encouraging to see our facilities continuing to evolve to meet the interests of our community and provide opportunities for people of different ages and abilities.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our Parish Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Facilities Manager and Parish Councillors, alongside the many volunteers and community members who give their time and enthusiasm so generously. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their continued commitment and contribution.



I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year!

Cllr. Janet Biggin
Chairman
D&BHPC

Date for the diary - FREE Tree Giveaway!

Join us at the King George V Pavilion on Saturday 23rd January (1–3pm) to pick up your free native tree! Let's make Downend & Bromley Heath even greener together. Trees are available on a first-come, first-served basis for local residents.



Spooky Goings-On at King George V Pavilion!





There were plenty of spooky goings-on at King George V Pavilion this Halloween! The Parish Council worked in partnership with the Friends of King George V & Badminton Road Playing Fields to host a fantastic Halloween event, welcoming over 60 young people for pumpkin carving and Halloween crafts. From creatively carved pumpkins to wonderfully spooky creations, everyone got into the Halloween spirit and enjoyed getting creative together. A big thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make it such a spooktacular success!

DOWNEND & BROMLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCILLORS

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Clerk to the Council
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Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council

Something to sing about!

WHAT makes you sing? Most often I think it is sparked by a feeling of happiness, joy or celebration. Even the most reserved or tone-deaf burst into song when a classic tune comes on the radio or playlist that reminds us of good times past. We join in the roar of 'Sweet Caroline' when England wins, sing the traditional 'Happy Birthday' at a party, or belt out a classic in the shower as we ready ourselves for a date.

Singing is expression: something within us must be let out. Enjoying the memory, the team win, the birthday celebration or the prospect of a date is not enough; we instinctively vocalise our joy in song.

This is exactly what we find in the Bible. Singing is an overflow of the heart; it is a response to what God has done. When we know the wonder of who God is and of his love for us, the emotions are expressed in worship and praise. It's what we see in several instances that surround the accounts of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God into the world. Mary, the mother of Jesus, early in her pregnancy sang from her soul praises to God for being mindful of her and for keeping his promises to his people to send a Saviour. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, likewise praised God for sending the rescuer and declared that his own son, John, would prepare the way for Jesus. Probably the most well-known is that of the angels as they announced the 'good news of great joy' to the shepherds that the Saviour had been born. 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.' And then, after Jesus' birth, Simeon, who had been promised by God that he would not die before he saw the Messiah, held the baby and praised God. 'Lord…you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation.'

Why did these people sing? The common theme is praise to God for sending the promised Saviour, the Messiah, the rescuer. This is why Christmas Carols have been a traditional element in our celebrations and why songs of praise continue to be written today. God has not left us to our own devices or abandoned us in our darkness.

I am sure you do not always feel like singing – certainly not with joy. Life can be tough: the team loses, a birthday isn't happy, the date doesn't go well or the relationship



ends. And when we are honest, the problems and pain are not just 'out there', caused by others; we see darkness within ourselves. But the message of Christmas is that Jesus came to save us. The light came into our darkness to bring us to himself.

We will be considering the songs listed above in our Sunday services leading up to Christmas and you would be so very welcome. Join in with our events and find there is truly 'Something to sing about!'



CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Pendennis Good News Church

CHRISTMAS MOVIE NIGHT — FRID 4TH
Refreshments and a festive film
6.30pm

CAROLS IN THE PARK — FRID 11TH
Bring a mug for hot chocolate
6.00pm, Page Park

CHRISTINGLE ALL AGE SERVICE — SUN 13TH
Discover the reason we sing
10.30am

CHRISTMAS LUNCH — SUN 13TH
Join us for food and friendship*
12.30pm- *contact for a space*

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT — SUN 20TH
Join our traditional carol service
6.30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE — SUN 25TH
Celebrate the birth of Jesus
10.30am

www.pendennisgoodnews.com | Pendennis Road, BS16 5JB | 07721645279 | Find us on Facebook

Christmas adverts, Christmas stories and the greatest gift of all



ONE of the things that tells us Christmas is getting closer isn't the appearance of decorations in the shops or even the first mince pies in the supermarket. It's the arrival of the Christmas television adverts!

Every year, the big retailers seem to compete to produce the advert that will make us laugh, bring a tear to our eye or leave us feeling just a little more Christmassy. Whether it's a heart-warming story about family, an unexpected friendship, a lonely character finding companionship or someone going out of their way to make another person's Christmas special, these short films have become part of our Christmas traditions.

And perhaps there's a reason why we enjoy them so much.

Underneath all the clever animation, catchy music and emotional storylines, many Christmas adverts share some surprisingly similar themes. They remind us that Christmas is about more than what we buy. It's about who we love, the people we spend time with and the difference a small act of kindness can make. They often remind us that the greatest gifts aren't necessarily the ones wrapped in shiny paper, but the ones that come from the heart.

There is something rather familiar about these themes when we think about the original Christmas story.

The first Christmas wasn't a glossy television production. There were no expensive decorations, celebrity appearances or carefully planned marketing campaigns. Instead, it was a simple story about a young couple, an unexpected arrival, a baby born in humble surroundings and a group of shepherds who were among the first to hear the news.

Yet Christians believe that this was the greatest gift the world has ever received. The Bible describes Jesus as God's gift of love to the world. As the Gospel of John puts it: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16).

It's a remarkable thought. Christmas is not simply about what we give to one another, important though that is. At its heart, it's about what God has given to us. In Jesus, God came into our world, sharing our humanity and showing us what real love looks like.

Perhaps that's why the best Christmas adverts resonate with us. They touch something deep within us: our longing to belong, to be loved, to be noticed and to know that someone cares.

Of course, no television advert can make Christmas perfect. For some people, this time of year can be difficult, particularly those facing loneliness, bereavement or financial pressures. But the message of Christmas offers something deeper than a few moments of festive entertainment. It offers lasting hope.

So, as we settle down to watch this year's Christmas adverts, perhaps we might remember the greatest Christmas story of all. It's a story of love, generosity, welcome and hope – and it's an invitation that is still open to everyone.

From all of us at Christ Church Downend, may you know the joy, peace and hope of Christmas.







Happy Christmas from Badminton Road Methodist Church

Christmas is one of those times when do our best to be inclusive, don't we, and share the "peace and goodwill" spoken of by angels in the Christmas story. At Badminton Road Methodist we're aiming for a, something-for-everyone kind of Christmas this year...

For those who find Christmas tough as a result of bereavement, we invite you to our Remembering service on Sunday 6th December at 4.00pm. It will be a quiet half hour service with opportunity to light candles in memory of loved ones.

If you like a good sing, why not join us for Coffee and Carols on Saturday 19th December at 10.30am (informal) or for our Carol service on Sunday 20th December at 10.30am (more traditional).

Or come along to Angel Crafts for All, if you fancy getting creative/active. There will be angel-themed crafts, quizzes and activities (and refreshments) on Tuesday 22nd December at 10.00am.

Hopefully you'll have some energy left for Christmas Day! Everyone is welcome to join us for worship at 10.30am.

Happy Christmas to all readers of The Voice!



Plenty going on at Staple Hill Methodist Church



At Staple Hill Methodist Church, we begin the festive season with Christmas on the Hill on Saturday 28th November. Our doors will open from 10 am – 3.30 pm with various stalls including Christmas presents, pre-loved gifts, tombola, books, jigsaws and more. Refreshments will be served throughout the day. On the same day, at 7.30 pm, we are delighted to have the UWE Singers and UWE Cello Ensemble performing a concert. Tickets are £10 on the door.

Every Saturday through to Christmas, we have our weekly Coffee Morning where we serve fairtrade tea and coffee, and a selection of cakes. This is also an opportunity to see inside our 152 year old traditional Methodist church which will have been decorated with Christmas trees. We are open 10 am – 12 pm. On the 19th December, we will also have carol singing on the front steps of the Church raising money for Action for Children.

As we approach Christmas, we have our Carols by Candlelight service on Sunday 20th December at 6.30 pm. Join us for an evening of carols, led by the Church choir, and readings which tell us the Christmas story. Mince pies and coffees will be service afterwards.

On Christmas Day, we warmly invite you to join us for our family service at 10 am as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We wish you all peace, love and joy this Christmas season and into the New Year.



The Big Community Sing-A-Long

JOIN us at the Big Christmas Community Sing-A-Long!

This free event will be held at St Augustine's Church in Boscombe Crescent, Downend, on Friday December 18 at 6.30pm.

We'll have the Salvation Army Band and our local African choir to bring us festive joy. Free refreshments will be provided after the concert, with even more singing!

Bring your family and friends: everyone is welcome to come along and kick-start your Christmas together. **Martyn Poole**

Something for everyone

THEY say Christmas is for the children, but its message is for all ages, hence the variety of Christmas services and events being held at Christ Church Downend this December.

Full details are on our website christchurchdownend.com.

If you're not feeling much like celebrating this year, but you would like to mark the season in a more gentle fashion, you could try the Blue Christmas event we're holding on December 8 at 2pm at Christ Church.

There will be a chance to pause and reflect on the meaning of the season in a quieter atmosphere. For details, please contact the parish office 0117 908 9867. **Anita Dobson**

Tree Festival at St James

ST JAMES Church's Christmas Tree Festival is a free community event, bringing people and local organisations together.

Between December 9 and 13, come and see the variety of trees on display at St James Church and share in the joy of Christmas.

As well as the display of decorated trees, there will be events and seasonal refreshments.

Saturday 12th is a fun day, with Breakfast with Santa, story time, a family Christmas film and Winterbourne St Michael's hand bell ringers. All welcome to this free community event - for timings see What's On, page 24. **Ruth Oakley**

Panto time!



Members of St Stephen's Drama Group

A SOUNDWELL-based drama group is preparing to perform one of the best-loved pantomimes in the New Year.

St Stephen's Drama Group will bring Aladdin to the stage at St Stephens Church Hall in Soundwell from January 28-30 at 7.30pm each night, with a Saturday matinee at 2.30pm.

The tale of Aladdin, his mum Widow Twankey, the evil Abanazar and the Genie is being produced by long-standing group members Caroline Ball and Debbie Townsend. It is their second pantomime together.

They said: "The cast are doing brilliantly, and their performances have us laughing at every rehearsal.

"Pantos are quite a challenge to produce, with so many different things to consider and a much larger cast.

"We always try to involve the whole group, which really shows how well we work together."

Tickets are on sale now via Ticketsourse at *tinyurl.com/4fak9bne* and cost £8 for adults, £6 concessions.

For more information, visit the group's Facebook page or website *ststephensdramabristol.co.uk*



Charity's superstore welcomed to Mangotsfield

BRISTOL charity St Peter's Hospice has opened its latest 'superstore' in Mangotsfield.

The charity has taken over the former Panoramic Windows showroom and offices in Richmond Road, which closed last year, and converted them into one of its biggest shops in the region.

The larger floor space enables the charity to offer furniture, white goods and electrical items for sale, helping people to reuse and re-home more household goods, while supporting its work at the same time.

St Peter's Hospice cares for adults with life-limiting illnesses across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset.

Services at its hospice in Brentry and in the community, for people with life-limiting illnesses or approaching the end of life, and their families, cost around £30,000 a day to run.

It has 45 shops across the region, and the Richmond Road branch is its fourth superstore, following successful openings in Portishead, Abbey Wood and Clifton over the past two years.

St Peter's Hospice has also opened a new shop on Emerson Way next to Emersons Green Retail Park.

Both shops stock the charity's regular selection of good quality second hand clothes, accessories, books and toys.

To welcome the charity to Mangotsfield, Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council chair Angela Bragg, Mangotsfield Residents Association chair Clive Heath and South Gloucestershire ward councillor Michael Bell dropped in on the opening day in October, and met store manager Luke Benyon.

St Peter's Hospice retail director John Broomhead said: "We are delighted to bring not one but two new stores to the local area. Each has a slightly different offering but both have the same goal – helping to fund free Hospice care for people in the community who need us.

"Pre-loved shopping is a brilliant way to find something special while making a positive difference. Our charity shops are full of hidden gems and unexpected finds you simply wouldn't see on the high street.

"By choosing pre-loved, shoppers can give quality items a second life, helping to reduce waste and make more sustainable choices – while also supporting our charity's work in making sure our patients have access to the best possible end-of-life care."

Managers are looking for volunteers to join both shops to help with jobs including sorting donations and working on the tills.



Malcolm Evans and Angela Bragg of Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council, Mangotsfield Residents Association chair Clive Heath and South Gloucestershire ward councillor Michael Bell with St Peter's Hospice Mangotsfield store manager Luke Benyon



Sunday 29th November
4:00 - 6:00pm - Messy Church

Sunday 6th December
10.00 - 11:30am - Family Carol Service

Thursday 10th December
11.15am - 12:00pm Thursday Church Carol Service

Sunday 20th December
5:00pm - 6:30pm - Carol Service

Christmas Eve
5.00 - 6:00pm - Carols in The Square

Christmas Day
11am - 12pm - Christmas Morning All-Age Worship

Every Sunday at 10am - All-Age Worship
For more information about activities at The Salvation Army, please use this QR Code to visit our website
Broad Street | Staple Hill | BS16 5LN

Christmas at Resound

COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US!

THURSDAY 17 DEC — Toddlers Christmas Party
10-11:30AM AT RESOUND

SATURDAY 19 DEC — Carols in Emersons Green
4:00PM OUTISDE EMERSONS GREEN VILLAGE HALL

SUNDAY 20 DEC — Family Carol Service
10:30AM AT RESOUND

MONDAY 21 DEC — Christmas Candlelight Meditation
7:30PM AT RESOUND

WWW.RESOUNDBRISTOL.CO.UK/CHRISTMAS

Guardians aim to protect River Frome

A NEW campaign to "protect, restore and celebrate" the River Frome has been launched.

River Frome Guardians aims to bring communities together on a stretch of the river between Iron Acton and Frenchay.

An online crowdfunding campaign has been started to raise money to support restoration and recovery work for the river.

Led by non-profit group Frome Valley Environmental Network CIC, the project aims to restore the waters as a haven for wildlife including brown trout, eel, otter and water vole.

During the coming year, River Frome Guardians will work with partners including We Are Avon, Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, parish councils, landowners, water companies and volunteers.

Activities planned include river walks, ecological surveys, a River Frome Bioblitz - where people record and identify as many different species in one place as they can - litter picking and removal of the damaging invasive plant, Himalayan balsam, as well as family activities and community river celebrations.

Frome Valley Environmental Network director Kate Macdonald said: "If enough people support our crowdfunder, West of England Mayoral Authority will match our funding up to £6,000.

"We're counting on community support to meet that target – if not more – to help bring our river back to life."

FVEN says the project will create and deliver a practical Frome River Restoration Action Plan, identifying opportunities for future wetland, meadow, tree, flood plain and river restoration work.



Walking along the River Frome

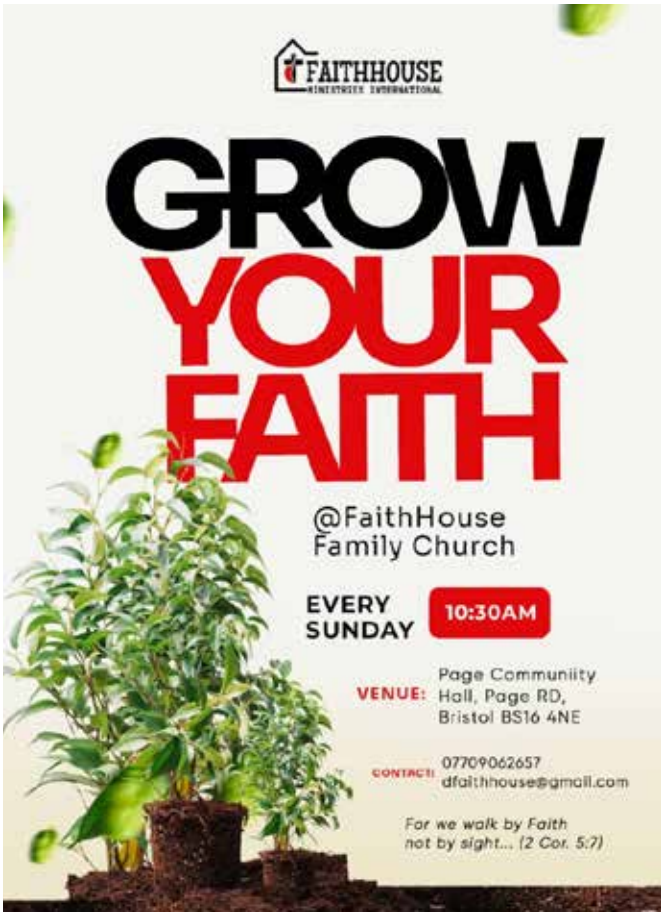
Campaigners aim to start with a shared walk along the river from Iron Acton to Frenchay, with ecologists, river specialists, councillors, community representatives and local people.

During the walk they will identify opportunities to restore biodiversity, improve habitat, reduce bank erosion and increase the river's resilience to flooding.

The work builds on the Frome Valley Pollinator Pathway begun in 2023, and aims to strengthen connections between people, communities and the river, while contributing to the West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy backed by WECA.

People are being urged to donate before December 22 by searching for River Frome Guardians at *www.spacehive.com,* or visiting *tinyurl.com/yc6rsvj7* to ensure the project goes ahead.

Updates will be posted at the Frome Valley Environmental Network Facebook and Instagram pages.





November 28

■ **CHRISTMAS ON THE HILL,** Staple Hill High Street, Page Road and Broad Street, 10am-4pm. Attractions include stalls, fairground and donkey rides, petting animals, music, visit from Santa. Carols around the tree at 4pm in Fountain Square.

November 30

■ **CAKE MORNING** at Good News Church Hall, Pendennis Road, Staple Hill, 10am-noon. Tea, home-made cakes and chat supporting Thrive: Embracing Life CIC to raise funds to support local work with young people. More details at thrive.embracinglife@gmail.com.

November 30-December 17

■ **COSSHAM HOSPITAL LEAGUE OF FRIENDS** Christmas Sale at the hospital, Monday to Friday, from 10am-2pm.

December 1

■ **FRIENDS OF PAGE PARK** Christmas Get Together at The Nest, Page Park, 7-9pm. American supper: bring along a plate of food, crisps or nibbles and drink. Anyone who would like to hear more about the Friends is welcome.

December 2

■ **MOTHERS UNION** Advent Lunch at Christ Church Downend, 12.15 pm. Food, talk and worship. Tickets must be bought in advance: call 0117 908 9867.

December 4

■ **WINTER MARKET** 3pm - 8pm St Werburghs Community Centre Featuring over 30 independent stalls alongside a special evening disco, this beloved event promises a festive celebration of local craft, food, and music for the whole community.

December 4

■ **FESTIVE DISCO** St Werburghs Community Centre with special guest DJ Ghost Phone 4:30pm - 7pm

December 5

■ **CHRISTMAS DEMONSTRATION** with Downend Flower Arranging Club Emersons Green Village Hall, 7pm, with Tracy Rowbottom. Tickets £12, including refreshments. All arrangements raffled off. Book via downendflowers@gmail.com.

December 7

■ **DOWNEND SENIOR FILM CLUB** Christmas Party at Christ Church Hall, North Street, Downend, 2pm. Music from The Fab Twins, dancing, festive refreshments. £4. Booking required at 0117 435 0063.

December 8

■ **BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE** at Christ Church Downend, 2pm. Quiet reflective service for those who are finding Christmas difficult due to bereavement or other reasons but want to mark the season. Refreshments afterwards.

December 9-13

■ **CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL** St James Church, Mangotsfield. Wednesday & Friday, 11am-5pm, Thursday 11am-8pm, Saturday 10am-5pm, Sunday 12.30-4pm. Fun day on Saturday: Breakfast with Santa 10am, story time 11am, lunch noon-1pm, family Christmas film 1pm, hand bell ringers 3pm. Free event with seasonal refreshments. More details: 07826 312630.

December 10

■ **CHRISTMAS STAR CONCERT** Join Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity for an evening of Christmas carols, live music and festive favourites at St Mary Redcliffe Church on Thursday 10 December. Hosted by BBC Radio Bristol's John Darvall, the concert will raise funds for local NHS hospitals. Tickets available now at *bwhospitalscharity.org.uk*

December 10

■ **ANNUAL OUTDOOR CAROL SERVICE** with Mangotsfield Residents Association and St James Church at the Dame School, St James Street, Mangotsfield, 6.30pm..

December 11

■ **FESTIVE FRIENDS CHRISTMAS LUNCH** 12pm - 2:30pm St Werburghs Community Centre Dedicated community meal and celebration for local elders and isolated members of our community.

December 11

■ **BRISTOL VETERANS BRASS BAND** concert at the David Baker Room, Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, 1-2pm. Refreshments from 12.30pm. Free entry. Retiring collection. Christmas jumpers optional.

December 11

■ **THE ORIGINAL SANTA FLOAT** visits Downend, Mangotsfield & Staple Hill. Raising money for Time is Precious charity, supporting children with disabilities. Route and timings available on the day at Original Santa Float Facebook Page.

December 11

■ **FILTON CONCERT BRASS** present Masquerade at Christ Church Downend, 7.30pm. Festive concert with an Italian twist from Bristol's leading championship section brass band. To purchase tickets visit tinyurl.com/4evxpfuh.

December 12

■ **CLEEVE SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT** at Downend Folk House, Lincombe Barn, 2pm. Tickets £6 from Downend Cards & Gifts (cash only), at the barn and on the door. Raffle, charity collection for Avon Valley Heritage Railway Trust.

December 13

■ **DOWNEND FESTIVE MARKET,** Badminton Road, Downend, 10.30am to 2.30pm. Gifts, food, festive atmosphere. Carol singing with Downend churches, 12.15pm.

December 13

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

December 13, 18 & 20

■ **CHRISTMAS FLOAT** tours with The Float Group, raising money for St Peter's Hospice and Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity. Frenchay Sunday 13, Staple Hill Friday 18, Downend Sunday 20. Timings and route available on the day at the Float Group Facebook page.

December 17

■ **DEMENTIA CAFE** at Warm Space, Christ Church Downend, 11am-1.30pm. Lunch served. Also 2nd & 4th Thursday, live music from Music Train and soup & roll lunch. Free. Accessible building and loos.

December 18

■ **BIG CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY SING-A-LONG** at St Augustine's Church, Boscombe Crescent, Downend, 6.30pm, Free event with Salvation Army band & African choir, free refreshments. All welcome. Kick-start Christmas, bring family & friends – all welcome.

December 20

■ **FRENCHAY UNITARIAN CHAPEL** Winter Solstice Celebration, 7.30pm. Prose, music and fire with food & drink: bring & share if you can. More details from Peter.a.bruce@gmail.com or 07527 118586.

December 25

■ **FRENCHAY UNITARIAN CHAPEL** Christmas Day service, 10.30am. More details from Peter.a.bruce@gmail.com or 07527 118586

Various Dates

■ **MANGOTSFIELD & CASTLE GREEN URC** Xmas Services: Xmas Eve Candle light service at 6 p.m. Xmas Day Morning Service @ 10.30 a.m.

Downend Library

Stories round the Tree

Wednesday 16th December 5.30-6.15pm at Downend Library
Free Event for Children - must be aged 4 and above.
A festive, fun filled evening with stories round the tree!
All children must be accompanied by an adult.
Booking essential, please contact Downend Library for details.

Winter Wonderland

Monday 21st December, 10.30-11.30am at Downend Library
Free drop-in craft activity
Most suitable for primary school aged children
All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Please contact the library for dates

Downend.library@southglos.gov.uk

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-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

■ **ARTS AND CRAFTS GROUP** Every Monday ,10am -12.30 pm . Page Hall , Staple Hill. Bring your own arts and crafts project materials , and enjoy a relaxed , friendly space to work alongside like-minded people . No experience necessary. £5 per session , including a hot drink and biscuits. For more information, please call 07944550442.

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.

■ **BEGINNERS AND REHAB PILATES.** (GP referral qualified) Tuesday 18:15 £8 per session Pendennis Church, Staple Hill Message Samantha 07736309272 for more information.

■ **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 10.15p.m 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

■ **WELCOME SPACE** at King George V Pavilion, Sutherland Avenue Downend. Every Wednesday, noon-2.30pm. More details from kgvdownend@gmail.com.

■ **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.

■ **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.

■ **MONTHLY MINDFUL MIDWEEK YOGA** @ Frenchay Quaker House: Gentle somatic and yoga practices to help you slow down, unwind & reconnect. All levels welcome. Every 3rd Wednesday, Visit yogawithmischa.co.uk for more information/details.

■ **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.

■ **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

Continued on next page



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 at*purplewellies@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. 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 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 *Lincornish@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 Carolyn 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, 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 Assembley 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 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.

■ **EMERSON'S GREEN QUILTERS** meet at the Christchurch Centre, Quakers Road on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. New members and visitors welcome. Socialise, talks and activities. For more information email emersonsgreenquilters@gmail.com.

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.*

■ **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*



WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

■ **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, every Saturday 10am-noon in aid of church funds or charities. Fairtrade coffee, tea and home-made cake. Repair Cafe open every third Saturday: donations to church funds.

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 Cossham 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, Sunday worship at 10.30am + Sunday Club for children aged 5-17. Holy Communion every 2nd Sunday of the month – all welcome. Contact Rev Martin Slocombe on 07769 982367 or Philippa 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, 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.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

VOICES FOR A CURE

Five Voices. One Night. One Important Cause.

A Special Charity Concert in Aid of Cancer Research UK

Sunday 24th January 2027
Hanham Community Centre

Local care home singer and entertainer Josh Morton is bringing together five talented vocalists for a fantastic evening of live music, raising funds for Cancer Research UK.

Josh, who regularly performs in local care homes, has organised Voices for a Cure after seeing family members and close friends face the challenges of cancer.

Joining Josh on stage will be Frankie Johns, Lucciano from Britain's Got Talent, Marisa, an X Factor finalist from 2008, and Lucy Danielle.

Josh says: "With people close to me currently battling cancer, this cause means so much. I can't take away what they're going through, but I can use my love of music to help make a difference."

The evening promises wonderful live entertainment, bringing the local community together to support a cause that touches so many lives.

Tickets: £10

Book online: **www.ticketsource.com/morton-music**

Unable to attend? You can still support the cause by donating through Josh's Cancer Research UK fundraising page:

https://fundraiser.cancerresearchuk.org/page/joshs-giving page-234583529

Come along, enjoy a fantastic evening of music and help make a difference!

Voices for a Cure – Bringing people together through music in aid of Cancer Research UK.



DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS PREVIEW

THE WILDERNESS YET + HEARTWOOD CHORUS

FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER 2026

DOWNEND Folk & Roots join in the festivities on Friday 18 December with their now traditional Christmas concert; an event which has become a highlight in the diaries of local music-lovers and is certain to sell out well in advance.

The Wilderness Yet return to South Gloucestershire to headline the show.

This trio combines the acclaimed talents of folksinger Rosie Hodgson, traditional fiddler Rowan Piggott, and guitarist-flautist Philippe Barnes.

With a voice that brings "a ruby-richness to lyrics new and old" (Folk Radio UK), it's no surprise that Rosie has been a finalist for the BBC Young Folk Award. After a successful EP and the eponymous album from Crossharbour, she recorded her debut album Rise Aurora to critical acclaim, producing what fRoots called "audible magic". Rosie's own songs are heavily influenced by the English tradition and her love of literature and the environment.

Rowan featured heavily on Rise Aurora, himself a fine singer with a "deep understanding and feel for tradition" (FolkWords) and he is known for his fiddle- playing with Georgia Lewis and The Songhive Project, which he founded to raise awareness of the plight of the bees. The winner of the 'Future of Young Folk Award' at Bromyard Folk Festival, he recently featured on the cover of The Living Tradition after releasing his solo album Mountscribe.

Philippe is well-known on the folk scene as a virtuosic flautist, but is an equally magnificent guitarist! Since completing an MA in Irish Music Performance at University of Limerick, Philippe has toured with the David Munnelly Band, All Jigged Out, Dizraeli and the Small Gods and Crossharbour (alongside Rosie!). As a session musician he appears regularly on film/tv soundtracks and has recently recorded an EP with pianist Tom Phelan.

As is now traditional, the evening will begin with a set from HEARTWOOD CHORUS, a Bristol-based folk choir who sing original arrangements of songs whose



murky origins stretch back centuries and centuries, songs our grannies taught us and future classics from the thriving contemporary folk scene.

Tickets for the concert, which takes place at Christ Church Downend on Friday 18 December 2026, are available online via downendfolkandroots.com or from Downend Cards and Gifts (cash only). They are priced at £15 each in advance or £17 on the door. Doors open at 7.00pm and the music starts at around 7.45pm.

There will be a bar, stocking cider, soft drinks, wine, hot drinks, real ale from Bristol's Hop Union Brewery and, for this month only, mulled wine. Audience members 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, as well as a prize draw, which helps to fund the support artists for each concert.

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

DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS REVIEW

ARREN + RHONA MACFARLANE

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER 2026

TOM Hodgkinson, in his brilliant magazine/manifesto/guide to life The Idler, describes being an Idler as "not a lazy or passive person, but a visionary, a free spirit who rejects modern hustle culture, a conscious time-controller". This sounds like a great thing to be and, if this is so, then Bristol's mini-folk-supergroup Tarren are glorious Idlers.

Alex Garden, Sid Goldsmith and Danny Pedler make music that is so timeless that it hangs, suspended, above us; it flits and drifts, darting into corners, filling spaces, it reaches out and stills the hands of a clock.

In fact, their last album was called Outside Time, and its title track tumbles like rain. There is a wildness as Garden's fiddle and Goldsmith's cittern run around, catching raindrops and Pedlar's accordion thrums behind them. The three of them grinning as this beautiful music, rooted in the English folk tradition, just engulfs this place.

Much of their first set is taken from their first two albums; the mix of glorious instrumentals and thoughtful, conscious songs warm every heart. A rare sighting of Hot Wax, from their debut Revel, is most welcome, fiddle and cittern peeking at each other as the accordion sneaks in the background. Dan-y-bont points to new ways, it is liquid, fluid, Goldsmith's concertina giving it direction.

Goldsmith describes Wanting for Nothing as "cute and smug" but it's still a fantastic song of contentment and found family. Garden's fiddle hovers, bee-like, right in the middle of it all, it is light and shines like gold. Sunk has a fuzzy pop edge that builds beautifully as all three instruments converge, it then expands into a pastoral lushness in its final acapella moments, a calm green space.

Neither Maid Nor Man still feels like a supremely important song. A celebration of gender non-conformity in folk song, formed through finding rare verses in different places that hint at acceptance. In Tarren's free-spirited, visionary world this is as necessary as life itself.

The second set is packed with new things, just as vital, from a forthcoming album.

Royate Hill, named after the nature reserve in Easton, sees Garden's fiddle dipping and soaring. There is something magical about the tone that they get from their instrument, it is incredibly soft and light, like the last rays of a summer day. Granite



Spiral celebrates circular forms, Pedlar's accordion pulsing away while the cittern indulges in all sorts of pagan naughtiness.

If there is one song that sums up the Tarren approach to Idleness, however, it is their version of Cyril Tawney's On a Monday Morning. The plucked cittern and fiddle-glide bring a languid sleepiness to this heartfelt plea to beat back normal life. It's so lovely. Goldsmith sings as though the modern world is a baffling nonsense, then Pedlar breaks through with a wonderfully poetic internal monologue. His words glittering though little specks of dust. Modern life, and all of its silliness, melt away at Tarren's hands.

Before all of this time-stopping magic, Scottish singer-songwriter Rhona Macfarlane does a mighty fine job of shutting out the real world too. Her short set is gorgeous.

Sitting somewhere between The Beautiful South's Briana Corrigan and Fairground Attraction's Eddi Reader, Macfarlane's voice is a dusty-edged Caledonian wonder. Resolutely indie-folk in nature but simply brilliant, her songs are fully formed, wholly realised. Going It Alone comes complete with audience-sing-along bits, Let the River Flow is piano-delicate and lovely while Closing the Window is a proper, grown-up pop song.

On this mid-October evening, you half expected to step back out into twilight rather than the dark of night, such was the time-warping effect of both Macfarlane and Tarren. Timeless music for all those that want to reject the corporate nasties.

Words: Gavin McNamara
Photo: Chris Dobson

Last Post for war veteran Harry, 101

A MOVING final farewell for one of the region's last surviving Second World War veterans heard tributes to an example of the "true Commando Spirit", and loving family man.

Around 100 people attended the funeral of Harry Francis, who died at his Soundwell home in September, aged 101.

Harry's relatives were joined at Westerleigh Crematorium in late October by members of the Royal Marines Association and Royal British Legion, who formed an honour guard of standard bearers, along with other veterans, serving Armed Forces personnel and civic leaders at the service.

Harry's coffin was draped in the flags of the Special Boat Service and Royal Marines as it was carried into the Waterside Chapel.

His medals, a wreath in the shape of his nickname, H, and a bottle of Lamb's Navy Rum – in keeping with a Royal Marines tradition – were placed on the coffin during the service.

Rev Beverley Charles, who led the service, read tributes to both the wartime commando who took part in daring raids behind enemy lines and the much-loved family man.

Harry volunteered for the Royal Navy in 1942, aged 16, before transferring to the Royal Marines in 1943 and becoming one of the first members of the elite SBS, fighting in Sicily, mainland Italy, the Middle East, Yugoslavia and Burma.

His missions included sabotaging a ferry and blowing up a railway line in Italy, putting an airfield used by Germany's feared Stuka dive-bombers in the Mediterranean out of action, and the reconnaissance mission in Burma that almost claimed his life, when he was stabbed during a Japanese ambush.



Veterans formed an honour guard at the funeral of Harry Francis



Harry Francis on his 100th birthday



A Royal Marines bugler sounded the Last Post

Paul Jobling, of the Royal Marines Association, said: "The action Harry was involved in at such a young age is incredible for us to imagine today.

"He was a man of immense determination and had great courage to face the challenges of fighting an enemy, often in close quarters. Always cheerful even in adversity, Harry displayed all the qualities of the true Commando Spirit."

Harry had nine children, seven step-children and many more grandchildren and great-grandchildrens.

A poem from his daughter Jacky was followed by tributes from step-daughters Teresa and Angela.

Teresa described Harry as "an honourable man with a kind and loving heart," and said she had been privileged to know "the man behind that cheeky smile".

Step-daughter Angela recounted how Harry had agreed to walk her up the aisle at her wedding but had been so determined not to make her late that they arrived at the church ten minutes early, while half of the bridal party was still in a nearby pub.

She said: "Your life's mission is complete, and the love, kindness and strength you gave to all of us will live on forever in the family you helped shape."

A favourite song of Harry and his wife Gwen, Yours by Vera Lynn, was played as a photographic tribute was shown.

A Royal Marines bugler played the Last Post before a silence was held, followed by the traditional Kohima Epitaph committal.

Remembrance services: Pages 32-33

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For more information or to book your event please contact
Tel: 0371 942 9014 | Email: meetingsandevents@lghhm.com

Spare a thought for our shop workers



AT this time of year we spend a lot more time than usual shopping, and it's a challenging time for our retail workers.

Those challenges sometimes include violence, threats and abuse. To highlight this, union USDAW has organised a 'Freedom From Fear' campaign to raise awareness.

Retail workers provide an essential service to our communities, and nobody should have to face abuse, intimidation or violence simply for doing their job.

I was glad to join USDAW representatives and workers at Sainsbury's in Emersons Green to hear about their experiences and discuss how we can continue to support safer workplaces.

I've long supported national action including removing the lower shoplifting threshold, which essentially wrote off theft, and to introduce a specific offence of assaulting a retail worker.

I'm proud to have voted for both of these changes in Parliament, which will soon come into force backing retail workers across our community, and our country.

In Parliament, I also spoke on behalf of staff at Poundland in Emersons Green, facing unfair job uncertainty due to poor owner behaviour and greed.

I was glad to visit them, too, to share my support, and I know we're all in their corner locally.

Poundland is a profitable company, a local employer and helps keep things affordable for many local families, particularly ahead of Christmas.

Poundland's owners, seeking to cash in at the expense of good local jobs, must be held to account. They need to step up and take bids to save the company seriously.

It was great to have Mangotsfield School students in Parliament, and to meet residents campaigning for improved animal welfare, which I fully support.

Having championed our local pubs in Parliament, I was glad to visit Bailey's Court Inn, Beaufort Arms, The White Lion and Willy Wicket to present them with their own copy of Hansard, the official parliamentary record with their name mentioned, as this will live on for generations.

As our government works up the specifics of the social media ban for under-16s, in Parliament I've called for support for young people to build safe social media usage skills and confidence ahead of turning 16, avoiding a cliff edge overnight.

It was an honour to attend poignant Remembrance services in Bradley Stoke, Downend, Patchway, and MOD Abbey Wood. Thank you to all who helped organise these events, and the fantastic volunteers supporting the Poppy Appeal.

Having pushed for more infrastructure as our community grows, I'm very pleased that our new Bristol Brabazon train station has opened - it's right that this is happening ahead of the arena and more housing being complete.

In November I held my regular advice surgery in Filton and knocked on doors in Stoke Gifford and Bradley Stoke to hear local priorities.

My small team and I worked on 604, new cases providing support.

I held my 'Coffee with Claire' event in Bradley Stoke, on access to local dental services. While some improvements have been seen, including through the government's 19,000 more urgent dental appointments in our NHS area, there's more to do. I will keep pushing on this for us, locally and nationally.

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





Communities remember together

PEOPLE who gave their lives in conflict were remembered in services and tributes across the Downend area.

Crowds gathered on Staple Hill High Street and Broad Street on Remembrance Sunday in November to watch veterans, uniformed organisations and civic leaders parade to an open air service around the war memorial in Page Park.

The event was organised by the Staple Hill & District branch of the Royal British Legion with Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council, the Salvation Army and other groups.

In the afternoon the focus was on Mangotsfield's war memorial at Alec Large Park, for a service organised by Mangotsfield Residents Association, St James church and the RBL.

RBL branch chair Ian Campbell said: "Remembrance Sunday in Staple Hill and Mangotsfield was a reminder of how much these services still mean to our community.

"Seeing the streets lined in Staple Hill, and the large crowd gathering together in Mangotsfield, was truly humbling.

"For some of us, these services are the one time in the year we get to see each other. We pick up conversations exactly where we left them twelve months before, as if no time had passed at all.

"Remembrance is about honouring those who served and those who never came home, but it is also about the bonds it builds between the people who gather to remember.

"My thanks go to everyone who took part, to the volunteers and partners who made both services possible, and to every resident who came out to pay their respects."

MRA chair and community pastor Clive Heath, who led the Mangotsfield service with Rev James Cannan, also held a service at the Red Lion in Mangotsfield for those unable to attend an outdoor event.

He said: "It was great to see so many younger people with us and another great attendance.

"Thanks to all who joined us and to those who helped to bring it together again this year."

Services and ceremonies were held in churches, schools and at other memorials across the area, both on Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day, three days later.

At Christ Church in Downend, a ceremony was held to lay crosses at the church's war graves.

Organised by 91-year-old Royal Navy veteran Norman Low, who has led the ceremony every year since 1957, it was attended by Filton and Bradley Stoke MP Claire Hazelgrove.

Vicar Rev Paul Peterson read the names of every serviceman buried in the churchyard as the crosses were laid.

A poppy cascade, with more than 1,500 handmade poppies made by local volunteers, decorated the pulpit.

In Downend's high street a topper to remember the fallen was created by knit and crochet group Downend Yarn Busters with Downend Men in Sheds.

The topper, mounted on the post box outside the former post office in Downend Road, was raising money for the Veterans Association. Donations can be made at *www.theveteransassociation.org*.



The oldest veteran on parade at Staple Hill was joined by one of the youngest children on the march to lay wreaths at the war memorial in Page Park
Picture: Herbie Hocking



Cubs and scouts march to Page Park



A standard bearer from the Army Cadets leads veterans in the parade on Broad Street, Staple Hill



Downend Yarn Busters worked with Downend Men in Sheds to produce a Remembrance-themed topper for the high street. Suzzie Belcher, Ann Wilde, Caroline Smith, Tina Jefferies and John Newport of Men in Sheds are pictured with the topper



Hundreds of poppies were knitted by members of the community to produce this Remembrance display for the pulpit at Christ Church Downend.



Brownies lay a wreath at Mangotsfield's war memorial



Army Cadets



Beavers line up for the Remembrance service at Mangotsfield

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The great scone debate



Scones at the open evening

DOWNEND School invited visitors to its recent sixth form open evening to take part in a great debate about scones.

The subject wasn't 'jam first or cream first' but how to pronounce the word - should it rhyme with cone, or gone?

A-level English language tutors encouraged people to vote to produce a decisive verdict and laid on supplies of freshly-prepared scones for them to eat while considering their answer.

Before casting their votes, they were given an introduction to the A-level English language course, which explores everything from language change and regional dialects to language acquisition, identity and culture.

Head of sixth-form Alex Garner said: "Friends debated. Parents attempted to persuade their children. Children attempted to persuade their parents.

"Some voters even changed their minds after sampling the evidence.

"Democracy, at its finest, was unfolding before our eyes.

"We encourage healthy debate. However, next year we'll be avoiding scones altogether!"

At the end of the evening, votes were counted and 72% of people voted in favour of pronouncing 'scone' like 'cone'.

Hospital tower needs repairs

SCAFFOLDING will be put up around the landmark clock tower at Cossham Hospital so experts can assess the extent of the "urgent repair works" it needs.

Bristol City Council has granted listed building consent for Bristol NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the 119-year-old hospital on Lodge Hill, to erect scaffolding so a survey can be carried out to plan essential repairs to the columns supporting the cupola - the small lead roof on top of the clock tower's dome.

A drone survey was carried out last year after a defect was spotted in a column supporting the cupola.

A report by Ferguson Mann architects said: "The survey identified two columns with signs of deterioration, including substantial loss of a section in one of them. The extent of the deterioration requires closer inspection through temporary access and selective opening-up works to enable the structural engineer to assess the condition of the concealed structure and determine the scope of any necessary repair works to the columns."

The hospital, which opened in 1907 funded by money from the estate of mine owner Handel Cossham, is visible for miles around as its location is believed to be the highest point of urban Bristol, at 112m above sea level. The architects say the cupola is the only surviving one of six that originally stood on top of the hospital - the other five, on corner turrets and in the centre of the roof, have all since been lost.

They said: "Positioned at the junction of the building's two principal wings, the tower acts as a focal point within the composition and is characteristic of the building's Queen Anne style with Edwardian Baroque influences. The clock tower has high significance, with little noticeable changes from its original form. The importance of maintaining its condition is vital, especially taking into consideration the loss of the five cupolas evident in the historic photographs of the opening of the hospital."



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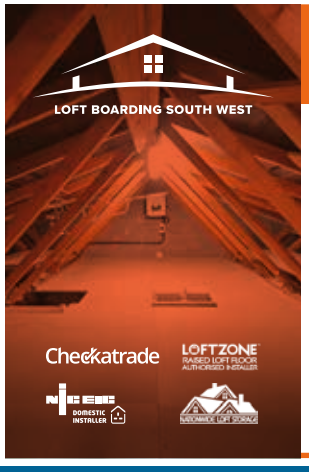

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Busy bees leave a surprise

I MUST tell you about a strange thing that has happened in our bee garden at Downend School.

As you may remember, we have a fixed bee hive, which our beekeeper Matt has installed.

I believe that Matt has been sorting out the honey that the bees have made this summer. However, we also have a bird roosting box in the garden, which is high up in a tree.

Unfortunately we have never had birds coming in for shelter but instead we have had hundreds of honey bees flying in and out all day long.

We have now realised that they have been very busy bees, making honeycombs inside.

There are eight separate combs (if that is what they are called), all with honey on them.

We are now going to have to consult Matt as to what to do with them. That is the wonderful power of nature – never knowing what it is going to do.

Our winter panolas are continuing to do well and weather the storm, but unfortunately the chickweed seems to be doing well, too!

Dave has been trying to get rid of it in our garden but it seems to be a constant problem. Apparently, as we found out this week, we are not supposed to put it into the compost heap, so that has abruptly stopped.

It also says to leave it in the sunshine to wither but that could be difficult when it rains so much! Anyway, we will keep battling.

The weather also did for our open day in November, which had to be cancelled at short notice - we will try again.

The summer flowers have been ordered, and this year we are going to try out some beautiful petunia surfinia in a deep purple colour.



The honeycombs discovered in a bird box

Sounds very good to me, so let's hope they live up to expectations.

In our larger beds and planters, we are going with an orange pelargonium and a deep blue calibrachoa. If calibrachoa are new to you, they look like a small surfinia petunia and are also known as million bells or trailing petunias.

These have a double flower, so we are hoping they will look very striking.

Finally, we have been finishing off our Christmas items which will soon be on sale to raise funds for next year's flowers.

See our Facebook page, Downend & Bromley Heath In Bloom Group, for more details.

Jackie Baker

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Seasonal sparkle

THERE'S plenty of seasonal sparkle coming to Staple Hill Community Hub this December, and everyone in the community is welcome to join in.

On December 14, our popular lunch club will be serving a full Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, followed by pudding. It costs just £8, and you'll be eating in the friendly, welcoming atmosphere the club is known for.

It's a lovely chance to catch up with friends and neighbours over a proper festive meal.



Father Christmas has promised to drop in at the Hub's party

Our free children's Christmas party is always a highlight for local families, and it is open to children from Staple Hill, Mangotsfield and the surrounding areas.

This year, much-loved entertainer Johnny G will be getting everyone laughing and dancing, and Father Christmas has promised to drop in too.

Places are limited and given on a first come, first served basis, so don't leave it too late to reserve yours.

We know Christmas can be a difficult time of year, especially for families on a tight budget and people spending the season on their own. That's why we're putting together hampers full of festive treats, including Christmas pudding, cake, mince pies and chocolates.

If you could use a hamper, or you know someone who would appreciate one, please get in touch. To reserve a place at the Christmas dinner or the children's party, or to find out more, call Staple Hill Community Hub on 01454 868374 or email hello@staplehillcommunityhub.org.uk.

Katie Cooper

Tips for the coming season

HAVE a great festive time and:

1. Time clock those lights when out, so it looks like you're in
2. Don't let your cardboard recycling give away what might be of interest to a thief - fold it inside out to hide logos away.
3. Keep present displays away from easy sight of the window
4. Don't leave anything in your vehicles, even for short periods, let alone overnight.

Bromley Heath Neighbourhood Watch will 'sleep' for the next year after a motion to do so was reluctantly approved at our annual meeting in October.

Four people were present – two committee members and two residents; there were nine apologies.

The group will exist for a further year only, producing four newsletters for online and email distribution, but no meetings or other business will take place. Our web hosting fee will not to be paid so the website, which is hopelessly out of date, will be taken down.

If a volunteer, or volunteers, don't come forward to take the group on in the next year, the treasurer is authorised to close the bank account and transfer any remaining funds to the national Neighbourhood Watch. The former chair will notify all other relevant parties that BHNW has closed.

If you want to remedy this, get in touch on 0117 956 3325 or email *contactus@bhnw.org.uk*.

We're happy to support anyone that steps forward.

We're also looking for volunteers to log our lamppost signs, sort committee, annual meeting and treasurers' reports into a complete electronic record. This is suitable for anyone looking for a short term, community service projects to count towards Duke of Edinburgh Award and a project for a uniformed organisation.

We're also still awaiting a reply from the Metro Mayor for our request for marked bays for electric bikes and scooters in the hire scheme.

Bill Crocker

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■ One tree - nothing else by Jeff Mckinstry



■ Seating - by Ed Shorney

Minimalism - easier said than done?

MINIMALISM was the subject of a recent print competition at our club.

Defined as a style based on simplicity, clean composition and few elements, it poses an interesting challenge - namely, less is more, the use of empty space.

Easier said than done.

One aspect that does help in this type of competition is that there is no set subject to search for: the empty space is as much part of the image.

Those judged the top three in the competition are shown here.

'Flower Arrangement' came top. It is an elegantly simple triptych, with only a separate part of three different blooms making up the picture.

The careful placement of each makes it work as a whole. Each element is set within its own frame, the viewer's eye led along the diagonal.

'One Tree – nothing else' came next. A tree with no leaves reveals its intricate shape, and the minimal treatment suits it well, as there are no distractions.

With mist rising from the ground, the branches of the tree become more clearly defined at the top. The faint, vague shapes around the tree somehow emphasise the emptiness without affecting the subject.

'Seating' came third. This was an unusual image in the competition in that among all entries, it probably was the easiest to produce. It was a snap taken on a mobile phone while leaving an event.

Someone with an eye for artistry had placed the chairs along the wall. Simple luck. Quite



■ Flower Arrangement by Adam Wakefield

appropriate really: minimal effort for a minimal competition!

However you enjoy your photography, there is a place for you at Lincombe Barn Camera Club. We're a friendly group who get together every other Tuesday from September to June. What we have in common is an interest in photography as a means of creative expression.

We host regular competitions, practical evenings, and guest speakers. Joining our club is a great way to present your work to others and develop and broaden skills, and we are able to have members prints on display. Your first visit is free.

Lincombe Barn is conveniently located on Overndale Road, with plenty of parking on-site.

More details are on our website at *www.lincombebarncameraclub.co.uk,* or you can contact us at *lincombe.barn@gmail.com.*

Ed Shorney

Biscuits, drinks and a thirst for knowledge

BRISTOL u3a is a club for people with time on their hands.

Having no staff, the club is populated by people with a passion for enjoying life.

Typically retired or semi-retired, we come together in shared-interest groups.

But did you know that in addition to those groups, there's a free monthly speaker meeting at The Foundation, Triodos Bank, in the centre of Bristol?

The venue is close to Bristol Cathedral and the council offices, so it's easy to get there by bus.

Non-members are welcome to attend, and this month's event is at 10am on December 15.

Entitled 'Yule not believe this', this entertaining talk will look at music in the festive period, where the sacred and profane meet down a dark alley.

What's a Wassail? What's the connection between a dead cow and Bethlehem? Is 'The First Nowell' really what it seems? And did you know that Bristol lays claim to perhaps the most popular Christmas music ever written?

Hot drinks and biscuits are available to attendees, so why not pop along?

January's meeting at the same venue is also scheduled at 10am, on the 15th.

The topic is 'Thunderbirds: A Very 60s Future'.

Jacob Hulland will talk about Gerry Anderson's classic TV show, seen in a new light.

Did Thunderbirds predict the future correctly? It was set in 2065 - what has it got wrong and what is not so different from our own future?

Joining Bristol u3a costs £20, but discounts are available. With that, we're able to pay for venues centrally, so you won't have to contribute towards hire costs when attending interest group meetings.

And because everything is by members, for members, there are no charges for teachers or leaders. A year's membership is the perfect gift for anyone who has a bit of spare time.

Providing access to over 200 interest groups across Bristol, around 35 locally and lots of social activities, there's bound to be something you'd like, and it's a great way to meet new friends.

For more details email *learnlaughlive@bristolu3a.org.uk.*

Lindsay Gough

Friends of Lincombe Barn Park & Woods



The walkway bridge before the work was carried out

THERE is something wonderfully uplifting about seeing people come together to care for the places we all love.

All our volunteers continue to show just how much can be achieved through a little teamwork, enthusiasm and community spirit!

One recent success has been the restoration of a bridge on the Jubilee Walkway, alongside the River Frome.

Over time, the bridge had deteriorated and was in desperate need of attention.

Some of our wonderful Friends volunteers stepped in to help by carrying materials to the site, making it possible for the council's hard-working team to carry out the rebuilding work.

It was a lovely example of partnership and people pulling together to keep this beautiful woodland permissive pathway as safe and accessible as possible.

We also enjoyed a fantastic Big Autumn Clean: more than 40 volunteers turned out to lend a hand.

We couldn't have asked for better weather, and there was a wonderful atmosphere throughout the morning.

Everyone worked incredibly hard, collecting bags of litter, tackling brambles around our young saplings and generally giving the park and pathways some much needed autumn care and attention.

But it wasn't all hard work! One of the best parts of our Big Autumn Clean is the opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new faces, chatting over homemade cakes and hot drinks.

It's these moments of friendship and shared purpose that make being part of the Friends group so special.



The repaired bridge

Our next Community Sunday is on December 6 from 10-11am.

Everyone is very welcome, whether you're a regular volunteer or joining us for the first time. We'll be litter picking and carrying out some gentle woodland management.

No special skills required. Just bring yourself and a little enthusiasm!

We're also keen to encourage more people to discover the amazing birdlife in our local woods. If you'd like to get involved in our conservation efforts, why not join us in using our eBird checklist? It's easy, enjoyable and a wonderful way to learn more about the birds sharing our green spaces. You can find it via our Facebook page.

Whether you're passionate about wildlife, enjoy a bit of fresh air and exercise, or simply fancy meeting some friendly local people, we'd love to see you.

For all the latest information, event details and updates, please visit our website at *www.lincombebarnparkwoods.co.uk* or Facebook page.

Diane Paddon

Friends of Page Park



The Page Park Friends London Marathon team

THE Friends of Page Park have a team of three runners taking part in next year's London Marathon.

Among those taking part is Page Park junior parkrun volunteer Tracy Thompson, who is taking on her first ever marathon to raise money for the Friends' park improvement projects.

Tracy said: "Page Park is our go to place for the family at other times too, as it's the kids favourite place to go on their bikes and for playing afterwards.

"Having never run a marathon before it is something I am apprehensive about, but it gives me the goal to push my running and I know it's something my friends wouldn't expect me to take on!"

Tracy's sponsorship page can be found online at *tinyurl.com/jjmjaaa8*.

The Friends' other fundraisers are a local couple who are also taking on their first ever marathon, and have a joint fundraising page at *tinyurl.com/msun6n84*.

Award for garden

THE volunteers who keep Page Park's sensory garden looking good have received a top award in this year's South West In Bloom competition.

The garden was awarded an 'outstanding' award by the Royal Horticultural Society in this year's contest, with judges describing it as a "beautifully maintained and welcoming space".

They praised the community participation in the garden, from fundraising plant sales to yoga sessions that attract up to 200 participants in the summer.

They said: "Friends of Page Park have created far more than an attractive garden. This is a well-supported, inclusive community space, where horticulture provides the backdrop for volunteering, recreation and social interaction."

Survey time

EVERYONE who uses Page Park is being encouraged to fill in an online survey with their views by December 31.

The survey is submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund to show how the money it awarded to the park is benefiting the community.

It can be found at *online1.snapsurveys.com/p7m7fw*.

Friends of King George V Playing Fields

I AM very pleased to announce that the Friends group have been successful in securing a grant from South Gloucestershire Council to start a Welcome Space.

It will start on Wednesday December 2, from noon to 2.30pm, and will run weekly every Wednesday from the Pavilion in King George V Playing Fields for six months.

All are welcome to this free event, where we will have a varied programme of activities and guest speakers, as well as a chance to get to know new people in a relaxed atmosphere.

For more details please email Kgvdownend@gmail.com.

We look forward to welcoming you.

After two successful Halloween craft days held in the pavilion over half-term, the Friends group will be again working in partnership with the parish council to host a free Christmas Craft event.

It will be a drop in for children with parents or carers, taking place at the pavilion on Monday December 21, from 9.30am-2pm.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Bridget Suitters

NEWS: CONTACT US AT: NEWS@DOWNENDVOICE.CO.UK

South Gloucestershire Council

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR RECYCLING AND WASTE SERVICES

Your collection days will change over the festive period.

My collection day should be...	It will take place on...
Fri 25 December	Mon 28 December
Mon 28 December	Tue 29 December
Tue 29 December	Wed 30 December
Wed 30 December	Thu 31 December
Thu 31 December	Sat 2 January 2027
Fri 1 January 2027	Mon 4 January
Mon 4 January	Tue 5 January
Tue 5 January	Wed 6 January
Wed 6 January	Thu 7 January
Thu 7 January	Fri 8 January
Fri 8 January	Sat 9 January

Collections return to normal from Mon 11 January.

Seating by Ed Shorney

Our Sort It recycling centres are closed on **Christmas Day**, **Boxing Day** and **New Year's Day**.

RECYCLING TIPS

Most extra waste over the festive period is recyclable.

In the run up to Christmas:

- Recycle as much unwanted packaging as you can.
- Keep paper bags from online deliveries to collect used wrapping paper.
- Label your recycling boxes so guests know how to recycle in your home.
- Order any recycling boxes or bags you need for free on the council website.

For your Christmas collections:

- Sort your recycling correctly to make it quicker for crews to collect.
- Flatten cardboard and cut up large boxes so they fit in our recycling vehicles.
- Empty bottles and cans so liquid does not spill on crews.
- Squash plastic bottles and cans to save space.
- Cards and wrapping paper without glitter, foil or decorations can be recycled.

We may use different vehicles to speed up recycling collections. This recycling will be sorted and processed as usual.

Download the South Gloucestershire Council app to check collection days, set reminders and find out what goes where: **southglos.gov.uk/app**

South Glos

Remembering a soldier of the International Brigades

RECENTLY I was in London, marching through the streets to remember the day, exactly 90 years earlier, when thousands said "they shall not pass" to Oswald Moseley's blackshirts.

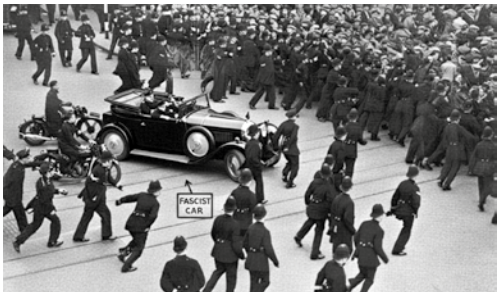
To be precise, they said "No Pasaran", the Spanish Republican cry associated with the battle against fascism.

Among those hearing the words for the first time, at what became known as the Battle of Cable Street, was a man who now lies in a grave at a small church in Portbury, near Bristol.

Up to 350,000 people turned out to stop Moseley's British Union of Fascists marching through the heart of the East End's working class Jewish community, and fought with the 7,000 police ordered to escort the blackshirts.

One of them was Johnny Longstaff.

In 1934, aged just 15, Johnny joined a hunger march from Stockton on Tees in the North East to London, organised to highlight the plight of unemployed workers like him.



The Battle of Cable Street, 1936

In London Johnny learnt about the rise of fascism first-hand, meeting Jewish refugees from Germany.

The experience of fighting to stop Britain's home-grown Nazis at Cable Street in October 1936 radicalised Johnny.

He signed up to fight in Spain, where a military coup, backed by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, led to civil war. Volunteers from across the world risked all to fight for democracy in the International Brigades.

After many battles, Johnny's story in Spain ended defending Hill 666 near Gandesa, Catalonia. Under heavy artillery bombardment, he was severely wounded and temporarily blinded.

Soon after returning to the UK, Johnny volunteered to fight fascism again in the Second World War.

Initially rejected because he had fought in Spain, he was eventually recruited and fought again, this time in North Africa and Italy, including the key battles of El Alamein and Monte Cassino. He was promoted to sergeant and decorated for bravery.

I came across Johnny's story during an event at Bristol Beacon about the International Brigades, where I was introduced to his son Duncan, who lives locally.

Duncan told me the extraordinary story of his father's heroism, which he had originally recorded for the Imperial War Museum.

He gave his father's testimony to The Young'uns, a folk group I've hosted at a workshop for Downend School students. They've also played at Downend Folk & Roots.

The Young'uns produced a critically acclaimed musical and stage performance on Johnny's life, performed in a church off Cable Street the eve of the 90th anniversary of the 'battle'.

Johnny moved to the West Country with his wife when Duncan took up his care. He died here in 2000, which is why St Mary's churchyard includes a grave emblazoned with the credentials of a soldier of the International Brigades, who risked all for his principles and joined so many important battles against tyranny and human misery.

To find out more, visit *theyounguns.co.uk/johnnylongstaff.*

Nick Smith

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BROMLEY HEATH WI

WE have been enjoying trips organised by our events coordinator Julie throughout the year.

In November we attended a beautiful candlelight concert in Bristol Cathedral by a string quartet playing Ed Sheran and Coldplay music, and a group attended the theatre to see Back to the Future at Bristol Hippodrome.

We have a planned trip to Avery's to do Christmas wine sampling,

Sadly, November's meeting had to be cancelled as those planning the night were taken ill.

BHWI have a strong subgroup community and these include lunch and supper clubs, Glug and a craft club, Sunday lunch meetups and visits.

We are also currently updating our archiving book of the past BHWI years since its conception, so please feel free to contribute any memorabilia you may have tucked away.

In December we look forward to line dancing and our festive party to celebrate Christmas.

If you would like to join our lively group of WI members, please email *bromleyheathwi@gmail.com* to enquire about a taster visit.

We meet every second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm, in Bromley Heath Junior School hall. **Jane Hickey**

DOWNEND WI

WE recently held our AGM, where members elected the president and committee.

Afterwards, we enjoyed a fun quiz organised by two of last year's winners.

With drinks and nibbles on offer, it was a relaxed and enjoyable evening for everyone.

Downend WI is now getting into the festive spirit, creating beautiful Christmas table decorations at our November meeting under the guidance of talented florist Jodie Hall. To add to the festive atmosphere, we'll be wearing our Christmas jumpers, enjoying mince pies and sharing a seasonal drink.

As Downend WI does not meet in December, our next gathering will be on January 26, when Rob Jones will share stories from his adventures in India.

Our February meeting will have a talk from Jenny Hollis, from the Stroke Centre Bristol, and in March we will be joined by three famous authors!

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 welcome for a small charge of £3, which includes refreshments.

We look forward to welcoming you!

As a member, you're free to take part in as much or as little as you like. Our programme is wonderfully varied, with something for everyone — and it's a great way to meet new people and try new experiences.

To find out more about joining us, please get in touch at *downendwi@yahoo.co.uk*.

Linda Russ
President

FRENCHAY WI

OUR annual meeting in November was very well attended.

We re-elected Marian as our president and the existing committee agreed to stand for another year.

As usual, the marvellous Country Markets brought along lots of goodies for us to purchase.

We are having an American supper and a bit of entertainment at our December meeting. It's a week earlier than normal, on December 14. Hope to see you there.

We have lots of interesting speakers and events lined up in 2027, 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 or would like more information, please email *FrenchayWI@gmail.com*

Wishing all our members, old and new, a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. **Linda O'Carroll**

STAPLE HILL WI

IT'S hard to believe that Christmas is almost here again, although most of the shops have been hinting at it for several months.

It has been a very busy year for our WI, with lots of interesting and informative speakers.

We celebrated our 30th anniversary with a cream tea and a boat trip around the harbourside.

We have of late welcomed some new members to our friendly group and in November we made Christmas wreaths, which was great fun, and were able to take home our efforts, providing a reminder of a good evening.

Our December meeting will be a Christmas party with an American supper and possibly a few games.

We have been holding regular coffee mornings at Wetherspoons and a monthly walk. This time we walked along the Bristol & Bath Railway Path from Staple Hill, finishing with lunch at the Horseshoe pub.

A small group also met for Sunday lunch. Another group will be attending the pantomime at the Bristol Hippodrome.

All our members are welcome to dip in and out of the events on offer.

Our regular monthly meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month, starting at 7.30pm, in Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, Downend.

If you are interested in joining our WI please come along or visit our website, *staplehillwi.weebly.com*. **Linda Stephens**

RODWAY RUBIES WI

OUR November speaker, Jane Swayne, told members the story of her work in Kosovo, where she founded a summer school for special needs children when the war there ended.

After a decade, funding for her project was cut, and a chance glimpse of an advert for a chocolate-making course started another career as a chocolatier.

The products she brought with her had quite different flavours, were delicious and much appreciated!

This year we are taking part in the St James Church Christmas tree event and are going to decorate our tree with items made by our crafters.

Our December meeting is our Xmas party, with a buffet and musical entertainment provided by a lady vocalist, Shannon, to get everyone in the festive spirit.

We are holding a wreath and flower decorations making morning at Mangotsfield URC on December 12 for a group of our members.

We would like to wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Xmas.

Looking forward to January and the New Year, besides our late 'Xmas' lunch at Saltford Golf Club we will be holding our annual quiz at the end of the month in aid of our charity for the year, BUST. We are looking to have ten teams, each of six friends and family, to pit their wits and have some fun, too.

This will be at St James Church Hall in Richmond Road, where we hold our usual meetings on the third Monday of the month.

Our January speaker is Jo Richardson, who will be talking about life on board the International Space Station. February brings a talk on medical detection dogs and in March we will be learning all about orchids.

Jane Eldon

MANGOTSFIELD DOLLY MIXTURES

FOR our November meeting a member who is a florist demonstrated making a Christmas log table decoration from silk flowers.

She brought along logs for each person and a bag of decorations. Then we all made our own, based on what we had been shown, and were invited to be creative.

As we are on the run-up to Christmas we had some lovely hot mulled wine, made by ourselves, plus mince pies.

Dress code was Christmas jumpers, and everybody searched the wardrobe and came up with a Christmassy top.

We are now looking forward to our special pub lunch at the Lamb. The dress code for this will be looking festive, with sparkly brooches, earrings and necklaces.

On November 28 we'll be supporting St James' Christmas Fair, providing tea and coffee, and looking forward to meeting everybody.

On December 8 we will be setting up our Christmas tree for St James' Church Treefest, which will be open from the 9th to the 13th.

Then on the 14th, for an evening event, we are having our three-course festive meal, with entertainment by Frankie Johns.

All of us at Mangotsfield Dolly Mixtures wish Downend Voice readers a magical Christmas.

Carol Coombs



■ Clevedon Pier on a misty day, by Phil Powell



■ Light-painting, by Phil Powell

Finding beauty in winter

WINTER can be a dark and bleak time of the year, with seemingly few outdoor photo opportunities.

But with winter sun leading to dramatic shadows, and snow, frost and – more commonly – rain giving different textures, it can be a photographic goldmine, regardless of the conditions.

Frost can transform ordinary surfaces to icy masterpieces, snow can convert ordinary landscapes to otherworldly scenes, and reflections can be shot in puddles after a rain shower.

Winter landscapes do not have the same colour as autumn, but they can lend themselves well to contrasts.

For example, the sharpness of a bare tree against a pale sky, or snowdrifts against evergreens. Isolating a subject, for example a bare tree, can show the bleakness of winter.

The reduced visibility of misty days should not be written off for photography. Misty days are great for capturing part of a subject with the rest of it disappearing into the distance. The Clifton Suspension Bridge dissolving into the distance is a common shot on misty days.

For those who enjoy street photography, winter streets still have something to offer. The bustling markets in the lead up to Christmas can capture warmth on a cold day.

Christmas lights can offer colourful street scenes, or provide interesting reflections from puddles or damp streets.

The dark winter evenings lend themselves well to light painting, which can be enjoyed by all ages. This can be achieved using a long exposure, which can even be set on mobile phone cameras, and moving lights around to create



■ Lone windmill, by Phil Powell

interesting shapes. Children can get involved with this theme, even attempting to write their name with a torch.

Whatever your preferred subject, there are shots to take in winter, and your camera doesn't have to go into hibernation because the days are shorter.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all at Downend Camera Club.

To find out more, visit www.downendcameraclub.org.uk or come along to the Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road on a Tuesday at 7.45pm.

Phil Powell

That was the year, that was!

AS Christmas approaches, and we are enveloped in cooler weather, mad rushes, adverts, pudding and clichés, it's fair to say that myself and the guys at Downend Men in Sheds are, how shall I put this... 'tired'.

For those of you who have followed our story as 2026 has progressed, you will have a sense of the scale of our challenges, the sheer magnitude of organisation, work, and energy expired by all the members in order to make the transition to Cuckoo Lane as smooth as possible – and it's done, we are in, the thrum of the scroll saw and buzz of drills will no longer be heard mingling with bird song across Bromley Heath playing fields!

Christmas is an opportunity for many things, and it would be remiss of us if we didn't take a moment to say Merry Xmas and thank-you to those that have helped us meet our challenges over the past year.

From a financial perspective, a big thanks and Nadolig Llawen to the Anchor Society, John James Foundation, the Triodos Foundation, Persimmon Homes and all those who have helped.

From a logistical perspective, a Joyeux Noël to Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council, Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council, Emerson's Green Town Council.

For our wood offcut and planter liner benefactors, Buon Natale Bristol Sheds & Gates, Crest Timber and Kingswood Canvas.

From a local community perspective, Feliz Navidad to all those who have taken the time to chat with us, donate tools, and buy some of the items we make.

A special Nollaig Shona Dhuit goes to the members of DMiS old and new. Getting to this point would have been impossible without your time, effort, resilience and enthusiasm (in the face of many challenges).

There's not enough space here to thank everyone so if I've missed any person or group, my apologies.

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to one and all, from all of us here at DMiS...it's going to be a good one.

David Alcock

A new way to tackle antisocial behaviour



Clare Moody A&SPCC
writes for the Voice

ANTISOCIAL behaviour remains one of the issues that businesses, retailers and residents across Avon and Somerset raise with me most often.

It can be far more than just a 'low-level' crime. It is often linked to shoplifting, intimidation, violence and other offences.

Antisocial behaviour can have a significant impact on people's sense of safety and, in turn, affect quality of life and local economies.

You may have recently seen the Freedom From Fear campaign from the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, highlighting these issues and calling for change.

As we move further into the festive season, when many of us will be visiting retailers or town centres, I know this will continue to be a concern.

This is one of the reasons reducing antisocial behaviour is a priority in my Police and Crime Plan and why I recently welcomed the government's new 'respect orders' coming into effect.

Respect orders give police, councils and courts stronger powers to tackle repeat adult offenders of antisocial behaviour, including better enabling police to ban individuals from town centres.

They carry a wider range of penalties for those who breach them compared to existing powers, including the possibility of imprisonment, which addresses an important gap in the current system.

But enforcement alone is not enough.

The causes of antisocial behaviour and retail crime are often complex and deeply rooted, frequently linked to wider vulnerability.

Issues such as addiction, poor mental health, homelessness, and access to basic needs can all play a role. If we want to reduce reoffending, we must also address these underlying causes.

That is why respect orders, alongside existing powers, also enable courts to require offenders to engage with interventions such as drug or alcohol treatment.

I hope to see these new powers used not only for enforcement, but also for these positive interventions.

I continue to commission services across Avon and Somerset that focus on prevention, early intervention and reducing reoffending – including Resolve West, which supports victims of antisocial behaviour while helping offenders understand the impact of their actions and make positive changes.

My office is also looking at how we can create a more joined-up approach to ensure the police and partners are tackling business crime and supporting safer high streets and retail centres.

We will work closely with partners to shape these plans, with the ambition of bringing together policing teams, businesses, business crime reduction partnerships, business improvement districts, local authorities and other partners to drive collective action where it is needed most.

Everyone deserves to feel safe where they live, work and shop.

But lasting change will only come from combining effective enforcement with prevention, support and partnership working.

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MANGOTSFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



Remembrance at Mangotsfield

OUR recent Hour A Month volunteer session was another well-supported event.

Hundreds of bulbs are now in our planters – I was going to say ready for spring, but some of them are coming up already!

November saw another fantastic turnout for the Mangotsfield Remembrance parade and service at the War Memorial: long may it continue.

The less formal and quieter service of remembrance in the Red Lion at 11am was also well attended and is important for those who, for whatever reason, are unable to attend the main service.

Christmas will soon be upon us, so a reminder of some dates:

On November 28 and December 4 we'll be doing the Dame School Nativity build, with Christmas lights going up on November 30.

From December 9 to 13 there's the St James Church Christmas tree exhibition.

On Thursday December 10 at 6.30pm we're joining with the church for the Dame School Nativity Carol Service

Our next monthly Red Lion Coffee Morning will be on December 2 at 10am: all welcome.

You can reach us via MangotsfieldRA@gmail.com, the Mangotsfield Matters Facebook page or by phone to chair Clive Heath on 07507 168700 or me on 07918 701881. **Chris Amos**

MANGOTSFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

MANGOTSFIELD Community Association has presented doinations of £5,000 each to two charities.

The money was raised throughout the year, mainly at events held at the Red Lion in Mangotsfield.

It has been donated to the MND Association and St Peter's Hospice to support their work – thanks to the staff and customers for their hospitality and support.

The day after the presentation in October more than £4,000 was raised at a football match held at Mangotsfield United's Cossham Street ground for St Peter's Hospice and Pancreatic Cancer UK.

Mugsy's Memorial Match was held in memory of Dean Williams, known as Mugsy, who died in November last year from pancreatic cancer, aged 61.

By the end of the day the match had raised a massive £4,424 – thanks to all who played and came to support these causes.

Great work has been done by all involved. **Clive Heath**



MCA members with a cheque for the MND Association



Offering rough sleepers a route off the streets



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

I CANNOT believe we are already heading into December, and hurtling towards a new year.

This year has been a landmark one for the West of England.

Now we are an Established Mayoral Strategic Authority, we will be able to make more of the decisions that matter to you here, instead of Westminster.

Whether it's improving buses and rail services, building more affordable homes, or helping people access better jobs and skills opportunities, we know our communities and are best-placed to deliver for them.

Personally, it has been a surprising end to 2026 as I was named one of the most influential climate change leaders in the world by Time magazine, alongside the Prince of Wales and Elmo!

It's an immense privilege to be named on the Time100 Climate list, but it reflects the work we are doing as a region, especially our Clean Power Pilot, which powered live music at so many events this summer including Forwards Festival and the Bristol Balloon Fiesta.

One of the things we're doing to help climate change is giving people in the West more opportunities to choose to leave the car at home, so it is particularly exciting that last month our newest railway station opened.

Bristol Brabazon connects one of the region's most exciting new developments with Bristol Temple Meads, as well as providing a gateway to the new Aviva Arena, which is on track to open in 2028.

Our next station, Charfield, will open next year too, as we continue to deliver our £600 million investment to improve rail connectivity across the region.

Of course, as many of us gather at this time of year, to celebrate with family and friends, it is important to remember not everyone in our region has somewhere to call home this Christmas.

That's why I have brought key organisations together from across the West of England in an ambitious programme to offer everyone sleeping rough a route off the streets by Christmas.

Rough sleeping is devastating at any time of year, but the winter months can be particularly

Everyone deserves somewhere safe to sleep and the support they need to move forward with their lives.

We have more than £12 million in Government funding to support this work over the next three years, and I'm challenging our partners to go even further by ensuring everyone sleeping rough is offered a route off the streets by December 15.

As we look ahead to the new year, we will continue building a region where everyone can thrive.

I wish you a happy and peaceful festive season.

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From Mangos to Madrid for Miguel?

A FORMER Mangotsfield United player could find himself facing Jude Bellingham and Real Madrid's superstars in the New Year.

Miguel Freckleton made 11 appearances for Mangotsfield United during the 2020-21 season in his first taste of senior football, before signing for Sheffield United.

The Bristol-born defender has played for a variety of clubs, from non-league to the Scottish Premiership.

But his latest club, Austrian Bundesliga champions LASK, have qualified for the Champions League league phase and an away game at Madrid's Bernabeu stadium is the pick of their remaining fixtures, which finish with a home game against Porto.

Miguel, 23, came on as a substitute during LASK's dramatic 5-1 extra time win over Celtic to put themselves into the league phase.

He was still waiting to make his first appearance in the league phase as the Voice went to print, having been an unused substitute in the Linz side's defeats to Liverpool and AEK Athens, and victories over Sporting Lisbon and Slovan Bratislava.

Miguel told the BBC: "We've got some good games coming up.

"I'm just trying to take it in. Also, just understand that this is the reality and I'm a part of it."

LASK were 16th of the 36 clubs in the league ahead of their trip to Norway to face Bodo/Glimt, above Manchester Utd and other giants including Roma and Atletico Madrid.

Matt Curry, now assistant manager for Mangotsfield United, coached Miguel for two years when he was teenager at Bristol Inner City Academy.

Having left Bristol Rovers' academy at the age of 14 for a chance to join Wolves that fell through, Miguel trained at Bristol Inner City Academy and SGS College, whose footballing alumni also include Manchester City star Antoine Semenyo.

Matt said: "I knew Miguel really well during his time at Bristol Inner City Academy and supported him with his development going into the college programme. I could see he would have a career in the game, although you're never quite sure what level you could see he was very advanced for his age and really dedicated."

Miguel and his older brother Andre both played for the Mangos, alongside Antoine Semenyo's brother Jai, around the Covid-hit 2020-21 season.

Matt said: "At the time he played for Mangotsfield United the team was being fulfilled by SGS College players. We were fairly reliant on the college and a lot of our under-18 team were also at SGS."

From SGS Miguel went on to get a contract with Sheffield United, who sent him out on loan over four years to clubs including Yeovil Town, Chesterfield and Swindon, before selling him to Scottish Premiership club St Mirren last year.



Miguel Freckleton at Bristol Inner City Academy Picture: Matt Curry

He was in the team that beat Celtic 3-1 in last season's Scottish League Cup final before earning a move to LASK.

Matt said: "Miguel's story shows there's a chance for players who have a bit of a resurgence in their late teens or early 20s, or don't get through the academy system, to get an opportunity later on."

Page Park Bowls Club

PAGE Park Bowls Club has handed over more than £3,400 to charity Children's Hospice South West.

The money includes £1,952 raised by club charity events, donation tins and general fundraising throughout the season, plus £1,500 raised by members who sponsored club captain Don Willcox's weight-loss challenge.



Glenn Dutton of Children's Hospice SW with bowls club captain Don Willcox

Don said: "I had proposed to lose 40lbs by the end of the season in September but managed to lose 3 stone (42lb/19kg) by mid-July, thanks to Slimming World.

"Keeping it off during the winter is going to be more of a challenge!"

The money was handed over by Don to Children's Hospice SW fundraising assistant Glenn Dutton, who visited the club for a presentation.

In total, the bowls club has donated more than £4,200 to local charities in the past year.

John Lockwood

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Cleve win on perfect day for rugby

CLEVE won an end-to-end game against a determined Thornbury side buoyed by a large crowd.

The weather was sunny, dry and a little chilly: a perfect day for rugby.

Thornbury were up for the game, tackling hard and scoring in the first five minutes.

But Cleve responded and, after good ball movement, Henry Wilstead went over in the corner. Thornbury went through under the posts to go 14-5 up, but Matt Jarvis rallied the troops and made a telling pass that saw Wilstead score again.

As Cleve pressurised near the line, a deliberate knock-on by Thornbury was penalised by a penalty try before forwards Harry O'Donnell and Ashley Wildgoose combined well to score. A penalty in the next phase of play made it 29-14 at half time.

The second half started with a kicking battle. After Jarvis drilled a penalty to the corner, the lineout and drive allowed Conor McKinney to go over.

Thornbury reacted as the crowd drove them on and scored twice, getting within ten points, but again Jarvis took charge, and Cleve started to dominate the scrum near Thornbury's try line.

A push-over try by number 8 Matt Lane and two penalties from Jarvis saw them through, despite another Thornbury try, to a 49-31 win.

The away win followed a top-of-the-table defeat at the Hayfields against Chippenham in appalling weather, as Storm Austen hit the West.

The conditions meant any ball kicked up in the air went miles wind-assisted but hit a wall against it.

Cleve's forwards worked hard, pinning Chippenham in their 22.

Centre Tom Jones made some great breaks, with Liam Code making inventive kicks, but Chippenham's stubborn defence held out before they scored in a breakout.

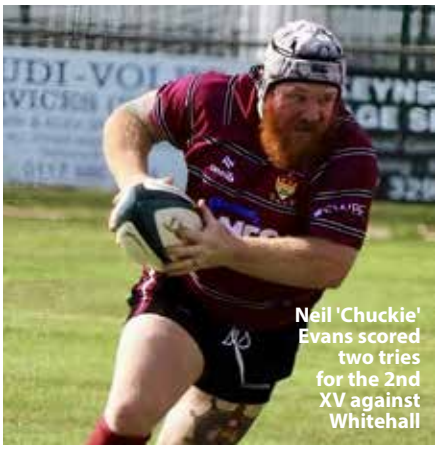
Cleve then went over from a scrum five yards out to make it 5-7 at half-time.

After the break Chippenham immediately scored and converted, and despite continued Cleve pressure the visitors stood firm, with more breakout tries making the final score Cleve 8, Chippenham 28.

Cleve 2nds are in a very competitive league containing several clubs' first teams.

The side combines some very young players with good senior players.

Against Whitehall's 1st team in November Cleve's Neil 'Chuckie' Evans, who is often in the first team but adds an essential ingredient to the seconds, scored two tries.



Neil 'Chuckie' Evans scored two tries for the 2nd XV against Whitehall

Leading 21-0 at half-time, Cleve went further ahead at the start of the second when Whitehall conceded a penalty try for illegally stopping an overlap.

Whitehall had a large following encouraging them to attack, but after Chuckie made a great break Cleve second row Sean Nixon went over.

Whitehall scored from a breakaway but Cleve moved the ball confidently and winger Theo Garnett went over. Whitehall scored at the end, but Cleve came out worthy 47-12 winners.

Stephen Bateman

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The Christmas decorating injury hall of fame



If you know me, you'll know that I love Christmas! However, I'm slightly less keen on the bit where you have to get Christmas out of the loft first…

You go up there for one box and discover that the tree is behind the suitcases, the lights are in a bag marked 'Easter' and the one thing you can reach is a set of decorations nobody has liked since 2009. By the time you sit down with a well-earned mince pie, you've done considerably more exercise than you'd planned.

So, in the spirit of the season, here are my three nominees for the Christmas Decorating Injury Hall of Fame.

Third place goes to the loft clear out

There's always a moment when you look at a box and think, 'I can get that down in one go.' This is usually when someone downstairs says, 'Shall I come and help?' and you shout, 'No, I've got it!' with much more confidence than the situation deserves.

Last year, we had a Christmas tree seller come into Cleve Chiropractic with severe lower back pain that was going down his leg – clearly the timing could hardly have been worse. We assessed him and decided to use the traction bed as part of his care. After all, he had trees to sell and a Christmas to keep on track.

How we treat back pain depends on what we find after our initial examination. For some people, that might mean gentle joint mobilisation or soft tissue work alongside exercises they can do at home.

As for the loft, take any help that's offered. And if you've packed all of Christmas into one enormous plastic box, give yourself an early present – make a resolution to split it into two smaller ones when you put it away.

Second place goes to the Christmas tree wrestle

One person is on the floor trying to tighten the stand while the rest of the family takes turns saying, 'A bit to the left.' Except nobody agrees who's left we are talking about. Then you stand up, walk to the other side of the room and realise the tree was straight in the first place.

This is a good job for two people. One holds the tree steady while the other sorts out the stand. And, if gripping the trunk brings back that ache on the outside of your elbow that you feel every time you pick up the kettle, mention that when you come in for treatment. It tells us the elbow was bothering you before the tree got involved.

We'll check how your elbow responds to gripping and lifting and we can use diagnostic ultrasound if we need a closer look at the tendon. We'll talk you through some exercises that will help to gradually rebuild strength. For some people with persistent tendon pain, we may also discuss using shockwave and laser therapy together as part of their care.

First place goes to the fairy lights

My favourite part of this is when you spend ages untangling them, get them all the way round the tree and only then think to plug them in.

Test them first. It might save you a second lap of the tree with your arms up and your head tipped back. And when you get to the top, move the step stool round with you. The extra few seconds are worth it, even if you're convinced you really can reach that last branch.

If you finish the afternoon with a stiff neck or a sore shoulder, we'll check how both are moving and which actions bring on the pain you recognise. That helps us decide where to focus - whether that's gentle hands-on treatment, shoulder strengthening or a few exercises to help you turn your head more comfortably.

It reminds me of the first sunny weekend in spring, when we all go out and try to do three weeks' worth of gardening in two days. At Christmas, you start with the tree and somehow end up moving the sofa, clearing the loft and spending half an hour on the floor trying to find the extension lead.

My advice is to put the tree up, put the kettle on and enjoy it for a bit. The lights can wait until after the mince pie. And if anyone asks why you're sitting down halfway through this process, you can tell them your chiropractor said so.

Happy Christmas from all of us at Cleve Chiropractic!

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"The sessions I had with Tim really helped prepare me for Saturday's game"
Mike Tindall MBE

"Seeing Catherine to work on my back and hip mobility regularly allows me to continue training"
Les Ferdinand

Inconsistent Mangos thrashed twice

MANGOTSFIELD United's inconsistent form continues to baffle many supporters.

The club bounced back well following a totally unexpected 6-0 home drubbing by old rivals Cirencester Town in the Hellenic League.

Although they were knocked out of the FA Vase on penalties, they are in three local cups and their league form improved too.

Supporters began to look towards the top end of the league table again, before an inexplicable 6-1 home defeat to Highworth Town threw another spanner into the works.

Watched by a large crowd of 352, the Mangos only trailed 1-0 at the break against Cirencester and were more than matching their opponents, but a second goal on 47 minutes knocked the stuffing out of them and a collapse ensued.

Manager Ollie Price's team talk for the following game at Tuffley Rovers had the desired effect, as goals from Lewis Powell (20), James Horrocks (30) & George Fowler (45) put the Mangos 3-1 up at the break. Tuffley got another goal in the second half but it finished 3-2.

Last hopes of a trip to Wembley this season ended at Andover New Street. Goals from Archie Morris (37), Harley Vozza (52) and Will Ashton (58) put Mangotsfield 3-1 up going into the last 10 minutes of the FA Vase tie, but the hosts rallied with two late goals, not helped by Dale Evans' red card to make it 3-3. Andover won the penalty shoot-out 3-2.

The Mangos bounced back with a hard-fought 3-1 Wisemans Cup win over Sharpness at Cossham Street. Curtis Jay Jemmett-Hutson (1 and 72) bagged a brace, with Archie Morris sealing it on 89 minutes.

Four days later, the Mangos beat Droitwich Spa 3-2 in the league.

The visitors led 1-0 at the break but Lewis Powell (50) & Will Ashton (53) quickly turned the tables after the restart. Droitwich levelled, but George Neill bagged the winner with 7 minutes left.

It was a battling win: the Mangos had played with 10 men for 60 minutes after Mircea Llea's first-half red card.

In the 3-2 GFA Challenge Trophy win at Thornbury Town, Jack Mills (19) and George Neill (29) put the Mangos 2-0 up at half time. Although Thornbury scored twice after the break, Lewis Powell netted what proved to be the winner on 74 minutes.

Another cup competition brought another win for the Mangos, this time 3-1 in the UHL Challenge Cup at Banbury United Development.

Louis Farrow (31, 60) and Kyren Simpson-Cameron (45) scored the Mangotsfield goals.

Back at home and in the league, the Mangos suffered another inexplicable drubbing at home, this time 6-1 against Highworth Town.

Although missing both central defenders through suspension and injury, the scores were level until the 53rd minute.

After that, Highworth ran riot, aided by some poor defending too. Owen Pritchard scored the Mangos' only goal on 70 minutes, but by then they were already 3-0 down and shipped three more in another night to forget.

Dave Smale

December fixtures:
1st: Cheltenham Saracens (Home, Wiseman Cup)
5th: Tuffley Rovers (H, Challenge Cup)
8th: Oldland Abbotonians (H, County Cup)
12th: Stourport Swifts (H)
15th: Longlevens (H)
19th: Corsham Town (Away)
26th: Roman Glass St George (H)

Club celebrates season's top players

DOWNEND Cricket Club's annual awards were presented at an evening hosted by Gloucestershire Cricket.

For the Men's 1st team, Callum Loud won the batter and player of the year awards, with Ross Robbins the best bowler and Jordan Garrett winning the players' player award.

For the 2s, Blake Sculthorpe won the batter, player and players' player awards, with Izzy Stankzai winning the bowler award.

For the 3s, Matt Curtis won best batter, Temoor Naeem won the bowler of the year award, Ben Pearce was player of the year and Ryan Collins was the players' player.

Marc Trafford was the 4s' batter and players' player of the year, with Frank Cheney best bowler and

Monesh Mohan the player of the year.

For the Women's 1s, the batter and players' player of the year was Lisa Ralph, best bowler was Georgina Bale and player was Rebecca Sellick.

Rebecca Partridge was the Women's 2s batter of the year, with Vicky Mundy best bowler, Kate Sage the players' best player and Lara Light McKelvaney the player of the year.

The Club's John Thompson award went to Finn Kingston and Clubman award to Joe Dryell.

Miles Davis



Right: Callum Loud, right, is presented with his award by chairman Mark Litson, centre

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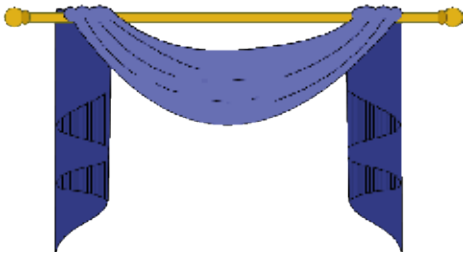

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