

# Local Talk Back

MARCH 2026

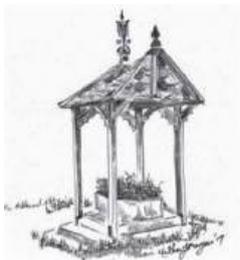
<http://actonturville.info/talkback/>

ISSUE 568

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*Happy Days, Hazy Rays. Spring's almost here.  
Picture by Lee Butcher, Acton Turville*



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A MAGAZINE WITH NEWS, VIEWS AND REPORTS FOR THE RESIDENTS  
OF ACTON TURVILLE, BADMINTON AND LITTLE BADMINTON

# EDITORIAL MARCH 2026

Say it quietly but there seems to be a bit of a buzz around Local Talk Back just now. It's always great when people offer to help with the newsletter, and we really appreciate the articles that we've received for this issue. They cover such a wide range of subjects, and we hope you find them both interesting and enjoyable. Maybe they'll inspire you to send in your own stories? We've also received some offers of help with producing other parts of the newsletter, so we feel like we're surfing the crest of a wave. To all those who support Talk Back in whatever way, thank you.

There's a bit of a buzz around our villages too. In Acton Turville, work has started on the Hollybush Farm site, where a developer is aiming to deliver "a collection of 17 beautifully crafted homes including nine barn conversions and eight new build properties". They've got off to a good start by installing a very smart new section of pavement around The Well, so we remain optimistic! In Badminton, the former Drewett's Stores, which has been empty since Wayne and Leslie moved out, is being comprehensively refurbished, and it can't be long before the building is once more home to a thriving village shop at the heart of the community. There won't be a Post Office but there will, apparently, be a coffee shop in an adjacent building selling large slices of cake (hopefully).

It'll be great to see such prominent sites within our villages looking their best again, but it made us wonder what other sites could do with a bit of TLC. I guess it would be too much to ask for the big green, steel railway bridge to revert back to something more fitting for an area of outstanding natural beauty, but there are two buildings just a stone's throw from that bridge which are crying out for attention – the two waiting rooms that sit either side of the London mainline. The railway opened in 1903 and Badminton soon became one of the busiest stops on the line, with members of the landed gentry arriving by train, complete with horses, for a day's hunting. Even the Royal Family disembarked from the Royal train at the station before being carried in a horse-drawn carriage to Badminton House. The station continued to flourish, carrying increasing volumes of passengers and goods, but its days were numbered as the motor car became the preferred mode of transport in the post-war years and the railways reviewed their operating model. Despite being scheduled for closure in 1961, it clung on for several years thanks to the intervention of the Duke of Beaufort, but even his opposition could not prevent the inevitable, and Badminton Station was closed in 1968.

Gradually the station facilities such as the iconic footbridge that appears on so many old pictures were dismantled, but the platforms and waiting rooms, which were witness to so many events that were part of our local history, still stand. They had a working life of 65 years, but they've now been boarded up for almost as long.

At least they're still standing. One is used as a store for a company working in one of the adjacent industrial units, whereas the other appears to be empty with its windows and doors bricked up. The buildings have the unmistakable architectural features associated with the railways, but the years haven't been kind to them - some of the brickwork is beginning to crumble and the cast iron guttering is badly corroded. It would be nice to think you could punch through the bricks which block the door, hold a candle to the hole and see "wonderful things", just like Howard Carter did when he discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun, but rather than finding a scene that has been preserved in aspic for 50+ years, I fear it'll be one of dereliction and decay.

It's sad to think of what might happen to those buildings. Some people have spoken of renovating them so they can be used by the community, maybe as a meeting room, but the associated costs would be hard to justify. There's also the small matter of trains flashing past the edge of the platform at 100+mph, which might concern the safety bods. So do we let nature take its toll and watch them gradually deteriorate until there's no option other than demolition? Why not tell us what you think?

As the song says, sometimes you don't know what you've got till it's gone.

Until the next time

*IAN CARTER*

Items for Local Talk Back email to: [localtalkback1975@gmail.com](mailto:localtalkback1975@gmail.com) Tel: 01454 218267

To advertise in Local Talk Back, please email Pauline on: [LocalTalkBackAds@gmail.com](mailto:LocalTalkBackAds@gmail.com)

PLEASE SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION IN THE APRIL EDITION OF LOCAL TALK BACK BY 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026.

THANK YOU.

### **DATES FOR THE DIARY**

#### **March 2026**

- Fri 6<sup>th</sup> Acton Turville Social Coffee Morning, Fox & Hounds, 10am  
 Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Didmarton Point-to-Point Races  
 Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Spring Crafts Workshop, Badminton Estate, 10.30am-4pm  
 Mon 9<sup>th</sup> Acton Turville Parish Council, Trinity School, 7pm  
 Tues 10<sup>th</sup> Chipping Sodbury Music Society presents Hannah Shilvock and Viola Lenzi, Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, 7.30pm  
 Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Fox & Hounds Senior Citizen's Lunch  
 Fri 13<sup>th</sup> Didmarton Film Club, Didmarton Village Hall  
 Sat 28<sup>th</sup> Acton Turville Spring Clean

#### **April 2026**

- Wed 1<sup>st</sup> Easter Cooking Demonstration, Badminton Estate, 6.30pm – 9pm  
 Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> Acton Turville Social Coffee Morning, Fox & Hounds, 10am  
 Mon 13<sup>th</sup> Acton Turville Parish Council, Trinity School, 7pm  
 Tues 14<sup>th</sup> Chipping Sodbury Music Society presents the Meliora Collective, Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, 7.30pm  
 Sat 18<sup>th</sup> Stop Lime Down Family Fun Day & Dog Show, The Park, Grittleton, 12pm - 4pm  
 Sun 26<sup>th</sup> Badminton House Open Gardens, 10am

#### **May 2026**

- Wed 6<sup>th</sup> – Sun 10<sup>th</sup> Badminton Horse Trials

#### **June 2026**

- Sat 27<sup>th</sup> Fundraiser for Ukraine, Portcullis Lodge, Acton Turville

#### **July 2026**

- Wed 8<sup>th</sup> – Sun 12<sup>th</sup> RHS Badminton Flower Show, Badminton House

#### **August 2026**

- Sat 15<sup>th</sup> Acton Turville Social Summer Party

\*\*\*Check with venues before setting off\*\*

Please let Local Talk Back know if you're planning an event and we'll add it to our dates for the diary.

### **DONATIONS RECEIVED THIS MONTH**

*We have received one anonymous donation this month. Thank you.*

*In addition, £42.20 was very generously donated in the shop collection boxes.*

*We really do appreciate all donations as it helps to keep Local Talk Back being delivered to your doors.*

*There are Local Talk Back collection boxes in Acton Turville Stores and the Badminton shop.*

*To donate by cheque, please make payable to*

**LOCAL TALK BACK**

*and send to:*

*The Treasurer, Local Talk Back,  
6 Hollybush Close, Acton Turville,  
Badminton, South Glos, GL9 1JJ*

*Thank you!*

### **ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ACTON TURVILLE**

#### **100 Club**

#### **WINNERS FOR FEBRUARY 2026**

Kate Seymour-Smith

Tim Penney

Tess Daly

***Congratulations!***

### **ACTON TURVILLE PARISH COUNCIL**

The next meeting of the Acton Turville Parish Council will be on

**Monday 9th March @ 7.00pm**

Venue: Trinity School, Acton Turville.

For more details, please contact the Parish Clerk:

Sue Radford-Hancock Tel: 01249 650052

Email: [clerk@actonturville-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@actonturville-pc.gov.uk)

Website: <https://www.actonturville-pc.gov.uk/>

Local Talk Back is printed by

**SPRINT PRINT, 22 STATION ROAD, YATE, BS37 4PS**

Tel: 01454 852255 or email: [info@sprint-print.co.uk](mailto:info@sprint-print.co.uk)

# WHAT'S ON



## DIDMARTON FILM CLUB

Didmarton Village Hall, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026

To receive full details of the films being shown each month by the Didmarton Film Club, simply join the club by filling in a form which will be available on film nights – membership is free, just provide your name, email address and mobile number to join.

Members are allowed to bring guests to the film shows, which will continue to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month at the Didmarton Village Hall. Whilst there is no charge for entry, all those attending are expected to make a donation (suggested amount £5).

The bar will run as usual.

*Non-members may contact the organiser, Jenny Body, for the title of this month's film.*

**Doors open at 6.30pm, film starts 7.30pm**

*Please let us know in advance if you intend attending so we can ensure that sufficient seating is available*

[jenny.body1@gmail.com](mailto:jenny.body1@gmail.com)



## Fox & Hounds Senior Citizens Lunch

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March

Tea/Coffee on arrival

Two Course Lunch (main course + dessert)

£13.00 per head

*The Fox & Hounds Senior Citizens Lunch is held in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month.*



BADMINTON ESTATE

### SPRING CRAFTS WORKSHOP

SUNDAY 8TH MARCH, 10:30AM–4:00PM

Join us for a relaxed, hands-on day of creativity, led by Emma and Melinda from Larkswold.

You can choose from three beautifully curated workshops:

- Ceramic March Hares
- Easter Table Centrepieces
- Scented Candle Making

### EASTER COOKING DEMONSTRATION

WEDNESDAY 1ST APRIL, 6.30PM – 9.00PM

Join us for an inspiring evening as professional cook Nancy Lawson of Overtown Manor presents a seasonal cookery demonstration focused on dishes perfect for Easter entertaining and spring gatherings.

Spaces for both events are limited, book early to secure your place and celebrate at Badminton.

See <https://www.badmintonestate.com/events/> for full details



## Chipping Sodbury Music Society

Forthcoming Events

### HANNAH SHILVOCK AND VIOLA LENZI

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – 7.30pm

Chipping Sodbury Town Hall

*This highly talented, passionate duo showcasing the music of the bass clarinet and piano. A rare chance to see and hear this fascinating mix.*

### MELIORA COLLECTIVE

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026 – 7:30pm

Chipping Sodbury Town Hall

*10 players – Born with a love of chamber music; Meliora Collective celebrates the shared joy of music making. Founding members, Meera and Steph dreamt up this ensemble in the midst of the pandemic, following a long-held desire to launch an ensemble of this nature.*

For full details and to purchase tickets, visit the Chipping Sodbury Music Society website at

<https://csmusicociety.co.uk/>

## **Spring, Sport and Head Matters: What the Six Nations Teaches Us About Brain Health**

By David Bartlett,  
Director, *Your Brain Health*

In my last article, I wrote about the importance of sunlight and vitamin D for brain health during the darker winter months. Since then, something welcome has happened; spring has begun to make itself known. The days are brighter, the air a little milder and we are now enjoying close to ten hours of daylight each day that will continue right through to the end of October.

After months of grey skies, that extra light makes a real difference to how we feel and how we live our daily lives. People are outside more, gardens begin to wake up and routines naturally become more active again.

For me, as a sports fan, spring is also marked by familiar milestones. The closing stages of the Six Nations and the arrival of the Cheltenham Festival always signal that winter is finally loosening its grip. These events bring excitement and community, but they also highlight a topic that has received increasing attention in recent years, concussion.

Many readers will have seen headlines discussing concussion in rugby and concerns about long-term brain health. It is absolutely right that sport takes head injury seriously. Repeated blows to the head are not good for anyone, and awareness, rule changes and improved medical care have all moved in the right direction.

However, it is also important to separate scientific evidence from fear. Conditions such as Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), have received significant media attention, often creating the impression that participation in rugby inevitably leads to severe brain disease. The reality is more nuanced. While CTE has been identified in some former elite athletes exposed to very high levels of repetitive head impact, the overall scientific evidence remains limited, particularly outside professional sport. Studies examining non-elite and community populations have found the condition to be extremely rare.

Unfortunately, sensationalist reporting can sometimes overshadow an equally important part of the story; the substantial benefits that sport and physical activity bring. Rugby clubs provide social connection, shared purpose and regular exercise, all of which are strongly linked to better long-term health, including brain health.

In fact, exercise is one of the most powerful tools we have for protecting the brain across the lifespan. Research consistently shows that people who remain physically active have better memory, improved mood, and a lower risk of cognitive decline as they age. Movement increases blood flow to the brain, supports the growth and maintenance of brain cells, and helps regulate inflammation and stress hormones. Quite simply, the brain responds positively when the body moves.

Exercise also supports mental wellbeing. Regular activity is associated with reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression, improved sleep and greater emotional resilience. Importantly, these benefits do not require intense training or athletic performance. The largest gains are seen when people move from being inactive to moderately active.

This brings us to a reassuringly simple message. According to current NHS guidance, adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week activities such as brisk walking, cycling, gardening, or swimming. Broken down, this is just over twenty minutes a day, an achievable target for most people when built gradually into daily life.

Each day, note whether you achieved at least 20 minutes of exercise. Consistency matters more than intensity when it comes to brain health!

*Continued over*

## Spring, Sport and Head Matters (cont'd)

w/c	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
2 <sup>nd</sup> March							
9 <sup>th</sup> March							
16 <sup>th</sup> March							
23 <sup>rd</sup> March							

As spring continues to unfold around the villages, the longer days offer a natural invitation to move a little more. Whether it is a walk through the village, time in the garden, or returning to a favourite sport, regular movement is one of the most reliable investments we can make in our brain health.

In the coming articles, I'll continue exploring practical ways we can all support our brains, not through dramatic changes, but through small, sustainable habits that add up over time.

After all, looking after our brains is not just about avoiding illness; it is about staying active, connected, and able to enjoy the lives we lead.



Find out more



Your Brain Health



# FAMILY

## Fun Day

### & Dog Show



Saturday  
**18 APRIL '26**     **The Park, Grittleton**

Entrance **£5** (kids free)     **12PM - 4PM**

**Grab your wellies and your sense of adventure!**  
Our Family Fun Day will be a celebration of all things countryside and good old-fashioned community spirit



Classic Country Games!



Farm machinery old & new



Meet the animals



Fun Dog Show



Competitions & Stalls!



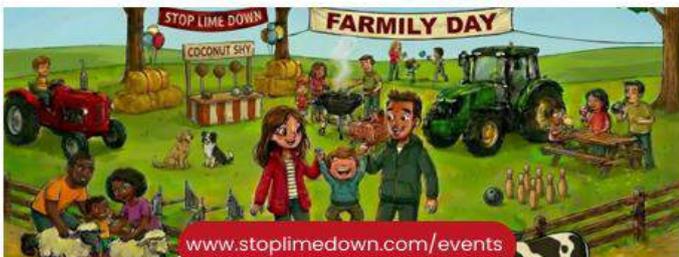
Creative Corner



BBQ, teas & cakes



Licensed Bar



www.stoplimedown.com/events

## THE 2026 ACTON TURVILLE SPRING CLEAN

THE ANNUAL ACTON TURVILLE SPRING CLEAN & LITTER PICK WILL BE HELD ON

**SATURDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026.**

CAN YOU HELP KEEP OUR LOVELY VILLAGE LOOKING CLEAN, GREEN, NEAT AND TIDY?

*IF YOU CAN, JOIN US AT THE FOX & HOUNDS CAR PARK BETWEEN 10AM AND 11AM.*

BAGS, GLOVES AND PICKERS WILL BE PROVIDED TO HELP WITH LITTER CLEARING, OR BRING YOUR GARDENING TOOLS IF YOU FANCY HELPING TO TIDY UP THE PLANTED AREAS.

**EVERYONE WELCOME!**

ANY QUESTIONS?

CONTACT [clerk@actonturville-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@actonturville-pc.gov.uk)

# Village Social Life

by Yvonne Nettles & Sally Smith

*Simon Long's article on village life in last month's Local Talk Back was very interesting, and made us think about the social life we have enjoyed here in our villages, especially from the 1970s onwards. We could take up many pages talking about all the groups, clubs and associations that used to be such an integral part of our lives here in the villages of Badminton, Little Badminton and Acton Turville, but we hope you enjoy our look back at some of the most popular and long-lived.*

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Not everyone knew all the neighbours from their villages but it's fair to say that most did back then. That was possibly because the Badminton Estate employed so many people, the main of them living in tied cottages. Very often the children followed their parents into the same jobs. There were a few families with two or three generations living here, even if they didn't work for the Estate. Looking back at the archives from the early 1900's we can trace some families down to the present day.

Things have changed a lot now with less people working for the Estate and many more young people wanting to live away.

Since 1975 our Local Talk Back magazine has been keeping track of the many clubs and societies that brought everyone together. The Badminton Village Club was a fine example. The membership included people from all the surrounding villages. At one time there were ten skittle teams playing at the club, the main of them in the Malmesbury League. Many friendships arose from those games. Darts was played in the Malmesbury and District League and The Badminton League, with teams coming from all the local villages including Badminton, Acton Turville, Tormarton, Hawkesbury, Littleton Drew, Burton, The Gibb, Didmarton and many more. Many acquaintances were made, if not friendships, and certainly more than a few marriages.

The Ladies group 'The Valentine Club' (1980 – 2009) not only included people from the three villages but brought in members from surrounding villages, as well as many from Yate. Some had moved away on marriage but always came back to join in whatever was going on here.

Those that came back for the Valentine Club often brought their children to join in with the fete and Christmas party.

The Badminton Cricket Club had many team members from Yate, Sodbury and Hawkesbury, again they had grown up here and brought their children to play cricket when old enough.

There were many other clubs and groups that brought people together. There were W.I.'s in Badminton and Acton Turville, the Silver Lining Club for oldies in Badminton, and the Acton Turville Village Association. There was Girl Guides and Brownies for the younger ones.

The Fox & Hounds has been a large part of the socialising, with the New Years Eve fancy dress parties, many charity occasions and now the Luncheon Club.

And as for charity fund raising there were no end of groups putting on dances, jumble sales, summer fairs, bingo games, fancy dress cricket and football matches and the Fun Run to mention just a few. These brought so many villagers together. All these friendships meant on Christmas Eve there was an army of people walking up and down the streets and paths posting their cards, and if someone had a party here it would be a big one because you wouldn't know who not to invite.

As for the two of us, we have been involved in quite a lot of occasions, whether for fun or for charity and have enjoyed every minute. It hasn't been our only social life but definitely a big part of it. And how amazing to have had such a large group of 'friends'.

Going back to the Talk Back, there has been so many articles written about the history and memories of our villages because those who left never forgot their roots, and found through our Talk Back a way to keep their own stories in print.

*Yvonne & Sally*

# THE MUD AND THE MIRACLE

By Simon Long, Acton Turville

I nearly walked past them.

Head down, collar up, dodging puddles on the Tormarton Road opposite the village shop. A rain-sodden trudge. And then, a flash of white against the sorry turf.

Snowdrops. Dozens of them, clustered by the garden wall. Heads bowed but not beaten. Pushing through the soaked earth like they didn't get the memo about the weather.

I actually stopped. Stood there like an idiot, grinning at flowers.

But here's the thing: I needed that. I think we all do, right now.

It's been a long winter, hasn't it? The lanes are rivers. The fields are lakes. The news is relentlessly miserable. Some days it feels like February has been going on for about six months. Good thing the flowers can't read a calendar.

And yet — *and yet* — something underneath is stirring.

I stopped to chat with a local farmer, Nick, the other day. He was leaning on his gate, looking out at a quagmire masquerading as a field that he has barely been able to touch this year. Too wet. Too heavy. His tractor's been bunking off work for weeks.

"I'm not a farmer this winter," he said, shaking his head. "I'm just a bloke who owns a lot of mud."

But then he nodded toward the hedgerow. A flash of yellow. The first daffodils, just starting to open.

"Forty years I've been at this," he said. "And the daffodils still know more than I do."

That's what I love about living here. The world can feel like it's spinning out of control, and some days, let's be honest, it does. Meanwhile, life in our cherished corner of South Gloucestershire somehow keeps ticking over. The seasons turn. We ebb and flow in tune with them. The snowdrops don't read the headlines. The daffodils don't check the forecast.

They just show up. Quietly. Stubbornly. Hopefully.

I've noticed the light changing these past few weeks. Not dramatically, not yet, but at 5pm, when it used to be properly dark, there's now a softness at the edges. A tantalising taste of what's to come before the night arrives.

It lifts the spirits, doesn't it? That first evening you realise you can see the birds on the trees from the kitchen window while you're making tea. That moment when someone in the Fox & Hounds says, "Bit lighter tonight," and everyone nods like it's the best news they've heard all week.

Because it is.

We've had a soggy few months. I admit I've spent more of it than I'd like scrolling through bad news on my phone, doom-refreshing like it's a competitive sport.

But here's what's been nagging at me lately: we've forgotten how to read the older news. The news that's been publishing for millennia, right outside our doors.

The Victorians were obsessed with it. They had a whole language — the *floriography* of snowdrops meant hope, or consolation in grief. Daffodils were the herald of new beginnings, of chivalry and regard. People sent each other bouquets that were basically encrypted text messages. "I see you. I'm thinking of you. Better days are coming."

I wonder if we've lost some of that magic. Somewhere between the invention of the smartphone and the 24-hour news cycle, we stopped looking at what's actually growing at our feet. We traded the hedgerow for the headline.

And yet the flowers keep publishing anyway. Every February, the same reassuringly recurring bulletin: *We're still here. So are you. Open your eyes and see.*

I wonder what would happen if we took that seriously. Not in a wishy-washy "nature is healing" way, but properly. What if the snowdrops on the Tormarton Road are the most important news you'll read this week? What if Farmer Nick's daffodils matter more than whatever fresh chaos is trending on the news?



*Continued over*

## THE MUD AND THE MIRACLE (cont'd)

I'm not saying ignore the headlines. I'm saying: the hedgerow has breaking news too.

Spring doesn't ask permission. It just arrives.

And so do we. Quietly. Purposefully. Hopefully. If we let ourselves.

So, here's my little invitation.

This week, go looking for snowdrops or daffodils. Take the long way round. Notice what's pushing through. And if you find yourself standing in the rain grinning at flowers like a complete idiot, welcome to the club!

The light is returning. The flowers know it. The land knows it. And somewhere on the Tormarton Road, there's an idiot standing in the rain, grinning at snowdrops.

Maybe that's the bulletin we all need right now.

Spring is coming. Pass it on.

*Simon Long, March 2026*

*Where have you spotted the first signs of spring this year? A flower, a bird, a shift in the light? Send your February moments to us at or share your reflections [localtalkback1975@gmail.com](mailto:localtalkback1975@gmail.com), we'd love to hear them.*

### Andy Hiscox - Village Agent Update

Village Agent for the West of England Rural Network (WERN)  
Serving the communities of the Cotswold Edge



We are now well into the New Year, and with it the physical challenges that some of us may face due to long term illness or ageing. As a sufferer of a chronic illness myself which impacts my life on a daily basis, I thought about the challenges we all face personally with such issues and where we can get help when required.

The Celestine Centre is a fully adapted property located in Yate and the house has a variety of adaptations in a true home setting and is available for South Gloucestershire residents to visit and try out the various adaptations. The centre aims to provide solutions to help maintain independent living for people within their homes. Some of the adaptations include the following:

- Through floor lift and Stairlifts
- Automatic Wash Dry Toilet
- Fully adapted Kitchen with High/Low Kitchen Units
- Hoisting Equipment
- Aids to assist bathing
- Level access shower installation
- Ramp and Step Solutions
- Fully Automated Door Entry Systems
- Home Living Aids

The house is available Monday to Friday by appointment only. Please contact [psehousing@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:psehousing@southglos.gov.uk) If you do not have access to email, I can help you with this, or alternatively if you believe you need an Occupational Therapy Assessment, I can also signpost you to help. Transport may also be an issue, and again I may be able to assist.

The Village Agent Service can make a real difference to the rural communities they support by working with local residents and agencies. For more information on the Village Agent Service please visit [www.wern.org.uk/village-agents](http://www.wern.org.uk/village-agents)

Or Alternatively please contact myself on:

Mobile: 07795442272

Email: [andy@wern.org.uk](mailto:andy@wern.org.uk) Further information can be found here - <https://www.wern.org.uk/village-agents>



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## Helping Hands for Hedgehogs

by Gill Carter, Acton Turville

*When was the last time you saw a hedgehog? There was a time that it was quite common to see a poor dead hedgehog on the roads, but these days even that is a rare sight. It's not that people are driving slower or more safely, it's simply because there are less of these little creatures around. Gill Carter visited a local group who are committed to looking after hedgehogs to find out what their work involves.*

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In the UK, hedgehogs are listed as vulnerable to extinction, with the overall population having dropped to under a million. Although they are a protected species, their numbers are primarily declining because of the impact people are having on their lives. The loss of hedgerows and other wild spaces, the increased use of pesticides, as well as fencing and traffic are some of the top reasons for their demise.

Some people are still lucky enough to see these night-time visitors in their gardens but most of us may never catch sight of them. I was recently lucky enough to see several when I was invited to visit the facility run by Hedgehog Rescue Chipping Sodbury. This small community-run group rescues and rehabilitates hundreds of sick and injured animals every year, and with so few around every individual matters! At the time of my visit there were 36 patients at the rescue centre. Some were hibernating, but the majority of them (20-plus) were receiving treatment for a range of ailments. Hedgehogs that are brought in for treatment later in the year are often kept in over the winter as, by the time they are well enough to be released, it's time for them to hibernate over the winter months. They therefore stay until spring when they stand a much better chance of survival back in the wild. They are usually released back to the area they were found unless there is a good reason not to, like a busy road for example. The success rate for release back into the wild is very high and only occasionally is an enclosed safe space needed for an individual. The hedgehogs that I saw on my visit were the most recently admitted patients in the hog hospital. This time of year, the usual ailments are lung worm or other illnesses, whereas in the spring it is more likely to be injury, the strimmer or lawnmower being two of the major culprits. Although still needing treatment and a lot of TLC, the little hogs I saw were quite active and looked well on the mend.



Caring for these creatures comes at a price. Anyone with a pet of their own will understand how much it costs to look after any animal, and Hedgehog Rescue Chipping Sodbury need to raise in excess of £6000 a year to fund their work, the money going on everything from vet bills to hedgehog food. The group is therefore indebted to the support provided by its small team of volunteer helpers who work tirelessly, 365 days a year, to look after the hedgehogs.

If you would like to help hedgehogs then there are lots of things you can do. Just putting out a dish of water (making sure you keep it clean and topped up) can make a big difference. You can also put out hedgehog food - dried cat food is ideal, although shops like Tesco even have bags of dedicated hedgehog food on their shelves! Gardens provide a quiet, safe sanctuary for hedgehogs, especially during the winter hibernation period, but modern gardens are often surrounded by fences and gates which the animals are unable to negotiate. Some communities are building hedgehog highways, which is simply ensuring there are ways in and out of gardens to enable them to move around. Finally, be mindful in the spring when you are mowing the lawn or strimming, or when disturbing leaves or log piles, and check in case there is a hedgehog sleeping there.



It was a real pleasure to visit the hedgehog rescue centre in Chipping Sodbury and see first-hand their hard work and dedication to caring for these delightful animals. If you would like to make a donation to Hedgehog Rescue Chipping Sodbury to support their work, they have a gofundme page which you can find on their website <https://www.hedgehogrescuechippingsodbury.co.uk/>

*If you are lucky enough to have hedgehogs visiting your gardens, or maybe even have photos of them, contact Local Talk Back at [localtalkback1975@gmail.com](mailto:localtalkback1975@gmail.com) - we'd love to hear from you.*

## The Generational Kitchen



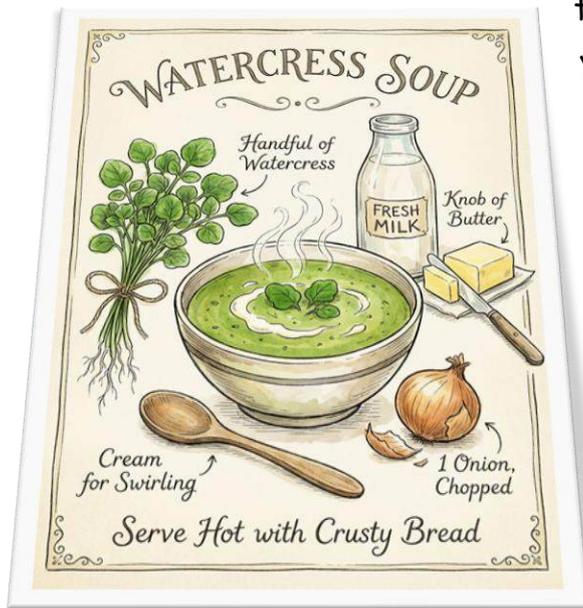
Welcome to **The Generational Kitchen** — a place for all those precious recipes handed down or handed over with all the love baked in; written on the backs of envelopes, emailed in haste or scribbled down in a frantic phone call to a loved one.

### Watercress Soup

*From the kitchen of Anne Wadey.*

My dear late Mum loved watercress with a passion — healthy and delicious! This soup is perfect for these lengthening days when you still crave comfort, but your heart is reaching towards Spring. The quantities may feel a little *relaxed*, but that's exactly how Mum wrote

them in her tattered Liberty recipe book. Trust me: you can't go far wrong.



### Ingredients

Serves 4

- 2 bunches fresh watercress
- 50g (2oz) butter
- 2 medium onions, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons plain flour
- 850ml (1½ pints) whole milk
- 2 vegetable or chicken stock cubes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Method

1. Chop the watercress, removing any very thick stalks.
2. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over a gentle heat. Add the onions and watercress and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes, until softened.
3. Sprinkle in the flour and cook gently for 1-2 minutes, stirring well.
4. Meanwhile, heat the milk in a separate saucepan until just below boiling. Gradually add it to the soup, stirring continuously, then crumble in the stock cubes.
5. Bring to a gentle simmer, cover, and cook for 15-20 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
6. If you prefer a smoother soup, blend or strain before reheating gently.

**Serve in warmed bowls with a swirl of cream and crusty bread.**



*The Generational Kitchen is brought to you by Amanda Wadey. Maybe you have inherited your own recipes which always remind you of someone special? Why not share the recipes with us, and tell us the story behind them. We can't promise to publish every one we receive, but we'd love to hear from you. The address is [localtalkback1975@gmail.com](mailto:localtalkback1975@gmail.com)*

## Answer's to the February Cryptic Crossword

By Alan Hetherington, Acton Turville

Well we can safely say the readers of Local Talk Back found our cryptic crossword something of a challenge! Thanks to those who sent in their attempts at completing the puzzles, but alas, despite a couple of people coming close, there were no correct entries so the prize remains unclaimed. Here are the answers. Next month, we hope to provide an explanation of how they were derived! Thanks again to Alan Hetherington for producing the puzzle for Local Talk Back.

S	Y	B	B	S	W	L	T						
P	L	A	C	A	T	E	T	R	I	N	I	T	Y
R	T	D	A	A	L	T	P						
I	C	E	M	O	U	N	T	T	U	T	T	I	
N	I	F	I	S	L	C							
G	E	L	N	O	B	O	E	B	E	T	A		
S	U	T	R	N	M	L							
A	C	T	O	N	T	U	R	V	I	L	L	E	
T	K	N	H	O	S	I	S						
U	N	I	T	T	U	B	A	T	E	M	P	T	
R	N	P	N	D	L	E	M						
N	G	R	O	W	T	H	D	E	E	D	A		
I	T	U	A	T	O	R							
P	R	O	R	I	G	H	T	S	O	F	W	A	Y
S	N	S	M	E	N	S							

## Sudoku

March's challenge set by Neil Fozard.

To solve the puzzle, each row, column and 3x3 box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9.

### EASY !!

		3						
			6		8			3
8	6	4		1		9		
1	3			8				5
			2				1	
9	7			6				4
6	2	1		3		7		
			4		7			6
		7						

### NOT SO EASY !!

			5				1	8
9	2		7			6		
		5						
	7				9			1
		2	6		7	3		
3			4				7	
						2		
		7			4		5	3
4	3				6			

Answers to the February quizzes:

'Easy'

6	4	7	1	2	5	3	8	9
1	8	2	9	3	7	6	5	4
9	3	5	8	6	4	1	2	7
7	6	9	5	1	2	4	3	8
8	5	4	3	7	6	9	1	2
3	2	1	4	8	9	7	6	5
2	1	3	7	4	8	5	9	6
4	9	6	2	5	3	8	7	1
5	7	8	6	9	1	2	4	3

'Not so Easy'

2	5	7	4	1	6	9	8	3
3	1	6	7	8	9	2	5	4
8	4	9	5	2	3	1	6	7
9	8	5	2	4	7	3	1	6
4	3	2	8	6	1	5	7	9
7	6	1	3	9	5	8	4	2
5	2	4	9	7	8	6	3	1
1	9	8	6	3	4	7	2	5
6	7	3	1	5	2	4	9	8

# Working with the HALO Trust

By Will Comaish

*At their meeting in January, the Badminton & Hawkesbury Branch of the Royal British Legion were delighted to welcome Will Comaish as their guest speaker. Will works for the HALO Trust, a charitable organisation which operates around the globe, helping to protect local communities from the effects of discarded landmines that litter former war zones. We are very grateful to Will for providing the following article which explains the role of the HALO Trust and some of the activities it undertakes.*



Back in January, on Milbay road, Plymouth, residents were much surprised to find themselves advised to leave their homes due to the discovery of a German 50kg “Drop Bomb” found at a building site. Surprise is an understandable reaction in a country that has not known war come to our shores since the Blitz, but for many people around the world, surprise is not the norm when it comes to the discovery of landmines, bombs and the Unexploded Ordnances of war.

Today, there are some fifty-nine active conflicts raging globally and since 1945 there have been hundreds more. Each of these conflicts leaves behind explosive weaponry that remain dangerous long after the conflict is over. In Ukraine alone, an estimated ten million landmines and booby traps have been laid since the war began. Each of these have the capacity to maim, kill, or simply negate the use of once productive land on which many people rely.

The charity for which I am privileged to work, The HALO Trust, attempts to take on this interminable task. Our stated mission is “to protect lives and restore the livelihoods of those affected by conflict”. On our foundation in 1988 this was achieved by British Ex-Military personnel on their hands and knees, clearing landmines from compounds in Kabul, Afghanistan, in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal, which had seen many internally displaced people suffering horrible wounds while attempting to return to their land and livelihoods.

Since then, we have learned many lessons, often the hard way, and expanded into a modern and professional charity, with around 12,000 staff globally, clearing landmines and explosives, managing weapons and teaching people about the risks that these items pose in the aftermath of a conflict. From Colombia to Cambodia, Ukraine to Syria, wherever we can find the means, the money and the mandate we will go.

However, it would be more than remiss of me to present the HALO Trust as a charity run by Expats. The vast majority of our workforce are local people, who have often been affected by conflict themselves. They devote years and often lifetimes to cleaning up their countries. From my experience, they are brave, hardworking and always deeply welcoming people. In this way, the HALO Trust is much akin to an extended family and much of the work we do in one country will be identical or at least similar to our work in another. Nor would I present this problem as one only tackled by HALO. The Demining sector is composed of many such charities, commercial groups and governmental bodies.



Looking at the world today, one might tend towards dejection, as we watch the world make the same mistakes that sparked HALO’s inception in 1988. But I believe that our mission is one founded on hope. Some people may have seen a picture of Princess Diana walking through a HALO Minefield in Angola in 1997. Few will know that Prince Harry walked through the same Minefield last year, to find it has become a bustling community where children now attend the Princess Diana school. This is the promise of the HALO trust come good and something which we hope to recreate all over the world.

# Church Matters

## March 2026 Letter from the Vicar

Dear Friends,

This year Marks the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis. As is well known, Francis loved nature and spoke of it in its different parts, as brother and sister. For example, he called the sun Brother Sun, and the moon, Sister Moon. Everything in nature was in relationship with humanity in his eyes.

I was sad to read in the paper yesterday, that climate scientists are warning us that we are fast approaching a tipping point, after which there will be no chance of recovery for the planet. And our climate will spiral probably quite swiftly, towards an environment in which humankind will either not survive, or find increasingly difficult. It is inconceivable, that the human race can be so blind to its most basic need. For what are we, without the Earth? What are we without oxygen to breathe and water to drink, and land to live upon?

My prayer is that the spirit of Saint Francis will once more inspire the people of the world to care for the things of nature, and to see our dependence and our relationship with nature.

After all, this was one the first of the Commandments that God gave mankind in the Bible. To be stewards of the Earth, not violators, not destroyers, not even governors, but to care for it.

With my best wishes for a happy and holy Lent,

Rev Richard Thomson, (vicar)

Badminton Benefice website: [www.badmintonbenefice.com](http://www.badmintonbenefice.com)

Email: [revrichardthomson@gmail.com](mailto:revrichardthomson@gmail.com)

Home:01454 606854/ Mob:07717791858

<b>Church Services for March 2026</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Minister</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> March Lent 2	9.30am	Lasborough	Matins	Lay Led, D Hewitt
	10.00am	Hawkesbury	Morning Prayer	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Didmarton	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	3.00pm	Acton Turville	Evening Prayer with HC	Rev R Thomson
8 <sup>th</sup> March Lent 3	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion BCP	Rev P Cheeseman
	9.30am	Leighterton	Holy Communion BCP	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Choral Eucharist	Rev R Thomson
15 <sup>th</sup> March Mothering Sunday	9.00am	Didmarton	Holy Communion BCP	Rev R Thomson
	10.00am	Hawkesbury	Family Service	Rev R Thomson, Debbie Young - Talk
	11.15am	Sopworth	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	3.00pm	Acton Turville	Evening Prayer	Mr M Butler
22 <sup>nd</sup> March Lent 5	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion CW	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Evensong	Sir Ian Macfadyen
	6.30pm	Leighterton	Evensong	Robert Bryant-Pearson
29 <sup>th</sup> March Palm Sunday	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion BCP	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Hawkesbury	Benefice Matins (preceded by procession from pond at 10.45am)	Rev R Thomson

See Benefice website for readings: [badmintonbenefice.com](http://badmintonbenefice.com)

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## Surprise Surprise!!

There was cake, laughter, music and dancing to the D-Day Dollies at the Old Royal Ship in Luckington recently, when Bill Major's friends and family threw a surprise party to mark his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Expecting a quiet lunchtime meal, Bill was shocked when the doors to the function room were flung open to reveal 120 guests! It was a perfect way for so many people to show Bill how much they appreciate his warmth and friendship, and will be remembered for many years to come. Special thanks go to Jocelyn and Tim for organising such a great event, and to all who so generously donated to the collections for St Mary's in Little Badminton and the Royal British Legion. Happy Birthday Bill!!



Pics by Yvonne Nettles and Sarah Smith



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