

TemerTalk

Delivered FREE to every household

May 2026



Inside

**Open Gardens • A spring walk • Pancakes • Tom Curran
and all your parish news**


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TemeTalk

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A community going forward with God

May 2026

Published by the churches of the
Teme Valley South Group
and delivered free to every household

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Printed by
Orphans Press, Leominster

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Items for inclusion should be
sent to Sandra Griffiths
by the 18th of the preceding month
and will be included subject to space

Dear Readers

Spring, trust and the courage to begin

I noticed the first swallow and the first house martin appear above the house on 11th April, within thirty minutes of each other. I stood and watched them for a while, these two small birds who between them had covered thousands of miles to get here, and what struck me was their complete lack of hesitation. No circling cautiously. No waiting to see how things turned out. Within what felt like minutes, they were already sizing up the eaves, getting on with the business of building. I found myself smiling. There was something quietly defiant about it — as if nobody had told them the world was in a difficult mood.

There's something humbling about that kind of purposefulness.

Jesus once pointed to birds like these — not to romanticise them, but to make a serious point. "Look at the birds of the air," he said, "they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them." He wasn't suggesting we drift through life without effort. He was pointing to something deeper — a trust woven into creation itself by a God who made it, loves it and has not for one moment stopped attending to it.

I think about the farmers in this valley when I read those words. I have a great deal of respect for people who work this land. They know, better than most, what it means to plant in faith. The seed goes into the ground and the farmer does everything right — and then the weather, the markets, the costs beyond anyone's control take over. You cannot farm without a profound relationship with uncertainty. And yet, every spring, the work begins again. The fields are prepared. The seed goes in. That, quietly, is an act of faith — and it mirrors something God himself has always asked of his people. Not certainty. Just trust.

And God, for his part, has been remarkably consistent about his side of that arrangement. "For

Continued on page 3

This month's cover picture is "Astley Barns"
by Mel Williams: see page 11

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Hanleys: Ed Yarnold 07930 882728

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07494 104781

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stokeblisskyrevillagehall@gmail.com

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Eastham –

bookings@easthammemorialhall.org.uk

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hanleyvillagehall@outlook.com

Stanford – Catherine Mawby, 07831 303792



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Parish news

From the Registers

Wedding

Blessings were held at Curradine Barns on Saturday 28th March to celebrate the marriage of Stuart and Shane-Estelle Strickland. We wish you every happiness for your future together.

Baptism

Keeley and Alesha Borkowski were baptised on Sunday 12th April at All Saints Church, Hanley William. We welcome you into the Church family with blessings.

Joy Slater

It is with sadness that we have heard from her son that Joy Slater passed away in March after a long battle with Alzheimer's Disease. Joy lived at Town Farm for a number of years and regularly played the organ at St Mary's, Kyre.

May Joy rest in peace.

Teme Valley Tots

Now the main hall refurbishments at Rochford are finished attention has turned to the kitchen. We hope to have resumed meeting by May.

For more information about our tots group do contact Tina via email on tinaslord@gmail.com.

Teme Valley South Churches Annual Meeting

This will be taking place at Stoke Bliss and Kyre village hall at 9.30am on Saturday 16th May. At this meeting churchwardens nominated by our five areas and the parochial church council for Teme Valley South is elected for 2026/27.

We will also be nominating representatives to go forward to the deanery synod for a three-year term.

Take Breath

Take Breath is on the first Friday of the month at 4pm at St Mary's, Kyre for 30 minutes, during the summer months only.

Rev'd Julia

TemeTalk

email ronsmum@icloud.com

telephone 07482 482629

Deadline for the June issue is 18th May

Dear Readers

Continued from page 1

"For I know the plans I have for you," he says in Jeremiah, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Not a vague comfort — a promise. And in Romans, Paul reminds us that nothing in all creation — nothing — can separate us from the love of God. Not difficult times, not uncertainty, not the noise of a troubled world.

That is the ground we stand on. And it holds. Thomas Aquinas put it simply: "To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible."

Hope and faith travel together. Faith is the decision to trust. Hope is the quiet certainty that God's love has the final word. The farmer planting his seed has both. The swallow returning to last year's nest has something that looks remarkably like both.

TS Elliot put it with characteristic precision: For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

Which is, perhaps, all any of us need to carry into the months ahead. The world may feel uncertain. But God is not. And that, in the end, is enough.

Pete Thorp

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Rochford 49 Club

*Congratulations to this month's
£25 winners!*

Wednesday winners

25th March	No 43	Not sold
1st April	No 48	Ann Prosser
8th April	No 37	Not sold
15th April	No 25	Barbara Weaver

Saturday winners

21st March	No 46	Not sold
28th March	No 7	Jon Adams
4th April	No 52	Not sold
11th April	No 31	Not sold
18th April	No 48	Jean Farmer

As you can see from the numbers of tickets not sold, there are still plenty of numbers available – why not join in? It's just £1 per draw, plus you get two chances each week to win £25!

Remember, you must be in it to win it!
Ring Norma Goodall on
07974 809242

Teme Valley Tote

April's prize draw, the first in this series, was decided when Rev'd Julia Curtis rolled the dice on 3rd March to select the set of random numbers and the starting point. Prizewinners are:

- £50 – Family Burgoyne of Stanford (No 566)
- £30 – Caroline Webster of Stoke Bliss (No 806)
- £20 – Mr & Mrs Tom Hauge of Knighton (No 608)

If you have any queries about the Tote, please contact Robin Dean on 01886 853295 or robin.c.dean@gmail.com – he is still looking for someone to take over its running!

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Rochford News

Village hall

The refurbishment of the village hall has gone well; it's looking very smart and should be back in service this month, although at the time of writing it is still a work in progress. There was more work in the kitchen than initially planned but it is now coming together.

Pancake evening

The village pancake evening has been rescheduled again for Friday 15th May at 7pm to celebrate the reopening of the hall. It's just £10 a head (children half price). There will also be a raffle to support the purchase of new blinds for the windows. Everyone is welcome so please come along and support this celebration. Forget cooking that evening, there will be a wonderful selection of sweet and savoury pancakes. Please book early with Ann on 01584 781317. There's no bar so please bring your own drink.

Village photo competition

There has been a great entry for the village photo competition to show the highlights of Rochford. The favourite pictures will be enlarged to decorate the walls of the newly refurbished village hall. The plan is to judge the pictures by public vote at the pancake evening.

Rochford Garden Party

The Rochford garden party is back on Saturday 27th June from 2 to 5pm at Rochford House (by kind permission of Simon and Vittoria Thornley). Enjoy a quintessential English garden party in this beautiful Rochford garden. Complete the afternoon with a delicious afternoon cream tea and add a glass of fizz for a little extra luxury, listening to serene live music. Just £15 for this unique afternoon to include: finger sandwiches, quiche, sausage roll, cakes, scone with jam and cream, together with tea or coffee & a glass of fizz or Pimms. Booking for afternoon tea is essential with Ann on 01584 781317.

Neighbourhood lunches

Neighbourhood lunches will resume on 26th May in the newly refurbished village hall. Everyone welcome. Booking for lunches is essential and takeaways should be collected between 12.30 and 1pm. Please book with Ann on 01584 781317 at least the previous week.

Church flower rota

Many thanks to everyone who gave donations in memory of loved ones to provide the beautiful Easter lilies in the church. The church looked beautiful; many thanks to everyone who helped with church flowers and cleaning the church for Easter.

Flower rota for May: Pam Powell and Norma Goodall. Thank you.

Dates for your diary

Village fête – July tbc
Big Breakfast – Saturday 19th September
Harvest Festival – Sunday 11th October
Village quiz – Friday 20th November

Contacts

Ann on 01584 781317
Andrew on 07809 658484 or through the parish WhatsApp group

If you would like to be added to the parish WhatsApp group to keep you up-to-date with all village happenings, please send me your mobile number.

Andrew Barbé

TimeTalk deadline 18th May

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News from Stoke Bliss & Kyre

Easter in Stoke Bliss

What a joy it is to be outside enjoying the spring weather with a little burst of warmth, if only for a few days. Thoughts of new life were in our minds as we celebrated Easter Day at St Peter's. It was great to welcome some new faces to the service, and also four paws, as a trainee guide dog joined us for some life experience. There were smiles all around as the sermon was regularly punctuated by loud chewing noises from the canine member of our congregation! Afterwards we were able to celebrate Rev'd Jen's birthday with a cake, adding a very festive end to a special service.

Spring Walk

The annual Spring Walk sets off from and returns to Apple Cross, Bannals Lane WR15 8RZ (W3W = PARKLAND RUSH TICKETS) on Sunday 10th May. Food will be available post walk. For booking and more details please contact Julia Berry on sbkvilleagehall@gmail.com.

Open Gardens returns

The Stoke Bliss & Kyre Open Gardens returns to our events programme this summer. Held on Sunday 14th June from 2 to 4pm, with varied private gardens across the village open and welcoming visitors. It is a great opportunity to look, admire and pick up ideas for your own garden. Tickets are £5 for adults, available from the village hall on the day. A plant sale and teas will be at Hall Farm during the afternoon.

Churchyard tidy sessions

If you are visiting St Peter's during May, don't be surprised by all the long grass in the churchyard. We are now into "No Mow May" when we allow the grass to grow, enabling our many varieties of wildflowers to mature and set seed before being cut back later in the summer. Several years of following this management pattern has already given us a noticeable increase in the density of our spring wildflower displays. We will keep the access paths into the tended area of the graveyard clear, but please understand our planned mess elsewhere.

Our next churchyard working party is on Saturday 20th June from 10am to 12 noon at St Peter's church, Stoke Bliss. All welcome, refreshments provided.

TermTalk deadline 18th May

Mike Bowdler

It was with sadness that we heard of the recent death of Mike Bowdler. His funeral was on Wednesday 8th April at 11.30 at Wyre Forest Crematorium. Mike was churchwarden at Stoke Bliss & Kyre and a valued steady presence during some turbulent times. He also served on the parish council.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Vicky and his family.

Rev'd Julia

Keeping you informed

Stay up to date with village news and events for Stoke Bliss and Kyre via the community group on Facebook – search "Stoke Bliss & Kyre Community" to join. If you are not already on the SBK email list, contact Julia Berry at sbkvilleagehall@gmail.com to join.

Jeremy Wyatt

Summer Barbecue

Saturday 30th May

Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall

Bar opens at 4pm, food served from 5pm

Please book food at sbkvilleagehall@gmail.com

Next Social Night is Friday 26th June



Thursday 14th May

Thursday 11th June

at Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall

12.30pm welcome, lunch served at 1pm

Two courses plus refreshments

to book call 07396 813137

or sbklunch@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you

Eastham Jottings

Church flowers and cleaning

May and June to be confirmed.

If you can join the rota please contact Celia Adams on 01584 781258 or email

Spring clean of churchyard and church

Thanks to everyone who helped to tidy up for the summer months on 18th April, and to those helping with the spring clean of the inside of the church.

Eastham Coffee Morning

Please join us for coffee, the monthly raffle and a catch up on Thursday 7th May at 10.30am at Eastham Memorial Hall. The rota for 2026 is:

7th May – Diana Clark

4th June – Nicky Webb

Pub Night

Join us for a quiet drink at pub night on Friday 22nd May at 7pm at Eastham Memorial Hall. Watch out for the usual banner.

Barbecue

Please join us at our barbecue on Friday 19th June at 6.30pm at Eastham Memorial Hall. Organised by friends of the Fête and open to all in the hall garden. There will be burgers and a cash bar, please bring a pudding.

Eastham fête grant scheme

Don't forget that the fête committee takes £500 from reserves to offer a pot open to all residents of Eastham who would like to put on an event or start a regular meeting or club using the village hall.

The money would be to help get your idea up and running, so if you have an idea for a community based event and would like to progress it using the hall the fête committee can offer support in the form of small grants to cover (for example) the hire of the hall or the provision of refreshments, to cover the cost of a speaker or the hire of equipment.

The only rules are that you must use the Memorial Hall and the event must be open to all.

To apply please email easthamfete@gmail.com in the first instance.

Eastham parish council annual meeting

The annual meeting of the parish council is on Tuesday 19th May at 7.30pm.

Eastham fête

Eastham fête is on Sunday 16th August starting at 12 noon.

You should receive your copy of the produce show schedule with this edition of TemeTalk. If not, please contact us and we will get a copy to you.

There are plenty of classes to join, no matter what your interest and if you have never entered before this year don't worry, this could be a good time to start. Someone will help you on the day with your entry if you ask.

In the meantime if you would like to help with setting up or on the day or if you have an idea and would like to run a stall or activity, please get in touch to let us know at easthamfete@gmail.com or contact either Jane, Celia or David.

Celia Adams

Lambert's family grocers

The mobile shop calls at Eastham Memorial Hall every Wednesday around 10.30am. Mike carries fresh vegetables, fresh bread from Ashley's Bakery and a range of offerings from Wyre Pie. If you want specific orders from Wyre Pie, Ashley's or anywhere else just ask Mike and he will order for you.

Filling Station

The next meeting is Thursday 21st May at 7.15 for a 7.30pm start. Everyone welcome. Please contact Kate on kateharley6@gmail.com.

Celia Adams

Activities at Eastham Memorial Hall

- Pilates – on Tuesdays at 1.10 and 2.20pm. For details or a taster session please contact Sue on 07974 343609 or sue579@icloud.com.
- Yoga – every Wednesday at 10am. Ring Zoe on 07962 981456 or see www.zedyoga.co.uk. Taster sessions available.
- Rejuven8 Fitness and Wellbeing fitball class – on Thursdays from 1.30 to 2.30pm. An exercise class using yoga balls to help improve posture and balance, build strength, flexibility and co-ordination. Good fun and suitable for all abilities. If you would like to come please contact Michelle on 07837 359403 to book your place.

Hanley Happenings

Free lunches

Thanks to everyone who attended our Warm and Welcome free lunches during the first three months of the year. The feedback was great and I hope we can repeat something similar next winter. There are a few people we must thank. Firstly thanks to Malvern Hills District Council for its financial support to enable us to put the lunches on and to Margie Spilsbury who came to my rescue from week two onwards. Margie's help was invaluable and her soups divine. I would also like to thank Mark Pagett the resident sandwich maker and Tracy Stuart-Allen, Kate Stallard, John Curtis and Sarah Geggie who all provided cake along the way. Thanks also to Alan Micklethwaite and everyone who helped in any way to make the lunches a great success.

Village hall news

We have invited Hooked and Cooked fish and chip van (Tom) to continue to come to the village hall once a month, starting on Tuesday 19th May. We have also invited Wheelie Good Pizzas to come once a month on the alternate fortnight, starting on Wednesday 6th May. We don't have anything else planned at the moment as we are hoping to start some refurbishment work on the hall soon.

Diane Pagett

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Open garden

Anna Fletcher will open her garden on 23rd May in aid of the Alzheimer's Society. Anna's garden, at Hanley Court Gardens, off New Road, Hanley William, is always a pleasure to see. The garden will be open between 11am and 4pm and there will be a well stocked plant stall but no refreshments. There is plenty of parking.

Anna has decided not to charge for entry to the garden but is asking for donations. Everything raised will go to the Alzheimer's Society.

Carole Gardner

Table Tennis at Hanley Village Hall

It was pleasing to see in April's TemeTalk that Carole Gardner is still promoting table tennis at Hanley village hall.

Sometime after we moved to Stoke Bliss, about twelve years ago, a note from Carole appeared in TemeTalk asking if anyone was interested in playing table tennis. Having got a table myself and realising the hall was just up the road from me, I expressed an interest. Notices appeared in subsequent editions of TemeTalk and then, one day, Carole called to say that, finally, she had found "a couple of men" for me! The men were Dene Fokias and Mike Williams and, over time, we three have been joined by men and women from neighbouring villages.

It's an enjoyable way of keeping fit (although I am now struggling a bit!) for an outlay of only £3 per session. We have three tables available to use, so why not give it a try?

Mike Downes

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Services in Stanford

Sunday 3rd May

Holy Communion at 10am with hymns

Sunday 7th June

Holy Communion at 10am with hymns

Flowers for May – Alexandra Winnington

Easter services

The Easter flowers and decorations by Sarah Burgoyne were beautifully arranged.

The Maundy Thursday service on 2nd April was very moving with the TVS choir joining us for this sombre and thoughtful service.

The dawn service on 5th April was the highlight of the year so far. The service started at 6am and the sunrise that followed was spectacular. Rev'd Julia Curtis and Rev'd Jen Jones led the service. Many thanks to Andy Nicol for laying the lighting the fire; the wood and firefighters were provided free of charge by David Ward of Eastham. It was rather windy for the paschal candle used for Easter but its flame was held to light everyone's candle. Bacon rolls, hot cross buns and hot drinks were enjoyed afterwards.



Rev'd Julia with the paschal candle at the dawn service.
Photo by Barbara Williams

Angel Gardens

Angel Gardens' new farm shop at Mill Farm Country Retail supplies fresh milk from Wilton Farm in Bromyard (milk bottles filled on site) and its supporting local businesses including Legges of Bromyard, Lamings Bakery, Wyre Pies of Tenbury and Lilley Pad of Clifton on Teme jams and chutneys. Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and Sunday from 9am to 2pm.

www.angelgardens.co.uk

Daffodil Day

On 21st March we had another lovely celebration of the splendid array of daffodils in Stanford which are enjoyed every year. Activities included tile painting, creating felt daffodils with pipe cleaners, painting tealight holders, vases, pictures and baubles. Some beautiful artwork was created and we were lucky to be joined by Rev'd Julia Curtis, Rev'd Tobias Thornes and Ordinand Robyn Rooney.

Huge thanks to artist Mel Williams and to Jill Smith (pictured below), who both helped run the activities and made it such fun.

Thanks also to Sue Softly, and Ann Wall for serving tea and cakes and all who made cakes and lemon curd. Funds were raised for St Mary's church.



Jill Smith (left) and Mel Williams at Daffodil Day

Stanford Fête

Stanford with Orleton fête in aid of the village hall and St Mary's church will be held on Saturday 6th June from 1 to 7pm at Orleton Court Farm.

Activities include dog show, tug of war, guess the weight of the cake, tombola, face painting, coconut shy, skittles, lucky dip and stands with games for all ages, tea and cakes, bar and barbecue. Entry is free.

Donations of prizes for tombola, wheelbarrow of drinks and bric-a-brac are very welcome. Contact stanfordwithorletonvillagehall@gmail.com

If you would like to help on the day please contact Sue on 07929 479865 or Alexandra on 07891 346783.

Alexandra Winnington

Rock Bridge Club

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Mel's new exhibition – all about sheds

Having trained in London and then taught there, Mel Williams moved with her young family to Martley in 1987 where she lived for nearly 20 years. She began Martley Art Group in 1991 combining family, her own painting and teaching. She now lives in Eastham with her veterinary surgeon husband Jim Cumming, having retired from teaching some 31 years later.

Living in the country has given her easy access to the landscape and animals she loves. Her work has always been as a response to things around her and life events but the subject must ignite a



spark, something that holds her interest. Then the process of trying to retain the essence but show it in a new light begins.

Her latest exhibition, *Gestural Matter*, is all about sheds. "This May I am taking my sheds to London," she says "I have loved finding dilapidated corrugated iron structures, forgotten now but vital once."

The exhibition, in collaboration with ceramdist Jo Dawson, is at 54 The Gallery, London W1J 7QX. The preview is on Monday 25th May from 2.30 to 8.30pm and the exhibition runs from Tuesday 26th May to Saturday 30th May from 10.30am to 8.30pm. Do go and see their work.

www.mel-williams.co.uk

This month's cover picture is "Astley Barns" by Mel Williams: the barns at Astley Farm in New Road, Hanley Broadheath, painted in oils on canvas. It is one of the pictures she will be showing in London in May. Above left is Mel in her studio and above right is another of her sheds.



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Another successful season for The Fox crib team



The Fox Inn crib team finished the 2025/26 Brom-yard Crib League season with a respectable third place, although we failed to lift any silverware this year.

Proceeds from the sale of raffle tickets gave us a sum of £49 which has been donated to the Midlands Air Ambulance.

Many thanks to our regular and occasional team members for leaving their warm firesides on the coldest and darkest winter nights to travel to the furthest reaches of the district.

Thanks also to Ray Neave from The Lion for organising the league and making it all happen, his efforts too often thwarted by death and disaster, and to Sharon and John for making us so welcome at The Fox. We especially enjoy Sharon's fantastic post-match sandwiches and chips.

The average age of our team is hovering around 70 and we would love to welcome some younger players. We practise at The Fox every Wednesday evening during the off-season so if you are interested in learning to play this exciting, intriguing and sometimes frustrating game, please come and join us.

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Travel sketchbooks with Shelly Perkins

The joyful appearance of the sun these past days has had me dreaming of the next travel adventures I have planned this year. Having returned from a very beautiful two weeks in Namibia in February, the cold weather was a bit of a shock and I was ready for spring.

I was in Namibia with a wonderful group of art students and we enjoyed the spectacle of the normally arid parts of Etosha National Park during the height of unusually abundant rains. The mesmerising mirror of the saturated salt flats against the deeply brooding overhead storms made for exciting subject matter and our sketchbooks filled with wildlife under stormy skies – rain in Africa somehow seems a lot more exciting than dreary grey rain on the Broadheath!

My next painting adventures will take me to France, Canada and India. As a travel and wildlife artist I have been to some incredible places to draw, paint and gather references for studio work. In more recent years I have been able to share some of those adventures with painting students. I have taught artists how to capture the play of light on the Merced River in the heart of Yosemite Valley. I've demonstrated quick wildlife sketching techniques as we've sat with leopards in South Luangwa at the end of the Great Rift Valley and I've helped students capture the urgency of a rapidly setting sun over some of the largest sand dunes in the world in Deadvlei, Namibia. No matter where



Shelly painting in Namibia

we are, it's the delight, surprise and confidence that I see growing in my students that really make the experiences special.

My next painting trip at the end of June is to central France. Here we study animals, flowers and the gentle way of life of a corner of rural France. In November I return to a deeply inspiring corner of India, Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh, famous for tigers, wild dogs, leopards and sloth bears. Our studies here will include the wildlife that we see alongside depictions of quiet, rural India with a little inspiration from the area's traditional Gond painters.

If you are dreaming of a wild escape and learning how to capture those memories in a travel sketchbook, join me in France (27th June to 4th July and 1st to 8th August) or India (21st to 28th November). All abilities are welcome, from beginners to experienced artists. Get in touch or head to my website for more details.
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Acton Scott Heritage Farm – visiting and volunteering

Acton Scott Historic Working Farm, on the A49 between Ludlow and Church Stretton, was a popular tourist attraction for many years until it closed in 2021. To the delight of its many fans it reopened in 2025 as Acton Scott Heritage Farm. Alison Benbow writes about visiting the farm and volunteering.

I took my daughter and her two young children on Easter Monday and they loved it, as my children used to. There is plenty to see and do including the Shire horses Edward and Bernie and the Gloucester Old Spot pigs Dulcie and Joan. Dulcie amuses with her snores and Joan had delivered three enchanting piglets the night before. There are Golden Guernsey goats, geese, hens and chicks and of course the Dairy Shorthorns and the adorable Shropshire sheep with their cute lambs. There is butter making in the dairy on some open days and you can come into the Bailiff's Cottage to see what the Bailiff's wife and Granny Bailiff are up to. There is a play barn too and all things spinning and weaving can be seen in the fleece barn. There is also a play area and a great café (open Wednesday to Sunday even when the farm is closed), so it's a great day out. There are specialist weekends and workshops to come so check the website.



The farm is open from 10am to 4pm every Saturday and Sunday and on bank holidays until 1st November and from Wednesday to Sunday in the school holidays.

Those of us who volunteer do it because we love the place and we are a friendly enthusiastic and expanding team committed to making the farm a success. It is a charity so relies on us for all sorts of tasks, small and large. I have done many things: tour guiding, cooking on the range as the Bailiff's wife (I will probably be Granny), weeding, clearing and raking leaves. No skills are needed for most of the tasks, just enthusiasm. We have a sewing bee once a month when we make costumes and other essential items and work on our patchwork and rag rugging.

Volunteering is great fun, sociable and rewarding, so if you fancy coming along for an hour or two or longer then please follow the directions for volunteering on the website and we would love to see you. Volunteer days are usually Wednesdays and the sewing bee is the first Wednesday of every month. For details see the website and email sabrina.cleevly@ashf.org.uk with any questions.

Alison Benbow

website: actonscottheritagefarm.org.uk

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<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">ON STAGE</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">A Gilbert and Sullivan Gala Concert Saturday 2 May, 7.30pm</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">ON STAGE</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Much Wenlock Male Voice and the Regal Community Chorus in Concert Saturday 4 April, 7.30pm</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">ON SCREEN</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">The Super Mario Galaxy Movie (PG) Monday 4 May, 11am</p>
<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">ON STAGE</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Authentic Opera Company presents A Night at the Opera Saturday 9 May, 7.30pm</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">ON STAGE</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Tenbury Town Band Saturday 10 May, 7pm</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">ON SCREEN</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Projectionist's Pick Monty Python's Life of Brian (12A) Tuesday 19 May, 2pm</p>
<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">ON SCREEN</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">EPIC: ELVIS PRESLEY IN CONCERT (12A) Thursday 21 May, 7pm</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">ON SCREEN</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Michael (12A) Friday 22nd May, 7pm, Monday 25th May, 7pm & Tuesday 26th May, 7pm</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">ON STAGE</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Hello Again... The Neil Diamond Songbook Saturday 23 May, 7.30pm</p>

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Road closure causes chaos

It was Sunday 8th February and we were driving home from a weekend in Norfolk. We had left our hotel after breakfast and hadn't stopped for lunch or even a coffee, so we were looking forward to a nice cup of tea. We got as far as Rochford. Then we hit the road closed signs. As Severn Trent had also closed Rhyse Lane, our nice cup of tea was a bit more than ten minutes away.

The B4204 at Rochford splintered and then collapsed on 6th February. At first it was just a 20 foot section which had slipped and engineers cordoned off the single lane. But as the full extent of the damage became clear the road was fully shut as Worcestershire Highways engineers assessed the damage.

The road closure has added several miles to a journey from Hanley Broadheath and Rochford to

Tenbury causing headaches for regular commuters, especially as the price of fuel rises. For people in Tenbury it has made the journey to Worcester and the M5 longer and more tedious.

Everyone's favourite Evri driver, Andrew, says he has had to rearrange all his regular routes between Stoke Bliss, Hanley, Rochford and Tenbury. Sharon, landlady of The Fox Inn, says she is losing business as customers no longer call in on their way home from work.

Worcestershire Highways said: "The road remains closed and investigations are ongoing to determine the cause". As we go to press they have requested a technical geological survey.

Local MP Harriett Baldwin has called for "action rather than words" as it seems that the road will remain closed for at least a year.



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Ancient stories for contemporary wisdom

Hello again to this series of short articles which look at ancient stories and wisdom for today. So far, I've offered some thoughts on the opening story of Genesis and what we can helpfully learn from its description of God making everything in six days.

What we often overlook – and it has some real insights for contemporary life – is what happened on the seventh day. What happened that is so important is (paradoxically) that not a lot happened. Day six has come to a great crescendo. Every thing has been made. Everything is very good. Humans (animals a bit like God) have been created and put in charge of the wonderful world. On the seventh day, God rests. God declares the seventh day special and a day of rest, a sabbath.

The pinnacle of creation is not day six, humans in charge. The pinnacle of creation is day seven, humans at rest. The highpoint of the story is relaxation and leisure.

The wisdom for us today is that we too need rest and relaxation. In one church I was part of we had someone whose job was to design very large electric motors. He told me his rule of thumb was to design motors which under normal load ran at about 70% of capacity. Less than that and the motor was bigger and more expensive than necessary; larger than that and there was nothing in reserve for those busy times and there was an

increased likelihood of breakdown and burn out. That, I told him, was pretty much how God had designed creation – and us in it.

Our society is increasingly 24/7. It is enormously difficult to live lives with “sabbath” built in. Ancient wisdom teaches us that “doing nothing” isn't actually doing nothing or wrong. Finding time for rest is helping us to live in a way that reflects the nature of the God who made us.

Robert Barlow

The Filling Station

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 21st May at Eastham Memorial Hall at 7.15 for a 7.30pm start.

Our speaker will be Kerry McLeish. Having experienced a period of exhaustion 15 years ago and having discovered how to rest well, Kerry now works as a rest coach and mentor. She lives locally and is a trained spiritual director and has a diploma in theology, ministry and mission, focusing particularly on the Issue of rest.

We look forward to your joining us for these evenings of fellowship, worship, teaching and refreshments. If you are not on our mailing list and would like further information please contact me on kate.harley6@gmail.com.



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Big Bake for The Brain Tumour Charity



There was a fantastic show of community spirit at Hanley village hall on Sunday 22nd March as people gathered for the Big Bake, a tea and cake sale in support of The Brain Tumour Charity.

Organised by Tracy Beverley-Smith, the Big Bake was held in aid of a cause very close to the family's heart. Their daughter Amber was diagnosed with cancerous tumours of the brain and spine in 2020 and the day provided an opportunity for friends, neighbours and the wider community to come together in support.

People came from Eastham, Rochford, Hanley Childs, Hanley Willam, Stoke Bliss, Tenbury and beyond (plus a couple of hikers who were cajoled into joining in after returning to their car and a full car park). They not only turned up in great num-

bers but also generously donated cakes and raffle prizes. Tables were filled with homemade bakes and the hall was packed, creating a warm and lively atmosphere throughout the afternoon.

As well as tea and cakes, there was a raffle, a cake auction and a fun "guess how many jumps on a pogo stick" game run by Amber, which proved very popular.

Thanks to everyone who contributed, including Parksey's Clearance Outlet for donating a beautifully planted spring container as a raffle prize, Tenbury Tesco for supplying the tea, coffee and hot chocolate and Tenbury Spar for a £50 voucher used towards a selection of prizes.

£864 was raised for the charity. If you would like to add to this fantastic total, Tracy's JustGiving page remains open. Please go to www.justgiving.com/page/tracy-beverley-1-smith.



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Teme Valley Wildlife

Mankind has found many uses for plants, using them as food, fuel, clothing and building materials and learning to exploit their properties in medicines, dyes and perfumes. One aspect of plant use which I had never considered before was their potential contribution to civil engineering. Not, that is, until a friend lent me a hefty tome with the somewhat uninspiring title "The uses of vegetation in civil engineering". The book is crammed with fiendish-looking mathematical formulae calculating such details as the forces of water absorption through plant roots and the torsional effects of increasing windspeed on the trunks of trees growing up hillsides. I ignored these and, following the main principles outlined in the book, began to look anew at the landscaping schemes used at the completion of civil engineering projects.

We are all familiar with the sight of rows of tree-guards protecting new shrubs and trees planted along dual carriageways and we enjoy the



Willow catkins

flowers of cowslips and ox-eye daisy which are often seeded into new grass verges. Trees and shrubs may be planted as screens, windbreaks and noise diffusers but my friend's book concentrated on the use of grasses, shrubs and trees in preventing the erosion of soil by wind and rain and in stabilising steep banks of bare soil left

after the creation of deep road and railway cuttings.

I sometimes drive along the A417 at Birdlip, Gloucestershire, where huge works are in progress at the site of the old Air Balloon pub. Thousands of tons of rock have been blasted away and countless tons of earth have been shifted and smoothed over in a project that seems far from finished. Some of the new slopes look very steep and it will be interesting to see what is planted to help keep them in place. The type and structure of the soil determines the depth that roots can penetrate and

Continued on page 24

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Continued from page 23

plants with different root depths and root configurations can be selected for any given site. Grass roots spread widely but not deeply. They are good for trapping water and protecting soil from the effects of water, wind and footfall. Deeper-rooted plants might be chosen for steep slopes, and my eye was drawn to a technique in which bundles of horizontal willow twigs were dug into recesses at regular intervals along the sides of a high bank.

Willow plants root very easily, even under water, and grow rapidly, making them ideal for such projects, particularly when used along riverbanks in schemes designed to counteract river erosion. It seems apt to use a plant with diverse other uses, namely for basketweaving, as a source of the medicine aspirin and as the raw material for making cricket bats.

Next time you pass a new road scheme, look at the planting. Is it just for visual enhancement or is it performing a structural function? Whatever the reason, growing plants is always to be encouraged. And I think I can give my friend his book back now!

The next meeting of the Teme Valley Wildlife Group will be at 7.30pm on Thursday 14th May at Stoke Bliss and Kyre Village Hall. We welcome Alison Wakeman whose talk will be about bees. Members and friends are welcome; it is just £3 on the door.

Stephanie Mcroft

For up-to-date information on what wildlife is being seen in the area, or to give us your sightings or comments, please visit our Facebook page. Our programme of events, newsletter and bird survey are available on our website at www.teme-valley-wildlife.org. We hold meetings on the second Thursday of the month January to November. Everyone is welcome.

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Tom Curran

Following the 2025 celebrations for the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in the Far East and Europe, Ed Yarnold tried to gather information about Tom Curran of Brickyards Cottage, Hanley Broadheath (now the home of Neville and Barbara) who had been a prisoner of war in the Far East for four years.

Tom never mentioned his time as a PoW. Ed searched the internet and asked for information in TemeTalk. Finally a lady from Shelsey, an expert in family and military history, came up trumps. This is Tom's story ...

Tom enlisted on 20th October 1939, his 21st birthday. He joined the Suffolk regiment and completed his training around England. During this time he married Hilda Dennis of Dudshill Court, Upper Sapey.

The Suffolks boarded a ship in Liverpool thinking that they were off to the Middle East but they sailed to Nova Scotia, enduring rough seas. Tom had never been on a ship before and was very seasick. From Nova Scotia they took another ship to Trinidad and on to Cape Town, finally berthing on 9th December, two days before Pearl Harbour.

Now that the Japanese had joined the war, the Suffolks knew they would be sent to the Far East. They sailed for Singapore, arriving on 1st February 1942. The Japanese invasion led to the surrender of the British Army just 18 days later.

Marching to various camps meant it was not long before the food ran out so they had to live on rice. Tom taught himself to mend shoes – being a cobbler entitled him to extra rations, probably saving his life!

He worked on the infamous Burma railway and the “bridge over the river Kwai”. When the railway was finished he was moved to several other camps and suffered from malnutrition, cholera, malaria and dysentery.

The Japanese were in trouble

Somehow he survived and soon discovered that the Japanese were in trouble. The PoWs were shipped to isolated islands in unmarked ships and came under attack from the Americans.

Japan surrendered after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Tom was released on 2nd September 1945. He needed medical care after three and a half years as a prisoner. It was probably 1946 before he was fit enough to return to the UK. He had not seen his wife and family for over four years.

He and Hilda moved into a cottage on Poke-



PoWs working on the Burma railway

Lane where he continued to work as a cobbler. Using his army pay, which had been held over and had reached a substantial sum, he and Hilda were able to buy Brickyards Cottage which came with about ten acres of land. They grew vegetables and had a sales round. They converted a barn where they bred and fattened turkeys and cockerels for Christmas.

Their son John had mental health issues. He went to school for a short time with me but was eventually sent to The Castle, a special school in Kidderminster. As he grew he became more of a handful for Tom and Hilda and finally had to stay permanently at the school. Tom and Hilda raised money for the school from their now large sales round. But they had more heartache when John was murdered by another resident at the school.

Tom was never much of a speller

Tom put up a sign at Brickyards to advertise the vegetables he had for sale and one that raised a smile was “Lettucs” – Tom was never much of a speller!

Tom died at the relatively young age of 64. His health had been ravaged by his time as a PoW. Hilda lived for another ten years and they are both buried at Upper Sapey church.

We must remember what young men ... sacrificed for their country

We must remember for ever what young men like Tom sacrificed for their country, enduring unimaginable hardships and separation from wife and family. To lose a child to murder after all he had been through must have been a terrible sadness. Our generation should be grateful that we have lived in peaceful times; let's hope it stays that way.

Ed Yarnold

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What's on in Teme Valley South

May

- 2nd Saturday Beltane Spring Celebration, Hollow Meadow, Stoke Bliss, 11am
3rd Sunday Open Garden, Lower House Farm, Vine Lane WR15 6RL, 11am-4pm
7th Thursday Eastham Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am
10th Sunday Stoke Bliss spring walk, Apple Cross, Barnnals Lane, 11am
14th Thursday Stoke Bliss & Kyre Neighbourhood Lunch, Stoke Bliss & Kyre VH, 12.30pm
15th Friday Rochford pancake evening, Rochford Village Hall, 7pm
16th Saturday Teme Valley South Churches Annual Meeting, Stoke Bliss & Kyre VH, 9.30am
18th Monday Eastham Memorial Hall AGM, Eastham Memorial Hall, 7pm
19th Tuesday Eastham Parish Council Annual Meeting, Eastham Memorial Hall, 7.30pm
21st Thursday The Filling Station, Eastham Memorial Hall, 7.15pm
22nd Friday Eastham Pub Night, Eastham Memorial Hall, 7pm
23rd Saturday Open Garden at Hanley Court Gardens, 11am
26th Tuesday Rochford Neighbourhood Lunch, Rochford Village Hall, 12.30pm
30th Saturday Summer Barbecue, Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall, bar open from 4pm

June

- 4th Thursday Eastham Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am
6th Saturday Stanford with Orleton Fête, Orleton Court Farm, 1pm
11th Thursday Stoke Bliss & Kyre Neighbourhood Lunch, Stoke Bliss & Kyre VH, 12.30pm
14th Sunday Stoke Bliss & Kyre Open Gardens, from 2pm
Open Garden, Lower House Farm, Vine Lane WR15 6RL, 11am-4pm
20th Saturday Churchyard working party, St Peter's Stoke Bliss, 10am
27th Saturday Rochford Garden Party, Rochford House, 2pm

July

- 2nd Thursday Eastham Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am
9th Thursday Stoke Bliss & Kyre Neighbourhood Lunch, Stoke Bliss & Kyre VH, 12.30pm

**Send items for inclusion to Sandra Griffiths by 18th of the previous month
telephone 07482 482629 or email ronsmum@icloud.com**

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