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December 2025/January 2026



**A very merry Christmas
and a happy New Year
to all our readers**

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TemeTalk

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A community going forward with God

December 2025/January 2026

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

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www.temevalleysouth.org.uk

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

Winter's Quiet Work

As December settles over the Teme Valley, we could be forgiven for seeing only cold and grey-ness. The fields rest, the hedgerows stand bare, and the hills seem to draw in close. It's easy to long for lighter days — or to take comfort in the glow of Christmas lights and carols that make winter feel gentler than it is.

Yet winter has its own kind of truth. It strips life back to what really matters. The trees practise the art of letting go; the soil hides quiet industry beneath its frozen surface. Here in our valley, life hasn't ended — it's waiting its turn. There's something quietly faithful about that — an assurance that rest, too, is part of creation's rhythm.

The Christmas story fits this season perfectly. New life doesn't wait for warmth or welcome. It comes quietly, in a backwater, into cold air and uncertainty. God chooses winter, not summer. The Christ-child is born not into comfort, but into the same raw world we know — and that makes the light all the more precious when it arrives.

So as we wait — through Advent and into January's half-light — perhaps we're being invited to do likewise: to trust what's still forming out of sight, to make peace with our own seasons of stillness and to see in every frost and dawn mist the promise that life, however hidden, is already stirring.

May you have a blessed Christmas season, and may Christ watch over you and all those you love — in warmth and in cold, in light and in quiet waiting.

Pete Thorp

Reader, Teme Valley South

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Trevor Matthews 07768 942169

Hanleys: Ed Yarnold 07930 882728

Stanford: Alexandra Winnington 07891 346783

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Jenny Barbé 01584 781298

Mel Williams 01584 781284

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Kate Walton
07494 104781

Village Hall Bookings

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stokeblisskyrevillagehall@gmail.com

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Eastham –

bookings@easthammemorialhall.org.uk

Hanley – Sarah Geggie, 07796 170949

hanleyvillagehall@outlook.com

Stanford – Catherine Mawby, 07831 303792



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Parish news

From the Registers

Funeral

Eila Joan Edith Tucker (nee Hipkiss) of Great Wit-ley was buried at Eastham church on Thursday 4th December. We send our condolences to her loved ones. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Teme Valley Tots

We meet on Fridays from 10.30am to 12 noon at Rochford village hall. Our last day before Christmas is 19th December and we return on 9th January. For more information about our tots group do contact Tina via email on tinaslord@gmail.com.

Bible Reflection Group

We are a small group who meet weekly on Friday mornings to share a cuppa and a biscuit (or two) and delve into scripture. We do this in a relaxed and easy-going way sharing our thoughts and reflections on what we have read using a study guide book.

This is an invitation for you to accompany us as we travel through Advent and await the arrival of the baby Jesus.

For further details please contact
Rev'd Jen Jones, tvscurate@gmail.com

Soul Space

We are continuing to explore and develop a time of fellowship after the Stoke Bliss & Kyre neighbourhood lunch each month

Those attending share ten minutes in fellowship as we sing a hymn, listen to a short passage of scripture and share a prayer.

All are welcome

For further information please contact
Rev'd Jen Jones at tvscurate@gmail.com

The Filling Station

There will be no Filling Station meeting in December so our next meeting will be on Thursday 15th January at Eastham Memorial Hall at 7.15 for a 7.30pm start. A speaker has not yet been arranged but if you are on our regular mailing list you will receive up to date information about the meeting nearer the time.

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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Rochford 49 Club

***Congratulations to this month's
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Wednesday winners

22nd October	No 55	Not sold
29th October	No 32	Andrew Barbé
5th November	No 16	Sue Gumbley
12th November	No 7	Rogers Ayres

Saturday winners

25th October	No 55	Not sold
1st November	No 29	Rosemary Ayres
8th November	No 44	Dan Taylor
15th November	No 25	Not sold

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

October's prize draw, the eighth in this series, was decided when Rev'd Jen Jones rolled the dice on 1st November to select the set of random numbers and the starting point. Prizewinners are:

£50 – **Phil Wilkes** of Knighton (No 664)

£30 – **Chris Moule** of Pensax (No 340)

£20 – **Mr & Mrs Forouhandeh** of Pensax (No 305)

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

As we come to the end of another year, many thanks go to all those who are actively involved in our village communities and help with and support our village events. We thank those who contribute to, support and deliver this magazine together with our cooks, flower arrangers, cleaners, grass cutters etc, you all do a great job. If you would like to be involved in helping arrange village activities, we would love to hear from you as our committee has lost a few members lately. Please contact Ann or Andrew.

Rochford Quiz

Thanks to everyone who helped with and participated in Rochford Quiz in November. Thanks to your support and generosity with the draw the event raised much needed funds for the village hall renovations. A sell-out night and a huge thanks to Bob, the quizmaster, who as ever provided an entertaining, informative and challenging set of questions.

Teme Valley Tots

On Children in Need day the tots were encouraged to bring their teddies. As well as the usual toys they had Pudsey Bears to colour in and sang teddy songs. A collection from mums and helpers raised over £150 for Children in Need – thanks to everyone who contributed.

Neighbourhood Lunch

Dates for sit down and takeaway neighbourhood lunches are 16th December for a Christmas lunch and raffle, 26th January and 24th February. Everyone is 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.

Village Christmas Lunch

The village Christmas lunch will be on Sunday 14th December at Rochford village hall at 12.30 for 1pm. A great start to the festivities with a full three-course lunch with wine and crackers. This is always popular – just £15 per head (under 12s half price, under 5s free). All welcome but please book your place to avoid disappointment. After lunch you are welcome to our carol service in our beautiful church.

Carol Service

Everyone is welcome to our warm church, beautifully decorated for Christmas, on Sunday 14th December at 3.30pm to celebrate the festive season with a traditional carol service led by the TVS Choir. The service is followed by tea or coffee and mince pies.

Christmas Eve Midnight Mass

On Wednesday 24th December at 11.30pm at Rochford church. Everyone is welcome to this uplifting service to greet Christmas Day.

MHDC Legacy Grant Scheme

We applied to the Legacy Grant Scheme to improve the insulation and décor of the village hall and to refurbish the kitchen. The scheme was oversubscribed but we were fortunate in our application being successful although we do have to find some match funding. We still have to meet compliance issues including showing evidence of demand, using user feedback surveys, so please respond positively to these. We are looking for quotes for the work which should take place in the new year. The village hall will be designated a community hub.

December church flower rota

Christmas volunteers, thank you.

A Message of thanks from Ann

Here I am again but on a much sadder note to say a really heartfelt thank you to everyone of you for all the love, support, cards and beautiful messages that Edward and I have received following the untimely passing of Emma. I feel so privileged to live in this village that is full of such lovely people. It has been a tough couple of months and still is, but you have all helped to ease the way, we are so grateful. Many, many thanks. Ann and family xx

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

Stoke Bliss and Kyre

As the year draws near its end, it is time to reflect on all the wonderful volunteers who plan, prepare and deliver our busy calendar of social and fund-raising events for the village hall and the church throughout the year. Our hardworking helpers turn out regularly to cook for the village; they deliver TemeTalk; they sit on committees; they move furniture and equipment for our events; they grow the plants and produce; they create beautiful floral displays; they cut the grass and heave the rubbish; they staff the stalls; they bake the cakes and make endless cups of tea; they lend their time, their vehicles, their trains and their homes. So to all our volunteers, very many thanks for everything you do. And also to the wider community, thank you for supporting all our village and church activities this year. We hope to see you again at next year's events.

Key dates for your diary in December are the Darkness-into-Light Service held this year at St Mary's, Kyre on Sunday 7th December at 4pm and the annual village Carol Service at St Peter's, Stoke Bliss on Sunday 21st December at 3pm. Our Relishing Rural Choir will be singing at both services. And everyone is welcome to join the family Christmas Day service at St Peters at 10am on Christmas Day.

Christmas Tree Festival

Stoke Bliss and Kyre churches will be entering the Stanford Christmas Tree Festival again this year, held over the weekend of 6th/7th December. Our entry will build on last year's theme of Recycle, Reuse and Rejoice. Look out for posts on the village Facebook page and email list for when the crafting session will be held.

Church roof restoration update

We are still waiting on detailed tenders to be assessed by our managing architects so no further details of the project costs are available. It is still our aim to carry out works in the third quarter of 2026, subject to securing funding.

Social Night

Friday 27th February

Bar opens at 7, food served at 8pm

Please book food at sbkvillagehall@gmail.com

Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall

Churchyard tidy sessions

There will be a break from tidy sessions during the winter until we restart in March/April. New helpers are always welcome, so look out for dates in February's TemeTalk.

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 sbkvillagehall@gmail.com to join..

Jeremy Wyatt

Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall

The village hall has hosted a marvellous selection of events in 2025 and I would like to thank everyone who has helped to organise these events and attended them. The hall continues to be at the heart of the community, bringing friends and neighbours together on a regular basis – long may this continue. Keep your eyes peeled for an update in the new year of events planned for 2026.

Trevor Matthews,

Chairman Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall Committee



Thursday 11th December

Thursday 15th January

Thursday 19th February

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

**Deadline for the next issue of TemeTalk is
18th January**

Eastham Jottings

Church flowers and cleaning

December – Christmas team

January – Adrian and Joanna Worsley

February – Stuart and Josie Ward

Thanks to everyone who has helped on the rota in 2025 and merry Christmas to all our helpers for your work during the year.

Eastham coffee morning

Please come to the December coffee morning on Thursday 4th December at 10.30am at Eastham Memorial Hall. Tony and Stella Wood will be leading the Christmas team to serve up coffee and mince pies. Merry Christmas to everyone who has arranged and attended coffee mornings during 2025; special thanks to Helen Matravers for preparing the room in advance, to Mike Young for coming over from Worcester and to friends from Blakehouse Caravan Park for all their help and support.

The next coffee morning is on Thursday 8th January.

We welcomed Diane Thomson of Air Ambulance to the November coffee morning and she was delighted to receive a donation of £103.

Pub night

The Christmas pub night will be on Friday 19th December from 7pm at Eastham Memorial Hall. Beryl Lewis will be manning the bar. Merry Christmas to everyone who has helped and attended during the year. Look out for the usual banner by the Eastham Christmas tree; thanks to David Clarke, Andy Chapman and Roger Daniels for their help with the tree.

Christmas Fayre at Eastham Memorial Hall

Thanks to everyone who helped make the Christmas Fayre on Sunday 16th November happen, despite the inclement weather. There was a vast array of stalls inside and outside the hall. Thanks to everyone for the truly Eastham barbecue, tea and coffee, cakes and mince pies and for manning the bar. Thanks from the children for the craft room and the opportunity to send letters to Father Christmas.

The winners of the Fancy Dress Dog Show were:

Best dressed puppy – Winnie

Best dressed dog – Truffle

Best dressed dog and owner – Tim and Lola

Many thanks to Bonnies for sponsoring the prizes.

Christmas wreath making

Come along to a repeat of last year's class run by Lucy Lawson on Tuesday 9th December at 7pm. She will have a vast selection of fresh and dried foliage to choose from. £25 per person, to include a festive drink and nibble. Ring or text 07855 132894 to book. www.wildbylucylawson.co.uk.

Grass cutting

It's been a difficult year for grass cutting at the church and the hall but many thanks to David Clarke and to those who helped keep all the grass at bay during 2025.

Maintenance day at the hall

Come along to the regular maintenance day to tidy the gutters and all areas of the hall on 24th January. All hands on deck!

The Filling Station

The next meeting is on 15th January (no meeting in December). Everyone welcome. Please contact Kate on kateharley6@gmail.com. Thanks to The Filling Station for using Eastham Memorial Hall for your meetings – we are delighted to have you with us each month.

EV charger at Eastham Memorial Hall

Contact rob@lawsonelectrical.co.uk for more information.

Christmas Eve Crib Service

Join us at Eastham at 3pm on Christmas Eve for a joyful child-led celebration of the Nativity. The children of Lindridge School have been busy creating wonderful props in sessions led and inspired by Mel Williams. These props will help bring the Christmas story to life in a fun and memorable way. Children are invited to come dressed as Nativity characters and take part in the story, choreographed live by Mel – anything could happen, but one thing is certain. "Baby" Jesus will be there! We are also delighted that Michael Webb will be playing the organ/keyboard. Please stay after the service for mulled wine, mince pies and other festive goodies.

Thanks

A big thank you from Eastham to the editor of TemeTalk – what a wonderful job you do!

Merry Christmas to everyone from Eastham

Celia Adams

Hanley Happenings

Christmas family bingo

Family Christmas Bingo is a great way to start your Christmas celebration, super hampers and other prizes plus a complementary glass of mulled wine. What more could you ask? Sunday 21st December at Hanley Village Hall, eyes down at 3.30pm.

Fish & chips for tea!

As a result of its overwhelming popularity we have booked the fish and chip van again for 3rd December. We are assured that this time they will not run out! They will be on the village hall car park from 5.30pm.

Harvest Festival

Following an enjoyable Harvest Festival service at Hanley Childe the donated produce was auctioned by Jason Yarnold. £90 was raised for charity.

Winter draws on

As the nights grow darker and we have more misty mornings and evenings, please wear reflective clothing when walking your dog. There have been a couple of near misses recently around the Broadheath triangle. And will drivers keep to the 30mph speed limit on Rectory Road and Bell Lane. Let's all be safe!

Tom Curran

Following last month's appeal for information about Tom, who lived on the Broadheath and had been a PoW in the Far East, we have had some responses. He was actually called Arthur Thomas Curran and was forced to work on the infamous Burma railway of *Bridge on the River Kwai* fame.

We are struggling to find out who he served with and wondering whether he was in the Navy and picked up from the sea after his ship was torpedoed. Perhaps he then became a Japanese prisoner of war

If you have any information that could help us discover more about what happened to Tom, please get in touch with Ed Yarnold on 07930 882728.

Ed Yarnold

Hanley Broadheath WhatsApp Group



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Services in Stanford

Sunday 7th December

Holy Communion at 9.00am

Sunday 4th January

Holy Communion at 10.00am

Sunday 1st February

Holy Communion at 10.00am

Church flowers

December – St Mary's flower team

January – Sue Softly

Thanks to Karen Jamous for the flowers in November.

Welcome back

We are looking forward to Rev'd Julia Curtis's return to ministry following her sabbatical. Hopefully the Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's will be a great welcome at our December communion service.

Christmas Tree Festival

The Christmas Tree Festival will be at St Mary's on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th December from 10am to 4pm, with carol singing on Saturday 6th at 4pm. Refreshments are available so do come and see this spectacular sight.

The trees will be bigger this year as there is a shortage of small trees. After the festival they will be redecorated and returned to Angel Gardens at Mill Farm where they will be available to buy.

Proceeds are split between Maggs Day Centre in Worcester and St Mary's church. Last year the total was about £1,000. Many thanks to John Curtis and Sue Softly for organising the festival.



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Carol Service

If you would like to help decorate the church for our carol service on Christmas Eve at 5pm it would be greatly appreciated. Many hands make it easier.

We are looking for readers for the carol service and would love to involve more children if they would like to do it. Please contact Alexandra on 07891 346783.

Stormy November

The storm in November was very fierce and caused havoc on local roads with many bridges impassable and cars stranded. Fields were flooded and daily life more difficult again for farmers. Hoping everyone is safe and sound.

Love, Laughter and Loss

The screening of *Love, Laughter and Loss* at Clifton village hall was a great success, over 70 guests came and £1,040 was raised for St Michael's Hospice. The film is the true story of a young woman and her daily life in the WAAF from 1939 to 1946. Thanks to everyone who came from Stanford and the other villages to support this event.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas.

Alexandra Winnington

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Kyre Park Garden



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David Ward firewood

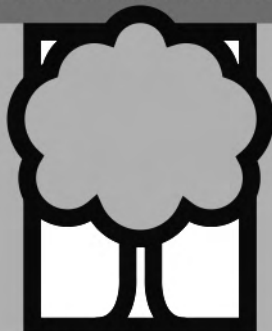
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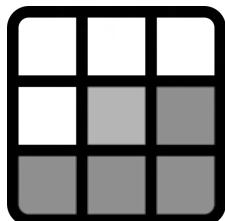
To Wordle or not to Wordle ...

Do you do Wordle? I do. Wordle is part of my getting started in the mornings and I normally get it in three or four attempts.

Last week I got it in two and was feeling very pleased with myself – until shot down about an hour later when my wife matched it in two as well.

A couple of years ago we had a message from my daughter-in-law in the USA – she had got it right first time. She uses the same word to start every time so the odds on her success are slightly shorter than a chimp on a typewriter composing the complete works of Shakespeare.

Other strategies include my brother's in New Zealand. He uses the same three different words



to start every day and ignores any correct or incorrect letters. He gets it in four without fail (nearly).

A local lady on the Highwood uses instinct/witchcraft/gut instinct or something similar and claims to get it in two more often than not. This is hearsay so cannot be admitted in evidence. And her name is confidential.

If you haven't tried it yet why not have a go at www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html.

That's all for now but here is a joke I saw recently:

Q. What is your favourite medieval joke?

A. The French at Agincourt.

I'll get my coat ...

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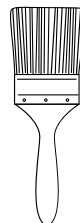
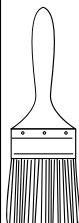


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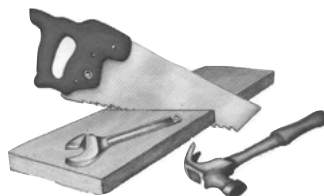
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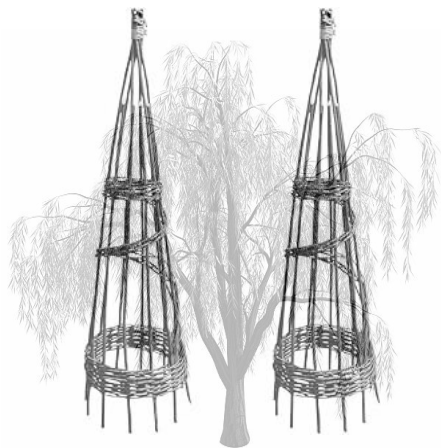
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£12 per person including 2-course supper
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and make up a team

A raffle will be held on the night

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Homecraft Committee

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What is frost – folklore and cold hard facts

The beginning of December brings frost, perhaps best described by Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice*: "Cold indeed, and labor lost: then farewell heat, and welcome frost!"

What created frost was clouded in folklore long ago. In ancient times there was a rather romantic idea that frost fell from the moon and stars on cloudless nights. And in Norse mythology a character appeared who cast frost – his name was Jokul Frosti, literally Icicle Frost, or Frost Giant – while in Germany Frau Holle shook a winter blanket over the ground with a covering or frost.

Eventually our familiar Jack Frost appeared in England, although apparently his name had nothing to do with Jokul Frosti. Jack Frost was a mischievous, impish character who worked his frosty magic at night and was first featured in 1734 in a book called *Round about our Coal Fire, or Christmas Entertainments*. Jack Frost also became something of a versatile figure who went round in autumn with a paintbrush colouring leaves red, yellow, brown and orange.

As for the nitty-gritty science of what created frost, there was an idea in the 1780s that both frost and dew came when the ground was a few degrees colder than the air above, although it was thought that the cold was caused by the dew and frost, not the other way round.

In 1812 a breakthrough in understanding frost was made by William Wells, an American-born

doctor working in London. He found that on calm, cold nights the ground rapidly cooled down, radiating its heat into space, and that rapidly cooled the air close to the ground until the moisture in the air turned to frost when the surface reached below freezing.

*with thanks to Paul Simons
of The Times*

Thank you from the Editor

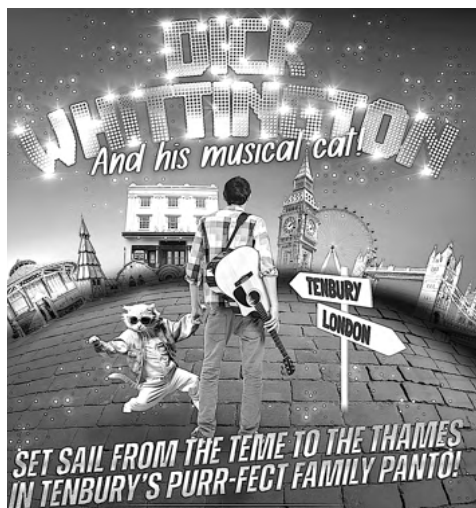
It's that time of year again when TemeTalk has reached the end of another year.

I'm very proud that September 2025 saw the magazine's 40th birthday. It seems a very long time ago, when Bill Bryant was the vicar and Geoffrey Whatmore was the editor. We hope to continue for many years to come!

I would like to thank everyone involved in the production of the magazine: our regular and occasional contributors, our delivery people who make sure that every household in the seven parishes gets its copy, come rain or shine, our advertisers who keep our finances healthy, Gary Nozedar and everyone at Orphans Press who make the magazine look so smart. And I mustn't forget my husband who fetches the magazines from Leominster every month without complaint. We couldn't do it without all of you, so thank you all very much.

Sandra Griffiths

Tenbury's favourite Christmas tradition returns: Dick Whittington and his Musical Cat



Curtains open on Thursday 11th December for Dick Whittington and His Musical Cat, the Regal's 11th professional pantomime. Running from 11th to 31st December, this year's festive spectacular promises comedy, music, magic and mayhem for all ages.

Local lad Dick Whittington is down on his luck. Convinced the streets of London are paved with gold, he leaves home on a one-way tractor ride to find his fortune. With his extraordinary musical cat, Dick is swept into a rollicking rags-to-riches adventure packed with villains, heroes, sea shanties and toe-tapping numbers.

Tickets are already selling fast, with peak performances proving especially popular. Families are encouraged to book early to secure the best seats on their preferred dates.

Tickets from www.regaltenbury.co.uk
and from the Regal Box Office

Christmas shortbread



Christmas shortbread is very easy to make so it is perfect to give to friends and family as foodie Christmas gifts. Fill your shortbread with your favourite festive flavours like chocolate, nuts and spices.

Ingredients

For the shortbread

100g/3½oz caster sugar
200g/7oz butter, softened
300g/10½oz plain flour

For the white chocolate and pistachio

50g/1¾oz white chocolate, chopped
2 tbsp chopped pistachios (or your choice of nuts)

For the chocolate and orange

50g/1¾oz chocolate (milk or dark), chopped
½ orange, grated zest only (or your choice of fruit)

For the spiced

1 tsp each of cinnamon, all-spice and nutmeg

Method

Beat together the sugar and butter in a large bowl until pale and fluffy. Stir in half the flour until combined then add the remaining flour and use your hands to bring it together. Add your chosen fillings and use your hands to bring the dough into a rough ball.

Roll the dough into a fat sausage, roughly 5cm/2in in diameter. Wrap tightly in cling film and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or until solid. (You can freeze the rolls for as long as you like and slice off the cookies and bake as required.)

Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6 and line a baking tray with baking paper. Unwrap the cling film and slice the sausage into 14 rounds, roughly 2cm wide. Place onto the lined tray and cook for 15–20 minutes or until the edges are beginning to brown but the tops have no colour.

Leave to cool slightly and enjoy. These will keep well for at least a week in a sealed container, but the fresher they are the better.

Averil's Glorious Brandy Sauce

This is the best ever brandy sauce! Disclosure: it includes alcohol (of course) and raw eggs so won't suit everyone. But it is quite divine and freezes perfectly into delicious ice cream!

3 egg yolks (make meringues with the whites)
284 ml/10 fl oz double cream
45 ml/3 tbsp golden syrup
30 ml/2 tbsp brandy (or a touch more!)

Whip the yolks until creamy. Whip the cream until it holds its shape. Warm the syrup in the microwave or in a small pot on the hob.

Then bring the four ingredients together, very gently, in a large bowl. Cover and chill overnight and remove from the fridge 30 minutes before you serve your pudding. Heaven!



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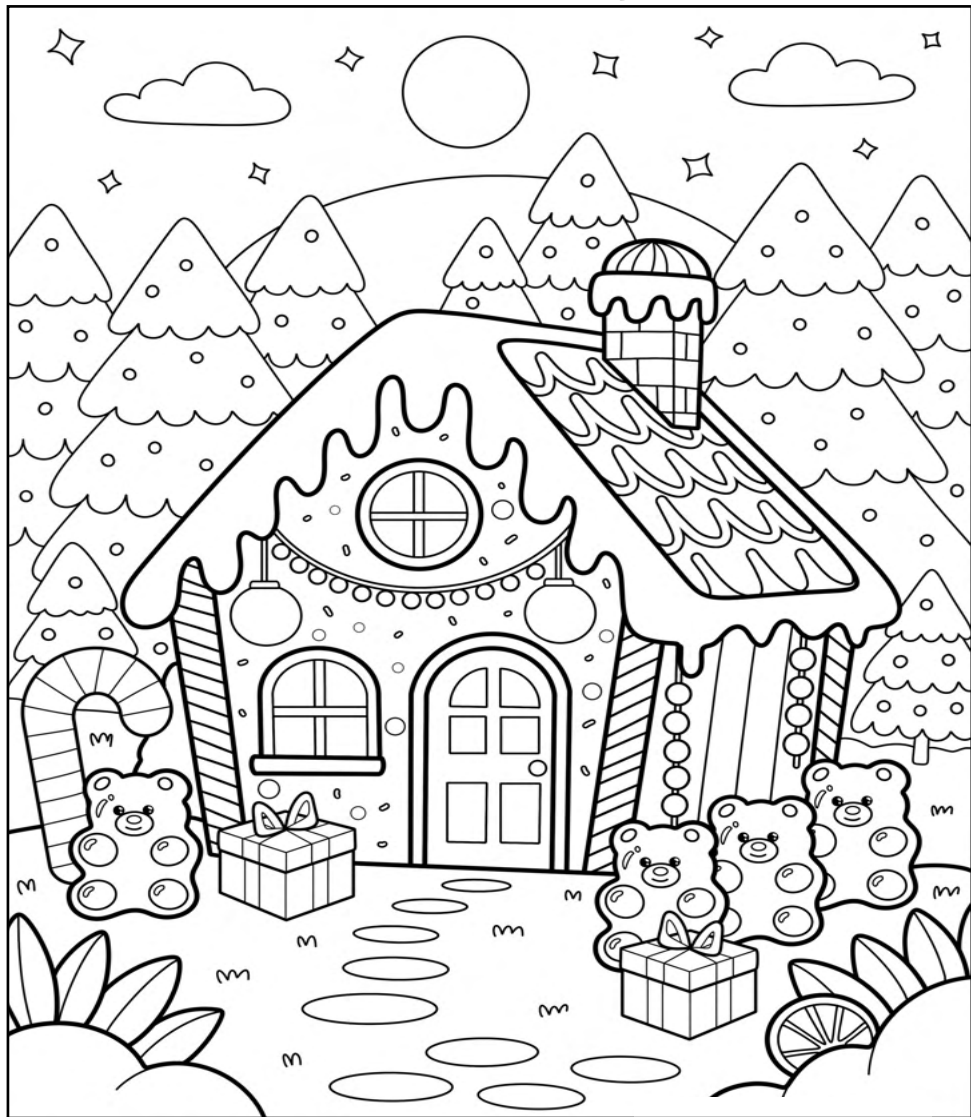
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Fun Christmas Colouring Competition



Our fun Christmas colouring competition is open to everyone, whatever your age! Fill in your details below and send your entry to The Editor, Grey Gables, St Michaels, Tenbury Wells WR15 8TW by 15th January. There will be small prizes and the winners' names will be published in February's TemeTalk.

Name

Age

Address

Stoke Bliss, Kyre and Bockleton Parish Council

The parish council is a team of local people (elected parishioners) who meet four times a year at Stoke Bliss village hall to discuss local matters affecting the parish. We are all enthusiastic volunteers. These meetings are open to all parishioners and we warmly welcome all that attend.

So what do the councillors do?

We represent the local community and make decisions on local issues to improve parishioners' quality of life. Our duties include dealing with local issues and acting as a voice for the community on planning, highways and liaising with the West Mercia Community Police PCSOs. We are the tier of local government closest to our community.

The minutes of the quarterly meetings are published on the parish council's website www.stoke-blissgroupparishcouncil.org.uk along with other news and information regarding road closures and other highways works. Additionally the website gives the dates and times of these meetings.

Currently the parish council has a vacancy for a councillor and once again this is advertised on the website and notice boards outside the village hall and St Peter's church. If you would like to get involved or have any questions or issues to raise

please contact our clerk, Carole, by email at clerk@stokeblissparishcouncil.org.uk or Mike Stephens, the chair of the parish council, by email at mas1959@btinternet.com.

Our next meeting is on 2nd February at 7.30pm at Stoke Bliss village hall. We would be delighted to see you.

Mike Stephens

Chair of Stoke Bliss, Kyre & Bockleton Parish Council

Activities at Eastham Memorial Hall

- Pilates, Tuesdays at 1pm and 2.20pm, breaking up for Christmas on 16th December. There are spaces at 2.20pm up to Christmas. Next term starts on 6th January. Contact Sue on 07974 343609, sue579@icloud.com for details or a taster session.
- Yoga, every Wednesday at 10am. Ring Zoe on 07962 981456 or see www.zedyoga.co.uk. Taster sessions available. Breaking up for Christmas on 17th December and restarting on 14th January.
- Zumba Gold – Lu has finished classes at Eastham. Thanks to her for all the week she has done right back to Covid days. Catch Lu at one of her sessions at other venues.

TemeTalk

Deadline 18th January

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TemeTalk

Deadline 18th January

Please note this is the *last* day for contributions – the sooner you send your items to the editor, the more chance there is that they will be included

Good start for The Fox

The Fox crib team has made a good start to the season, undefeated so far with one win and two draws. We play on Wednesday evenings, home games at The Fox at Hanley Broadheath and away games at exciting venues like The Inn at Bromyard, The Plough at Stoke Lacey and The Three Horseshoes at Much Cowarne.

We need eight players for a match and are always looking for new recruits. If you would like to join us please contact our captain, Brian Griffiths, on 07814 539857. Tuition is free for beginners!




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Teme Valley Wildlife

December brings the close of the year and affords an opportunity to review the preceding eleven months. 2025 has been unique for me, because it is the first year during which I have been obliged to share my garden with a muntjac deer.



Mitzi asleep in my front garden

"Mitzi" first hove into view in January, on the front lawn, investigating the grass under the bird feeder and inspecting the herbaceous borders. In broad daylight, she showed little fear of humans, but on that day appeared troubled by biting insects, possibly ticks. She repeatedly turned round to chew the fur on her back and abruptly hopped about in tight circles, as though trying to dislodge something. She's returned nearly every day since, entering from the lane, travelling up a secluded gully between our hedge and that of our next-door neighbour, crossing the border, lawn and drive then trotting up a bank and on into the orchard.

As spring brought life to the garden, Mitzi's presence proved to be rather less than benign. A prized patch of snake's head fritillaries in a damp

part of the lawn suddenly appeared shortened. The flower stems had been bitten off a few inches above the ground and a deer-slot next to this work informed me of the culprit. Any stem rising from the ground bearing a tasty bud proved to be too much

of a temptation for Mitzi. After I had swathed my fritillaries in sticks wound with black cotton she turned her attention to my cowslips, aquilegias and scabious instead. My husband was appalled to find a large Schubertii allium bud detached from its stem and lying on the ground – too garmicky to eat we assumed. She then explored the patio and demolished a pot of his lilies.

A grassy bank where I had envisaged a drift of large purple crocus in William Robinson's "wild garden" style proved a total disappointment. Here, Mitzi waited for the buds to open before eating them, mercifully leaving the leaves behind, which I hope means that the plants might survive. Gravetye, Robinson's wonderful garden in Sussex,

Continued on page 24

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Continued from page 23

is fully deer-fenced, I now learn. Perhaps I should have checked on that before embarking on one of his planting schemes.

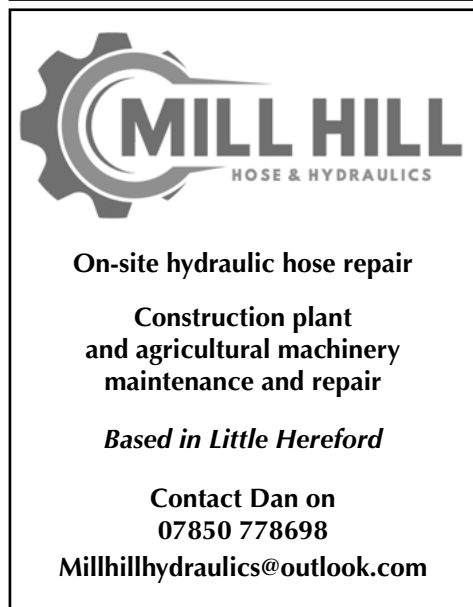
Cross, but resigned to life with Mitzi, I shrugged my shoulders at her summer activities as she pruned the roses before they had flowered, leaving me to wait for colour later in the year. She, meanwhile, enjoyed fallen cherries, raspberries – both leaves and fruit – then damsons. Apples and pears aren't to her taste.

Autumn shed light on her night-time exploits. Opening a window to let out a wasp one evening, I heard cough-like barks coming from the orchard. This had to be Mitzi summoning a mate. And who did I see a few mornings later, travelling her route beside the hedge? Yes, a large male with gnarly swept-back horns. Oh, just my luck, "Marmaduke" has moved in as well!

Happy Christmas!



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The next meeting of the Teme Valley Wildlife Group will be at 7.30pm on Thursday 8th January at Stoke Bliss and Kyre Village Hall, WR15 8RR. We welcome local falconer Steve Woodison whose talk is called "Owls and other birds of prey". Some of his birds will join him. Members and friends are welcome; it is just £3 on the door.

Stephanie Macroft

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, bird survey and archive photographs are available on our website www.temevalleywildlife.co.uk. We normally hold meetings on the second Thursday of the month to which all are welcome. Contact us by email at twwg@outlook.com.

TemeTalk deadline 18th January



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What's on in Teme Valley South

December

- | | | |
|------|-----------|---|
| 4th | Thursday | Eastham Christmas Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am |
| 6th | Saturday | Christmas Tree Festival, St Mary's Stanford, 10am
Christmas Tree Festival Carol Singing 4pm |
| 7th | Sunday | Christmas Tree Festival, St Mary's Stanford, 10am |
| 9th | Tuesday | Christmas Wreath Making, Eastham Memorial Hall, 7pm |
| 11th | Thursday | Stoke Bliss & Kyre Neighbourhood Lunch, Stoke Bliss & Kyre VH, 12.30pm |
| 14th | Sunday | Rochford Village Christmas Lunch, Rochford Village Hall, 12.30 for 1pm
Rochford Carol Service, Rochford Church, 3.30pm
Stoke Bliss & Kyre Christmas Lunch, Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall, 1pm |
| 16th | Tuesday | Rochford Christmas Neighbourhood Lunch, Rochford Village Hall, 12.30pm |
| 21st | Sunday | Carol Service, St Peter's Stoke Bliss & Kyre, 3.00pm
Christmas Family Bingo, Hanley Village Hall, 3.00pm |
| 24th | Wednesday | Crib Service, Eastham Church, 3.00pm
Carol Service, St Mary's Stanford, 5.00pm
Christmas Eve Service, Eastham Church, 3pm
Midnight Mass, Rochford Church, 11.30pm |
| 25th | Thursday | Christmas Holy Communion, Hanley William, 10.00am
Family Service, Stoke Bliss, 10.00am |

2026

January

- | | | |
|------|----------|--|
| 8th | Thursday | Eastham Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am |
| 15th | Thursday | The Filling Station, Eastham Memorial Hall, 7.15
Stoke Bliss & Kyre Neighbourhood Lunch, Stoke Bliss & Kyre VH, 12.30pm |
| 26th | Tuesday | Rochford Neighbourhood Lunch, Rochford Village Hall, 12.30pm |

February

- | | | |
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| 5th | Thursday | Eastham Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am |
| 6th | Friday | Quiz Night, Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall, 7.30pm |
| 8th | Sunday | Snowdrop Songs of Praise, Rochford Church, 3pm |
| 17th | Tuesday | Pancakes at Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall, 7.00pm |
| 19th | Thursday | Stoke Bliss & Kyre Neighbourhood Lunch, Stoke Bliss & Kyre VH, 12.30pm |
| 24th | Tuesday | Rochford Neighbourhood Lunch, Rochford Village Hall, 12.30pm |
| 27th | Friday | Social Night, Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall, 7.00 for 8.00pm |

**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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Services

January/February 2026

Continued from page 28

Sunday 4th January

10.00am	Stanford	Holy Communion for Epiphany
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Sunday 11th January

9.30am	Stoke Bliss	Holy Communion
4.00pm	Hanley Village Hall	Epiphany Evensong

Sunday 18th January

10.00am	Eastham	All Age and Holy Communion
2.00pm		Walking Church

Sunday 25th January

10.00am	Rochford	All Age and Holy Communion
4.00pm	Kyre	Celtic Evening Prayer

Sunday 1st February

10.00am	Stanford	Holy Communion and Hymns
4.00pm	Stanford	Choral Evensong

Sunday 8th February

9.30am	Stoke Bliss	Holy Communion
3.00pm	Rochford	Snowdrop Songs of Praise



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Services

December 2025

Daily prayer continues at 9am and 7pm on Zoom, contact Rev'd Julia if you would like to join us. The blessings group meets regularly and is co-ordinated by Richard Skerrett, who can be contacted on 01886 853099 for more details.

The Church of England has a pre-recorded weekly on-line service which can be found by searching 'Church of England Weekly Services' or accessed on their website www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online/weekly-online-services

Services Schedule

Saturday 6th December

4.00pm	Stanford	Christmas Tree Festival Carol Singing
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Sunday 7th December

9.00am	Stanford	Holy Communion (said)
4.00pm	Kyre	Advent Darkness to Light Service <i>with TVSCC</i>

Sunday 14th December

9.30am	Stoke Bliss	Holy Communion
	Rochford	Christmas Lunch
3.30pm	Rochford	Carol Service with TVSCC
	Stoke Bliss & Kyre	Christmas Lunch

Sunday 21st December

8.30am	Eastham	Holy Communion
9.30am	Hanley Childe	Nativity
3.30pm	Stoke Bliss	Carol Service with TVSCC
6.00pm		Walking Church in the dark

Wednesday 24th December

10.00am	Kyre	Christmas Eve Common Worship Holy Communion
3.00pm	Eastham	Crib Service
5.00pm	Stanford	Carols
11.30pm	Rochford	Midnight Mass

Thursday 25th December

10.00am	Hanley William	Christmas Day Christmas Holy Communion
10.00am	Stoke Bliss	Family Service

Sunday 28th December

10.00am	Rochford	All Age and Communion
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Continued on page 27

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