

TemerTalk



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September 2023

Inside this month's issue

Ploughing Match • *Into the Breach* * Music on the Lawn

Weaving a willow coffin • h.Art
and all your parish news

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TemeTalk

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A community going forward with God

September 2026

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

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Parish website

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

As I write, temperatures are soaring into the mid-30s and our water supply at the Rectory has not been 100% reliable this summer. These may seem like minor inconveniences, but they remind us of the wider challenges we face – as individuals, as a nation and across our planet – as the effects of climate change become increasingly evident.

I remember my final-year project at university, studying Biological Sciences. I reviewed the evidence available at the time about climate change, did it appear in the data and likely impacts? Concluding it was something we would all have to grapple with. That was in 1989.

Nearly 40 years later, climate change is a reality. What I certainly didn't envisage was that I would now be a vicar!

My grounding in the natural world has always meant that seeing Christ in creation is an important part of my faith. I love being outdoors and rooting myself in the natural world. For me, faith and Biological Sciences are not separate worlds. Rather, creation sings with the presence of its Creator.

Evolution does not mean that God cannot exist. Instead, I see it as part of the extraordinary story of a diverse, interconnected and ever-changing planet – a planet in which God is continually at work. Yet that planet is finely balanced and we are increasingly aware of the impact of our choices upon it.

During September our churches will celebrate Creationtide: perhaps this gives us all a chance to pause, give thanks for the beauty of creation and think about how we can care for this precious gift. Caring for creation is part of our Christian calling. As we love God and our neighbours, so we are called to care for the world we share and hold in trust for generations who follow us.

Rev'd Julia

Many thanks to Matt Hall for this
month's cover photograph

TemeTalk deadline 18th September
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Trevor Matthews 07768 942169

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stokeblisskyrevillagehall@gmail.com

Rochford – Ann Prosser, 01584 781317

Eastham –

bookings@easthammemorialhall.org.uk

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Parish news

From the Registers

Funerals

The funeral of **William Ryan Rollason (Bill)** was held at St Michaels, Rochord on Monday 31st July. We send our condolences to his family. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death on 27th July of **Jeremy Harris** of Kyre. We hold his family and friends in our prayers at this time. A service of thanksgiving to celebrate the life of a true gentleman will be held at St Peter's, Stoke Bliss. The date and time will be announced in due course.

Confirmation

Confirmation is a joyful and public step of faith where a person affirms their baptism promises and receives the bishop's prayer for strength through the Holy Spirit. So we are delighted that Hugh, our new bishop, will be coming to Rock Church in the Muddy Boots Mission area on 20th September to lead a confirmation service at 4pm.

Iona Worship 2026

A pattern of prayer, singing and imaginative engagement with scripture, Iona worship reflects our life together as rural communities as we gather to celebrate God's presence in our landscape and our lives.

**You are invited to join us at
Hanley Rectory**

where you will find a warm welcome
and light refreshments

Services are at 4pm on the following Sundays

13th September – Creationtide

8th November – Remembrance

*For more information please email
Rev'd Jen Jones at tvspcc@gmail.com*

Teme Tots

Our tots and helpers return on 4th September after a lovely summer break. We will be thinking about and praying for all of our tots who are moving to big school or nursery this autumn. We have loved hosting you and look forward to hearing about you as you grow and thrive.

Do you love music?

We asked last time ... do you love the Sound of Music?

Clearly you do! Thank you to all who have got in touch about tickets for our Music on the Lawn fundraising concert. At the time of writing tickets are selling fast. There may be a few left online at www.temevalleysouth.org.uk/come-and-sing-and-listen-with-us-and-the-choir/events/events.php or speak to Rev'd Julia or Chloe.

If you are keen to hear us and haven't managed to get a ticket for 6th September's event you are welcome at our Creationtide service at Hanley Rectory at 4pm on 13th September and we hope to have another concert early in the New Year, so watch this space.

If you would like to support our music making why not join the Friends of the Choir by emailing Chloe on music.tvspcc@gmail.com.

Rev'd Julia

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Rochford 49 Club

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

Wednesday winners

22nd July	No 46	Carolyn O'Hagan
29th July	No 1	Brian Woodhouse
5th August	No 8	Roger Gough
12th August	No 52	Not sold

Saturday winners

18th July	No 10	Not sold
25th July	No 34	Rob Perrin
1st August	No 29	Rosemary Ayres
8th August	No 43	Rosemary Ayres
15th August	No 7	Jon Adams

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

TemeTalk

Deadline 18th September

ronsmum@icloud.com or 07482 482629

Teme Valley Tote

July's draw, the fourth in this series, was decided when Rev'd Julia Curtis threw the dice on 2nd August to determine the set of random numbers and the starting point. As a result, the prizewinners for July are:

£50 – **Tom Duff Gordon** of Eastham (No 238)

£30 – **John Curtis** of Stoke Bliss (No 857)

£20 – **Helen Bosley** of Pensax (No 323)

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

August was a quieter month in Rochford and for once the school holidays were greeted with long hot sunny days, just like when we pensioners were children, or is that just a rose-tinted memory! Many of us enjoyed Tenbury Show, which had a record attendance, helped by the settled weather. Hopefully we are coming out of the long hot dry summer, as the dry weather has caused many problems for the fire service, gardeners and the farming community, with severe lack of grass for livestock and reduced yields for many arable crops. The nights are noticeably drawing in, often accompanied by misty mornings and hop picking will be carried out this month, so please be patient with tractors and trailers on the lower Rochford Road as we continue to work around the many road closures in our area.

As I mentioned last month, if you are interested in starting something new in Rochford, which doesn't duplicate what is on offer in other neighbouring villages, MHDC is offering a range of grants to help develop new community-based activities, including micro-grants of up to £250 to help individuals start up new community events, and community wellbeing grants of up to £3,000 backing local ideas that help people live happier lives. Please get in touch with your ideas.

Neighbourhood lunches

The dates for sit down and takeaway neighbourhood lunches are 29th September, 27th October and 24th November. Everyone welcome but 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.

We have been approached by our local policing team who are looking for places to be more visible and available to hear people's concerns in our communities. So a police officer is coming to Rochford village hall from 11.45am before the neighbourhood lunch on 29th September, to be around for anyone who would like to have a chat.

Teme Valley Tots

The Teme Tots will be back at Rochford village hall on Friday 4th September from 10.30am to midday. This is a great community activity and we look forward to welcoming tots old and new and their accompanying mums, dads or grandparents

The Big Breakfast

The Big Breakfast is on Saturday 19th September at 9.30am at Rochford Village Hall. Get the weekend off to a good start; come along and enjoy one of Ann's breakfast with fruit juice, cereal, full English (with vegetarian option), toast, tea and coffee. Just £12, children half price. All welcome so please book with Ann to avoid disappointment. We were sold out last time!

Dates for your diary

Harvest Festival – Sunday 11th October

Village quiz – Friday 20th November

Church flower rota

Flowers for September – Tina Lord and Ann Prosser, thank you.

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.

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TemeTalk deadline 18th September

News from Stoke Bliss & Kyre

We will be welcoming the Stratford Theatre Company performing *Into the Breach* at the village hall on 19th September (see page 14 for full details), plus the annual Stoke Bliss & District Ploughing Match during the day at Leysters Farm. Then wrapping up the month we have the annual village hall bingo night on 25th September. Lots to look forward to!

St Peter's church roof

Our faculty application for the proposed works has now been sent forward for consultation. This allows relevant heritage bodies, such as Historic England, to look at the proposed works. Once the faculty permission is granted, we can start full discussions with potential contractors and grant funding bodies.

Stoke Bliss Ploughing Match

The 79th Stoke Bliss & District Ploughing Match takes place on Saturday 19th September at Leysters Farm (HR6 0HS). The traditional rural event features competitive match ploughing for both modern and vintage equipment, together with heavy-horse plough teams. Running alongside is a well-supported produce and homecraft competition celebrating rural farming traditions and craft, plus a bar and catering. Competition entries close on Wednesday 16th September. For more details see page 15.



Thursday 10th September
Thursday 8th October
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

Churchyard tidy sessions

Thanks to all our volunteers whose hard work has kept St Peter's churchyard in a much better state this year. The next tidy-up session is on Friday 5th September from 10am to 12.30pm. Everyone is welcome, refreshments provided.

Harvest Festival

Looking ahead to the autumn, our annual Harvest Festival will be held at St Mary's church in Kyre on 11th October. We will be joined by the wonderful Teme Valley Churches Choir.

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

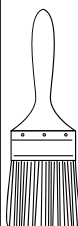
Social Night with Bingo

Friday 25th September
Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall

Bar opens 7pm
Bingo starts soon after
Food at 8pm

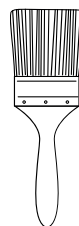
*Please book food in advance
at sbkvillagehall@gmail.com*

Next Social Night is Friday 30th October
Bar opens at 7pm, food at 8pm



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The deadline for the October issue of TemeTalk is 18th September

Eastham Jottings

Church flowers and cleaning

September – Alyson Brookes

October – Rhiannon Chapman

More helpers needed

If you can join the rota for church flowers and cleaning that would be great, just contact Celia Adams on easthamcourt@icloud.com or 01584 781258.

Eastham's 58th Riverside Fête

Thanks to everyone for helping to make the 2026 fête a great success: those who provided items to sell, those who joined in with the Produce Show or supported in many other ways. We hope that you had a wonderful time, ate too much, found a bargain, and won a prize at something. Hopefully you met up with old friends and had a good chat.

Also massive thanks to all those who made it happen, far too many to mention but it would not happen without you. Well, done, another successful year, see you all again next year.

See page 11 for photographs of Eastham Fête. Many thanks to Simon Lusty for the photographs. Cup winners and dog show winners are on page 25.

Bell ringing at Eastham on Fête Day

Thanks to the Lilleshall Bellringers who rang a quarter peal on fête day in memory of the Wylde family. Many thanks to Julie Hartridge for all her arrangements.

Future bell ringers

If you would like to have a go at bell ringing, training can be provided. Contact Celia Adams on 01584 781258 or go to Tenbury church where new people are welcomed on Wednesdays from 7 to 8pm.

Eastham Coffee Morning

Please join us for coffee, the monthly raffle and a catch up on Thursday 3rd September at 10.30am to 12 noon at Eastham Memorial Hall. .

The rota for 2026 is:

3rd September – Tony and Ann Simpson

1st October – MacMillan (joint)

Pub Night

is on Friday 18th September from 7pm at Eastham Memorial Hall. Come along for a drink and a catch up, everyone is welcome.

The Filling Station

The next meeting is on Thursday 17th September at Eastham Memorial Hall. Everyone is welcome. This is a great group which loves having visitors. For more information please contact Kate on kateharley6@gmail.com

Autumn clean of churchyard and church

Make a diary note to come along on Saturday 17th October to keep our Grade 1 listed church and churchyard in tip top condition. Everyone welcome from 10 am to 12.30 pm.

Chill out over a barbecue and beer at the end.

Celia Adams

Activities at Eastham Memorial Hall

- Pilates – on Tuesdays at 1.10pm and 2.20pm. For details or a taster session please contact Sue on 07974 343609 or sue579@icloud.com. Starts again on 8th September.

- Yoga – every Wednesday at 10am. Ring Zoe on 07962 981456 or see www.zedyoga.co.uk. Taster sessions available. Starts again on 16th September.

- Fitball – Rejuven8 Fitness & Wellbeing is running a fitball class at Eastham village hall every Thursday afternoon from 1.30 to 2.30pm. Fitball offers a variety of exercises using a yoga ball, which can help improve strength, balance, coordination and flexibility. It is good fun and suitable for all abilities. If you would like to come and give it a go, please contact Michelle on 07837 359403. There is a WhatsApp group that keeps everyone up to date: contact Michelle for details.

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Hanley Happenings

Strawberry Tea

Chair Diane Padget and committee members Lisa Brooke, Lex Moore, Mark Padget and John Curtis all worked hard to ensure the Strawberry Tea on Sunday 26th July was a resounding success, a fantastic way to close the activities at the village hall in preparation for the refurbishments.

Villagers past and present turned up and there was a buzz in the air. All the seats at each table were occupied.

Diane would like to thank everyone who came and we all look forward to the next event when we reopen after the refurbishment.

Pizza

Last night I collected three pizzas from Wheelie Good Pizza at Hanley village hall. A lazy supper, I thought, for ourselves and a neighbour. I was really impressed, the dough was superb and the toppings rich and tasty.

We sat down to a substantial meal and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, the glasses of wine obviously a bonus! Graham and Ruth couldn't have been more helpful and cheerful despite the wind!

Next month I will be returning to the mobile kitchen and if you like pizza, give it a try. You won't be disappointed!

Macmillan Coffee Day

Please come to my Macmillan Coffee Day on Saturday 26th September from 10am to 4pm at Tally Ho Cottage, Bell Lane, Hanley Broadheath WR15 8QX.

Everyone is welcome, £5 for coffee and cake. I may have garden produce available depending on the weather. Donations of cakes and garden produce will be much appreciated.

Anyone for tennis?

If you are interested in a game of tennis at Town Farm, Margie is happy for the courts to be used. Just give her a ring on 07796 081857 to check that they are available. Donations please to Cure Leukaemia.

Carole Gardner

Hanley Broadheath WhatsApp Group



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Services in Stanford

Sunday 6th September

Holy Communion with hymns at 10am

Sunday 4th October

Said Holy Communion at 8.30am

Harvest Service with hymns at 11am

Thanks to Helen and Andy for serving refreshments at services.

Flowers for September

Alexandra Winnington

If you would like to arrange some flowers at the beginning of the month, it would be much appreciated as we are short of volunteers for this.

Harvest

The Harvest service at St Mary's church will be on Sunday, 4th October at 11 am and will be taken by Rev'd Julia Curtis. Please bring any produce to the church on the morning of Saturday 3rd October if you can.

A Harvest Lunch is planned afterwards at 12.30 pm at the village hall for all who would like to come. Please contact Alexandra on 07891 346783 or Sue Softly on 07929 479865 if you would like to come. We would be very pleased to see as many of you as possible. It is great fun and we usually have our auction of produce. This year we will be making a donation to FOAG (Farmers Overseas in Action in Uganda) and also to St Mary's Church.

Masonry repair

The wet weather of last winter, which seems long ago now, caused a few areas of deteriorated masonry on the church to worsen and some repair on those particular places is being explored by Andy Nicol. We hope to get permission to do some work before the wet weather starts again, which will of course be very welcome after such a seriously dry summer.

Churchyard working party

A churchyard working party will take place on Saturday 19th September from 10am to 12 noon. Coffee and biscuits will be served. Hope you can come along – many hands make light work and we will achieve more.

We are very pleased to say that Bernard Churchill has kindly agreed to offer some lawn-mowing services to St Mary's which will be a great help.

New hymn books

New Ancient & Modern hymn books are to be supplied in the church so that across TVS churches we will eventually all be using the same version. It would be wonderful if you would like to sponsor some of the books with a dedicated page for the sponsorship. If you can help with this, please contact Alexandra on 07891 346783 for the details and suggested donation.

A date for your diary

The Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church will be on 5th and 6th December this year.

Alexandra Winnington

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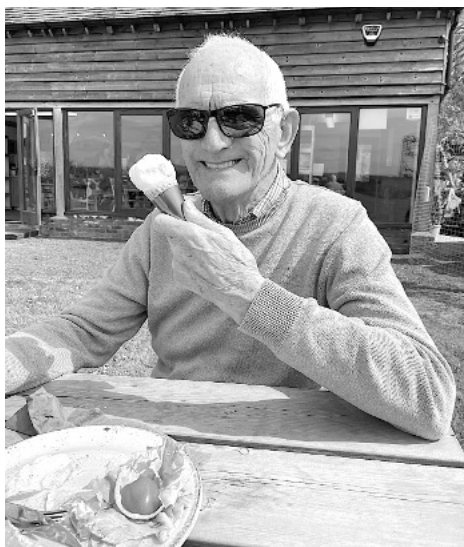
William Ryan Rollason (Bill)

My lovely father passed away on 7th July. Five years ago, he moved to Rochford with his beloved wife, Diane – mother to my sister and me. They came to live in our “mower shed” so we could look after them, just as they had cared for us throughout our lives.

Dad truly loved Rochford. In his later years, when he could no longer get around independently, it was wonderful to see the village come to him. He delighted in talking to dog walkers, fussing over their dogs, and watching the changing scenery as the nearby farmland was worked. Most of all, he loved waving to the tractor drivers as they drove past.

A beautiful celebration of his life was held at St Michael's Church in the village. A donation was also made to the Friends of Tenbury Community Hospital, whose loving care during his final days brought immense comfort to our family.

*His daughter, Jo Evans
Rochford Court*



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Fun in the sun at Eastham Fête



(Above) Erin Allison with Sky and judge Rhiannon Chapman
(Below) Desmo, most handsome dog



(Above) Ottie Appleton Moseley and Texas
(Below) Having a go at archery



(Above) One of the interesting cars on display
(Below) The Malvern Chase Brass Band



Cerys Arnold and Beau



Stiltwalker Andrew Healey

Beating the gong for Methodism

J Arthur Rank wanted to promote his faith – now just bingo clubs are left

This is a story of evolution. It starts with a famous milling company. Rank Hovis McDougall and in particular the Rank connection.

The Rank family were not just successful in business, they were also devout Methodists. One member, J Arthur Rank (born 1888) left milling and started making films to promote his Methodist faith. He was very, very successful.

His business expanded from film making (Pinewood Studios) into distribution (Odeon cinemas) and then into a whole variety of other activities such as Butlins holidays, theatres, coin-operated laundries, Bush Radio, The company acquired clubs for dancing, skating, bowling and bingo. They built motorway service stations and hotels and, a master stroke, they invested in the copier company Xerox which made lots of profits whilst many of the other parts

of the business were in decline.

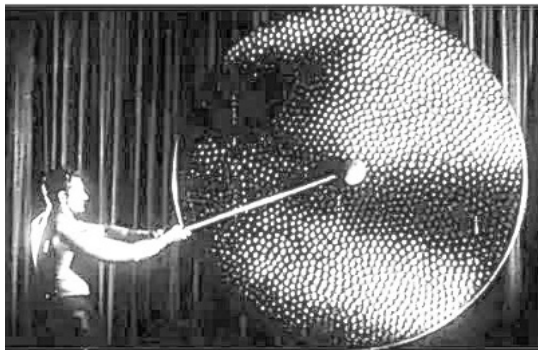
Eventually most of these interests were sold off except the bingo clubs and Grosvenor casinos.

For the whole of my childhood I attended

Methodist Sunday School, so much of the Methodist ethos was drilled into me. On Sundays my grandmother would visit after chapel and turn off any radio playing Pick of the Pops – definitely not suitable for Sundays. Other Sunday strictures included no card games and definitely no hanging out washing!

Irony? I can only imagine the devoutness of J Arthur Rank but I imagine if he were alive today he might have strong opinions on the company that still bears his name and in a hundred years has progressed from promoting the Methodist faith to promoting gambling.

WBG





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Our next meeting will be on Thursday 17th September at Eastham Memorial Hall at 7.15 for a 7.30pm start. At present I am awaiting confirmation of who the speaker will be but will contact people on our mailing list as soon as I know.

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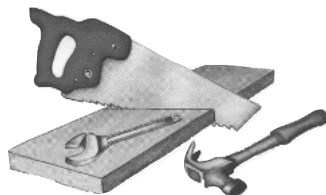
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h.Art – a celebration of local creativity

5th to 13th September

It's September – time for my favourite event of the year, Herefordshire Art Week, or h.Art.

I'm opening my home and studio in Hanley Broadheath, just two doors down from our wonderful local pub The Fox, post code WR15 8QS. Pink signs will be clearly displayed in front of the village phone box directing you to our door, venue number 26.

I will be joined by my friend, the highly skilled silver art jeweller Sarah Kinnersley of Skylark Jewellery. Together we will welcome visitors from 11am to 5pm every day from 5th to 13th September. I'm always particularly pleased to see local people call in, some brave enough to see the signs on the roadside and visit without even knowing what the event is about – brilliant! Everyone is met with complimentary tea and cake and both Sarah and I



are available to explain our artwork.

This year I am looking forward to showing sketchbooks from recent travels to Namibia, Canada and France and Sarah will be showing jewellery inspired by her time spent on the Isles of Scilly.

We hope the road closure along the B4204 won't affect visitors too much but if so, hopefully our neighbours will make the most of a slightly quieter opportunity to visit the studio!

Other local venues can be found in Tenbury and Stockton on Teme. The event is easily recognised by its bright pink and white signage throughout the area in the lead up to

and during the nine day event.

Visit www.h-art.org.uk for more information.

Shelly Perkins

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ON STAGE Don't Go Into The Cellar! presents The Time Machine Wednesday 16 September, 7.30pm	ON SCREEN Flash Gordon (12A) Thursday 17 September, 7pm	ON STAGE An Audience with Brian Blessed Friday 18 September, 7.30pm
ON STAGE Harvest - A Celebration of Neil Young Saturday 19 September, 7.30pm	ON SCREEN The End of Oak Street (Age TBC) Tuesday 22 September, 7pm	ON STAGE The (almost) Complete History of Britain Friday 25 September, 7.30pm

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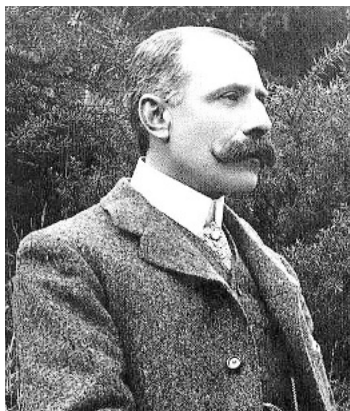
Sir Edward Elgar, Worcestershire's great composer

It is said that at the age of ten, Edward Elgar was discovered sitting on a river bank with a pencil and sheet of manuscript paper in his hand, trying to write down "what the reeds are saying".

Sir Edward Elgar was born in Broadheath, near Worcester, on 2nd June 1857. The delightful cottage is now the Elgar Birthplace Museum, but the young Edward only lived there for two years before his family moved into Worcester to live above Elgar Brothers Music Shop which was run by his father and uncle.

Elgar described life above the shop: "A stream of music flowed through our house and shop and I was all the time bathing in it". "Gosh, man, I've got a tune in my head" was a typical expression of the delight he felt at the prospect of writing music.

He was largely self taught and had a long apprenticeship. He gave piano and violin lessons at private schools, he took over from his father as organist and choirmaster at St George's Roman Catholic church and, strangest of all, he was conductor of the staff band at the Worcester City and County Lunatic asylum.



Elgar in about 1900

well rewarded as her husband became England's greatest composer for 200 years.

It was in Malvern, where he lived for 13 years, that some of his finest music was written, inspired by his friends, his religion and the beautiful surroundings of the hills themselves. The music was born in the open air when he was walking, cycling through the Severn Valley, out on the golf course, with the towering hills as a constant backdrop and a constant companion.

Elgar died in 1934 and is buried in Malvern next to Alice; he was laid to rest without a note of music being played.

Edward Elgar's friendship with Malvern lasted most of his life and there is no doubt that the hills had a huge influence on his music. He always returned to Worcestershire, "the most English" of areas, where most of his major works were composed. Listen to his music and it's not hard to understand why.

SG



A statue of Elgar with his bicycle in Hereford

When he was 31 Elgar married Caroline Alice Roberts, a remarkable woman who, according to their daughter Carice, "gave up her lifelong ambition to be a writer because she was so sure that a genius had been given into her charge". As she once said of herself, "the care of a genius is enough of a lifework for any woman". And her care was

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Ancient stories for contemporary wisdom

The story left our first ancestors being godlike helpers to each other in their garden. What could possibly go wrong? Only human nature! I know for myself (and I don't think I'm much different from anyone else in this respect) that if someone tells me not to do something then I want to know why I shouldn't do it. If I can't see or understand the reason why, my natural inclination is to do it anyway.

That's what happens next in the story. "Don't eat from the tree", says God. So that's exactly what our ancestors in the story do! While the legend doesn't tell us what sort of tree it is, it has historically been depicted as an apple. All it says is that it "was good for food and pleasing to the eye". It

*Our human nature
contains a
rebellious streak*

doesn't really matter what sort of fruit it was. What matters is that our human nature contains a rebellious streak. We assert our individuality and independence even

when we know deep down it isn't in our best interests.

The good news of the story is that even though things go wrong because of human pride, God doesn't give up on humanity. The story tells that he meets with Adam and Eve and provides for them – clothing in this case – for their ongoing life outside the garden. The wisdom for today is to recognise God's continuing love even when we mess up.

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The do's and don'ts of good writing

The Times Style Guide keeps me on the straight and narrow

I keep The Times Style Guide on my desk so that I can check spellings, capital letters and tricky bits of grammar. But just flicking through it and picking words at random can be fascinating.

For instance, *Achilles' heel* must have the capital letter and apostrophe because it refers specifically to Achilles, the Greek hero of the Trojan War, but *achilles tendon* is lower case with no apostrophe because the connection to the Greek hero is more remote. Who knew?

For adjectives in general, the Style Guide's advice is not to overdo it. "Ask if it is necessary and what it adds. Try to use adjectives to add precision, not merely for colour or emphasis. Beware especially those adjectives that come unbidden to mind with particular nouns: serious danger, devout Catholic, staunch Protestant, blithering idiot."

Decimate strictly means to kill one in ten but is now more widely used because, as the Guide says, "opportunities to write about the killing of precisely one in ten are fairly rare".

The Guide's advice on punctuation is that "no sentence should be confusing. No paragraph should need to be read twice. A sentence should have a subject and a verb. The best punctuation is the full stop. Commas should be kept for punctuating lists and breaking up sentences to avoid confusion. They should not join sentences that are better separated by a full stop. Semi-colons are best confined to separating lists of phrases. Colons have a specific use, throwing meaning forward. Dashes are a bad habit, often used to pursue a line of thought that the writer cannot be bothered to construct some other way. Brevity is all."

Me is a perfectly good word often wrongly avoided by the ignorant who don't think it sounds genteel enough. Don't use horrors such as "between you and I" or "he gave it to my wife and I". You wouldn't say "he gave it to I". The presence of the wife should make no difference to the grammar. *Myself* is needlessly used instead of *me* by people who know there is something grammatically wrong with "he gave it to my wife and I" but who suppose that "he gave it to my wife and me" isn't genteel enough to be correct.

Invalid is not a word to use without thought. As Times columnist Melanie Reid wrote: "Every sum-

mer of my childhood had been spent at my grandmother's home where my disabled aunt lived. Not

that the word "disabled" had any currency then. Auntie Avril was referred to as an invalid, an umbrella term for chronic disease of any type. Not valid. Literally from the Latin not strong. Legally null and void. Worthless, untrue. A word only suitable

these days to describe driving licences or immigration visas, not human beings".

The last of a long list of do's and don'ts about apostrophes reads: "an apostrophe may for clarity be used to indicate the plural of single letters – p's and q's – if the alternative seems worse; a rare instance of a permissible greengrocer's apostrophe".

The last entry of all is one of my favourites: "*yuletide*, lower case but it is hard to think of a good reason for using it at all".

And another favourite: "*old*, think carefully before using old to describe anyone under about 80". (The older you get, the higher that number needs to be!)

"Exclamation marks, nearly always unnecessary!!!"

SG

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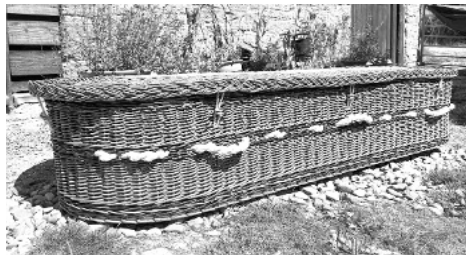


A very special willow weave

Maggie Kingston asked six friends to help her weave her own coffin

Have you ever thought about weaving your own willow coffin?

Last year I saw a display of willow baskets as part of h.Art (Herefordshire Art Week). And I found that Steph, who weaves the baskets, also weaves coffins from her home grown willow and other English willows and is happy for people to join in the making process. Well, as I happen to be sorting and clearing out the surplus stuff I have accumulated over many years, this



The finished coffin

actually buy something that could have a useful function as a blanket box before its final use!

I asked six friends to join me and we met up at Steph's on a hot summer's day to find the half-prepared casket awaiting our skills. Together we took turns, moving in silence and profound concentration as we learnt to bend the willow and guide it to the next position, without poking our fellow weavers' eyes out. It was a cross between a silent meditation and a sequence dance as we flowed between weaving and observing with an occasional quiet conversation as Steph showed us

how to proceed when we reached the pair of willow weavers that showed we had come to a changeover point. Every so often the weave was beaten down to firm the structure. The session was

from two to five o'clock, Steph having to finish the casket the same day because of the rapidly drying willow. We stood back at twenty to five, having reached the top of the upright stakes. Our part finished, Steph trimmed the willow and the resulting bunch of stems was handed around so we could all

add a blessing to the coffin.

One of my friends said afterwards, "I can honestly say I was very dubious about the weaving when you asked us to join you, but as you said, it really was peaceful and an honour to be part of it". I think some of the others agreed. It certainly opened up conversations, then and later, about preparing for the inevitable end to our earthly journey and how to celebrate it.



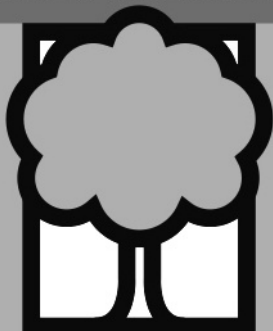
Maggie (third from left) and the seven weavers

Meanwhile, it is a question of where to put the "blanket box" in my cottage! It even contains plaits of grasses from Hollow Meadow in the top band; a beautiful large basket woven with memories. (Hopefully it will be a long time as a blanket box before it's needed for its actual purpose.)

Maggie Kingston

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Lime, bitter chocolate and ginger cheesecake



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Ingredients

85g (3oz) butter
250g (9oz) ginger biscuits, crushed
2 x 200g tubs full fat soft cheese
397g can Carnation Condensed Milk
finely grated zest and juice of 4 limes
55g (2oz) bitter chocolate (70% cocoa solids) melted
8 thin lime slices
55g (2oz) icing sugar (optional)

Method

In a large saucepan, melt the butter, then stir in the crushed biscuits. Press onto the base of a 23 cm (9 in) loose bottom cake tin. Chill for 10 to 15 minutes.

In a large bowl, whisk together the soft cheese, condensed milk, lime zest and juice for 5 minutes until thick and glossy.

Spoon the mixture over the biscuit base and chill for at least 1 hour, preferably overnight.

Remove the cheesecake from the tin and place on a serving plate. Drizzle the melted chocolate over the top and sides, then leave to set.

To finish, gently simmer the lime slices in a saucepan to which you have added the icing sugar and water – there should be barely enough water to cover the slices. The syrup will reduce to a sticky coating on the limes, and you need to make sure you remove the saucepan from the heat before the lime slices colour or brown.

Transfer the lime slices to baking parchment to set before placing on the cheesecake



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Teme Valley Wildlife



the county dragonfly recorder. All told, we've seen twelve different species of dragonfly and damselfly either visiting or making themselves at home.

The pond is only yards from the kitchen window, so we have a fairly constant view of what's going on there. Many's the time we've dropped the washing up to rush outside and see what's new, maybe a water shrew, a heron, a bat, a sodden sparrowhawk drying its wings, a frog, a turquoise flash of kingfisher, even next door's cat looking to pounce on a grass snake!

Our garden pond has been a great joy. Over the years we've witnessed so many unexpected wildlife encounters that I can't thank the garden's prior owners enough for having had the foresight to put it in. Wanting to build a garage, but not possessing anywhere flat, they found themselves moving rather a lot of soil to create a level base. The homeless soil ended up as a retaining wall on another slope, which they then filled with water to create a small pond. They were keen on dragonflies, so tailored the pond to meet dragonfly needs. We have continued to look out for them and, as they had done, to send yearly records to

Don't worry, we distracted the fascinated tabby and "hissing Sid" slid into the water. He (or she) had been around for a few days, taking leisurely swims and drying off in the sun at the pond's edge. Whilst monitoring its activities (and protecting it from felines!) we'd seen it attempt to catch one of our resident toads. The toad was none too pleased and fought back, slowly drawing its legs out of the snake's jaws and valiantly waging a war of strength against the snake. This was no mean feat because the snake, a large and full-grown adult, was many times the size of the toad.

Continued on page 24

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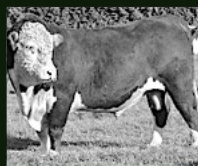
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Unfortunately we didn't get to see the end of this tug-of-war because both snake and toad disappeared under the water to continue their duel. It may be that the toad retrieved the rest of its body from the snake's jaws because the next time we saw the snake it had no telltale bulge to suggest that it had recently eaten a large meal.

The incident reminded us of another tussle worthy of a David Attenborough commentary which we witnessed some years ago, again featuring a toad. We had spotted an unusual visiting dragonfly and were just using binoculars to check its appearance against the details in the dragonfly guide when a toad popped its head up out of the water and grabbed our subject of interest. Perhaps unwisely, the brown hawker dragonfly, for that is what it was, had rested on vegetation quite low to the water's edge. Expecting the match to be very

one-sided, we were surprised by how tenaciously the dragonfly held on to the leaf it had grasped. A very slow trial of strength ensued. Gradually, gradually, the dragonfly pulled more of its abdomen free and eventually, some fifteen minutes later, flew off. But we didn't see another brown hawker that year.

The next meeting of the Teme Valley Wildlife Group will be at 7.30pm on Thursday 10th September at Stoke Bliss and Kyre Village Hall. We welcome Ros Bissell from Moors Meadow, Collington whose talk is called "A wildlife garden". As her garden, which I'm sure many will know, is inspirational, we'll be in for a treat. Members and friends are welcome; it is just £3 on the door.

Stephanie Mocroft

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 all available on the website www.teme-valley-wildlife.org. We hold meetings on the second Thursday of the month from January to November. All are welcome.



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Eastham Fête Produce and Handicraft Show Winners

Perpetual Awards

Eastham Parish Cup – for the most points in Class A	Laura Barnett
C Buckingham-Bawden – for the winner in Class A Nos 1-5	Tina Lord
Lilly Lanman Memorial Rose Bowl – for the best display of roses in Class A No 11	Anna Fletcher
Miss F Morris Cup – for the most points in Class B	Anna Fletcher
Eastham Men's Club Cup – for the most points in Class C	Colin Lord
George Hipkiss Memorial Cup – for the most points in the bean classes Nos 24, 25, 45	Colin Lord
Mr B Leason Memorial Cup – for the most points in the onion classes Nos 38-41, 47	Adam Wright
Mr Moseley Cup – for the most points in Class D	Charlotte Bradley
Eastham Parish Cup – for the most points in Class E	Charlotte Bradley
Mr C Norman MBE Memorial Cup – for the best container of sweet peas Class A No 7	Diana Clarke
Nora Edwards Memorial Cup – for the best exhibit in show	Adam Wright
The Children's Cup – for the most points in Class F, children 5 and under	Alfie Skyrme
Molly Yarnold Cup – for the most points in Class F, children 6-10 years old	Margot & Bay Barnett
Mr & Mrs Downes Cup – for the most points in Class F, children 11-14	Amber Beverley-Smith
Perpetual Challenge Cup – to the child with the most points in the children's races	Noah

Fun Dog Show Winners

Best in Show	Beau
Cutest puppy	Dottie
Prettiest bitch	Beau
Most handsome dog	Desmo
Most obedient dog	Lily
Golden oldie (over 9 years)	Texas
Cutest Heinz 57 (over 2 years)	Leo
Best retriever	Beau
Young handler	Sky



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TemeTalk

Deadline 18th September

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



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What's on in Teme Valley South

September

3rd	Thursday	Eastham Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am
5th	Saturday	Churchyard tidy session, St Peter's Church, Stoke Bliss, 10.00am Supper and a Talk, Clifton upon Teme Village Hall, 6.30pm
6th	Sunday	Tai Chi and a cup of tea, Hollow Meadow, Stoke Bliss, 10.30am Music on the Lawn, Harborough Bank, Shelsley Beauchamp, 4.00pm
10th	Thursday	Stoke Bliss & Kyre Neighbourhood Lunch, 12.30pm
13th	Sunday	Iona Worship for Creationtide, Hanley Village Hall, 4.00pm
17th	Thursday	The Filling Station, Eastham Memorial Hall, 7.15pm
18th	Friday	Pub Night, Eastham Memorial Hall, 7.00pm
19th	Saturday	Churchyard working party, St Mary's Stanford, 10.00am Big Breakfast, Rochford Village Hall, 9.30am Stoke Bliss Ploughing March, Leysters Farm HR6 0HS, 10.00am <i>Into the Breach</i> by Stratford Theatre Co, Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall, 7.30pm
20th	Sunday	Tai Chi and a cup of tea, Hollow Meadow, Stoke Bliss, 10.30am
25th	Friday	Social Night with Bingo, Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall, 7.00pm
26th	Saturday	Macmillan Coffee Day, Tally Ho Cottage, Hanley Broadheath, 10.00am
29th	Tuesday	Rochford Neighbourhood Lunch, Rochford Village Hall, 12.30pm

October

1st	Thursday	Eastham Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am
4th	Sunday	Harvest Service, St Mary's Stanford, 11.00am <i>followed by</i> Harvest Lunch, Stanford Village Hall, 12.30pm
8th	Thursday	Stoke Bliss & Kyre Neighbourhood Lunch, 12.30pm
11th	Sunday	Harvest Festival, Rochford Church Harvest Festival, St Mary's Church Kyre
17th	Saturday	Autumn clean of churchyard and church, Eastham church, 10.00am
27th	Tuesday	Rochford Neighbourhood Lunch, Rochford Village Hall, 12.30pm
30th	Friday	Social Night, Stoke Bliss & Kyre Village Hall, 7.00pm

November

5th	Thursday	Eastham Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am
20th	Friday	Rochford Village Quiz
24th	Tuesday	Rochford Neighbourhood Lunch, Rochford Village Hall, 12.30pm

December

3rd	Thursday	Eastham Coffee Morning, Eastham Memorial Hall, 10.30am
5th/6th		Christmas Tree Festival, St Mary's Church, Stanford

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

Services

September/October 2026

Daily prayer continues at 9am and 7pm on Zoom, contact Rev'd Julia if you would like to join us.

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

Sunday 6th September

10.00am	Stanford Church	Holy Communion with hymns
4.00pm	Shelsley Beauchamp	Music on the Lawn (see page 13)

Sunday 13th September

9.30am	Stoke Bliss Church	Holy Communion
11.00am	Hanley William Church	Holy Communion
4.00pm	Hanley Rectory	Iona Service celebrating Creationtide with choir

Saturday 19th September

4.00pm	Clifton upon Teme	Welly Church Harvest
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Sunday 20th September

10.00am	Eastham	All Age Service and Holy Communion
4.00pm	Rock Church	Muddy Boots Confirmation with Bishop Hugh

Sunday 27th September

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

Sunday 4th October

8.30am	Stanford Church	Said Holy Communion
11.00am	Stanford Church	Harvest Festival and Lunch
6.30pm	Worcester Cathedral	Diocesan Havent Service

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