

# ALVESTON MAGAZINE

Dec 2025/Jan 2026

No 557

Newsletter for Alveston Parish, produced  
by the Churches since 1970



Alveston Community Events

## Christmas Fair

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Groups  
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Alveston Methodist Halls

**Saturday 6th Dec 10am-1pm**

# JOY

**CHRISTMAS @ ST. HELEN'S**

DECEMBER

7th @ 4pm Advent Carols  
21st @ 4pm Village Carol Service

CHRISTMAS EVE

4pm Children's Crib Service  
11.15pm Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY

10.30am Family Christmas Service

THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

## THE FUTURE OF ALVESTON MAGAZINE

This December/January edition of our magazine will **NOT** be the last one we are going to be able to produce in print. There is a new team member who will liaise with advertisers.

The plan for deliveries is for distributors to please collect their copies from St Helen's Church coffee morning on the last Tuesday of the month - if they are able to, (10:30-12:30). (See page 37 for the proposal as to which months because we propose cutting down the number of editions over the next year). I will **also** be putting the magazine online.

Diane Barnard, editor



**Quality Christmas Trees: our biggest fundraiser!!!**

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Or post to 'Helmet Magazine',  
1 Beech Close, Alveston, BS35 3NH.

*Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Helmet editors or committee.*

Your Helmet editor is Diane Barnard (01454 885793).  
Contact David Moss if you are interested in advertising ([revsrural@gmail.com](mailto:revsrural@gmail.com)).

ADVERTISING RATES		
SIZE	PER ISSUE	PER YEAR at 10% off
Full page	£48.75	£438.75
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Helmet dates 2025-26		
We plan to deliver on or soon after the LAST Tuesdays prior to the months of news. The deadline is the 1 <sup>st</sup> of the previous month.		
<u>Edition</u>	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Delivery</u>
Feb/March	Jan 1st	Jan 27th
April/May	March 1st	Mar 31st
June/Juy/	Aug May 1st	May 26th
Sept/Oct	Aug 1st	Aug 25th
Nov/Dec/Jan	Oct 1st	Oct 27th

Payment by cheque or bank transfer must be received in advance.

**ALL Contributors - Please** send in original art-work and good quality photos and not what has gone via social media or some online storage which compresses the size and will result in poorer quality reproduction. We need it to be at 300dpi. A half page advert needs to be landscape format and full page 'portrait'.

*Nota Bene*

## JOY

This year the Church of England has chosen JOY as its Christmas theme.

Joy can mean feeling very happy, someone who brings happiness, or a sense of success.

Joy is a moment of great happiness.

One of the happiest moments in life is the birth of a child. While the pure joy of welcoming new life can fade as the responsibilities of parenthood begin, studies show that this joy often returns for parents and caregivers. Acts of kindness and compassion, especially when they are genuine and heartfelt, can fill us with joy. I still feel joy from a recent visit to the nursing home. The elderly man beside me called out, 'Help, help!' When I held his hand, he smiled right away.

Joy can also be someone who brings happiness to others.

Meaningful relationships bring us great joy. People who find a life partner often talk about the deep happiness that comes from a supportive and loving relationship. Of course, even close partnerships can have disagreements and challenges. But joy is more than just happiness. It is the contentment that comes from knowing you have loved and been loved. This kind of joy endures, even after someone has passed away.

Joy... as the feeling of success.

Nothing brings me more joy than completing a task well, especially when it helps others. I sometimes think I have one of the best jobs in the world. When the bride and groom thank me for their special wedding day, when young parents thank me for a joyful christening, or when a widow thanks me for a memorable funeral—these are moments filled with joy when I know I have helped others and done a good job.

"Joy to the world" is the good news that the Angels brought to the shepherds in the fields at the moment of Jesus' birth.

This was also the joy that Jesus' parents felt when he was born. The name Jesus means Saviour, given in the hope and joy that Jesus would change the world for good through kindness and love, even to the point of giving his life. While Christmas is a time to celebrate his birth and the love he brings, it also invites us to look forward to the promise of resurrection and the ultimate renewal of all things. This hope of a kingdom where joy persists beyond the now deepens our celebration, transforming our seasonal warmth into an anticipation of everlasting joy.

**Please join us for the Community Carol Service at St. Helen's, 4pm on Sunday, 21st December. Come sing joy into our community.**

PS. Thank you to everyone who donated to this year's Christmas Boxes, which were delivered to poor and vulnerable children across the world.

Rev. David Moss MA, Vicar of North Severnside, St. Helen's Vicarage, Alveston  
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## **Methodist Church Worship – December & January**

10.30	7 <sup>th</sup> December	Church Anniversary - Team Ministry
10.30	14 <sup>th</sup> December	TBA
10.30	21 <sup>st</sup> December	Carol Service – Pete Jones
10.30	25 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Day Service – Pete Jones
10.30	28 <sup>th</sup> December	TBA
10.30	4 <sup>th</sup> January	TBA
10.30	11 <sup>th</sup> January	TBA
10.30	18 <sup>th</sup> January	TBA
10.30	25 <sup>th</sup> January	TBA

## **Methodist Church News and Events**

### **The Spirit of Christmas**

If you think that Christmas started earlier than ever in the shops this year, you are correct, and this has been true for decades. To give just one recent example, in 2020 mince pies first appeared in supermarkets on 28<sup>th</sup> September, but this year they were on the shelves in Morrisons on 17<sup>th</sup> August!

It was bizarre going around Garden Centres early in September this year, with pumpkins piled high and as many skeletons as staff, while bears and reindeers sang Christmas Carols amid vast displays of lights, decorations, and all sorts of things you never thought you needed on 25<sup>th</sup> December. The children had only just gone back to school!

Businesses make a significant proportion of their annual profits at Christmas, so it's understandable why they do their best to get ahead of their competitors. But why are most of us happy to buy at least some things so early - even if we tell ourselves that it's wrong?

There is a deep desire in all of us for peace, hope and joy, and Christmas is the catalyst for many to try and attain them - if only for a short time on one day of the year. This is driven by a longing to escape the harsh realities of feeding the family, paying bills that only get bigger, keeping a job, loneliness and fears for the future. Against a backdrop of accelerating change and complexity, climate catastrophes, uncertainty, and warfare, we wish for peace, hope and joy that will last a lifetime, not just a day.

# Memory Lane

*“It's hard losing someone. The pain doesn't really ever go away.*

*But the setting here is so lovely and green, calm and peaceful, it helps.*

*We can't bring them back but when we're among those trees they feel less far away.*

*And knowing that we're helping create a woodland for future generations... that's solace.”*

Chris, Bristol

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MEMORIAL  
WOODLANDS

BRISTOL

#### Methodist Church News and Events continued

The baby born that first Christmas came precisely to bring peace, hope and joy for all people and for all time. Jesus is the perfect gift from God to a troubled world. The thought-provoking carol 'In the bleak midwinter' asks the question 'What can I give him, poor as I am?'. What indeed can we give the one who created everything? The answer is wonderfully simple. 'Give my heart'

When we open our hearts, and accept Jesus into our lives, we sense peace, hope and joy in ways we never imagined possible. We start a journey of discovery which, in time, will enable us to safely navigate life's challenges in sensing him by our side every step of the way.

Our **Carol Service** on **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December** may be the perfect place and time for you to experience the peace, hope and joy of the true Christmas. We'd love you to join us.

**Community Cuppa** will be on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December from 10.30 to 12.00 in the hall. The good company, laughter, friendship, excellent coffee, tea, cupcakes, biscuits and '**Ian's Intriguing Quiz**' will lift your spirits! If you are not able to be with us then, make a New Year's resolution to join us on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January!

If you like Christmas Carols and cake, you'll want to be at **Alveston Fellowship** on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December from 2 to 4pm**. There will be plenty of seasonal spirit (of the non-alcoholic variety!) and joy. And the first meeting of the new year will be on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January.

**Craft and Chat** is a brilliant way for folk to come together at Christmas. It will be good to see you on **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December from 2 to 4pm** in the hall. Bring whatever craft you enjoy, or just pop in for a coffee and chat. We will meet again on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January. Contact Elaine on 415374 for more details. Pete Jones 01454 412912

#### St Helen's Church contacts

[www.sthensalvs.co.uk](http://www.sthensalvs.co.uk)

Rev David Moss 01454 415190

#### Licensed Lay Ministers-

Tracey Black (And for children's activities) 01454 417660

[Tracey.lynnne.black@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Tracey.lynnne.black@hotmail.co.uk)

Judith Heybyrne 01454 616725

#### Church Warden -

Gail Lowe 07949 920851

#### Alveston Methodist Church contacts

Rev Dr Simon Edwards 01454 418176

#### Stewards -

Peter Jones 01454 412912

Pam Jones 01454 412912

Doreen Stears 01454 850453

(Contact steward)

Hall Hire - Peter Jones 01454 412912

## St Helen's Church Services December 2025

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	<b>12 noon</b>	<b>Advent Course followed by Soup lunch</b>
7th December	8am	Holy Communion
	10.30am	All Age Service with Communion
	4pm	Advent Carols
14 <sup>th</sup> December	8am	Holy Communion
	9am	Messy Church
	10.30am	All Age Service
21st December	8am	Holy Communion
	10.30am	All Age Service with Communion
	4pm	Village Lessons and Carols Service
28th December	10.30am	All Age Service

## Services January 2026

4th January	8am	Holy Communion
	10.30am	Epiphany Carols
<b>7th January</b>	<b>12 noon</b>	<b>Holy Communion with Soup Lunch</b>
11 <sup>th</sup> January	8am	Holy Communion
	9am	Messy Church
	10.30am	All Age Service
18th January	8am	Holy Communion
	10.30am	All Age Service with Communion
25 <sup>th</sup> January	8am	Holy Communion
	<b>9am</b>	<b>Café Church</b>
	10.30am	All Age Service

## St Helen's News

**Work in Progress** - after successfully completing the organ refurbishment and the new heating system we have not taken a rest at St Helen's. We are now undertaking two new projects, the installation of a new kitchen space and work on the bell tower. Over the coming months we will be organising fund raising initiatives so please look at our website and notices placed around the village and come along and support us while having some fun yourselves.





## INVITATION FROM US TO YOU COME AND LET'S CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS TOGETHER

7th December	4pm	Advent Carols and readings
21st December	4pm	Village Carol Service (followed by mince pies and mulled wine)
24 <sup>th</sup> December	4pm	Family Crib Service (dress up and help us tell the Christmas story)
24 <sup>th</sup> December	11.15pm	Holy Communion
25 <sup>th</sup> December	10.30am	Family Christmas Celebration
4th January	10.30am	Epiphany Carols

### **ADVENT REFLECTIONS** On **Wednesdays 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> December**

at 12noon there will be a short communion service followed by a soup lunch, during which Advent themes from this year's Advent book O Come, O Come Emmanuel, will be discussed. It is a beautifully illustrated, full-colour book that provides daily meditations, scripture readings, artwork, and prayers, making it a valuable tool for personal or family devotion during the Advent and Christmas seasons. The book features contributions from several leading clergy, including David Hoyle, who was the Dean of Bristol Cathedral and is now the Dean of Westminster Abbey.



### **Something new for all the Family - Every Sunday at 9am at St. Helen's - Starting January 2026**

Please come along and join us

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 9am Church Breakfast
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Messy Church & Breakfast
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Alpha Course & Breakfast
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Café Church & Breakfast



### **Alpha Course Breakfast - Every 3rd Sunday Starting 9 am 18<sup>th</sup> January**



An Alpha Course Breakfast is a Sunday Morning event held at 9am in St Helen's Church that provides breakfast to kick off the Alpha Course, a series of monthly sessions exploring the basics of the Christian faith. The breakfast is often followed by a short video and discussion, creating a warm, welcoming environment where people can ask questions and explore their faith in a relaxed setting.

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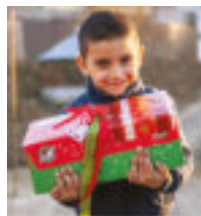
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**Samaritan's Purse Shoe Boxes** – A big thank you to all those who brought their shoe boxes and donations into St Helen's for onward transportation. The boxes are now on the next stage of their journey.



### **Charity Coffee Mornings**

We are delighted to report that at our Charity Coffee mornings during 2025 have continued to be well supported and we have raised monies for a wide selection of charities, thank you. These will continue in 2026 on the first Tuesday of each month and regular Coffee Cake and Chat sessions on other Tuesdays between 10.30am and 12.30pm.

### **Church Activities**

**Knitting Group** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month 2pm- 4pm. For further information then please contact Judith Heybyrne 01454 616725

**Art Group** – Friday 10-12noon. For further information contact Anne Harrison 01454 885532.

### **Alveston Fringe ART 5 & 6th December 10 am — 4 pm**

We will be hosting an exhibition in St Helen's Church, Alveston, with a variety of paintings and crafts, some of which will be for sale. There will also be a cake stall. On the 6th (Saturday) during the afternoon you can enjoy the renditions of the Thornblowers and bellringers while you enjoy a cuppa.

Refreshments will be available, along with a cheery welcome.

We look forward to seeing you.

Friday 5th and Saturday 6th December 10 - 4 pm

Entrance is free!

***Finally, we would like to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas  
and our Best Wishes for 2026***

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## **NEWS FROM the ALVESTON Women's Institute (WI)**

### **The WI Meeting in October was a talk from Steve Slade on his Flying Adventures**

Steve was a keen sportsman, playing rugby, cycling, peddle car racing and in the Cadet Force at school. At 17 he won a Royal Naval Flying Scholarship and was accepted at the British Airways College of Air Training. A flying accident threatened to put paid to his flying career before it had even started, and after time in Stoke Mandeville Hospital's spinal injury unit he changed his career ambitions, studying Aeronautical Engineering at Southampton University. Steve's final year project involved developing a hand-control system for a light aircraft. In 1978 he moved to Bristol to work as a Development Engineer on the engine for Concorde, which was the beginning of a diverse career with Rolls Royce spanning 38 years.

Steve discovered that he could learn to fly with the charity Flying Scholarships for Disabled People. He built his own aircraft with adaptations which, as a paraplegic, enabled him to fly. He recounted numerous light aircraft and microlight 'Flying Adventures' over the last 22 years, taking part in Round Britain Rallies, Kiev to Odessa Microlight Rally, International competitions, (winning a gold medal at the 1997 1<sup>st</sup> World Air Games in Turkey) and the Guinness World Record (July 2002) for performing 102 successive take-offs and landings in his light aircraft in a 60 minute period at Kemble Airfield Gloucestershire. In 2008, after a significant amount of planning and organisation, to raise money for Help for Heroes a total of 114 airfields were visited, with only one being missed due to low lying mist obscuring the strip. This comfortably beat the previous record, which had stood at 70. As a child his daughter suffered with heart problems - so he raised money for the Children's Hospital by flying from Lands End to John O'Groats in a day - 750 miles and 11hrs 45 mins in the air. Nothing held Steve back! He has around 3,200 flying hours.

Steve illustrated these adventures with fascinating aerial views from around this country and beyond, including photographs taken in the local area showing the many changes in the landscape over the last 40 years.

Retiring from Rolls-Royce in December 2016, Steve now explores other hobbies in addition to aviation - brewing beer, sailing on Cotswold Water Park, Wheelchair Rugby with Bristol Bears and the Newport Dragons (they won The League!). He also goes on adventures with his electric buggy exploring footpaths and cyclepaths, and travelled the West Devon Way from Tavistock to Plymouth - a truly inspirational and impressive life well lived.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS NEW YEAR

With the long dark nights stretching out in front of you, why not consider volunteering in your local community? Not only will you improve your health and happiness but by giving just an hour a week of your time you can make a huge difference to those that you help.

There are many reasons why people volunteer. For some, volunteering can be a route to employment, or a chance to try something new which may lead to a career change. For others, volunteering is a chance to meet new people, make new friends, make a difference to the lives of others and give you a purpose.

Thornbury Volunteer Centre can provide you with information and support on volunteering opportunities in the local area which best suit your needs, skills and time available, whilst making sure that you find volunteering an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

We are contacted regularly by groups and organisations that are seeking to recruit volunteers from all walks of life, levels of expertise (from none to highly skilled) and time available.

Age, gender or disability are not barriers to volunteering. Anyone, who is able to spare some time, from an hour a week to once a month or just on a one-off basis, would be warmly welcomed by someone in the community.

Volunteering is a valuable experience that benefits all parties.

To find out more please contact Thornbury Volunteer Centre on 01454 413392;

email: [mail@volunteer-thornbury.co.uk](mailto:mail@volunteer-thornbury.co.uk);

website: [www.volunteer-thornbury.co.uk](http://www.volunteer-thornbury.co.uk);

twitter: @thornburyvc

Facebook: [thornburyvolunteers](https://www.facebook.com/thornburyvolunteers).



## Thornbury Orchestra

3pm Saturday 17th January 2026 in Marlwood School Thornbury Orchestra present an afternoon programme of exciting Spanish, English and Belgian music. Starting with Chabrier's lively Espana we move north to the battlefields of Agincourt and the film music for Henry V by William Walton. The second half is devoted to Franck's dramatic and gloriously happy D minor symphony. The concert is in aid of the Jesse May charity "Caring for children with short lives, so they can be at home with their families when it matters most". Tickets available from the Thornbury Orchestra website [thornburyorchestra.org.uk](http://thornburyorchestra.org.uk) or on the door

## ST. MARY'S MUSIC

THE POPULAR MONTHLY CONCERTS HELD EVERY 3RD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH, THORNBURY (BS35 1HQ) RESUME ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 18TH 2026 WHEN WE SHALL HOST THE **BRISTOL CHAMBER CHOIR**.

AS USUAL, THE CONCERT BEGINS AT 4.00PM, LASTS APPROXIMATELY AN HOUR, AND WILL BE FOLLOWED BY REFRESHMENTS.

ADMISSION IS FREE AND DONATIONS GO TO ST. MARY'S MUSIC.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THIS EVENT

## Thornbury Choral Society

Rehearsals for the new season begin again after the Christmas break on Monday, January 5th 2026. As usual the rehearsals take place at the United Reform Church, Thornbury at 8.00pm. At our next concert on May 16th, we will be performing Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle.

On Saturday, February 28th, our annual "Come and Sing" workshop will take place at Alveston Methodist Church (BS35 3RA) when we shall be studying Verdi's Requiem

Further information can be found on our website [thornburychoralsociety.org.uk](http://thornburychoralsociety.org.uk)



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## Rough Weather by Janet Tucker

We watched with delight as the bus slogged its way up the steep hill towards us, waiting at the bus stop under our umbrellas. It was a cold wet night. Very dark, no moon or stars, altogether pretty miserable in the heavy rain that was pouring down from the black night sky. Then the bus reached us and we looked at each other in dismay as we read the sign on the front of the bus. 'Driver Training' it said, as it swept past us without stopping, spraying us with rainwater from the gutter. "Oh, thanks a bunch," shouted Jock at the bus's retreating rear end. "That was just what we needed."

So we stood there, the two of us, cold, damp and miserable. Then Jock decided he was going to phone for a taxi to take us into town. Heaven only knows how much longer we would have to wait for a bus ...

"Sorry Sir, there is a thirty-minute wait. We are run off our feet tonight. There is nothing available right now. Do you still wish to order one and wait? We will try to get one out to you as soon as possible." Jock looked at me and I nodded, "Yes please" and he told the operator. "OK, we will get one out to you as fast as we can," she said after Jock had given her our location.

Then, all of a sudden, the black night sky was split in two by a sudden bolt of forked lightning that splintered its way across the heavens followed by an almighty roar of thunder. "Good Lord, something must have raised Thor's hackles this night," muttered Jock. "Yes," replied Eve. "The fact that there are no buses and no taxis either for that matter."

The rain was absolutely relentless now, sheeting down so hard they almost couldn't see through it. The gutter was being overwhelmed with water which was soon flowing up and over the pavement to add to the couples' discomfort. "I wish that taxi would hurry up and come," moaned Eve.

"I can see a small green light coming up the hill," said Jock. The couple watched as the light climbed up the hill and got closer. It WAS the taxi, much to their relief, just as yet another bolt of lightning split the sky in two with a fierce brightness, and thunder rumbled incessantly.

"What a night!" said the taxi driver after the couple had installed themselves in the car, rainwater running in rivulets from their umbrellas. "Where to?" he asked. "Town please, Rosamund Street."

"Oh, are you going to the Green Goose then? If so, I will drop you right outside ... "Yes, that would be great. Thanks," Jock said.

So they eventually arrived at the restaurant. Luckily Jock had booked a table so they sat down and had a delicious hot meal before having to leave and brave the foul weather again. Yes, it was still raining cats and dogs, but at least they had a dry ending to a very wet cold start at the bus stop that was out in the middle of nowhere!

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Pilates, Zumba and other fitness classes - contact Sam on 07977632003  
Amateur Radio Club, Chantry: Wed 7:30pm (secretary 07765892447)  
Thornbury Chamber Players: Methodist Church: fortnightly Thurs 7:45-9:45  
Sharon Phillips School of Dancing, contact 07989652780  
Climate Action Thornbury & Surroundings see [www.sustainablethornbury.org](http://www.sustainablethornbury.org)  
Coffee, Cake and Chat 10.30am to 12.30pm every Tuesday. St Helen's Church.  
Knitting Group – 2nd Wednesday of each month, 2pm- 4pm at St Helen's Church. For further information please contact 01454 616725  
Art Group – Fridays 10am-12 noon, St Helen's Church, with all abilities welcome. Further information please contact Anne Harrison on 01454 885532.  
House Group – meets Thursday evenings 7.30-9pm, usually fortnightly in St Helen's Church, further information from Tracey Black 01454 417660.  
Thornbury Orchestra Wednesdays 7:45 – 9:45, St Helen's Church.  
[www.thornburyorchestra.org.uk](http://www.thornburyorchestra.org.uk)  
Scouting:- Beavers Thursdays from 5.30pm - 6.30pm  
Cubs Tuesdays from 6pm - 7.30pm  
Scouts Fridays from 6:30pm to 8pm

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Please continue to pass on your annual programmes and details of future events (deadline 1st of the month) to Tony Houghton, 2 Beanhill Crescent, BS35 3JG. They can be accepted by email to [Diaryhelmet@btinternet.com](mailto:Diaryhelmet@btinternet.com)

## SOME EVENTS HAPPENING IN DECEMBER

Mon 1st 7:30 Alveston Gardens Association - Scottish Trip 2024 -

George Hargreaves - JH

Tue 2nd 2pm Northavon Dolls House Club - 501 901 for details - AMH

Sat 6th 10:00 - 1pm - Christmas Fair - AMH

Mon 8th 7:30 Alveston WI - A Murder Mystery - The Red Herrings - JH

Thursday 18th 2pm Craft n Chat - See below

Alveston Local History Society - No Meeting

## SOME EVENTS HAPPENING IN JANUARY

Tue 6th 2pm Northavon Dolls House Club - 501 901 for details - AMH

Mon 12th 7:30 Alveston WI - Peace Pencil Portraits - Beth - JH

Thursday 15th 2pm Craft n Chat - see below

Wed 28th Alveston Local History Society - Thomas Becket - Edward Boreham

AMC = Alveston Methodist Church; AMH = Alveston Methodist Hall; JH = Jubilee Hall;  
SMCH = St Mary's Church Hall, Thornbury.

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## 4@4 concert

**4pm Sunday 25th January 2026 in St Helen's Church.**

The 4@4 concert series (Fourth Sunday at 4 o'clock) continues with a programme of Baroque music featuring the new hybrid organ. Paul Bailey will be performing Handel's Cuckoo and Nightingale concerto with members of the Thornbury Chamber Players and guests. In addition to Handel there will be music by Bach (Sinfonia from Cantata 42) and Boyce (Symphony 1). The concert will be followed by refreshments.

Entry is free with a retiring collection in aid of church charities.



**Made a Mark *Alveston Elf Trail*** will run from **Dec 1st 2025 - 4th Jan 2026**. There will be 10 Elves to find around the village, each with a letter. Find them all and solve the anagram to be in with the chance of winning a prize.

Maps on sale from Dec 1st from The Square Bakehouse or Alveston Parade Convenience Shop - £1 per map. Each completed map will be entered into a prize draw!

## **ACTION AT THE ARMSTRONG**

Work has continued non-stop on the renovation of the Cossham Hall and the creation of the new bar, kitchen and foyer. Significant milestones have been the completion of most of the internal walls, insulation of the foyer roof and installation of most of the cables and main pipes. The next stage, starting in November, was the installation of the new bar and kitchen and the final roof repairs to the Cossham Hall including the restoration of the vaulted ceiling.





All of this has been made possible by Maggie Lansdown's generous gift of £1.25m in memory of her mother. After much persuasion she has given her permission to call the main hall the 'Lansdown Hall' in recognition of her invaluable support, without which this project would have been impossible. Maggie has visited to see progress and meet the team, and was impressed by their enthusiasm and commitment to the project. The whole venue will be known as The Armstrong in honour of Frank Armstrong's generous legacy to the town over 50 years ago.

The focus for the Armstrong Team now is on raising awareness and support in the community, along with raising the vital £1.1m needed for the renovation of the larger hall. This will be needed for the provision of new flooring and roof insulation, as well as installing a greener and more efficient heating system. So several of the team have been out and about gathering support and giving out information and contact details. The Armstrong had a stall at Love Thornbury's Vintage Car Event and at the Christmas Lights Switch-On event. The response from the public has been very positive, and many thanks go to Thornbury Christmas Lights Association for donating the proceeds of the day to help with funds for The Armstrong project.

Phase 2 is vital for the future - we need to provide the large space to bring back community activities which have been lost due to closure, and provide a fitting arena for the talented drama and musical groups, including Thornbury Arts Festival, which have given the town such joyful delights over 50 years.

It is hoped that the Cossham Hall and Foyer will be in operation in early Spring, so if you belong to a community group which needs a home, or if you are planning a show, a concert, an exhibition or a private event in 2026, please get in touch with the marketing team via the website. Please spread the word and look at the website to access information about how to help and how to donate. Watch social media for updates and sign up on the website to receive the monthly newsletter.

Head to [www.thearmstrong.co.uk](http://www.thearmstrong.co.uk) to find out all you want to know about this exciting project.

Joel Dommett, a leading comedian and TV personality who grew up in this area and performed on the stage of the Armstrong Hall when he was young tells us

"Performing at the Armstrong was unforgettable and I'm so excited that Thornbury now has this incredible space back, ready to inspire the next generation of talent."



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Fun Palaces Celebrates Huge Success for Fifth Year Running in Thornbury. Thornbury Fun Palaces 2025 has once again proven to be a vibrant celebration of community, creativity, and connection. Marking five incredible years, the event brought together people of all ages for a day full of energy, imagination, and fun. This year activities spanned across 5 venues with 15 providers kindly using their time and resources to benefit their community.

Over 1000 visitors were treated to a wide variety of activities, from interactive coding workshops by Digilocal to hands-on woodland clay art with Woodland Makery. Inside JIGSAW Thornbury the Community Cafe and Lending Library welcomed families as they discovered how to be a radio presenter with Thornbury Radio.

“Thank you for hosting us at Fun Places! We had a wonderful time, and I truly appreciate the effort you and your team put into organising such engaging initiatives. It was a great experience.” Anant, Thornbury Resident.

At Thornbury Library families joined in with engaging sessions, including Makaton-signed stories with Better Communication Together, as well as fascinating museum artifacts from the Thornbury & District Heritage Trust and an interactive giant mosquito displayed by Rotary in Thornbury. Local music, from the Panache Steel Band at the St Mary Centre, added a lively soundtrack to the event with their live performances and workshops throughout the day.

The event also offered plenty of opportunities for active fun. Families enjoyed free swimming, ball games, and acrobatics demonstrations, while others explored health and wellness workshops such as birth preparation with Moon & Lotus, whilst Krunch Pod provided delicious free food and craft activities.

One young child said they loved “working with their Daddy on the computer” and followed this with a heart drawing. Other favourites included ‘happy faces, old and new’, and the ‘warm and welcoming community feel’.

“JIGSAW Thornbury is proud to facilitate this community-led event, uniting local providers and residents to share their skills and passions. My role in the coordination has been an absolute joy. It was wonderful to see people of all ages coming together to create, connect, and celebrate our community — a true reminder of the power of creativity and belonging.” — Bonnie, Community Participation Lead at JIGSAW Thornbury.

Thornbury Fun Palaces 2025 has once again shown that when a community comes together to share creativity and fun, the results are truly magical. A heartfelt thank you to all of the activity providers and South Gloucestershire Council, Thornbury Library, Thornbury Radio and the St Mary Centre Team for their support in promoting and facilitating the event.

(Bonnie Rayment, JIGSAW Thornbury on behalf of the Thornbury Fun Palaces community initiative).



Woodland Makery providing nature activities



Thornbury Radio providing the opportunity to become a radio presenter

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## **Alveston Gardens Association Meeting 6th October 2025**

The Xmas Lunch arrangements were uppermost on the agenda at this month's meeting. Topical tips were to sow broad beans, cut back asparagus, protect citrus fruit trees, turn compost heaps, and make shelters for hedgehogs. We then welcomed Vanessa Berridge from the Gloucestershire branch of the National Open Gardens Scheme to tell us about the how the organisation developed and some of the gardens we can visit.

In 1926 the honourable Elsie Wagg, who was on the committee for the Queen's Nursing Institute, suggested that to raise more funds those members who had attractive gardens should open them to the public and charge a shilling per person. She and several others did, and raised £8000. The King was impressed, and in 1927 agreed to open Sandringham's garden in support of the charity. More open gardens followed. In 1939 money was raised for the War Effort.

In 1948 the NHS took over running the District Nurses and the NGS began funding other nursing charities. In 1980 the Queen mother became the Royal Patron. In 1984 the first donation was made to MacMillan Nurses and in 1996 five new nursing and medical charities were added to the list of those supported. Some charities receive long-term support, some are supported to accomplish a specific project and others are just supported for a year. Dr Richard Claxton, the new chief executive, has a strong interest in horticulture as therapy and has been particularly involved with the development of Horatio's Garden which works with spinal injury patients.

A few facts and figures for 2025 about gardens involved in the scheme in Gloucestershire: 86 opened to the public, 75 provided teas, 60 had credit card readers, 48 were accessible to wheelchairs, 42 sold plants, and 32 accepted dogs (as well as assistance dogs). In 2024 the NGS raised £35 million overall, 80% of which was actually distributed to the charities.

The NGS has a website, and every year publishes a "yellow book" for each county. This lists which gardens will be open when and what facilities will be provided. If the garden you want to see is not open at a suitable time it may be possible to negotiate a private viewing for a group. It's always worth asking. Some gardens only open at a certain time of year because that is when they are really worth seeing. Vanessa then talked a little about some of Gloucestershire's gardens which take part in the scheme and showed some photos, particularly of the smaller less well-known ones, just to whet our appetites for next year. Start with the snowdrops ----- and go through to the Michaelmas daisies.



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## Alveston Local History Society October 2025

This month's subject was, in some ways, very "local". Sir Handel Cossham was born in Thornbury High St in 1824. His father was a builder and carpenter, and presumably lover of the music of George Handel. The young Handel went to work as a clerk in Yate colliery and seems to have really made his mark because at 24 he was able to marry Elizabeth Wethered, the daughter of a colliery owner. Soon afterwards Handel and his father-in-law opened up more collieries and Handel developed a reputation for being a very considerate employer, providing decent housing and medical care for his staff.

He was a member of Bristol City Council in the 1860s, and in 1885 became MP for Bristol East. He died after a sudden short illness in 1890, still concerned that there were no significant medical facilities for the poor of East Bristol - his will directed that the money he left was to be used to build a hospital as his lasting legacy. His idea was that the income from his investments would fund the running of the hospital.

The Cossham Memorial Hospital was duly built in the early 1900s and opened in 1907. It was a "voluntary" hospital, paid for partly by Handel's legacy and partly by "subscribers" who would each pay an annual sum towards its upkeep. It was managed by an unpaid committee with "honorary" consultant surgeons and physicians. Unfortunately, there were not enough subscribers and the consultants received substantial "gifts" at the end of the first year which tipped the hospital's finances into the red from the start. The hospital had to close when a patient who was admitted with an unidentified fever was found to have smallpox. Quite a few patients caught it and some died. Clearly there were a significant number not inoculated.

The hospital reopened in 1910 and from then on theoretically each patient was supposed to pay £1/1/0d per week for treatment. This was more than most "ordinary" people could manage so the financial problems continued. The people of east Bristol valued their local hospital very highly and did a great deal of fund raising. The police proved to be particularly good at putting on events. Perhaps they had little crime to investigate!

The types of patients changed over the 1920s and 30s as motor vehicles became more common, and as WW2 broke out young male motor cyclists were a significant proportion of the intake. It remained open throughout WW2.

1948 saw the start of the National Health Service and the hospital has undergone *many* changes, particularly since the 1960s. The main original building is basically intact, but now only functions as an outpatient unit with dialysis, X-Ray, scanning and physiotherapy services. Handel would probably be disappointed that its usage is so limited. Even the midwife-led birth unit closed in 2023 for lack of trained midwives. What is next for Cossham Hospital? At the moment even the future of the NHS seems uncertain, but Cossham seems to be a survivor, so who knows?



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## Hawkins Hide Allotments

### LEAFMOULD

It's hard to know what to talk about in the shortest months. Nothing's happening right now. I have parsnips, leeks and purple sprouting broccoli still growing. The soil is very soggy, as it always is in winter. Really not much to say.

Hmmm. OK, lets talk about leafmould instead.

Its not too late to gather leaves to start creating leafmould. All leaves will eventually form leafmould but waxy, thick leaves will take much longer to break down. I wouldn't bother collecting evergreen leaves from things like holly or laurel; focus on the leaves from deciduous tree/shrubs.

Place them in a bin liner or old compost bag, moisten if dry, make a few holes in the bag, tie the top loosely and leave for up to 2 years. Bingo, done. That simple.



You can use the well-rotted result as seed-sowing compost. It has been called black gold, and I suspect it is a waste not to use as seed compost (especially given the state of bought compost these days) but you can also use it as a mulch, a soil improver, lawn top-dressing, etc. etc. I'm filling all those empty compost bags that don't get thrown away because they might be useful - is that just me?

Pine needles will form an acidic leafmould. I did a PH test on my garden soil when I first moved here, and then my allotment when I first got it. If you wondered, the soil round here is very alkaline (the tester shows red for acid soils, green for alkaline soils; on both sites my tester showed it as dark dark green) so an acidic leafmould as a mulch is not a bad idea. If you get a real Christmas tree (shout out to 2nd Alveston Scouts) you could put it in a corner of the garden after Christmas to dry out and shed its needles. Gather up those needles and create a needle leafmould pile to rot down and use as a mulch round acid-loving plants. Although, to be quite honest, I'm not sure I'd even try and grow acid-loving plants around here, given how alkaline the soil, so use it anywhere. (Take the dried-out tree round the tip, on a groundsheet, it WILL shed needles in your car, please don't hold me responsible for the mess.)

Happy Growing

Alison.

If you are interested in taking on an allotment please apply by contacting the Alveston Parish Clerk, Graham Smith using [clerk@alvestonpc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@alvestonpc.co.uk)  
If you would like more information about the allotments before applying please contact [alveston.allotments@gmail.com](mailto:alveston.allotments@gmail.com)



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## Rotary Swimathon 2026

Thornbury Rotary is delighted to announce the forthcoming Swimathon 2026 event, which is being held on Friday 6th and Saturday 7th March. With more than half a million pounds raised over the years, the event continues to be one of the most successful annual fundraisers of its type in the area. There are 2 main charities being supported in 2026, namely Krunch South West and Jigsaw Thornbury. Rotary is indebted to Thornbury Leisure Centre for its continued hosting and support, enabling many national and local charities and charitable causes to benefit. President of Thornbury Rotary, Peter Ball, would like to thank all the previous swimmers and sponsors for their amazing involvement and generosity. This includes individual and corporate sponsors. Every single penny raised by the swimming teams is passed on to the beneficiaries and, for 2025, donations amounted to over £18,000.

As always, the Swimathon is open to all ages from 8 to 80 and beyond. Swimmers must be able to swim the whole length of the Thornbury pool. It's not a race, nor an endurance test, just a great fun event to raise money for important causes. Relay teams of up to 6 members can enter, without any cost whatsoever to those taking part, or their organisations.

Rotary is keen to encourage teams to enter as soon as possible. Details on how to do this are easy to find on the new website: [www.thornburyrotary.org.uk](http://www.thornburyrotary.org.uk). There are forms for entry and sponsorship, and plenty of information on what to do to get involved. There is also a link to the Swimathon 2026 fundraising page, which is [www.justgiving.com/campaign/thornburyswim26](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/thornburyswim26). For additional questions or support, including corporate sponsorship, you can contact Adrian Dennis on 07970 435520.

Thornbury Rotary members would like to express their very best wishes to everyone for the festive season.





# THORNBURY Art Club



## December

Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec only. Tuesday Painting Studio Group, SMCH, 1.30-4.30 pm. Tel. 01454 414433

Thurs until 18th Dec. Thursday Painting Studio Group, SMCH, 1.30-4.30pm. Tel.07776271010

## January

Tues 6th and every Tues. Tuesday Painting Studio Group, SMCH, 1.30-4.30 pm. Tel. 01454 414433

Thurs 8th and every Thurs. Thursday Painting Studio Group, SMCH, 1.30-4.30pm. Tel. 07776271010

Venue: SMCH - St Mary's Church Hall, Eastbury Rd, Thornbury, BS35 1DR)

## **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January Club Night.**

### **St Mary's Church Hall**

For our opening night in 2026, we have a **water-soluble oils** demonstration by **Valérie Pirlot**. This will be a landscape as Valerie loves to capture the great outdoors 'alla prima'. In fact often she has been invited to paint live events such as weddings, parties, fairs, circus shows and music festivals such as Glastonbury. Valerie is a member of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters and a founding member of The British Plein Air Painters group. Her teaching will encourage us to paint with freshness, confidence and spontaneity and will include tips for plein air painting. Valerie aims to depict the essence of a subject in a few well-placed brushstrokes.

We'll have a short break during the evening for free tea, coffee, and biscuits. This will give us an opportunity to catch up with each other and say hello to our visitors. There will be some time to chat to the artist and ask questions. Don't miss this fantastic chance to learn, socialise, and enjoy an evening of art, whether you're just starting out or looking to refine your skills. **If you're interested in joining the Club**, our membership secretary, Pat, will be on the door to give you more information, or else contact us as on the next page.



**Members free, non-members very welcome - £6 on the door, cash or card.**

**7.15 for 7.30pm until 9.30pm.**

## **Thornbury Art Club – New members always welcome.**

We are a diverse group, brought together through the love of art and creativity. We enjoy meeting up to share ideas and techniques. Many find this a refreshing alternative to on-line learning. Our membership and activities are thriving. If you get a buzz from being arty and creative, then maybe we're the Club for you? Annual membership is just £46, which includes:

- Monthly evening **Club Nights** when a variety of professional artists will visit to demonstrate their art skills and style. During the tea break we can catch up with each other, chat to the artist about materials and techniques plus items for sale.
- Our monthly Saturday morning **Outdoor Sketchers Group** is very popular. We meet and sketch at different venues then socialise over tea and coffee in a local cafe. We try to car share where possible.
- Saturday **Workshops** with a professional tutors (additional fee).
- Members can display their work in **Club Exhibitions** and our **Art In the Community** programme.

We hold weekly **Studio Groups** on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Here you can enjoy your painting and crafting with others, learning and sharing skills and tips. This is an additional £79 p.a.- but includes refreshments. Both groups are currently full but we hold a waiting list. Non-Members are welcome to visit during studio hours to see what we are up to and to ask about memberships in person.

Our club is open to everyone, regardless of artistic experience or medium. Some of our members just paint for fun, while others are successfully running their own art businesses. Come and give us a try, we're always keen to have new members.

**To find out more, visit:-**

[www.thornburyartclub.co.uk](http://www.thornburyartclub.co.uk),

[www.facebook.com/ThornburyArtClub](https://www.facebook.com/ThornburyArtClub)

email [publicrelations.tac@gmail.com](mailto:publicrelations.tac@gmail.com)

### **The Thornbury and District Cancer Research UK Committee**

would like to give a huge thank you to all those who supported us at our annual Autumn Fayre in Alveston on 11 October 2025, raising funds for Cancer Research UK.

We raised £2602.93 in total and we thank you sincerely for your valued support and generosity.

May we wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

## What's On: Thornbury & District Museum

A new exhibition is now open, which runs until Fri 19 December – **Thornbury: A Garrison Town in WW2**. Our district played an important, perhaps unexpected, role in the Second World War, as it hosted a significant military presence throughout the war years.



The exhibition looks at the various units which passed through the area, especially Thornbury's 'own regiment' – a little-known and unusual section of the Royal Artillery that was raised in the town and taken into the hearts of the residents.

What impact did the presence of hundreds of troops and the military aspects of the war have on the lives of the civilians? The exhibition features personal accounts remembering the armed forces, the fall of Dunkirk, aircraft crashes, the arrival of the 'Yanks', the build-up and effects of D-Day, and much more.

In our upstairs exhibition room, **a related exhibition, "My Dear Mum"**, concerns the Harwich evacuees who stayed in Thornbury during the war. Their stories are told using personal letters, oral histories, photographs and other sources such as school logbooks. This should be of great interest to local schoolchildren learning about child evacuation.



We also now have another, smaller display in our Coins Room which looks at **Education in Thornbury**.

The magnificent **Thornbury Quilt**, which is part of the Museum's collection, is now **on permanent display in an upstairs room at Thornbury Town Hall** and can be viewed every Wednesday during the Town Hall's opening hours.



This unique coverlet was created locally in 1900 to help fundraise for a new vicarage. Some of its 236 squares represent local people and tradesmen. Their stories, and the story of how the quilt was rediscovered in 2013, are told in an accompanying audio-visual display, created by the museum.

The Museum is in Chapel Street and is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 1-4pm and on Saturdays 10am-4pm. Entry is FREE.

**OCTOPUS DRAMA GROUP ‘CINDERELLA’**

7 -10 th January we will be performing our very own take on Cinderella, written and directed by Abi Baskerville. There will be many new faces on stage and this pantomime is sure to be a crowd pleaser!

After Cinderella’s father remarries his new wife (the elegant but jealous Baroness) and her two intriguing looking daughters move in. When the Baron dies Cinderella is left at the mercy of her stepmother and stepsisters, who force her into a whirlwind of chores, day and night. Cinderella is loved by all, even the mice, and gets by each day with the friendship of her fellow house staff and the ever-cheerful Buttons. Prince Charming & his bestie, Dandini, avoids the King and Queen’s demands for him to marry. In a final attempt to find love the Prince hosts a Ball, inviting every eligible lady in the kingdom to try and win his heart, but not before dance lessons from a special guest!

Cinderella’s fortunes change thanks to her Fairy Godmother & her friends. She attends the ball, captures the heart of Prince Charming, and, after the famous glass slipper test, is finally freed from her life of drudgery. Oh yes she is!

There will be 5 performances:  
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 7.30pm and Saturday at 11am and 2.30pm at Christ the King Hall in Castle Street, Thornbury.

Tickets go on general sale at 9am on Saturday 6 th December at Rosie & Rex gift shop, 32 High Street, Thornbury. Tickets costing £8 for adults and £6 for children under 18 can be purchased Monday to Friday from 9 am – 4.30 pm and from 9 am – 4 pm on Saturdays. Get your tickets soon to avoid disappointment.

Christ the King Hall has plenty of parking nearby and refreshments will be available during the interval. For those who want a programme it would help if you bring cash.

**Alveston Magazine dates 2026**

The printers will now deliver all magazines to St Helen’s church prior to the last Tuesday of the month.

If those who usually receive a box or bag are able, please collect your batch from the church from 10.30 - 12.30 on the last Tuesday. Coffee and cake will be available. (Brian and Elaine Lee are now retiring, having undertaken most of this process since the start of the pandemic restrictions.)

The deadline is the 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous month. We are planning to keep going but with fewer editions

<b>Edition</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Collection/ Delivery</b>
<b><u>2026</u></b>		
<b>Feb/Mar</b>	<b>JAN 1</b>	<b>JAN 27</b>
<b>Apr/May</b>	<b>MARCH 1</b>	<b>MAR 31</b>
<b>June/July/Aug</b>		
	<b>MAY 1</b>	<b>MAY 26</b>
<b>Sept/Oct</b>	<b>AUG 1</b>	<b>AUG 25</b>
<b>Nov/Dec/Jan</b>		
	<b>OCT 1</b>	<b>OCT 27</b>

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## December 2025 in Thornbury Library

**Stories Around The Tree** Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December 11am Calling all children! Join us after Lego for a Christmas story and some Christmas songs around the Christmas Tree. All the family can join in

**Winter Wonderland** Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 10.30-12

Join the fun and create some Christmas crafts

**Lego Club** Create your own LEGO masterpieces and display them in the library for your family and friends to see FREE Every **Saturday 9.30-10.30am**

**Rhymes and Stories** FREE Every Monday (still Rhymetime but with a little story on top). 9.30am-10am (open at 9.30 for Rhymetime only).

**Rhymetime** FREE every Friday 9.30am-10am (open at 9.30 for Rhymetime only).

### FOR ADULTS:

**"Have You Read...?"** A book group for everyone **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2pm**

Come and enjoy a reading group with a difference! No set novel to read. Just drop in for an hour for refreshments and a chat

**Computer Support 1-1** Book a session with our computer volunteer for IT and digital support Every Thursday 10am, 11am, 12pm

## January 2026 in Thornbury Library

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**Lego Club** Create your own LEGO masterpieces and display them in the library for your family and friends to see FREE Every Saturday 9.30-10.30am.

**NEW – Rhymes and Stories** FREE Every Monday (still Rhymetime but with a little story on top) 9.30am-10am (open at 9.30 for Rhymetime only).

**Rhymetime** FREE every Friday 9.30am-10am (open 9.30 for Rhymetime only)

### FOR ADULTS:

**Red Herrings – The Silver Songbird Mystery** **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2pm**

A murder mystery where it's up to you to solve the crime. Tickets £5 from the library or [sglibraries.eventbrite.com](https://sglibraries.eventbrite.com). (Ticket price including refreshments)

**"Have You Read...?"** A book group for everyone **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2pm**

Come and enjoy a reading group with a difference!

No set novel to read. Just drop in for an hour for refreshments and a chat

**Computer Support 1-1** Book a session with our computer volunteer for IT and digital support. Every Thursday 10am, 11am, 12pm

### STAFFED TIMES

Mon, Wed, Thurs & Fri 10-5, Sat 9.30-12.30

Rhymetime 9.30-10 (Monday and Friday) special opening time for this event only.

### OPEN ACCESS (Unstaffed hours)

8.00am – 7.30pm Everyday.

Induction essential

**Please note A 15-minute lapse will occur between staff closing time and Open Access starting**

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Don't forget to use those businesses which advertise herein and tell them that this is where you saw them.



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Alvestonyouthcentre@gmail.com**

**JUBILEE HALL - Alice Keehn  
jubileehallbookings@gmail.com**



**ST HELEN'S  
CHURCH - Elaine  
Lee 01454 419322**

**ALVESTON METHODIST CHURCH -  
Peter Jones 412912**