

# EAST KNOYLE NEWSLETTER

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[www.east-knoyle.co.uk](http://www.east-knoyle.co.uk)

January/February 2025



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## The East Knoyle Newsletter

### In this issue...

#### A note from the Editors...

Our front cover is Trish Strachan who was the first to complete Wren's shop new loyalty scheme. See Wren's shop news for more details and pop into the shop to get your card!

The Bingo (or Springo) night has been rescheduled to the 21st of March (see details below).

Tickets are available to buy in the shop.

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#### East Knoyle Newsletter hosting



Raising money towards the production and printing costs

Entry: £6.00 per person

Purchase tickets at the shop

**BROWSE THE NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE**

#### Celebrating 50 Years

Friday 21st March 2025

7.30pm - 9.30pm

East Knoyle Village Hall



Bring your own dabber!

Bar





## Parish Council News

As most of you know, all our Councillors are village residents – often your neighbours - who have all volunteered to be councillors in order to support the community in various ways. They bring a wide range of skills and viewpoints to decisions made. They also manage the budget we receive via the precept (shown on your Council Tax statement). We hope that this article provides some insight into some of what the PC has done either directly or by leading/supporting volunteer groups over the last 12 months. **Why not come along to the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April to hear more, perhaps make some suggestions for projects and ask any questions? It is your village! Or even become a Councillor?**

Knoyle House Grounds and Playground has seen much needed improvements and maintenance work carried out – reflected by the excellent RoSPA report received. The grounds have been kept in good condition despite the wet weather and extended grass growing season and work on improving the look of the boundary vegetation is due to start soon.

We are lucky to have access to so much common land, which is primarily woodland, but that in turn brings problems. Apart from ongoing tree management ash dieback continues to cause problems, especially next to roads, properties and footpaths. A proactive approach to woodland management this year has meant no expensive emergency work was needed in 2024, despite some severe storms. We have struggled to eradicate the knotweed for quite a few years but can now confidently say that we are getting it well under control, again thanks to a group of volunteers injecting and locating the knotweed. In addition, the work of the CLAROW team of volunteers in maintaining footpaths and lands (clearing 1 hectare of the invasive Himalayan balsam by hand for example) is a tremendous asset to the village.

We remain frustrated with the condition of some of our roads, despite repeatedly reporting issues. Some work has been done (e.g. Wise Lane 'patch'), and the Parish Steward is given a list of 'potholes/repairs' for his one-day visit each month (which does not always happen!). There are 253 town and parish councils within Wiltshire County, all requesting 'urgent' repairs to their roads and faced with the reduced Wiltshire Council budget for road repairs and their prioritisation of main road repairs we can only continue to report issues. One recent success has been our request to clear some of the drainage ditches. The PC continues to press for a reduced speed limit on the A350 (and is supporting the latest official investigation) and police monitoring (sadly lacking). Thanks to WC Cllr Bridget Wayman for her ongoing support in this, and other local issues.

The Parish Council supports and recruits volunteers wherever we can. The CLAROW team, the KHG team, the Telephone Box refurbishing team, the annual Litter Picking Team. Huge thanks to you all. Apart from providing the finances, the PC also must provide insurance and liability cover for PC 'owned' volunteer events, as well as ever increasing demands on managing safety. We pay for and maintain the defibrillator at Wren's Shop and have organised the forthcoming CPR training.

Looking ahead – the precept request submitted to Wiltshire Council will reflect a smaller increase this year of 5%. A large portion of the precept goes straight to maintaining KHG, the War Memorial and our common lands, for which all costs continue to rise. This year we are now faced with having to pay for the May elections (for the first time Wiltshire Council are imposing this charge) as well as having to upgrade various communication elements required by recent national legislation. We are also looking at improving the view from the Windmill and some tree replanting in suitable areas.

**Why not have your say? Come along to PC meetings (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month). We also have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor – contact the Clerk for more information.**

Martin Brown – [clerkeastknoylepc@gmail.com](mailto:clerkeastknoylepc@gmail.com)

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### Did you know there is a East Knoyle village WhatsApp group?

The purpose of which is to relay important information quickly to those in the village, such as a tree blocking a road lost dogs or cats

Please message Deb Bateman on 07713 321 530 to be added.

*The paper this magazine is printed on is from renewable managed forest resources, that are grown in an environmentally friendly manner.*

# Wren's Shop News

## Happy New Year To All Our Customers & Volunteers

We would like to thank everyone who has played their part in supporting our much-valued village shop over the last 12 months. Whether you are customers, volunteers or both, the shop would simply not exist if it wasn't for you.

### New For 2025 – Wren's Loyalty Discount Scheme

Ask for your Loyalty Card next time you shop with us and every time you spend £10 or more you will receive one stamp on your card. When you have 10 stamps you will receive £10 off your next shop with us.

### News About Our Volunteers

By the time you read this our new Bookkeeper, Jonathan Turnbull should have fully taken over the role from Paul Egginton. Paul will thankfully still be volunteering for the shop and with his vast knowledge of how it all works we will continue to consult him when we 'don't know the answer'.

### Can You Spare An Hour Or Two For Our Shop?

We would love to hear from you if you would like to volunteer with us. Please contact us on the shop email or telephone numbers (given below), or just pop in and have a word with us.



**Owned & Run by the Community  
For the Community**

#### Opening Hours

**Monday to Friday: 08:00 to 18:00**

**Saturday: 08:00 to 16:00**

**Sunday/Bank Holidays: 09:00 to 12 noon**

**Newspapers every day**

**Fresh Fruit, Vegetables & Meat 6 days a week**

**Fresh Bread delivered 3 times a week**

**Croissants baked in-store daily**

**Hot Drinks available**

#### **Orders Taken**

**Tel: 01747 830735**

**Email: [shop@wrensshop.co.uk](mailto:shop@wrensshop.co.uk)**

**<http://www.wrens-shop.co.uk>**

**Facebook: WrensShopEastKnogle**



#### Opening Hours

**Monday to Friday : 09:00 to 13:00**

**(Closed Weekends & Bank Holidays)**

#### Our Services

- \*Amazon Drop-off & Collections
- \*Banking - cash withdrawals, cheque/cash deposits
- \*Banking Balances
- \*Bill Payments & Top-up
- \*Drop & Go Drop-off
- \*Customs Forms for International Postage
- \*Euros on Demand, Other Currencies - to order
- \*ParcelForce UK & Worldwide (incl Large Parcels)
- \*Postal Orders
- \*Royal Mail Letters & Parcels (Inland/International)
- \*Royal Mail Redirections
- \*Royal Mail 24/48Hr Tracked &/or Signed For
- \*Savings & Investments
- \*Special Delivery, Tracked & Signed-for Postage
- \*Stamps (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Class & International)
- \*Travel Money Cards

**Tel: 01747 830928**

**Email: [shop@wrensshop.co.uk](mailto:shop@wrensshop.co.uk)**



## Data Entry Opportunity at Wren's

The Village Shop is looking for a volunteer to undertake the data entry work for our Finance Team. Our current team member, who is leaving us in May, works one morning per week, although any new team member would be able to choose their days/times to suit themselves. The role involves, amongst other things, maintaining records of invoice payments and credits on the internet based Xero finance system. You should therefore be comfortable in the use of a computer. Full details of the role are available on request.

If you would like to apply for this role or require further information please contact Liz Quantrell, details below.

[equantrell55@gmail.com](mailto:equantrell55@gmail.com)

0744 360 8292



Thank you to Jo Wilmott for this photo of the shop lit up at night with Christmas decorations



Note  
the  
date

WONDER WHAT THE  
PARISH COUNCIL DO?

fascinated by  
the history of  
the village?

WANT TO MEET  
OUR PARISH  
COUNCILLORS?

Attend the Parish Assembly  
On: **Wednesday 2nd April 2025**  
The Village Hall  
Village archives on display from 5pm - 6pm  
Meeting starts at 6pm

## East Knoyle Village Hall

Having had a very successful Art Exhibition, the Quiz Night with Martin Brown as the Quizmaster had a very amusing evening, raising over £1,100 which will be used for the work that is planned for the maintenance of the Hall, a building the age of the Village Hall always requires upkeep.

With James Doherty asking to stand down from his duties as the Treasurer and Booking Secretary, the replacements for both the posts have taken a little longer than we had planned. We are pleased to announce that Paul Egginton has taken on the Treasurer's post and Jill Hockham has undertaken the role of Booking Secretary.

The price increase to £20 per hour has been implemented with some necessary negotiations with the regular users being completed to ensure the Hall remains affordable for the Village activities. The Village Hall bookings are at a level that have never been obtained before which has resulted in the income being just above expenditure for the first time in a decade.

Paul Naish reported that the tickets for Kevin Stow's Music Quiz have sold out, we look forward to another very entertaining evening and our thanks go to all those who ensure the evening is such a success.

Cat Stott will be starting to bring the garden back into its glorious shape in the Spring and the grass continues to be kept looking very good by Mark Howell.

Happy New Year

David Jenkins



**For Village Hall Bookings & Availability - [eastknoylevillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:eastknoylevillagehall@gmail.com)**

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### Wonderful local response

In late November the Met office reported that a deep Atlantic low pressure system, named Storm Bert, would bring a spell of extremely wet and windy weather. East Knoyle was clearly in the path of the storm, with very strong winds and gusts in some parts of the south-west exceeding 70mph. Such a gust struck the church roof bringing the carved finial from the ridge of the main roof crashing down on the tiles of the chancel roof.

The PCC are indebted to an early morning walker who saw the damage and reported it, a drone photography enthusiast living in EK who provided close-up pictures, and then Messrs Burfitt & Garrett who responded immediately, erected scaffolding and undertook repairs in record time. The north (churchyard) side of the roof has more modern tiles than the graduated stone ones on the south side, so it was possible to match and replace them. Burfitt & Garrett's prompt action ensured that the famous plasterwork inside was unaffected – thank you!

During December there were two Carol Services – one supporting Clouds House and the traditional village one. Both were well supported and we need to thank another EK business – Q J Hull – for stepping in quickly to repair outside lights in time for people arriving at these two events – thank you!





## East Knoyle rainfall September, October, November, December 2024

Apologies for missing the last report. As a result, here are 4 months for you to look at! We had an extremely wet September (a real problem for harvesting late crops such as maize, for baling precious straw, and for autumn sowing) followed by a comparatively dry October-December.

**SEPTEMBER 2024.** We had 6.23" (158.2mm) in September 2024. The 30 year average is 2.42" (61.42 mm). So this September, rainfall was nearly three times higher than the 30 year average. (We had an above average 3.60" in September 2023, so perhaps wetter Septembers are a trend we can expect to see repeated.)

**OCTOBER 2024.** We had total 3.92" (99.5 mm) in October 2024, compared to 30 year average of 4.39" (111.42 mm). So this October, rainfall was 10% below the 30 year average. (We had twice as much in October 2023, 7.97".)

**NOVEMBER 2024.** We had 3.86" (98mm) in November 2024. The 30 year average is 4.3" (109.14 mm). So this September, rainfall was again 10% below the 30 year November average.

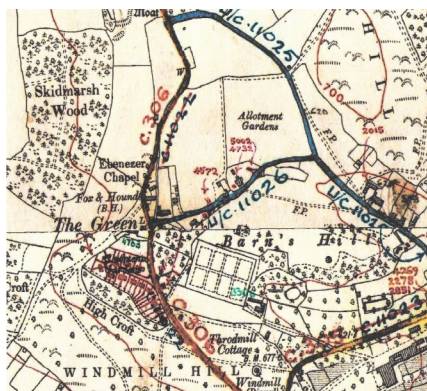
**DECEMBER 2024.** We had total 2.42" (61.5 mm), compared to 30 year average of 3.92" (99.57 mm). So this December, rainfall was 40% below the 30 year December average. (We had twice as much in December 2023, was 5.57", 40% above.)

Nat Page



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## Round and About



St Mary's Church was filled with members of the farming community and many family and friends to remember and give thanks for the life of Sam Brine, who died last month, at the age of 90. Sam and his family had farmed in the area for many years, most recently at Chicklade. He was a dedicated stockman, an excellent arable farmer and, after partial retirement, a keen tractor driver. On full retirement, Sam and Jean came into East Knoyle to live at The Green, and from there moved down to Seymour Farm to be with Sally, Leigh and their children, delighting once more to be close to the cattle. Jean died in May 2024, Sam surviving her by just seven months. We send our condolences to Sally, Leigh and their family, and to Adrian and all his family.

The village has lost another true countryman with the death of Brian Maitland from Holloway. Our sympathy goes to his son Neil.

The Round and About Team are aware, as -doubtless- are many of you, that several residents and former residents have had spells in hospital for treatment or operations. We would like to send best wishes to all these Knoylians, with hopes for speedy recovery.

The start of a new year seems a good time to throw a spotlight on some of the volunteers who make this village the special place it is, and what better place to begin than in the shop. As well as those who wo/man the till, there is a real army of behind-the-scenes helpers: early openers, late closers, accounts and IT techies, those who order, those who clean, the Christmas decorators, paper-voucher-counters, newspaper sorters, stock-room mistresses, the shop committee who take all the big decisions and steer it in the right direction. Without this dedicated team, Wren's Shop could not function and be the fabulous centre of the village it really is.



The Branch AGM, held on the 26th November at the Fox and Hounds, provided the opportunity to review 'in the round' an extremely successful 2024 across all elements of Branch activity and to elect officers for the year ahead. Readers of the EKVN are always well briefed on our events, fundraising and commemorative activities so the first report of 2025 will focus purely on the future, beginning with confirmation of Branch officers (all elected unopposed) tasked with maintaining - and improving on - our current impressive track record:

Chairman - Sir Nick Wright, Vice-Chairman-Paul Naish, Treasurer - Andrew Knight

Secretary - Ron Clark, Poppy Appeal Organiser - Ian Gurney,

Standard Bearer - Mark Gittings.

### Poppy Appeal

At the time of writing the total for the 24/25 appeal, which ends on the 30th September, stands at £12,953.85, the majority of which was raised in just two weeks of 'Remembrance fortnight' and already exceeds the total raised for the whole year of the 23/24 appeal. So once again we stand on the threshold of another record breaking year, our target being in excess of £15,000. With that, and the VE and VJ Day 80th anniversaries in mind, we are currently constructing an interesting and informative portfolio of events/talks, which, coupled with Roy Halsall's efforts during the summer months, we will certainly be giving it 'our 'best shot'. Watch this space.

### Dates to Note

- 18th January RBL Wiltshire County Conference, Warminster.
- 4th February Branch Meeting, 1830 Fox and Hounds
- 4th March Branch Meeting, 1830 Fox and Hounds
- 1st April Branch Meeting, 1830 Fox and Hounds
- 8th May 80th Anniversary VE Day
- 2nd September 80th Anniversary VJ Day

Ron Clark  
Branch Secretary



## IN AID OF THE POPPY APPEAL

Do you have any odd coins or notes, old or foreign currency? Even Euros! Old watches (working or not). Small items of militaria or interest, including Jewellery.  
Gold or silver scrap.

Please contact Roy Halsall 830499, or leave at the Village Shop Post Office.

**All money made will go to the Poppy Appeal.**



## RBL Women's Branch

Another enjoyable and successful year has gone by, and this next year is not only the 80th anniversary of VE day, but also that of our Women's Branch. Something to be very proud of, as only 2 independent Branches remain in Wiltshire.



Looking back on last year we had talks from a chimney sweep and Neal's Yard, visited Bowood Gardens and the Chocolatier in Frome, and some of us attended the Festival of Remembrance. We ran a successful Easter Egg Hunt, joined the Mens Section to put on the Pimm's and Strawberry event and of course the Remembrance Parade when Lady Venetia Wright read the Roll of Honour. The County AGM was held at the Village Hall when our members provided wonderful refreshments. The year ended with our annual Christmas Party, which was a very enjoyable occasion, and a good start to the festive season.

Thank you to all the ladies who have provided delicious food for all the events, raffle prizes which helps to raise our funds, to Monica Snell for a great quiz based on the Village Newsletter, and to all who attend and support the meetings and events. Special thanks must go to Helen Lever who works tirelessly for the Branch and magically provides wonderful decorations for any occasion.

Meetings will be held on the 2nd Monday of the month starting from February 10th. A programme and locations are not yet available but will be sent out by email when speakers and trips are confirmed.

The annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Monday April 7th.

Gill Staunton  
Branch Secretary

### Mega Book and Puzzle Sale!

Children's and teen fiction, non fiction/reference books, picture books, adult non/fiction and art books, some collectors and vintage books, good quality jigsaws and games.

Come find a bargain - low prices, 100's of lovely books and games at Chauffeur's Cottage, SP3 6AL  
10-4 Saturday February 1st

Claire Morsman

**T@3**

The next dates are Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February, 13th March, 10th April.  
Doors open at **2.45pm**, and we need to be out of the hall **by 4.30pm**.



### Dog Mess

It's been a while since we have put a note in the newsletter about the increasing amount of dog mess around the play park and surrounding areas - in fact all through the village.

Please clean up after your dog even in the fields as dog mess is harmful to livestock.

Do not leave poo bags hanging on trees or bushes.

If you have taken the trouble to pick it up please put it in the bin.

Thank you

## Moviola



We think we have a strong and entertaining programme for you at Moviola to help blow away the winter blues and set you up for the first buds of Spring. Starting on a theatrical theme, we have **THE CRITIC (15)** on **Wednesday 29th January** starring Ian McKellen, Gemma Arterton, Mark Strong and Lesley Manville. This is a suspenseful thriller set in 1930s London with McKellen playing a theatre critic, who is unflinching in his assessments of the shows and actors he writes about. When events threaten his position at the newspaper, he resorts to blackmail and general bad behaviour. The great cast, led by McKellen in an 'unsympathetic' role, offers a glimpse into a pre-internet world where reputations are made or lost by the stab of a pen.

On **Wednesday 26th February** we have the sparkling and tender comedy **THELMA (12A)**. When 93-year-old Thelma is duped by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson, she doesn't take it lying down, but sets out on a quest, fraught with peril, to reclaim her lost money. Starring the very elderly but dynamic June Squibb, this film has themes that many will respond to, handling the challenges of modern-day life faced by older people with warmth, humour and a lightness of touch.

Dates for your diaries:

Wednesday 26th March – **My Favourite Cake** – charming, funny Iranian film

Wednesday 30th April – **Conclave** – Ralph Fiennes as a Cardinal embroiled in intrigue and conspiracy when leading the selection of a new Pope.

We are serving potatoes as usual, with delicious fillings. There is a bar with wine, soft drinks, snacks and ice creams.

**Tickets remain at the bargain price of £5.** You can get them from Wren's Shop, on the door, or phone me on 01747 830594.

We start serving at 6.50 and the film starts at 7.30.

Please remember to bring some cash.

Thank you for continuing to support us. We look forward to seeing you in the Village Hall.

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## East Knoyle Chess Club

The annual East Knoyle Chess Club Tournament took place at the Fox and Hounds on 9th January and, this year, competitors were vying for the Mark Boyden Trophy. Mark was one of the founder members of the club, an enthusiastic player and a formidable opponent. Very tragically, he died in 2019 from cancer at the age of 56. So to have his name on the trophy is more than appropriate and hopefully the competition will continue his name for many years. We were very pleased that Mark's brother, Dave, was able to present the trophy to the 2025 champion, Peter Miskin, who won all his games. Many congratulations Peter. He fought off challenges from Chris Cox, who came second, and Kevin Stow and Dave Le Cuirot (last years winner), who shared the bronze medal position.



If you have any interest in playing chess, we would love to see you. The club meet every Thursday at The Fox and Hounds and, apart from this tournament, it is all very relaxed and informal. Even if you haven't played in a long while, other players would be happy to give some gentle tuition.



## East Knoyle Village Hall 200 Club

The new year has got off to a flying start for one lucky winner in the Village Hall 200 Club. Nights are getting shorter and days are getting lighter, and the sun is OUT: the first draw of the year has been held. The winning number is 119, and the winner is:

**LUKE LEVER £50**

Thanks to all subscribers. New supporters are cordially welcome to join at any time for only £12 a year; the fee goes to help maintaining and improving the Village Hall. Just ring Sara and Neil Southerden on 830594 or leave a message in the Shop.

The next draw is on March 1st.



Your local branch of Save the Children has concluded its programme of fundraising events for 2024 with our Annual Dinner and Auction, held at Summerleaze on 12 December. This event alone raised some £4,000 and was closely followed by Christmas Jumper Week with a raffle drawn on Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> December. We are, of course, the Shaftesbury Branch of this well-known international charity and although we attract support from far and wide, our fundraising events are mainly centred on East Knoyle and its surrounds.

Most of you will already know that Save the Children carries out valuable work around the world, helping families and children caught up in natural disasters and conflict. The Charity's aim is to ease their hardship and suffering by supplying shelter, food, clothing, medical aid etc - all financed by its worldwide fundraising efforts. Within the UK, at local level, most of the fundraising is carried out by Branch Teams up and down the country – the Shaftesbury Branch is your local Team.

As usual, in organising our programme of fundraising events, we have been extremely busy throughout the year, which started with our Spring Talk "Adventures by Train" raising over £1,000. This was followed by the Fun Day and Dog Show in June, which raised some £3,700. Our outdoor summer play "The Importance of Being Ernest" earned over £1,400, whilst donations from other local productions amounted to a further £3,300. Other donations, street collections and miscellaneous sales brought the total raised in 2024 to some £18,000.

Such a result would not be achieved without the generosity of our numerous supporters, whether they are local or from further afield. So, Katie and her Team would like to thank every one of our volunteers, helpers and all those attending our various fundraising events during the year in producing such a tremendous contribution to the Charity's success.

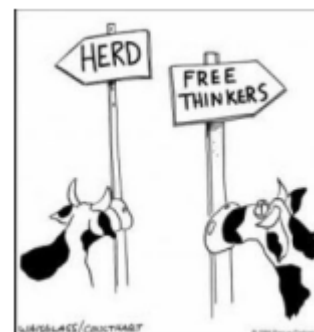
Our Team is currently down on numbers, making our task of organising and running these fundraising events all the more difficult. So, we would welcome interest from anyone who might like to become involved and join the Shaftesbury Team to help with its future fundraising programme. To do so, please contact Katie Page (Chairman) on (01747) 830278 or by email at: [katiepage@copac.org.uk](mailto:katiepage@copac.org.uk)

## East Knoyle Free Thinkers

The January meeting of the EKFT group was the first part of a two meeting topic where we are looking into the following idea:

"To identify life skills and educational subjects not currently taught on the curriculum, that if added, might better prepare young adults for the challenges of the world today."

At the second part of the meeting in February we will be joined by Mat Lake a senior teacher at Gillingham School. Mat will have gone through the same exercise with a cohort of teaching staff and in February we will be comparing the results of our meetings.



## East Knoyle Spring Revue

With the nights already drawing in, it might feel like things are winding down, but like you're Spring bulbs you might be planting, some of us are planning something fun for the new year.

Planned for February/March 2025, we're looking to host an evening of entertainment in the village hall, including a specially written short comedy play. We're looking for volunteers to join the cast, so if you're at all interested and can spare time for rehearsals, please get in touch with John Tyson on [be.free.kode@gmail.com](mailto:be.free.kode@gmail.com)

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### Rising Equestrian Star in East Knoyle

We have watched the Olympics from Paris, this summer, and celebrated the achievements of competitors in every sport, but how do they fulfil their ambitions? They start very young and work relentlessly following their dreams.

Georgia Newby-Vincent, 21, moved her horses to East Knoyle 4 years ago. The village name is believed to originate from the Saxon word "cnuigel" (knuckle) for the shape of our hills, and it is these that drew Georgia here. She told me that our roads and hills provide the ideal fitness training for her horses.

Georgia was destined to ride, her mother (also a rider) bought her first pony, Sovereign, before she was born! Georgia was home schooled because from a very young age she knew what she wanted to do with her ponies and horses. She has dedicated herself full time to look after, ride and compete her ponies, and later her horses, in all aspects of equestrian sport. She still has her most successful pony, Aquillas Moondance (Casper) in her yard. He is now 18 and enjoying retirement after a very successful career taking Georgia to the Horse of the Year Show. Her other FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale) pony Quay (Nancy) took her to selection for the Frickley U18 Championship eventing team, where they won team silver and individual 5<sup>th</sup>. Georgia was only 12 years old.

Moving onto horses, Georgia travelled to Holland to look for a Dutch Warmblood horse to take her career further. Casella Z (Bella) and Georgia together have made a very successful partnership. Competing in Dressage, Georgia has been selected for the UK Foundation Academy Programme. She has been a member of the England Youth team and, from the age of 16, competed in showjumping successfully in Spain on the Sunshine tour. Bella is now 14 and will retire from competition with hopes of breeding Georgia's future horses.

Georgia is very excited about her young horse, bought in Ireland, Orchardleigh Cruise (Luigi). They qualified to compete in the Burghley Young (4 years) Event Horse and is now aimed in 2025 at the Eventing 6 years old championship at Cornbury. This is where the UK future top class eventing competition horses show themselves as prospects for the future top level (5\*) events, such as at Badminton, as well as our national teams. Georgia and Luigi were invited to appear in front of Becky Moody, one of the Team GB medal winning team at the Paris Olympics 2024, at a demonstration in front of an audience in November 2024, and enjoyed every moment of the experience it gave them. It was Luigi's first experience inside an indoor arena, filled with spectators, and potentially spooky objects. After his early nerves, Luigi settled down and coped well with it all.

As well as the welfare and training of her horses, with help from 2 others, Georgia uses her articulated lorry licence, in the afternoons to drive such large lorries for others. She never has time to fill.

Equestrian sport is an extremely difficult management of training, fitness and achievement of both horse and rider to all peak at the right time for the competition. We wish Georgia her every success in the future.

Trish Strachan





## Prickly Parishioners

It was by sheer good fortune, or with a gentle nudge from God, depending on how you view chance happenings, that I glanced up from my desk on a freezing but bright afternoon. Outside my window was a tiny hedgehog.

A quick search for RSPCA guidance indicated he would die if we didn't help – so we did! For a month he lived in our kitchen, eating voraciously, making an incredible din, teaching us that hedgehogs are good climbers and escape-artists, and being weighed regularly in our kitchen scales (we did wash them afterwards!). He was clueless about being nocturnal or hibernating! Once he gained weight we moved him to the garage where we'd disturb him less, though he's still munching busily most nights.

This unexpected guest has been noisy, smelly and messy, deeply distracting and somewhat disruptive – and utterly delightful. It has felt a privilege to observe this wild creature and to see him strengthen. It will be a wrench to let him go in the spring but we hope we can make the rectory garden a hedgehog paradise he won't want to leave (we certainly have many appropriately wild areas).

British hedgehogs are now classed as vulnerable to extinction - yet another of those depressing statistics which we hear so often about our environment. Our little 'Hoglet' has been a gift because he just demanded we help and then rewarded us hugely, but often we must seek out opportunities to make a difference, proving to ourselves that we are not just passive consumers or helpless observers. We have the power to act and we must use it, taking practical steps to make a difference - join the village litter pick, plant trees, feed the birds, fly less, join an environmental campaign etc. In the words of Edmund Burke: 'Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little'.

Revd Kate McFarlane

*(Please do make use of our Foodbank collection box by the door to St Mary's.)*

To find out the details of which services are taking place around the Benefice please visit

[www.benofbart.org.uk/events/month/](http://www.benofbart.org.uk/events/month/)



### Community Coffee Morning

St Mary's, East Knoyle

10.30 - 12.00

4th Tuesday of every month



### Date for the Diary

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

Terry Bishop (friend of Paul & Rachel)

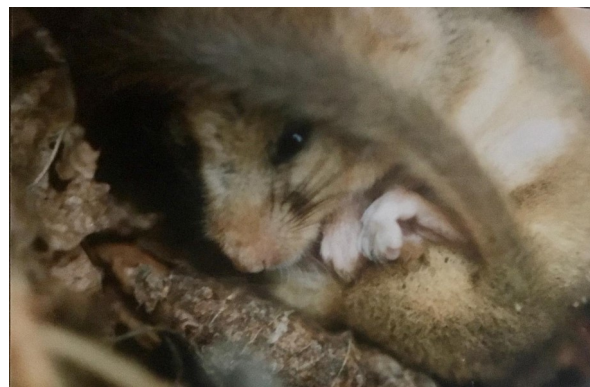
Troubadour & Cruise Ship Entertainer

At the Village Hall

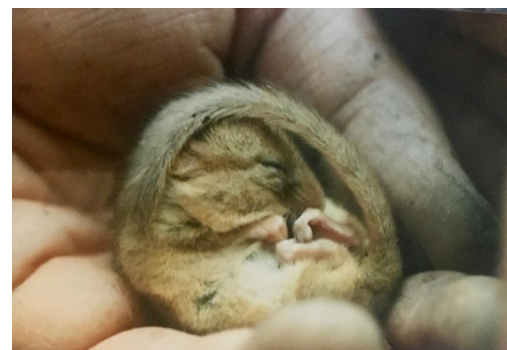
Details of the tickets etc in the next Newsletter

## Knole Nature—Dormouse

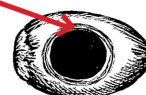
This is one of our rarest mammals. It's a native species, and has lived here since the end of the last ice age, 10,000 thousand years ago. It was once so common that country children kept them as unsuitable pets, but due to habitat destruction and predation there are now only about 45,000 left, and those confined to southern England. It is very rare in Wiltshire, but I have found it in both the gardens we have had in East Knole. The first was accidentally discovered curled up still in its winter sleep in a nest in the decayed base of a big Yew tree we had in Milton, and the photograph shows it in my hand. We carefully put it back and left it to its slumbers. Sadly, a year later we found it or another drowned in a water butt, and ever since we have made sure that we put some kind of board into water butts for escape; I recommend this to all as there must be many small animals that might suffer in this way, as they go down drainpipes in search of food. The second was in a big outbuilding at our cottage in Holloway, and it stayed only a few minutes, not doing very much before going off on its travels or more probably to sleep as they are nocturnal.



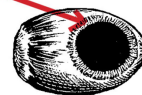
They are small and light, about 40 g. They are easily recognisable because they are the only mouse-like animal with a very furry tail. They use the tail as a 5th leg and for balancing, and as a scarf in winter. They are known as Hazel Dormice because their favourite food is hazelnuts as it is for many other small rodents: distinctive tooth marks are left on the nuts and you can do your detective work on the empty shells under Hazel trees to deduce which rodents have been eating them (I include some drawings to show marks from different species). These nuts are usually eaten when soft and green so making an access hole is easier. Their other foods include small insects, and berries (especially blackberries), so you can begin to work out what their habitat needs are. Additionally they like honeysuckle bark strips for their nest. They also prefer the edges of woodland, or hedges that aren't either too well cut or not cut enough, so you can see that they are fussy little things, and as a very down-to-earth botanist friend said "animals that are so over-particular deserve to die out". But she also liked butterflies and their needs are much more complicated and demanding. Perhaps it's us who deserve to die out.



Dormouse-chewed hazel nuts have a smooth inner rim with tooth marks at an angle to the hole on the nut surface and look a little like a clog.



Vole-chewed hazel nuts have teeth marks across the inner rim of the nut but don't leave any marks on the surface, around the edge of the hole.



Wood mouse-chewed hazel nuts have teeth marks both on the inner rim of the nut and also on the surface, around the edge of the hole.



As squirrels and birds are larger and stronger than smaller rodents they simply crack a hazel nut open, shattering the shell.



They properly hibernate for the 7 coldest months, and the word 'hibernate' should only be used in situations where a warm-blooded animal allows its body temperature to drop to little more than that outside, and heart rate and metabolism drop by 90%, it is often wrongly used to cover any form of over-wintering. To survive so long a hibernation they have, like hedgehogs, to put on big fat reserves in Autumn, and even so, about half don't survive winter.



Another rarer species exists called the Edible Dormouse: this the Romans used to fatten-up for eating baked in honey; those here escaped from a captive colony in Buckinghamshire. With all properly hibernating animals warm spells in winter can wake them up, and this causes problems as they start to burn their precious stored fat at a much higher rate and this may not leave enough to survive.

These marvellous creatures share our village and I find that thrilling.

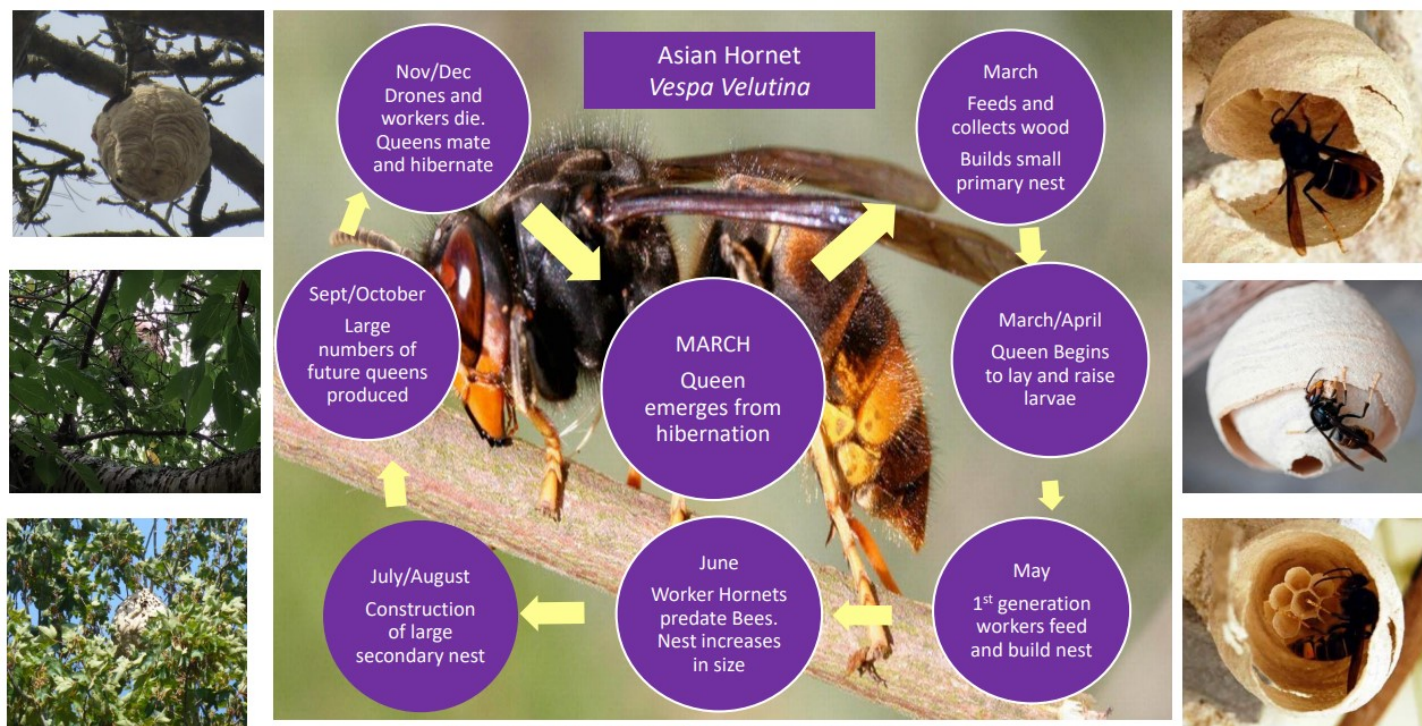
David Pickering



## East Knoyle Honey Bees - Notes from the Milton Apiary – 22

It is mid-January and we have had an excellent cold snap. It is too cold to have a peak in the hives – but I am hoping that the queens will have stopped laying eggs. If this is the case, the cluster temperature will have dropped to a core temp of 18 °C and a peripheral temperature of 8°C. Cold is helpful and works the same as a good frost in the garden, it slows down or kills various pathogens in the colony. Bee colonies are complex biological systems which also include specialised moths, fungi and bacteria. Most of which, we are still trying to understand. Possibly the greatest risk to UK honey bees over the last 30 years, has been the Varroa mite – appropriately named Varroa Destructor. This came over from France (there is a theme here!!) in 1992. Some beekeepers have been pouring chemicals over their colonies ever since. The snag is that these will reduce the number of Varroa mite – but there are around 100 other mites in the colony that are killed off and we are not sure what they do – law of unintended consequences. On the plus side, the clever honey bee is evolving and many colonies have developed hygienic behaviours for removing mites. I was at a lecture at last year's BBKA Spring Conference, where they reckoned, we will be varroa free in 10 years.

Asian Hornet. As I said in the Christmas edition – we dodged a bullet last year. In the autumn, I was really impressed by the amount of (European) Hornet spotting on the village WhatsApp group.



**Yellow-legged hornet**

*Vespa velutina*

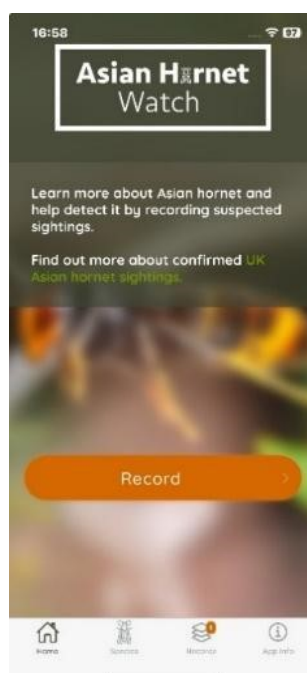


**European hornet**

*Vespa crabro*

<b>Legs:</b>	Yellow at ends
<b>Head:</b>	Black from above, orange face
<b>Thorax:</b>	Black and velvety
<b>Abdomen:</b>	Mainly black with one obvious yellow/orange band
<b>Size:</b>	< 2.5 cm abdomen to head Queens up to 3 cm
<b>Activity:</b>	Never active at night

<b>Legs:</b>	Brown
<b>Head:</b>	Brown from above, yellow face
<b>Thorax:</b>	Black and brown
<b>Abdomen:</b>	Mainly yellow with black bands, spot marks like 'dripping paint'
<b>Size:</b>	larger: < 3 cm abdomen to head Queens up to 3.5 cm
<b>Activity:</b>	May be active at night



Here we have the Asian Hornet Lifecycle. DNA research scientists believe that queens are surviving over winter in the hot spot areas (Sussex, Kent and Plymouth). National Bee Unit Inspectors trap the young queens in March through to June. Last year 15 of the 71 sightings were in Spring Monitoring Traps in Kent and Sussex.

Please get the Asian Hornet Watch app. If there are any questions, please give me a call – Tom EK X 246 – I have some traps!!



## Beast Knoyle, Wild Things in an East Knoyle Garden by Steven Drewett

Since discovering grasshoppers and slow-worms in the Essex home of my childhood, I have been fascinated by the wildlife that lives along side us. I have now spent the past year photographing the creatures that live in our garden at The Green and produced a documentary book called Beast Knoyle, Wild things in an East Knoyle Garden. It is an A4 format, filled with more than 250 images of our garden wildlife. The East Knoyle Village Archive has a copy if anyone wants to take a look.

Drew [stevendrewett1@gmail.com](mailto:stevendrewett1@gmail.com)

*Top row: Common Toad, Sparrow Hawk, Roesel's Bush-cricket.*

*Bottom row: Angle Shades Moth, Wood mouse*



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## **Devolution**

Wiltshire Council held an extraordinary full Council meeting on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January to discuss the proposal for the relevant councils in the 'Heart of Wessex' to join the Devolution Priority Programme.

The government wants to see the whole of England to become Strategic Authorities, progressing to Mayoral Authorities, "to partner with Government to deliver the most ambitious programme of devolution this country has ever seen". That's the stick; it will happen. The carrot is to devolve new powers over transport, skills, planning and employment support.

The councils of Wiltshire Dorset and Somerset are proposing to become The Heart of Wessex and have left the door open to Swindon Borough and Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole councils to join.

Individual councils would continue to exist with their own budgets and each council leader would have a vote on what would be a separate legal body. If the strategic authority then becomes a Mayoral Strategic Authority, council leaders and the Mayor would have votes.

Areas of competence for SAs will be set out in law (via the English Devolution Bill) and will include

**Housing and Planning** (spatial development strategies and when in place call-in powers on strategic developments plus a mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy; Homes England programmes and Affordable Housing Programme funding),

**Transport** (bus franchising, rail network influence, station control, key road network),

**Environment** (retrofit funding, Local Power Plans, Local Nature Recovery Strategies)

**Business** (Growth Hub funding, Office for Investment, UKRI regional innovation influence)

**Public Service Reform** (aligning geographies – police and fire, mayors on Integrated Care Partnerships, health improvement, right to request devolution)

**Skills** (Adult Education Budget, Get Britain Working, Local Skills Improvement Plans)

There will, apparently, be a significant mayoral premium in funding and functions alongside influence via the Council of Nations and Regions.

The Leader of the Council expressed reluctance with the proposal, practically every speaker in the debate expressed their reluctance, but the vote was in favour of the proposal. I voted against the proposal because this devolution process seems to me to have a democratic deficit and I do not understand why councils cannot be given the funding, albeit a smaller amount, to do the same things. Wiltshire Council works very well and we do not need another layer of governance that is likely to cost more.

## **Western Gateway Subnational Transport Plan (WGSTB)**

The WGSTB is consulting on its draft Strategic Investment Plan 2025-2035 at the moment. Particularly relevant to our area are two proposals. One is a Top Ten priority to start before 2030 and that is Junction Improvements to A303/A350 intersection. I am checking the intention of the wording as it does not seem to be a new slip road to take traffic on to the west bound A303, only increasing the space for vehicles queuing to turn right onto the A303 and improved signage and visibility.

The other scheme is the proposal for the Tisbury Loop on the railway line between 2030-35 so that services could increase from one per hour each way to two per hour each way.

The consultation closes on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, but I will support and encourage both these proposals, but I will encourage a better solution for the A350/A303 junction.



## The Cinephile

**Conclave \*\*\*\*** (Oscar tips all round here. Lucky old Ralph Fiennes is the cat that got the cream in this utterly competent, rather wonderful piece of film making.)

Sometimes, going to the movies with no prior knowledge of what your going to see can produce a nice surprise. A film about the election of a new Pope seemed a bit dry and wasn't top of the list. But this film just proves how wrong you can be. My god it's entertaining!

It's a simple concept: The Pope is dead and a new Pope must be appointed. In practice it turns out it's a hugely complicated process, full of thrilling Machiavellian twists and turns. This is proof of the old adage that the first rule of making a great film is to have a great screenplay (Script). This is the case here, with Peter Straughn writing a great script from Robert Harris's great book.

Ralph Fiennes, Stanley Tucci, John Lithgow, Isabella Rossellini are all actors with so much experience that they carry total authority here, along with a remarkably sensitive performance from an actor called Sergio Castellito. Anyone who appreciates the art of acting will squeal, internally with delight. It was difficult not to feel a certain pride in Fiennes's really kind and thoughtful performance, (where; as an actor at this stage in his career, with this part, he seems to be dancing on the moon). For those who want more, the whole craft of this film is pretty much pitch perfect. The photography is stunning, the sound effects and use of music are excellent and the detail in the make up and costumes consummately professional. The only possible criticism, is that it's so slick.

**Bird \*\*\*** (delightful coming of age story set on the fringes of contemporary society and directed by steadfast British director Andrea Arnold, who here stumbles over too many ideas.)

Arnold has always leant towards social realism and she remains in that vein here. For the British film enthusiast they will recognize the influence of Ken Loach's films in her work. She also delves into some Magic Realism in this, which is a delightful nod to the films of Wim Wenders and Jim Jarmusch. The Bird of the title refers to a rather mystical man who almost has the presence of an angel.

The story follows the lives of members of a dysfunctional family living a sort of working class, bohemian life in a squat somewhere in the lost lands of suburban Kent. It's recommended particularly for a stunning debut performance from Nykiya Adams, who plays the lead as Barry Keoghan's (Saltburn) daughter, searching to figure out what life is all about. Keoghan has blast playing a man who misguidedly thinks he knows exactly what life's about.

It's a fresh, energetic film which is beautifully photographed by Robby Ryan, who has shot most of her previous work.

**The Room Next Door \*\*\*** (Julianne Moore and Tilda Swinton are intense and self consciously poised in Almodover's moving Euthanasia project.)

How you respond to this film will depend on your views on assisted dying, those who believe that it is wrong will find it uncomfortable viewing. In short, Tilda Swinton's character has terminal ovarian cancer and has, somewhat improbably, managed to get her hands on a pill from the dark web, which, when she's ready, will allow her to chose when to die. So she doesn't need assistance, but she would, (perhaps rather selfishly), like an old friend to keep her company and enjoy her final weekend with her in a luxury air bnb in the beautiful countryside.

It's the filmmaking that's enjoyable here. As you would expect from Almodover it's indulgent. He specializes in glorious set design and locations bathed in colour and style, captured by sumptuous photography. The performances are so confident from these two actors that it feels almost as if one is watching an academic workshop, where they are admiring one another's craft, but this is in itself compelling. It's a pleasure to watch and is original and moving.

**Small Things Like These \*\*\*\*** (Cillian Murphy and Emily Watson are excellent in a dark, pulled back film about the historical horrors perpetrated by some members of the Catholic Church in small town Ireland).

This is a tough watch, but it's fascinating in its contrast to Conclave. Both about the secrets and lies within the fabric of institutional Catholicism, they are both great films in utterly different ways. The paired down intensity of Small Things Like These makes for a mesmerizing experience of an important film.

**Blitz \*\*\*** (Watchable, if somewhat nostalgic wartime drama where the Nazis rain their bombs down on London, seen from through the eyes of a mixed race boy and his single mother.)

For a Steve McQueen film this one appears uncharacteristically conventional. Saoirse Ronan turns in a solid performance. Her character's mixed race son, played by Elliot Heffernan steals the show and there are a couple of amusing Cameos by Paul Weller, (when did he start acting?) and Kathy Burke.

**Anora\*\*\*** (Billed as the 21<sup>st</sup> century's Pretty Woman this is fun propaganda-bashing Russian stereotypes. It also won The Palme D'Or and will probably pick u an Oscar.)







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Newsletter  
10th March 2025**

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