



Ermington

Parish Magazine

June 2025

Parish Diary

Event	Time	Place
Store & More open	Mon-Sat 10 – 4, Sun 10 – 1	
The Hub	See pages 4 and 5	
Ivybridge Mobile Library	9.40 – 10.10 a.m. Tuesdays 17 June, 15 July	Fawns Close
Pub quizzes	Sundays 1 June, 6 July	Crooked Spire

The date of the next Parish Council meeting is on the Parish Council website - <https://www.ermingtonparish.com/>

St Peter and St Paul Ermington

CHURCH SERVICES – June 2025

1st - 11am Holy Communion

8th - 11am Morning Service with

Local Worship Leaders

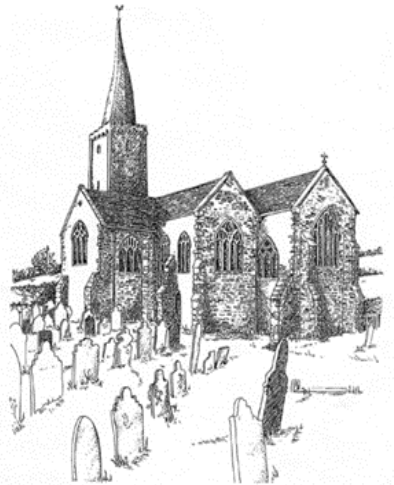
15th - Holy Communion

22nd – 11am Family Service with

Local Worship Leaders

29th—5th Sunday Benefice Service

at Diptford at 11 am (No service here)



The Church Building is open every day for visitors and those seeking a quiet reflective space for private prayer. Thanks to Mr & Mrs P Daniels

For more information, please go to the website:
www.threeriversmissioncommunity.org.uk

From the Editor

Hello Everyone, for the last time.

After 17 years, we are leaving Ermington, and crossing the river Erme. Even though we are going only as far as Modbury, I have decided that I should not try to edit the Ermington parish magazine from outside the parish. In addition, I am having problems with my left eye, and cannot focus clearly, which makes reading and writing difficult even for a pink pirate; you may find mistakes in this magazine. I hope someone else will be able to take over.



This has been an extraordinary year of weather; the driest March on record, and unusual warmth and sunshine in April and May. I am enjoying riding my bike again, after the beastly grey cold of January and February.

There have been extraordinary events in the parish council, too; the upheavals are covered on pages 24-27. I wish the new council well.

This issue is packed with environmental news, from a visit to the Apricot Centre to a bug hunt, a river clean, a Himalayan balsam cull, and Ro's wonderful growing tips, not to mention a powerful argument against the proposed pet crematorium.



Remember Big Pete's hair affair? In the end he raised £801 for his chosen cancer charities. My congratulations. His stunt may have had something to do with the events on pages 30 and 31.



Goodbye Everyone; I shall miss you.

All the best,

Adam



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Activities in The Hub

Situated conveniently in our community shop, The Hub is a perfect space for classes, clubs, and other group activities.

To find out more and make a booking, please call: 01548 831111 or email communityshop.ermington@gmail.com.

Weekly activities are listed under What's On, on the website: www.ermington-shop.com

Monday

9.30 - 10.30 am Beginner's Yoga with Cait.

6.45 - 7.45 pm Yoga with Cait.

8.00 - 9.30 pm Ukulele group.

Tuesday

2.30 – 3.30 pm Men's Yoga with Cait.

Wednesday

10.00 - 12.00 pm Art Class with Christine Pascoe.

1.30 – 3.30 pm Art Class with Christine Pascoe.

Thursday

2.00 - 4.00 pm Spinning group.

6.30 - 9.30 pm Ermington Ladies group.

Friday

9.30 - 10.30 am Pilates Core Strength workshop with Karen.

Sunday

7.00 - 10.00 am Cycling club.

Additional events to look forward to during June:

Tuesday 3rd: 7.30 - 9.00 pm Parish Council Meeting.

Wednesday 11th: 6.0 – 8.00 pm Sovereign Wines, Wine Tasting.

Saturday 14th: 10.00 - 12.00 pm Shareholder opportunity:

Become a supporting member of our community shop,
Ermington Store and More.

ERMINGTON SUMMER FAIR IN THE SQUARE

JUNE 28TH. 2PM. TILL LATE.

**OZZY D MAGICIAN
SALTASH SILVER BAND
UKELELE PLAYERS
DOG SHOW
GAMES
CANDY FLOSS**

**PRIZE DRAW
FIRST PRIZE £100
PLUS MANY MORE
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BBQ**



**LIVE BAND IN EVENING.
8 PM. TILL LATE**

Flete Farm Visit Wednesday 25 June



By kind permission of John Mildmay-
White



Come and see at first-hand the steps that are being put in place to help regenerate this beautiful estate that bridges land and sea, to help increase biodiversity in both fauna and flora all over this area which the Flete manages.

Meet at 12 noon for a picnic lunch on Mothecombe Beach, followed by the tour of the estate with John.



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Minibeast Hunt Report



This year's event was organized by Emily and Ellen and was very well attended by

eleven adults and five children.

Fortunately, we had a lovely sunny day on 29 March, to celebrate our Minibeasts.

Following our Safety Talk, we started our Hunt up in the top of the Churchyard, above the wall, where the children were excited to find: a Black Oil Beetle; a Nursery Web Spider; a Snail, a Slug, a Bumblebee, a Comma Butterfly, a Grass Spider and lots of Woodlice.



In addition we had a 'Listening Bench' where we tried to identify as many sounds of insects and animals as we could, and we also refurbished the 'Bug Hotel' with natural lambs' wool, fir cones, chopped bamboo sticks, and twigs.

Following this we returned to the Church for some well-earned refreshments, and the children used their magnifying glasses to identify what they had 'caught' in their pots, and draw pictures.

Thank you to all the Volunteers.

New Shoots Seedling Swap 10 May

This was well attended, and we were delighted that donations raised £100 for the Ermington Store and More. Another good turn-out at what is now a familiar event in Ermington.



Those who came along also stopped to chat, and buy coffee and cake, ensuring that Hub Café was busy all morning.

Thanks to those who also brought along good-quality spare garden tools to exchange and give away.

Big Shout also to Adam Hart-Davis who offered to sharpen and oil secateurs and shears and the like. A much-appreciated service that added something to the whole event.

We were delighted to welcome those from further afield (South Brent, Ivybridge, and Modbury).

Word gets out fast that there is so much good stuff going on in a modest village such as the wonderful Ermington.

We have a WhatsApp group to stay in close contact. Our first garden visit of the season will take place on Thursday 5 June at 15.30. We will be visiting the garden of one of the members of the group. Everyone will be welcome.

If you would like to be part of the WhatsApp group and stay in touch with our activities, please contact me by email : thinkingworlds@yahoo.co.uk



Ermington Colour Run is Go!

We are thrilled to announce Ermington's first Colour Run fundraiser on Saturday 14 June at 10 am on Ermington Playing Fields. Get ready to be showered in vibrant non-toxic colours and take on exciting obstacles, as you walk, jog, or run round the course.

It's a fantastic opportunity for the community to come together, have fun, and raise money for our amazing local schools, Ermington Primary School and Ermington Pre-School.

This event is for everyone. Kids, parents, grandparents, teachers, and neighbours are all invited to join in the colourful chaos.

Entry fee is £5 per child, accompanying adults go free. Don't miss out on the fun. Sign up today



to secure your spot and receive further information. Scan the QR code opposite, or follow link www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ermington-colour-run-tickets-1345027857529?aff=oddtcreator

Remember to bring a white T-shirt to showcase with drama the vibrant explosions of colour. Don't forget your most jazzy sunglasses or goggles to protect your eyes. Most important, bring your enthusiasm and readiness for a fantastic time.



Food and drink will be available to purchase. A big thank you to Graddon Vending for sponsoring the event and showing their support.

Let's paint the town (and ourselves) and raise funds for our schools. We can't wait to see you there.

ermington colour run

saturday 14th june

10am

ermington playing fields

entry £5 per child

accompanying adults run free

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"ermington colour run"



join us for an action packed fun run featuring vibrant colour stations and obstacles all whilst raising money for ermington primary school & ermington pre-school.

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for all enquiries email ermingtoncolourrun@gmail.com

Penquit House Farm Newsletter

Margaret Lawson

You may have noticed (but probably haven't) that I've been very quiet lately, although it's not been for want of trying on Adam's part. In a few seconds, just eight days before Christmas last year, life changed for a good long while. I tripped over a box left on the kitchen floor and ended up with a fractured femur. Ouch it certainly was.

It wasn't how I intended spending the Christmas and New Year period, but having done the deed, there was no option but to spend the next three and a bit weeks courtesy of the NHS. It did, at least, give me first-hand knowledge of the pressures the NHS are facing at this time. I spent over six hours lying on a cold, hard floor in absolute agony, awaiting the arrival of an ambulance.

A week in Derriford Hospital highlighted the shortage of staff, equipment, and room to move within the ward, although I must comment how kind and caring all the staff were, working so hard under such difficult conditions. The food, also, left much to be desired and did nothing for my poor appetite. Try eating cold cottage pie and carrots.

Physiotherapists seem few and far between, and it was a week post-op before I took my first steps, despite being told this would happen the day after the operation. And it was only five weeks after discharge that a physio came to see me at home. It did all highlight the awful state the NHS is in.

On Christmas Eve, with some metalwork now in my leg, I was transferred to South Hams Community Hospital in Kingsbridge for rehabilitation, and what a difference! The lovely staff had time to get me back up and walking, the ward was pleasant and airy, and the food was superb. The NHS are always threatening to close this lovely little hospital. It would be so sad if they do.

I gradually improved, but until recently I couldn't walk around the yard or even get my wellies on. I was no use around a cow as I couldn't move out of their way fast enough. Tim and Andrew had to manage without my normally limited help, yet the work still goes on, and added to that Tim had the paperwork to contend with, calf births to register, bills to pay etc. some of which he'd not done before. There were quite a few text messages between us while I was in hospital.

I'd not contemplated the 'brain fog' element of a broken leg, but that has gradually cleared, which is just as well, as at this time of the year there are numerous returns to submit as well as the annual accounts to get off to the accountant. I frequently become 'number blind' and have to take a break.

I'm a bit rusty concerning the farm work. It was another very wet winter which causes untold problems. But then a lovely dry spring meant ideal conditions, as the land dried out. As I write, we've just had some much-needed rain, which I'm sure your gardens have appreciated; our rather large 'garden' with quite a few newly sown seeds certainly has. It is still cold by night, which is affecting the growth of grass and crops.

The cows went out in the last few days of April, spending two more weeks indoors overnight to conserve grass, as it's only just



starting to grow to its full potential. With several fields out of grass production, we are short of grazing acres.

In-calf heifers, waiting to be allowed outdoors.

Milking cows also need a gradual transition between different feedstuffs to build up the right 'bugs' in their rumen, which allow them to use the feed properly to produce milk. Most of the young stock and calves were put out to grass early in May, and are



enjoying the sunshine on their backs. Cattle much prefer cold weather to hot. They digest their food by fermentation, which gives them a good source of heat from within, as long as they are well fed. We often refer to them as walking radiators.

In the last two months we have been inspected five times; we've no idea why, but each visit can take two or three hours, and there's always something to put right afterwards, with a short window (often two weeks) to rectify anything. We've been made to alter things that have been the same for 30 years. How ridiculous is that? However, we have managed to get some barley planted, to be made into silage when ready in the summer. Grass seed was also sown at the same time; so once the barley is harvested there will already be established grass, which will give a bite to eat by late summer. The grass silage will be harvested by the time you read this, and it is time maize seed was in the ground.

Our material handler has just broken down, and we've decided to call it a day, as it's long past time it was replaced. Second-hand machinery is not easy to come by these days, but a suitable one has been sourced (in Wales) and will, we hope, be arriving here in the next few days.



It's no easy job getting large silage bales into the mixer wagon with a fork!

The last of the calves were born by early March and the next cows start calving in mid-June.

Farming is a continual cycle; the seasons don't stop and neither can we, not even for a broken leg.



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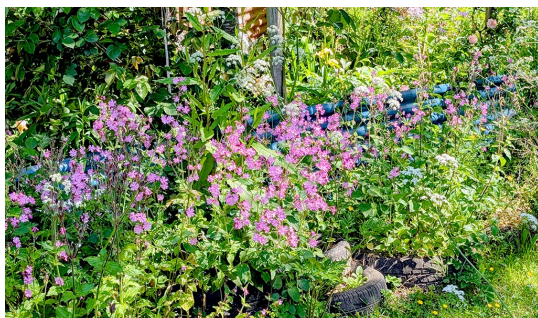
Growing Tips Ro Hughes

Well, what a wonderful spring we've been having this year. The first 'proper' spring for a long time, with everything happening at the right times, the may blossom in May, the elderflowers just coming out and filling the evening air with their drowsy scent, warm sunny days and cool nights, just as it should be!

It's looking like a bumper year for the birds and insects too, nest boxes stuffed with huge clutches, plenty of flies, baby spiders everywhere, bees, and let's hope butterflies too. It has been drier, and rainwater is precious; so catch as much as you can.

Crops may be quicker to flourish, but may well bolt faster too, so make sure you have successions of sowings, especially the salads, to keep it going. As long as you can provide enough water, and cover the soil with planting or mulch, vegetables and flowers should do very well this year.

I'm always talking about working with nature, so I'd like to give you an example. This is a completely natural border with native plants all suited to the soil and situation.



However, it did not happen just on its own. It has been managed, by weeding out the more vigorous nettles, hogweed etc. and clearing over winter once the last seeds have fallen. A partial cut later this month or in July will ensure a second flush of flowers to last all summer – and that is all you have to do.

Many perennial flowering plants will benefit from a cut back, traditionally after Chelsea. Herbs like marjoram and oregano will then provide a second flourish; herbaceous perennials too can be partially cut to give more flowering buds and a longer season.

Regenerating Land, Loves, and Livelihoods

Ermington Environmental visit to The Apricot Centre by Pat Hannam



Ermington Environmental group continues to have nature and the natural world (especially in the Ermington Parish) as one of its main interests. Over the past year we have been taking a particular interest all matters concerning farming, and many other things in relation to the soil and wildlife, and how we can produce our food without causing harm to the beautiful world we live in and depend upon.

On 14 May 2025, in the afternoon, 16 of us made a visit to the Apricot Centre at Huxhams Cross Farm, Dartington. <https://www.apricotcentre.co.uk/> This is a sustainable, diverse farm producing vegetables, fruit, and flowers for a Veg Box scheme. They deliver to Ermington.

The farm is also interested in wellbeing, not only of the land but of all of us, and offers a wellbeing service funded through the NHS for Children and Families. The Apricot Centre is a Community Interest Company (not for Profit) founded in 2006, and aims to be financially self-sufficient.

The vision of the Apricot Centre is to 'recognise that there is a fundamental link between the wellbeing of the soil, food, and habitat, and the mental and physical health of the people in and around the farm, making for a wonderful environment for a warm and effective mental health/wellbeing service for children and families.'



We enjoyed a tour led by Bob Meyhew, one of the Directors of the centre, who began with an introduction to the founding of the centre, before showing us the 'Well-Being Garden' that was relocated from the Chelsea Flower Show in 2024.



A fascinating walk around the Farm included observing how what had been conventionally farmed fields until ten years ago, now saw increasing biodiversity as a result of the regenerative practices being adopted. This included dividing up the fields into much smaller areas designed using 'Permaculture Design' model. The fields are divided by strips of Hazel plantings along the contours of the land to hold back water, act as a wind break to protect plants, as well as to encourage wildlife and increase biodiversity. The Hazel is coppiced every few years, and the

wood finely chipped to lay onto the ground to further add organic matter and so improve the soil.



Herbal Lays are used in rotation to increase soil fertility without the use of chemicals.

We were able to see the poly tunnels already productive with strawberries and cougettes, and to look at the peach trees that contribute to a layered system in the tunnels.

Water is collected from the roofs of the buildings and held in a large pond for irrigation in the poly tunnels especially.



Climate Change and Water

We asked questions about how Climate Change is effecting production. We heard that problems with water are anticipated, since each Spring seems to becoming much warmer with less rain. They are thinking ahead about what to do. However they already notice that the increased cover of trees is helping to hold water back in the soil, compared to surrounding farms that have large areas of open ground with no trees.

This is a practice to be recommended – planting more trees in fields. This could be easily done by putting back the hedges and making fields smaller once more. Letting the hedges grow wild would also make more space for wildlife and increase biodiversity.

Farmers using large open fields may have more problems with water in the future. This is a good argument for regenerative farming practices that are also adapted to climate change.

Questions and conversation

We enjoyed a break part of the way round to enjoy a cup of tea and piece of cake and ask more questions about how the centre runs.

We heard how an array of solar panels on the roof of the buildings produces more than enough electricity; so the delivery van is electric and use of electricity from the grid is minimized. Another example of how the Apricot Centre is producing and delivering food sustainably.



All in all a fabulous afternoon was had by all, raising more questions about how we can enable more of the land in our Parish and the neighbouring areas to be managed regeneratively. Thinking together how it should be possible to produce more food locally (reducing the need for transportation) and without the use of chemicals that are killing our environment, birds and other wildlife.

For more information about the Apricot Centre see their website:

www.apricotcentre.co.uk



To find out more about the Ermington Environmental Group email Ellen Hill:
ellenh12@hotmail.com





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

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The last year has brought many challenges, but also important achievements, the most significant being that after many years of encouraging more parishioners to join us, we have succeeded, over the last year, to increase the number of Parish Councillors, to a nearly full complement.

Following a by-election in November 2024 we had several applications for co-option around Christmas and New Year, and we are now considering another; so we are much better placed to reflect and represent a range of opinions when considering issues effecting the parish.

The impact of the political change at a national level following the summer 2024 election, and most recently at last week's County Council elections, is already having a profound effect on how the Parish Council relates to other authorities. The pace and scale of planning for Local Government Reorganization over the last few months has been ambitious, and I am grateful to Cllr Robert Owens for attending the numerous meetings, and distilling the various proposals into manageable information we can all understand, and share with parishioners.

Some examples of our decisions and work during this last year are:

We have kept our portion of the council tax at the same level, to continue to return surplus reserves to parishioners. The full accounts can be seen on our website.

There has been a lot of interest in planning applications. We are allowed to comment only on these within the planning regulations and timescales. However, we have consistently represented parishioners' views submitted through the South Hams District Council (SHDC) planning website or by letter to SHDC, and copied to the Parish Council prior to our meeting.

We have continued to do everything within our power to slow traffic through the village. We have installed and monitor two vehicle-activated speed cameras, which collect data and warn speeding motorists. My thanks to Cllr Ian Creese for installing and maintaining the cameras, and managing the data. We have also worked with the local Community Speedwatch Team, and our thanks go to all involved in the speed-monitoring sessions.

Our campaign to make the A3121, Totnes Road, safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, by reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph between the river walk footpaths, is agreed in principle but has been held up by a lack of support from Devon County Council (DCC) in agreeing the details of how and where to slow the traffic. We hope the new leadership at DCC will help facilitate the implementation of this project.

Several parishioners have told us about speeding motorists and dangerous driving along the A3121, also through Westlake and Cadleigh, and along Hunsdon Road. All motoring offences need to be reported to the police direct through Police contact at the time, or using the Operation Snap website, as the police tell us they get very few reports from Ermington residents, and therefore we are not considered a priority.

Other highways issues, including regular flooding, the increased number and repeated re-appearance of potholes, worn road markings, and blocked drains, have been pursued on behalf of parishioners. These are all Devon County Council responsibilities; however we have chased up those reported on the DCC website, and resolved several complaints by working with the local Highways Team.

We funded repairs the footpath from The Square to the Church during the autumn 2024, to provide a safe alternative pedestrian route from the Square to the Church, and Shop and Hub.

We have continued to campaign for improved bus services, and commissioned a Community Transport Survey, undertaken during the spring, from which we are awaiting the results.

We have agreed grants to fund clock repairs at the Church, also to the Village Fund, the new Ermington Local History Group, Ermington Environmental Group (EE), and South Hams Citizens Advice.

Together with Ermington Environmental we added swift boxes to the reading room walls, and continued to support local litter pickers. My thanks to Ermington Environmental volunteers who give their time to help improve the environment and clean the river banks and footpaths, also to Sarah and all the volunteers who collect litter along our lanes and hedgerows.

We have installed a temporary toilet on the park for the summer months, for parishioners' convenience; my thanks to Cllr Nick Toms for leading on this project.

This report can only be a short summary of our work; much more is ongoing; information is available on our website: <https://www.ermingtonparish.com>, or parishioners can speak to any councillor, attend our meetings, or contact us via our website, email, or post.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Teresa Drew, our Parish Clerk, for her hard work and dedication in supporting the work of the Parish Council.

After six years as Chair, I have reached a point where I'm ready for something different, and the Council, being almost complete, is now in a strong place and ready for new leadership, so I do not intend seeking re-election as Chair.

Finally, I think it worth reminding ourselves that Parish Councillors are volunteers, all striving to ensure that Ermington continues to be a great place to live. As the first tier of Local Government, our role in representing the parish is vital to our democracy; so I wish to finish by thanking my fellow Parish Councillors. Thank you.

Your Parish Council met on 6 May and elected a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, and also co-opted an applicant to become the 10th member of the Parish Council, which now has its full complement of members to represent and reflect the views of the community.

The new Chairman is Nick Toms, and the new Vice-Chairman is Margaret Grafton. Nick has previous experience in the role and will be ably supported by Margaret. Thanks are due to Denis Onley and Rob Owens for their work as the previous Parish Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman. They both remain as Parish Councillors.

Dan Thomas, the standing County Councillor, was successful in the recent County Council elections, with a greatly increased majority. The Parish Council looks forward to continuing to work with him. The Liberal Democrats now have the greatest number of seats on the County Council, and it is hoped this may help your Council in dealing with, for instance, the change of speed limit on the A3121. Time will tell.

Your Council is continuing to consider whether the semi-wild area next to the recreation ground and cricket pitch could be developed as an asset for the community, in partnership with Ermington Environmental.

In the next two years we are going to see a significant change in local government. It is likely that Parish Councils will remain, possibly with increased powers, but District and County Councils are being swept away, and local government in Devon and elsewhere will be in the hands of new Unitary Authorities. There are at least six different proposals as to how Devon County will be divided into such authorities, but the final decision on which proposal will be implemented will be up to the Government, who are likely to make a decision in November 2025.

Your Council has written to South Hams District Council regarding the process they adopted when considering the planning change-of-use application for the Pet Crematorium in Ermington, which your council regarded as unsatisfactory. A reply is awaited. It should be understood, however, that this is not in any way an appeal against the decision, but a request for clarification of the process involved in making the decision.

Your Council has continued to deal with various planning applications and other routine Council business. All parishioners are welcome to attend Council meetings, which are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30 either in the Reading Rooms or in the Hub.

A friend had his hall, stairs, and landing redecorated by a man who had retired from his job as an airline pilot. The result in the hall and stairs was ok, but the landing was superb.



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Barbara Jones Writes

Thank you to Ross for the items on the Environment from the children in Year 6, in the last magazine. They don't need me now, but I have listened to them read when they were younger. Thank goodness we have such wonderful, talented children who will make a difference to save our planet.

I have something else to say, if I may take a small space in the magazine. I am out of touch with the Employment Laws now, but I want to give notice that I will be giving up on working on the bank on Town Hill and will give three years' notice; I will 'retire' in three years, when I will (I hope) get to the older age of 90. So that should be plenty of time for others to take over.

If anyone who has a garden and will be reducing their plants, rather than just composting them, please bring them to the bank, take out some grass and pop their plants in. You could water them if very dry. I call it giving them two chances -- they either live or they die. Any flower will do, not just wild ones, as insects just don't care.

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It takes a village—and ours steps up

There's something quietly powerful about a village that looks after its own. In the rush of modern life, it's easy to overlook the value of close-knit communities—but judging by the acts witnessed in Ermington recently, those bonds are still strong. It's not just in the big moments, but in the everyday gestures, the shared smiles, and the willingness to help without being asked. Our village proves that when people care, it shows—in ways that truly matter.

Big Pete's Cottage Paint

Peter Davis—Big Pete, to all of us. For years now, Pete has been the steady heartbeat behind much of what makes our village feel alive and connected. He runs the village fund with quiet dedication, and manages to pull off event after event that bring people of all ages together: the much-loved Easter egg hunt that fills the village green with so many of our children every spring, the fireworks display that lights up the autumn sky, the Christmas lights that make our streets glow with festive warmth, and of course, the village summer fair that so many of us look forward to each year.

So, when it came time to show a little appreciation, the village didn't hesitate. A fresh paint job on Pete's cottage was the plan. Some prep work was carried out in the days leading up, and



then, on the day itself, a group of villagers turned up—paintbrushes and rollers in hand—ready to give the front of his cottage a proper makeover. It wasn't just a gesture of thanks; it was a collective show of how much Pete means to us all.



Peter Davis, Sean Parnell, Keith Deards, Chris Trant, and Andrew Savery

As Andrew Savery, who coordinated the effort, put it: *'Big Pete has done so much for the village – I think it would be great for the village to give something back.'* Judging by the turnout, many people felt exactly the same. Pete, ever humble, was deeply touched – **'THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!'**

he wrote on social media.



Barbara's Bench

And then there's Barbara — *Nanny Barbara*, as she's affectionately known by so many children in Ermington. For years, she's been a quiet but powerful presence in our village life. She spent countless hours at the local school, volunteering to listen to children read. But she didn't stop there. Barbara would take the stories children told her — their wild imaginings, sweet thoughts, and dreams — and turn them into little handmade books, gifting each child a story of their own. My own son was one of those lucky children, and the book she made for him is something we'll treasure forever.

But Barbara's magic doesn't end with words. For some years now, she has lovingly tended a little corner of the village with the same quiet care. There's a bench in that spot — one she's painted and surrounded with flowers year after year. She brings her gardening tools from home, kneels in the earth, and works without ever asking for thanks — just to make that area a welcoming place for everyone.

So when Barbara quietly asked me if I might help repair the



bench — its wooden slats were crumbling, its bolts rusted — I knew it was more than just a favour. It was a chance to give something back to someone who had given so much. We set to work: renewing the timbers, replacing the bolts, and restoring it with care.

Riley Barrett putting the first timber in place

And we added something special – a brass plaque that reads:

Barbara's Bench – Thank you for all you do. Lots of love from all the villagers of Ermington. XXXXXXXXXXXXX

We then knocked on Barbara's door, and Riley led her up the street and across the road to where her bench stood proud. When she saw it, Barbara was visibly moved.

There were tears – soft and genuine, like the years of care she had given that spot.

And she wasn't the only one. Riley Barrett, who holds Nanny



Sarah and Riley Barrett
bolting in the last timber



Barbara in the highest regard, summed it up perfectly: '

She deserves it because she was really nice to all the children at school and made the area around the bench so pretty for all the village to enjoy.'

These two acts of kindness say so much about Pete and Barbara – and just as importantly they say everything about the kind of village we are.



It's our everyday gestures – no matter how big or small – that remind us that a village is more than just buildings and roads. It's people – looking out for each other, lifting one another up, and saying thank you in ways that truly matter.

In a world that sometimes feels too fast, too disconnected, community spirit remains our most valuable asset. And here, in our village, it's alive and well.



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How our Riverbank Cleans make a Real Difference

Colin Whybrow



Ermington Environmental mustered six volunteers for their riverbank clean at the end of April on a



perfect spring day. The good news was that there was noticeably less litter than at the autumn clean last November. Nonetheless, the range of 'finds' was quite diverse. To the usual carelessly



discarded bottles, cans, and plastic sacks could be added items that might have had a more intriguing back story: a pair of waterproof over-trousers snagged on tree branches, a cap, a single child's sock and a still-partly-inflated helium balloon.



Regardless of how they got there, they are all unwanted aliens in an otherwise beautiful natural environment. More important, is what happens when these items start to break down in the environment, as that is where their harmful

effect starts to multiply.



This was demonstrated very visibly during a March river clean on the Erme estuary near Holbeton. I noticed an area in the reed beds where some fallen tree limbs appeared to be acting as a trap, creating an accumulation of debris. While the larger items were easy to

spot, the reed beds, at first glance, seemed to comprise mainly organic matter from decaying reed stems. But they concealed an insight into just what happens to waterborne plastics once they enter the environment.



Plastics are everywhere

Scratching only just below the surface revealed how plastics break down. The combination of salt water and sunlight (UV) make the plastic brittle, a process known as photodegradation. Tidal agitation then breaks the plastics into smaller and smaller pieces. This breakdown can result in the leaching of harmful chemicals such as phthalates, often called 'everywhere chemicals' found in plastic food containers and packaging.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is another leached chemical used in polycarbonate plastics like water bottles, and for epoxy resins used in food cans and bottle tops. Salt water accelerates the break down, and the released chemicals can have a toxic effect on marine life and ecosystems.

Removing the visible plastics and other debris before it starts to breakdown is a very positive first step and really makes a difference, which is why the riverbank cleans in other reaches of the Erme, such as Ermington, not only improve that stretch of the river but reduce impacts further downstream.

Huge thanks to everyone who took part in Ermington Environmental's riverbank spring clean. A summer cull of that well-known non-native invasive species, Himalayan Balsam, is planned for 19 June. Look out for more details if you would like to join in.



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A Village Not Heard

By a concerned resident of Ermington

Tucked between green hills and quiet lanes, Ermington is a small village full of ordinary, remarkable things. There's a primary school where laughter rings out at break-time. A playing field where local children chase footballs under wide skies. A community shop, run by volunteers who know your name. And people who care - not just about themselves, but about each other, and about the place they live.

But something is happening here. Something that doesn't quite fit. And it doesn't feel right.



A pet incinerator has been approved on the edge of the village - just 50 metres from the nearest homes, and within 300 metres of the school, playing fields, and hundreds of families. Despite strong objections from local residents, and a unanimous No from the parish council, South Hams District Council gave it the green light.

And for many of us, it has left a quiet ache: a feeling that no one was really listening.

In Ermington, the parish council is made up of volunteers - local people who give their time freely to protect and guide the community. They listen to villagers, attend meetings, and speak up on our behalf - often quietly, modestly, and without recognition. They raised objections to the proposed incinerator because they understood the concerns of the community.

And yet, when they voiced those concerns to South Hams District Council, they were met not with dialogue, but with dismissal - it was condescension. To be treated as an inconvenience, as though their concerns were naïve or irrelevant, has left many feeling demoralized. There was no sense that our views - the views of those who live here, raise children here, care for this land - were given any weight at all. In fact they were drowned out by a larger authority that appeared to have already made up its mind.

Perhaps Miss Faye Goodman, the applicant behind the incinerator, has never walked the playing field on a spring afternoon, or watched the children running and laughing on sports day by the Cricket pitch, or perhaps she doesn't live in our village and is fortunate not to be one of the mothers who now feels uneasy watching her children kick a football, inhaling deeply, wondering what unseen risks might float on the breeze.



There's a bitter irony, too. This facility will use an oil-fired furnace - which directly contradicts South Hams' own decarbonization policy! And just a hundred metres from the incinerator site, local residents are creating a space designed to enrich the environment — not compromise it. They are working to *improve* the environment. Ermington Environmental, a group of volunteers, are creating a nature trail for children and families to learn outdoors. There will be information boards, picnic benches, forest school sessions — a space designed to nourish minds and respect the land. Which vision do we want to support?

There's already a pet cremation service based in Churchstow, less than nine miles from Ermington — also within the South Hams. But in that case, while the customer-facing business is in the village, the actual incinerator has been respectfully located several miles away, on a remote industrial site. It's a clear sign that with thought and care, steps can be taken to protect local residents. It proves that these facilities can exist — without sitting next to homes, schools, and playing fields. Without causing distress. It's not about saying No; it's about doing things in a way that respects the communities they're placed in.

Even the installation instructions state that the model in question, an Addfield PET-200 incinerator, is not recommended for residential areas. And yet here we are, with homes just a stone's throw away. And though pet crematoria fall under different rules, it's hard not to see the gap in logic. Under the Cremation Act, human crematoria can't be built within 200 yards of homes. But this one — this incinerator — is somehow allowed at just 50 metres. Are the risks so different? Or is it simply a loophole, a legal technicality that overrides common sense?

A recent door to door survey in the village highlighted these concerns. 112 residential houses nearest the site were called upon and 111 signed a petition to stop this; 1 abstained.

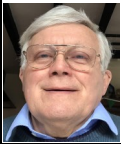


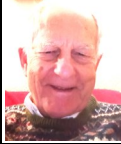


What hurts most is the feeling that this wasn't our decision. That someone, somewhere else, decided this was good enough for Ermington. That our role was only to accept it.

And perhaps most troubling of all: the ones most at risk - our children - have no voice in this. They don't get to object, write letters, or attend council meetings. They rely on us to do that for them. If we fail to protect the spaces they grow up in and the air they breathe - what kind of guardians are we?

We are not against change. We are not against progress. But we are for our village. For its children, its volunteers, its future.

And so we ask — not with anger, but with moral insistence: *Is this really the right thing for Ermington?*

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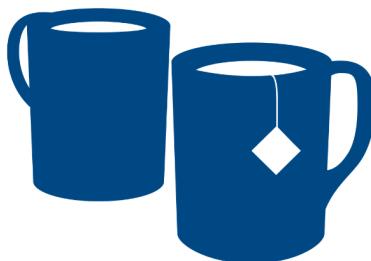
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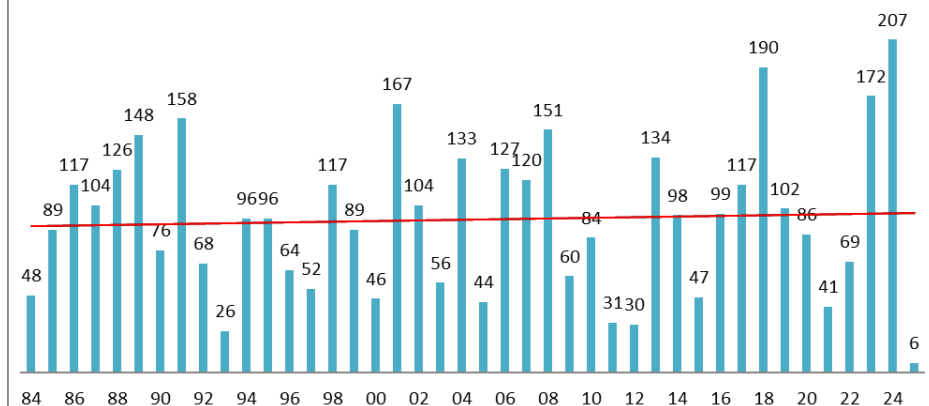


Rainfall Records by Frances Bromfield

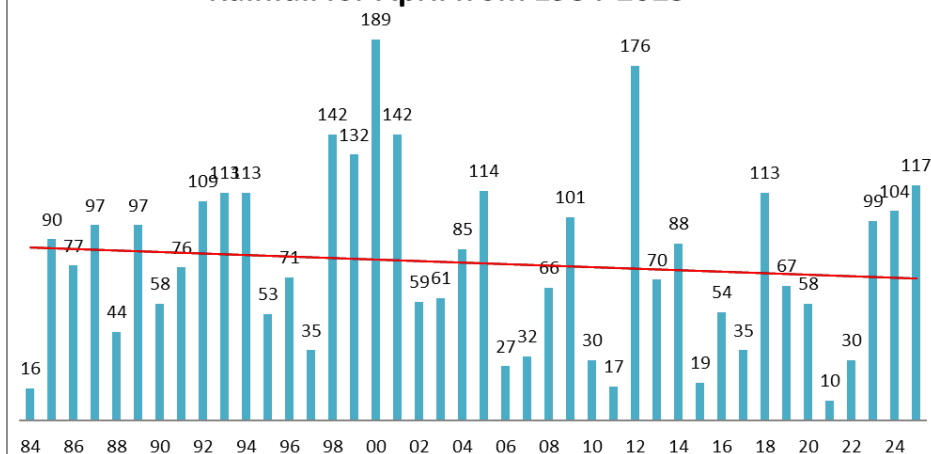
Last year was the wettest March here with 207mm rain, while this year was the driest with just 6mm – what a huge contrast.

At 117mm, April received 50 per cent over the average, with 92mm of that falling over the five-day period leading up to Easter.

Rainfall for March from 1984-2025



Rainfall for April from 1984-2025



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Bell Ringers Win

Ermington Bellringers took part in a competition on Saturday 3 May at Dodbrooke Church, and won the Junior Section Shield.

Our six ringers were John Irish - Treble & Caller; Ellen Hill 2nd; Ted Pinsent 3rd; Sophia Hines 4th; Rupert Hines 5th and John Woods Tenor.

33 changes on the Dodbrooke Bells were called for each team and two judges outside the Church marked as winners the Team with the fewest faults. South Pool were second, Galmpton Third, and Salcombe

Fourth. Sophia also won a cup for the Youngest Ringer.

Please contact the Bell Captain of Ermington - Andrew Kenyon or Ellen Hill or Sarah West, if you would like to ring the bells. We usually have a practice on Monday Evenings at 6.30pm; become a part of a tradition that goes back hundreds of years!



as



Church bells are one of the most historic sounds many of us ever hear.

Would YOU like to be a part of this ancient tradition?

Join our Band at Ermington's medieval Church

We are always keen to welcome to our band any new recruits and lapsed ringers who'd like to get into the swing again .
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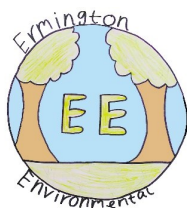
We have six bells, the tenor bell weighs just over 14 cwt

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It's not just about new glasses . . .

For some readers, the notion of booking an appointment at their local Optician is simply a means of obtaining an up-to-date prescription, so they can order the latest trend in glasses. Conversely, for others there's a misguided assumption that such an appointment means they'll be obligated to buy new glasses, even if they don't want them or cannot afford to do so. Result? they avoid visiting an Optician altogether!

Once upon a time, all Opticians were viewed as medical professionals, providing an invaluable healthcare service to the local community.

Then came the retail giants where selling glasses and meeting targets seemed to matter more than healthcare. In recent years, this narrative has become supercharged with adverts and social media posts awash with offers and deals to entice you in for an appointment to get a new prescription, so you'll then purchase new glasses from them.

So, what happened to the healthcare side of visiting an Optician? In truth, it never really went away, it just got squeezed as appointment times got shorter. After all, shorter appointments mean more appointments and more appointments mean more opportunities to sell glasses, right?

And now we have glasses from the internet. No need to leave the comfort of your armchair, simply swipe through the pretty pictures and select a frame, just like you would if buying a new top. Enter all those confusing numbers from your prescription and don't worry too much if it's way out-of-date; no one at the other end really cares! Hey-presto! a few days later a new pair of glasses arrive in the post. Oh, and if you can't see through them or the frame doesn't fit, the online retailer will likely suggest you to go and visit your local Optician to

sort it out! Except they will probably decline to do so as they didn't supply them, which after all, seems quite reasonable.

At this point, the author suspects you're thinking this all sounds a little bitter! After all, many of the big retailers do a pretty good job when it

comes to providing glasses, so is it a case of bitterness . . . or is it confusion?

Despite incredible advancements in diagnostic technology like Optical CT Scans, in the understanding of sight threatening eye diseases, in dry eye treatments and in new technologies like Myopia Control, Colorimetry and Orthokeratology, the author is genuinely confused as to why so many people still chose to side-step most of the healthcare aspects for a brief sight test, despite a general understanding of just how vital good vision is.

What price would you put on your eyesight?

If all of this or, even some of this rings true with the reader, then you'll be pleased to know - there is an alternative . . .

As the bigger Optical chains become more retail orientated, so a growing number of smaller independent Opticians are becoming more healthcare oriented; extending the length of their appointments so there's more time to investigate, diagnose and discuss your results, investing in new treatments and eyecare services and, generally slowing things down so that you can enjoy a more relaxed unrushed experience, rather than it feeling like a trip to the cattle market.

So, what should you expect when you choose to visit your local independent Optician? Firstly, expect to be centre of their attention, expect to be asked lots of questions and offered lots of advice. Expect a longer, far more thorough Eye Examination, regardless of whether you are private or NHS.

Expect to be shown your Optical CT scan results, your retinal photographs, field-of-vision results and dry eye assessments.

Expect to have these results fully explained and expect to receive tailored advice and guidance. Naturally you'll probably be asked to pay a little extra, but ask yourself this - what price would you put on your eyesight?

And despite being given a new prescription, it's highly likely that any recommendation to consider new glasses will only be made if your visual acuity results suggest you'll actually be able to see more clearly with them. Maybe it's finally time to give the cattle market a miss and discover a local independent Optician who really cares about your vision . . .

In a future article we hope to enlighten you about why a Qualified Dispensing Optician really is the best person on the planet to help you choose your new glasses . . .

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Plymouth Argyle Rodger Reid

Plymouth Argyle – Relegated, But Optimistic For The Future

So now it is confirmed. Plymouth Argyle have been relegated from the Championship League and will play their football next season in League Division 1. It was a brave fight right up to the final whistle, but previous results, a really poor away form and teams around them getting good results, meant the drop was inevitable.



The form displayed over the final seven games showed they were a worthy Championship side – played seven, won four, and lost three (mostly by the odd goal). Let us not forget either the Cup run which saw the Greens defeat Brentford away and Liverpool, probably one of the best teams in Europe, at home before narrowly going out to last season's Premiership champions Manchester City.

Looking to the future, it is not all gloom and doom. A large number of the squad remain in contract and, if the manager, Miron Muslic, remains in post there is a good chance to rebuild and make a swift return to the higher league.

The support for the team remains strong. Away matches are always accompanied by at least one to two thousand fans, even though the journeys are invariably long and tiring. Home games have nearly always been sold out. This will be replicated next season as long as the results are positive.

Having a post mortem to consider the failings of last season isn't always a good thing but the appointment of Wayne Rooney was generally considered a bad move. His track record was poor and although his attacking ideas were good, the defensive skills appeared lacking. His replacement in January didn't have

enough time to recover the points gap and hence the position the club now finds itself in.

As loyal fans, or is it gluttons for punishment, John and I will be renewing our season tickets for the forthcoming battles in Division 1. We are optimistic and live in hope of a successful season to come.

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Ermington Parish Magazine

The magazine has been published, with funding assistance from Ermington Parish Council, in Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct, and Dec. It was distributed free to 400 homes in the parish, and is available on line at www.ermingtonparish.com

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The editor reserves the right to edit any article. Authors may ask the editor to withhold their names, but anonymous submissions will not be published.

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