



Judith Taylor

TIPTON TIMES

334

August and
September 2026

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for Tipton
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People's
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(H)Otter
Rail and
River Run

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Village
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

Otter Rail and River Run

Courtesy of Paul Taylor

We welcome letters and contributions but reserve the right to edit and amend such offerings. Views expressed within each article are the author's own.

Editorial

Welcome to the August/September edition of Tipton Times.

We are delighted to hear the news that Devon County Council are in the process of submitting a planning application for the re-siting of the primary school within the village. We understand that this is by no means a 'done deal' yet, but it represents real progress and the prospect that the school will stay as part of the village community. There is no doubt that communities which lose their schools suffer a number of unintended consequences, so let's hope that this news quickly becomes reality.

Many congratulations to Adrian Harris, Jo Earlam and the team organising the Otter Rail and River Run and Children's fun run on another successful event. We'd like to echo Jo's appreciation in her article on page 4 for all those in our community who support this event in so many ways.

Well done, too, to Mark Rigden and his team for all their efforts behind the family fun day and dog show. In his Playing Field Association article, Mark alludes to a decline in numbers at this year's event and offers a gentle challenge to the community to support it more fully next year. I'm sure he would be delighted to receive any ideas which could make the day even more successful than it is now. Read the article on page 8 and please do respond to Mark.

We very much hope you enjoy this edition!

The Editors

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The 2026 (H)Otter Rail & River Run - by race director Adrian Harris

The 19th edition of the Otter Rail & River 10km and Fun Run was another great success. The event, which took place on Saturday, 11th July, raised more than £4,500 for the Tipton Playing Fields and other local causes.

The success of the event is a reflection of the village community who provide the majority of the marshals and volunteers. Many of the participants return year after year. And we know from the many thank you messages we received after the race it's because of the support, friendliness and encouragement of the volunteers: **"What amazing Marshals you have**, despite many standing in the baking heat they remained cheerful, encouraging and really worked hard to direct us all and keep the water stations, sponges and hoses going which was fantastic."

The heat this year added an extra challenge to the participants, volunteers and organisers. But it didn't discourage 250 runners lining up on the start line to run in temperatures of 27°C at the start, rising to 29°C by the finish! Despite the heat, Tom Merson came within 20 seconds of breaking the men's course record and thankfully our medical team (expanded due to the conditions) were left twiddling their thumbs.

Tom Merson of Exmouth Harriers won the men's race in 34:56, making him the second person in 19 years to break 35 minutes. Hannah Bown, also of Exmouth Harriers, won the women's race in 50:28. The first local runners to cross the finish line were Andy Wiltshire and Harriet Nash. For the second year running, Dennis Burrell travelled up from near Camborne, Cornwall to cross the line as the oldest finisher - age 82!



It's not all about the 10km though. Before the main event, more than 70 youngsters from 2 years upwards lined up for the fun run. They ran about a mile, some of them at amazing speeds, for a medal and [the much sought after] jelly snake. This year, due to the heat they received an extra reward of an ice pop - a bonus that was very well received.

Our thanks go to Michelmores, Otter Brewery (beer for finishers), The Golden Lion Pub (vouchers for spot prizes), Four Elms Fruit Farm (apple juice to category winners), Pinnacle Icing (prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd male and female), Ian

Winchester & Sons (fruit for finishers) and Phyz (vouchers for spot and local runner prizes).

And a special thank you to Jo Earlam and Catherine Hilton, our committee members, who make it all look easy by working so hard.

And a few words from marshal co-ordinator Jo Earlam (jo.earlam@hotmail.co.uk)

The consistent community support for the Otter runs never ceases to amaze and humble me, so many local people who turn out year after year, many of them non-runners, and new faces too, to enable this annual event to take place.

On the morning of this year's run, searching for some containers to fill with water to use as cool downs for hot runners' feet, I tipped out the paperwork they held on to my bedroom floor, and in putting it back a few days later I happened to come across the August 2015 edition of the Tipton Times, with a report of the run, then in its ninth year.

The editorial spoke of what "a fantastic success this event has become and what a contribution it makes to the community: not just in terms of the substantial income for the Playing Fields but also for the way it motivates a wide range of villagers to work together on something really special."

2015 was the year that we exceeded 200 runners for the first time, double the figure from two years earlier. Everyone rose to the challenge of 100 runners registering on the day and coped in what were also temperatures in the high 20s. The event has effectively been a sellout success ever since, with maximum numbers now raised to 300, and that's down to each and every person who helps in some way. I finished my race report then by saying: "I really hope this goodwill and support will continue in future years, that runners far and wide will keep coming back and for the benefit of the whole community that this event will be a fixture on the calendar for years to come ... to literally run and run." Reading that 11 years later, I feel incredibly thankful to everyone who's made that wish come true, which includes a lot of people.

I hope everyone who helped has been thanked individually. It's always difficult to mention individuals without leaving people out, but this year I want to say a special thank you to Gill Marks and Barbara Pugh, and their team on refreshments (who this year were Janet Croud, Mo Mylne, Jenny Parkin, Elizabeth Cozens, and Jude Goodwin). Gill, Barbara and Janet have been stalwarts, organising the refreshments unfailingly year after year. Gill and Barbara are willing to carry on as helpers but would like to step back from organising. If there's someone out there who'd be willing to take on that role, please let me know.

Next year is going to be cause for a big celebration it being not only the 20th anniversary of the run, but also the 60th anniversary of the founding of the playing fields. In addition, it will be the 10th anniversary of Women Can, which will be in April and for which plans are progressing well. Keep following future Tipton Times for updates on all.

Jo Earlam

TIPPS

Our AGM on 18th July was well attended. The elections were very straightforward, our committee remains largely the same, as only Mark Reader had come to the end of his term and he was duly re-elected. Stephanie Kinson has stepped back this year but is remaining a much-valued member. Our thanks go to Stephanie for everything she has done. We now have two vacancies on the committee.

The business side of the meeting was soon over. We did spend quite a lot of time discussing how to recruit new members. Like a lot of societies and organisations these days, quite a proportion of our members are not in the first flush of youth. The costume ladies do a fantastic job and hope to continue to do so but unless someone younger and fitter comes forward to join the team to costume a production and is able to help move heavy bags and boxes, they will be unable to continue. If you or anyone you know is looking for a new hobby, TIPPS is the group to join there are so many aspects to a drama group, singing, dancing, carpentry, painting, set designing, lighting, sound, costumes, front of house and many more. Something for everyone.

That's beside the acting side of things. There is nothing better to build confidence than acting, for young and old, as is proved time and again when the shy children that have joined our junior section over the years emerge as confident, capable and sociable young people. Please contact me if you would like to know more.

Once all the discussions were over, we were entertained by a motley crew of members performing Robin Hood, one of Doris Russell's very funny potted pantos, Brilliant! Followed by an excellent bring and share supper.

A note from Sue and Kyle, directors of our Autumn production.

This October's production will be something different: from **29th - 31st October** we will be staging 'Halloween Hotel Horror', a murder mystery, which will include a two-course dinner and an opportunity to get involved (if you wish!). As it will be suitable for those aged 11 years and upwards, it promises to be an entertaining evening for all the family. Tickets will be available from the end of August/early September, so keep an eye open for the launch and get your tickets early as we already have a waiting list!

Rapunzel

On Sunday 6th September at 2.30pm in the Community Hall, there will be the first read through of 'Rapunzel' written by Lea Pryer, which is to be our February 2027 pantomime. So, if you are thinking of joining us, this would be the ideal time to come along.

Yvonne Kellett 07875 867222 ykellett@gmail.com

Nature Notes

Well, we had a rehearsal, and now we're experiencing the real thing. Yes! Summer has arrived and it's very warm and dry, just like it's supposed to be! I know that it's not for everyone but, it seems that for all the information that is currently being given regarding the climate changing, it looks like we are going to have to adapt. I've read and heard a few success stories regarding this, but that's for another day. In the meantime, stay cool!



I put a short video of our first topic up on the Tipton Community Facebook page a little while ago.

Although it was a bit of a windy day, I always find it so special, and a privilege, to be able to watch these beautiful creatures in action. The hummingbird hawk-moth is a small, day-flying hawk-moth. It is a summer visitor to the UK, migrating from southern Europe in variable numbers each year. In some years, it can be common and may be seen in gardens, hovering like a hummingbird as it feeds on the nectar of honeysuckle, red valerian and other flowers.



It can also be found along woodland edges and on heathland and scrub. The caterpillars feed on various species of bedstraw so the female adult moths lay their eggs on the buds or flowers of these plants. The Hummingbird hawk-moth has greyish-brown forewings, bright orange hindwings and a greyish body with a broad, black-and-white 'tail'. Whilst resting, the Hummingbird hawk-moth looks quite unassuming; mostly grey in colour and blending in with muted surroundings. But in flight is where the glorious hummingbird transformation happens. Its hovering flight is a distinguishing feature; the moth's wings beat at an astonishing 80 times per second, so fast that their orange underwing colouration appears to merge with their overall form and they look brighter. Its long proboscis (25–28 mm) and its hovering behaviour, accompanied by an audible humming noise, make it look remarkably like a hummingbird while feeding on flowers. Like hummingbirds, it feeds on flowers which have tube-shaped corolla.

Our best-known thrush the blackbird is a common sight in gardens, parks and woodlands across the UK. Blackbirds are especially fond of feeding on lawns and can be seen with their heads cocked to one side, listening for earthworms. I have currently been treating our little 'family' to fruit and berries and watching as the mother started feeding the young until the point where they all seem to be feeding each other! All part of the learning process! Male blackbirds are unmistakable - they are entirely black, with a yellow bill and yellow ring around the eye. Females are dark brown, with streaking on the chest and throat. Juveniles are also dark brown but covered with gingery streaks. One of our commonest garden birds, blackbirds are partially migratory within the UK (Scottish populations visit Northern Ireland, for example) and strongly migratory within Europe, with birds from Scandinavia and the Baltics joining our residents in winter.



In pastures or meadows, plants such as ragwort and creeping thistle colonise and thrive. Ragwort is poisonous to livestock and they avoid grazing it. As a result, large areas can be seemingly dominated by its bright yellow ragwort flowers at this time of the year, and earlier. The cinnabar moth (the adult is black and red) feeds on this species at its caterpillar stage. The caterpillars are black and orange to ward off predators, who may view them as a tasty snack. The caterpillar stores alkaloids from the plant which means that birds do indeed find them nasty to eat.



Related to thistles, burdock is an impressively sturdy plant that grows rapidly. Once foraged for its edible root, it is today often considered a weed. In summer, burdock produces thistle-like purple flowers, with a ball of viciously-hooked spines below each flowerhead. This prickly structure, called a burr, contains the seeds. If a mammal brushes past, the spikes latch onto its fur and the seeds are dispersed. In 1941, the super-sticky burr famously inspired a Swiss engineer, George de Mestral. His invention? Velcro.

Elderberries will soon be ripening and are feasted on by hungry birds such as starlings and blackbirds. Bilberry fruit are now ripe and ready to eat. Other berries are ripening too, such as hawthorn ('haws'), sloes and rose hips. These will provide sustenance for many species through the harsh winter months. For now, food is plentiful, although the dry ground can cause problems for the ground feeding birds.

That's it ... 'til next time!

gjpinn@tiscali.co.uk

Geoff Pinn



Long-Serving Tipton Times Postie Retires to Tiverton

This year, in the early part of June, Jenny Dorrington moved from Tipton. She had been a part of the village for just short of fifty years.

Jenny was a seventeen-year-old bride when she and Paul were married in 1969 and they came to the village in 1977, moving in just before Jubilee week, bringing Joanne aged three and Mandy aged five.

During the 1980s Jenny had different working roles in the village and 1982 saw her working for the Diwanis as an evening care assistant at Angela Court, relaying the care of the children with Paul when he came home from work.

Jenny suffered an aneurism in her mid-forties, taking nine weeks to start a return to normality. She remembers and thanks the friends who stood by and helped Paul with the children and the home. *"... and Dr Brown was marvellous, though he was tough. He came into the kitchen and threw his keys on the floor. 'Pick them up!' he ordered me - Paul was furious ..."* At last Jenny could think about getting back to work with Alita taking her on for three years in the early 2000s to help in the shop. *"Yes. My big thanks to Alita for that. It got me back on track and working again."*

Jenny remembers being a dinner lady when Mr Tomkins was Headmaster of Tipton School, and then playground supervisor and cleaner there. Jenny was often called out after hours when the alarm went off ... until the fault was eventually identified in the system! Later came the post of kitchen assistant at the Golden Lion, working for Caroline and Colin Radford. She remembers her colleague Margaret Quentance - *"lovely lady"*. Jenny blinked away a tear, remembering good times and friends from her long forty-nine years in the village.

So often seen walking her little dog around the village, or stepping down to a duty in the Golden Lion, Jenny delivered Tipton Times from Coombe Cross to Claypits from 1995 to earlier this year - 31 years! As time went on, in the early 2000s, Pete Farmer arranged a post-box outside Higher Coombe Farm, where Jenny could leave the Claypits area magazines for onward delivery, saving a long haul up the steep hill.

Jenny's husband Paul died early last year and she shouldered a life alone. *"I lost my pal"* of 58 years. Jenny gives big thanks to friends and neighbours who have supported her, both while Paul was ailing and since his passing. Now, about a year later, she has moved to Tiverton, to be closer to family, and exchanging an elderly three-bed terraced council house for a freshly-built one-bed ground floor flat with big French doors opening onto a little patio and much more manageable garden. Solar panels and a heat pump have seen an end to Jenny having to lug coal to feed the old boiler and wood for the sitting room fireplace.

Already Jenny's home and garden are filled with plants and shrubs, some brought from Tipton, many from family and friends. Walking Tara twice a day, she has found two footpaths nearby leading to fields and the canal path. She looks forward to a possible visit to Tipton's Summer Fete and trusts old friends will visit from time to time ...

Jenny delivered Tipton Times from Coombe Cross to Claypits from 1995 to earlier this year.

"It'd be 50 years this August I'd been in the village. Thanks to all in Tipton - Even now I'm alone, I've had a happy life which I'll never forget. Try to make time - don't leave me out ..."

"And good luck with the school."

Barbara Pugh

Tipton Carer Support Group

The June gathering of the Tipton Carer Support group was the largest yet, with seven people attending for a convivial chat. It coincided with the start of the summer sunshine and a nice change to sit outdoors. There was no get together in July as it was the Otter Run, a day when it would have been more pleasant to be in the shade.

Come rain or shine, a cuppa, a slice of cake and a warm welcome awaits anyone who has a caring role or interest - next dates are **Saturday 8th August** and **Saturday 5th September** from **10.30am to 12.30pm**, at Brambledown, Green Lane, EX10 0AH. Do email if you would like to know more, or any pointers for assistance jo.earlam@hotmail.co.uk

Jo Earlam

Tipton St John Playing Field

Hello Tipton

What fantastic weather we have been having! It's really nice to see so many people using the field.



We have had a busy few weeks with the Family Fun Day, the Dog Show and the Rail and River Run. Well done to all involved and many thanks to all those who helped out with these events. The Family Fun Day was enjoyed by all that attended: it was nice to see people from outside Tipton enjoying the day.

Unfortunately, attendance was definitely down on the previous two years we have held the event. The question is does the village actually want these community events to take place? Or are we just a sports field that allows dogs?

We have been advised about how polluted the river is, so to be safe, please do not swim or let your dogs bathe in the water. If you see any pollution running down the river please report it to the Environment Agency.

If you or anyone you know might like to get involved in the Playing Field Association, we are possibly going to have a few spaces on the committee. Please do contact me via email if you are interested. Our AGM is held in November.

Please keep using and enjoying Tipton's beautiful asset. Until next time ...

Mark Rigden. Chairman
rigden58@btinternet.com

Tipton St John FC

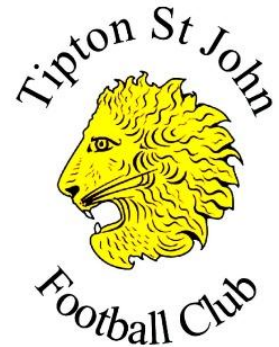
By now our pre-season is well under way with the football season starting on 29th August which has come round fast after a late finish last season because of the wet winter we had. We hope to get as many games played through August and September before the predictable wet winter arrives. We're still in Division 3 of the Devon & Exeter league and look forward to what looks like a competitive season. Please check the fixture board at the front of the playing field car park for upcoming fixtures.

The pitch boundary posts and rope will be going back up before our first home match in September. The purpose of the boundary rope is to protect the pitch from foot traffic which will give us the best chance of completing the season.

It is also for dog owners to not allow their dogs to exercise on playing pitches to ensure the safety of players especially when youth players share the pitch.

We're training throughout September down at the pitch on Wednesday evenings starting at 6.30pm. All new and old players are welcome to attend.

Up the Johns !!



Kevin Sexton

Memories of Tan Phillips (1946 -2026)

This is the eulogy given at Tan's recent funeral by celebrant Lisa Craig, which draws on the memories of Tan's family.

To those who loved her, she was never "Tania" - she was simply Tan. A warm, funny, glamorous woman who somehow managed to be both quietly practical and wonderfully full of life. Her story runs through Hillingdon and Hayes, Yateley and Iver, and finally to the West Country, but it's really written in the people she loved - her husband, her children, her grandchildren, her friends and the many lives she brightened along the way.

Tan arrived in the world at Hillingdon Hospital in June 1946, one of five children and the only girl among four brothers. Growing up in Hillingdon in a bustling, lively household, she learned early how to hold her own, and perhaps that's where her strength, humour and resilience began. She went to a Catholic school, where she was good at science and discovered a love of dance - something that would thread gently through her life, from those early days at school to the dancehalls of her teens.

It was after school, working on the sweets counter at Woolworths, that Tan's life really changed direction. Tom would come in on his lunch break from his apprenticeship at Fairey Aviation, asking for two ounces of sweets - and somehow always leaving with a little more than he'd paid for. Those "extra" jellybeans became part of family legend: Tan, 'accidentally' overloading the bag in the kindest possible sense, quietly slipping more into the bag and, without knowing it, into the heart of the man she would spend the rest of her life with.

She and Tom married young - Tan at 18, Tom at 22 - at Botwell Catholic Church in Hayes. What began as a Woolworths romance over jellybeans grew into more than six decades of shared life. They started out in a flat in Granville Road and then moved to Yateley in Hampshire, before coming back to Hayes, on again to Iver in Buckinghamshire, and finally down to the West Country.

Tan's working life was varied and very "her". There is a sweet thread running right through it: from Woolworth's sweets to a baker's shop called Lowmans in Camberley, and later to Nestlé, bringing home bags of chocolate. At home, there were the famous Heinz tins with no labels from Tom's father's job at Heinz - the family relying on a sheet of codes to work out whether they were about to open beans, soup or something else entirely. It could have been a hardship; in Tan's world it became another story, another shared laugh about "lucky dip dinners" around the table.

When the family moved to Iver in 1985, Tan joined Tom at British Airways, working in the post section, while Tom had already been with the airline since the 1960s. This opened up the world to them, quite literally. What began as standby tickets and hoping for spare seats turned into years of travel and adventure that shaped their family memories.

As a wife, Tan was, in Tom's words, "the best wife anybody could ever have." Theirs was the rare kind of marriage that lasted from teenage years into old age, not just surviving but thriving.

They travelled widely together: to the Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, Niagara Falls (taking the Maid of the Mist boat), walking over the Bridge over the River Kwai, riding the cable car up Table Mountain, exploring the tunnels in Vietnam, and even flying Concorde to New York. In 1974 they were in Las Vegas when Elvis was performing; Tan stood patiently in a standby queue and secured precious tickets so that she and Tom could see him live - an experience that became one of the favourite tales of their shared life.

They didn't just visit places; they collected stories. There was the time standby tickets left them and the children stranded in Miami for days, waiting for spare seats home while the school start date loomed; the times they were all scattered around an aircraft because of last-minute seating; and the delight, years later, of being able to lie flat in business class when Tom's staff benefits changed. For Tan, these weren't inconveniences - they were part of the adventure, part of the life she and Tom built together.



As a mum, Tan was deeply loved and admired. Nicolette remembers being proud at the school gates, knowing her mum looked so stylish and glamorous, yet was utterly approachable and kind. For Nicolette and her brother Heath, their childhood was rich with experiences - holidays to places like Florida long before it was commonplace, flights on planes when most of their classmates had never flown. The other children sometimes didn't believe their stories of Mickey Mouse and aeroplanes, but for Tan it wasn't about impressing anyone; it was about making memories with her family.

One of the most enduring threads of Tan's life as a mum was the Saturday ritual with Nicolette: whole days spent shopping together, talking, laughing, and, most importantly, stopping for tea and cake. When Nicolette moved to Devon, they carried that tradition on, meeting in Exeter or at Otter Nurseries, where Tan would cheerfully ask for the biggest slice of cake. These weren't grand occasions, but they were precious: little pockets of time that said, "You matter. This is our time."

As Nan and Nanny, Tan was at the heart of another generation's memories. The grandchildren knew her in the kitchen, making big birthday cakes, fairy cakes and her famous Sunday roasts, which were, by unanimous agreement, "the best." Her love of family was quiet but constant, in the way she baked, the way she listened, the way she laughed with them. Even great-grandchildren knew her simply and lovingly as Nan, because that's who she was to them: a familiar, gentle presence at the centre of things.

Her sense of humour and lightness of touch coloured so many family stories: the Paris weekend with Nicolette and Natasha, where they endured a tiny hotel room, scratchy towels and a bathroom you could barely turn around in, yet laughed their way through it; Tan mistakenly queuing for the wrong flight at Exeter Airport; the three of them craning their necks at a French film they didn't understand but watched anyway; and Tan marching calmly through a crowd at the Louvre to get the perfect photo of the surprisingly small Mona Lisa. In every story, she's the one who turns mild chaos into something everyone smiles about years later.

Beyond home and family, Tan gave a great deal to her community and friends. She was central to Tom's years playing cricket for Tipton, providing cricket teas for around twelve seasons - full spreads of sandwiches and cakes that players and supporters still remember.

Later, she became involved in the village magazine, "Tipton Times", first helping the editor, and then assisting when another neighbour took over. It was typical of Tan: no fuss, just steady, practical help, and a kind presence that people looked forward to seeing. If you asked those who knew her best to describe Tan, the words that come back again and again are kind, caring, loving, funny, thoughtful, a wonderful cook, great company, and beautiful inside and out.

She was glamorous, yes - the kind of woman whose age people never believed - but far more importantly, she was good. Good to live with, good to talk to, good to laugh with. She had that rare gift of making the ordinary feel special: a Saturday shop, a cup of tea and cake, a family meal, or a shared holiday became something you'd talk about for years.

Tan's life can be traced on a map, in dates and addresses and job titles. But her true story lives in the sound of shared laughter in a tiny Paris hotel, in the taste of a perfectly cooked Sunday roast, in the feel of a grandchild's hand in hers, and in the quiet pride of a husband who still says, without hesitation, that he had the best wife anyone could wish for.

Those are the memories of Tan that stay. They are woven into her family, her friends, her village, and they will go on being told - with smiles, a few tears, and with deep gratitude for a life so well and lovingly lived.

Thought for the Times

With the end of the school year having just passed and the new one starting, there's going to be a lot of change happening in many homes in our community. There'll be last days and first days, new classes and teachers, little ones starting school and last year's sixth formers heading off to work or university. It can be a challenging time, as well as one filled with much excitement.

Change is something many of us find difficult. We tend to be creatures of habit. We get settled into our routines and feel we've got a handle on things and then, all of a sudden, we're faced with something new. And yet change defines what it is to be alive, to develop and grow.



In our Otter Vale Mission Community of churches, we too are experiencing change. Our Team Rector, Lydia Cook, will be leaving us for fresh pastures on Sunday 16th August and we will, after a few months of vacancy, be welcoming a new Team Rector. It will be a big change for us and for Lydia as she swaps rural East Devon for the somewhat busier streets of Chelsea. She leaves with our love, our thanks and our prayers for her new ministry.

In all this, I am reminded of one of my absolute favourite Bible verses from the Letter to the Hebrews. It says this: "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8). It reminds us that although this world can be chaotic, unsettling and unpredictable, God never changes. His promises to be with us in every season don't evaporate and his mercy and love remain steadfast.

Whenever the ground seems to shift beneath our feet, and we are faced with the fact that our well-laid plans and expectations can dissolve in an instant, the Bible assures us that we can hold onto God who doesn't wobble or move. As a well-known hymn says: "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand".

And when life calls us to make decisions and take steps which move us away from the familiar into unknown territories, when it's time for us to grow and change, we can be sure that Jesus walks alongside us then too. To truly live is to embrace that change and growth as a core part of our Christian journeys of discipleship.

Change is a 'when', not an 'if'. So, my prayer for us all as we encounter it in our lives, is that we may always remember, even when our feet feel a bit unsteady, that Jesus is there holding out his hand for us to grasp and his feet have an excellent grip.

Rev Carys Baker

Lydia's Last Service: This will take place at Ottery St Mary church on Sunday 16th August at 10.30am and all are warmly invited to attend

Rev Carys Baker 07977 090932
curate@otterystmary.org.uk

Friends of St John and St Gregory Club

We have just held the first draw of the club new year and these are the results: -

1st (45) Lionel Dodd £30.00, 2nd (4) Stephanie Kinson £20.00, 3rd (59) Jean Miles £15

Previous subscribers' numbers were all included in the draw, but **subscriptions** were due in June and several were **overdue**. If you intend continuing your membership, please pay your subs ASAP preferably by online payment or cash.

Our numbers are down this year as people have moved away, sadly died or had to reduce the number of shares held (times are hard!) so if you don't subscribe, please consider this way of supporting your LOCAL CHURCHES by taking a form from one of the two churches and/or contacting me on 812040 email annknight@gmx .

Ann Knight

John Sargent 6th November 1938 – 1st June 2026

John, who died on 1st June, was the youngest of five children born to Stanley and Lilian Sargent. John was the only one of the siblings to be born at Tipton Mill where he would live all his life until deteriorating health forced the move into long-term care. John attended the village school and then Sidmouth Secondary Modern and impressed his teachers, ending his time at Sidmouth as head boy. He was keen on sports especially football, later playing for Tipton AFC alongside brother Edwin. On finishing school, he settled into life at Tipton Mill helping around the farm, and learning the milling trade from his father - and particularly enjoyed milking the cows and rearing the calves.



At just 17, John's carefree life was abruptly cut short by the sudden death of his father in January 1956. Overnight he had to take over the running the mill and the farm. The family suffered a further loss In September the following year, when his beloved sister Betty lost her life in a road traffic accident at just 30 years of age. This double tragedy weighed heavily on John for many years.

This period in John's life was very hard. Finances were tight, work was gruelling with long hours and now the family was torn apart. Just at an age when John should be socialising and pursuing other pastimes, he was trapped at the mill. Given all this, little wonder people considered John a recluse.

The old water-powered mill was pushed to the limits often working long into the night to fulfil orders. There were no longer any farm animals at the mill and the stables, shuppen etc., were now used for feed storage. The milling business had been expanded as far as it could go. So, in the early 70's the decision was made to build a new electric-powered mill and warehouse on the current site. The new mill would offer a range of bagged or bulk products for delivery to farms. And best of all, raw materials coming in were mostly in bulk and products leaving the mill were now stacked on pallets to be handled by forklift. Before the old mill finally closed, the University of Plymouth made a film of John and Eddy operating what was then one of the last working grist mills.

John conducted all his business by telephone. He regularly spoke to traders from around the country and farmers far and wide for years without meeting in person. John was a great one for collecting snippets of information via the telephone. Although he rarely left the mill, it was well known that if you wanted some information, ask John Sargent.

John loved cattle and over the years, with the encouragement of others, established a large herd of Charolais cattle. A few were selected for showing and on occasion won rosettes. Good prices were achieved at market for the quality beef reared. As the herd grew more fields were acquired and additional barns built to accommodate the herd over winter.

One achievement John was rightly proud of was the construction of the hydroelectric Archimedes screw on the mill leat. John had spent some three years bringing the project to fruition; battling planners and the Environment Agency. The project generated its first electricity in 2010 and is still going strong.

John's love of nature and animals was one of his passions. He enjoyed walks around the fields by the river where he would often see kingfishers and dippers. A chance meeting with other walkers would often lead to a good chat. John loved "putting the world to right" and would often walk across the fields to Hugh Rudham's at Fluxton to seek Hugh's opinion on the topic of the day.

John remained a bachelor all his life and never learned to drive which he repeatedly said was his biggest regret.

John's final years were spent at Kings Manor Care Home. John had a lovely room beside the garden with views to East Hill. The catering was five star and the care and compassion he received from all levels of staff was exceptional.

Nick Bater

Tipton St John Cricket Club

Our season continues to go well in terms of results. At the time of writing, we have played 18 matches and won 14 of them. Sadly, eight matches have been cancelled because of a lack of players on both sides, which confirms the suspicion that friendly cricket is struggling at the moment. However, the situation has eased more recently, thanks to a combination of returning and new players.



John Buckland leads the batting averages at this stage, having scored 596 runs so far, including one century and two fifties. The bowling honours are shared between Owen Smith (22 wickets so far), John Buckland and Phil Wright (21 wickets each).

We were delighted to be able to remember cricket club and village stalwart Brian Blackbeard, when we placed a bench in his memory next to our score hut, thanks to many generous donations. It was great to welcome a number of former friends and players and Blackers' son and daughter in law Mark and Paula to its unveiling.

This season's remaining fixtures are below. Nearly all our matches in July and August are at home so there is plenty of opportunity to come and support us



August	Sunday	2nd	Coaver Gerries	Home	1pm
	Tuesday	4th	Bakers	Home	6pm
	Sunday	9th	<i>To be confirmed</i>		1pm
	Thursday	13th	Basingstoke & North Hants	Home	1pm
	Sunday	16th	Woodbury & Newton St Cyres	Home	1pm
	Sunday	23rd	Bakers	Home	1pm
	Thursday	27th	Incogniti	Home	1pm
	Sunday	30th	Whimble	Home	1pm
September	Tuesday	1st	Ascott-Under-Wychwood	Home	1pm
	Sunday	6th	South Brent	Home	1pm
	Sunday	13th	Ottery St Mary	Home	1pm
	Sunday	20th	Heads & Tails	Home	1pm
	Sunday	27th	Bridford	Home	1pm

David Birch, Chair (07929 822940)

Follow us:

<https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/tiptonstjohn/>

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057807483472>

<https://bsky.app/profile/tiptonstjohncc.bsky.social>

As I sit in my office with the door open to the garden in the glorious heat, I think how lucky we are to be having summer in summer time. I know some of you find the heat trying but think of those of us who love it. Over 365 days not many of them are like this! No one knows what it will be like by the time you read the Tipton Times.

As usual we have been getting on with the business of running the hall. On Monday 6th July we held our AGM. It was well attended for a hot night and all the business went through without a hitch. I am delighted to say that nobody resigned and all the hardworking trustees remain in post.

This was followed by a slew of committee meetings as we, the trustees, remained in the main hall and TIPPS met in the small hall. That should be all be straightforward except some people are on both committees. There was a little running backwards and forwards!

We welcomed Jan Winfield to be our booking clerk. Last letter I welcomed Jude Goodvin to the post. Unfortunately, Jude had to withdraw owing to family matters and we are delighted to have Jan on board doing the bookings. She is still learning, but very fast, and I can see she is going to be a whizz at the job.

We are looking for volunteers to help us in the garden at the back of the hall. The raised bed is doing very well – so well that it needs weeding and a little cutting back. Please let me or Brian know if you are willing to help and we will arrange for a weeding party get together. Refreshments will be provided and it will not take place in the rain!

Because a classroom was flooded the school used the Small Hall for eight weeks while it was all put to rights. Wet playtime was in the Main Hall. We received an envelope of thank you letters and I would like to share a couple of them with you as they are charming.

"Dear village Hall, Thank you for letting us use the mini village hall while Maple class were in our class. We tried to keep it as tidy as possible we really appreciated it. We took our shoes off every single day and I hope you didn't find any pens or pencils on the floor after we left."

"Dear village hall people, Thank for letting us use the village hall. You are so, so, so kind. I appreciated it. We had so much fun playing in the hall."

Quiz nights start again soon beginning on **Sunday 13th September** and **Sunday 11th October**. Other dates will follow shortly. Organise your teams and book as soon as possible. It is always as full as we are allowed to have it.

Have a safe and wonderful summer.

Kyle Hayes





People's Emergency Briefing

On the climate and nature crisis

Tipton St John



Film screening and discussion

Tipton St John Community Hall
4th August 2026 6.30pm (Small Hall)

www.nebriefing.org





Table Tennis dates at 7.30pm are:
August no meetings
September 14th & 28th

People's Emergency Briefing screening on 4th August at 6.30pm.

This is part of a nationwide effort to brief as many people as possible on the climate and nature crisis facing our country and on what can be done to address it. After the film we will hold a short discussion including what we might be able to do locally. May be repeated at 7.30pm as required.

Ken Mylne

Tipton St John Primary School

School Governor update regarding the relocation of Tipton St John C of E Primary School:



Background

As you will be aware, our school is required to relocate due to the serious flooding issues on the existing site. The rebuild is due to be funded and delivered by the Department for Education as part of the Government's School Rebuilding Programme. The first step is for Devon County Council to identify and provide the Department for Education with a suitable piece of land. We consulted on the relocation of the school to Ottery St Mary in 2024 in response to a previous site appraisal exercise which did not identify a suitable site in Tipton. This was met with widespread opposition from the local community and the governors approached Devon County Council and requested they look again for a feasible site in Tipton St John Village.

Update

Last year, Devon County Council agreed to look again at potential sites in Tipton. Land west of Tipton Vale was selected as the one potentially feasible option and a detailed assessment of the site has progressed at pace and as a priority by Devon County Council over the past year. This has involved a multi-disciplinary team working together to prepare for an outline planning application for the development of the site, which requires detailed consideration and assessment of both on-site and off-site works that will be required to enable the site to be developed, including the identification of suitable pedestrian access route through the village. This work is extensive and ongoing. Governors have been regularly updated throughout this process and have worked constructively alongside Devon County Council officers throughout and we now have progress that we can relay to you ...

Next Steps*

Devon County Council will be leading a drop-in session as part of the outline planning application process to rebuild Tipton St John Primary School on land west of Tipton Vale. This will be held at Tipton St John Village Hall on **Thursday 23rd July (Main hall 2:30pm - 5:30pm / Small hall 5:30pm - 6:30pm)**. Here you will be able to learn more about the outline plans and discuss this with the project team. The intention is for Devon County Council to submit the outline planning application in the Autumn Term 2026.

Your Role

School governors really hope you can show your support for the project through engagement with the planned drop-in session and by responding to the outline planning application with your comments once the formal planning consultation begins. It is not an option for the school to remain long term in its current location and if this outline planning application is unsuccessful, it is likely the school will move to Ottery St Mary.

A Brighter Future for Our School

It is important that it is understood that this is simply a relocation to a new building, in a nearby location, NOT the opening of a new school. In fact this proposed location would be close enough for us to walk our resources to the new site! The essence of our church school and all that makes us special would journey with us. The Governors' highest priority is to reach a deliverable solution which offers all pupils of Tipton St John Primary School a safe school building and an environment with allows all pupils and staff to thrive personally, socially and academically and be the best they can be!

Kind regards,

Sarah Walls
Chair of Governors

Amanda Fulford
Executive Headteacher

***Editors' note:** *This meeting was scheduled before the publication date of this issue. We hope it was well-attended and provided useful information about the outline plans and enabled constructive consultation.*

<https://www.avalonplanning.co.uk/public-consultations/tipton-st-john-primary-school/>

Over the past few months, our three sections, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have been busy working on various badges.

Beaver Colony report - The Beavers have done a variety of activities including visiting Woodbury Castle where they went on a nature walk, balsam pulling at Tipton Playing Fields, a visit to Sidmouth Lifeboat Station – where they did some litter picking on the beach whilst they were there, to Seaton Wetlands for an animal trail and, recently, they had a campfire at the scout plot and sang some scouting songs. The summer session is expected to finish with some rock pooling and a picnic on the beach.

Cubs Pack report - At the start of the summer session, the cubs partook in some St George's day games. The following week saw the cubs hike from Salcombe Hill car park, down into the Byes - they walked fast, I could hardly keep up with them! They enjoyed a session of backwoods cooking, where they made and cooked dough twists over an open wood fire. As part of their pioneering badgework, the cubs made 'Pharoah's Chariots' with three broomsticks and three lengths of rope - they had to carry one of their six on the chariot, and race against the other sixes, which they thoroughly enjoyed. The cubs also carried out a beach clean at Budleigh recently. Over the last couple of weeks, they had a go at archery and air rifle shooting at our scout plot. An evening of knots and tarps is on the programme for next week. The cubs are then off on a PGL trip to Osmington Bay there they will be keelboat sailing, going on a zip wire and fencing amongst other things.

Scout Troop report - At the start of the term, the scouts had an evening of wide games at Tipton Playing Fields. The following week, half the troop went mountain biking on Woodbury Common, whilst the other half of the troop did a Blue Plaque quiz in Sidmouth. On a very hot Saturday in May, some of the scouts did a walk on Dartmoor - an ice cream was enjoyed by all at the end of the walk. The scouts had a go at making 'Pharoah's Chariots' and racing in their patrols, and have also been brushing up on their archery and air rifle skills. A two-day sailing course is planned for the end of July, joining the cubs on the PGL trip to Osmington Bay.

If you have a child aged from 6 to 8 who would like to join our beaver section, or aged 9 for cubs, please get in touch.

Trustee Board - Behind every charitable organisation, there is a Trustee Board. For the past few years, the Tipton Scout Group Trustee Board has been made up mainly of leaders from all the sections. To help progress our plans for the scout plot, we really need some help on our Trustee Board to drive our plans forward. We would love to be able to get electricity and or water to the plot, but this is proving very difficult. We would also like to build a shelter on the field, so we can still use the field when it's raining. Our hut is proving too small for us now and in the long term, we would love to rebuild/extend it but would need to raise a lot of funds to do so! If you have some spare time, just a few hours per year (4 meetings per year), please do consider helping on our Trustee Board. We do desperately need your help to keep our group running!

We are looking for people to help in all sorts of ways, in our meeting place and behind the scenes.

We would especially love some help with the specific roles and tasks listed below:

- A new **Chairperson**. At present we are running without a chairperson, which is not ideal.
- **Additional Trustee Board members**, especially a fundraising team.
- **Beaver leaders** - this doesn't have to be a weekly commitment.
- **Support with development of the plot** - Planning, Project Management, Construction and other related skills would be a huge bonus, but not essential.

Whether you want to support young people or if you are more comfortable planning an adventure from the sidelines, we have got a role for you.

Scouts happens when a lot of us give a little. You are not signing up for a lifelong commitment - just to help, when and where you can.

And volunteering's a two-way street. Research shows that it improves your wellbeing and helps you build career-boosting skills. Let us know if you are interested, and we will give you any support and training you need to let your skills shine.



Alison Clatworthy
Group Lead Volunteer for 1st Tipton St. John Scout Group
tiptonstjohnscoutgroup@gmail.com

VOSRA Venn Ottery Garden Event

50 or so local residents and their friends came along to enjoy eleven of Venn Ottery's gardens on Sunday 7th June. Our thanks goes out to the gardeners who agreed to include their gardens (and for all the hard work they put in, getting them ready), and to other local residents who provided very delicious cream teas and hosted a wonderful barbecue on the Saturday, giving the gardeners an opportunity to meet up and enjoy looking at each other's gardens.

As one local resident fed back to us, 'Congratulations to all team and hosts on an outstanding Open Gardens. Intimate, personal, varied - from the seriously curated to wild and wonderful. Flat and manicured to 'Everest' hike. It was lovely to acquaint and reacquaint with folk.' Another wrote, 'We had a lovely time meeting people, appreciating the picturesque landscapes in Venn Ottery, and really enjoyed all the amazing gardens.'

Having had to restrict the event, for insurance, security and health and safety reasons, it was great that so many could join us. We will consider running the event again and we will, as we did this year, ensure it does not clash with Tipton's Open Garden event. Whilst we will need to re-look at parameters for the event, and appreciating that some people were unable to attend, if you would particularly like to attend any future event, please let our Chairman know (Andy can be contacted on andy.finch1511@icloud.com).



First Wednesday of the Month at St Gregory's, Venn Ottery



St Gregory's welcomes everyone to join them for a short time of meditation and prayer at 9.30 - 10am on the morning of the first Wednesday of the month, in the peaceful setting of St Gregory's, Venn Ottery. Parking is available at Rillside, 1 Barton Mews. This is followed by a community coffee morning from 10.15 until 11.30am to which all are welcome - an opportunity to catch up with neighbours and friends.

The next dates are

5th August

2nd September

and 7th October.

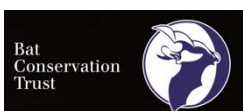
The Bats at St Gregory's

We are really pleased to share the following notification and a date for your diaries:

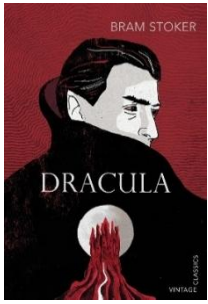
7.30 Friday evening 11th September 2026 at St Gregory's church.

A bat talk and walk by Sarah Butcher of the Devon Bat Group. This is an opportunity to hear about these fascinating creatures who live in and around St Gregory's church, then go out with provided bat detectors to see what you can hear and see. There will be light refreshments served and bat activities for children.

Save the date! Book a place at cwtpionvennottery@gmail.com



Tipton Readers



Dracula by Bram Stoker

What a strange book for an old lady to choose! It is such a well-known title and theme, depicted in many forms: films, television, strip cartoons, etc but I had never read the original so thought I'd find out what it is actually about.

What a strange book indeed. Perhaps also a strange time, though not thought of as such when written in late Victorian Britain - almost in two worlds. Travel by horse and carriage when not nipping onto the underground, no mobile phones but letters delivered the same day they were posted, contemporary technology such as typewriters, phonographs, telegrams, blood transfusions and Winchester rifles all used in the battle against Dracula. Strong belief in the power of the Cross and the Consecrated host but a lurking belief also in old folk tales and legends of blood-sucking vampires, with their aversion to garlic and staking as a means of killing.

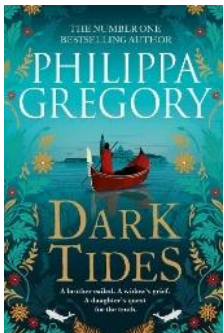
The early part of the book, with an innocent lawyer going to visit the Count in Transylvania to carry out a legal conveyance of a London property, is probably the scariest part. There is a real feeling of menace here, and with the ship carrying Dracula to Whitby. It seems to take a while for the men to realise what is happening to their 'blood sucked' sweethearts but the careful recording of the remaining lady, Mina, helps save the day. I was amused that in all the anguish they manage to stop for lunch, tea or dinner at the appropriate time! There is no direct narrative in the book: the story is told entirely from diary entries, logbooks, new paper reports, letters etc.

Bram Stoker, born in Dublin, earned a living writing theatrical reviews and consequently became friends with the famous actor, Henry Irving, who offered him the job of theatrical manager at the Lyceum. Stoker supplemented his income by writing novels, publishing eighteen of which Dracula is his seventh and largely inspired by folklore tales from his childhood. *Dracula* is a work of Gothic literature extensively researched. The Count's physical characteristics are typical of Gothic villains during Stoker's lifetime, specifically his hooked nose, pallor, large moustache and thick eyebrows.

I was quite surprised at the favourable response from the readers group. Of the 10 members who read it 4 gave it a 9 and the overall score gave an average of 8.



Ann Knight



Dark Tides by Philippa Gregory

Philippa Gregory is best known for her historical novels, her best known being *The Other Boleyn Girl*. *Dark Tides* (published in 2021) is the second book in the Fairmile series.

Dark Tides is an historical novel, set in 1600s after the Civil War and King Charles is now on the throne. It follows the fortunes of the Reekie family, now living on the banks of the Thames operating a small warehouse where smaller ships unload their wares. The plot takes in other locations: Venice from where Livia the Nobildonna arrives, claiming to be the widow of Alinor's son, and New England where Alinor's brother has emigrated after Cromwell lost power.

Sir James Avery, a former rich lover of Alinor's, tracks her down in the hope of finding a long-lost son to whom he can leave his estate. As Alinor rebuffs him, Livia, the beautiful Italian, tries to seduce him when she realises that the Reekie family can't provide her with the life she would like. Alinor's daughter, Alys, is persuaded by Livia to bring artefacts from Venice for her to sell which forces her into debt.

New England provides a sub plot of the life of Alinor's brother, Ned, who wants to lead a simple life who gets on well with the native Americans and sends herbs back to England for Alinor to sell.

The book provided good discussion on the strength of women in the story ... unusual in 1600s and the weaknesses in the plot. It scored 6.5 in our reviews and some were keen to read the final book in the trilogy to find out what happened to the family.

Anne Bareford

Church News

We usually long for nice warm weather in August, but for many of us we've already had too many sunny days and the heat and hay fever have been a bit too much, not to mention the lack of rain for our farmers and our gardens. As with most things hot sunny days are good in moderation. One day which we hope will bring good weather is the August bank holiday when we hold the church fete - please see Mike Smith's article elsewhere in this edition telling you all about it and how you can help. We'll prepare for the fete with a special service in church on the 30th August at 9.30am.

Before that, on 12th August, we welcome back our vicar, Mark, after his sabbatical - we pray he will be suitably refreshed - and we give thanks to Carys Baker for stepping in for him over the past 3 months.

Here's the rest of our news from St John's and St Gregory's - see the separate article on how the church is funded on page 32 in this edition.

Harvest

There's no excuse for missing out on celebrating harvest as we have three quite different services. At Venn Ottery Church on 6th September at 9.30am we celebrate both harvest and the feast day of its patron, St Gregory. More informally, harvest will be the theme of our September Café Church on the 20th which will be followed with a bring-and-share harvest lunch from around 12 noon onwards in the Community Hall. Then on the 27th we host our Harvest Communion in Tipton Church at 9.30am.

Our churches will be beautifully decorated through this harvest season so please pop in even if you can't get to any of these services. At all of these services we will, as usual, be collecting packaged food and other essential items for St Petrock's, the homeless centre in Exeter (see <https://stpetrocks.org.uk/> for information on the great work they do). The items required this year can be seen in these boxes.

There will be a drop-off point in each of our churches throughout September where you can leave contributions or you can drop items off at my house in Tipton - St Mary's, at the top of Hayne Close.

Our harvest monetary collections this year will be shared between: WaterAid ([WaterAid UK](https://www.wateraid.org.uk/)) who work globally to provide access to clean water and sanitation to those who lack it and Farming Community Network ([Farming Community Network](https://www.farmingcommunitynetwork.org/)) who support farmers in the UK with the many challenges they face including mental health issues.

Something New

For those who like a simple, quiet time of worship and reflection we have started a new service of Morning Prayer which will be held in St Gregory's at 9.30am on the first Wednesday of each month. In August that will be on the 5th and in September on the 2nd. The material we use will draw on a variety of Christian traditions. On all the other Wednesdays St Gregory's will be open for half an hour of silent prayer, also from 9.30am. All are welcome - this service and the silent prayer times are for our whole parish not just Venn Ottery residents.

Café Church

Our next Café Church gathering in the Community Hall will be on 16th August when we'll be going on a summer excursion as we enjoy some 'Travels with Paul' and then, as mentioned above, we'll be thinking about harvest in September. Café Church is loved by all who come but particularly appreciated by those who struggle to get up the hill to St. John's church. The Community Hall doors open at 10.30am for free coffee, pastries and chat with a time of informal worship starting around 11am. Do come along for fun and friendship with activities for all ages.

Cleaning & Hygiene Items:

- Anti-bacterial Spray
- Bio Washing Powder
- Washing up Liquid
- Toilet Cleaner
- Wet Wipes
- Men's & Women's Deodorant
- Men's & Women's Disposable Razors
- Shaving Foam

Miscellaneous Items:

- Flasks
- Insulated Cups
- Battery Packs for phones
- Baseball caps
- Blankets

Packaged Items:

- Rice
- Plain & Self-raising Flour
- Granulated Sugar
- UHT/Long-life Milk
- Powdered Milk
- Instant Coffee
- Instant Hot Chocolate
- Fruit Squash - Orange, Blackcurrant
- Individually wrapped biscuits (Penguins, Kit Kats etc)
- Cereal (Coco pops, Weetabix, Cornflakes)
- Biscuits
- Store-bought Jams, Honey & Marmite
- Cooking Oil
- Golden Syrup
- Stock Pots/ Cubes
- Tomato Puree
- Mustard, Mayonnaise, Branston Pickle, Ketchup & Brown Sauce
- Mixed Herbs & Garlic Salt

Rough Sleeper Items:

- Sleeping Bags
- Rucksacks / Backpacks
- Trainers (Men's & Women's)
- Jeans & Joggers (Men's & Women's)
- New Men's Boxers & Women's Underwear
- Small Sports bras
- Small Women's Leggings
- T-shirts
- Hoodies
- Belts
- Both thick and thin socks

Tinned Items:

- Tinned Vegetables & Pulses
- Baked Beans
- Tinned Tomatoes
- Tinned Fruits
- Rice Pudding
- Tinned/Powdered Custard
- Tinned Meats
- Tinned Fish
- Pasta Sauce
- Sweet & Sour Sauce
- Curry Sauce

Come And Meet Our Bats!

As part of our work on care for creation we have invited Sarah Butcher, chair of the Devon Bat Group, to come to St Gregory's and share her vast knowledge about these remarkable flying mammals. On Friday 11th September she will give a talk as dusk falls at 7.30pm and then lead us on a walk around the Venn Ottery churchyard and village green. Please bring a torch or head torch, we will provide refreshments at the end of the evening. Bat detectors will be provided to listen to the echolocation calls from which we can see which species of bat are living here - Devon is home to many of the 17 species found in the UK including pipistrelles - both common and soprano, and lesser horseshoe. Please book your place with Malcolm Hamilton via email to CWTiptonvennottery@gmail.com or phone him on 07831 775459. Parking is available at 1, Barton Mews. Children will be most welcome.

Historic Churches Sponsored Cycle Ride

On 13th September one of our churchwardens, Malcolm Hamilton, will be attempting to cycle round all 12 churches of the Otter Vale Mission Community, a distance of around 50km, to raise funds that will be split equally between our own parish churches here at Tipton and Venn Ottery and the Devon Historic Churches Trust (DHCT - <http://www.devonhistoricchurches.co.uk/>). If you would like to sponsor him please email Malcolm at cwtiptonvennottery@gmail.com for details of his JustGiving page. We have benefitted from grants from DHCT in the past and will be going back to them again for more in the coming months.

If you have any questions about what's happening in our churches do please call or email me anytime. Our weekly notices can be found at <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/8805/news/notice-sheet/grid/> and do look out for items on our church Facebook page www.facebook.com/tiptonstjohnchurch/.

David Williamson, Licensed Lay Minister, Otter Vale Mission Community
812493 davidhwilliamson@btinternet.com <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/8805/>

Tipton Church Fete - from 12 noon on Bank Holiday Monday, 31st August

The Fete will again be on Tipton School Field in the centre of the village, admission remains at only £2 per adult (free for children), and there is ample free parking. Live music is again to be provided by our popular local musicians, Wonky Buzzard, and there will be games and activities for the children.

Delicious barbecue lunches, cream teas and cakes will be served, and there will be the usual wide range of stalls (including homemade cakes and produce, books, crafts, jewellery, bric-a-brac, jigsaws, games and toys, plants, etc.), games and competitions, and the lucky winners of the Grand Draw (for which tickets will be sold around the village in advance as well as on the day itself) will be announced.

We should be very grateful if you would now let us have donations of prizes and items for sale on our stalls, including good quality books (paperbacks only, please), children's books, bric-a-brac (saleable items only and in good working order, where applicable), jewellery for the jewellery stall (decent quality, and no pierced earrings, please), toys, games and jigsaws (complete and in good condition, please) and bottles and other prizes for the bottle stall/tombola. If possible, please leave paperback and children's books at Dolberries, on the left side at the top of Barton Orchard, bottles and other prizes for the bottle stall/tombola at Brookside Cottage, Metcombe, and all other items at 2 Hayne Park (in the right-hand of the two garages, if open, or outside it if closed). We would also welcome donations of plants (please leave outside the church from 25th August onwards) and cakes and home produce (at Tipton School Field on the morning of the Fete).

We expect to hold a short church service on the morning of Sunday 30th August before spending a couple of hours getting everything ready for Monday, with stalls etc. to be set up on Monday morning ready for opening at 12 noon. There are always lots of jobs to be done, both beforehand and on the day, including putting up signs and posters, taking items to the site, setting up tents and gazebos, preparing the site, helping with car parking, stalls, games and refreshments, baking cakes etc. etc. As I know that some of our regular helpers are away, I would really welcome some new volunteers this year - could you or any of your friends or neighbours lend a hand? There is something for all ages and abilities and it is an enjoyable way to get involved in village activities and make new friends in the area. If you are able to help or would like to put on some entertainment or to run a stall of your own (our village fete is an ideal opportunity to promote local clubs and charities), or to participate in any other way, or if you have any queries or suggestions, please contact Mike Smith, on 812542.

I look forward to seeing you all at what I hope will be another successful and enjoyable Village Fete.

Mike Smith, Fete Chairman

Garden News

A secret garden



I wandered down the road to ask my friend Jo for some embroidery advice. We ended up talking gardens and she kindly said I could tell you about her garden in my article. I've actually got a few gardens to write about but as I stepped through the picket gate I just wanted to tell you about this one.

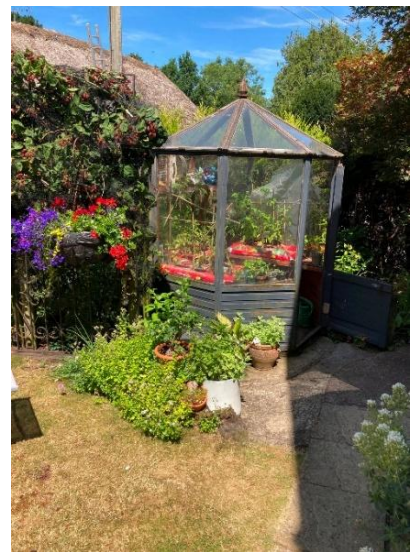


At the bottom of Barton Orchard the garden is surrounded by a tall well-trimmed hedge (her son does a great job) you would never know what a treat lies behind it. It isn't a big garden but its got such a range planting. At one side is a high raised bed with a mixture of vegetables and flowers much like Geoff Hamilton advocated back in the day.

The runner beans are well up the poles and have plenty of flowers

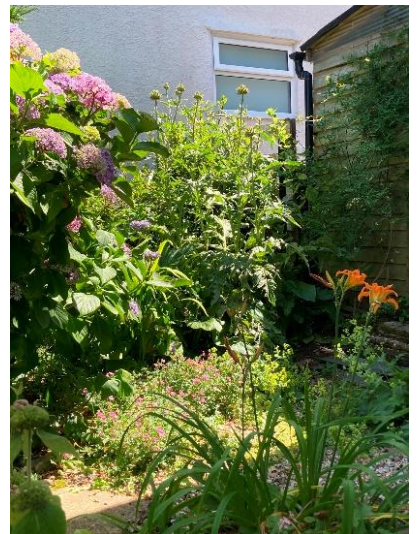
and a courgette is tucked in alongside a hydrangea. There is some space for sunflowers too which will be fun. The border lends itself to tall things as there is usually a fence behind it and indeed the hollyhocks are spectacular. In the courtyard part of the garden is a wonderful selection of sempervivums displayed in a range of quirky pots on a table with an old sewing machine base. I love a succulent display.

Round the other side is a little green house which houses tomatoes and other plants but just in front of this is a trellis with blackberries winding their way up. There is so much fruit starting to ripen already and Jo has strung some netting up over it as the feathered friends have been having a feast. There are nice pots of annuals which add a bright pop of colour alongside ornaments which add interest.



As we continue along the path to the other gate there are more hydrangeas which look good as they benefit from being slightly shaded and therefore they do not dry out so much. I also spotted an artichoke with a lot of heads which will make a tasty starter later in the year.

A delight to discover what is behind the hedge ... a beautiful secret garden! Many thanks, Jo, for a garden write up and embroidery advice ... you're a star.



Alison Stevens

Jess Bailey

Independent Devon County Councillor, Otter Valley

School relocation to land at Tipton Vale

I am so pleased that progress is being made on the proposed relocation of Tipton School to a flood-free site within the village. I know how important it is to keep the school in the village and how campaigners have strongly opposed the relocation of the school to Ottery St Mary for many years. This opposition was reflected both in the refusal of the 2020 planning application for a school and 150 houses in Ottery, as well as the 2024 public consultation, with nearly 1,000 people signing a petition opposing the move.



The local elections in May 2025 saw a change in political leadership at Devon County Council. I invited the new leader, Cllr Julian Brazil, to Tipton School in July 2025, and it was agreed that more detailed work should be carried out on a site in Tipton. Behind the scenes, that work has been progressing apace, and we are now at the stage where a consultation event is taking place as part of the planning process. I have been out leafleting in Tipton to raise awareness of the drop-in consultation event at the village hall which, at the time of writing, has not

yet taken place.

The technical work on the site is ongoing in order to prepare all the validation requirements for the outline planning application. The application is expected to be submitted in September. Once the application has gone live, there will be an opportunity to comment, and it will be really important that support is expressed.

Local Government Reorganisation

On 16 July, the Government announced its decision on the new unitary authorities to replace Devon County Council and all the district councils in Devon. They appear to have opted for the most unpopular option, which will see Exeter significantly expanding its boundaries and becoming a unitary authority, Plymouth and Torbay, which are already unitary authorities, expanding, and a fourth unitary authority called Coast and Countryside covering the remaining area. It will be vast, spanning from the South Hams in the west to Axminster in the east.

If you are not sure which new unitary authority you will be in, there is a postcode search facility on DCC's website: www.devon.gov.uk/lgr-map-search-by-postcode.

West Hill will be in the expanded Exeter authority, while Ottery and Tipton will be in Coast and Countryside. The proposed timetable is as follows: elections to these new authorities are due to take place in May 2027. From May 2027 until May 2028, the new authorities will exist in "shadow" form, with DCC and EDDC continuing to provide services. From May 2028, DCC and EDDC will cease to exist and the new authorities will take over. However, given how unpopular the LGR decision is in virtually every quarter, there may well be formal legal challenges which could potentially affect both the timetable and the decision.

Changes to Planning Rules

I am very disappointed by the new planning rules that the Government intends to introduce later this year. From 31 October, a national scheme of delegation will require most routine and smaller-scale planning applications to be determined by planning officers rather than planning committees. Planning committees will instead focus on applications that raise issues of significant local, economic, social, environmental or planning importance. These changes will remove the ability of ward members like me to "call in" applications for consideration by the planning committee where they disagree with an officer's recommendation. The changes will also reduce the influence of parish councils in the planning process. In my view, these changes diminish the role of local voices, which provide an important check and balance within the planning system. I believe this is a backward step and risks reducing local democratic accountability.

Locality Budget

Each year, as a Devon County Councillor, I receive a Locality Budget that can be used to support community groups and local projects. This year's allocation is £10,000. If your organisation is interested in applying for a grant, particularly if you have not previously received funding, please do get in touch. One of the projects I am supporting this year is testing the River Otter for E. coli, helping to improve our understanding of local water quality and environmental health.

Cllr Jess Bailey

01404 814056

email jessica.bailey@devon.gov.uk

Sarah Martin, Ottery St Mary Town Councillor, Tipton St John Ward

Road Works: The August Obstacle Course Arrives in Tipton!

If you've been enjoying a smooth drive around Tipton St John lately, look away now. Residents are being advised that parts of the roads between **Tipton St John Primary School, The Orchard, Burcombes Grange, Woods Coombe and Otter Close** will be closed overnight from **17–20 August**, between **9pm and 6am**, while cable recovery works take place.

The good news is that the closures are only at night, so most daytime journeys shouldn't be a problem. The bad news is that anyone planning a late-evening dash for milk, chips or a forgotten birthday card may find themselves enjoying Devon's scenic diversion routes instead.

There's also a longer-running restriction on the road between **Burcombes Grange and Woods Coombe**, which is currently expected to remain in place until **20 August** while works continue following storm damage.

As always, allow a little extra time for journeys, follow the signed diversions, and perhaps take the opportunity to remind the sat-nav who's really in charge.

For the latest updates, keep an eye on the road closures section of the Ottery St Mary Town Council website.

Tipton Times verdict: temporary inconvenience, permanent appreciation for anyone fixing roads, cables and the mysteries that lurk beneath them!

Cllr Sarah Martin

sarah.martin@otterystmary-tc.gov.uk



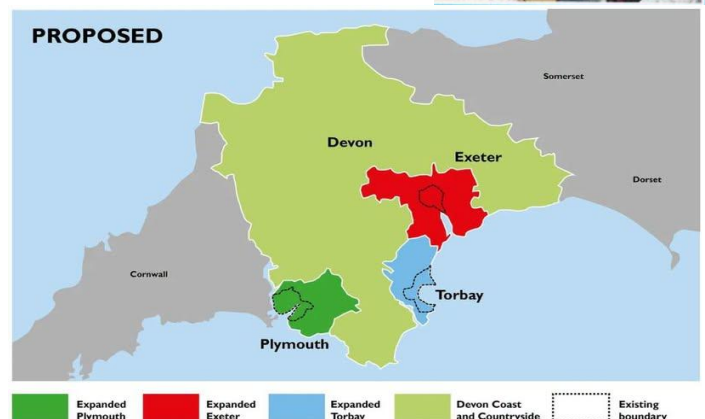
Janice Aherne, Ottery St Mary Town Councillor, Tipton St John Ward

It's great news that Devon County Council has confirmed it has identified Carter's Field on the west side of Tipton Vale for the rebuild of our Primary School. Given public support, outlying planning permission will be submitted this September. It's reassuring to know that "people power" can still be effective!



Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has now announced (16th July 2026) its decision on local government reorganisation (LGR) in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. The Government has selected the proposal put forward by Plymouth and Exeter city councils, creating four new unitary councils across Devon. The 11 existing councils in the area will be reorganised into four unitary authorities, replacing the current two-tier system of county and district councils.



Proposed Timeline for LGR

Autumn 2026	Secondary Legislation
6 th May 2027	Elections to New Unitaries
1 st April 2028	New Authorities Operational

Detailed information can be found on the Devon County Council Website.

Footpath along the River Otter: Currently closed as the river has eaten away the bank, the Public Rights of Way Officer is in the process of trying to divert the footpath onto the old railway line, unfortunately this is a slow process, due to multiple landowners.

Emergency Hub Plan

The Community Emergency Hub Plan is still a work in progress, more details to follow.

Cllr Janice Aherne 07508 308569

janice.aherne@otterystmary-tc.gov.uk



OTTERY ST MARY
TOWN COUNCIL

Report of Ottery St Mary Town Council Meeting 6th July 2026

EDDC Cllr Johns sent a written report. EDDC Cllr Collins and DCC Cllr Bailey did not send reports. Cllr Faithfull highlighted concerns about the fracture in the wall at Connaught Gardens in Sidmouth. Cllr Faithfull attended a Seeing is Believing briefing looking at Net Zero. Cllr Faithfull attended an EDDC meeting regarding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). It was raised there that most of Cornwall's asset transfers happened after the forming of the unitary. It was noted that there will be an increase in workload once a decision is made.

The Council's Planning Committee met in June. Copies of the minutes of these and other committee meetings are available on the Council website.

Cllr Johns has chased EDDC regarding a hedgerow removal in Gerway. The Clerk will email EDDC to request an update for the Council.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor attended a DALC briefing session on LGR. DCC and the District councils are working behind the scenes but there are still a lot of unknowns. It is unclear whether there will be a Mayor for the new unitary. Across Devon parish and town councils are being told they will be given additional workloads but have no financial information to support this.

The Council appointed Paul Russell as their Internal Auditor for 2026/27.

The Council will provide the venue for a screening of the People's Emergency Briefing which will take place at 7pm on Thursday 16th July at the Station Hub.

Cllr Copus asked whether it would be possible to reinstate the Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) at the top of Tip Hill. This was removed when the speed limit was reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

Cllr Faithfull asked whether the grass around the phone box at bottom of Spring Gardens could be cut. Cllr Sneller was pleased with the resurfacing of Mill Street but raised concerns that the repainted white lines at the top of Mill Street have been squished where the parked cars are. There is a narrow pavement so it will be asked whether the white lines can be more central. Cllr Sneller asked when the rest of the lines will be marked.

It was agreed that the Clerk will write to the DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer to thank them for the quality of the resurfacing in Mill Street. They will also ask when the repairs and cats eyes will be reinstated on the Alfington Road.

Future Full Council meeting dates:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Monday 3 rd August 2026 | Council Offices |
| • Monday 7 th September 2026 | Location to be confirmed |
| • Monday 5 th October 2026 | Location to be confirmed |

Useful dates:

Citizens Advice at Council Offices every Tuesday from 9.30am until 11.30am (subject to volunteer availability) or telephone 08082505703

Our offices are open Monday to Friday, 10am–1pm, and we are always happy to help.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram or visit www.otterystmary-tc.gov.uk for agendas, minutes, and all the latest Council news.

Kerry Kennell
Town Clerk

Ottery St Mary Town Council
8 Broad St, Ottery St Mary, EX11 1BZ
Tel: 01404 812252
Email: admin@otterystmary-tc.gov.uk



Tipton Ladies - The Crafty Shepherd

If you drive down through Harpford and reach the bottom of Four Elms hill, look across at the hill opposite the junction and you may be lucky enough to see a group of alpacas in the field. These belong to Naomi Stannard, who came to give us a whistlestop whizz through her life as the Crafty Shepherd. Her shepherding life began after a trip to the Bath and West Show in 2008 when she first became interested in owning alpacas. But having started with five alpacas which gave birth just after she returned home from giving birth to her own daughter!!, her herd/flock seemed to rapidly increase as she was repeatedly tempted by rare breed sheep - and the regular purchase of five of each.

First came the Castlemilk Mooritt (a small but long legged and agile breed from the Scottish lowlands – who were good at escaping), then the Soay (a small breed descended from the wild sheep of Soay, a small Scottish island in the St Kilda archipelago – again, great at escaping), then Manx Loaghtan followed by Shetland, cute grey faced Dartmoors, etc. and so, amusingly, the list went on. We learned the difference between self-shedding breeds and breeds which need shearing, and the noisy process by which alpacas are shorn. We were able to handle fleece from the alpacas and various sheep breeds and feel how the coarseness and length of fibres vary greatly between breeds.

Not only is Naomi a shepherd but she also turns her hand to many fleece-related crafts and showed us beautiful examples of felted creatures she has made and how she also spins yarn some of which she colours with natural dyes. There were so many interesting anecdotes of individual animals she has owned, and fascinating facts spread throughout the evening as she talked about her passion for the life as a crafty shepherd ... and how having such a packed and busy life is great for avoiding the housework (a lot of nodding heads to that!).

Mo Mylne (both articles)

Kelvin Boot - Wildlife in churchyards and gardens

We had a fabulous meeting in July. Kelvin Boot was hugely enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the role churchyards and gardens can play in improving biodiversity in the UK. The state of UK nature report in 2023 noted 1500 species at risk of extinction. This translated to 43% of birds, 32% of amphibians and 26% of mammals at risk. The UK is one of the worst countries on the planet for biodiversity but British gardens occupy 3.1 times the area of all UK nature reserves - so any little thing we can do in our garden or churchyard can help.

The proportion of your garden managed for wildlife is your choice but any can bring benefit. By creating an area that has mixed long and short grass, water, a variety of food and nectar plants (such as sedum, honeysuckle, fennel, ivy, thistle and berry-bearing bushes, some dead wood i.e. a variety of species offering different habitats and food sources to insects, butterflies, birds etc.), we can offer nature a wider range of opportunities and it will respond. Kelvin showed us many examples of insects, birds, amphibians, mammals and plants that he has found in his own garden or in Devon churchyards. So much is there if we can take the time to look carefully. With wonderful close ups of beautifully-marked moths and butterflies, insects, amphibians, snails, snakes and spiders - and the larger mammals such as badger, fox, hedgehog and stoat - it was a real treat to see. It certainly made me eager to get back out and look more closely also to think what more can we do to help nature recover though careful management for wildlife of, at least, some of the area covered by our churchyards and gardens.

The September meeting is another wildlife themed talk with a representative from East Devon Wildlife Trust coming to talk to us about the local wildlife.



Ottery Library News

Hello from Ottery St Mary Library!

The past year has been a challenging one for the library, with two staff members retiring, a recruitment freeze and a public consultation. However, thanks to everyone who completed the library public consultation, we are delighted to confirm that our opening hours will remain unchanged.

We are also pleased to welcome two new members of staff - Jo and Aggie. They will already be familiar faces to many of our customers, as Jo has been providing relief cover at Ottery Library for some time, and Aggie has previously volunteered with our Library Extra service. Please do pop in to meet them and say hello.

We are delighted to announce that we have also received a generous donation from one of our customers. This has enabled us to increase our staffing levels, reopen during Monday and Friday lunchtimes and we even trialled an earlier opening time on Mondays throughout June and July. July marked the launch of Libraries Unlimited's fantastic free reading challenge, **The Summer Book Quest**. It's not too late to join! Once your child is a library member, they can sign up to take part and receive a Quest leaflet to collect stickers as they read and complete fun activities throughout the summer. Children who complete the challenge will receive a special certificate and keyring. Here at Ottery Library, we also have an additional prize for all our young readers who complete the challenge. We have a fun-filled programme of summer events to accompany the Summer Book Quest. For more information, or to book onto any of the events, please contact the library.

We are also pleased to announce the return of two popular activities for adults:

IT Support

Having trouble with your computer, email or phone? Our volunteer-led IT support sessions offer free, friendly help with a range of everyday digital queries. Bring along your own device (or use one of our public computers) and we'll do our best to help. Sessions operate on a drop-in basis every Monday from **2.30pm - 4.30pm**. Please ensure your device is fully charged before attending. Please note that we can provide general digital support but are unable to carry out physical repairs.

Family History

Interested in exploring your family tree but not sure where to begin? Or perhaps you've already started your research and need some guidance? Contact the library to book a place on one of our free Family History sessions, which will restart in early autumn.

We look forward to welcoming you to the library soon.

Kerry, Claire, Jo and Aggie





Libraries Unlimited

Upcoming Events

Ottery St Mary Library

July 11	Summer Book Quest Launch Day Sign up for the Summer Book Quest & join in our Saturday Special Lego Club.
July 11 - 25	Treasure Hunt Can you solve the clues and find the hidden treasure?
July - Sept 27 - 5	DIY Craft Every week there will be a different craft activity for you to make in the library.
July 30	Dr Bike* Bike repair session. Free!
July 31	Smoothie Bike In need of a refreshing drink? Make your own using pedal power.
August 03	Fun Science* Join Edd from Fun Science for a fascinating look at the science of vehicles - rockets, hovercrafts and more.
August 17	Author Event* Meet author Becca Rogers as she takes you on a writing journey based on her latest book "Scamp Saltbrace and the Tidal Clock".
August 24	VR Session* Virtual Reality experience in the library.

*Booking essential. Some events incur a small cost. Contact the library to find out more!



The River Otter

Did you know that the river Otter is now classed as one of the more polluted rivers in Devon?

I remember fondly how I would spend my summers, as a child, playing in the river. I would while away my afternoons wading through the river weed, corralling the baby fish that basked in the pools at the edges of the riverbank, then jump and squeal when the eels writhed around my feet.

I was captivated by the trout rising to feed on insects, leaving the circular, outward ripples on the slow, smooth areas of the river. There was always endless entertainment along the riverbanks.

The river Otter begins as a spring, high in the Blackdown hills of the Devon and Somerset border. As it meanders the 44 km down the Otter valley to the sea at Budleigh, pollution from industry, agriculture and sewage is sadly inevitable, but much of it should be more avoidable.



The river Otter by local artist William Coutts, 1970s

Even in the 1800s newspaper reports talk of it being:

“Shamefully polluted on a couple of occasions with deadly liquids and with scarcely one live fish to be found in certain stretches or the banks strewn with poisoned fish”.

Before the early 1900s, household sewage would be buried in the gardens or, more often, thrown in the brooks or river. The mill would release water once a week, into the stream, to increase the water flow, so everyone used to empty their waste, which would then get flushed quickly away, but then straight into the river. In the 1950s the Otter was reported as:

“... disfigured by old motor tyres, rubbish and mown grass and practically a sewer.”

It's been interesting, looking back over old newspaper and Field magazine reports, reading how bountiful with fish the river once was.

“Sufficiently stocked to merit the distinction of a 1st class trout stream ... The trout of the Otter are of a superior quality as regards size, appearance, and flavour. They will be found to run steadily 2 to the pound throughout the season, which must be admitted is high for a Devonshire stream.”

“If fishermen on a summer day finds himself on the River Otter at Tipton (rail can take him there) it is as well to know that in this cider making county that a capitol Burton Ale can be obtained at a little hostelry, just a stone's throw away from the water. The little village can boast of a busy blacksmiths shop, with the pleasant hostelry opposite presided over by a Mr Ham - suggestive of the relish - and watercress in the streams as abundant as weeds.” 1873.

In 1885 it was reported that there were problems with poaching:

“When the water was low, they would come with a cart and nets, late at night and leaving before daylight. They would use a fine meshed net which would reach across the river, with a light chain dragging along the bottom so that nothing could escape.”

The Otter is in the habit of changing the shape, naturally, of the meadows as it flows. Even in our lifetime we have seen how it finds its own way, meandering through the fields and marshes, taking away the banks or adding in some places. The river used to be very low and wide just below Hayne Farm, as shown in the map, but when the railway came, the river was manually redirected to allow for the new line to be built, this is described here in a paper of that time:

“On Saturday last I wandered my way down the beautiful meadows (jewelled with celandines) on the banks of the Otter, to Tipton Mills, thence to Hayne where I received hospitality from some relatives, later I descended to the bottom of Hayne cliff, where a gang of navvies had nearly completed a new cut to divert the river and when completed this will dry up a large bend in which the ‘finny tribe’ are now sheltered in immense quantity”

There is hope for our river, we have seen a return of its namesake the otter, and beavers now successfully live and breed on the riverbanks. When you see the flash of blue fly past, you know that the kingfishers are surviving despite the challenges and the familiar, yet somehow exotic, egrets still manage to find enough food to sustain themselves. There is life in our river, thankfully, BUT it deserves to be so much better. Hopefully with the media attention now focussed on the testing and improving of the quality of the river water, healthier habitats and eco systems will return, and the water will be safer for generations to come. I'll leave you with this old fisherman's forecast rhyme of the winds on the river...

When the wind 's in the North, let the angler go forth, When the wind 's in the West, by your hearth, smoke and rest.



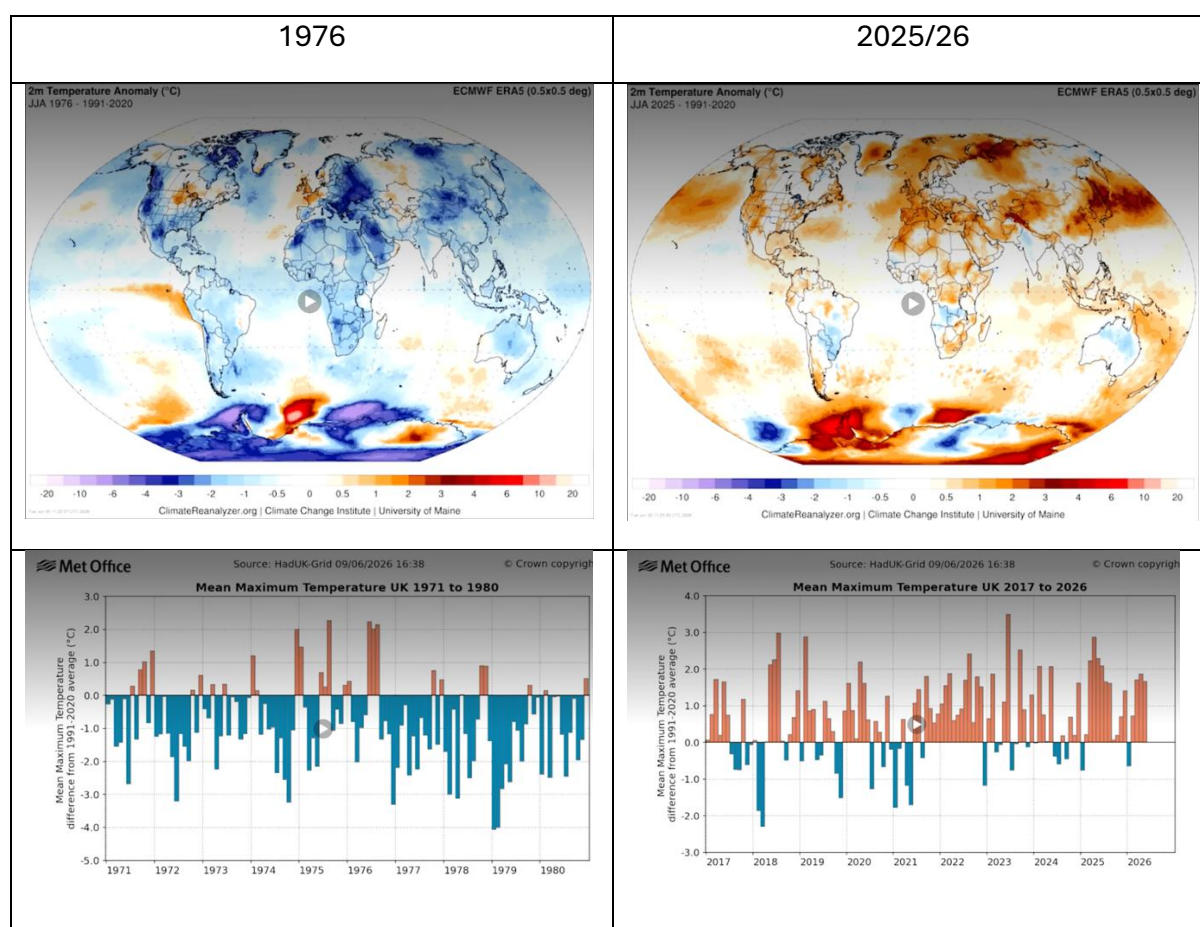
Judith Taylor

All references from The British Newspaper Archives



Weather report

Heat, heat, HEAT! There is so much I could write about heat this month; I am not sure where to start. Record temperatures, comparison with 1976, heat domes, marine heatwaves, El Nino ... Social media is full of people saying *we have always had hot summers, remember 1976?* I do (just!) and it was remarkable, partly because it followed a sequence of cold summers and also for the period of 15 consecutive really hot days, so it is really worth comparing what we have now with 1976. Both were caused by a *heat dome*, a term I first heard in relation to the extreme heatwave in NW USA and Canada in 2021. *Heat dome* is a new name but simply describes the effect of a large area of high pressure in summer which persists over days or weeks. Under high pressure the air descends from high altitude. Descending air gets warmer as the pressure rises and is compressed - in the same way as your bicycle pump gets warm as you pump your tyre pressure. As air descends over a wide area over several days, it gets warmer and warmer at the surface. Clear skies also support strong solar heating and in the UK we often get hot air imported from the continent by easterly winds, enhancing the effect. So, in both 1976 and 2026 we had heat domes, but there the similarity ends.



The two maps really need to be seen in colour (see online version) but show that in 1976 (left) the heat was restricted to the British Isles and the very near continent while much of the world was cold compared to the 1991-2020 average. In 2025 (2026 average not available yet!) the heat extends right around the northern hemisphere and is even more extreme in large parts of the southern hemisphere. Most of the globe is MUCH warmer than in 1976. The lower graphs are for the UK and show monthly average maximum temperatures. In 1976, the 3 summer months stand out as exceptional among many months much colder than the 1991-2020 average, whereas in 2026 we are continuing a series with many much warmer months. There is no doubt that while 1976 was a welcome exceptional heatwave, the current heat is part of a much wider pattern of climate warming. Indeed, just this week the Met Office issued a statement that '*What we used to think of as extreme, we increasingly consider as normal*', noting also that '*the climate of the 20th Century has now gone.*' That is a somewhat alarming statement!

In my introduction I also mentioned marine heatwaves and El Nino. No space for detail here, but another feature this year, and in 2025, is exceptionally warm seas around the UK, helping to push up our temperatures. The oceans have absorbed the vast majority of the heat trapped in the planet by climate change, so it is not surprising that we are now seeing much warmer sea temperatures - also with impacts on marine life. El Nino is further away from us, in the tropical Pacific, but has global climate impacts. El Nino is part of a cycle that gives warm sea temperatures over a wide area every few years, but now it is imposed on top of an ocean already warmed by climate change. This year's 'Super El Nino' looks likely to be one of the strongest ever recorded, and it is therefore likely that 2026 will break many records and will quite possibly be the warmest year on record globally - again.

Enjoy the heat but let's hope for some rain soon.

Ken Mylne



When the Duke of Gloucester recently visited Ottery to formally open the Feoffee Charity's New Street residential development, he was shown the historic minute books brought by the Ottery Heritage Society for the occasion.

One of these listed donors from the 1700s, and the other detailed five-shilling gifts to the charity in 1905 - a more substantial amount than it sounds in an agricultural small town where a farm worker might earn a pound a week and needed all of it.

Late Summer Pause

The traditional August break in the talks schedule has been extended to next month to enable a more relaxed and social AGM in September. Rather than having an outside speaker, various members will share briefly about their area of interest.

Inspeximus Charter

We have recently received the text of a historic Ottery charter document from the mid-1500s Reformation period. We are finding out more about it with a view to making it available online for research. Check out the <https://otteryheritage.org.uk> site and its expanded Data section under the Media & Research tab where you can study birth, death, and marriage records for Ottery families dating back to the 1600s.

Join a Team

Heritage Society trustees are legally responsible for managing the society, its activities, and its funds - but that's only their formal role. Each trustee represents a specific area of interest - and recent discussions have proposed viewing them as team leaders who inspire others to join them or to develop their own projects within a team framework. It's early days and we're still working it out - but this promises to be a great way to enable members to be more 'hands on' in thinking up and developing their own projects, whether researching the area, its buildings, businesses and people - or finding their area of interest in other aspects of the society's wider work.

News and dates of the autumn schedule of talks are available at <https://otteryheritage.org.uk>

Ian Greig



Duke of Gloucester examines historic charity's minute books





Happy New Singing Year!

The Choral Society's new singing year will start in September, with rehearsals kicking off in the United Reformed Church, Ottery, at 7.30pm on Wednesday 2nd.



We have a very busy first term ahead of us. Not only will we be practising for our annual Christmas concert on **Saturday 5th December**, but also the biannual **Classics Galore! concert** on **Saturday 14th November**.

More details of Classics Galore! will be given soon. This series of concerts, held every other year since 2007, raises a considerable sum (the last concert in 2024 raised £20,000) for our local Exeter-based cancer charity, FORCE. We hold it in the Exeter Great Hall, a venue that seats up to 1,400, and aim to sell each and every ticket. It is a monumental organisational task, involving nearly 200 musicians on stage at the same time: our Classics Galore Orchestra, the combined choirs from the Ottery St. Mary Choral Society and the St. David's Players, and the fantastic Lymptone Band, our local Championship section brass band (that is, the best there is!). The programme of music is yet to be announced, but it will be a combination of well-known and popular choral music, orchestral pieces and an inspirational selection of brass music. The evening is rounded off with a Last Night of the Proms style finale, where joining in loudly is expected. It's a heavy roof, but we will raise it.

For our Christmas programme this year, the centrepiece will be Rutter's *Magnificat*, propelling the choir from its recent programmes of 18th century music right up to the 1990s.

This is a relatively short piece at about 35 minutes long: energetic, exuberant, and tuneful. We can't wait to get started with it! At its first performance in 1990 some critics loved its Latin-inspired rhythms and its persistent optimism whereas others were less convinced. One critic, obviously intending to write a scornful barb about the piece, said that it was an exercise in glitzy populism. Now, I don't know about you, but I think that's the best reason of all to hear it. Couldn't we all do with some of that in our lives?

If you would like to join us this term and take part in a packed autumn programme of singing glitzy populism to 1,400 people in Exeter Great Hall and then some more in the Ottery Parish Church at Christmas, you would be very welcome. We need new singers to keep going. We don't audition, so turn up, see if you like it, and hopefully stay with us.

Peter Hudson

Recipe Corner Greek Country Salad

Ingredients for the vinaigrette - make this at least an hour before serving.

- 3 tbsp. dried oregano
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- 2 to 3 cloves garlic, finely minced
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1¼ cups mild and fruity olive oil.

Rub the oregano in your hands to warm it and release its oils. Toast in a dry frying pan over a low heat for a minute or two. Whisk all the ingredients together in a bowl. If you have time, warm the dressing over a low heat for a few minutes to intensify the flavours.

Ingredients for the salad. (Serves 4)

- ½ cup oregano garlic vinaigrette
- 4 ripe but firm tomatoes, diced
- 1 cucumber, peeled and sliced ¼ inch thick
- 2 small green bell peppers, seeded and diced
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 3 cups of torn or coarsely chopped salad greens, such as romaine or endive (about ¼ pound)
- 20 Kalamata olives, pitted
- ½ pound feta cheese, coarsely crumbled

Drain the tomatoes in a colander for 20 minutes. Combine the salad ingredients in a large salad bowl and toss with the vinaigrette. If you find raw onion a little strong, marinate it in a little of the vinaigrette for 15 minutes.

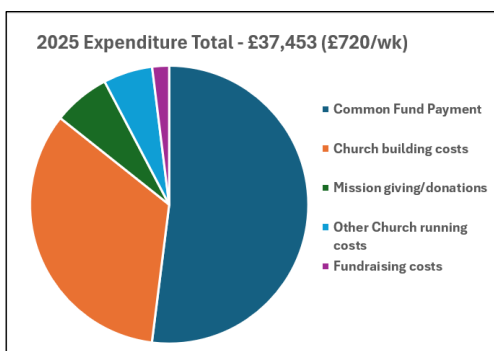
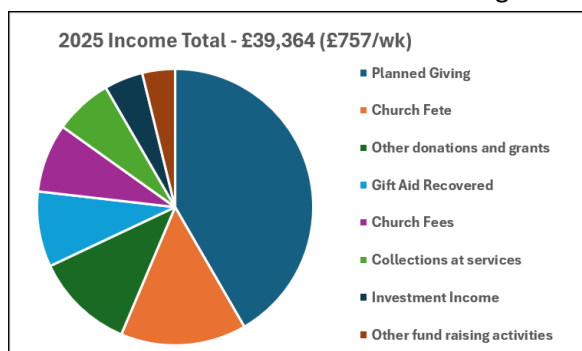
Jenny Pinn

Who Funds Our Local Church?

Following a recent baptism service in Tipton Church, one of the baptismal party asked us, as he looked around the church, "Who pays for all of this? Is it the Government?". It's a common misunderstanding. Many people assume that, because the Church of England is the established church, central government must fund local parishes. Others imagine that the Church Commissioners in London provide everything needed for churches like Tipton St John and Venn Ottery. The reality is somewhat more mundane and more challenging because ultimately it is us, the local parishioners who fund it.

The legal responsibility for meeting all day-to-day running costs - building maintenance and repairs, worship services, administration and wider activities - rests with the Parochial Church Council (PCC). This small group of volunteers, elected from the congregation, must raise the funds required each year. The only major expense the PCC does not directly cover is the vicar's salary, which is paid by the Diocese of Exeter. However, each parish must contribute to the Common Fund, which helps cover clergy costs across the diocese. Our Common Fund contribution is calculated based on factors such as church attendance, local affluence or deprivation, and the number of buildings a parish maintains. A full-time vicar costs the Diocese £83,000 annually, including stipend, pension and housing. Our parish's 2025 Common Fund contribution is £19,500 - far below the full cost - so we share our vicar, Mark, with Colaton Raleigh, Harpford, Newton Poppleford and West Hill. Our contribution also gives us access to essential diocesan support: technical advice for managing listed buildings, training for officers, ministry development and safeguarding guidance.

The PCC must therefore raise all remaining funds needed to run the local church. These 2025 charts show



where our income came from and how it was spent. Planned Giving - regular donations from congregation members and others in the

wider community who wish to see the church present and active here - forms our largest and most reliable income stream, making up 42% of the total. We are deeply grateful to everyone who gives in this way. Regular giving is vital not only because it provides substantial income, but because it allows us to plan responsibly.

As a church we have recently joined the national Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), which automates donation processing and Gift Aid claims and allows donors to increase their gift annually in line with inflation. Anyone wishing to give regularly or make a one-off donation can visit parishgiving.org.uk and search for our parish using your postcode - or contact me for a leaflet and paper form.

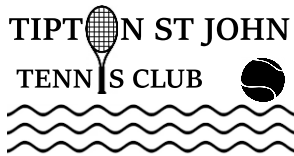
You will see from the charts that in 2025 we only just covered all our costs. The challenge will grow in 2026 and beyond. Over the next five years, our two church buildings require at least £65,000 of essential work and urgent repairs continue to arise - over £2,000 has already been spent this year on roof leaks alone. While grants are available, priority is often given to churches in deprived areas. Our parishes are not considered deprived, so we struggle to get our case heard.

The charts also highlight the importance of the annual fete, our second-largest income source. Supporting it over the August bank holiday makes a real difference. Both churches remain open daily, each displaying a QR code linking directly to our PGS page. A card reader is also available at services for contactless donations.

Amid all this discussion of finances, we must remember the deeper purpose: this is God's church, present and active in our communities. We give generously because God has first been generous to us. In Tipton, 'the church on the hill' gives our village its name, and thus its identity; in Venn Ottery, the church stands as a symbol of centuries of endurance of both faith and community. We want both buildings - and both worshipping communities - to thrive. We are grateful for every contribution of time, skill, energy, or money. If you can support us in any way, do please get in touch.

David Williamson, Treasurer, Tipton St John with Venn Ottery 07845 953984

treasurer@tiptonvennottery@gmail.com



The summer league season is well underway and the stars this year are the ladies, who have won 8 out of 11 matches and are only a few points behind second place in division 4. I have heard tales of some epic long matches with many close tiebreaks. Well done ladies! Following a slow start, the Men's A team has started putting together some good results and are climbing the division 4 table with games in hand. There is still much work to do to avoid relegation but Captain Steve Upsher is confident the blend of youth and experience will see the team finish the season in a good position in the table. Men's B are struggling in division 6 and look certain for relegation.

Prospective members are always welcome at club nights on Wednesdays from 6pm or at Tuesday morning ladies' session from 9.30am. Come and give us a try!

See our website at <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/TiptonStJohnTennisClub> for membership details.

Ken Mylne, Chair

Terry's LEJOG Adventure June 2026

Until last year cycling was a form of transport for me, rather than a leisure activity. However, after doing a 100 mile charity ride last June, I became hooked on endurance cycling. One major challenge for cyclists is LEJOG (riding from Land's End to John O Groats). Aged 75, I decided I had to do it this year.

I spent many hours in January planning a route that passed through all three home nations, used the national cycle network where possible and passed through scenic areas. Sue nobly agreed to drive a support vehicle so I wasn't loaded down.

From January I followed an increasingly intense training schedule in order to prepare for riding 60 miles day after day. Even so, by the end of May, I still had major doubts whether I was really capable of going all the way. It was with a sense of excitement and trepidation that we drove down to Cornwall. The following day (1st June) I had my photo taken by the famous signpost in the 3 different charity jerseys and then the adventure was truly under way.



I was incredibly lucky that in the 17 days of cycling I avoided any hot weather and indeed it was unseasonably chilly on several days, but that's easier to deal with than heat. Of course the actual physical challenge was a big part of it and some days various parts of my anatomy were protesting loudly. I'd decided late on to seek charity sponsorship and was inspired by people's generosity. This was a great motivator when the cycling was tough.

Cycling is very different to walking. Several times I found myself struggling to get up a long steep hill only, after cresting the summit, to be on a descent where I could freewheel and take a rest. There were also times of pure exhilaration such as riding through a near-deserted Cheddar Gorge on a sunny evening or bowling along on good surfaces for mile after mile with a following wind.

The outstanding thing for me was the chance to see the ever-changing landscape of this amazing island unfolding day after day. No two days were remotely similar, ranging from coastal scenery, classic rolling green valleys to high moors. Along with that, the architecture varied from severe granite on Dartmoor, cob and thatch in Devon, half-timbered in Shropshire to various colours of stone in the North.

Riding a bike gives you a very different view of the country and I could fully appreciate things such as the carpets of wild flowers lining the verges. Not only can you stop to admire the scenery at will but also are able to experience things that are missed in a car, whether it be hearing cuckoos, the eerie call of a curlew high up on the moors or, enthrallingly on a quiet back road in Scotland, passing within inches of a startled red squirrel. Crossing the Severn and Forth Road Bridges not only gave fabulous views, but was also a visceral experience, where the cross-wind was so strong that cycling was impossible.

Although John O Groats is the official end, I made a detour to Dunnet Head, which is actually the northernmost point of mainland Britain. As I rounded the final bend and rolled into the finish at John O Groats, I was overcome with emotion. I can honestly say that it's been one of the greatest adventures of my life and I feel extraordinarily lucky to have been able to do it.

My blog of the journey can be accessed at: <https://www.cycleblaze.com/journals/terrylejog2026/>

Terry Riordan (Metcombe Vale House)

Church Calendar for August and September 2026

Everyone is welcome to join us at any of our services or events

AUGUST

Saturday	1 st	10.00 am	Coffee Morning and produce stall.	Community Hall
Sunday	2 nd	10.00 am	Holy Communion	N.Pop
Wednesday	5 th	9.30 am	Morning Prayer	V.O.
Sunday	9 th	11.00 am	Holy Communion	T.S.J
Sunday	16 th	10.30 am for 11am	Café Church	Community Hall
Sunday	23 rd	9.30 am	Holy Communion	T.S.J.
Sunday	30 th	9.30 am	Service of the Word followed by preparation for the Fete	T.S.J
Monday	31 st	Noon	Church Fete	School Field

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday	2 nd	9.30 am	Morning Prayer	V.O.
Sunday	6 th	9.30 am 10.00 am	Harvest Festival Holy Communion	V.O. N.Pop
Sunday	13 th	11.00 am	Holy Communion	T.S.J
Sunday	20 th	10.30 am for 11am	Harvest Café Church	Community Hall
Sunday	27 th	9.30 am	Harvest Holy Communion	T.S.J

OCTOBER

Saturday	3 rd	10.00 am	Coffee Morning and produce stall.	Community Hall
Sunday	4 th	10.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Holy Communion	N.Pop O.S.M.

ONLINE SERVICES

In addition to the live services and events listed above, an online Service of Worship takes place at 9.30am on the following Sundays : **2nd and 16th August, 6th and 20th September and 4th October.**

For details contact David Williamson (phone 07845 953984) or go to our church website: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/8805.

CHURCH FETE

**BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY 31st AUGUST
SCHOOL FIELD at NOON**

Stalls Barbeque Lunches Cream Teas Grand Draw

Diary Dates - August and September

All dates correct at the time of publication.

August

4 th Aug	6.30pm	People's Emergency Briefing, Small Hall	P14
8 th Aug	10.30-12.30	Carer Support Group, Brambledown, Green Lane	P7
28 th Aug	8pm	Full Moon Labyrinth Walk, Tipton Playing Field	
31 st Aug	12 noon	Church Fete	P20

September

5 th Sept	10.30-12.30	Carer Support Group, Brambledown, Green Lane	P7
11 th Sept	7.30pm	Bat talk and walk, St Gregorys, Venn Ottery	P17
13 th Sept	7pm	Quiz Night, Community Hall	P14
14 th Sept	7.30pm	Table Tennis, Community Hall	P14
21 st Sept	7pm	Tipton Ladies Group, Community Hall	P25
28 th Sept	7.30pm	Table Tennis, Community Hall	P14

October

11 th Oct	7pm	Quiz Night, Community Hall	P14
29 th -31 st Oct		Murder Mystery evenings, Community Hall	P5

NO MAINS DRAINAGE? Considering selling your house or small business? Have you heard of the General Binding Rules?

We have recently gone through the painful and extremely lengthy process of selling our house. Being in a rural location there is no mains drainage, so like other homes in the Tipton and Venn Ottery area our drainage was to a sewage treatment system and septic tank, all totally within our grounds. This was working very satisfactorily, but mortgage lenders nowadays seem to take a view that **all sewage treatment systems should meet the current latest building regulations**. How many people are aware of changes that are made to those rules? We certainly were not, and it appears that most other people don't know about this either. Hence this article is a **WARNING** to you if you are considering or maybe in the process of selling your house or small business that is not connected to mains drainage.

Before getting too far in the sales process check the current **General Binding Rules** that apply nowadays. You can look at these online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/general-binding-rules-small-sewage-discharge-to-the-ground>

When you read the rules, it might appear that your system conforms - but if it is more than about 10 years old it quite possibly does not - and that can prove to be very expensive. If we had been aware of such rules, we could have undertaken work necessary to meet the General Binding Rules, but these changes are not notified to householders (I enquired at EDDC about this). It seems that Estate Agents who specialise in rural properties are aware of the problems but are unlikely to share that useful knowledge with sellers, although one feels that it should be a standard point to be raised by the estate agent when one is about to sign a contract under which one is paying the Agent for a 'service'.

The message is: **If you plan to sell your house or small business that is not connected to mains drainage then get your sewage treatment system or septic tank checked out. Any remedial work will probably cost you a lot less than a quote based on a full drainage survey!**

We have since heard about several sales in this area (Southerton, Venn Ottery) that have lost large sums from their sales as result of this problem. As an indication, the work identified at our place - which was massively greater than that needed to meet the General Binding Rules - forced a sales price reduction of £30,000, and other house sales nearby have had similar issues. BEWARE!

In aid of Tipton and Venn Ottery Churches

TIPTON FETE



in Tipton School Field



MONDAY



31st AUGUST

starting at 12 noon

Admission £2.00, Children free



**Barbecue Lunches
and Delicious Teas**

**Stalls, Games, Music
and Grand Draw**