

The Grapevine



Welcome to Spring! We can delight in the beauty of flowering bulbs, blossoming trees and greening hedgerows around Hankerton for a few moments of respite from the madness of the world around us. It is also a time when people get out and about; a smiling neighbour can lift our spirits as much as a momentary flash of sunlight. We wish everyone a Happy Easter and may you enjoy the chocolate without guilt and share your good fortune with family and friends. Eds.

Deadline for news for the June Grapevine: May 10th 2026

The size and content of The Grapevine depends on the amount of copy we receive from individuals and groups, so please keep the news and events coming in!

All articles, adverts to be sent to: grapevinesn16@aol.com

Or to 21 Follyfield, Hankerton. SN16 9LA

The opinions expressed are the responsibility of the authors.

We reserve the right to edit material.

Nature Diary – **April 2026**



Perhaps as the result of a mild but very wet winter, the Primroses (*Primula vulgaris*) in the Hankerton churchyard are at the time of

writing (7th March) looking lovely and continuing to increase in numbers, especially under the Oak tree in the north-east corner. They will be followed later on by the flowers of the Cowslip (*Primula veris*), but the flowering period does overlap a bit (March to May for the Primrose and April to May for the Cowslip).

The name Primrose comes from the Latin *prima rosa*, said to mean the first flower of the year, but maybe this comes from a time when Snowdrops had yet to be introduced into this country? More literally, the Latin means “first rose”, which would then make it the first of the year, except it is not a member of the rose family!

The colour of the flowers does vary in the strength of the yellow colour, but usually the petals are a pale yellow with darker yellow towards the centre of the flower. A single flower is carried on each hairy stalk growing up from the centre of the leafy base. The leaves themselves taper slowly down to the base of the plant, in contrast to the leaves of the cowslip which taper abruptly well before meeting the base of the plant.

Primroses are one of the flower species that exhibit Heterostyly, an evolutionary development that is supposed to help with cross pollination and hence genetic diversity. The style of the flower is the structure that receives the pollen when fertilised, and the pollen grows down the style to the ovary to eventually produce seed. Also within the flower are the anthers, the structures that produce the pollen to be transferred by visiting insects, hopefully to other flowers. There are two forms of flower structure in Heterostyly in Primroses, the Pin-eyed and the Thrum-eyed forms. In the Pin-eyed flower the style will be prominent at the centre of the flower, with the anthers lower down in the neck of the flower. In Thrum-eyed flowers the anthers are prominent in the top of the flower’s neck and the style hidden within the neck. Do you all remember learning about this in school biology classes? Why not see if you can spot the different forms in the churchyard – remember to bring along your spectacles (or maybe even a hand lens!).

Primroses seemed to go through a period of decline in the countryside, and this decline was suggested to be due to excessive picking for posies that was prevalent in the

19th and early 20th century. However, there is strong opinion, and some experimental research, to suggest that this picking was not the cause and that it was due to changes in agricultural practice where permanent pasture was replaced by short-term leys, together with the widespread use of herbicides, the latter not only on agricultural land. Even so, not picking means that they are still there for everyone to enjoy. Fortunately, the primroses are seemingly returning and can be found in woodland and along grassland adjacent to hedges, and grassy banks. Coppicing of woodland is very helpful for the species as it allows more light down to the woodland floor.

The Cowslip has smaller flowers than the Primrose, and they are carried in clusters on top of the stalk (cf. primrose single flower on each stalk) and note the previously described leaf difference. Both species provide



very valuable food sources for pollinating insects, especially the primrose as it flowers before many other flower species.

The overlapping flowering period of the two allows for crossing, and the offspring are known as False Oxlips – not to be confused with the true Oxlip (*Primula elatior*). A False Oxlip has flowers similar to the Primrose (larger and more open than cowslip) but held in clusters on a single stalk, making for fairly easy identification, and usually to be found close to where both primroses and cowslips are growing. The true Oxlip is an uncommon plant and only really found towards the eastern side of England.

Hopefully the primroses will still be flowering at the time of publication, and the article will cause you to take a more appreciative view of this very pretty flower species, and its cousin the Cowslip. Look out for the hybrid, False Oxlip, as well.

Steve Davies.



SATURDAY FRIENDS

2.00pm – 4.00pm

April 11th – Armchair Exercises and Quiz with Pam Ollis

May 2nd – End of the Track Choir (50's/60's/70's music)

June 6th – T'Ukes (Yukulele group)

July 4th – Philip Dowding – keyboard player

NO AUGUST

September 12th – Anoushka Morse - flautist

October 3rd – Malmesbury Natural History Presentation

November 7th – Bingo

December 5th – Xmas Party with music by Marlow (including Xmas songs)

'Saturday Friends' is a session for people who are on their own at the weekend. Normally held the first Saturday in the month from 2.00pm - 4.00pm at the Riverside Community Centre Malmesbury (next to the big Co-op), we supply **FREE** entertainment and refreshments.

If anyone would like to attend the group (or offer their help) please contact Mary O'Brien 01666 577394

Good Friday Breakfast at the Wheatsheaf Inn Crudwell

*Come and join us at The Wheatsheaf Inn Crudwell on Bank Holiday Friday, 3rd April 2026
for a breakfast treat with free hot cross buns!*

Served from 8.30am to 11.00am - Please state your preferred time when booking!

*Please ring 01666 577739 or
Email tobygregory@aol.com*

Menu choices:

Fruit juice

Followed by:-

Full English breakfast £15.00
Bacon, fried eggs, sausage, tomato, mushrooms, fried bread, hash brown, Heinz baked
beans.

Optional black pudding

or

Smoked salmon with scrambled eggs £14.00

On toasted seeded bread

or

Smashed avocado on toast with poached eggs (v) £12.50

or

Kedgeree with Poached eggs £14.00

Included:

Tea or coffee,

Toast and preserves

Hot cross buns

Cash or card payments



WESSEX WATER ROADWORKS

Here's a summary of the roadworks that start on 7th April and will cause the road from Hankerton to Crudwell to be closed for 5 months...



**ROAD
CLOSED
ACCESS
ONLY**

Wessex Water are installing a new water mains pipe along Murcott lane from the Cloatley Road to the southeast to the Flintham Hill turn off for Oaksey to the northwest . The work will take some five months and represents an investment of some £700,000. The old pipe apparently runs along under the road's east verge (the Folly Field side) and will be left in situ. The new pipe will be fitted at the bottom of a trench to be dug along same (east) side of the road, through the tarmac.

Once a section of the new mains is ready to take over from the old pipe there will be a brief mains water switch off period as the local supply pipe to residences are switched from the old water main to the new one. At present three mains shutdown periods are envisaged which will take place between 11pm and the early hours, each preceded by a week's notice. Existing infrastructure such as cables and pipework have been identified by ground penetrating radar and other survey means and will be left intact.

Dates: Work will commence on the 7th of April, but the first visible work (i.e. the first digging) may not be until the 13th. Operations will progress from the Cloatley Road end to the Oaksey turn off in sections of approximately 100 yards at a time. Access: While the work

is underway (i.e. for some five months) there will be no through traffic allowed along this road, but access for local houses and businesses will be maintained at all times save when the trench is actually being dug across an access road. Residents and businesses with specific needs should liaise in advance with the site supervisor or site manager (see below) and they will do their best to help.

Rubbish: Collections will continue as usual. If there are obstructions at the time, the road workers will take affected bins from their usual places to a more convenient location, and returned after collection. Those with specific requirements such as disabled access to bins should inform the site supervisor. Everyone should ensure their own bins are clearly labelled so they can be correctly returned.

Bus services: This service will be permanently discontinued from April 7th this year. Users will need to use the Wiltshire Connect service instead (see <https://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/royal-wootton-bassett-malmesbury/>).

Communications: Information from Wessex Water to residents and local business owners will be by letter, email, the Hankerton Whatsapp Group and the Grapevine. The PC will try to feed weekly reports to the village.

Contacts: Once work starts the 1st point of contact is the Site Supervisor, Ashley Russell (07788 353939). 2nd point of contact is the Site Manager, Robert Dixon (07919 111906). Before the work starts the contact is the Design Engineer, Jamie Prangle, on 07823-370-095 who will also hopefully feed notifications onto the Hankerton Village WhatsApp group.

Malcolm Gerald on behalf of Hankerton Parish Council





Rooted in Place: Caring for the South Cotswolds

April brings a welcome sense of renewal across the South Cotswolds. Hedges are greening, lambs are in the fields, and our villages feel busier again as the days lengthen. After the grey of winter, it's a reminder of how fortunate we are to live

in such a beautiful and unique part of the country.

At the end of March, I attended two very different conferences - one national, one local - both focused on the same theme: the importance of place.

The first was Anthropy, exploring how Britain's future will be shaped not only from the centre, but town by town and county by county. The message was clear: when local communities are confident, well supported and proud of where they live, the whole country benefits.

The second was the Cotswold Regenerative Agriculture Conference, where farmers and local businesses shared practical ideas for strengthening food production while improving soil health, biodiversity and resilience. There was a strong spirit of collaboration - very much in keeping with our area.

Both gatherings reinforced something I hear repeatedly from residents: decisions about land matter deeply.

Across the South Cotswolds, in places such as Siddington, Lechlade, Fairford, Kempsford, Lea, Cricklade and Crudwell, many of you have contacted me about large housing proposals and their knock-on effects - on traffic, flood risk and sewerage capacity.

Recent national coverage has sharpened concerns. Channel 4's *Dirty Business* highlighted the long-running issue of sewage pollution, while a recent *New Statesman* investigation reported thousands of illegal sewage discharges by Thames Water in recent years - raising serious questions about infrastructure capacity as further development is proposed.

This is not nimbyism. It reflects genuine care for our countryside, rivers and village character. Most people accept that some new homes will be needed - particularly homes that local families can afford. But many residents are understandably

questioning whether the scale and pace of development now being proposed is realistic for rural areas like ours.

Part of the concern is that housing targets are increasingly set from the centre, while the practical consequences are felt locally. Rural communities want to help shape their future - not simply absorb change decided elsewhere.

Too often, housing targets appear first, with infrastructure expected to catch up later. In practice, it rarely works that way. When roads, drainage and health services are already stretched, the effects are felt quickly - whether after heavy rainfall, at school drop-off, or along rural lanes never designed for higher traffic volumes.

Many residents also want to know whether we are making the best use of land that has already been developed before building over productive farmland and open countryside? Prioritising brownfield land where possible would help protect both food production and the character of rural landscapes.

The South Cotswolds has evolved over centuries. Change is part of that story. But growth that runs ahead of infrastructure, or erodes the character of our villages and countryside, risks undermining the very things that make this area so special.

With careful planning, proper infrastructure and genuine community input, the South Cotswolds can continue to thrive - protecting the landscapes we cherish while ensuring our villages remain vibrant places to live for generations to come.

Warm wishes,

Roz

roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk

01285 300555



OAKSEY CHURCH

**SPRING CONCERT TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE
CHURCH LOO PROJECT**

**JOIN THE AKcidentalS STRING GROUP
SATURDAY, 18TH APRIL @ 7PM**

DOORS OPEN 6.30PM

**A DELIGHTFUL EVENING OF CLASSICAL
AND LIGHT MUSIC**

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**PLUS, MIN. £100 CASH PRIZE DRAW DURING THE
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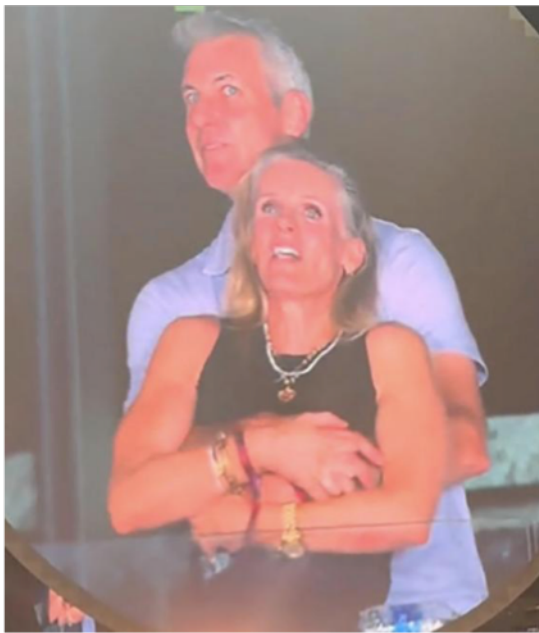
info@mrbheating.co.uk


Malmesbury
GARDEN CENTRE & CAFE

Malmesbury Garden Centre is a locally run business supplying all your garden requirements. We are still open and have some gorgeous flowers and vegetable plants in, lots of seeds and gardening tools. The staff are very friendly and willing to help you with all your needs. The Cafe food is scrumptious too!

We are open:
Monday to Saturday: 9:00am – 5:00pm
Sunday: 10.00am – 4.00pm





“A Face in the Crowd.”

Andy Byron & Kristin Cabot were hoping to blend into the background amongst the 66,000 fans attending the Coldplay concert in Boston last July. Unfortunately, the ‘kiss-cam’ spotted them cuddling up, much to the outrage of their spouses and employers!

A crowd does generally offer anonymity.

That’s certainly the hope of the un-named woman in Mark 5. She absolutely doesn’t want to stand out. She’s suffered for 12 years from a discharge of blood and has spent all her savings on doctors,

to no avail. She’s getting sicker. She’s ‘ritually unclean,’ and banned from the Synagogue. It’s a desperate situation for her.

Large numbers of people gathered round Jesus as he visits her area, but the woman has worked her way through them and has touched the hem of Jesus’ garments. It’s a bold action on her part. No words are said. She clearly believes that touching is enough.

Astonishingly, she receives what she desires. Immediately her blood loss stops!

I love this. It says to me that we don’t have to have a ‘PERFECT’ FAITH. That God will meet us in the level of faith we possess, when we reach out for Him. We may be mistaken in the details of what we believe, but God is looking for faith the size of a Mustard Seed. I would dare to say that it is impossible to have a perfect faith, and that God is always meeting all of us in in the landscapes of our limited understanding.

So, this woman is healed and then tries to silently slip away into the crowd. Sometimes, we’re shy or hesitant to talk about our spiritual Life. We want what Christ can give, but we’d like it to be private & hidden.

She’s not allowed for the effect of this interaction on Jesus Himself. Her touch is sensed by Him. Jesus can always distinguish between the jostle of a curious mob, and the hopeful touch of a needy soul. As Jesus looks around, so the woman is moved to step forward.

She may have been expecting Jesus to rebuke her - for bringing her illness into contact with Him, but Jesus is very kind. He invites her to come closer and says, *“Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be cured of your disease.”* Jesus wants to meet her, so she can hear this special name of tenderness.

So, she went home with a better understanding of who Jesus was and of what He had done. She would never talk of the ‘*Magic of the Robe*’. Instead, she would always talk of the Lord. Had she been permitted to walk away without that conversation, she may have said happily, ‘I found a cure.’ Now she would always say, ‘I’ve found a friend.’

Jesus won't let her be anonymous - because He wants her to know she is seen and valued and loved. She goes away restored, remembering not his clothes, but his FACE & his WORDS.

When we have the courage to see ourselves as we are, to acknowledge our need of forgiveness and acceptance, we open ourselves to the healing touch of Christ. Our story tells us that Jesus takes a personal interest in you and me. We are much, much more, than just a face in the crowd to Him. Let's come close.

With every blessing

Reverend Bob

Art Exhibition

HAGS are having an art exhibition from May 9th to May 28 at the Town Hall. Please come and support the Hankerton artists and spend an enjoyable time looking at the wide variety of artwork produced by, Linda Davies, Steve Davies, Chris Jarvis. Anne Goodyer, Susan Mockler and Pam Walkinshaw.

Braydon Brook Benefice @



2026

Volunteers Wanted

Minety Festival 2026 meetings will be starting shortly.

St Leonards, Minety and the Benefice are asking for volunteers

We are looking for any assistance for cover; it will be from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th July 2026.

Enquiries welcome via the Parish Office on bbbandgb@gmail.com

MURCOTT FARM SHOP

Welcome to our family farm shop in Crudwell, Wiltshire set in the beautiful Cotswolds, just moments from the historic town of Malmesbury. We have amazing 'Allpress' coffee, fresh produce, local meat and cheese, delicious honey and freshly baked bread and pastries. Everything you need for a delightful shopping experience awaits you here!



Find Us:

Murcott Farm Shop,
Unit 1, Crudwell Garage,
Crudwell,
nr. Malmesbury,
Wiltshire,
SN16 9EU

Contact

Please contact us at:
hello@murcottfarmshop.co.uk

Opening Hours

Mon - Sat 8:00 am – 6:00 pm
Sunday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Services across the Braydon Brook Benefice

All are welcome to attend any of the services taking place across the Benefice



Date	Services in Church	Additional information
Sunday 5th April Easter Sunday	9.30am, Holy Communion @ Ashley	
	9.30am, Holy Communion @ Charlton	
	9.30am, Holy Communion & Hankerton	
	10am, Friends & Family @ Crudwell	
	11am, Holy Communion @ Minety	
	11am, Holy Communion @ Oaksey	
Sunday 12th April	10.00 am, Benefice Communion @ Hankerton	
Sunday 19th April	8.30am BCP Holy Communion @ Ashley	
	9.30am, Holy Communion @ Charlton	
	11am, Morning Praise @ Crudwell	
	11am, Holy Communion @ Minety	
	11am, Matins @ Oaksey	
	4.30pm Prayer, Praise & Story @ Hankerton	
Sunday 26th April	9.30am, Holy Communion @ Ashley	
	9.30am, Morning Praise @ Charlton	
	10.00 Family Service @ Oaksey	
	11am, Holy Communion @ Crudwell	
	11am, Morning Praise @ Minety	

Mid-Week Services and Events

Tuesday	Weekly	9.00am	Morning Prayer via Zoom
Wednesday	1st April	6.00pm	Stillness & Peace Service@ Ashley
	8th April (2nd Wed)	10.30am	Coffee & Chat @ Crudwell
	Weekly	7.00pm	Men's Bible Study 1 Days Court, Crudwell
Maundy Thursday	2nd April	12.00 Noon	Lent Lunch 1 Days Court, Crudwell
	9th April (2nd Thu)	9.45am	BCP Communion Service @ Minety
Good Friday	3rd April	10.00-12.00 noon	Good Friday Crafts@ Oaksey
	3rd April	2.00 pm	Service for Good Friday@ Minety
Friday	Weekly	9.00am	Morning Prayer via Zoom
Saturday	4th April (1st Sat)	11am – 12.30pm	Easter Café Church @ Hankerton

Please visit our website www.braydonbrook.co.uk and **Braydon Brook Churches Facebook Page** to find out more.

Services across the Braydon Brook Benefice To be confirmed...

All are welcome to attend any of the services taking place across the Benefice



Date	Services in Church	Additional information
Sunday 3rd May	9.30am, Holy Communion & Hankerton	
	10am, Friends & Family @ Crudwell	
	11am, Holy Communion @ Oaksey	
	6pm, Evening Prayer @ Ashley	
Sunday 10th May	10.00 am, Benefice Communion @ Minety	
Sunday 17th May	8.30am BCP Holy Communion @ Ashley	
	9.30am, Holy Communion @ Charlton	
	11am, Morning Praise @ Crudwell	
	11am, Holy Communion @ Minety	
	11am, Matins @ Oaksey	
	4.30pm Prayer, Praise & Story @ Hankerton	
Sunday 24th May	9.30am, Holy Communion @ Ashley	
	9.30am, Morning Praise @ Charlton	
	10.00 Family Service @ Oaksey	
	11am, Holy Communion @ Crudwell	
	11am, Wedding theme Praise & Blessing Service @ Minety	
Sunday 31st May	10.00 am, Benefice Communion @ Oaksey	

Mid-Week Services and Events

Tuesday	Weekly	9.00am	Morning Prayer via Zoom
	13th May (2nd Wed)	10.30am	Coffee & Chat @ Crudwell
	Weekly	7.00pm	Men's Bible Study 1 Days Court, Crudwell
Thursday	14th May (2nd Thu)	9.45am	BCP Communion Service @ Minety
Friday	Weekly	9.00am	Morning Prayer via Zoom
Saturday	2nd May (1st Sat)	11am – 12.30pm	Café Church @ Hankerton

Please visit our website www.braydonbrook.co.uk and **Braydon Brook Churches Facebook Page** to find out more.

HANKERTON BUS SERVICE

By Simon Kearsley



We have discovered important information about the bus service in Hankerton.

When one Hankerton resident telephoned Wiltshire Council to ask about the bus service during the 22 weeks of water main work he was told the following news.

The decision is that the regular timetabled bus service through Hankerton is to be discontinued, with effect from 7 April this year. Not just during the water main work, but permanently. Evidently the average number of passengers on our route is the deciding factor. Instead Hankerton will be served by the Wiltshire Connect service. And incidentally this applies to all the villages on the Route 93, including for example Charlton.

Wiltshire Connect is a flexible bus service that operates in parts of rural Wiltshire. You can book your ride in advance up to 7 days ahead and on the day with 30 minutes notice (subject to vehicle availability). It costs the same as the scheduled bus services do and free bus passes are accepted too. To find out more look up this internet link <https://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/royal-wootton-bassett-malmesbury/> . And note that the service can take you to the Great Western Hospital, and also to Cirencester although this is not shown on the map on that website.



minety community shop

Minety Village Hall Minety SN16 9QH
Tel: 01666 860013 www.minetyshop.co.uk
Weekdays: 8am - 6pm Weekends: 9am - 1pm

New Into Your Shop:

Fresh Meat from Hiscocks our local butcher with special orders on request

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Plus all of our usual products:

Off Licence ● Convenience Goods ● Confectionery
Fresh Produce & Frozen Produce
including a range of local & Minety Made products
● Newspapers & Magazines to order ●

Support your local shop: Did you know if every household spent just £5.00 per week in the shop the future of the shop would be guaranteed. The Minety Shop is a "not for profit" organisation but needs to cover its running costs.

We are always looking for more volunteers to help in the shop or on the committee.

For more information call
Steve: 07802 3538325 or
Catherine: 07786522455
or email: minetyshop@gmail.com



ROAD OF FAITH

Lord, You forgave us, made us whole
Eradicated sins through the anguish of
Your soul

All will be done in Your Time and in
Your way - Direct our thoughts to
patience as we wait on You and pray
Can you feel it, are you aware? - The
gracious Hand of God lies upon us here
He leads us on our Road of Faith, He is
with us from the start - The
commencement of our journey marks in
us a change of heart

As we begin our travel, we can be of any
age - If we would take the Road of Faith,
wisdom is the gauge

Where we are going is the most important
goal This journey leads us back on track
for You have cleansed our souls
No matter what disorder overtakes our
lives - As we turn to Your Road,
enlightenment thrives
You can read into our thoughts, and know
if we're true - For there can be no secrets
between us and You.
Now is the time to take this Road and
make a brand-new start – Thank You,
Lord, for leading us to the centre of Your
Heart.

11.11.96.

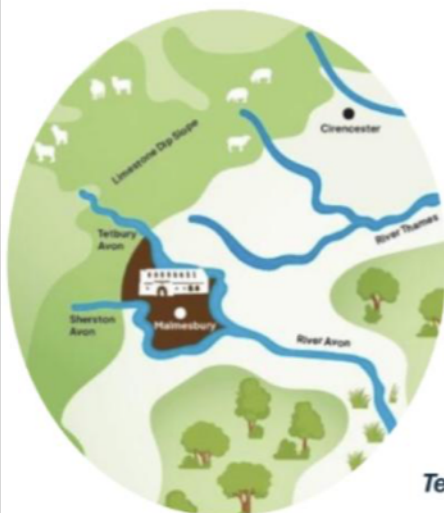
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SPECIAL TALKS FOR APRIL, MAY & JUNE

Tickets available now online & in Museum
<https://www.athelstanmuseum.org.uk/events/>

Malmesbury as a Border Town - from Wessex/Mercia to WW2

Wednesday 15 April 2026 2.30pm
at The Rausing Building - Old Moravian Church,
Oxford Street, Malmesbury SN16 9AX



Anne Goodyer will share her research into Malmesbury's history as a border town – starting with its geography, through the Anarchy and the Civil War up to the present day.

Anne is a Museum volunteer and a member of the Malmesbury History Society.

*Doors open at 2.15pm.
Tea and cake is served at 2.30pm.
The talk starts at 3.00pm.*

Fri 8 May @ 7.30pm

Julian Richards - A Career in Ruins

Julian presented Meet the Ancestors - including one from Abbey House Malmesbury. His stellar career as a leading archaeologist will be a fascinating insight into our history and how it is still being revealed to us.

Advance tickets only - high demand.

Weds 3 June @ 7.30

Ronald Hutton - Did King Arthur Exist?

Professor Ronald Hutton is a leading historian and expert on all things King Arthur! His last talk in Malmesbury was about our famous witches and was a sell out - so book soon!

Advance tickets only - high demand.



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