

Freshwater East News



February 2026

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Please contact Vicky on 01646 672615 or by email at tomlinson745@btinternet.com if you have any queries about the items below or about items in the Nature notes.

Weather

After the brief snowfall between 4th and 5th Jan., followed by Storm Goretti on 8th Jan., Storm Ingrid on 24th Jan. and then Storm Chandra on 27th Jan., it is a relief to have started a new month even if the wind and rain show little sign of abating just yet. We have had an occasional bright day to alleviate the gloom and it is cheering to witness longer daylight hours now as we get nearer to the spring equinox.

Northern Lights

A lucky few of our residents were treated to a fabulous light show when the Northern Lights put in an appearance on the evening of 19th Jan. The light show started about 8pm and was visible for 2 to 3 hours. The cover shows an image taken by Helen Swancott with part of Lower Devon Court visible in the foreground. Here are some more of Helen's photos together with a one from Rebecca Morris.



February openings.

With school half terms taking place shortly (16th-20th Feb) several businesses are beginning to re-open after their post Christmas break.

Jacks at the Longhouse is now open between Wed and Sun. Hot drinks and cake are available between 10 and 5pm when it's open plus evening food on Thur, Fri and Sat and roast dinners on Sundays Full details of their opening times are on their Facebook page.

The Freshwater Inn hasn't set a date for its reopening yet but still hopes to do so before too long.

Trewent Park Poplar trees and new planting.

As mentioned in a previous newsletter the National Park recently engaged a contractor to fell the line of large poplar trees lining the boundary between the chalet park and the marsh. The work was carried out last month and the tall trees, seen here, are no more.



About 10 years or so ago saplings from a variety of native trees were planted along the same line with the aim of providing some camouflage once the poplars were felled. However, not all the saplings survived and so more saplings are being planted this month. On **Thur 12th February** volunteers, working with Ranger Chris Taylor, will be planting up to 450 saplings along the line of the felled trees. The work will continue on Friday 13th if not finished on the 12th.

If you'd like to join the volunteers, please contact Chris at christ@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk or 07773 797559. The group will be meeting up outside the Longhouse at **10am** on Thursday.

High Tides



The recent high tides and strong south easterly winds have changed the look of the beach recently. The area southwest of the stream is almost completely covered with pebbles while the larger area north east of the stream has a very sandy appearance and a sand cliff has appeared along part of the dune edge where the tides ate into the dunes.

There's a thick bank of seaweed laced with large chunks of wood and the inevitable bits of plastic debris near the entrance to the beach on either side of the stream.

It's not known whether the National Park and/or the County Council will take steps to clear the plastic and other debris. Some of the chunks of wood are forming quite a barrier at the entrance, making access a bit hazardous for the less able as pictured here.

Gardening work

If any of our readers are looking for help with a garden project, you may like to contact Edward Reynolds. He is RHS qualified and he can tackle all aspects of gardening work, including hard landscaping. For enquiries please phone 01646 672018.

Roadworks

As many of our readers will already know there are lengthy delays at times on the road to Neyland/Milford, west of the Cleddau bridge, due to one way traffic with traffic lights on the bridge above the Neyland marina area. Work on the bridge started on 19th Jan. and may last up to 12 weeks.

There is the possibility of delays on the A477 between St Clears and Pembroke Dock over the next 18 months due to planned roadworks. An order was made this month allowing 40mph speed limits where needed and 10mph limits where escorted traffic is required.

Digging for Britain and Gwen John

Here are two BBC programmes which may be of interest via catch-up TV:-

1. On Thursday last week (5th Feb) the final episode in the current '*Digging for Britain*' featured 2 Pembrokeshire items. One described some of the unexpected Roman period artifacts found during a dig at an Iron Age promontory fort on the Castlemartin Range. The site known as Buckspool lies about a 10 min walk west of St Govan's chapel. The archaeologists are speculating that by the later Roman period (200-300AD) it may have become a place for offerings to whatever spirits/gods were being invoked/honoured

as all the pottery finds were broken and the Roman coins were mostly of small change, such as you might throw into a wishing well.

The other dig mentioned was the work at the former Ocky White site in Haverfordwest. Researchers at Cardiff University have been examining some of the human remains and have found signs of healed bones from traumatic injuries which may suggest that the friary served as a hospital.

2. On the same night, BBC Wales broadcast a programme entitled '*Keeping the World Away: Finding Gwen John*'. It described the life of the artist Gwen John through her paintings. She lived in Tenby until a teenager and then studied at the Slade School of Art in London before moving to France. The art curator at Tenby museum was interviewed and some of Gwen's work held at the museum was shown. She was a very different artist to her flamboyant brother, Augustus John, but the high quality of her artwork together with her association with the sculptor, Rodin, and her introverted life make her just as interesting a subject for a biography.

WHAT'S ON in February - March

Tue 10th Feb. Wildlife Trust Talk

at 7.30pm, Kevin Harvey is giving a talk about the fascinating World of Ants (their lifecycle, nesting behaviour and conservation) in the Green Room at Haverfordwest leisure Centre, St Thomas Green. Doors open at 7.15pm (£3 donation to include tea/coffee).

Tue 10th Feb Films4Tenby

Films4Tenby will be showing the film '*The Roses*' featuring Olivia Colman and Benedict Cumberbatch at 7pm upstairs in the De Valence Pavilion (£5 or £4 for members)

Wed 11th Feb. Blood Donation Clinic

Giraldus Centre Manorbier SA70 7TN

Book appointments online: <https://wbs.wales/GiraldusCentre>

Sat 14th Feb. Soup and Pudding Fundraiser in Lamphey

The Manorbier Newton Fundraisers are hosting a Soup and Pudding feast in Lamphey Village Hall between 11.30am and 1.30pm. All proceeds will go to local charities. Come along and enjoy home made soups and puddings with tea/coffee included at £8 a head. Raffle draw at 1pm. Takeaways available.

Sat 14th Feb. Winter BBQ with music

Dewslake Farm, Lamphey is hosting a winter BBQ with live Boogie Woogie from Big Steve Young and his Boogie Woogie Good Time Band plus dancing demo. with the Pembrokeshire Lindy Hoppers. Doors open at 7pm and food served at 7.30. Tickets £25 per person. Go to dewslakecamping.co.uk for further information and a link to ticket booking.

Tue 24th Feb Films4Tenby

Films4Tenby will be showing the final '*Downton Abbey*' film at 7pm upstairs in the De Valence Pavilion (£5 or £4 for members)

Fri 27th Feb Singer Lee Gilbert

Tenby Arts Club is hosting a concert given by Lee Gilbert at St Johns Church House. Tickets £10 or £8 for members

28th Feb-1st Mar **Tenby St David's Festival**

A variety of events are taking place in Tenby for its St David's Festival including storytelling, film, poetry and concerts. Go to www.tenbycommunityfestival.wordpress.com for full information.

Sat 28th Feb. **Murder Mystery Dinner: *Flappers Away***

Giraldus Centre Manorbier SA70 7TN

Doors open 6.30pm, show starts 7pm

It's the roaring 1920s. we're at the shooting party, and a body is found...

1920's attire encouraged.

Book online at <https://www.giralduscentre.com/whatson#murder> by 25 February for early bird price of £19 including 1920's-inspired two-course dinner. Full price £23 after 25 February.

Sat 7th Mar. **Pembroke and Monkton History Society coffee morning and talk**

The Society is hosting a Coffee Morning in Pembroke Town Hall at 10, followed by a Talk at 11 given by historian and author, Melita Thomas entitled '*The life and Times of Tudor Women*'. The event is free and all are welcome. To find out more go to the society's website pembrokeandmonktonhistory.org.uk.

Mar 20th-22nd **Tenby's Steampunk Festival**

The colourful Steampunk Festival takes place in Tenby over the weekend of 20-22-March. As in previous years it will feature costumed parades through the town and events in the De Valence and other venues. Go to tenbysteampunk.wordpress.com for further information or check the Facebook page for 'Tenby Steampunk Festival'.

Vicky's Nature Notes. February 2026

Early Signs of Spring and the Snowdrop



Pictured here are the first lambs to appear locally in a field on the edge of the village. It is always a treat to see them.

Other signs of the spring to come are the tight buds of the swathes of daffodils in our verges waiting to open. One or two have

opened already and it won't be long before the others follow.

Amongst our native wild flowers the dainty sunny celandines are among the first to flower and I've spotted one or two already.

In the meantime, we can enjoy the banks of early flowering snowdrops now blooming on some verges and in our gardens. There are many names for the snowdrops, including Candlemass bells, Dewdrops, Fair maids of February, White queen, Eve's tears and Naked Maidens. Their scientific name, *Galanthus nivalis*, comprises '*gala*' meaning 'milk' with '*anthos*' meaning 'flower' and '*nivalis*' meaning 'resembling snow'.

One of its Welsh names is *Tapr Mair* (Mary's taper). This like 'Candlemas bells' reflects the fact that they bloom at the same time as the Feast of Candlemas on 2nd February. The feast falls exactly 40 days after Christmas Day and marks the day which remembers

both the Purification of the Virgin Mary and the Presentation of the baby Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem. It was the custom for a mother to visit the temple 40 days after giving birth, a custom later reflected in a church service known as the Churching of Women. The rite in the Christian church involved the mother holding a lit candle at the church entrance and being led to the altar for prayers and a blessing. It was a form of thanksgiving for the birth and a blessing for the mother after her recovery from childbirth.

The symbolism of the candle reflected the belief that Christ came to us as a light in our darkness and it was a tradition in churches to bless on the Feast of Candlemas the new beeswax candles to be used in church in the coming year. In some catholic churches it



was the custom to replace images of the Virgin Mary with a bunch of snowdrops on the Feast of Candlemas.

In some areas of Britain it was considered unlucky to bring snowdrops into the home while in others they were placed inside a house on Candlemas Day to purify the house. Another tradition held that young girls had to pick snowdrops before Valentine's Day or they wouldn't marry that year. In the Victorian language of flowers it represented 'hope'.

In the church calendar Candlemas marks the official end of the Christmas period with Lent and the preparation for Easter following not very long afterwards, depending on the date of Easter. This year Lent begins on 18th February (Ash Wednesday) with Easter Day falling on 5th April. For pancake lovers, Shrove Tuesday (Pancake day) is on 17th February.