



Happy New Year!

Albeit a numbingly cold start to 2026! I quite like a frosty/snowy start to January; it always puts me to thinking, 'Well that's the worst of the Winter over with, it'll have killed off some over-wintering midges, etc., now fingers crossed for a mild and early Spring?' We live in hope, or Monyash, rather, where there is not so much happening in January, as a rule...time to dig those sledges out from the shed, perhaps?



Village Tidy-up Days: Saturdays 17th & 24th January

Further details in a special flyer, coming your way soon!

St. Leonard's Church

25th January

at 10.00 am

A Service of Holy Communion

Led by Rev. Jane Clay (from Youlgrave) – Everybody is very welcome, as always

EVENTS this month of January:-

Monday 5th

- **INSET DAY** - Monyash School; normal school days begin from tomorrow.
- **Beginners' Pilates, Class with Caroline.** 9.30 to 10.30am, the Village Hall. £8, cash on the door/ by bank transfer. Caroline is a fully qualified yoga and Pilates instructor. If you would like to reserve a place or find out more about Pilates or Yoga, contact Caroline: 07831 720810 /email: carolinewebster2@gmail.com
- **IYENGAR YOGA.** 5pm – 6.30pm, in the Village Hall. £9; email Dave: djs.abbotside@gmail.com.
- **Parish Council Meeting** - 7pm., Village Hall. Anyone is welcome to attend this public meeting. There is 10 minutes for 'Public Speaking' at the start. See **village website and noticeboard for agenda**.

Tuesday 6th

- **Monyash Quilters Group**, Village Hall, 2 to 4 pm. A friendly group of ladies with a wide range of creative talent who love making beautiful quilts and anything crafty. Drop into one of our weekly meetings to see what we do and if we can tempt you to join.

– **Pilates.** Class with Caroline Webster. 6pm – 7pm, Village Hall. £8. Other details above, 'Pilates'.

Wednesday 7th

- **Mobile Library** – 11.15 to 11.45, The Square.
- **Hatha Yoga** – 5.30 –6.45pm, Village Hall, with meditation, £10. Other details see above, 'Pilates'.
- **Monyash WI** - 7.30 - 10.00 pm, in the Village Hall, the first Weds of each month, with guest Speaker and competition. A small, friendly group and new members always welcome.

Thursday 8th

- **Quiz Night** – The Bull's Head. 9.30pm.

Friday 9th

- **Crafternoon.** 2pm – 3.30pm, in the Village Hall. Bring along a craft project –or not! Tea and natter is fine!

Monday 12th

- **Beginners' Pilates**, Class with Caroline. 9.30 to 10.30am. £8. Other details, see 'Pilates' above, top.
- **IYENGAR YOGA.** 5pm – 6.30pm, in the Village Hall. £9 per session. Other details as above.

Tuesday 13th

- **Monyash Quilters Group, Village Hall**, 2 to 4 pm, other details as above.
- **Pilates.** Class with Caroline Webster. 6pm – 7pm, Village Hall. Other details: 'Pilates' above, top.

Wednesday 14th

- **Hatha Yoga** 6.00 – 7.15pm, Village Hall, with Yoga Nidra meditation. £10. Other details see above, 'Pilates'.

Thursday 15th

- **Quiz Night** – The Bull's Head. 9.30pm. (And on 4th – ran out of space above!)

Saturday 17th

- **Village Tidy-up;** watch out for further details in a leaflet to be delivered to you soon...

Monday 19th

- **Beginners' Pilates**, Class with Caroline. 9.30 to 10.30am. Other details see above, 'Pilates'.
- **IYENGAR YOGA.** 5pm – 6.30pm, in the Village Hall. £9 per session. Other details as above.

Tuesday 20th

- **Monyash Quilters Group;** Village Hall, 2 to 4 pm, other details as above.
- **Pilates.** Class with Caroline Webster. 6pm – 7pm, Village Hall. Other details as above.

Wednesday 21st – Hatha Yoga; 6.00 – 7.15pm, Village Hall, with Yoga Nidra meditation. £10. Other details, see ‘Pilates’.

Thursday 22nd – **Quiz Night** – The Bull’s Head. 9.30pm.

Friday 23rd – **Crafternoon.** 2pm – 3.30pm, in the Village Hall. Bring along a craft project –or not! Tea and natter is fine!

Saturday 24th – **Village Tidy-up:** watch out for further details in a leaflet to be delivered to you soon...

Sunday 25th – **Church Service at Saint Leonard’s:** 10am, Holy Communion, led by Rev. Jane Clay.

Monday 26th – **Beginners’ Pilates**, Class with Caroline. 9.30 to 10.30am. Other details see above, ‘Pilates’.

– **IYENGAR YOGA.** 5pm – 6.30pm, in the Village Hall. £9 per session. Other details as above.

Tuesday 27th – **Monyash Quilters Group;** Village Hall, 2 to 4 pm, other details as above.

– **Pilates.** Class with Caroline Webster. 6pm – 7pm, Village Hall. Other details as above.

Wednesday 28th – Hatha Yoga; 6.00 – 7.15pm, Village Hall, with Yoga Nidra meditation. £10. Other details, see ‘Pilates’.

Thursday 29th – **Quiz Night** – The Bull’s Head. 9.30pm.

Nature Notes – ‘Here we come an-Ouzelling...’

As in 2023, a wonderful display of May Blossom, (i.e. Hawthorn) in late Spring, has converted into a bumper crop of haws, especially through Fern/Fere Dale, where a perfect larder for our visiting Winter Thrushes is all laid out. Most days over Christmas and New Year there have been dozens of **Fieldfares** feasting all through the dale; these are the plump-looking, purple-tinged, grey-rumped birds, about the same size as our resident Mistle Thrush; they visit the UK from the continent in large numbers, escaping the *real* cold and in search of our fruits. They are strikingly beautiful, if you are able to get up close, or have a pair of binoculars and they are noisy; that loud, ‘tchack-tchack-tchack!’ you will hear is unmistakeable and one of *the* sounds of late Winter for me, along with the calls of wild geese passing overhead. (The other day, a flock of Pink-footed Geese flew right above me, as I walked through the Lathkill hay meadows; but I *heard* them only, through the thick fog/low cloud).

As usual, there have been noisy rows breaking out amongst the **Blackbirds** in the dale as well as in village gardens. Now, we think of Blackbirds, (which are in the Thrush family) as being ‘local’, but where you hear them arguing like this, it’s almost certainly a sign that there is a dispute between our resident birds and ones that have come over with the Fieldfares, etc... Normally, it is impossible to tell migrants from locals, but in our garden (and possibly a few others along Church Street) this year we have a distinctive, resident hen with white tail feathers and a body that looks like she has been grabbed by the fingertips of a floury baker. Rather unimaginatively, we taken to naming her ‘Whitetail’. She must alight in the churchyard across the road from time to time, so watch out for her. She is very dark for a hen, so much so that I wondered if she were an immature male at first, but the streaky front singles her out as female.

Another visiting Thrush from Europe, the **Redwing**, is altogether slimmer and quieter. In flight Redwings are easily taken for Starlings, while close-to they look very like our native Song Thrush. There do seem to be a few more around this Winter than last and I have seen good numbers in the dale. They often mix with the noisy and flashier Fieldfares, so they can be overlooked amongst the chattering flock. The odd one has turned up in our garden, before now, pecking at fallen apples. The most distinctive feature, to set the Redwing apart from the Song Thrush, is a cream-and-black stripe over the eye; the ‘red wing’ is only properly seen when the bird takes flight, being mostly underneath.

Song Thrushes, if the weather turns milder, will begin to sing in late January or, more commonly for Monyash, in February. The most distinctive thing about his song is that the bird repeats each phrase, up to seven times in a row, while he can have a repertoire of a hundred different motifs – many being perfect impressions of other birds, which really confuses things!

The larger and paler **Mistle Thrush**, however – living up to one of its country names, ‘Storm Cock’ – will happily sing early in the New Year and often on a very windy day. They love the tall Ash trees in the churchyard for song-posts, but mostly they sing at a little distance from our houses; this, in my mind, seems apt for the style of the Mistle’s song, which I always describe as sounding a bit sad, lost and questioning, as if asking, ‘*Can you hear me? I don’t where I am! What are you doing?*’ (etc., feel free to hear all kinds of questions and statements, each thrush is highly individual...) Although, to look at, the Mistle and Song Thrushes are the most easily confused of our residents in the family, in song, the hardest distinction to make is between the Mistle Thrush and the Blackbird. Both have a melodic, lilting, friendly quality, but the Mistle is very definitely in a *minor* key, compared to the Blackbird’s much warmer tone; and appropriately enough, the ‘Garden Ouzel’ as it was once known, does tend to sing as the weather becomes much more Spring-like.

Which brings us to the other two ‘Ouzels’ we are extremely lucky to have nesting locally, if not in the village itself. The rare and endangered **Ring Ouzel** has been doing well here in recent years, nesting on some of the local gritstone edges – and we heard one calling in the blackthorn bushes at the very start of Lathkill just a few Summers back, making its way to Africa, where they spend the Winter. The other is the **‘Water Ouzel’** – much better known as the Dipper, of course and not properly in the Thrush family at all, though, from the white bib and very dark plumage, you can see a similarity with the Ring Ouzel. It does have a beautiful, thrush-like song, loud and high pitched, to carry over the noise of tumbling water where it breeds (in Lathkill, the nest is sometimes hidden *behind* the falling water of the falls). It is well worth a walk as far as the waterfall in late Winter and early Spring, so see if you can experience the song, which is to be heard from both the male and the female.