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Issue 529 – March 2026





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The Trumpit is a free monthly magazine with 1200 copies available in over sixty local outlets plus an online version too. The aims are to inform, entertain and promote the local area.

The Bill & Bloss Community Fund honours the memory of the two previous Trumpit editors and is there to support local good causes.

The deadline date is typically the 20th of each preceding month although for new submissions as early as you can please. Advertising prices (June 2018): Page £100; half £60; quarter £30. Discounts available for long-runs.

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The cover picture was taken by Cathryn Bell in Buck Woods, Thackley. See inside for contact details.



Editorial

Firstly, my apologies if this issue contains a few more than usual of unintended cock-ups but ten days in Tenerife made for a very short month so far as deadlines go. My thanks to all contributors who helped me make this date.

On my return journey, having run out of reading material, I bought a Daily Mail. One hour later I confess to never having been so dismayed as to the state of the nation.

The so-called elite are being exposed daily by the fallout from the Epstein scandal emanating from the US. Of course this is worldwide but here in the UK we have several establishment figures shamed by this. And, naturally enough, the media are rampant seeking more names.

But contrast this with the almost media blackout so far as the failure of young lives so much closer to home with the grooming gangs scandal. Inside I have tried to write a balanced piece but, put simply, the institutions in place to protect our young people are failing them by their refusal to act here. It says much about the state of our society.

From Epstein all the way to City Hall in Bradford the stain of the cover-ups spreads freely. For a city that has such a dreadful external image, what better chance than to come clean and lead the way so far as an open and transparent review of the failings that have caused so much suffering?

Decades ago Bradford led the way in many areas that advanced society. Now, we are led by those who simply seek to preserve their own careers rather than have the courage to protect those who need justice. Come May we all have the chance to have our say; don't waste your vote.

February is the financial year-end for The Trumpit and on page 12 there is a full summary in the interests of transparency - practice what you preach. If you have trouble sleeping this is the page for you.

Finally, some more sad news with the tragic recent loss of Kelly, landlady at the Commercial in Thackley. The Trumpit has had several "spiritual homes" from its birth at the Shoulder via Bloss, to its resurrection via the Commercial, with Bill living next door. Local pubs are the very heart of communities as are the people who run them, working long hours to keep alive places so many rely on.

The Commercial has been a long-standing supporter of The Trumpit for decades and I offer my heart-felt condolences to Gary and his family for their loss. See page 8 for the funeral details and family wishes.

The Stain

Like many of you I have watched the grooming gangs scandal meander along for years, often with a despairing shrug of the shoulders, as politicians from all sides either ducked and dived or pushed the agenda shamelessly for their own purposes.

All through this, the real victims that have had their lives wrecked have had to sit and wait for any sign of action from the authorities. It is an indelible stain on us all, like it or not.

I am not a parent but have spent years coaching kids at various sports with a desire to give back some of the joy I had from an uncomplicated childhood spent chasing cricket and footballs and the occasional confusing girl too. I cannot comprehend the horror these kids have suffered at the hands of - largely - backward, cowardly men.

Dame Louise Casey's 2025 report was the latest in a long line of establishment hand-wringing since 2009. Casey previously published "The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration" in 2016. Living in Bradford, one could argue what has changed.

In October 2022, child protection expert Prof Alexis Jay finished a seven-year inquiry into the countless ways children had been sexually abused in England and Wales. She found that over decades, children had been harmed online, offline, in the UK and abroad, by individuals and paedophile networks, including grooming gangs, on the streets of British towns and cities. (Source: [bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0mvmvmy3dwe1o](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0mvmvmy3dwe1o))

Fast forward to a grim January night at City Hall in Bradford, the venue for the first council meeting of the year in one of the epi-centres of the scandal. Fiona Goddard, a survivor from years of abuse, gave a brave, eloquent and impassioned speech to the full council.

Making a direct request to the council leader Cllr Hinchcliffe, who has led the council since the beginnings of the Jay Inquiry, she asked that Bradford be front and centre of a full inquiry. The silence was deafening.

But Hinchcliffe is not the only one culpable here for their shameful, career-preserving silence. Only 21 out of 90 councillors backed a petition sent to them by Fiona Goddard in October 2025 to support an inquiry. What is wrong with them?

Remember that all 90 are up for election in a couple of months time. Failing to back Ms Goddard - and by their inaction many more vulnerable kids - is inexcusable.

Successive governments from the coalition in 2010 onwards have all failed to take decisive action here; none of them come out of this with any credit, no matter how they might posture for the moral high ground from time to time.

You may well be reading this in relative comfort, thinking this could never happen to your kids - but it can. And, left to fester under the dust of a raft of long-forgotten government reports, the problem will only continue to mushroom in secret darkness.

Bradford is one of a number of Northern cities and towns at the centre of this issue but it is national too; only by being open and honest as to the causes and effects of this will we have any chance of moving forward.

And more affluent areas of society are not free from investigation either - child abuse straddles cultures, religions and social classes.

If we continue to kick the can down the road, as Cllr Hinchcliffe and her ruling Labour Group clearly wish to do so, generations are failed.

Here is Fiona Goddard's request:

We, the petitioners join Fiona Goddard, a survivor of child sexual exploitation in the Bradford District, in calling on Bradford Council to volunteer itself for a targeted grooming gangs inquiry as part of the upcoming National Inquiry.

This is a chance to protect the futures of our young. Be bold Bradford, be brave!

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Your Say

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I was saddened to read in the February issue of the passing of one of Thackley's favourite sons, Alvin Blossom. I got to know Alvin via his show on BBC Radio Leeds - I regularly phoned in to the show as part of his kids' phone-in quiz (I even won a couple of records), and was sometimes taken to the Shoulder by my dad, as it was his local.

I even remember with fondness being present when he recorded a Christmas Special of his radio show at the Shoulder. I loved to read the original Thackley Trumpit - especially the jokes and the comic anecdotes of occurrences from the pub life.

As regards his acting, I was pleasantly surprised to see him in a cameo as a gangster on trial in an episode of Heartbeat - the court scenes took place in City Hall. He became a great friend - he even spun the discs at my 21st (photo attached). Keep on rockin' Bloss - wherever you are. **Kevin Russell**



A request here re Shipley Glen Tramway.

You may have heard that the hot weather followed by heavy rains have severely damaged the track bed.



The Tramway faces a bill of £89K. It is safe to run, albeit more slowly, and it is hoped that the work can be completed before Easter when the season really gets going.

The tramway is run completely by volunteers, was built in 1895 and is fondly remembered by people in the Bradford area and beyond, many who now bring their children and grandchildren.

Please would The Trumpit consider giving a donation from the Bill and Bloss Community Fund? **Barbara Walker (Volunteer at the Shipley Glen Tramway).**

The tramway is a part of Bradford life from far better days and we should do all we can to help volunteers who keep these things alive for future generations. The Bill & Bloss Fund is able to make a donation of £250 here.

Now another appeal; the 30th North Bradford Scouts is looking to attract new young people—see Community Page—but it needs to replace aged equipment. Based at St James Church, Bolton Road, the Bill & Bloss fund is seeking a partner to match fund here sharing a £300 wish list. If you can help—maybe you had a great experience through the Scouts—please contact me. All details are on page 3.

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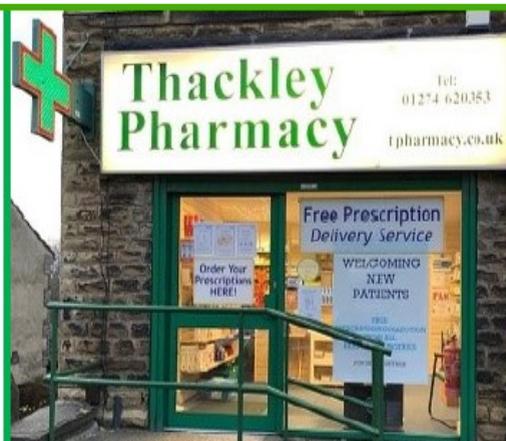
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Gravity works the same for everyone. Whether you understand it or believe in it, it does its thing.

In the same way, whether you believe your experience is created from within or not - that's what's happening, 100% of the time.

Spring is in the air - almost. It's been a dark, dingy February, and it's easy to let what's happening "out there" affect how we feel on the inside.

But that's not how life really works. All of our experience is created within.

Check it out for yourself. Have you ever watched a film with someone and at the end they thought it was fabulous while you thought it was rubbish? Same film, different experience.

So it can't be the film creating the experience - otherwise everyone would feel the same.

Now take gravity.

I'm not asking you to believe this. Just play with it as a possibility. Notice where it's easy to see and where it's not. I still question it sometimes.

What I've found is that seeing this is liberating. I don't have to change other people, situations, the weather, or politicians to feel peaceful.

I have the choice to change what I'm thinking and in turn how I'm feeling.

From my heart to yours - peace & happiness are an inside job.

Jane

Kelly's Funeral

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Then Back To The Commercial To Raise A Glass



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The Thackley Trumpit

The Trumpit was born in 1987 by Alvin Blossom, landlord of the long gone Shoulder of Mutton pub in Thackley. "Bloss", an ex-Radio Leeds DJ, developed what was originally known as The Thackley Trumpit as a bar top A4 flyer.

It took a "sabbatical" from 1992 until it re-appeared in December 2000 with Bill Craven as co-editor. Bill started work with the Shipley Times & Express as a sixteen-year-old. Copies were sold for 10p eventually rising to 25p.

This page is dedicated to the two of them and all who have contributed during the years to 2018...and beyond. The 2000-2018 archive is on the website - www.thetrumpit.com

This month here are some extracts from edition 266 (March 2003).

A thoughtful headline piece about drug rehabilitation was Bloss's main contribution.

THE GOOD NEWS...

By Alvin Blossom

Let's start with the bad. Without doubt, the vast majority of the crime committed in this country is drug related. There are those who believe that they can use so-called 'recreational drugs' without becoming addicted. But as sure as eggs are oval, of those who do dabble, and this includes some school children (they've been seen smoking drugs outside shops in Thackley), many will eventually become 'hooked'. That's when the rot sets in. Once hooked, nothing, it seems, will stop them from getting their next fix.

Those earning cash, can perhaps, budget for their 'hobby', but those without a job, or with a job that doesn't pay well, will, it seems, do anything to get the money they need. Muggings, burglaries, assaulting old ladies ... car jacking ... you've heard it all before.

... OR THE BAD ?

The article mentions a place I have never heard of...does it still exist all these years later?

And can anybody remember this? I can recall my Dad wondering about the impact of local fishing stocks, not that I ever saw him bring any home! David Ward would soon be in Westminster - surely he would miss local issues like this?

Twenty plus years on we all know the value of our post office, more than ever since the banks abandoned the High Street. Use it or lose it is a familiar mantra, as it was in 2003.

Now for two letters which, once again, show how little things have changed. Mike Smith writes at length about something I have tried to highlight before so far as how our area is short-changed re local sports facilities.

And a letter that could be written today follows. .

As a barometer of out times, at least locally, this archive is

a fascinating demonstration of how little anything really changes.

No decision has yet been made about a request by members of the Hindu religion to be able to scatter the ashes of their deceased family members into the River Aire at Apperley Bridge. Cllr. David Ward said, "Meetings with the Hindu community have concentrated on the possibility of using a site near Nab Wood Cemetery."

How would you manage if our local Post Offices had to close? Not very well we think. The changes which are proposed in the next few months constitute a real danger of this happening. Pensions and benefits paid into bank accounts instead of benefit books. Loss of revenue to the sub postmasters, making their shops in danger of losing money and having to close.

Dear Sirs

Tony Cheetham-Hudson's abortive quest for an additional venue to house another Karate club (Feb issue), highlights the abysmal lack of sporting and leisure facilities in our village. Since 1997 a further 450+ dwellings have been completed within our environs, the majority purchased by young families with children, or young couples likely to start families in the future. However, we appear to be completely ignored when budgets for leisure facilities are formulated at City Hall.

Dear Editor

I have voted Labour all of my life, but not any more. This Government has totally lost the plot. They preside over a tidal wave of asylum seekers, which gets bigger



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FINANCIAL YEAR	2021-22(9)	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
INCOME	Ltd Co	Ltd Co	Ltd Co	Ltd Co	Ltd Co
Advertising	5965.00	8379.00	10392.00	14125.00	14004.00
Donations	400.00	620.00	300.00	66.00	0.00
Donations - Fund	130.00	10.00	60.00	0.00	40.00
Interest	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	195.75
Misc	0.00	0.00	12.25	20.03	32.13
Subscriptions	100.00	120.00	105.00	150.00	125.00
TOTALS	6595.00	9129.00	10869.25	14361.03	14396.88
	9 months				
EXPENDITURE					
Adjustment	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.00
Bank	0.00	92.10	119.08	111.13	102.00
Bad Debts	0.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	30.00
Bill & Bloss Fund	800.00	1100.00	691.40	1105.24	2091.50
Print	3318.00	5338.00	5783.00	6511.00	6804.00
Misc (inc tax paid)	176.50	623.75	679.03	934.23	1488.08
Cash Drawings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Post/Stationery	0.00	190.60	119.30	123.85	148.40
TOTALS	4294.50	7344.45	7396.89	8785.45	10663.98
PROFIT/LOSS	2300.50	1784.55	3472.36	5575.58	3732.90
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Tony Gough

The Benefits of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) stands as one of the most transformative innovations of the twenty-first century. By simulating human intelligence to process vast amounts of data and perform complex tasks, AI is driving a new era of progress. The benefits of this technology are profound, offering the potential to enhance human capability, revolutionize industries, and solve some of the world's most stubborn challenges.

The most immediate impact of AI is seen in increased efficiency and productivity. AI excels at automating repetitive, data-heavy tasks that are prone to human error. In sectors like manufacturing, logistics, and finance, AI systems can operate 24/7 without fatigue, optimizing supply chains and detecting fraudulent activities in real-time. This automation does not simply replace labour; it liberates humans from mundane work, allowing them to focus on creative, strategic, and interpersonal endeavours.

In the field of healthcare, AI is life-saving. Machine learning algorithms can analyse medical images, such as X-rays and MRIs, with a level of precision that often surpasses human specialists, leading to earlier and more accurate diagnoses. Furthermore, AI is accelerating drug discovery.

This is by simulating chemical reactions and predicting how molecules will interact, potentially reducing the time it takes to develop vaccines and treatments for diseases like cancer or Alzheimer's.

AI also plays a critical role in environmental sustainability. It is an essential tool in the fight against climate change, used to optimize energy grids, predict weather patterns, and monitor deforestation through satellite imagery. By improving resource management and reducing waste in agriculture and industrial processes, AI helps society move toward a more sustainable footprint.

On a personal level, AI has democratized access to information and services. From personalized learning platforms that adapt to a student's individual pace to real-time language translation breaking down communication barriers, AI is making the world more connected. It empowers individuals with powerful tools for research, organization, and problem-solving that were once available only to large institutions.

The benefits of AI are vast; by augmenting human intelligence, AI acts as a force multiplier for innovation and problem-solving. While the technology must be developed responsibly, its ability to improve health outcomes, boost economic output, and protect the planet makes it indispensable.

You've probably guessed; I used AI to write this entire article about AI. It took seconds to produce and 15 minutes to edit. Tony



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Tales Away From The Scruffy

All The Way To Shearings



As the hounds of winter circled faster than the gas meter, Suntan Sally and I were off for a pooch free ten days in Tenerife.

I'd been there several times before. On my first trip, several pals and I hugged and whimpered like babies on the rattling cable car up to the summit of the volcanic Mount Teide. Every jolt of the cables felt like a last breath; I've never been on a cable car since.

Several years later, the Swing Gate 1990 Tour was two weeks of depravity - The Young Ones meets The Inbetweeners. Less said, the better.

As much as I love my holidays, I hate travelling. From the crowded airports to sitting in a metal tube going at 500mph, 35,000 feet up in the air, driven by some posh kid. Add to this the fear of Two Tonne Tattooed Tessie sat next to me, squeezing my face into the window for four hours; there are better days to be had.

As ever we booked with the brilliant Idle Travel - see page 5 - and soon my lack of patience at the numerous options was showing. So it was that we - I - plumped for what looked like swish Skandi opulence.

Mea Culpa! On arrival it became clear that somehow we - I - had missed any reference to this being an upmarket Skandi Butlins.



One of the most child averse people on the planet looked down from the balcony at seemingly hundreds of kids buzzing around like mosquitos. And there was tone deaf Barnie the Bear too, who toured the site daily singing to the kids. He even had a statue like Gadaffi.

The first morning at breakfast was like half an hour on the M25 in rush hour. Suntan went on hunger strike, refusing to leave the safety of the room, so I ended up bringing her daily food parcels. A local advised us this had been the coldest winter for years - things had not started well!

On the plus side there were two adult sun terraces which had the dual attraction of peace and quiet but also the option to throw myself off, taking out Barnie in the process, if the sun kept his hat on for ten whole days.

Resourceful people as we are, soon we found a bit of "culture", swapping Barnie the Bear for The Red Lion. By this time, having been away from the pampered pooch for a full day, Suntan was in complete canine meltdown.

We'd been able to find some retired emergency service friends to house sit and filled them with b*ll*cks as to what a good dog Winnie is and how she likes to sleep all day.

Suntan had also splashed out £140 on a GPS tracker that MI5 would have been proud of. She was now stalking Kenny, our new dog-walker, charting his every step. With video surveillance via the door bell, home had now become GCHQ Idle.

It was only a matter of time before I was drugged and chipped myself. That said it is hard to get lost between home and The Scruffy. Resolving to stick only to adults only holidays in the future, all the way to Shearings, I decided I needed to get some "action".

Daily we had aqua aerobics where I risked being decapitated or drowning by a flailing arm, hopelessly outnumbered by the bingo wing set. But there was far better to come.



Yoga seemed a safer bet than karate in the pool and so I joined the regular classes, keen to maintain my non-existent plywood-like flexibility for my return home. The highlight was Yin Yin yoga, a “meditative journey” at 8.00am on the same roof terrace I had contemplated taking out Barnie.

This was quite different from Yak Yak yoga with the Golden Girls back home. The plink plink of the background music was soothing unlike the drip drip from the leaking roof filling numerous buckets in BD2. We even had a pillow to rest on and a towel for warmth; I thought about suggesting duvets on my return. Ms Sweden asked us where we were all from: Denmark! Finland! Norway!! Yorkshire!!

The quest for culture in an alcoholic sense finally found home with the discovery of a tiny bar called Café Steps International. Here the landlady produces eclectic compilations of music videos; it is a must if you ever visit Costa Adeje. Although it is a Belgian bar there was not a Flemish accent audible, the owners were Italian and I stuck to the local beer.

Around the resort a popular mode of transport was the Benidorm bus. As for Adeje itself, there was plenty going on as we discovered having decamped to the beach.



Of course there were the usual Irish bars full of pasty looking folk and mad-eyed women singing mad-eyed songs...mid-afternoon.

There were also sex shops galore offering Chinese, Japanese and even Mexican but, seemingly, no full English.

We passed numerous shops where, for 10E, you could plunge your feet into a tank full of mini piranhas and take your chances.

It was all mind-boggling.

This was when I began to start hallucinating, perhaps longing for The Scruffy? I was convinced King Kurt the stoneman was staying at the hotel. Maybe they modelled Barnie’s statue on him? The hands were big enough. And as a Benidorm bus flew by one day driven by a steely-eyed old lady, I was sure it was Old Feisty from Baildon.

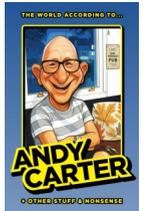
On the beach, as I flapped madly to ward off hypothermia in the sea, there was Gentleman John taking his daily stroll, the old smoothie nodding courteously to the numerous beautiful women he passed.

I guessed that the presence of weed in the air may be contributory. As we ventured for lunch, I was sure Boilerman Brown was playing volleyball in a pair of skimpy Speedos. It was not an image I wanted to hold; I needed a diversion but, by then, I had read all my books. All I had was Uncle Andy’s confessions of a ladder climber to get me through.

By now the days were flying by and Barnie had been exorcised from my mind. We battled with the Monday morning rush hour to the beach, passed by numerous virtuous joggers pounding the boardwalk for a perfect body.

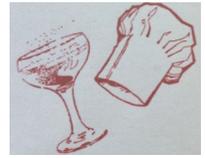
The volleyball nets were being carefully assembled and they would play all day, highly skilful and athletic. Meanwhile, we watched the sun rise higher and, for the umpteenth day on the trot, I tried to convince Suntan that the ocean was warming up. It is fair to say she is not in the global warming corner.

The beach was full of the day’s hustlers - you want fruit/massage/sunglasses??? I reached for my faithful iPod 2007 model locked in time now, for you can no longer “burn” CDs onto this little museum piece and so its contents remain an archive, just like the videos at Café Steps. As I drifted away to days of old I made a promise to keep to the adults only theme for the future...all the way to Shearings.



The Thackley Chef

Richard Aveyard - ACIEH



Some warming dishes as we await the arrival of spring.

Lamb Casserole - Hot-pot style - serves 4 with the option of dumplings.

Pre-heat oven 200C/400F/Gas6). Cooking time is approximately 1-2 hours and you will need an oven proof casserole dish.

Ingredients: 500g lamb shoulder (trimmed & diced into 2-3cm thick chunks rinsing away any excess blood and patting dry) or 4 neck of lamb; salt & peppermill; 1-2tbs plain flour; large onion (peeled & diced); 2 carrots (washed, peeled & diced); 2 tbs tomato puree; 1-2 litres stock (lamb or chicken); 2 bay-leaves; 2-3 sprigs fresh thyme and rosemary; 2-3tbp vegetable oil; 25g butter; 2-3 large potatoes (washed & sliced into 1/4 inch thickness and kept in water until needed).

Method:

1. Season the flour and dredge the lamb through the flour, shaking off any excess.

2. Place dish on a high heat, add the oil and when hot carefully add the lamb turning regularly until you have colour. Once achieved turn off heat and remove from your dish keeping to one side.

3. Place dish back on a moderate heat, adding a little more oil if needed then add the onions cooking until golden. Add the carrots and repeat - keep all ingredients moving before adding the puree stirring in well. Keep scraping base of the dish to remove some of the caramelisation.

4. Carefully add half the stock stirring all ingredients increasing the heat and bring up to a boil. Add the aromatics, than add the lamb and any juices back in to the dish.

5. Once all ingredients have come up to a boil then reduce to a simmer for 2-3 minutes adding more stock if needed. Taste and season if needed.

6. Lid on place into the oven. After 10-15 minutes, reduce heat to (180C/350F/ Gas4) and carry on cooking until soft and tender for approximately 30-40 minutes. Keep checking the liquid level adding stock when needed.

7. Carefully remove the casserole from oven, placing on a trivet, taste and season if needed. Rinse and drain potatoes well.

8. Lay the potatoes around dish then brush potatoes with the butter and place dish back into the oven without the lid cooking until the potatoes are golden in colour and tender.

Serve with a side of buttered cabbage.

Chef's Notes:

- using neck or shoulder lamb requires slow cooking for full flavour.

- for potatoes use either Maris, Pentland, Cara or Edwards which are ideal.

Ingredients for dumplings: 250g self-raising flour (sieved with a bit of extra flour for shaping the dough); flour for a pinch of salt; 1tsp baking powder; 125g shredded suet; cold water to mix.

Method:

1. Add flour, salt and suet to a mixing bowl stirring well then add cold water a little at a time until you form a soft pliable dough. Rest until needed.

2. Turn dough out on to a floured board kneading lightly and divide into balls - rest until needed.

3. Add dumpling into the simmering stew and cook for the last 15- 20 minutes in the oven so you have a crusty top and soft dumpling underneath.

Enjoy with a lovely glass of red wine or beer!

If you would like your favourite preparing by the Thackley Chef please contact the Editor - details on page 3.

What's On

The Commercial-free bar snacks Friday to Sunday plus lots going on here.

Idle WMC-Thursdays quiz (8.45pm) and bingo night (7.15pm).

The George- 1st Roadstuner 6.30pm; 7th The Fund 9pm; 14th Knuckle Fuzz 9pm; 15th Jack O'Malley 6.30pm; 22nd Adam Lerner Acoustic 6.30pm; 28th Got It Covered 9pm; 29th Jerrad Barraclough 6.30pm.

Silence are playing The Brewery Tap, Idle on Friday 27th March.

The Highfield-6th DJ 7:30pm; 13th DJ 7:30pm; 17th St Patricks Day with live band Wild Geese; 20th DJ 7:30pm; 25th March DJ 7:30pm; 18th live band The 404 Club 8:30pm.

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The scouser says, "It was handed down to me."

Fiona Bruce, "Where from?"

The scouser replies, "An upstairs window."



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Bookworm

A Windhill Wanderer

There Are Rivers in the Sky by Elif Shafak is one of the most thoughtful and imaginative novels I have read. Blending history, culture and human emotion, it delivers a sweeping story that flows - like the rivers of her title - across time and place. Starting in ancient Mesopotamia, the story connects characters separated by centuries but united by water, memory and the fragile thread of survival.

At its heart, this is a story about water. Rivers shape civilisations, carry stories and witness both beauty and brutality. Shafak uses this basic premise to link different lives across history, moving on from Mesopotamia to the river banks of Victorian London and into the present day. Despite this, the novel does not feel scattered, it feels carefully braided, each storyline feeding into the others like tributaries.

One of the most compelling strands is where Shafak imagines what it must have been like in the cradle of civilisation, where stories are carved into clay tablets and knowledge is both sacred and dangerous. She brings this ancient place vividly to life - the dust, the heat, the politics of power and the early shaping of myths that still echo today. The historical detail is rich without being overwhelming, making it accessible for readers who don't usually gravitate towards historical fiction.

Another storyline unfolds in 19th-century London, where the River Thames becomes both a literal and a symbolic presence. Shafak paints a picture of Victorian London with a sharp yet compassionate eye. The city is alive with opportunity and inequality, science and superstition.

The characters in this timeline wrestle with questions of belonging and ambition, especially as ideas and artifacts from the ancient world make their way into British institutions (namely, the British Museum). Through this thread, Shafak quietly raises questions about cultural ownership, colonialism and who gets to control history.

In the contemporary strand, we meet characters whose lives are shaped by displacement and environmental anxiety. The river here becomes a reminder of both loss and resilience. Themes of exile and identity are explored with tenderness and nuance.

The modern characters feel especially relatable, grappling with climate change, migration and the search for a home in a world that feels increasingly unstable.

What stands out for me is the author's lyrical writing. It is elegant without being showy. She crafts sentences that hit the target without slowing down the momentum. The imagery of water (rain, rivers, tears) runs through the book, tying together its emotional and thematic currents. At times, the symbolism is clear, but never heavy handed. At no point does she use a sledgehammer to crack a nut. More than anything, it serves to remind the reader that the novel's central theme is that everything is connected.

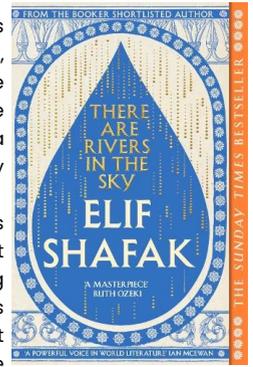
The characters are another strength and Shafak manages to empathise with all of them, even those who are flawed and morally complicated people. No one is a simple victim and no one is a hero, they are all more nuanced than that. Their struggles, whether for knowledge, love, safety or dignity all feel timeless. Across centuries people have shared the same hopes and fears, reminding us that human nature changes less than we might think.

The novel also touches on the power of storytelling itself. Clay tablets, books and oral traditions all play a role in preserving memory. Shafak seems to suggest that stories are also like rivers, they travel and shapeshift, stories survive when empires fall.

The structure might prove challenging for some readers. Moving between timelines does require attention, especially in the early chapters and it is easier to get used to that if you have time to devote to serious reading - if you usually read for ten minutes before bed to help you get to sleep, then something with a more linear structure is perhaps a better option.

However, if you do invest a little patience into it, the experience becomes rewarding. The shifting perspectives start to feel like pieces of a larger mosaic.

Readers who enjoy layered historical fiction with emotional depth (think *Wolf Hall*) will find this book offers a rich and satisfying experience. It encourages you to slow down and reflect, much like sitting beside a river and watching the current move.





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Having rained almost non-stop throughout late autumn and winter the first thing on my garden centre shopping list is another water butt anticipating a hosepipe ban around July! As we make our way back to the plot, expect to find sodden soil and prepare to be patient.

Even if you cannot dig your plot over due to it being a quagmire, it is a good idea to clear as much debris and waste as possible; clearing old stalks and significant weeds is a start. Use a plank to straddle the mud to avoid compacting the soil. If you have sheeted areas, remove the sheets and try give these a good rinse on a dry day before storing away.

Greenhouses and cold frames will appreciate a bucket of hot soapy water and, if possible, a blast with the hosepipe into the nooks and crannies where problems may lurk in the months ahead.

March is the time to get planting – mainly indoors until the soil warms – and here's a few of what you can reasonably get cracking with. The brassica family includes broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale and sprouts to name a few; these all have a long growing period.

They will also need potting up at least once before planting out around June so get cracking now and aim to sow at least monthly to build up a reserve. Leeks and parsnips all have a long growing period too, so if these are on your list, get cracking.

Beetroot is an annual favourite of mine and generally very reliable across dry and wet summers. Plus, it stores well over the winter with lots of options. Boltardy is popular but there are many options. I start these off in trays, generally three or four seeds in each small cell to plant on in a clump, thinning out over the summer.

We can also start to think about tomatoes; again, it is not a bad idea to plant in stages. This year I am going with old faithful Tumbling Tom again and a bit of a "flutter" with Giulietta, a "high-yielding" plum type ideal for pasta sauces – we shall see.

Many will be getting cucumbers going in tandem with tomatoes but I find another month is not a bad policy here as these usually catch up.

The first salad crops can be started in March but the trick here is always little and often. When the warmer days come along these tend to become abundant. Grow in elevated pots if you can or get used to feeding the local slug population.

Outdoors, if you have fruit bearing trees there is plenty you can do especially winter pruning and removing dead leaves from strawberries.

New strawberries can be planted as can rhubarb crowns. Bare root trees need to be planted by April. Give all your fruit trees a top dressing of fertilizer and cover with a thick layer of mulch to help retain moisture.

Eccleshill Horticultural Society is based on Harrogate Road membership is a modest £3 annually. The society shop opens on Sunday mornings from 10-12 until March.

One of the benefits of membership is access to the Dobies seed catalogue and a 50% discount on packet seeds. Obviously there is a postage charge which can work against the more bulky items like seed potatoes. But it is well worth a look here.

Thackley's community gardening swap shop will soon be starting up – watch this space. For those social media types out there they also have a Facebook pages with lots of useful shared information.

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Liz 07719 437486

5.30pm

St James Community Hall
Beaufort Grove, Off Bolton Road
Carol 07713 978045

Tuesday ~ Idle

5.30pm

Idle Baptist Church
Bradford Road, Opp Co-Op
Liz 07719 437486

Friday ~ Shipley

7.30am, 9am & 10.30am

Caroline Street Social Club
Liz 07719 437486

Saturday ~ Bolton Outlanes

8am & 9.30am

St James Community Hall
Beaufort Grove, Off Bolton Road
Carol 07713 978045

Saturday ~ Heaton

8.30am & 10am

St Martins Church
Haworth Road
Liz 07719 437486

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Walks in Yorkshire

Good Old Knee Power!

Mike Priestley

Many readers will remember Mike Priestley as a journalist for the Bradford T&A. His regular walking columns were a treat. A local lad, Mike has kindly given The Trumpit permission to reproduce walks from the five books he wrote dating back to the 1980s. I have remained faithful to the original text but some routes may have changed given the passage of time so please be aware. This is his second book.

Stranded in Ambleside with a broken-down car one March weekend, my wife and I thought we might as well put the time to good use by exploring the fellside path to Troutbeck and returning via Wansfell Pike and Stock Ghyll Force.

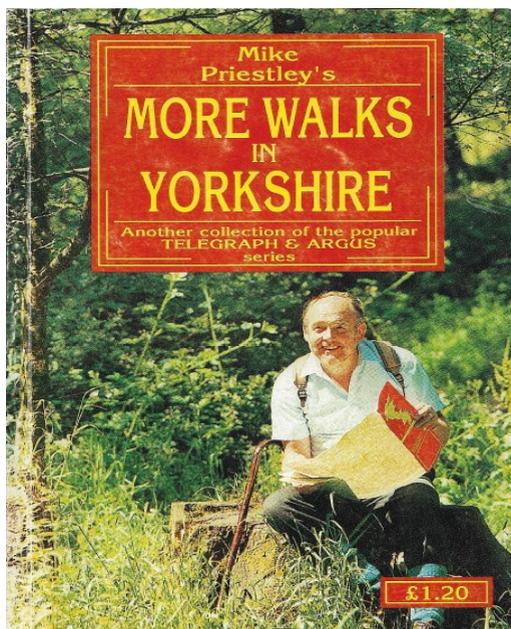
According to various guide books, it's about six miles. But as we all know when you are walking, six miles can sometimes seem like four, and it can sometimes seem like eight.

This six miles seemed like ten, partly because of the steepness of some of the ascents, partly because it was our first major outing of the season after a winter of sloth. Nevertheless, they were ten very enjoyable miles.

We headed out of the centre of Ambleside on the Windermere Road, and soon took the Old Lake Road fork up to the left.

Our next turn left was premature. We could have trekked well out of our way if a considerate local woman hadn't come running up behind us and said: "If you're looking for the way to Jenkin Crag, you want to go further along past Old Lake Road and then take the signposted turning to the left."

So we thanked her and followed her advice and soon found ourselves heading up a narrow, winding tarmac track with, to the left, drives heading off to private houses hidden in the trees.



At a fork we continued to the right along the contour with trees to our left until the path twisted its way up into the woodland past a couple of National Trust signs until we came to one on the right which told us we were at Jenkin Crag.

A brief detour to this rocky outcrop rewarded us with hazy but splendid views across and down Windermere. The sky was grey but not threatening. In fact, there was a hint of promise among the shifting clouds.

Back on the path again, we climbed for a while longer then descended into open space past a farm and over a bridge in the dip beyond. A left turn through a gate-stile took us to the path which curved up the open hillside.

It eventually joined the walled lane called Hundreds Road and, going right, soon became Robin Lane and headed down into the green and pleasant valley of Troutbeck which curves up between steepening fells towards Kirkstone Pass and Patterdale.

What a lovely place Troutbeck is, with its striking slate-built Post Office and its highly desirable ancient cottages.

The sign carries the verse: "O mortal man that lives by bread/What is it makes thy nose so red?/Thou silly fool that looks so pale/'Tis Drinking Sally Birkett's ale!"

It wasn't Sally Birkett's ale we enjoyed but Cockermouth brewery Jennings' with a sandwich in the busy bar before we headed out again to find the sub shining on us as we retraced our steps briefly to the sign post pointing to Wansfell Pike and Ambleside.

A good walled track wound steeply up the fell. We took it slowly, conscious of the need to digest the beer and sandwiches and pausing from time to time to look back at the valley views. An elderly man overtook us, plodding steadily upwards. A badge on his backpack warned "Don't follow me - I'm lost too!"

The track levelled out a little for a while then veered sharply to the right. At this point we took the gate-stile to the left, on to the open fell side. The path was muddy but clearly defined. It was also increasingly steep - something which had failed to affect the steady pace of the elderly man with the backpack, who was almost at the distant summit of Wansfell Pike.

With much huffing and puffing and pauses for a look around, we were eventually there too and being buffeted by a stiff breeze. We could see down Windermere past Belle Isle to where the lake swings round to the west. Looking northwards, there were the rugged fells of Central Lakeland and the white frontage of the pub at the mouth of Kirkstone Pass.

On the summit, a couple who must have been in their late seventies took photographs of the views, incredibly, they had climbed up from the other side, using the precariously steep path which we now descended, picking our way carefully through the scree and the damp earth.

Ten feet below the summit the wind had gone and the sun warmed Tomorrow the snow was to come, but today we were scrambling down into an early Ambleside spring.

When he's not out walking...

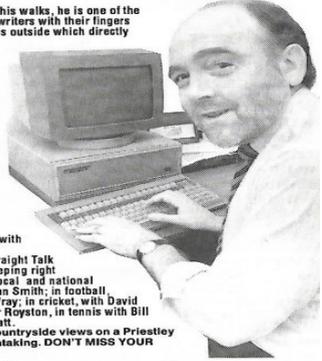
When Mike is not on the road for his walks, he is one of the Telegraph & Argus's top team of writers with their fingers on the pulse of the city, and issues outside which directly affect our lives.

Mike's North of Watford weekly column has twice won him the Yorkshire Columnist of the Year award for its incisive look at news events and in 1988 also resulted in him being named Yorkshire Journalist of the Year.

Alongside him the T&A has a host of other specialists bringing readers the stories behind the news of the day:

In politics, with Jack Foster at the House of Commons; in the arts, with Peter Holdsworth; in health affairs, with Rod Jones; in transport matters, with Alan Whitaker; in business, with David Swallow; in local politics, with Robert Schopen.

PLUS Jim Greenhall's weekly Straight Talk column, and sports specialist keeping right up to date with EVERY angle of local and national sport. In Rugby League, with Brian Smith; in football, with David Markham and John Wray; in cricket, with David Warner; in speedway, with Peter Royston; in tennis with Bill Marshall; in racing with Clive Pratt. Our scope is as broad as the countryside views on a Priestley Walk. The impact just as breathtaking. DON'T MISS YOUR COPY OF THE T&A



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It took us a long time to reach a more gentle gradient. Before we got there we discovered that we had both developed a complain that can only be described, I'm afraid, as Fellwalker's Knee Tremble.

It afflicted only our right knees, the ones which took the most strain as we dug into our heels to stop ourselves slipping.

Over the stile at the bottom, we sat for a while by a tumbling stream, to recover our composure and let the trembles subside. And then we walked down the field, over another stile, turned left along the lane and soon right into the woodland to admire the spectacular Stock Ghyll Waterfall and then follow the footpath beside the stream back down into the heart of Ambleside.

Time: 4 hours approximately.

Sincere thanks to Nigel Burton, Editor of the Bradford T&A, for allowing The Trumpit to publish Mike's wonderful walks.



Community News

If you are free on a Wednesday or Thursday evening why not join a friendly local group exploring Bradford for a 2-hour mid-week walk? All walks are approx. 4 to 5 miles starting at 7pm. Please see <https://bradfordramblers.org.uk/>

Sincere thanks to Thackley Methodist Church for their kind donation to the Bill & Bloss Community Fund of £30. It is very much appreciated.

We are over the moon to announce that Support The Animal Rescues Shop (S.T.A.R.S) has donated a massive £2,000 to The Cat House Rescue. This money is a total game-changer and will go directly toward life-saving vet bills and essential care for all the cats and kittens currently looking for homes.

None of this happens without our volunteers who are the engine of this shop. Their hard work on all 3 floors makes these miracles possible - thank you. Every bargain our customers buy helps save a life.

Want to join the mission? We need volunteers (10am-1pm or 1pm-4pm) please.

Pop in and see us at The Old Mill, Victoria Road, Eccleshill, Bradford, BD2 2BT.

Or email: star-shop2024@hotmail.com



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30th Bradford North Scouts needs you! If you are aged between 6 to 14 yrs old and want to learn skills for life then come and join us.

We meet on Thursdays from 6.15pm depending on your age. Did you know scouting opens many doors to college, university and job applications. We teach camping, hiking, cooking and lots of other activities. If you are interested we do a 4 week taster session so please call John for further details on 07935 155927.

The Commercial

Thackley's original village pub recently refurbished with a warm welcome to all. We are family-run and dog-friendly too. Come along and sample a great range of cask ales with a warming open fire. There's lots going on each week and a function room for hire too. Please contact Gary on 07495 157938.

From Snowballs To Easter Eggs

At Thackley Methodist Church, a snowball fight with pompom snowballs made by our minister, Reverend Lisa Quarmbly, is becoming a traditional, joyful finish to our Christmas Eve service! We love welcoming anyone and everyone from the Thackley community to what we hope you regard as your church, and the service is always well attended.

A longer standing Christmas Eve tradition is that the collection from our service is donated to The Bradford Soup Run, a charity which provides nutritious meals and a kind welcome to homeless people in our city. Last Christmas, with your help, we collected £220!

When John Tempest, The Bradford Soup Run founder and director, wrote to thank us for the donation, he mentioned that the charity was trying to source Easter eggs to distribute to the people they feed. Which got us thinking.

Both Christmas and Easter are all about celebrating God's love for us and sharing that love with those around us, so what better way to celebrate Easter than by helping a charity that cares for the neediest among us?

So Thackley Methodist Church has promised to donate 100 medium sized Cadburys or Mars brand Easter eggs – John Tempest specified those, so that everyone can be given the same – and we are hoping and praying that you lovely, generous people will step up, in the same way you do at Christmas.

Eggs can be dropped off at church on Sundays between 10.00 and 12.00, or on Tuesdays from 10.30 – 12.00 at our Share, pay as you feel community café. Please feel free to join us. But if getting an egg to us is problematic, we are also setting up a JustGiving page for money donations, to enable us to buy eggs on your behalf – the link will be available via our Facebook page.



Share!

Community Café

10.30 – 12.00 Tuesdays

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Conversation
Company



ALL are welcome
(Pay as you are able)

Thackley Road
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Thackley **Methodist Church**



Trumpit Money

Your 2026 Homebuying Journey

Spring is the moment the "For Sale" signs really begin to appear. If you've spent time feeling the squeeze of a home that no longer fits, or if you've decided that 2026 is finally the year to find a place of your own, you aren't alone. We're seeing a surge of renewed activity as listings hit the market, driven by a collective desire to kickstart homebuying goals.

While the beginning of a new year is always an exciting opportunity to set new goals, the start of 2026 feels different. Following the Bank of England's move to trim the base rate to 3.75% in mid-December, we're now witnessing a genuine "rate war" among lenders competing for the most competitive deals, resulting in a more favourable landscape for borrowing.

With inflation gently easing off, and interest rates on the decline, prospective and current homeowners can finally welcome some breathing room after the rollercoaster ride of the previous two years.

We can't predict the future, but we're fairly confident that we'll continue to see interest rates fall as we go through the course of 2026 - although how quickly we get there will depend on how the economy performs.

Getting your ducks in a row

Whether you're already ploughing through viewings or buying your first home still feels like a pipedream, one of most important conversations you can have at the start of your homebuying journey is with a mortgage broker.

It doesn't matter if you've already been through the mortgage process before or are a complete novice: understanding your affordability and what your monthly mortgage repayments could be from the outset puts you in the strongest possible position.

In doing so, you might even find a welcome surprise. As rates have fallen and lenders have become more innovative, many people are discovering their budget stretches further than it did 12 months ago.

Realising you can afford that extra bedroom or a better location from the start could help you achieve those long-term financial and personal goals even sooner.

For those looking to take their first step onto the ladder, 2026 is particularly encouraging. We're seeing a wave of creativity from lenders specifically designed to support first time buyers - from 100% lending options to mortgages that recognise your financial history as a reliable renter.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves' focus on stability has fostered a more predictable economic environment, and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)'s work to simplify mortgage rules means products are now better reflecting how we actually live and work.

If you've been previously declined or felt a mortgage was out of reach, the range of mortgage options at your fingertips is now significantly wider.

With you from start to finish

While the new year surge brings a welcome flurry of activity, it's worth remembering that the property market moves in cycles. We often see a natural momentum build through the spring, followed by a quieter period in the late summer as the focus shifts to the holidays.

Understanding these rhythms can take the pressure off. If your current home is feeling a little too small, or your needs have shifted, you don't have to rush - but you should be prepared. By having the conversation with a broker now, you can navigate these seasonal shifts with a clear strategy, ensuring you're ready to act when the right opportunity arises.

Whether you're a budding buyer, planning upsizing for your growing family, or want to help your children navigate their first purchase, 2026 offers homebuyers a new window of opportunity.

Speaking to a broker now doesn't just potentially put the keys in your hand sooner - it provides the long-term financial confidence that makes a new house feel like home.

**Andrew Milnes Mortgage Advice Bureau, 105/107
Main Street, Bingley.**

Tel: 01274 568832 / 07703 548020.

Email: andrew.milnes@mab.org.uk

A man went to confession.

"Father", he confessed, "it has been one month since my last confession. I had sex with Fanny Green twice last month."

The priest told the sinner, "You are forgiven. Go out and say three Hail Mary's."

Soon thereafter, another man entered the confessional. "Father, it has been two months since my last confession. I've had sex with Fanny Green twice a week for the past two months."

This time, the priest questioned, "Who is this Fanny Green?"

"A new woman in the neighbourhood," the sinner replied.

"Very well," sighed the priest. "Go and say ten Hail Mary's."

At mass the next morning, as the priest prepared to deliver the sermon, a tall, voluptuous, drop-dead gorgeous red headed woman entered the sanctuary.

The eyes of every man in the church fell upon her as she slowly sashayed up the aisle and sat down right in front of the priest.

Her dress was green and very short, and she wore matching, shiny emerald-green shoes.

The priest and the altar boy gasped as the woman in the green dress and matching green shoes sat with her legs spread slightly apart, but just enough to realize she wasn't wearing any underwear.

The priest turned to the altar boy and whispered, "Is that Fanny Green?"

The bug-eyed altar boy couldn't believe his ears but managed to calmly reply.

"No Father, I think it's just a reflection from her shoes".

A married man was visiting his girlfriend when she suggested that he shave his beard.

"OK Ken. I like your beard, but I would really love to see your handsome face".

Ken replied. "My wife loves this beard. There is no way I could shave it. She would kill me!"

"Oh please!" the girlfriend asked again in a sexy little voice. Ken sighed and finally gave in and shaved his face smooth.

That night, Ken crawled into bed with his wife while she was sleeping.

His wife woke up, reached over and felt his face and said "Oh Tony! You shouldn't be here, my husband will be home soon!"

Son: "Daddy, I have to write a special report for school, but I don't know what Politics is."

Father: "Well, let's take our home as an example. I am the bread-winner, so let's call me Capitalism. Your Mum is the administrator of money, so we'll call her Government.

"We take care of your need, so let's call you The People. We'll call the maid the Working Class and your brother we can call The Future. Do you understand son?"

Son: "I'm not really sure, Dad. I'll have to think about it."

That night awakened by his brother's crying, the boy went to see what was wrong. Discovering that the baby had seriously soiled his nappy, the boy went to his parents' room and found his mother sound asleep.

He went to the maid's room, where, peeking through the keyhole, he saw his father in bed with the maid.

The boy's knocking went totally unheeded by his father and the maid, so the boy returned to his room and went back to sleep.

The next morning he reported to his father.

Son: "Dad, now I think I understand what Politics is."

Father: "Good son! Can you explain it to me in your own words?"

Son: "Well Dad, while Capitalism is screwing the Working Class, Government is sound asleep, the People are being completely ignored and the Future is full of sh*t."

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{cont'd from p32}

Campion, who play on the site of the old Manningham Mills ground, are also having a reasonably successful season, after a rather shaky start. The Red and Blacks, who also lured another eight Thackley players across the city at the start of the season, are currently on a good run of form and one of the teams fighting for a play-off place.

However. Campion have a habit of pushing for promotion during the season only for results to fall off in the later stages. This season could be different. Again, Thackley can claim bragging rights, beating them 4-1 in their only encounter to date. Satisfying too!

Eccleshill United moved from their Bradford home to play in Keighley but it looks like the move has not had the positive effect the club had hoped. The Eagles are currently fifteenth in the table and have the lowest average attendance in the division at only 80.

It is hard to see how a club can survive with this sort of following and not playing games at their paternal home. Again, Thackley can claim the bragging rights, winning 2-0 in their only encounter so far this season.

Albion Sports are another team that moved grounds in the close season, previously sharing a ground with Bradford Park Avenue, to the new 3G facility at Myra Shay. This is another move that has done little to improve the fortunes of the club. This is The Lions third shared ground since joining the Northern Counties East League (NCEL) in 2011.

Albion have had a difficult season to date and are currently just one place above a relegation place. Bragging rights remain equal between the two clubs, Thackley winning 3-1 at Dennyfield, Albion the 3-0 victors at Myra Shay.

Away from the NCEL, Brighouse Town play in the Northern Premier League and look to be in trouble this season. Currently in a relegation place in the table, a club statement states that they have had to cut their player budget by half and are looking for sponsorship/donations to keep the club going.

Let us hope the club does not go the same way as Farsley Celtic. And so, to the on field action with just two games, both at Dennyfield, which provided two very different performances.

Liversedge came as league leaders, having lost just one league game this season. A determined performance produced the biggest upset of the day, a 1-0 victory for Thackley and three valuable points.

It was hoped that the momentum could be carried forward to their next game, away at Parkgate. Alas, the fourth wettest January on record, put paid to the trip to Rotherham.

Thackley entertained Golcar the following Saturday and any momentum they may have had, had gone. The game produced a much different outcome to their previous home game, the Huddersfield based club winning 5-2 on a very wet Saturday afternoon.

Finally, Thackley Ladies have had the perfect start to the new year with three cup victories and a league win from four games. Victory in the League Cup against an in-form Guiseley Lionesses team (6-2) gives them a place in the semi-final against Morley Town at Dennyfield on March 1st.

Victories against Horsforth St Margarets (3-1) and on penalties against Ossett United (0-0, 4-3 on penalties) means a home quarter-final tie against Farsley Celtic on 15th March.

In the league they beat Sherburn White Rose 4-0 to maintain their top of the table position.

Thackley AFC Fixtures

Wed 4th March Thackley v Tadcaster Albion KO 7.45pm
Sat 7th March Parkgate v Thackley KO 3.00pm
14th March Sheffield v Thackley KO 3.00pm
21st March Thackley v Handsworth KO 3.00pm
28th March Beverley Town v Thackley 3.00pm
4th April Thackley v Eccleshill United 3.00pm

Thackley AFC Ladies Fixtures

Sun 1st March Thackley v Morley Town KO 2.00pm
Sun 8th March Leeds Medics & Dentists v Thackley KO 2.00pm
Sun 15th March Thackley v Farsley Celtic KO 2.00pm
Sun 22nd March Silsden v Thackley KO 2.00pm
Sun 29th March Thackley v Golcar United KO 2.00pm.

THACKLEY AFC A VIEW FROM MUPPET HILL



With Thackley's lack of on field action due to the weather - they have played just two games since last I wrote - and with a quarter of the season left to play, I thought I might do a quick round up of how their league rivals from the Bradford area are doing. Liversedge, relegated from the Northern Premier League last season, lured the Thackley management team, along with five players, away from Dennyfield at the start of this season and were expected to do well.

They are currently fulfilling that prediction and look likely to finish the season as league champions. They are currently eight points clear of Beverley Town with a game in hand. However, Thackley can claim bragging rights from the two league games played, taking four points. An away point in early season was followed by a win at Dennyfield in January. This ended a Liversedge run of twenty-two league games unbeaten. Some victories are much more satisfying than others.



Thackley Juniors U7's - mascots for the *Golcar* game.
(Photo credit Martin Taylor - Shot by Bamboo)

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