

December/January 2020/21

the **Bridge**

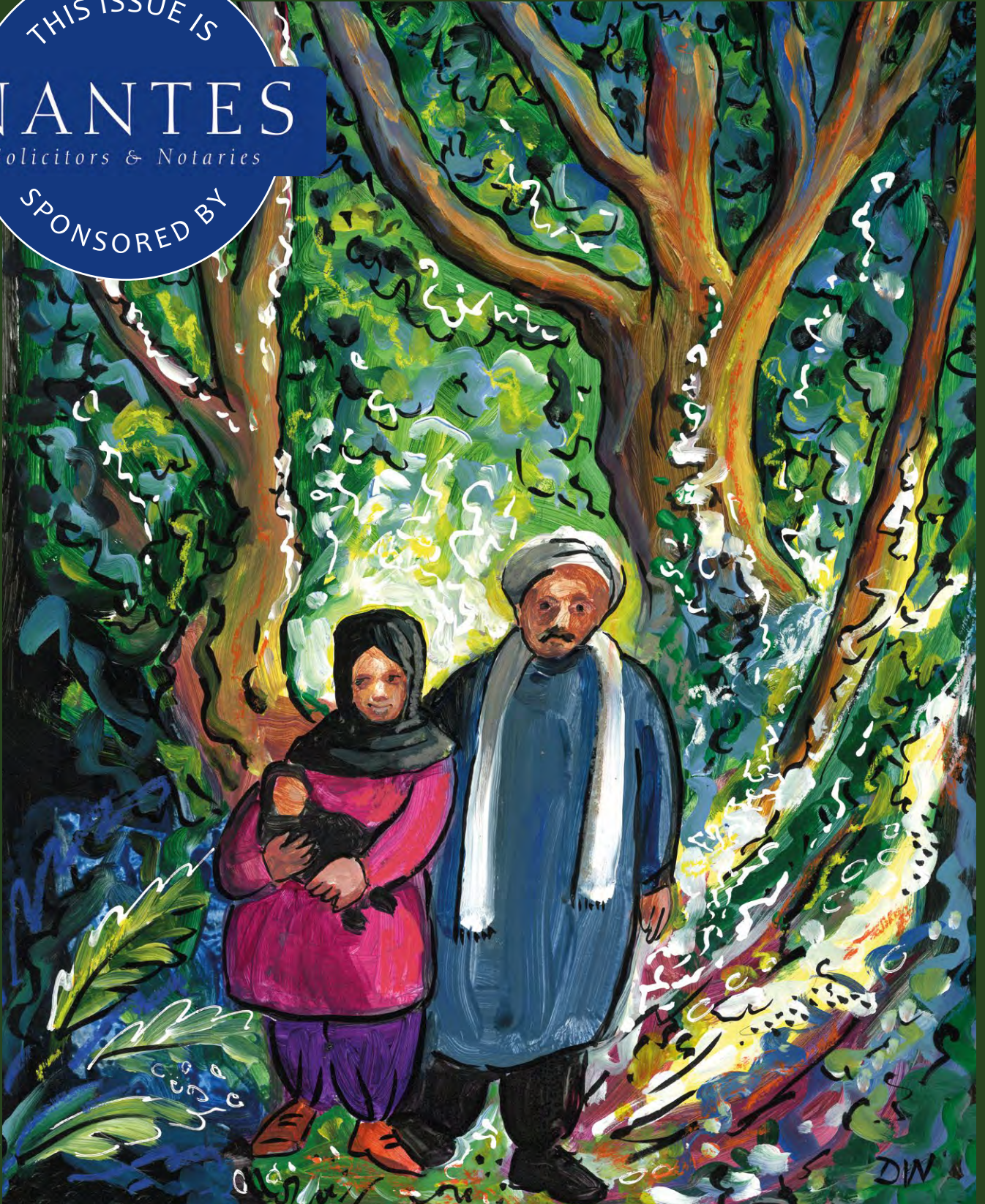
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NANTES

Solicitors & Notaries

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'The Holy Family Exploring West Dorset' by Hugh Dumford Wood



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POINTS OF CONTACT Team website: www.bridport-team-ministry.org

All phone numbers are Bridport (01308) unless otherwise stated

Team Rector

The Revd Deb Smith 301457
revdebsmith@gmail.com Day off Friday

Team Vicar / Community Mission Partner

The Revd Pete Stone 426459
pete@bridport-team-ministry.org Day off Monday

Team Deacon

The Revd Lorna Johnson 538519
ms.lorna.dee.johnson@googlegmail.com

Team Curate

The Revd Helen Croud 07712 481835
helen@bridport-team-ministry.com Day off Friday

Permission to officiate

The Revd Janis Moore 425644
janis@bridport-team-ministry.org Day off Wednesday

The Revd Ann Ayling 424896
annayling7@gmail.com Day off Wednesday

The Revd Dan Shackell 426514
danshackell@gmail.com

The Revd Kay Watters 427290
kay@bridport-team-ministry.org

The Revd Philip Ringer (Hospital Chaplain) 425774
philipringer@aol.com

Other churches in the area

Beacon Church Bridport, Priory Lane 456031 office

The Christian Fellowship
David Collins 458227

St Mary & St Catherine (Roman Catholic)
Monsignor Keith Mitchell 424754 presbytery
bridport@predtr.org.uk 422594 office

Bridport Quaker Meeting clerkb@bridportquakers.org

United Church (Methodist & United Reformed Church)
The Revd Peter Clark 425978
Sue Herman, administrator 422598

Team Administrator

Dianne Sinclair 424747
di@bridport-team-ministry.org
The office is currently closed but Di is available by email
Post: The Administrator, c/o The Rectory, 84 South Street,
Bridport DT6 3NW

Secretary to the PCC

Vacancy

Team licensed worship leader

Martin Whiting

Licensed lay ministers

Phil Doughty 422096
Graham Purse 423220
Peter Wright 456967
Coral Hatton

Lay pastoral assistants

Caroline Cook 07859 803734
Anne Stone 426459
Diana Wright 456967

If you cannot get to church and would like home communion or a visit, please contact one of the lay pastoral assistants.

Cupboard Love food bank

Carrie Gamble 07443 596096
cupboardlove.bridport@gmail.com

Hall bookings Halls are starting to open following the coronavirus lockdown. For bookings please contact:

St Swithun's church hall
Details online at www.bridport-team-ministry.org/hall-bookings
or contact Yvonne Welch 459587

Bothenhampton village hall
Pennie Jones (temporary) 458006

Bradpole village hall
Please email bradpole@dorset-aptc.gov.uk

Church House, South St, Bridport
Tony Nott 425897

Walditch village hall
Peter & Jill Tobutt 458999

Christian Fellowship, King Street
Jacquie Webb 425738

United Church
Sue Herman 422598

The Bridge Editor & production: Olivia Daly 07710 805029 editor@thebridgemagazine.org (previous address still works)
Advertising: Philip Sturrock 07802 895785 chair@thebridgemagazine.org

Please contact Philip Sturrock for all advertising. Rates are online at www.bridport-team-ministry.org/bridge/advertising. If you have an idea for an article, please contact the editor. Otherwise send copy to village correspondents (details inside) at least three days before the deadline, or a week for handwritten/typed copy. We will try to include late copy in the following issue as appropriate.

Opinions expressed in The Bridge are not necessarily those of either the clergy or the editorial team. While we make every effort to ensure the accuracy of the magazine's contents, we cannot accept responsibility for information given or claims made by our contributors or advertisers.

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Crossing the threshold to Christmas



In a small church in Bruges is an anonymous note by the door:

“Have you reflected on what happens when you enter through a church door? Have you ever experienced that such a door is a connection between two worlds? On one side, there is the hustle and bustle of daily life: work and business, sorrows and conviviality, an abundance of good things but also evil, misery, lies, deceit and suspicion. And on the other side of the door we find peace and tranquillity. Here the light is different, softened by an atmosphere of reflection and prayer. In the house of God, where everything speaks of His goodness and His merciful love.”

Too few feel or appreciate the change from outside to inside a church. Bear with me as I explain...

I was feeling a little low the other day – work, Covid restrictions, the weather, dark evenings, depressing news – and all I wanted to do was go out and enjoy myself. Although I don't consider myself to be very good, I have enjoyed singing since I joined a choir at the age of eight, and I now belong to Bothenhampton church choir. At our socially distanced choir practice we sang a few carols in preparation for recording the Blue Light service. Instantly my persona was changed and my mood lifted. Earthly troubles forgotten, I had crossed the threshold.

A few days later I was fighting a persistent weed (Japanese anemone) in our garden. As I dug to lift it out, some spring bulbs came out, too. All were shooting so they were quickly reburied in the cleared soil. And I thought, yes, spring is on its way. Lighter evenings, warm sun, crossing the natural threshold.

When I worked in a factory in Weymouth, my favourite journey home to Bridport was on 23 December. The factory closed until 2 January: switch off work, switch on the twinkling lights and cross the threshold to an excited young family Christmas.

I don't know what the next few days or weeks will bring. No one does. But I hope that as Christmas approaches you will get that sense of crossing the threshold. Leaving behind the worries of the world, and the selfishness (toilet rolls!), and stepping into a reflective, prayerful, peaceful world that we often only seem to get at Christmas. This year we have seen the worst and best of people. Neighbours and friends helping each other through the difficulties; National Health

staff, shop workers and delivery drivers going well beyond the call of duty. At Christmas we celebrate Jesus coming into the world. Born of a young woman so we might, through him, through his teaching, his example, his sacrifice, come closer to a loving God. That we might understand God's goodness and love for all the peoples of the world.

If you are feeling down, light a candle, sing a carol and step over the threshold. Thank God for what you have, for all that is good in your life, and not for what you want. Although Covid might be here for a while and we may well have to have a very different Christmas, embrace the change with positivity and look forward to spring.

As the second lockdown ended we were put into Tier 2 with most of the country, and were told that only three households would be able to meet up at Christmas. What does this mean for so many, particularly the lonely? The United Church, for instance, has had to cancel its Christmas lunch. At the Jewish festival of Passover a place is laid at the head of the table for the prophet Elijah. A cup of wine is poured and during the meal a child goes and opens the door to let Elijah in. As he arrives, he announces the arrival of the Messiah, the Christ Child. In Matthew 25, Jesus is talking to his disciples about sharing: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me.”

If the restrictions allow, why not invite neighbours, the elderly who may be on their own, and allow them to cross your threshold for Christmas lunch? They too may feel cut off from their loved ones, so sharing a lunch with them is sharing God's love for all.

On Bothenhampton church door is an anonymous notice: *Our church stands with unlocked door upon the crowded way.*

Enter ye and snatch a moment from the busy day.

To commune with the unseen, the real, the good, the true. The peace the world can never give is waiting here for you. Wishing all our readers a very happy, safe and blessed Christmas with a bright, sunny new year to look forward to. *Graham Purse*



Graham Purse
Licensed lay minister

Merry Christmas – brighter days are ahead



This issue of The Bridge marks the end of a year none of us saw coming – and the hope that 2021 will bring better times.

The team behind the Bridport Refugee Support Campaign are working hard, under a government community sponsorship scheme, to bring better times to a refugee family. You can

read about the group's launch – and their ultimate goal of resettling a family here in Bridport – on page 7.

We also meet Alasdair Warren (page 10), who's bringing new life to Bridport's arts and entertainment scene with his investment in two town-centre venues and his hospitality business, the Electric Pub Company.

And, of course, we have our usual range of news and views from across town in the Parish Pages (page 12) plus information about church services and other events over Christmas and into January. In these uncertain times, my fingers are firmly crossed that it's all still accurate when this magazine lands on your doorstep! Merry Christmas.



Olivia Daly
Editor



‘Christingle in a bag’ lets families take part in a special service

Families across Bridport will be making their own Christingles before coming together over Zoom to share in a very special service on Sunday 20 December at 4pm.

‘Christingle in a bag’ is being organised by the Revd Helen Croud, BTM Curate (pictured above), who sent out invitations to Bridport primary and pre-schools earlier this month. Anyone who signed up will receive a kit containing everything they need to make a Christingle at home: an orange, a candle, sweets and a ribbon, plus stickers and colouring pages. They’ll also receive instructions for joining the Zoom service.

The family service, which will include songs and stories, will be streamed live on the BTM Facebook and YouTube pages and will be also be available to watch afterwards.

“Christmas 2020 isn’t cancelled, or even postponed – it’s here,” says Helen. “We’re just doing it differently this year. I’m looking forward to welcoming families to what I hope will be a very special service.”

Christingle has come to mean ‘Christ’s light’, although it comes from the German ‘Christkindl’, which translates as ‘little Christ child’. Each part of the Christingle has a meaning: the orange represents the world; the candle represents Jesus, the Light of the World; the ribbon around the orange represents Christ’s blood; the four cocktail sticks represent the four corners of the world; and the sweets (sometimes dried fruit) represent God’s gifts.

This year each of the BTM churches has a Christmas tree outside in the churchyard. On the four Sundays in Advent (starting 29 November), the trees are being hung with decorations made by parishioners along four themes: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. “At the moment our churches are closed outside service times,” says the Revd Deb Smith, Team Rector, “but the trees allow everyone passing by to see the true message of Christmas, even if they don’t come inside to worship.”



Virtual Blue Light carol service will raise funds for air ambulance

Bridport’s annual Blue Light carol service has been a highlight of the Advent season for the last 11 years – although this year’s event, like so many other things, will be somewhat different.

Normally held at St Mary’s in South Street, the event brings together people from the emergency services, plus their families and supporters, to sing carols and celebrate Christmas while raising money for the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance. This year, however, the service is being recorded in advance and broadcast online.

Everyone taking part has filmed their contribution and sent it to Gary Hepburn, churchwarden at All Saints Wyke Regis, who is skilfully putting the clips together to form the service.

The carols come courtesy of the choir of St Mary’s Litton Cheney, directed by Paul Cheater. Those reading lessons include the High Sheriff of Dorset, George Streatfeild; the Lord Lieutenant, Angus Campbell; the Assistant Chief Constable, Samantha (Sam) de Reya; and the Bridport Team Ministry curate, the Revd Helen Croud.

Anyone who’s been to the service in the past will know that the Bridport-style ‘Twelve Days of Christmas’ is definitely a must-see, and this year is no exception. Again, the various clips – including, for instance, the Crime Commissioner, Martyn Underhill, and the Chief Constable, James Vaughan, as the two turtle doves – are being spliced together in preparation for the broadcast.

Organisers are confident that the occasion will retain much of its usual atmosphere. “We hope that many people will watch this very special service,” says the Revd Philip Ringer, Bridport Police Chaplain. “Viewers will get a glimpse of the message of Christmas, while enjoying the fun of the ‘Twelve Days’ and raising money for a good cause, too. Gary’s done such a great job putting it all together, and I’m very happy that the event could go ahead despite the difficulties we’re all enduring at the moment.”

The service will be broadcast on Thursday 17 December at 7.30pm on the Wyke Regis livechannel on YouTube here: www.youtube.com/user/WykeRegisChurch/live where it will also be available afterwards.



You can donate to the Air Ambulance appeal here: www.dsairambulance.org.uk/fundraisers – follow the link to the Blue Light carol service page.

Left: The Revd Philip Ringer, who has organised the Blue Light service



A full programme of Christmas services

Churches across Bridport are offering a range of services over Christmas with the aim of ensuring that everyone who wants to share in public worship can do so. No booking is necessary.

On Christmas Eve there will be services at five of the Bridport Team Ministry (BTM) churches. The first is a 10am Eucharist* at Walditch, then – in a Covid-era version of ‘midnight mass’ – Eucharist services will be held throughout the evening at St Swithun’s, Bothenhampton, Bradpole and St Mary’s Bridport.

On Christmas Day, morning services will be held at St Mary’s Bridport, Walditch, St John’s West Bay, Bradpole and Bothenhampton.

“We want everyone to know that Bridport can come to church this Christmas,” says the Revd Deb Smith, Team Rector. “The Covid restrictions mean worshippers have to be socially distanced, so our capacity is limited, but we’re holding services in all of our churches on these important days. We also have some other events – both ‘live’ and online – to look forward to during Advent, including a short daily reflection posted on our website and Facebook page.”

Advent and Christmas services

Thurs 17 Dec	7.30pm	Blue Light carol service (see left)
Sun 20 Dec	9.30am	Eucharist at St Swithun’s
	11am	Service of the Word at St Mary’s
		Eucharist at Bradpole
	4pm	Interactive Christingle (see left)
Thurs 24 Dec	10am	Service of the Word at Walditch
	6pm	Eucharist at St Swithun’s
	8pm	Eucharist at Bothenhampton
	10pm	Eucharist at Bradpole
	11.30pm	Eucharist at St Mary’s
Fri 25 Dec	10am	Eucharist at St Mary’s, St John’s West Bay and Walditch; Service of the Word at Bradpole and Bothenhampton
Sun 27 Dec	10am	Eucharist at St Swithun’s



After 27 December, BTM churches will return to the following pattern of services unless there are new Covid restrictions. Churches will not open for private prayer at other times (except Bothenhampton – see p14 for details).

Sunday	9.30am	Eucharist at St Swithun’s
	11am	Eucharist/family service at St Mary’s
	11am	Service of the Word at Bradpole
Monday	10am	Morning Prayer at St John’s West Bay
Tuesday	2.30pm	Service of the Word at St Mary’s <i>(On the second Tuesday in the month this is Eucharist instead)</i>
Wednesday	10am	Morning Prayer at Bradpole
	2.30pm	Eucharist <i>(first Wednesday of the month only – this is in addition to the morning service)</i>
Thursday	10am	Eucharist at St Swithun’s
	10am	Morning Prayer at Walditch
Friday	10am	Eucharist at Bothenhampton <i>(first, third & fifth Fridays in January; second & fourth are Morning Prayer)</i>
Saturday	6pm	Evening Prayer at St John’s West Bay <i>(fourth Saturday in the month only)</i>

See the Parish Pages for details of services at the Roman Catholic church, Bridport United Church & Uploders Chapel.
*an alternative name for the Holy Communion service

The Bridport Team Ministry’s Service of Remembrance at St Mary’s on 8 November fell during the second national lockdown so was not open to the public. It was followed by the traditional act of remembrance at the war memorial outside (pictured), attended only by the mayor and a few civic dignitaries and representatives from the armed forces. Both were broadcast live on the BTM Facebook and YouTube pages.

There was also a secular remembrance event in the afternoon led by Cllr Anne Rickard and held over Zoom. This was an opportunity for the community to share their thoughts on the subject.



Stephen Beardshall

The Bridge needs your help...

Enclosed with this issue of *The Bridge* is a request for donations to help us continue our work. The team behind the magazine has run this appeal for several years and it has proved very fruitful, thanks to the generosity of our readers.

This year has been tough on us all, financially and in other ways, but printing *The Bridge* maintains a valued method of communication, particularly for more isolated people and those who aren't online. If you can make a donation, please know that it will be much appreciated.

Or contribute in a more practical way!

The Bridge relies on volunteers, but we are always looking for more people to join us. Most pressing is the need for a voluntary **advertising manager** who will liaise with our valuable clients. This is not a high pressure sales job! Once you're on top of things, it would take two or three hours a week at the most. Please get in touch if you're interested in taking this on.

We'd also love to find a **distribution manager**. Each church has a distribution coordinator, and between them they cover the town, but we need someone to oversee all of this and look for new ways to increase our reach. Please email editor@thebridgemagazine.org to find out more.

Farewell, and thank you...

This month we say farewell to three highly valued members of the Bridport Team Ministry family, with grateful thanks for their hard work over many years.

Alan Paul has served as parish treasurer for more than 30 years. This is almost a lifetime of dedicated service! As any parish treasurer will know, it requires hours of number crunching, many exchanges with others to get the required information, an in-depth knowledge of church and charity accounting standards and the ability to stand up at meetings and explain the figures. We owe Alan a great debt of thanks. The PCC has set up a working party to see how we will organise things in the post-Paul era! Alan will continue to be treasurer to the Lyme Bay Deanery.

Rosemary Russell has served almost the same term in the role of parish secretary. After 31 years of dedication, serving with four team rectors, she has kept all in order with her quiet efficiency and good nature. She has decided to step down from that role and it will leave a big hole. She will, thankfully, continue as chapel warden at St John's, West Bay.

We are also saying goodbye to Laura Taylor as advertising manager of this magazine. Her methodical approach, her firm grasp of the systems and her calm, friendly relations with our clients will be much missed.

We wish all these dedicated people well and send them our sincere gratitude. We hope we'll be able to find an opportunity to thank them face to face in due course.

Wanted: a new parish treasurer

Following Alan Paul's resignation, the Bridport Team Ministry is now looking for a new parish treasurer. The finance working party (FWP) set up by the PCC will be considering the structure of financial management throughout the team. It is likely, therefore, that the job will change somewhat from the work Alan has done, but in this area, as in all others, we need a volunteer to step forward.

This person doesn't have to be an accountant but they will need to have a facility with numbers and the use of computer systems.

If you would like to talk about this, Philip Sturrock, who is the chair of the FWP, would love to hear from you. Contact him on 07802 895785 or philip@philipsturrock.com.

Scout Christmas post

Unfortunately, after 33 years of successfully delivering on average 25,000 Christmas cards each year, the Dorchester and West Dorset Scouts have had to cancel the service this year. A spokesperson said: "While we are extremely saddened not to be running our post service this year, we will always put the safety of our young people and volunteers first."

The money the scheme usually raises goes directly to the Scouts to help fund their activities. In an attempt to make up for the absence of this income this year, the DWD Scouts have set up a Crowdfunding page. Follow the link from their website here: www.dwdscouts.org.uk/scout-post

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Amy Mowlam

01308 555638

amy.mowlam@porterododson.co.uk

21 South Street, Bridport

www.porterdodson.co.uk

Welcome all

The Bridport group working to resettle a refugee family

With nearly 80 million forcibly displaced people in the world, community groups are doing their bit to help – including one right here in Bridport...

The Bridport Refugee Support Campaign (BRSC) has got off to an impressive start despite the difficulties everyone has faced during 2020.

The campaign was set up earlier this year and operates under the government's community sponsorship scheme, which helps local groups to welcome refugee families and resettle them in the community. As well as raising money, participating groups have to commit to fulfilling a number of other stipulations including finding suitable housing and arranging English lessons. Training and support are available for group organisers through Reset, the UK's community sponsorship learning hub.

The BRSC's formation was inspired by a similar group in Uplyme, which started in 2019 and has already raised more than £12,000 through a variety of events and appeals. The Uplyme group expects to be able to welcome a Syrian refugee family to the village in 2021 after a delay caused by the pandemic.

Barry Lovejoy is the BRSC's chair and was behind its inception. "I found out about the Uplyme group so I went along to their public meeting," he says. "It struck me that this was something Bridport could do really well. The town has a long history of commitment to this kind of action and I was confident that some great people with the necessary enthusiasm and drive would be keen



Pictured: BRSC chair Barry Lovejoy (left) with members of the group in Bucky Doo Square



to get involved."

Barry made

some enquiries

and got together

about 12 people who

were interested in starting a campaign.

"A representative from the Uplyme group came to speak at one of our first meetings," he says. "We realised then just what was involved – we'd need a constitution, for a start, we'd have to achieve charitable status and there would be all sorts of safeguarding and health and safety admin to look after. Some of this is still ahead of us, but Reset's resources have already proved incredibly valuable."

The 'official' fundraising target is £9,000, although Barry says: "It's more like £15,000 – enough to cover furnishings, transport, English lessons

from a qualified teacher, and a number of other expenses."

A Covid-safe launch

Starting its fundraising work during a global pandemic has presented a challenge for the BRSC, but members are determined to reach their goal. "The coronavirus restrictions meant we couldn't have a launch in the town hall, and we didn't want a 'virtual' launch, so we opted for a market stall in Bucky Doo Square in September," says Margie Barbour, one of the group's founder members. "We had some t-shirts and leaflets printed and took to the streets to introduce ourselves to the town and answer people's questions. Because Bridport is such a creative place, we'd decided not to use photos of people in refugee camps on the launch stall but instead to ask some local artists

The Bridport group working to reset

Right: Pamela Allsop's painting 'Seeking Refuge' which she has donated to the BRSC to help with their fundraising work

to depict their response to the refugee crisis. Their work attracted some much-wanted attention."

Ricky Romain, Hugh Dunford Wood, Angie Porter and Peter Loizou all donated pictures for the launch (Hugh's painting 'The Holy Family Exploring West Dorset' is on the cover of this magazine) while Pamela Allsop asked campaign members to choose one of the paintings from her show 'Awakening' – inspired by the trauma refugees face – which was running in Symondsburry at the time. They went for 'Seeking Refuge' (pictured right), which will be used in a future fundraising event.

"We haven't been able to have any other live events yet, although we did run a 'virtual' storytelling supper in late November," says Barry Lovejoy. "Covid has forced us to move our main fundraising activities into 2021, so this early work has been mostly about raising awareness. We already have a mailing list of about 100 people, and some of these have volunteered practical help,



either with fundraising or when the family is actually here. Considering the circumstances, it's a great start."

Looking ahead to more events

As long as Bridport Arts Centre is allowed to remain open, a new exhibition called 'Exile' will run there until 22 December in partnership with various groups including the BRSC. The exhibition features the work of Ricky Romain, Cedoux Kadima and Robert Golden, and explores the social and personal effects of alienation.

The group is also planning a musical event at the Arts Centre on 18 December, when a member of a Syrian refugee family who settled in Ottery St Mary in 2017 after a similar campaign by the town's support group, Abide, will speak about their experiences of coming to the UK.

"It's likely that 'our' family will be from Syria, too, although the government has been opening up the resettlement



Left: BRSC chair Barry Lovejoy, artist Ricky Romain and committee member Lucy Campbell at the group's stall in September

ttle a refugee family continued



scheme to people from other Middle Eastern countries,” says Barry. “We won’t know anything about the family until quite a late stage.” The Home Office will look at the group’s submission, and they’ll have to get clearance from Dorset Council and the police. Then UNHCR (the United Nations refugee agency), which interviews eligible refugees, will put forward a suitable family according to various criteria such as available school places and medical needs.

One important step towards the BRSC’s ultimate goal was achieved in early November when the group secured charity status. Barry was delighted and believes the registration will help them to attract larger donations.

“We’re very grateful to everyone who has already helped in any way,” he says.

“One very generous individual gave us £100 at our market-day launch, but donations don’t need to be that big to be meaningful – it all helps. We’re looking forward to continuing our work and, eventually, to welcoming a family to their new life in our town.”



Search ‘Bridport Refugee Support Campaign’ on Facebook for regular updates about their activities. The group is also on Twitter @BridportRSG and Instagram @bridportrefugee and their email address is BridportRSG@gmail.com.

The group has produced some lovely Christmas cards (pictured left) showing Hugh Dunford Wood’s painting ‘The Holy Family Exploring West Dorset’. They are £3 for five from Fruits of the Earth, Waste Not Want Not, Rise Bakery and Leakers, or from the committee at the email address above.

Christmas 2020 will be different!

Of course Christmas won’t be ‘cancelled’ this year, but it will be different.

Creative people up and down the land have already come up with all sorts of imaginative ways to celebrate Christ’s birth amid the very challenging circumstances of this year – and I have a few of my own to add.

Come to think of it, these would be nice things to do for Christmas in any year, global pandemic or no global pandemic!

- 1). Go outside our front doors at an agreed time on Christmas Eve and greet our neighbours – socially distanced, of course!
- 2). Give a small present to anyone you know who may be alone over Christmas, especially if they’re elderly.
- 3). Get children to create colourful artwork to display in their front windows.

- 4). Make homemade presents – how about fudge or toffee in a pretty hand-decorated box?
- 5). Sing some carols together in the open – well distanced, please.
- 6). Contribute to your town’s food bank or other charity that helps local people in need.
- 7). Send cards (preferably charity ones) to all your friends and relatives who you haven’t seen for ages, with hopes and wishes about meeting up next year.

8). Remember to use your local shops for food and presents – they have had a tough year!

9). And last but not least, go to a local church service (don’t forget your mask).

I hope you all have a very special and happy Christmas.

Carol Irvine



The future's electric: investin

We were delighted when the Electric Pub Company agreed to sponsor our relaunch issue in October. This month we meet Alasdair Warren, the man behind this exciting business – and it turns out he's been making waves in other parts of town, too.

The phrase 'giving something back' is well worn, but there's one local businessman and philanthropist who's taking it to a new level. West Dorset native Alasdair Warren made a lot of money in the City; now in his 50s and back for good, he's spending it on the town he loves: Bridport.

Alasdair grew up on a smallholding near Melplash, where his family roots go back over 200 years, and went to Hardye's Grammar School (now the Thomas Hardye School) in Dorchester. After taking two gap years, during which he backpacked his way around the world, he studied geology at Nottingham University and vowed he'd never work in London, but changed his mind after finals.

"I left university in 1989 with a big

overdraft," he says, "and I had to get a well-paid job to pay it off. Luckily, I managed to do just that on the strength of my experiences at uni, where I'd started a couple of businesses for the student community, running security for parties and hosting nightclubs."

Alasdair worked in the City for 30 years, including stints in top management at Goldman Sachs and Deutsche Bank, but would always come back to Bridport every couple of weeks. Then a few years ago he started to invest in the town, a step that would lead to a permanent move back 'home'.

One weekend in 2014, Alasdair was showing a London friend around Bridport, and the tour included the Electric Palace. "I have so many happy memories of that cinema and I was reminiscing about how my dad had taken me there to see my first 'proper' movie – 'The Spy Who Loved Me' – in 1977. Then later I saw that the place was for sale, so I called Peter Hitchin [the previous owner] and started the process of striking a deal."

The Electric Palace dates back to 1926 and was originally built as a theatre and opera house, later becoming a cinema as movies gained popularity. It closed in 1999 when the building was condemned as unsafe, then reopened in 2007 after a partial refurbishment. When Alasdair bought the venue it needed an injection



Alasdair Warren

of serious money – something he was able to provide.

"I set out to preserve and enhance the building and refurbish it in the original style, and we're pretty much done now," he says. "I've made a point of using local suppliers and tradespeople – Bridport Upholstery, for instance, re-covered all the cinema seats for us. This might not be the cheapest way of doing things, but local businesses have to survive and I believe it's important to give them as much support as possible."

Alasdair, still based in London at the time, asked his sister Sue if she'd like to come home to Bridport and manage the Palace. Between them they put in place ambitious programming plans, aiming to build on the events of the previous few years, with greater diversity and more live theatre, both professional and community productions. One standout result of this determination to work with local groups was the 2017 musical 'FLEA!', which involved more than 200 local people of all ages and inspired Alasdair to create the Dorset Performing Arts Fund (see panel).

There have also been some exciting new events for children at the Palace. "I loved Saturday-morning cinema as a kid, so we've brought it back. It's very popular – before Covid we were getting audiences of up to 200. The live screenings have been a hit, too, with



Left: Bridport Arts Centre

g in our entertainment scene

about 150 people coming along to enjoy the ballet.

“For much of this year it’s been about survival, as we’ve barely been open, and when we have been, we’ve only been able to sell a small number of tickets. Thankfully, our survival was underpinned by a grant of £50,000 from the government’s Culture Recovery Fund in October, but we can’t wait to re-open properly and continue our work. I want the Palace to be something the people of Bridport can be proud of.”

Expanding his portfolio

The most successful people never stand still for long before looking for a new challenge, and Alasdair has also taken a confident leap into the hospitality industry. In summer 2019 he bought the Pymore Inn, just outside Bridport, and gave it a stylish facelift before reopening to the public.

“About that time, I started spending less time in London and more time down here,” he says. “I noticed that there were very few pubs where you feel really good about everything – the hospitality, the beer, the food and the surroundings – so I thought I’d do it myself.”

Since then Alasdair has added the Elm Tree at Langton Herring, the Antelope at Hazelbury Bryan and the World’s End on the A35 between Wimborne and Bere Regis – plus wine merchant Morrish & Banham – to his hospitality portfolio, which operates under the name The Electric Pub Company.

Then at the beginning of 2020 Alasdair bought the Bridport Arts Centre (BAC). “When the chairman of the BAC trustees contacted me last year, they were facing some serious financial difficulties and needed to find someone to buy the building,” he says. “So I did just that. While the ownership has changed, very little has changed for the people who use the building, but the BAC now has the benefit of greater financial security.”

Alasdair’s Electric Pub Company is planning to open a seafood restaurant in the cafe area of the building and outside on the piazza in front – “it’s an amazing location, particularly in the summer”. He’s also hoping that the Allsop Gallery will be able to host more ambitious,



expertly curated exhibitions following investment in its lighting, atmospheric controls, access and security. And of course, his role with both the BAC and the Electric Palace will ensure an enhanced relationship between the two venues; for instance, the BAC’s mainstream cinema offer will move to the Palace, which has better equipment and more seating capacity.

You can’t take it with you

Alasdair is clearly enjoying his money – or, rather, he’s enjoying watching what it can do for his beloved Bridport. “I grew up with very little – we weren’t grand at all – so I know that people genuinely don’t need much to be happy,” he says. “And if you have enough, you can give it back in a meaningful way.”

There are also some other, more tangible perks. Alasdair has now returned to West Dorset permanently to live in Long Bredy, and his children certainly appreciate the fact that their dad owns a cinema. “On Christmas Day a couple of years ago we all came in and I put on *The Great Escape*. They thought it was so cool – although they were surprised to discover that the film has an interval!

“One of my greatest pleasures is going into the auditorium incognito when it’s busy and listening to people admiring the building. It’s an amazing venue, and I really appreciate its magic. I know we can do some really great things here – and also at the BAC – and I’m excited to be so involved with the cultural life of this very special town.”

The Dorset Performing Arts Fund

The success of ‘FLEA!’ in 2017 led Alasdair to create a fund to allow other Dorset communities to take on theatrical projects. The Dorset Performing Arts Fund (DPAF) supports local groups in developing performing arts projects that reflect their audiences and locations, enriching community life, sparking enthusiasm for the theatre and raising aspirations.

Alasdair worked with producer Sally Vaughan, community dance practitioner Anna Golding and theatre director Niki McCretton – who had all been involved with ‘FLEA!’ – to define DPAF’s principles and purpose.

The fund is now managed by the Dorset Community Foundation, which uses expert support from the Arts Development Company to ensure DPAF grants – about £75,000 a year – are targeted in the most effective way.

www.dorsetcommunityfoundation.org/managed-funds/the-dorset-performing-arts-fund

DPAF also offers funding for talented young Dorset residents to realise their ambitions in the performing arts. Details of this bursary are here: www.dorsetcommunityfoundation.org/the-dorset-performing-arts-bursary

ST MARY'S Bridport

Parish editor – Peter Wright 456967
 Churchwarden – Lesley Hill 422417
 Director of music – Tim Linsley
 07830 308701
 Tower captain – Bob Hardwick 420632



making that call is easy; we anticipate a light and breezy conversation that flows easily and brings shared enjoyment. More challenging is making the time to speak with those whose replies may not be positive, writing the letter when a reply is long overdue, or summoning up the strength to tell someone something that they might not want to hear. We can no longer make our busyness an excuse. It is indeed more difficult than making coconut ice, but will often be the most important thing that we do all day.

‘Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.’ Proverbs 16 : 24
Lesley Hill, churchwarden

How difficult is it to make coconut ice?

As I write, I reflect on the busyness of the St Mary’s congregation this time last year as we beavered away to put in place our final preparations for the Grand Christmas Bazaar.

This year the days are quieter and the sorting of bric-a-brac, the making of fudge and coconut ice, and the labelling of tombola gifts have been replaced by time for reflection, winter walks and muffled conversation.

It was a joy to be able to meet together in the church building for worship during the summer months. The commentary of a well-known natural historian might go something like this: “Here we see the St Mary’s congregation returning to their natural habitat for the first time in many months. They seem a little apprehensive, with much looking around and then tentative waving to one another. Yellow and black tape on the floor is helping them know where to walk, and some strange members of the species keep pointing and nodding. All seems to go well until the dispersal and then we see a marked reluctance to leave without a bit of to-ing and fro-ing. Clearly, they are social creatures with practices of habit, but in coming episodes we will see how they manage to adapt and embrace change.” And this we did before the requirement to move into a second period of lockdown.

We can adapt to the wearing of face masks and distancing, but for people who are sad, lonely, anxious or recently bereaved, the days of November were so very difficult.

Maintaining and growing our contacts with others is the work we are now called to do. Sometimes



Christmas hampers and stockings

Many thanks to all who have helped us reach our target for this year, either through cash and cheque donations or through our Just Giving page. We have also received generous financial support from Waitrose and Bridport Round Table. The 80 stockings will be given to schools on 14 December for parents to collect, and the 72 hampers will be delivered on Christmas Eve, ensuring that the most needy and vulnerable families in our community can enjoy their Christmas Day.

December services at St Mary’s (correct at the time of going to press; see also p5 for the current full service rota)

Sunday 20	11am	Eucharist
Tuesday 22	2.30pm	Service of the Word
Thursday 24	11.30pm	Eucharist
Friday 25	10am	Eucharist
Tuesday 29	2.30pm	Service of the Word

Covid-19 has made a huge impact in so many ways and many of our regular donors have not been able to support the church as they once did. If you can make a donation, whatever you can give, you will be helping us to maintain our beautiful church and its ministry in the heart of Bridport.



HOLY TRINITY Bradpole

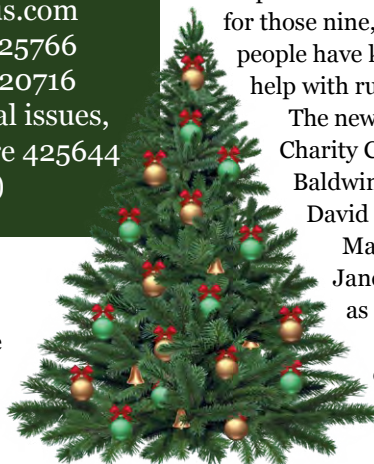
Village editor – Douglas Baldwin 424232
 douglas.baldwin@seaside20.plus.com
 Churchwarden – John Adams 425766
 Tower captain – Peter Carnell 420716
 If you have any pastoral or personal issues, please contact the Revd Janis Moore 425644 (Wednesday is her day off)

Bradpole village hall

The 2020 annual general meeting was held by Zoom on Monday 26 October. Beforehand people had been invited to vote, by email or a printed form, for nine individuals who had put themselves forward as trustees. Sixty people voted for those nine, with no votes against. A number of other people have kindly given their names as volunteers to help with running the hall when it reopens.

The new trustees, who have been accepted by The Charity Commissioners, are Dawn Adwick, Douglas Baldwin, Jane Bryant, Jim Bryant, Peter Carnell, David Coe, Colin McReavie and Martin Whiting. Martin Whiting has agreed to be chair, with Jane Bryant as secretary and Colin McReavie as treasurer.

The trustees would like to thank the chair of the parish council, Colin Baker, and clerk to the council Sandy Goldsmith for their work this year in ensuring that the



Christmas tree

Since the church is open only for services at the moment, there is a Christmas tree outside in the churchyard. Decorations are being added weekly during December, reflecting the themes of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.

HOLY TRINITY Bradpole continued...

hall was kept insured and bills paid so it could continue to function. Thanks are also due to Alan and Wendy Smart as members of the hall management committee who have ensured that the building has been safe during its closure.

The hall has been inspected and all the necessary paperwork (health and safety, safeguarding, booking procedures, etc) reviewed to ensure that the hall will be ready to re-open for general use. An opening date cannot be given until this is allowed by the government and the requirements of the Covid restrictions can be met.

In the meantime, the trustees would like to thank the many past users of the hall and hope that they will use the hall in the future when it is available.

December services at Bradpole (correct at the time of going to press; see also p5 for the current service rota)

Wednesday 16	10am	Morning Prayer
Sunday 20	11am	Communion
Wednesday 23	10am	Morning Prayer
Thursday 24	10pm	Midnight Communion
Friday 25	10am	Service of the Word
Wednesday 30	10am	Morning Prayer

HOLY TRINITY Bothenhampton

Village editor – Barbara Ffooks 423122
 Churchwarden – Heather Purse 423220
 Children & youth worker –
 Jean Mitchell 422127
 Home communion –
 The Revd Kay Watters 427290
 Director of music – Sue Smith 456955



From the village editor

We are now in the season of Advent, which lasts until Christmas, and we are bringing some ‘Advent Sparkle’ to Holy Trinity and the church grounds this year. Scenes of Advent and Christmas are displayed in open-fronted boxes among festive decorations, and if you have not seen these yet there is another opportunity on Saturday 19 December, 10am–1pm. Everyone is welcome but social distancing rules apply, and please remember to wear a face covering.

It has been a long time since we have been able to get together at our usual monthly coffee mornings and also to be able to enjoy a ‘Souper Saturday’ lunch, but these activities will recommence as soon as we are told it is safe.

Barbara Ffooks

The Old Churchyard

We had a fantastic turnout for the autumn Old Churchyard ‘tidy’ on 10 October. Graham Purse got us organised and we achieved a lot of work, strimming edges, cutting ivy and brambles away from walls and weeding beds. The compost bin was dug out, too, and a tree stump removed from the front pathway. We even had a new layer of gravel, which two of our youngest volunteers expertly levelled out. We were



Pictured, from top: Volunteers hard at work tidying the Old Churchyard; Frankie and Hattie White take a break

rewarded with a lovely cup of tea in the gorgeous autumn sunshine. It was a great afternoon and we look forward to going back to the Old Churchyard again in 2021.

Natalie Swanson

Wanted

Bothenhampton Village Hall Committee requires a new hall bookings clerk. All enquiries to Sandra Hooker (422205).

From the Revd Kay Watters

As I write this we are in a time of reflection, thinking mainly of those we have loved and lost – and an email has dropped into my inbox inviting yet more reflection.

I trained for the priesthood over 20 years ago, part of the largest year group our course had ever had, and when we all went our separate ways after ordination we promised to keep in touch with news every year. Through the gentle and persistent offices of one dogged friend among our original 40-strong cohort, we have kept good our promise and each year hear news of families, hardships and joys to be shared, and the ups and downs of parish life from all over the →



HOLY TRINITY Bothenhampton continued...

country. More recently there's been news of retirements and, sadly, deaths of those with whom we all shared the strangeness of being in a learning situation as mature (some of us very mature) students. We learned so much from one another, as well as from our Oxford lecturers, because we all brought knowledge of real-life situations to the skills we were being introduced to that would, hopefully, help us deal with whatever parish life threw at us. Nobody at that time took even a second to think about what to do in a worldwide pandemic.

So, as well as calling to mind memories of a hard but happy three years, that email has reminded me that I am very much looking forward to hearing how others have been coping and how that might have differed from the innovations we have introduced in our Bridport churches.

On the last day of October came the bombshell: England was to go into lockdown again. Our services would stop for a month, maybe longer, but we could continue with private prayer. All this just as the Team were beginning to think of our Advent and Christmas worship together – not because we were complacent that the south-west seemed to be dealing well with Covid-19, but because our congregations were telling us how much they appreciated being together again in church, even if it had been at unusual times and on days we hadn't thought of before being allowed to come together for a weekly service.

Now the lockdown has been lifted, and we have some new arrangements to deal with, I can allow myself to think that however we have to do it, we shall be reliving the wonder of

the Christmas story and supporting one another in our prayers for the healing of God's good world. Let us bring a caring and creative touch to our worship, not just in Holy Trinity, Bothenhampton, but together in our Team as we come together to hear of the birth in Bethlehem and the faith, hope and love that God brought into this world as He gave us His Son. We may not yet be allowed to sing this together, but you know the tune, and whatever and wherever the pandemic brings us, we humbly ask:

*Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay, close by me forever, and love me I pray;
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, and bring us to heaven to live with Thee there.*

With my love and prayers that the Joy of Christmastide will fill your life and the lives of all you love, care and pray for,
Revd Kay

Services at Bothenhampton (correct at the time of going to press; see also p5 for the current full service rota)

After Friday services the church will be open for private prayer: December 11.15am–12noon; January 11.30am–3pm

Friday 18 Dec	10am	Eucharist
Thursday 24	8pm	Eucharist
Friday 25	10am	Morning Prayer
Friday 1 Jan	10am	Eucharist
Friday 8	10am	Morning Prayer
Friday 15	10am	Eucharist
Friday 22	10am	Morning Prayer
Friday 29	10am	Eucharist BCP

**ST MARY'S Walditch**

Village editor – James Craddock 458725

Churchwarden – Chris Wellman-Herold
281096 / chris.w-h@hotmail.co.uk

Vergar – Pat Stapleton 456421

If you have any pastoral or personal issues,
please contact the Revd Ann Ayling 424896
(Wednesday is her day off)

Remembrance 2020

This year we have had to create new ways of worshipping and remembering. In Walditch, 105 pebbles and a slate commemorating Remembrance Sunday formed a 'path of poppies' leading from St Mary's church door to the front gate of the churchyard.

Villagers, their relatives and friends, the Bothenhampton Brownies and members of other Bridport Team churches



decorated stones, creating images that helped us to visualise the commitment of those who gave their lives to preserve our freedom.

Thanks to all those who took part in the project. The path of poppies is the evidence that the young and old still remember – and still care.

James Craddock

Advent and Christmas activities

In these times of Covid-19, St Mary's Church wishes all in the parish a joyous Christmas and happy New Year. While the church is closed except for services, the Revd Ann Ayling will continue to say prayers for the community. If you have a prayer that you would like her to say, please write it on a card and leave it in the box in the church porch.

During the Advent season a tree outside the church is being decorated on consecutive Sundays (from 29 November) with decorations reflecting the themes of Hope, Love and Joy, concluding with Peace on Sunday 20 December. Walditch residents are invited to place their decorations on the tree.

This anonymous adapted poem sets out our Walditch Christmas message:

Put me in loving remembrance of the lowly lodging in the stable of Bethlehem,

The sorrows of the blessed Mary, the poverty and exile of the Prince of Peace.

Give me at Christmas good works to do,

That I may forget myself and find peace in doing it for Thee.

Left: Part of the Path of Poppies at St Mary's Walditch

ST MARY'S Walditch continued...

*Send me to carry some gift to those in need,
Some cheer to those who are more lonely.
Grant me the joy to do a kindness to one of Thy little ones:
Light my Christmas candle at the gladness of an innocent
and grateful heart.
Make me sure that Eternal Love is revealed in Jesus, thy
dear Son.*

December services at Walditch (correct at the time of going to press; see also p5 for the current full service rota)

Thursday 17	10am	Morning Prayer
Thursday 24	10am	Service of the Word
Friday 25	10am	Eucharist
Thursday 31	10am	Morning Prayer

All those on our email list will receive the weekly pew sheet.

Light the spire

The spire is lit in December
'In memory of baby Alexander John Scott.'
Marian and John Scott

The spire is lit in December and January
'In loving memory of parents Emily Irene
and Harold Bellamy Brailsford, and
Edward, my husband.'
*Your loving daughter and wife,
Anne M Saunders*




ST JOHN'S West Bay

Village editor – Sue Pollock
07903 558568
Chapel warden –
Rosemary Russell 423013

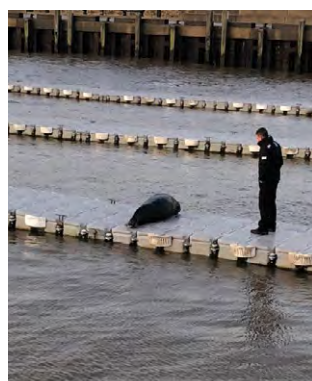
From the village editor

How lovely it was to be able to go into St John's once the churches were allowed to open! Although we couldn't have our Sunday service, we could go on a Monday for Morning Prayer led by the Revd Helen Croud. It was so good to see a few members of the regular congregation again, but no sooner were we allowed in than Lockdown 2 came into effect. Sadly, during this lockdown St John's was open only for private prayer on a Monday morning at 10am. I am sure that those of us who watched the services online really appreciated them, but there really is nothing like being back in the church. Hopefully it won't be too long before our regular Sunday services are restored.

I still see some of our congregation while I'm out in West Bay but it was a lovely surprise to hear from one of our members who lives in Harbour House. She said that all was good and they were managing to keep themselves occupied.

What's been happening in West Bay?

In October the powerboat racing finally took place, albeit with restrictions. The event was held later in the year than it



is usually, but fortunately the weather was relatively good. The racing was live-streamed on Facebook in an effort to prevent many spectators travelling to the event, although many local people came out to watch.

It has been good to see some wildlife in our harbour. First a large seal came for a rest on one of the pontoons. I was lucky enough to be down in the harbour early one morning and saw one of the harbour staff appearing to check on the seal (pictured below). Unfortunately I didn't see the otter that also dropped by, nor did I see the deer that had got trapped in the rocks. I'm glad to say that the deer eventually managed to free itself and trotted off along the beach.

Unfortunately a number of people have been involved in accidents, but I'm glad to say all were safely rescued. The lady swimmer was very lucky that there was a fishing boat just coming into the harbour as she got into difficulties, and its crew went swiftly to her rescue.

Fortunately there were no casualties when a large section of cliff close to West Bay collapsed. A crack had appeared on the coastal path, and drone footage showed that it was getting larger by the day – until eventually the cliff fell. It is estimated that tons of rock came crashing down during the night. The debris can clearly be seen extending into the sea from the end of the West Pier and despite warnings people are still clambering on it.

Have you noticed the two new sculptures that have appeared in the Bay? They are part of the parish boundary markers art project run by Dorset Coast Forum as part of its 'West Dorset Walker Welcome'. The one at the start of the West Cliff path (pictured left) is by Alice Blogg and pays tribute to the Wildcat strike by women working in the net industry. The one at East Cliff is by Brendon Murless and shows a number of boats on a post.

The West Bay Community Forum sent out a survey to its members to try and establish what was important to them about West Bay. There were 12 questions and members were asked to prioritise their answers. The feedback showed that 91% of members want to maintain and improve the bus services, followed by 73% who want improvements to public conveniences. →

Pictured: A member of the harbour staff checks on a seal at West Bay's pontoon; Alice Blogg's sculpture at the start of the West Cliff path

ST JOHN'S West Bay continued...

Fortunately the closure of the West Bay Road coincided with Lockdown 2 and the end of the holiday season. However, it has caused a lot of holdups as people now have to use the Marsh Barn Road, which is narrow and not in a good state of repair. Hopefully it will hold up for the duration of the work, which will last for eight weeks.

Once the holidaymakers had packed up and left Parkdean Holiday Park, work started on the coastal defence improvement scheme to shore up the River Brit bank. This has involved moving 25 of the static caravans. I'll be following this work with great interest as I usually run or cycle through the park. Also at Parkdean, plans to add eight

more glamping pods were given the go-ahead; obviously the existing pods have been very popular with visitors.

The Discovery Centre is now closed, probably until mid-February but obviously its reopening depends on Covid.

Sue Pollock



December services at St John's (correct at the time of going to press; see also p5 for the current full service rota)

Monday 21	10am	Morning Prayer
Friday 25	10am	Eucharist
Saturday 26	6pm	Evening Prayer
Monday 28	10am	Morning Prayer

ST SWITHUN'S Allington

Village editor – June Goodburn
423061

Churchwarden – Jo George 426457
Children and youth worker – 423061



produce from gardens and allotments.

The group opens its doors at the Chapel regularly for people to collect food, and on Thursdays from 10am to 1pm they hold a pop-up stall at St Swithun's. In recent weeks Helen Choudhury from the Taj Mahal restaurant has donated portions of delicious curry and rice, which has gone down a treat!

The group's opening hours at the Chapel vary, but they publish regular updates on their Facebook page, or you can email sarahwilberforce@gmail.com.

A Christmas prayer by Rosalind Bizley

May the Christ-Light pierce the darkness
As the world, so weary, sighs;
May the star that shines so brightly,
Lighten now the darkest skies.
A mother holds the Child Divine,
While Earth resounds with angels' voices;
May God's light within us shine -
For Love is born and Heaven rejoices.

December services at St Swithun's (correct at the time of going to press; see also p5 for the full service rota)

Thursday 17	10am	Eucharist
Sunday 20	9.30am	Eucharist
Thursday 24	6pm	Eucharist
Sunday 27	10am	Eucharist (Team service)
Thursday 31	10am	Eucharist

Bridport Community Fridge

The Bridport Community Fridge has continued its weekly stall (pictured right) in St Swithun's car park during the second lockdown.

The 'fridge' is a group of volunteers based at the Chapel in the Garden in East Street. They redistribute surplus food in the community, either free or for a donation, helping local people and cutting food waste. As well as regular deliveries from four local supermarkets, they also receive donations of food from smaller shops and growers, including the members of Bridport Garden Glut, which shares out excess



Bridport UNITED CHURCH

Minister – The Revd Peter Clark 425978
Church secretary – Sue Herman
422598 / bridportsec@gmail.com

**incorporating
UPLODERS CHAPEL**

Correspondent – Carol Hall
423163 / carol@gribb.plus.com

From the Minister

*O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Immanuel.
O Little Town of Bethlehem by Phillips Brooks (1835–93)*

How, I wonder, can we connect with a story 'then' when 'then' and 'now' are so different...?

After all, 'then' was in a backwater, a small village miles from the capital – while 'now' is in a small town in the south-west with no motorway or rail connection to London.

Then, a couple had to travel miles to comply with a government diktat for census registration – while now we are having to comply with central government regulations to



Bridport UNITED CHURCH continued..

control the spread of a pandemic. Talking of which, then there was fear aplenty of dreaded invisible threats such as leprosy – which is treatable now – while we now also suffer fear of an invisible virus and pray and work for a treatment.

Then, there was great food insecurity and fear of starvation – while now, as I write, there is a big row about ensuring school children get lunch. Also now, the news reports about migrants fleeing persecution across the Channel – and then (later on), that couple, plus baby, fled to Egypt and lived as refugees for some time.

Then, that couple had huge challenges finding a bed for the night (and the birth!) – while now local families struggle to find a roof to live under. Then the father couldn't work and earn a living while he was registering – and now many are finding the Covid situation is making work harder and harder to sustain.

Then, shepherds were abiding in the fields, while now our local hills have many sheep grazing. Then star watchers read significance in the heavenly bodies – and now our scientists discover significant water deposits on the moon, meaning a space station could be built there!

Then, in an animal's manger, God came alongside the poorest of the poor – and now the followers of that God continue to work alongside those suffering deprivation in a hugely challenging economic system.

Then, in a time of huge challenge, injustice, fear and hopelessness, Hope was reborn into the world – and now, in a time of huge challenge, injustice, fear and hopelessness, we celebrate Hope reborn into the world.

Clearly, despite newspaper headlines, Christmas has not been cancelled – and, what's more, 'then' and 'now' aren't so different after all!

The Revd Peter Clark

Sadly, since the last issue, three of our church members have died: Michael Loud, Bill Fry and Brian Stidwell. May they rest in peace.

A brief return to group worship

How good it was to be able to meet together for a form of Sunday worship during the weeks before the second lockdown was implemented. While many of us had enjoyed Sunday morning worship through Zoom during the first lockdown, it was lovely to actually see many of our church members once again in the flesh, albeit suitably distanced and masked.

Recognising faces as each arrived wearing the obligatory mask, and remembering surnames to complete our

attendance list, was at times a challenge, but nothing like the challenge of not being able to sing hymns. I discovered it was very hard to sit and listen to a well-loved hymn without bursting into song.

Left: Socially distanced worshippers at a service between the lockdowns



To most of them I chose to hum along (humming is allowed) but when Peter, our minister, announced the next hymn was to be 'How great thou art' I found myself saying the words instead. Somehow speaking the words made me really think about them and I realised why the third verse had led a dear friend to make a commitment to Jesus during a Christian rally held in

Bath many years ago:

*"And when I think that God His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin."*

Yes, things do have to be done differently. We don't know when we can return to 'normality', but we can still take things from this new and slightly strange situation. As long as some form of group worship is allowed, we can worship together, enjoy each other's company, and then go home to sing our hymns lustily along with the BBC's Songs of Praise.
Ros Hilliard

Sunday services in December and January at BUC

(correct at the time of going to press)

20 December	10.30am	Gill Bumphrey
24 December	3pm	Carol service with Peter Clark
24 December	11.30pm	Midnight service at St Mary's
25 December	10.30am	Peter Clark
27 December	10.30am	Peter Clark
3 January	10.30am	Peter Kershaw
10 January	10.30am	Covenant service with St Mary's (HC) – Peter Clark
17 January	10.30am	Chris Warren
24 January	10.30am	Jennie McGinlay
31 January	10.30am	Roger Phillips

Please note that the weekly giving envelopes for 2021 are now in the church foyer.

From Uploders Chapel

We had a lovely service on Sunday 25 October, taken by the Revd Peter Clark, which was delightful in many ways. While it seemed strange to be wearing face masks, social distancing and refraining from singing the hymns, Peter produced a beautiful service and with the use of modern technology we could see images on a screen and hear some lovely music.

However, on Remembrance Sunday, 8 November, we found ourselves again in lockdown. We should have been having our second service since emerging from the first lockdown, but sadly like many others we had the two minutes' silence at 11 o'clock on our own at home. Somehow, for me, it put the current situation into perspective when compared with what those in the world wars experienced. Yes, Covid is scary for many – particularly those who have contracted the virus and their loved ones – but for most of us life goes on more or less as usual, especially here in this beautiful part of the country. During the wars families were split apart, with those at home worrying if and when they would see their loved ones in the services and on the front line. Technology now allows us to keep in touch with family and friends wherever they are. I can only imagine what it must have been like wanting to hear that someone was safe but knowing that the technology of the day – i.e. a telegram – meant you wouldn't hear any news at all unless you were →

Bridport UNITED CHURCH continued..

told they were missing or dead. Today we have so many ways to stay connected, so let's stay positive and be thankful for all the kind souls doing their bit to help us in one way or another.

Although we're able to have services at the moment (as shown on the right) we can't be totally sure whether they or any other activities will be cancelled again. Let's do what we can to keep smiling and help others to do the same.

Let's keep each other in our prayers, have a Determined

December and hope and pray to be able to Jolly up January. Don't forget the British Bulldog Spirit!

Carol Hall

Sunday services at Uploders Chapel All at 10.30am
(correct at the time of going to press)

- 6 December Chris Hatton
- 20 December Peter Clark
- 3 January To be announced
- 17 January Peter Clark Covenant/holy communion

St MARY & St CATHERINE
Roman Catholic Church

Parish priest – Monsignor Keith Mitchell
Presbytery 424754
keith.mitchell@predtr.org.uk
Secretary – Faith Leborgne 422594
bridport@predtr.org.uk



Looking forward to Christmas

Christmas approaches and, along with other churches across the land, for us it will be a Christmas unlike any we have known. For since March, "we are all changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

Now, we think back on other Christmases when the church was so full that cushions had to be found for those sitting on the floor. We packed ourselves in, shoulder to shoulder; the spirit in the candlelit church was as jovial and convivial as befitted the season and nobody minded the crush. Elderly people, young parents, children and babies, sometimes the odd snoozing dog, all squeezed in together - that was the scene of many a Christmas past in our church - but this year will be so different as we will all be physically distanced. We'll be wearing masks and the congregation will be halved to conform with government coronavirus regulations.

For weeks many of us attended Sunday Mass online. This was a very new experience for us, sitting at our kitchen tables, tuning into Facebook and watching Fr Keith or Fr Cor celebrating Mass for us in an empty church. Not



everyone could take advantage of the Facebook Mass as not everyone had a computer or tablet. We were scattered in our various homes around our parish of three churches - Bridport, Beaminster and Chideock - and because of the lockdown we seldom

Left: The Altar of St Ignatius, Chideock

saw each other around Bridport. When we did happen to meet, it was like a reunion of old friends, but rather than embrace or clasp hands, we stood at a two-metre distance, almost bowing our recognition in an 18th-century way.

All the spontaneity was gone, but we all knew why, so no one took offence. We were all in the same boat, not only in Bridport, but across the world. Then in July we were able to come to church again, but in limited numbers and we were to be spaced apart. How good it was to see one another again!

Wearing masks in church requires us to make good use of our eyes and eyebrows. This is the only way we can show recognition of each other. We nod and wave across to our fellow parishioners as we come into church and we smile but no one sees the smile behind the mask - that's where the eyes and eyebrows play their part, so we raise our eyebrows and hope that the eyes say it all.

Masks will, no doubt, take on a jaunty, festive air at Christmas when, thus adorned, we will file into church in an orderly, distanced fashion. We will kneel before the crib, presented as in previous years, and think on the joy and the meaning of Christmas. Throughout this pandemic we have become increasingly aware of the selflessness and generosity of people who have rallied round to help and to keep an eye on their friends and neighbours, and close bonds have been wrought in the unlikeliest of circumstances. The pandemic is a dreadful foe, and many have died, but the one saving grace has been a greater closeness and a breaking down of barriers.

We will be a thin gathering compared with those in the past and this year attendance at the Christmas Masses at Bridport, Beaminster and Chideock will have to be made by application through the parish office on 01308 422594. The Mass times are below.

Pat McEvoy

Christmas Masses

- Christmas Eve Bridport 5pm and 6.30pm
Beaminster 9pm
- Christmas Day Bridport 8am
Chideock 10am

Please apply through the parish office as above.

Other services at St Mary and St Catherine

Sunday Mass is at 10am when government regulations allow. This Mass is streamed through Bridport Catholic Parish Facebook page and on the parish website: www.bridportcatholics.org.uk

For other Sunday Masses and daily weekday Mass in the parish, please see our weekly newsletter on the website.

Get involved: local clubs, groups & societies

We are no longer carrying adverts from local groups. Instead, information about these organisations will appear in a listings format. Unless otherwise stated, all phone numbers are Bridport (01308).

Please note: most groups have not been active during the coronavirus restrictions but we are giving their usual arrangements in the hope that they can resume soon.

Colmers WI meets at the WI Hall in North Street. They hope to resume monthly meetings in October, but this depends on the hall being Covid safe. Contacts are President Gill Smith 301201 and Sarah Nicks 459855.

West Dorset Flower Club (Bridport) meets at the WI Hall in North Street with regular visiting speakers and demonstrations. For details phone 456339.

Bridport Blind Club is a social club for the visually impaired and will restart in 2021. Contact ian.ibbotson@btinternet.com / 898484 or contact Leah Cross for personal or technical help 07789 997620.

Bridport Stroke Club meets weekly from September to Christmas and February to July at the Community Room, Vernon's Court. Contact the secretary, David Lawrence: dandhlawrence@gmail.com.

Bridport Hearing Club meets on the first Monday afternoon of each month at Good Books, Gundry Lane. Cost £1.50pp to cover refreshments. For details phone 862608.

Probus, for retired/semi-retired professional men, meets at the Eype's Mouth Hotel on the third Wednesday each month at noon for lunch. Contact Graham Pitts 01297 561569.

Burton Bradstock Duplicate Bridge Group meets on Tuesday afternoons 1.45–4.45pm at the village hall. Contact Kathy 485626.

Bridport Choral Society rehearses on Monday evenings at the United Church Hall and hopes to resume activities in January. Contact Margaret Foster (Secretary) margefoster1956@gmail.com.

Bridport & District Gardening Club meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7.30pm at the WI Hall in North Street. Contact Peter Gough 459469.

The Arts Society (West Dorset) has regular Thursday talks at 2.30pm at Bridport Town Hall. Contact Sandy Lovelock 01305 848390 / sandylovelock@btinternet.com.

Dorset Wildlife Trust (West Dorset Group) meets at the United Church Hall on the first Friday in each month.

Contact Monty Crook 423442 montycrook@rocketmail.com. **Disabled Carers & Friends** meets every Thursday from 9am to 12 noon at Vernon's Court Community Room, South Street. Call in for a chat or advice. Email pete.bowditch@hotmail.com or phone 423620, 421213 or 427819.

Bridport Bridge Club meets Wednesday and Thursday evenings (duplicate bridge, good standard) and the first two Friday afternoons in the month (relaxed bridge) at St Swithun's Hall. Contact Roy Tarsnane 425298.

British Sugarcraft Guild meets at Groves' Ivy House cafe on the second Tuesday each month. Contact Jan 281085.

Bridport ASD and Social Anxiety Group for carers and young people 7–11 and 11–18. For children's activities see our social media posts plus www.bridportasd.wordpress.com and Facebook. Email indigo.may.counselling@gmail.com.

Bridport Child Contact Centre facilitates contact in a safe environment for non-resident parents following family breakdown. Phone 07792 075972 – see also advert below.

Update: St Swithun's Hall

Along with all other community buildings, the hall at St Swithun's had to close in March for the first lockdown. Sadly, a whole range of sessions had to stop almost overnight. However, in July we learned that if certain conditions were met, halls could open again for specified activities that were exempt from 'the rule of six' in carefully managed settings.

We worked hard during August to meet the criteria for re-opening, with professional deep cleaning and a detailed risk assessment, in which the Revd Pete Stone helped greatly. Unfortunately not all of our previous clients were eligible to start up again because of the nature of their participants (e.g. vulnerable/elderly) or the nature of their activity, and we have assured them we'll be delighted to welcome them back in due course. Meanwhile we were 'found' by some fresh enterprising tutors whose previous venues could not be made available. Since September we've had ballet classes for youngsters, yoga sessions and 'Tripudio' classes, and we've been able to welcome back prayer groups, music appreciation, exercise for people living with Parkinson's disease and even the St Swithun's Band, who learned that under certain conditions they could rehearse again! All our groups undertook their own risk assessments before starting and have worked with us to keep the hall clean and safe, for which we are grateful.

Along with the rest of the Bridport Team, St Swithun's sees an important part of its mission as being engaged with our local community, and the hall is one way to do that. We're confident that now we're out of the second lockdown we'll soon be able to open our doors and welcome back our friends, old and new, to pick up where they left off.

Yvonne Welch

Citizens Advice

During the ongoing restrictions, the local bureau is encouraging people to use its phone and online services.

If you need help with benefits, debt, employment or other issues, the best way to contact Citizens Advice is by leaving a message on 01308 456594 or Dorset Advice Line 03444 111444. You can also send an email to advice@bridportcab.org.uk or use the contact form on the local CA website: www.bridportca.org.uk.

The national CA website www.citizensadvice.org.uk has a comprehensive range of information, including regularly updated advice relating to the pandemic.

Volunteers Needed

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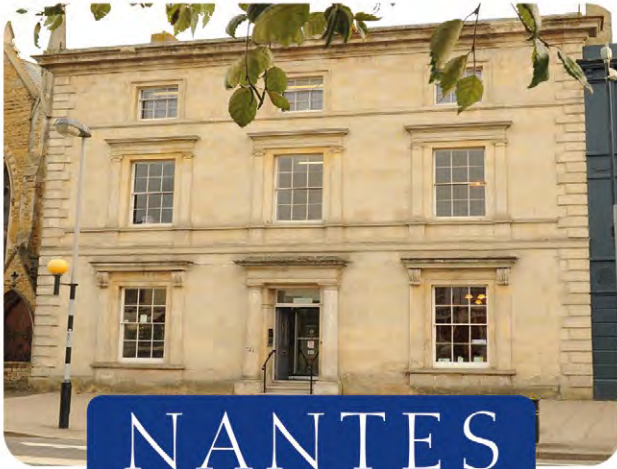
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